


Chaco Canyon and Pueblo Culture (Grades 2-12)

Main Lesson Slides

The image shows a vast, arid landscape under a clear blue sky. In the foreground and middle ground, there are extensive ruins of ancient stone buildings, likely made of adobe or mud-brick. The structures are multi-story and feature small, rectangular windows. Some walls are still standing, while others are in various stages of collapse. The ruins are situated at the base of a massive, layered rock cliff that rises steeply in the background. The cliff face shows signs of weathering and erosion, with some darker patches that could be ancient art or natural rock formations. The ground is dry and dusty, with a few small, scrubby plants scattered throughout. The overall scene conveys a sense of historical significance and the passage of time in a harsh, desert environment.

**Group 3:
A Picture Tells
a Thousand
Words**



I used to think _____,
but now I think _____

Essential Question

How does our understanding of the past change as we collect or introduce more information?



Note on Spanish

There wasn't sufficient time to translate every piece of this lesson, but the cover page and lesson on Chaco cylinder jars are available in both English and Spanish. Ideally, every piece of this project would be available in both English and Spanish. This reflects the reality that many young learners in this country are best served by having resources available in Spanish. These students are often marginalized in educational spaces, and creating resources in Spanish for students and educators is one way to address inequality that exists in educational spaces. Spanish, while one of the most commonly spoken languages in the United States, is not the only language other than English that students need educational resources in. Ideally, these resources would be available in a variety of widely spoken languages. I would also like to acknowledge that the Spanish language, like English, is a force of colonization for many Indigenous people in what is now the United States. These lessons aim to center and elevate Indigenous perspectives, and there not being available in Indigenous languages is a shortcoming that we recognize.

Overview of Lesson Plans

- Introduction to Migration of Ancestral Pueblo in the Southwest (4th-5th)
- Petroglyph Pictographs (for students grades 2-8)
 - Link to slides
- Daily Life and Technology in Chaco Canyon (for students grades 9-12)
- Identity and Becoming: Towards "A More Perfect Union" (American Gov/Civics (9-12))
- Chaco Cylinder Jars (for students grades 6-12) (bilingual Spanish/English)



Introduction Lesson for Elementary Students (4th-5th)

How does our understanding of identity
and place inform what we can learn about
migration?



Enduring Understandings

- People depend on and are influenced by their physical environment and adapt to it in different ways.
- Culture is a system of beliefs shared by a group impacting all aspects of daily life.
- People of all cultures use the natural resources available to themselves. People migrate to find suitable resources for sustainability.
- Identity is formed by your family and environment.
- People migrate for a variety of reasons (environmental, economic, political, etc.) Migration may take the form of community migration and independent migration.
- Migration is an act of survival for a community and family.



Components

1. Materials/Resources
2. Learning Principles
3. Assessment
4. Vocabulary
5. Scaffolding
6. Cross-curricular



LEARN Format

1. Link
2. Engage
3. Activity
4. Reflect
5. Next Steps



Rock Art

Petroglyphs - Pictographs - Pottery imagery

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-C7NKQxUhdjH3a1przDTow7e2cP9Z-DGb1li4KMyZ54/edit>



Cosa Range petroglyph with atlatl and Bighorn sheep

Photo courtesy Matrago Museum



Identity and Becoming: Towards “A More Perfect Union” American Govt/Civics (9-12)

Daily Life and Technology in Chaco Canyon

- **Essential Question:** How does our understanding of the past change as we collect or introduce more information?
- **Content Objective:** SWBAT understand the basics of daily life of the people of Chaco Canyon by analyzing archeological evidence and drawing conclusions and comparing these observations to the accounts of modern Pueblo people

Day 1:

- Students will analyze various artifacts by going to stations relating to
 - Kivas
 - Trade
 - Daily life
 - Subsistence
 - Pottery

Day 2

- Students will analyze native perspectives in a gallery walk to expand on their knowledge analyzing archaeological artifacts. Topics include:
 - Secrecy and knowledge
 - Migrations
 - Water
 - Corn
 - Language
 - Kivas (Hopi Origin story)
 - Oral Traditions

Chaco Cylinder Jars (Meera)

In the format of a museum program (divorced from any sort of practical considerations)

Topic: Ancestral Pueblo People, visual culture, close looking, variety of sources of information, shifts in understanding, object-based learning

Learning Goals: Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of visual examination of material culture, gain a richer understanding of the stories behind objects

Visual analysis

What do you see? What do you see that makes you say that?

- Describe the shape
- Describe the decorations
- Describe the handles
- Imagine holding this. How would it feel? How might you use it?

Examining visually, as an object divorced from context



Text Analysis

“Some scholars believed that Chaco’s [Chaco Canyon’s] inhabitants, ancestors of the modern Pueblo people of the Southwest, had stretched skins across the cylinders and used them for drums, while others thought they held sacred objects.”

(NYT article)

What do we learn from this passage? Point to the words in the passage that tell you.

Text Analysis

Passage from a NYT article that describes the physical context of the Chaco Jars, background on chocolate and analysis

What do we learn about the (immediate physical) context of these jars?

- MOST are from Chaco Canyon
- Most of those are from ONE ROOM

Tell me what we learn about their use

- Use and reuse
 - Does that tell us something about how the people using them viewed them?
 - That reuse and refiring took work and energy
- Chocolate
 - What does that reveal to us?
 - Trade networks with Mexico -- connection
 - Who was drinking this chocolate? -- possibly elites
 - (also, the chocolate was likely unsweetened, yuck)



Visual Analysis: Compare and Contrast

What are the similarities between the two vessels?

What are the differences?

What stands out to you about the new vessel?

- What do you notice?
- What do you see?
- What do you see that tells you that?

What adjective would you use to describe what you see?

Points to emphasize:

- It's *figural*-- has figures on it
- Shows action-- not abstract



Additional information

This is a modern piece of art made by artist Diego Romero

He is a member of the **Cochiti Pueblo**

- Why is it important that I shared that with you? Have you seen the word Pueblo before?
 - What does “ancestral” mean? What about “ancestor”?

This jar was inspired by the cylinder vessels from Chaco Canyon

“He used brown paint to reference chocolate and incorporated Coyote figures dancing around the jar. Above Coyote’s head we see the night sky. Romero often creates pottery based on the shapes of ancient jars and bowls and incorporates pop-culture elements inspired by ancient pottery designs.”

He created his own cylinder jar. **Is it a copy of the “original”? How so? How not?**

Why might he choose to make his version different?

He is mixing the past and the present

Through art, exploring his own past and identity

Concluding Questions

- **What questions do you still have about the cylinder jar?**
 - Is there anything that we still don't know about the object?
 - e.g. How exactly was it used? Who used it? Did it belong to one person? Was it shared? What did they think about it? In what way did it matter to them?
 - Where might we get that information?
 - We haven't learned EVERYTHING, some things might be unavailable to us
- How was each source similar? How were they different?
- What information did we get from each source?
- How did your understanding of the object in question change over time?
- What one piece of information added the most to your understanding?
- If we just looked at any one of these sources, would our understanding be the same? Why or why not?
- Which source did you find the most helpful? The easiest to understand?

Final Thoughts

There are A LOT of descendants of Ancestral Pueblo People alive today. They might all have different relationships with the past and objects like these. Every one of them could make a different piece of art inspired by the same object that we looked at. By looking at Diego Romero's artwork, we are examining only his point of view, and only one object that he created. There are so many more points of view from Native people out there!

Ask: **Why is it important to consider what modern Pueblo people think about ancient objects like the cylinder jars?**

Also includes...

- Notes for facilitators
- Notes on accessibility and remote learning
- Note for educators on marginalized identity and ethics