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The following lesson was created by **Jill Connor**, a teacher participating in a 2010 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers entitled, "Exploring the Past: Archaeology in the Upper Mississippi River Valley."

Viking Culture in the "New World" vs. Native American Culture circa CE 900-1000

Grade Level: 5

Objective:

The purpose of this lesson, and accompanying small group activity, is for students to further develop their knowledge of and practice their skills in World and North American geography (climate, landforms, longitude and latitude, etc.) as outlined by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Grade 5.1

Also, as students investigate the environments of— for our purposes— Norway and Newfoundland, toward creating their "imaginary" cultures, the goal is for them to discover that:

- a. Upon initial investigation, the environments found in Norway and Newfoundland are not all that different. However, upon further research, they should discover that environment is not the only factor in the success or failure of a culture.*
- b. It is necessary for a culture to be flexible and dynamic if it is going to survive.*
- c. Encounters between two different cultures can be positive and negative for many reasons, including availability of and competition for resources.*

And,

d. Ultimately, based on their assigned environments, students will create cultures that are similar to or comparable with those of the Vikings and the Native Americans. The discussions around these cultures will then lead into future lessons on European exploration and encounters with Native peoples throughout North,

*Central, and South America.² (Rather than the teacher introducing the Vikings and their culture and then the Native Americans and their culture, students will come to their own conclusions about what kind(s) of cultures would have thrived in the environments and **then** the teacher can give them specific names, i.e., Vikings and Native Americans.)*

Furthermore, knowing about the cultures of these two groups will create a stronger connection for students when we begin discussing the kinds of evidence archaeologists and anthropologists have found that prove Vikings and other European Explorers were in North America. Students will learn that without that cultural context, we would not be able to make sense of what evidence is found– it would just be “ stuff” .

This lesson could also tie in nicely with the Grade 5 Science curriculum on ecosystems and animal adaptations.

Materials:

World and North American Atlases

Encyclopedias

Internet access

Texts and handouts

White and lined paper

Pencils

Crayons, markers, or colored pencils.

Web sites:

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/vikings.htm>

<HTTP://WWW.PBS.ORG/WGBH/NOVA/VIKINGS/>

<http://www.mnh.si.edu/vikings/>

<HTTP://HOME.FREEUK.NET/ELLOUGHTON13/VIKINGS.HTM>

<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/vinland.html>

<HTTP://WWW.BBC.CO.UK/SCHOOLS/PRIMARYHISTORY/VIKINGS/>

<http://worldhistory.mrdonn.org/vikings.html>

HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/GEOGRAPHY_OF_NEWFOUNDLAND_AND_LABRADOR

²The Massachusetts Frameworks are divided into strands—the Grade 5 History and Social Sciences strands include

VOCABULARY

INTRODUCE THE FOLLOWING TERMS/IDEAS TO THE CLASS:

ARCHAEOLOGY/ARCHAEOLOGIST	SUBSISTENCE
ANTHROPOLOGY/ANTHROPOLOGIST	SETTLEMENT
ARTIFACT	SOCIAL ORGANIZATION
ENVIRONMENT	IDEOLOGY
TECHNOLOGY	ADAPTATION

WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION/INTRODUCTION TO THE BIG IDEA:

ENVIRONMENT PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN A GROUP'S CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WE LIVE IN, WHAT KINDS OF FOODS WE EAT, WHAT KINDS OF CLOTHES WE WEAR— ALL THESE THINGS ARE DETERMINED, IN PART, BY THE ENVIRONMENT WE LIVE IN.

WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT TWO DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS AND BASED ON CERTAIN CRITERIA WE ARE GOING TO CREATE CULTURES THAT COULD LIVE IN THOSE ENVIRONMENTS.

THE FIRST OF THE TWO ENVIRONMENTS WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT IS FOUND IN NORWAY (A COUNTRY IN SCANDINAVIA), AND THE SECOND IS IN NEWFOUNDLAND, ON THE NORTHEASTERN COAST OF CANADA. WE ARE GOING TO PRETEND THAT THESE TWO ENVIRONMENTS ARE CURRENTLY UNINHABITED (THERE ARE NO PEOPLE THERE), AND THAT THERE ARE NO MODERN CONVENIENCES— AS IF WE WERE LOOKING AT THESE ENVIRONMENTS OVER 1000 YEARS AGO.

AFTER YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR RESEARCH AND GATHERED INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ENVIRONMENT (AS OUTLINED BELOW), YOU MUST ALSO DECIDE WHAT KIND OF **TECHNOLOGY**, **SUBSISTENCE PATTERN**, **TYPE OF SETTLEMENT**, **SOCIAL ORGANIZATION**, AND **IDEOLOGY** YOUR IMAGINARY CULTURE WILL HAVE. YOU SHOULD INCLUDE ILLUSTRATIONS, DIAGRAMS, OR OTHER ARTISTIC WAYS TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS IN YOUR CULTURE (FOR EXAMPLE, YOU COULD CREATE A MODEL OF A TYPICAL PERSON FROM YOUR CULTURE OR DRAW A PICTURE OF SOME OF THE KINDS OF FOODS PEOPLE IN YOUR CULTURE MIGHT EAT).

HAND OUT THE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER & EXPLAIN EACH OF THE SECTIONS AS OUTLINED:

ENVIRONMENT: (BE SPECIFIC, E.G., ARCTIC, TROPICS, GRASSLAND, ETC.) YOU WILL NEED TO USE THE ATLAS TO LOOK UP AND RECORD INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT'S AMOUNT OF RAINFALL, GROWING SEASON, SOILS, VEGETATION, ANIMAL LIFE, AND CLIMATE.

Technology: What kind of technology (tools) would the people in your culture use to survive? You must be specific in describing what kind of technology is used, how it relates to the social organization, settlement, and subsistence base. Most cultures that make a living by hunting and gathering wild resources move a lot and have simple, portable technology (stuff that's easy to carry). Remember: we're talking about basic technology, i.e., tools, not modern technology like computers or cell phones.

SUBSISTENCE PATTERN: ARE THESE PEOPLE HUNTERS AND GATHERERS OF WILD RESOURCES, GARDENERS, FARMERS, OR A MIXTURE OF THE TWO? DESCRIBE THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS GROWN AND/OR HARVESTED. DO THE PEOPLE IN YOUR CULTURE FISH IN THE SUMMER AND HUNT THE FOREST IN THE WINTER? BE SURE TO USE LOTS OF DETAIL.

Settlement Type: Are the people in your culture staying in one place all year round, or do they move one or two times a year, or are they “ nomadic” in that they move around from site to site all year round? What type of houses do they live in? What types of other facilities (buildings or useful areas) do they have (storage, wells, workshops)? Is your group of people involved in any conflict with its neighbors?

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION: THE WAY YOUR GROUP IS ORGANIZED MUST FIT IN A WAY THAT MAKES SENSE WITH THE WAY THEY LIVE (SUBSISTENCE) AND SETTLEMENT TYPE. IS YOUR CULTURE ONE IN WHICH EVERYONE IS EQUAL (EGALITARIAN) BUT CERTAIN PEOPLE HAVE PARTICULAR ROLES BASED ON WHETHER THEY'RE MEN OR WOMEN, BOYS OR GIRLS? OR, ARE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR CULTURE RANKED BY THE STATUS THEY ARE GIVEN AT BIRTH (A PERSON MIGHT BE BORN INTO A HIGHER CLASS, REGARDLESS OF HIS OR HER ABILITY— LIKE A PUREBLOOD WIZARDING FAMILY LIKE THE MALFOYS, OR A HALF-BLOOD FAMILY LIKE THE POTTERS, OR A MUGGLE FAMILY LIKE THE GRANGERS). TYPICALLY, HUNTERS AND GATHERERS ARE EQUAL OR EGALITARIAN SOCIETIES, WHILE FARMERS COULD BE EGALITARIAN OR RANKED.

Ideology (beliefs): What or whom do the people in your society believe in or worship? Are there special gods who can help or hurt the success of your society? How do your group's beliefs affect or relate to its way of life, technology, settlement, and social organization?

PROJECT GUIDELINES:

YOU AND YOUR GROUP (NO MORE THAN 4 OR 5 STUDENTS PER GROUP) MUST RESEARCH AND CREATE EACH OF THESE PARTS INTO A HUMAN CULTURE THAT MAKES SENSE— ALL SIX COMPONENTS MUST RELATE TO EACH OTHER. YOU MUST:

1. GIVE YOUR CULTURE A NAME.

USE THE ATTACHED GRAPHIC ORGANIZER TO PLAN YOUR FIRST DRAFT. EACH PART IS WORTH 10 POINTS.

PARTICIPATE FULLY AS A MEMBER OF YOUR GROUP (YOU ARE A MINI-EGALITARIAN SOCIETY).

TYPE OR WRITE YOUR FINAL DRAFT IN INK.

GROUP ROLES:

A. ARTIST— THIS PERSON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAWING OR OTHERWISE ILLUSTRATING YOUR CULTURE (PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS RELATED TO YOUR CULTURE).

B. Recorder— this person is responsible for writing down the group's ideas and filling in the graphic organizer.

C. TIME KEEPER— THIS PERSON MAKES SURE THE GROUP IS STAYING ON TASK AND GETS THINGS STARTED AND WRAPS THINGS UP EACH TIME THE GROUP MEETS. THIS PERSON WILL ALSO PROOFREAD THE FIRST DRAFT WITH THE RECORDER.

D. Materials Minder*— this person takes care of finding, gathering, and cleaning up the materials the group needs and uses each time the group meets. This person will also proofread the final draft along with the Recorder.

E. PARKING LOT ATTENDANT*— THIS PERSON WRITES DOWN AND KEEPS TRACK OF ANY QUESTIONS THE GROUP HAS FOR THE TEACHER OR THE CLASS AS A WHOLE, EITHER ABOUT THE PROJECT, CULTURES, THE ENVIRONMENT YOU ARE WORKING WITH, OR ANY OTHER QUESTIONS THAT COME UP. (THIS JOB CAN BE COMBINED WITH THE RECORDER OR TIME KEEPER IF THERE ARE ONLY FOUR PEOPLE IN A GROUP.)

*These are the only two group members who may get up out of their seats without permission from the teacher.

CREATE A CULTURE

DATE:

GROUP MEMBERS AND ROLES:

ARTIST:

RECORDER:

TIME KEEPER:

MATERIALS MINDER:

PARKING LOT ATTENDANT:

NAME OF YOUR CULTURE (REMEMBER THE NAME MUST FIT WITH ALL THE OTHER PARTS OF YOUR CULTURE LISTED BELOW):

The Recorder will complete the following sections (you may use bullet-points or short sentences– this part of the assignment does not need to be in complete sentences).

1. Environment– (circle one):

NORWAY (SCANDINAVIA)

NEWFOUNDLAND (CAN)

2. TECHNOLOGY (WHAT KINDS OF TOOLS DID THEY USE?):

3. SUBSISTENCE PATTERN (HOW THEY LIVED):

4. SETTLEMENT TYPE (WHERE THEY LIVED):

5. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION (HOW IS THE CULTURE SET UP? ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS OR IS EVERYONE EQUAL?):

6. IDEOLOGY (BELIEFS):

REFERENCES:

VIKINGS: THE NORTH ATLANTIC SAGA, EDITED BY WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH AND ELISABETH I. WARD. PUBLISHED BY SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION PRESS, WASHINGTON AND LONDON, 2000.