

The Treaty Trail: U. S. - Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest

A Treaty Trail Lesson Plan

Clothing That Talks: Meaning and Material Culture

A *Dig Deep* Classroom-Based Assessment for elementary school students.

By Patricia Pierce Erikson

Summary:

When you look at old photographs, how do you know they are old? What clues do you use to identify the time period, place or identity? This exercise teaches students how to carefully examine historical images to identify evidence that supports an interpretation of the past.

In this exercise, students will examine images of Isaac Stevens, Chief Lawyer, and Francois Lucie for information about these men and the nature of Euro-American/Native American cultural and political contact in the 19th century.

All of these individuals lived in a world filled with symbols of authority and of ethnicity. In this world, epaulets, ostrich feathers, and bandoliers could communicate as much as business cards do for us today.

Teachers wishing to engage their students in a Dig Deep Classroom-Based Assessment in history will help their students to use evidence from artifacts and/or primary sources to develop a historical account of a time period and construct a timeline of the major events of the time period. Students will be asked to write an essay describing a Gustav Sohon drawing, with special attention given to the significance of material culture in the artwork.

Essential Questions for Students:

- How does material culture reflect a culture and its interactions with other cultures?
- How can historic photos, artifacts and documents help us to understand the past?
- Who were Isaac Stevens, Chief Lawyer, and Francois Lucie?
- What are some of the significant, historic events in which they were involved?






Essential Understandings:

1. Students will learn how to use historic images as evidence of the past.
2. Students analyze material culture to consider concepts such as identity, status and ethnicity.
3. Students will identify evidence of historical encounters between



DOWNLOAD AREA

Download the PDFs required for this lesson plan:

-  [The Lesson Plan](#)
-  [Primary Source Documents \(pdf version\)](#)
-  [Primary Source Documents \(web gallery\)](#)
-  [Secondary Source Readings](#)
-  [Student Worksheets](#)

Material Culture: Tangible objects and structures in human societies, past and present, that serve a function and carry meaning e.g., pencil, shoe, church, book

Euro-American and Native American cultures.

Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs)

This lesson plan satisfies the following EALRs: History 1.2.1, 1.1.1a; WA1.1.3b, 1.2.1; Arts 2.3, 4.4; Reading 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.4.2, 2.1.4 and Social Studies skills: 1.1.1f. [Click here](#) to print out these EALRs for your reference.

Primary Sources for Student Examination (provided):

1. Portrait of **Isaac Stevens** in military uniform
2. Portrait of **Isaac Stevens** in civilian dress
3. Portrait of **Isaac Stevens** in fur hat and hide coat
4. Photo of Stevens' epaulets
5. Portrait of **Francois Lucie** in fur hat and bandoliers
6. Gustav Sohon's 1855 drawing of the Walla Walla Treaty Council
7. Gustav Sohon's portrait of **Chief Lawyer**
8. Photograph of Chief Lawyer

Primary Sources: A piece of evidence created during the time period under investigation by someone who participated in, witnessed, or commented upon the events that you are studying. It is the surviving record of past events such as photographs, diaries, or artifacts.

Secondary Sources: Books, articles, essays, and lectures created, often using primary sources, that describe and interpret a time period after events have taken place.

Secondary Sources for Student Examination (provided):

1. Biography of **Isaac Stevens**.
2. Biography of **Chief Lawyer**
3. **Cause and Effect**
4. **What is a Treaty?**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Part I. Introduction

1. Provide your students with a brief overview of the "Essential Questions" and "Essential Understandings" listed above.
2. Let them know that they will be analyzing historical images, using them like detectives who are trying to learn about the past. They are going to have the opportunity to create an interpretation of the past, using various sources.
3. Write the vocabulary words "material culture" and "interpretation" on the board and ask them to begin using the vocabulary worksheets to develop an understanding of these terms. Optional: Facilitate a class discussion of this vocabulary to draw out examples and reinforce their understanding.
4. Let them know that they are going need to consider how clothing (and other material objects) "speak," how they can carry meanings for us. In order to "read" or "decode" historical images, they need to understand what symbols or articles of clothing meant at that time.

Note: The next step will assist the students' transition into historical analyses by first building upon their prior knowledge and experience.

Part II. Your Photo

Objective: create an exercise where students can **observe** and **inventory** their own clothing. This will help build skills for examining primary documents subsequently.

1. Either take full-length pictures of your students or ask them to bring a full-length photograph of themselves into class. (If neither option is viable, have them continue the exercise just by examining what they are currently wearing.)
2. Ask them to use the **Student Graphic Organizer: Clothing That Talks** to hone their observation, inventorying, and reflection skills.

3. Lastly, engage them in a brief discussion where they share with the class examples of items of clothing that convey different kinds of meaning in different settings e.g., baseball hats, torn jeans, sneakers. If they are struggling, try stimulating a discussion of what styles are “out” and “in” and what material culture items are associated with those styles. What do these styles “say”?

Note: Next we are transitioning into analyzing uniforms, in particular.

Part III. Uniforms

Objective: To reinforce the idea that clothing can convey not only identity and status, but authority and affiliation with an organization, ask them to think now about uniforms.

Uniform: an identifying outfit or style of dress worn by the members of a given profession, organization, or rank.

1. Ask them to continue using the **Student Graphic Organizer: Clothing That Talks** to again practice inventorying. As they try to answer the questions, prompt them to think about color, fabric patterning, style of footwear, style of headwear, details on buttons, pins, buckles, etc.

1. After they finish this, ask students to share aloud the uniforms that they have described. After hearing a few examples, prompt a discussion of:
- *What are the differences between these uniforms?*
 - *Which characteristics of the uniform would enable you to recognize that uniform?*
 - *What about them communicates such concepts as military vs. civilian, Air Force vs. Army, boy scout vs. girl scout, lower rank versus upper rank, or various team or school distinctions?*

Note: After discussing how much information can be gleaned by looking at pictures, the students are ready to use their understanding of their own photographs to prepare to analyze the 19th century images in historical context. In the next part of the lesson, you will be introducing students to the pictures of the former governor. In one of the images, Stevens wears a military uniform, in another, he is in civilian dress and in the third, he wears a fur hat and hide coat. Students will explore the differences between the three styles of clothing and consider what the images are trying to convey about Stevens’ position in Washington Territory.

Part IV. The Three Faces of Isaac Stevens

Objective: Practice analyzing 19th century portraits for material culture evidence.

Hand out the **Vocabulary Organizer: Clothing That Talks** and the “Part III. Isaac Stevens” of **Student Graphic Organizer: Clothing That Talks**

As homework, or in-class work in pairs, ask students to use reference materials to fill out their **Vocabulary Organizer**. Then ask them to use these vocabulary words to fill out their graphic organizer.

1. Tell them that they are now ready to move their material culture investigation skills back in time into 19th century life in Washington before it was a state. Specifically, they are going to research the period when Isaac Stevens negotiated treaties with Native American tribes on behalf of the U.S. Government.

2. First, ask them to read the biography of Isaac Stevens. To reinforce basic concepts from their reading, facilitate a discussion of the following:

- *Who was Isaac Stevens?*
- *What were some of the significant events in which he was involved?*
- *Why did Stevens’ job involve Native American peoples?*



Biography of
Isaac Stevens
[CLICK TO READ](#)



Isaac Stevens in military uniform with sword, scabbard, epaulets, and spyglass. Washington State Historical Society Collections.

3. Remind students how they have learned that clothing can convey identity and status. Tell them that they will be exploring three images of Isaac Stevens, each of which shows a different “face” or “role.”

4. Project the first portrait and identify it as one of Isaac Stevens, but *without describing the image in any way*.

Ask the students:

- *What is he wearing?*
- When they say “uniform,” remind them that this is an *interpretation*; *what is their evidence?*
- *Specifically, what is he wearing that communicates “uniform” or “military” to them?*
- *Is this a photo or a drawing? How do you know?*

5. Confirm for them that this is Stevens’ military uniform and remind them that he was a United States government agent.

6. Project the next image of Isaac Stevens and repeat the exercise above. Prompt the students as following and ask them to support their interpretation:

- *What is he wearing?*
- *Is it a uniform this time?*
- *What does he appear to be dressed for?*

Confirm for them that this is Stevens in formal, civilian dress.

7. Project the portrait of Isaac Stevens in the fur hat and repeat the exercise above.

Engage students in the following discussion:

- *Is this a photograph?*
- *What is he wearing?*
- *What materials are used to make the clothing?*
- *What do you think he is dressed for?*

8. Project the next portrait, this time of Francois Lucie, a Cree/Metis hunter
- *What material culture items are present in both of these portraits? (fur hats and bandoliers crossing their chests)*
 - *How might Stevens have acquired similar items? (get them to consider trade or gifting as possibilities)*
 - *Why might an influential, non-Native leader pose for a portrait wearing the same outfit that a Cree/Metis hunter is wearing? (see if you can elicit consideration of cross-cultural contact and exchange of styles)*
 - *Can they think of examples in their lives where the style of one culture influences another? Where the clothing of one culture is adapted by another because it “says” or symbolizes something for them?*

Part V. Online Extension Activity (Optional)

Objective: Develop interpretive skills with respect to one particular material culture item – an epaulet – and the symbolic information encoded in its design.

1. Project the image of Isaac Stevens’ epaulet and tell your students that this is a part of a military uniform. Tell them that by exploring an online interactive activity, they are going to discover that the epaulet works almost like a



Governor Isaac Stevens wearing a hide coat, fur hat, and bandoliers. Washington State Historical Society Collections.



Francois Lucie, a Cree-Metis guide and hunter who taught artist Paul Kane about bison hunting. Fort Edmonton, 1846, painted by Paul Kane. Courtesy Stark Museum of Art,

“business card” and that this one communicated a great deal about Isaac Stevens.

2. In class or as homework, ask students to explore the interactive web activity, “Where in Time is Isaac Stevens?”, located at: <http://www.washingtonhistoryonline.org/treatytrail/activities/isaac-stevens-in-time.htm>. Ask them to select the epaulet and read more about it.



Isaac Stevens' epaulet showing the gold braid and an insignia of the Corps of Engineers. Washington State Historical Society Collections.

Part VI. U.S.-Indian Treaties

Objective: Describe and compare patterns of life over time in Washington State including: Native cultures of Washington and Immigration, settlement, and interaction of cultures (1830-statehood)

1. Hand out the **Timeline Graphic Organizer** and review for your students the concepts of timeline and chronology. Let them know that their next set of secondary source readings will introduce them to the U.S.-Indian treaties and give them information to construct a timeline.
2. If time is short, divide the class into three groups and assign one of the three essays listed below per group. Provide time for each group to verbally report to the rest of the class on what they feel are the main points of their reading. Facilitate a class discussion:

- *What is a treaty?*
- *How did treaties affect settlers' lives?*
- *How did they affect Native American lives?*
- *How did Chief Lawyer think about the treaties?*

Student reading:
Biography of Chief
Lawyer
[CLICK TO READ](#)

Student reading:
The Treaty Trail:
Cause and Effect
[CLICK TO READ](#)

Student reading:
What is a Treaty?
[CLICK TO READ](#)

3. Project the two images of Chief Lawyer – a Gustav Sohon portrait and the photo portrait. Ask students to compare the images.

Note: You are both exercising their observation and material culture analysis skills and trying to get them to apply what they have learned about the imposition of Euro-American culture upon tribal peoples.

- *How is the clothing different?*
- *Which one looks like how they would expect “an Indian” to look? Why?*
- *Why do they think Chief Lawyer might have chosen to wear one outfit at one time and the other outfit at another time?*
- *How is this choice similar or different from Isaac Stevens choice to wear civilian dress or the fur hat/bandolier outfit?*

4. For an in-class assignment or as homework, ask your students to construct a timeline of events mentioned in these three essays, plus the prior Stevens biography.

Part VII: Dig Deep Classroom-Based Assessment: Evidence and Interpretation

Objective: To apply their skills in analyzing primary source documents, to create a timeline of events in 19th century Washington territory, and to construct an interpretation in a research paper.

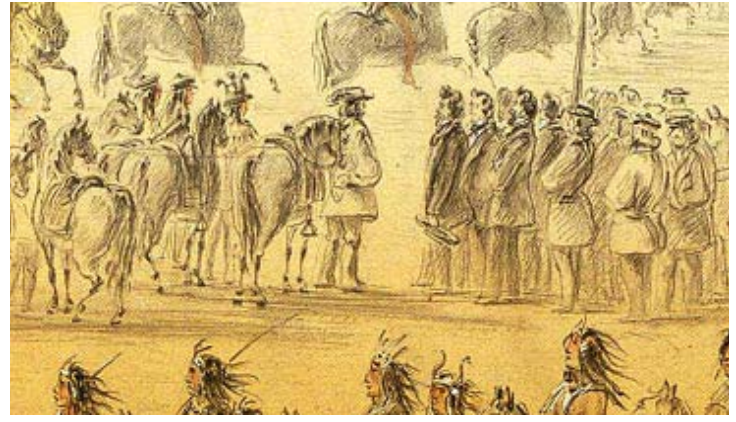
1. Explain to students that they are beginning their own research and writing assignment.

- *Your task is to write an essay describing a piece of art completed in 1855. You are going to pay special attention to the significance of material culture in this artwork.*

Show students the 1855 drawing by Gustav Sohon of the Walla Walla Treaty Council- provide both the full image and the detail that highlights Chief Lawyer and Isaac Stevens.



Arrival of the Nez Perce Indians at the Walla Walla Treaty, May 1855, watercolor and ink by Gustav Sohon. Washington State Historical Society Collections.



Detail from Arrival of the Nez Perce Indians at the Walla Walla Treaty, May 1855. Isaac Stevens stands at center right and Chief Lawyer at center left with plumed hat. Washington State Historical Society Collections.

2. Tell students that they are ready to investigate and write about a drawing made in 1855.

Help students locate Isaac Stevens in the Gustav Sohon drawing. Compare what he is wearing here with the three portraits. Provide them with the [Responding to Art worksheet](#).

- *What did Stevens choose to wear on this day?*
- *What did Chief Lawyer choose to wear on this day?*
- *How does their clothing compare with what the large number of Nez Perce riders are wearing in the drawing?*
- *What do you think the two parties involved are trying to say to each other with the clothing they are wearing?*
- *What is the significance of clothing in this scene?*

3. Provide them with an assignment checklist:

- *Fill out the Responding to Art worksheet.*
- *Use evidence from artifacts and/or primary sources and your secondary source readings to develop a historical account of a time period.*
- *Construct a timeline of the major events of the time period from your reading.*
- *Develop a guiding question and thesis statement*
- *Write an essay describing the "Arrival of the Nez Perce Indians at the Walla Walla Treaty". Pay special attention to the significance of material culture in the artwork.*

Note: The Washington Library and Media Association recommends that teachers offer their students the following tool to learn about the creation of thesis statements:

<http://www.ozline.com/electraguide/thesis.html>

4. Please refer back to the Dig Deep scoring goals listed in the [CBA Rubric](#) to determine grading for this assignment.