

The Indigenous Perspective on Health and Healing

Lesson Objectives

1. Students will be able to use the Native Voices Web site in order to:
 - a. Identify healing plants used by Indigenous people and explain what they are used for and how they are used.
 - b. Discuss the role of healers in Indigenous societies.
 - c. Define how Indigenous people view health and healing.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast traditional health and healing practices of Indigenous people, and health and healing practices within their own communities.
3. (Extension Activity) Students will identify modern medicines that include ingredients found in healing plants.

Grade Level

Middle School grades 6 to 8

Materials Needed for Lesson

- Computers with Internet access
- Paper
- Pens
- [Health and Healing: Indigenous People's View on Health and Medicine Worksheet \(H.1\)](#)
- [Health and Healing: Indigenous People's View on Health and Medicine - Essay \(H.2\)](#)
- (For the Extension Activity) Poster boards
- (For the Extension Activity) Markers

Lesson Time

Two 45-minute class periods in addition to the time spent at the actual exhibition.

- One class period to explore and research the Native Voices Web site.
- One class period to answer questions and present findings.

Lesson

Students will write an essay to explain Indigenous people's view on health and healing, the role of "healers," and how some native plants are used to treat and prevent disease.

Teacher Directions

1. Students will work in small groups to complete the worksheet "Health and Healing: Indigenous People's View on Health and Medicine Worksheet (H.1)."
2. Assign each group one of the following regions found under Healing Plants to research: Southwest, Native Hawaiian, Native Alaskan, and Upper Plains.
3. Use the following areas of the online exhibition to complete the worksheet:
Interviews >Healing >Healing Beliefs and Healers
<http://apps2.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/interviews/index.cfm?mode=theme&theme=5>
Exhibition>Healing Ways>Medicine Ways>Healing Plants
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/exhibition/healing-ways/medicine-ways/healing-plants.html>
4. As a large group, discuss the findings from the worksheets. Allow each group to present the results of its research.

5. Distribute the handout “Health and Healing: Indigenous People’s View on Health and Medicine - Essay (H.2).” Let the students know that they will now work individually to write an essay that encompasses their research. Their essay should include the following:
 - a. Description of the Indigenous people’s view on health and healing.
 - b. The role of healers in Indigenous people’s societies.
 - c. Description of plants researched, including what part of the plant is used and what diseases the plants are used to treat or prevent.
 - d. Description of the similarities and differences between Indigenous health and healing practices and the type of medicine that is practiced within your own community.

Additional resources for research:

- Native Voices: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices>
- American Indian Health: <http://americanindianhealth.nlm.nih.gov/>
- MedlinePlus: Native American Health: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/nativeamericanhealth.html>

Extension Activity

Making Connections: Create a poster.

- Select one of the plants researched for the essay activity.
- Show how Indigenous people use the plant to treat or prevent illness or disease.
- Indicate modern medicines that contain the plant in their ingredients list.
- Explain whether the medicine/product is used to treat or prevent disease.

Students will use the NLM Web site DailyMed to complete this activity: <http://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov>

Health and Healing: Indigenous People's View on Health and Medicine Worksheet (H.1)

Use the following areas of the online exhibition to complete the worksheet:

Interviews >Healing >Healing Beliefs and Healers

<http://apps2.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/interviews/index.cfm?mode=theme&theme=5>

Exhibition>Healing Ways>Medicine Ways>Healing Plants

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/exhibition/healing-ways/medicine-ways/healing-plants.html>

Name of plant region _____

Facts about Indigenous people's view on health and healing:

Fact 1:

Fact 2:

Fact 3:

Fact 4:

What is the role of "healers" in Indigenous people's societies?

Select three plants from your assigned region, and complete the chart below.

Plant name	Parts of plant used	Disease or illness plant is used to treat or prevent

