



"Qa'-Soy" Published in News from Native California © Elaine Palmer

## Qa'-Soy: a Pomo Tale of Traditional Ecological Knowledge



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## Grade Level:

4-5

## Subjects:

English Language Arts, History-Social Science

## Time Frame:

1 Week


## Lesson Slides:

 [Slides](#)

## Printables:

 [Pomo People Handout](#) *(Teacher can read sections to the class or hand out)*

 [Qa'Soy: a Story.pdf](#)

 [Coloring Page 1.pdf](#)

 [Coloring Page 2.pdf](#)

 [Coloring page 3.pdf](#)

 [Family Tree.pdf](#)

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## Curriculum Themes

- ☒ History
- ☒ Cultural Strengths
- ☐ Law/Government
- ☒ Relationship to Place
- ☐ Cross Curricular Integration



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## Unit Overview

This 3 part unit was written by Pomo educator, weaver and artist, Elaine Quitquit Palmer. A story recollecting a cherished childhood memory, with her father, is the focal point.

The story of Qa'-Soy illustrates the passing on of traditional knowledge. Students will read this story and interview an elder in their community. Some students will have a grandparent they can ask about traditions in their family. If a family member is not available, the teacher can help the student identify an appropriate community member the student may interview.

"Elders are highly respected in California Native American culture. They remember our history and teach culture, share stories, and pass down traditional knowledge. It is important for the youth today to learn how to respect and communicate with their elders so that they maintain their family histories." Elaine Quitquit Palmer

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## Learning Goals

- Students will gain understanding of a Pomo cultural practice as well as their own family traditions and history.
- Students will learn how to identify "Elders" in their families and interact with them in a respectful manner.

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## Background for Educators

### Geography:

For over 10,000 years Lake county has been inhabited by Pomo people in the North central portion of California. There were various bands of pomo located around Clear Lake, one of the oldest natural water lakes in California.

### History/Background:

The mid 1800's commenced a period of colonial violence due to the Gold Rush and assimilation practices that sent many Pomo children away from their homes. Most children were sent to boarding schools throughout California. The Gold Rush brought in more settlers to the area in Lake county. The Pomo population began to dwindle due to sickness, slavery and outright killings by these foreign settlers.

In 1847, settlers Andrew Kelsey and Charles Stone established a ranching operation in Clear Lake, exploiting Pomo labor through enslavement, starvation, and sexual violence. After Kelsey and Stone murdered a young Pomo man seeking food for his family in late 1849, Chief Augustine and others retaliated by killing the two settlers. This act of resistance prompted a brutal U.S. military response. On May 15, 1850, Lieutenant Nathaniel Lyon led the 1st Dragoons Regiment to \*Badon-napoti\* (Bloody Island), where they massacred approximately 800 Pomo, primarily elders, women, and



children. Today there is a marker off of Highway 20 that memorializes those that were massacred on that day. Not far from there is the Robinson Rancheria Casino and rancheria.

At present, Robinson Rancheria Band manages approximately 1,010 acres in Lake County, blending economic development with cultural revitalization. Initiatives like the Clear Lake hitch conservation program address ecological threats to culturally vital fish species, while gaming enterprises fund language preservation and intergenerational education. These efforts underscore the tribe's resilience—a continuity of resistance that bridges ancestral traditions and modern self-determination.

### Culture:

Pomo were known for their fishing and hunting skills and for their intricate art of basketry work and were thriving on the lands around Clear lake. Today many pomo are bringing traditional skills back and are teaching youth how to make baskets from willow and tule, how to create tule canoes, teaching them how to gather traditional foods and medicine and passing down traditional ecological knowledge like cultural burning and land stewardship.

The Robinson Rancheria Band's history is a testament to the Pomo people's resolve to protect their heritage, lands, and future.

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## Curriculum Standards

### English Language Arts:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2 Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3 Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.



- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

#### History Social Science:

- HSS-4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods
  - HSS-4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.
  - HSS-4.4 Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s.
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## Teacher Directions

### *Day One*

(45 minutes)

1. Introduce purpose of lesson (slides 1-4)
2. Introduce Pomo land and people (slides 5-6).
  - a. While viewing the slides, read selections from the “Pomo People handout” to the students or have them read it themselves.
3. Share the story of Qa’-Soy to the classroom (slide 7-8)
  - a. Pass out the story handout and read together.
  - b. Have the students reflect on the topic.
  - c. Have them identify something similar that was shared by them or have them write a paragraph about it.

### *Day Two*

(30-45 minutes)

1. Discuss the topics the students wrote about, in pairs or with the whole class. (Slide 9)
  - a. How does this story relate to older generations?
  - b. Family Tree Exercise-students pair up and work on it together. (handout)
  - c. Students pick a coloring page to color as they continue to think about people in their life with whom they have shared important moments and/or have learned something. (3 coloring page handouts)



## Day Three

(30-45 minutes)

1. Introduce assignment to formally interview an elder or family member. (slides 10-11)
  - a. Review potential questions
  - b. Brainstorm methods of having successful interviews (students take notes in notebook).
    - i. Picking (Who is appropriate? Who else?)
    - ii. Preparation (How to reach out and plan logistics)
    - iii. Behavior (How to listen)
    - iv. Tools (How to record)
    - v. Reciprocity (How to thank elder for their time)
2. If time, students can color another coloring sheet while watching Native youth videos linked in “Additional Resources.”

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## Scaffolding

English language learners may benefit from the following strategies:

Emerging: In slide 4, take extra time to discuss terms and allow students to discuss them further with a partner, if needed. After reading the story of Q’a-Soy, discuss the events and terms with a reading partner.

Expanding: Assist student begin their writing with relevant prompts (The girl’s tribe is called\_\_\_\_\_Her father teaches her to find \_\_\_\_\_This is important to learn because\_\_\_\_\_.)

Bridging: After a student has further discussion with an elder in their community, they connect the concepts learned in a more detailed paragraph. This extended writing would meet additional standards of ELA W 5.2 and 5.3

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## Additional Resources for Teachers

- “We Are Still Here” video (15 minutes) could be used to introduce students to Native cultures: [link to video](#)
- This 9 minute video on the cultural practice of weaving could be shown to students in order to explore the relationships weavers have with plants and their community members: [link to video](#)
- Recommended Resources:

We Are the Land: A history of Native California by Damon B. Akins and William J. Bauer Jr.  
University of CA Press.



Pomo Indians of California and Their Neighbors by Vinson Brown.

Image of America: The Pomo of Lake County by K.C. Patrick Arcadia Publishing.

Grace Hudson, Artist of the Pomo Indians: A Biography, By Lucienne Lanson and Patricia Tetzlaff, Grace Hudson Museum.

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## References

*We Are the Land: A history of Native California* by Damon B. Akins and William J. Bauer Jr.  
University of CA Press

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## California Native American Studies Model Curriculum

The California Native American Studies Model Curriculum (NASMC) will support the design and development of open-source lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist California K-12 educators in teaching about California Native American Studies. Per AB 167, the NASMC is defined as lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist educators in teaching about Native American Studies. The traditional cultural knowledge within lessons, including Native language, art, media and stories, are owned by the respective Tribal nations, Native knowledge keepers, artists, producers and authors of the curriculum as indicated in each lesson.

