

## #LandBack and Land Acknowledgements/ Slide Script

Wiyot; Round Valley

History; Cultural Strengths; Law/Government; Relationship to Place

Grade 9-12

11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

RH.11–12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Slide 1	<p><i>Note to teachers: It is important if you would like to teach this lesson that you have some background in how to create your own land acknowledgement. This will help to guide students in creating their own land acknowledgement and demonstrate how you are engaging with the process as well.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Watch “What good is a land acknowledgement” <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WgxfugOtAY&amp;t=3320s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WgxfugOtAY&amp;t=3320s</a></li></ul>
Slide 2	<p><b>In today’s lesson, we will co-learn to:</b></p> <p>Review each point with students so they understand the lesson.</p>
Slide 3	<p><b>In today's lesson, we will build understanding to answer the following questions:</b></p> <p>Review each point with students.</p>
Slide 4	<p><b>In today’s lesson, we will learn more about the following terms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land Acknowledgement</li><li>• Land Dispossession</li><li>• 18 Unratified Treaties of California</li><li>• Traditional Ecological Knowledge</li><li>• Land Return/ #LandBack</li></ul>
Slide 5	<p><b>What is a land acknowledgement?</b></p> <p>Guide students through a short discussion. In the first section ask students to raise their hand after each statement. After each bullet point you may want to ask if any students want to share about their experience. For instance, after “I know what a land acknowledgement</p>

	<p>is,” you may want to ask what they think it is or what they can tell others about a land acknowledgement to explain more.</p> <p>After that open up a discussion around the term “land acknowledgement.” If your class is open to discussion, encourage them to participate. If it works better to group them together to discuss practice a pair/share activity and have them discuss in small groups and then share with the larger class.</p>
Slide 6	<p><b>Whose land are you on?</b></p> <p>This is a chance for students to look up and engage with who’s land they are on.</p> <p>Teachers can either bring up the website via a classroom computer and search for things as a class (usually by zip code or city/location) to see what the map says.</p> <p>Students can also be guided to use their phones and see how the texting feature works.</p>
Slide 7	<p><b>WATCH: #HonorNativeLand (4:06)</b></p> <p>This short 4 minute video presents Indigenous voices talking about the role of Land Acknowledgements and the importance of hearing them recited.</p>
Slide 8	<p><b>REFLECT:</b></p> <p>After the video, spend some time with the class discussing the video. Provide time for the students to discuss and extend on what they now understand about land acknowledgements.</p>
Slide 9	<p><b>FOR TEACHERS:</b></p> <p><b>(insert your own land acknowledgement)</b></p> <p>Best practices would include here an example from the teacher/instructor of a land acknowledgement that speaks to the region/area where you are teaching and learning from. This includes details as per the lesson plan and per the video resource included. Also be sure to include a course of action. You will want to write and insert your own land acknowledgement here to demonstrate for students what they will be embarking on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch “What good is a land acknowledgement”  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WgxfugOtAY&amp;t=3320s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WgxfugOtAY&amp;t=3320s</a></li> </ul>
Slide 10	<p><b>Let’s Read</b></p>

	<p>Note to teachers: This slide is written from the perspective of being located in far Northern California (Humboldt County). It can be used as an example for the classroom but best practices would be for each teacher/instructor to write their own land acknowledgement which they include in this slide show.</p> <p>After reviewing and reading through this slide you may want to guide students through a short discussion about what they noticed about the land acknowledgement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn from this land acknowledgement?</li> <li>• What important information did it provide?</li> </ul>
Slide 11	<p><b>Parts of a land acknowledgement:</b></p> <p>This slide breaks down each part of the land acknowledgement and considerations that were made when creating the acknowledgement so that it engages in best practices.</p> <p>It will be helpful to review these parts with the students and highlight to them that they will be utilizing this same type of information to create their own land acknowledgement.</p>
<b>OPTIONAL READING/LISTENING ARTICLE</b>	
Slide 12	<p><b>LISTEN/READ</b></p> <p>This article is a chance to engage with various Indigenous peoples to understand the pros and cons of a land acknowledgement.</p> <p>There may not be enough time to read through/discuss this article so this is an optional resource that can be used to help further understand the role of land acknowledgements.</p> <p>Students can either be assigned this article as homework in preparation for the lesson (or the article can be reviewed before the lesson so that the discussion is part of this lecture) or the class can read through the article together.</p> <p>There is also an option to listen to the article via the “Five Minute Listen” that is on the site. This narrated version of the story can be played in class. It will be helpful to remind students to listen to the story for the “pros/cons” of land acknowledgements.</p>
Slide 13	<b>DISCUSS/REFLECT</b>

	<p>Spend some time with the class</p> <p>The goal is to help students understand what a land acknowledgement is, how people use them, and some of the critiques and important ways that students can create better land acknowledgements.</p>
Slide 14	<p><b>Map of Land Dispossession:</b></p> <p>This map shows the historical arc of land land dispossession for Native peoples in the United States.</p> <p>Note for students: notice that while Indigenous peoples were originally the owners of all of the US over time their land holdings were reduced to very small tracts of land. Native American historians have noted that “Everything in US history comes down to land. Who owns it. Who manages it. Who regulates it.” While many people might think of this as “expansion” or “exploration,” the terminology of Native American Studies calls his “land dispossession.”</p>
Slide 15	<p><b>Terminology: “Land Dispossession”</b></p> <p>Review each bullet point with students.</p> <p>Note for students: We should remember that while Native American people were negotiating agreements with the United States (treaties) they were primarily concerned with their ongoing land stewardship. Native peoples were guaranteed certain lands through these treaties and they were also guaranteed that the US would support Native American rights to govern themselves and their lands. However, in the history of the US every single treaty that the US has made with tribes has been broken. Most of this was in the name of claiming and taking more land. There have been several Supreme Court cases that have determined that the US illegally took land from Native peoples. This is not something that you generally learn about in history books.</p>
Slide 16	<p><b>Map of California Land Dispossession</b></p> <p>These maps show land dispossession in the context of California. Note that while California Indian tribes were throughout California (on the first map are the aboriginal territories of California Native peoples). Indigenous California is thought to have had the densest pre-colonial population north of Mexico. There are no “blank spaces” or “wilderness” on this map. Every place is part of some tribal peoples' homelands and as M. Kat Andersen says, we know that California Indians were on all parts of the land and there was no “wilderness” because “every place was named.” There were names for all of the mountains, rivers, village</p>

	<p>areas, trails etc.</p> <p>The second map shows what California Indian lands look like today. Notice that they are very small, sometimes tiny dots on the map. Post-contact California was a violent, destructive place for Indigenous peoples. Scholar Sherburne Cook estimates that between 1770-1900 close to 90 percent of the California Indian population was decimated. While the methods of attempted genocide differed throughout the state, violence perpetuated against California Indians was the constant under Spanish, Mexican and then American conquest. Systemic racism was the foundation of the settler colonial regimes that invaded early California. Building wealth by whatever means necessary is foundational to how the territory of "California" was founded, first for Spanish conquistadors, then for the Spanish crown and Catholic church, followed by the Mexican ranchers and continuing with settlers during the Gold Rush and the founding of the State of California. The extermination methods employed throughout California's history ranged from state sanctioned assault, massacres, murders and kidnapping to legislative and assimilative policies, illegal land seizure and enslavement of California Indians. Policies and practices of extermination were part of the foundation of different nation state methods for securing rights to land and resources.</p> <p>The long history of dispossession and displacement of Native peoples that built the State of California is a reminder that organizations, peoples, counties, and local governments and institutions are beneficiaries of the massacres, killings, and removal of Native peoples by continuing to occupy stolen Indigenous lands and build secured intergenerational wealth through Indigenous land dispossession.</p>
Slide 17	<p><b>The California Mission System &amp; Land Dispossession</b></p> <p>Likely many of the students have already learned something about the California Mission system. This is a chance to reframe the understanding of the mission system as also being an opportunity to claim and steal Native American lands. (Claim for the Catholic Church and Spanish Crown).</p> <p>It may be helpful to have students recall what they remember learning about the mission system in California and what message they internalized about why it was important to learn about the Mission system.</p> <p>Note that land dispossession is not peaceful or fair and generally has involved a lot of violence (including mass killings, removals, enslavement, kidnappings, and genocide). This is one example of</p>

	<p>reframing the mission system to understand the level of violence that was inflicted upon California Indian people, ultimately to kill, remove, and enslave them. It was also to erase their claims to land and land rights.</p> <p>A few quick facts in case students do not recall much about the mission system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were twenty-one missions founded from 1769-1834 along the “El Camino Real.”</li> <li>• There was also active and passive resistance exercised by Native people throughout the Mission period against the violence and abuse perpetrated by the Spanish missionaries.</li> <li>• It was well documented that Native peoples imprisoned in the missions would organize resistance movements that included slowing-down or work stoppage, running away from the missions, and also continuing to practice spiritual, cultural and language traditions even though this was outlawed by Spanish missionaries. There were also a number of instances where California Indian people led uprisings against the mission system.</li> </ul>
Slide 18	<p><b>Konkow Trail of Tears</b></p> <p>This is another example of land dispossession and removal in California which demonstrates the violence that was enacted on California Native peoples in order to claim their lands.</p> <p>Students may recall hearing or learning about the “Trail of Tears” which usually refers to the removal of the Cherokee from Georgia to Oklahoma but it is important to point out that “trail of tears” type events happened throughout the United States in the name of stealing lands from Native peoples.</p>
Slide 19	<p>In Evelene Mota’s story, her people are rounded up in the middle of the night by soldiers and were forced to walk many miles. When they got to the ocean the soldiers forced them into the water over a cliff. Two younger girls swam back into a bay and onto shore. One was her great-grandmother. The land that the Maidu and other Native peoples of the central valley were forced out of (and subsequently run into the ocean) would become one of the State of California’s most “fertile” and “lush” landscapes - a haven for agriculture with thousands upon thousands of acres of crops, many of which are grown year round. It was not just the illegal movement of Indian people off their land, it was the subsequent creation of a historical archive that “ownership” of this land can at the earliest be traced back to a deed written in the mid to</p>

	late 1800s thereby ignoring the California Indian genocide, and the deliberate stealing of the land from California Indian peoples.
Slide 20	<p>In the United States and Canada tribes have developed a relationship based in part on treaties signed – nation to nation – between governments. These treaties are binding documents intended to protect and honor agreements made between nations at first contact, negotiated by both parties in order to demonstrate and pay respect to the nation status of Indian people.</p> <p>In 1851 the Federal Government sent agents to California to negotiate treaties with California Indian nations. In total 18 treaties were negotiated and signed by the agents and California Indian tribes. The treaty negotiation process was not taken lightly by California Indian tribal peoples. There was plenty of precedence for negotiating use of lands in tribal territories and amongst tribes throughout the long history of tribal peoples in California. Tribes made considerations regarding continued use of aboriginal territories, and rights to hunting, fishing and gathering spots. After signing the treaties many tribes began to move onto the agreed upon lands, however, once the treaties reached Congress, Congress refused to ratify the treaties and instead placed them under an injunction of secrecy. Tribes were not told of this development. They were displaced from their homelands and were no longer guaranteed the rights that were negotiated as part of the treaties. As a result, many had to hastily renegotiate terms for their land, others were displaced, removed and remained without recognition as tribal groups, there were even tribes who had to fight wars against the Federal Government who were trying to encroach upon their lands. There are still tribes in California who remain “unrecognized” by the Federal Government though they did sign one of the 18 unratified treaties. Many of these unrecognized tribes have relatives and representatives whose original signatures are on these treaties, though because they remain “unratified” the tribes remain unrecognized.</p>
Slide 21	It is estimated that the land guaranteed in these treaties would have amounted to 7,488,000 acres or 7.5% of the state
Slide 22	<p><b>California Indian Tribal Lands Today:</b></p> <p>Review with students what this means for California Indians today and the inequitable land statistics that we see for California Native tribes.</p>
Slide 23	<p><b>National Tribal Lands:</b></p> <p>Review where national tribal lands stand today. Recall the previous map</p>

	<p>of how the entirety of the US was Native lands and the way that dispossession pushed Natives out of their territories. Consider how this debunks that Native peoples have “a lot” of land.</p> <p>You may want to note: The Washington Post reports that 59.9% of land is held by private landowners while 28.7% is owned by the Federal Government; 8.6% by State governments; .3% by County and local governments; and only 2.5% is owned by tribal authorities. Contrast this with inequitable land ownership statistics like 2021 data from the Land Report 100 and the Madison Trust Company who found that two of the largest land-owning families in California/Oregon/Washington are the Emmerson Family (approximately 2.3 million acres) and the Reed Family (approximately 2.1 million acres). Combined these two families own more than 8X the land of all California Indian tribes.<sup>1</sup> The Emmerson Family company is Sierra Pacific Industries and is “the largest private lumber production firm in the United States.</p>
Slide 24	<p><b>Indigenous Peoples &amp; Biodiversity:</b></p> <p>Read the statistics on this slide and ask students to reflect on what information they gain from it. What is the important point that the slide is trying to make? What does this add to the understanding of Indigenous land management practices and the benefits of land return to Indigenous peoples?</p>
Slide 25	<p><b>California Before &amp; After Map:</b></p> <p>This map was created by Mark Clark, a geographer to demonstrate how California would have looked in 1851, just before the true onset of colonization during the gold rush and establishment of the state.</p> <p>Guide students to discuss the differences that they see between California before and after. What impacts can they see on the land itself because of colonial management and taking of the lands. Consider what the land was like before - students should note that there should be a very large lake in the central/southern area of California.</p> <p>As noted by PBSSoCal: ...before California's Central Valley became an agricultural breadbasket, annual snowmelt from the Sierra Nevada poured into its basin, forming a vast complex of wetlands and a series of sprawling inland seas one might have described as California's Great</p>

<sup>1</sup>Madison Trust Company. “Who Owns the Most Land in the United States?” Choose the Best Self-Directed IRA Company and Get Control of Your Retirement Investments, 22 Dec. 2022, <https://www.madisontrust.com/information-center/who-owns-most-land/>.



	<p>Lakes. Of these, none was greater than Lake Tulare, the country's largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi. By the 1880s, however, dams, stream diversions, and reclamation projects had transformed Lake Tulare into a mirage. ...The Bay Area and Los Angeles metropolitan regions, urban gray today, appear as shades of green in the 1851 image. On the east side of the Sierra Nevada, Owens Lake, desiccated today, is filled with water. No difference shocks as much, however, as in the Central Valley, where today rectangular farm fields occupy the once-sodden domain of elk and geese and antelope.</p> <p><a href="https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/lost-la/six-strange-maps-of-california">https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/lost-la/six-strange-maps-of-california</a></p>
Slide 26	<p><b>Benefits of Indigenous Land Management:</b></p> <p>Review the quotes that are included and discuss how California state government and other government agencies have started to recognize Indigenous ownership, land return, and Indigenous land management as key to the future of building climate resilience and addressing issues of climate change.</p>
Slide 27	<p><b>Land Dispossession Case Study #2: Wiyot Tribe &amp; Tuluwat Island</b></p> <p>This case study features the Wiyot Tribe located in far Northern California in Humboldt County.</p>
Slide 28	<p><b>Land Dispossession: Wiyot Tribe &amp; Tuluwat Island</b></p> <p>On December 4th, 2019 just about 159 years after the Indian Island Massacre, the Eureka City Council voted to return the last of the city-owned portion of the island - about 200 acres - to the Tribe. The transfer documents were officially signed on October 21, 2019, and hundreds of people came to experience the ceremonial return of the land.</p>
Slide 29	<p><b>Guarding Ancestral Ground with the Wiyot Video</b></p> <p>This entirety of this video discusses the Wiyot Tribe and their fight to protect a sacred site from the building of an industrial wind farm. However, the section of the video selected here for exploring this case study discusses the return of “Tuluwat” island.</p> <p>While the video should automatically start with a click to show the correct clip please note the time to begin and end the video is (9:34 - 17:17).</p>
Slide 30	<p><b>REFLECT:</b></p>

	<p>Guide students through a short discussion about the video and ask them to reflect on the questions on the slide.</p> <p>Consider some key points from the video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wiyot peoples had their sacred land/island stolen as a result of a massacre. They did not abandon or “give up” the land.</li> <li>• Wiyot peoples lobbied and fought for the return of the sacred island for over two decades. This is likely the first example of a city returning land to a tribe.</li> <li>• The Wiyot tribe was also responsible for cleaning up the island because of how it was mistreated while under control of settler occupiers. The Wiyot were dedicated to restoring the land not just for the health of the people that wanted to use it but also for the animals, waters, sea life, plants etc.</li> <li>• Think about what this example of land return looked like. It was a joyous occasion. And the return of the land not only resulted in a step toward healing historical wrongs, but also allowed the tribe to restore the land for the betterment of all peoples.</li> </ul>
Slide 31	<p><b>Assignment: Writing a Land Acknowledgement</b></p> <p>Review this slide with students. This will help prepare them to complete the handout. Students can work individually to complete each section of the handout or can be divided into groups of 2-3 to work together to find the information.</p> <p>Finding this information will likely require additional research via a computer. Either the handout can be assigned as a homework assignment or students will need access to a computer or other way to google and look up additional information.</p> <p>Sometimes it will not be possible to find out the Indigenous word for the local region, city, or town. Encourage students who cannot find this information to try and find other examples of Indigenous language words (perhaps for the people, or for other landmarks).</p>
Slide 32	<p><b>Links to Additional Resources</b></p> <p>These links are provided for additional options to help explore land acknowledgements; land dispossession and the tribes featured in the lesson plan.</p> <p>Teachers are encouraged to explore these resources before teaching the lesson plan.</p>