Native Symbols in the Modern World

Examining Symbolism in Native American Poetry and Art

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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	60-120 Minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	2-3 Class Periods
Course	A.P. Language and Composition, A.P. Literature and Composition		

Essential Question

How is symbolism used in Native American culture?

Summary

In this lesson, students examine symbolism in Native regalia, poems, and art and gain a better understanding of what symbolism looks like in a real-world context. Throughout the lesson, students research and discuss Native authors, tribes, and artists. After reading and annotating a poem, students create a visual representation explaining the symbols found in the poem. They end the lesson by summarizing their learning through a compare-and-contrast writing assignment.

Snapshot

Engage

Students watch and discuss a video about Native American symbols in tribal regalia.

Explore

Students annotate poems by Native authors and participate in whole-group discussion.

Explain

Students research their poem's Native author and tribe and create a one-pager explaining the poem's symbolism and its significance.

Extend

Students analyze and discuss Native art and the symbolism embedded in each piece.

Evaluate

Students compare and contrast the symbolism in their assigned poem and accompanying art piece by writing a brief essay.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.7.W.2: Students will create visual and/or multimedia presentations using a variety of media forms to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence for diverse audiences.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 10)

11.3.R.1: Students will analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic and organizational choices in grade-level literary and informational genres.
11.3.R.4: Students will evaluate literary devices to support interpretations of texts, including comparisons across texts:

- imagery
- tone
- symbolism
- irony

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 10)

12.7.R.1: Students will analyze and evaluate written, oral, visual, digital, non-verbal, and interactive texts in order to draw conclusions and defend arguments.

Attachments

- Bead Workers—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.docx
- Bead Workers—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.pdf
- Bead Workers—Native Symbols in the Modern World.docx
- Bead Workers—Native Symbols in the Modern World.pdf
- Entangled—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.docx
- Entangled—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.pdf
- Entangled—Native Symbols in the Modern World.docx
- Entangled—Native Symbols in the Modern World.pdf
- How Soon—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.docx
- How Soon—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.pdf
- How Soon—Native Symbols in the Modern World.docx
- How Soon—Native Symbols in the Modern World.pdf
- Innocence—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.docx
- Innocence—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.pdf
- Innocence—Native Symbols in the Modern World.docx
- Innocence—Native Symbols in the Modern World.pdf
- It's OPTIC-AL! Answer Key—Native Symbols in the Modern World.docx
- It's OPTIC-AL! Answer Key—Native Symbols in the Modern World.pdf
- It's OPTIC-AL!—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.docx
- It's OPTIC-AL!—Native Symbols in the Modern World - Spanish.pdf
- It's OPTIC-AL!—Native Symbols in the Modern World.docx
- It's OPTIC-AL!—Native Symbols in the Modern World.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Native Symbols in the Modern World.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Bead Worker handout (attached; print 2-sided; stapled)
- Entangled handout (attached; print 2-sided)

- How Soon handout (attached; print 2-sided)
- Innocence handout (attached; print 2-sided)
- It's OPTIC-AL handout (attached; one per student)
- It's OPTIC-AL answer key (attached; optional)
- Copy Paper (one per student)
- Notebook paper (one per student)
- Internet Access
- Printer Access
- Copy Paper
- Pens/Pencils
- Highlighters (two colors per student)
- Colored Pencils, Crayons, Markers etc.

Engage

Display the title slide on **slide 2** of the attached **Lesson Slides**. Next, review the essential question and lesson objectives on **slides 3-4**.

Transition to **slide 5.** Using the Bell Ringer strategy, explain to students that they will watch a short video called Regalia and Symbols. It shows Native dancers and organizational princesses explaining what their regalia symbolizes. Instruct students to create a list of the regalia and symbols associated with each tribe using a sheet of notebook paper while they watch the video

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=dWXf2uswcNY

Explore

Arrange students in small groups of three to four. Distribute two different colored highlighters and one of the four attached poems (**Bead Workers, Entangled, How Soon,** and **Innocence**) to each student. Every student should have a different poem within their small group.

Transition to **slide 6**. Review the Why-lighting strategy and instruct students to read their poems and highlight, using only one of their highlighters, everywhere they see symbolism. Next, instruct students to annotate what they have highlighted by explaining their reasoning in the margins. Begin the timer and allow students 10 to 15 minutes to complete this task. You may adjust the time as needed.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=9gy-1Z2Sa-c

After students finish the Why-lighting activity, display **slide 7** and briefly facilitate a discussion connecting the symbolism in their poem to the symbolism in the tribal regalia from the video. Use the following guided questions:

- What were some symbols that stood out in your poem?
- Did any of the symbols in your poem connect to the tribal regalia in the video?
- Does anyone think the author of the poem may be affiliated with one of the tribes in the video? Why or why not?
- What similarities and differences did you find regarding the symbolism in both the poem and the video?

Teacher's Note

Prior to teaching this lesson, arrange desks or tables in small groups of three to four and print handouts.

If multicolored highlighters are limited, instruct students to underline or circle during the Why-lighting strategy.

Teacher's Note

The HIVE for this lesson contains additional poems not already provided in the learner handouts. If you wish, you may print these poems from the HIVE and distribute them to your class. Make sure the students also receive the questions on the back of the poem handouts.

Explain

Transition to **slide 8** and instruct students to turn to the back page of their poetry handout, where a list of questions is provided. Explain that students will now research the author of their poem.

Using websites featured in the "Native Symbols in the Modern World" HIVE, students will research their author and tribe while documenting their answers to the following questions on the handout.

- What is the title?
- Who is the author?
- Where are they from? (Country, state, region)
- What university did this author attend and what were their areas of study?
- What is their tribe and where is that tribe located?
- What is the focus of the author's work?
- What is their tribe known for? What makes that tribe unique?

Begin the timer and allow 10 to 15 minutes for students to research their author and tribe. Feel free to adjust time as needed.

As students finish their research, transition to **slide 9**. Instruct them to re-read their assigned poem and Why-Light again using the second highlighter. Explain that the purpose of doing this activity a second time is to gain new understanding based on their research, such as learning about the author and their tribe.

Next, transition to **slide 10** and review the directions for the One-Pager strategy.

Instruct students to:

- Select one or two symbols from the poem and explain their meaning.
- Select two quotes from the poem.
- Create a symbolic border.
- Write a paragraph about the author and their tribe.
- Add color to your One-Pager.

Allow students to use a blank sheet of copy paper to create their own One-Pager. Provide markers, colored pencils, or crayons for students to be creative with this activity. Allow 20 to 25 minutes for students to complete the One-Pager but adjust time as needed.

As students complete the One-Pager, display **slide 11** and instruct students to share their One-Pager within their small groups highlighting:

- The symbols from their poem.
- The tribe their author is from and the significance of that symbol.
- The meaning of their creative border.

Teacher's Note

If students are not able to finish their One-Pagers by the end of class, schedule some time at the beginning of Day 2 for students to complete their work.

Extend

Day 2

Begin the class by reviewing the essential question and learning objectives on slides **12-13**.

Display **slide 14** and distribute the attached **IT'S OPTIC-AL** handout. Review the directions for It's OPTIC-AL strategy with the class. Explain to the students that they will be viewing different art pieces from Native American artists. Tell students to keep in mind that the symbols in the art are a blend of traditional native and modern world cultures. Transition to **slides 15-18**. Review each image and the mini bios for the artists. Allow three to five minutes for students to view an image using the HIVE and complete the handout. As they review each image, facilitate brief discussions using guiding questions to make connections to the symbolism from the poems. Use the following guided questions as you discuss:

- What do you notice about the image?
- What symbols do you see?
- How does the image blend traditional native culture with the modern world today?
- What is the image's message?
- How does the title support the message?

Teacher's Note

Consider displaying the students' One-Pagers with a clean copy of the poems.

Evaluate

Display **slide 19**. Review the CER strategy and have students get out their paper from the Bell Ringer on the previous day. Invite students to write 2-3 paragraphs comparing and contrasting symbolism in their assigned poem and the accompanying art piece.

Depending on students' level of understanding, provide a rough outline for students to follow or sentence starters if needed. The outline and sentence starters can be found on hidden **slide 20**.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (2023, July 11). *Native Symbols at a Powwow.* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWXf2uswcNY
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Claim, evidence, reasoning (CER). Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f506fc09
- K20 Center. (n.d.). One-Pager. Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/72
- K20 Center. (n.d.). It's OPTIC-AL. Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/99
- K20 Center. (n.d.). *Native symbols in the modern world.* HIVE. https://hive.k20center.ou.edu/boards/30
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-lighting. Strategies. Retrieved from https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). *K20 Center 10 minute timer.* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gy-1Z2Sa-c
- K20 Center. (2023, July 10). *Regalia and symbols.* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/dWXf2uswcNY