

American Indians of North Carolina and Tribal Seals

By Anne Haugh from Penderlea School

for the 2021-2022 World View Global Fellows Program

Overview of Lesson: Students will research the archaeological histories and contemporary cultures of the eight state-recognized American Indian tribes in North Carolina to explore how different tribal identities are reflected in the images and symbols used in the tribes' seals. To create a personal connection with what they learn, each student will then design their own seal that represents their personal, family, or community identity.

About the Project: American Indians lived in the area we now call North Carolina for at least 15,000 years. Archaeologists study the remnants of their communities to learn who these people were and how they lived and prospered for thousands of years. The lesson presented below was developed as part of the 2021-2022 UNC World View Fellows Program, [Exploring Indigenous Cultures: Ancient North Carolinians, Past and Present](#). It is one in a series of lessons that the Fellows created for K-12 schools and community colleges to help students learn about the ancient peoples that lived here and those who represent today's vibrant American Indian populations. Lessons connect past to present day by exploring multiple resources within the [Ancient North Carolinians: A Virtual Museum of North Carolina Archaeology website](#) to examine how communities changed over time and what influenced these changes. Understanding past Indigenous lifeways—their complexity, resiliency, and vitality—allows for a greater appreciation of the contributions American Indians made to the past and continue to make to the present and future of North Carolina.

Suggested Grade Level: 4th grade

Subjects: Visual Arts, Social Studies

Corresponding National and State of North Carolina Standards:

Visual Arts

4.V.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively

4.V.1.2 Apply personal choices while creating art.

4.V.1.3 Infer meaning from art.

4.CX.1 Understand the global, historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts.

4.CX.1.4 Explain how place and time influence ideas, issues, and themes found in art.

Social Studies

4.B.1 Understand ways in which values and beliefs have influenced the development of North Carolina's identity as a state

4.B.1.1 Explain how traditions, social structure, and artistic expression have contributed to the unique identity of North Carolina

4.H.1 Understand the role of various people, events, and ideas in shaping North Carolina

4.H.1.6 Explain the significance of historical symbols in North Carolina from various perspectives

Essential Questions:

- How did the histories and cultures of the American Indian tribes in North Carolina inform the imagery (i.e., visual symbolism) used in each tribal seal?
- What ideas and values are important to you? And, how can you translate them into imagery to create a seal that represents your personal, family, or community identity?

Lesson Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify various artifacts used by Indigenous peoples in North Carolina.
- Describe generally the histories and cultures of contemporary American Indian tribes in North Carolina.
- Describe the tribal seals for each of the eight state-recognized American Indian tribes in North Carolina and the meaning behind the seals' imagery, if this information is available to the public.
- Create their own seal based on ideas and values that are important to them.

Background information for the educator: Since ancient times, humans have created symbolic images to represent their ideas and values. These symbolic images are rich in history and meaning and important to the people who created them. There are eight state-recognized American Indian tribes in North Carolina. They have a long and rich history in our state, have overcome many hardships, and achieved many successes. Each tribe has created a tribal seal that reflects the culture and values of their people. In studying the histories and contemporary cultures of the tribes, students will gain a better understanding of the meaning of the imagery used in the tribal seals. Reflecting on this knowledge and inspired by their findings, they will create their own personal seals.

Discussion questions:

- What did you learn about the histories and contemporary cultures of American Indian tribes in North Carolina?
- How do their histories and cultures inform their tribal seals?

Lesson Outline:

Part I (Ancient North Carolinians) ~40'

1. Ask students what they know about American Indians in North Carolina or elsewhere in North America. Record answers. Explain that in this lesson, they will learn about Ancient North Carolinians as well as the eight state-recognized American Indian tribes that currently reside in North Carolina to gain a better understanding and appreciation of different cultures.
2. Hand out the accompanying worksheet ([Worksheet for American Indians of North Carolina and Tribal Seals](#)). Explain to the students that they will be looking at American Indian artifacts from five different time periods (Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, and Historic) and answering questions about their observations. Then they will report their findings to the class. Students can be divided into five groups, with each group working on a different time period. Direct students to

the Ancient North Carolinians website: <https://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/>. In particular, point them to the different time periods outlined on the page “Indian Heritage / By Time” (<https://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/indian-heritage/by-time/>). Next, they will choose one-time period outlined on the page, open subsequent webpages, and observe the artifacts displayed. They should record their findings on Part I of their worksheet.

3. Next, students can share findings. List the different time periods (Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, and Historic) on the board and record student findings as to what the artifacts tell us about how American Indians may have lived and thrived in North Carolina.
4. Provide background information on how the Ancient North Carolinians arrived in this area and how they evolved and progressed over time as is evidenced in the artifacts that have been found.

Note: You can use the following information to help guide your discussion.

The Archaic (8000 – 1000 B.C.) is an overarching time period covering over half of the timespan people have lived in North Carolina. This vast time has been explored by finding well-preserved deposits in rock-shelters and stratified, deeply-buried open sites in alluvial floodplains. The Archaic is generally thought of as a period dominated by nomadic, relatively small bands pursuing a hunting and gathering way of life, but there is evidence that some Archaic people settled into larger and more permanent sites relatively early. <https://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/indian-heritage/by-time/archaic/>

The Woodland period (1,000 B.C – 1,600 A.D.) revealed progression of the Indians through pottery-making, semi-sedentary villages, and horticulture. All had their origins in the Archaic but became the norm during Woodland times.

<https://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/indian-heritage/by-time/woodland/>

Part II (Tribal Culture) ~20-25'

1. Explain to students that they will research the eight state-recognized American Indian tribes in North Carolina. Students can be divided into eight groups with each group researching a different tribe. Once again, direct students to the Ancient North Carolinians website: <https://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/>. In particular they will be looking at background information of the tribe, which can be found on the page titled “Indian Heritage / By Modern Tribe” (<https://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/indian-heritage/by-modern-tribe/>). They can click on their tribe to find out more information. Within this section there is also a place to access the tribes’ websites. They can go to the tribal website to conduct further research. They will record their findings on Part II of their worksheet.
2. As you display the slide of each of the tribes, have the students tell what they learned about the particular tribe. Then you can add to their information.

Part III (Tribal Seals) ~ 20 ‘

1. Next, refer to the “Background information for the educator” outlined above to explain how symbolic imagery is used to reflect aspects of that organization and what an organization values. Explain to students how each tribe developed a tribal seal to represent their tribe and that they will now look at the tribal seals to see if they can uncover what the images mean and how they reflect a particular tribe.
2. Students should investigate the seal for the tribe that they researched in Part II. They can work independently or with their group and record their findings on Part III of the worksheet. Display Slide 1 or give a copy of the seals (included in the [worksheet](#) handout) to each student. They will need a color copy of the seals.
3. Ask students to tell the class what they think the various images mean in each seal, and/or explain the meanings and see if students came up with similar ideas.

Part IV (Art Component): 1-2 45’ class periods

1. Tell the students that they will now be designing and creating their own personal emblem. Using Part IV of their worksheet, they will start by listing at least 5-10 things that are important to them. Examples could be given such as family, family gatherings, pets, hobbies, sports, school, community, holidays, trips they’ve taken, etc.
2. Next, they should circle four of the most important things from their list.
3. Now they are to draw an image that can be used to represent each of their words. The teacher can model words and images. Students can sketch out their ideas on the back of the work sheet.
4. Instruct students that they will need to come up with the shape (circle, square, rectangle, pentagon, etc.) as well as the arrangement of the images within this format.
5. Hand out 9x9 inch drawing paper. Students should start with main shape of their seal and then proceed to draw their images in pencil and then color with colored pencils.
6. If time allows, students could share their final projects.

Part V (Closure/Post Reflection)

1. In conclusion, students can refer to Part V of their worksheet and fill out the Post Reflection.
2. If time allows ask students to share what they learned about American Indians, about themselves, and how their ideas about American Indians changed during the course of this lesson.

Learning Extensions:

At the onset of the lesson, students could be asked to go home and ask family members what they think of when they hear American Indian. Later in the lesson after they have studied the tribe’s history and current culture, they could share some of this information with their families as well (the names of the tribes and where they are located, their struggles and their accomplishments).

Materials: Students will need a copy of the [Worksheet for American Indians of North Carolina and Tribal Seals](#), pencils, 9x9 drawing paper, colored pencils, erasers.

[Worksheet for American Indians of North Carolina and Tribal Seals](#)

[Tribal Seals of the American Indians of North Carolina Slide deck](#)

References:

Waters, Elaine. (2018, October). *North Carolina American Indian Patch Program*. Retrieved October 8, 2021, from <https://www.hngirlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-hngirlscouts/documents/PG958-North-Carolina-American-Indian-Patch-Program.pdf>

Ancient North Carolinians. (nd). <https://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/>

Welcome to the Coharie Tribe. (2021). <http://coharietribe.org/>

The Official Government Website of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. (2021). <https://ebci.com/>

The Official site of the Haliwa-Saponi tribe. (2020). <https://www.haliwa-saponi.org/>

The Official site of the Lumbee tribe of North Carolina. (2019). <https://www.lumbeetribe.com/>

Meherrin Indian Tribe. (2011). <http://meherrinnation.org/index2.html>

Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation. (2021). <https://obsn.org/>

Sappony. (2018). <https://www.sappony.org/>

Waccamaw Siouan Indians. (2021). <https://waccamaw-siouan.org/>

This lesson plan was created by Anne Haugh of Penderlea School as part of the 2021-2022 UNC World View Global Fellows Program. For more information about the program, please visit <http://worldview.unc.edu/>.