

Unit 1 Overview

Quetzalcoatl: Beautiful and Precious Knowledge



Lesson 1 The Power of Our Stories	In this lesson, students explore different representations of the Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl as a sacred story and symbol. They write six-word stories along with their classmates to explore how gathering multiple perspectives on a shared place and symbol helps build a deeper understanding of the truth and meaning. Then students watch a video and discuss the value of multiple perspectives for developing counter narratives that challenge dominant narratives. Finally, students listen and read along to a poem by Layli Long Soldier and discuss how the author uses multiple perspectives and untold stories to challenge a dominant narrative about America.
Lesson 2 Building a Collective Society	In this lesson, students analyze and critique dominant individualist ideologies in the United States. They reflect on the 20th century American concepts of the American Dream and the Self-Made Man and write a logline that captures the essence of the American Dream through an individualist perspective. Then, students learn about collectivist values from Indigenous Plant Teachings and rewrite their loglines to integrate collective values. Finally, students apply their learning to a section of Layli Long Soldier's poem.
Lesson 3 Nonlinear Narratives	In this lesson, students explore the different ways in which we tell stories and what we can learn from indigenous ways of storytelling when trying to complicate dominant narratives. They apply their learning about nonlinear narratives to the story of ethnic studies. Finally, they analyze an excerpt from Layli Long Soldier's poem and reflect on the circular storytelling used in the poem excerpt.
Lesson 4 Intersectionality in Action	In this lesson, students explore how art can express solidarity with a group of people. Then, students analyze a video on intersectionality to understand the overlapping nature of oppression and to consider how intersectionality as a framework has the power to challenge dominant narratives and encourage multiple perspectives. Next, students work as a group and create community agreements for the course that promote a respectful and inclusive space for all. Finally, they engage in an interactive activity by piecing together parts of Layli Long Soldier's poem to identify the counter narrative.
Lesson 5 Centering Our Classroom Environment	In this lesson, students watch and listen to a video that presents the words of Chief Si'ahl Seattle (1854) and an Indigenous worldview of interconnection and sacredness. Then, they use the Navajo Four Cardinal Direction map to design a classroom worldview using symbols to create a story of meaning for the space. Finally, they learn about what a Potlatch is and prepare to share a gift and tell an oral story as the final presentation of the unit.
Lesson 6 Potlatch	In this lesson, students participate in a Potlatch by gifting an object that holds a particular sacred meaning to the classroom and sharing the oral story behind it. Finally, they write a journal entry to reflect on their experiences so far and what they hope to learn in the course.