

Lesson – The History of Various Cultural Traditions in Washington

[using CD-ROM of Folk & Traditional Artists of Washington]

Learning Objectives

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the length of time that specific cultural communities have been part of the cultural landscape of Washington state.

Lesson Summary

Students use CD-ROM to explore a wide diversity of cultural artistic traditions that can be found in Washington state. In reviewing the traditional artists' bios, photos and samples of their art work found on the CD-ROM, they attempt to determine roughly how long each of these cultural traditions have been practiced in Washington state.

Lesson Outline

1. Individual students or small groups of students (or 2 or 3) are given a copy of the CD-ROM, which they open on computer. [It's also possible to do this activity as a full class if there is a projector available for presenting the CD-ROM on a screen].
2. Students randomly begin reviewing specific artist pages on the CD-ROM which contain artist bios, photos, artistic samples, artistic genres and ethnic heritage. They might also choose to take a more focused approach and review all artists from a specific ethnic background (such as all Finnish-Americans) or from a specific county in the state (such as Whatcom County).
3. They are then asked to make an assessment of approximately how long a certain artist or cultural community may have been living and practicing their art form in Washington state [Note: This will be much easier to pinpoint with some artists than others – based on information provided in the CD-ROM. Students may want to consult other sources to help them in their assessment].
4. Students then repeat step #2
5. After reviewing the CD-ROM pages for at least 6 different artists, students are then asked to create a timeline, starting two hundred years ago up through the present time. They will then place those 6 or more specific artists or cultural communities along that timeline in chronological order of when that artist or culture would have first arrived in Washington state. For example: 200 years ago Pauline Hillaire's ancestors in the Lummi community were already established in Whatcom County, then 150 years ago Linda Burgess Marcellus' forefathers probably settled in Washington state, then 50 years ago the Croatian-American founders of Vela Luka would have arrived, 20 years ago Mexican-American Juan Barco came to Washington state, and less than 5 years ago Ukrainian-American artist Oleksandra Pryveda arrived in Seattle.
6. Students make a written copy of their artist/cultural timeline.

Questions for Discussion:

What are some of the oldest cultural communities in Washington state? And what are some of the newest? What cultural community are you from? How long ago did your ancestors or family settle in Washington? What traditional art forms does your cultural community practice and why?