

CALIFORNIA Native American Studies MODEL CURRICULUM

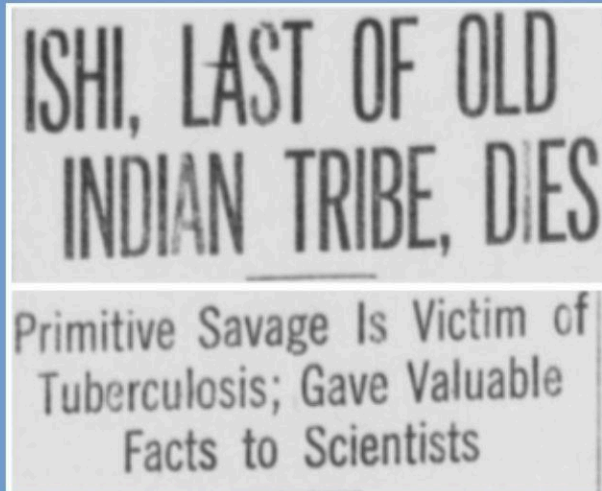
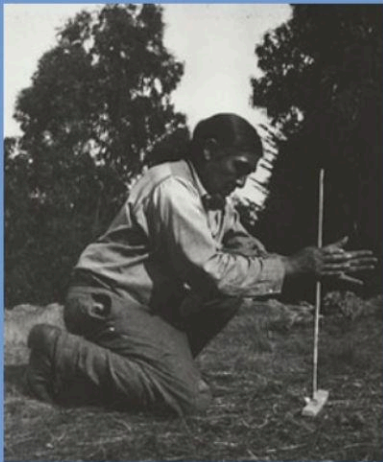


Photo Courtesy of the University of California Regents and the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology



NASMC
Native American
Studies
Model Curriculum

Ishi: A Story of Dignity, Hope, and Courage Unit

Grade Level: 4th Grade

Subjects: Social Studies, English Language Arts

Acknowledgment: Resources from this unit and lesson plans come from California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center.

Materials Needed:

- Computers for each student
- Student Learning Worksheets
- Computer with internet access and projector
- Whiteboard and markers
- Chart paper and markers
- Notebooks or journals
- Art supplies

Curriculum Themes: (check all that apply)

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

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.

Unit Objectives:

- Analyze cultural values and worldviews by exploring Ishi's life story and his role as a cultural bridge between the Yahi people and settler society.
- Examine the relationship between geography, environment, and survival, understanding how the Yahi adapted to and thrived in their ancestral lands.
- Identify and critique stereotypes and misrepresentations of Ishi in media, literature, and public memory, distinguishing between myth and historical reality.
- Explore Yahi cultural practices, including language, toolmaking, and spiritual traditions, with an emphasis on reciprocity and the preservation of Indigenous knowledge.
- Evaluate Ishi's legacy, including the ethical questions surrounding repatriation, cultural preservation, and institutional responsibility.
- Understand the concept of cultural erasure, using Ishi's life as a case study to explore how colonization impacted Native identity, community, and continuity.
- Reflect on Indigenous leadership, both historical and contemporary, and consider Ishi's quiet resilience and dignity as forms of leadership.
- Assess the complexities of Ishi's life in San Francisco, including his adaptation to urban life and the contradictions he faced in a settler-dominated world.
- Analyze the treatment of Ishi after death, debating the tension between scientific curiosity and cultural respect, and discussing ethical research practices.
- Demonstrate empathy, critical thinking, and respect through discussion, research, and creative expression, applying insights from Ishi's life to broader discussions about Indigenous history, representation, and justice.



NASMC
Native American
Studies
Model Curriculum

Background for Educators

Essential Understandings of California Indian History and Culture

- ☐ Essential Understanding 1: Great Diversity Among Tribes ([EU1 Video](#)) https://bit.ly/NASMC_EU1
- ☒ Essential Understanding 2: Diversity Among Identity ([EU2 Video](#)) https://bit.ly/NASMC_EU2
- ☒ Essential Understanding 3: Native Traditional Beliefs ([EU3 Video](#)) https://bit.ly/NASMC_EU3
- ☒ Essential Understanding 4: Policies that Affected Tribes ([EU4 Video](#)) https://bit.ly/NASMC_EU4
- ☒ Essential Understanding 5: Reservations ([EU5 Video](#)) https://bit.ly/NASMC_EU5
- ☒ Essential Understanding 6: History from a California Indian Perspective ([EU6 Video](#)) https://bit.ly/NASMC_EU6
- ☐ Essential Understanding 7: Tribes Have Sovereign Powers ([EU7 Video](#)) https://bit.ly/NASMC_EU7

Overview

This unit explores the life and legacy of Ishi, the last known member of the Yahi people, as a gateway to understanding Indigenous history, culture, and resilience. Through his story, students investigate the cultural values, survival strategies, and spiritual practices of the Yahi, while critically examining how Ishi has been represented and sometimes misrepresented in history and media. The unit also addresses broader themes of cultural erasure, Indigenous leadership, and the ethical considerations surrounding Ishi's experiences both in life and after death. By engaging with these topics, students develop empathy and a nuanced appreciation of Indigenous identities, the impact of colonization, and the ongoing efforts toward cultural preservation, repatriation, and justice.

Core Themes:

- History and sovereignty
- Cultural strengths and Indigenous knowledge systems
- Culturally Relevant Terminology
- Tribal Nations and Political Identity

Students Will:

- Explore the life of Ishi to understand Yahi cultural values, history, and survival practices.
- Analyze how geography and environment shaped the Yahi way of life.
- Identify and critique common stereotypes and misrepresentations of Ishi in media and historical accounts.
- Examine Yahi cultural practices, including language, toolmaking, and ceremonial traditions, with an emphasis on reciprocity.
- Reflect on the legacy of Ishi, including ethical issues surrounding repatriation and cultural preservation.
- Understand the concept of cultural erasure and its impact on Indigenous communities using Ishi's story as a case study.
- Investigate the forms of Indigenous leadership demonstrated by Ishi and others.
- Assess the challenges Ishi faced living in San Francisco and the broader implications of Indigenous survival in settler societies.
- Evaluate the treatment of Ishi after death, discussing the balance between scientific inquiry and cultural respect.

Lesson Highlights:

Lesson 1: Exploring Cultural Values Through Ishi's Story

- Students will explore Ishi's life story to understand Yahi cultural values and worldviews.
- Students will discuss how individual experiences reflect broader Indigenous histories and traditions.

Lesson 2: Geography and Survival of the Yahi

- Students will examine how the geography and environment influenced the survival strategies of the Yahi people
- Students will explain the relationship between place and cultural practices in Indigenous communities.

Lesson 3: Stereotypes and Misrepresentation of Ishi

- Students will identify common stereotypes about Ishi and evaluate their impact on public perceptions.
- Students will differentiate between historical facts and myths in representations of Ishi.

Lesson 4: Cultural Practices and Reciprocity

- Students will explore the concept of reciprocity.
- Students will explain how cultural traditions sustain community and identity.

Lesson 5: Ishi's Legacy and Repatriation

- Students will evaluate the ethical considerations surrounding the repatriation of Indigenous remains and artifacts.
- Students will assess Ishi's legacy in the context of cultural preservation and Indigenous rights.

Lesson 6: Understanding Cultural Erasure through the Life of Ishi

- Students will analyze how colonization contributed to cultural erasure experienced by Ishi and his people.
- Students will reflect on the ongoing effects of cultural loss on Native communities today.

Lesson 7: Leadership

- Students will identify forms of Indigenous leadership demonstrated by Ishi and other Native figures.
- Students will discuss the qualities and challenges of leadership in Indigenous contexts.

Lesson 8: Cultural Practices and Reciprocity

- Students will further examine Yahi cultural practices and their role in maintaining community ties.
- Students will describe how reciprocity is expressed in social and spiritual life.

Lesson 9: Phoenix Rising: Ishi's Experiences in San Francisco

- Students will analyze Ishi's adaptation to urban life and the cultural challenges he faced.
- Students will consider the complexities of Indigenous identity in settler society.

Lesson 10: Between Science and Sentiment: Ishi's Treatment in Death

- Students will debate the ethical tensions between scientific study and cultural respect in the treatment of Ishi's remains.
- Students will explore the impact of these tensions on Indigenous communities.

Lesson 11: Ishi and the Stereotype of the "Last" Yahi

- Students will explore how this stereotype shapes public understanding of Native survival and resilience.

Lesson 12: Unit Reflection Questions

- Students will have the opportunity to reflect and discuss what they have learned throughout the unit.

Pedagogical Approach:

Each lesson follows a 5E learning model—Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate—and includes:

- Video-based storytelling from Native voices
- Hands-on activities and group projects
- Scaffolded strategies for differentiation
- Formative and summative assessments
- Emphasis on respect, reciprocity, and reverence in learning



Ishi: A Story of Dignity, Hope, and Courage Unit

Lesson 2: Geography and Survival of the Yahai

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject: Social Studies

Duration: 60 minutes

Acknowledgment: Resources from this unit and lesson plans come from California Indian Museum and Cultural Center.

Overview:

Students will analyze the geography of the Yahai homeland and understand how the Yahai people adapted to their environment to survive. They will compare historical resource use with modern practices, fostering connections between past and present.

Learning Objectives:

- To teach students how physical geography and climate influenced the survival strategies of the Yahai people.
 - To develop an understanding of how indigenous communities adapted to their natural environments for sustenance, tools, and shelter.
 - To foster analytical thinking by comparing historical and modern resource use.
 - To support students to learn and reflect on historical and cultural education about Ishi and the Yahai people.
 - To provide students with a deeper appreciation for the life and legacy of Ishi and the broader experiences of Native Californians.
-

Materials:

- Ishi: A Story of Dignity, Hope, and Courage Student Readings
- Ishi: A Story of Dignity, Hope, and Courage Student Worksheets
- Laptop or Devices to view Ishi videos
- Map of Butte County and surrounding areas
- Images of the Yahai homeland (rivers, forests, Deer Creek)
- T-chart template (printed or digital)
- Art supplies for drawing (colored pencils, markers, paper)
- Worksheet for reflection and drawing activity

CA Indian Museum and Cultural Center Resources and Videos to support teaching this lesson

Ishi Exhibition Tour

<https://cimcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Ishi-Exhibition-Tour.pdf>

Ishi Education Lesson Plan Resources and Videos

<https://cimcc.org/exhibits/ishi-education/>

Ishi Exhibit Guide

<https://cimcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Ishi-Exhibit-Guide.pdf>

Ishi Exhibit Photos

<https://cimcc.org/exhibits/ishi-gallery/>



NASMC
Native American
Studies
Model Curriculum

Curriculum Themes: (check all that apply)

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

Instructional Standards:

History-Social Science Content Standard 4.1. Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define California's places and regions. Identify how geography, including rivers, valleys, and forests, affected the settlement and survival of indigenous communities like the Yahi.

History-Social Science Content Standard 4.2. Students describe how California Indian nations depended on, adapted to, and modified the physical environment for survival.

Lesson Plan

Engage

Introduction to Geography (5 minutes):

- Display a map of Butte County and surrounding areas.
- Ask:
 - "What features do you notice on this map? (E.g., rivers, mountains, valleys)"
 - "How might these geographic features help people survive?"
- Write student responses on the board (e.g., rivers provide water, forests offer food and materials).

Set the Context (5 minutes):

- Explain that the Yahi lived in this area for thousands of years and depended on the natural environment for survival.
- Show the map again and point out key features of the Yahi homeland, such as Deer Creek, forests, and nearby mountains.

Explore (15 minutes)

Analyzing Images (10 minutes):

- Display or distribute images of the Yahi homeland, such as rivers, forests, and canyon ledges.
- Ask guiding questions:
 - "What resources do you think this environment provides?"
 - "How might these features be used for food, tools, or shelter?"
- Encourage students to share their observations in small groups and record their ideas.

Group Sharing (5 minutes):

- Bring the class together and list their observations on the board.
- Highlight how these resources supported the Yahi's daily life.

Explain (10 minutes)

Discussion on Resource Use (5 minutes):

- Explain how the Yahi used their environment for survival:
 - **Food:** Fish from rivers, acorns from oak trees, game from forests.



- **Tools:** Stone tools, fire drills from wood, fish hooks from bone.
- **Shelter:** Huts made from natural materials like wood and bark.
- Ask: "Why do you think the Yahi were so skilled at using what was available?"

Introduce Adaptation (5 minutes):

- Define adaptation: "Making changes or using resources to survive in a specific environment."
- Provide examples of Yahi adaptations:
 - Storing acorns for food during winter.
 - Building shelters in hidden areas to avoid settlers.
- Compare this to how people adapt to their environments today (e.g., using air conditioning in hot climates).

Elaborate (15 minutes)

T-Chart Activity (10 minutes):

- Provide a T-chart template with two columns: "Yahi Resource Use" and "Modern Resource Use."
- Have students fill in examples for each:
 - Example: "Yahi used rivers for fishing" vs. "Modern Californians use rivers for water supply and recreation."
- Discuss findings as a class, highlighting how resource use has changed over time.

Class Discussion (5 minutes):

- Ask:
 - "What are the similarities between how the Yahi and modern Californians use natural resources?"
 - "What are the differences?"

Evaluate (10 minutes)

Creative Reflection:

- Provide students with a worksheet for the following task:
 - **Drawing Option:** Draw a picture showing how the Yahi used one natural resource effectively (e.g., fishing in rivers or collecting acorns).
 - **Writing Option:** Write a short explanation describing how the Yahi utilized a specific resource and why it was important for their survival.

Sharing and Feedback:

- Have students share their work with the class or in small groups.
- Provide feedback that highlights the connection between their work and the Yahi's resourcefulness.

Scaffolding Strategies

For Struggling Students:

Provide labeled images of resources and pre-filled examples for the T-chart.

Use sentence starters for writing tasks (e.g., "The Yahi used rivers to _____. This was important because _____.").

For Advanced Students:

Challenge them to research and include specific examples of tools or food preparation methods used by the Yahi.

Encourage them to propose modern sustainable practices inspired by the Yahi's resource use.



Assessment

- Participation in discussions and group activities.
 - Completion of the T-chart with relevant examples.
 - Quality of the drawing or written explanation, showing understanding of the Yahi's use of natural resources and adaptation to their environment.
-

Extension Activity:

Yahi Resource Map:

Students create a detailed map showing how the Yahi used natural resources in their environment.

- Include labels for rivers, forests, and other geographic features.
- Add symbols or drawings to indicate how these resources were used for food, tools, and shelter.



Lesson 2: Geography and Survival of the Yahi
Student Worksheet: Geography and Adaptation

Matching Activity: Match each natural feature to how the Yahi used it:

- Rivers →

- Forests →

- Grizzly Bear's Hiding Place →

Reflection Questions:

Why did the Yahi choose to live near Deer Creek?

How did the Yahi adapt to their environment for food, tools, and shelter?