

Differences in Worldview

When Swedes and English interacted face-to-face with the Lenni Lenape or Shawnee, they encountered one another in the fundamental differences, not only of language and culture, but of underlying worldview as well. The differences in worldview between Indians and Europeans informed early negotiations between the groups, which involved moving back and forth between differential understandings of property, language and writing, social customs, and notions of reciprocity. This activity introduces the concept of cultural worldview and allows students to understand how Native and European ideas of time, the spirit world, property and social relations differed from one another. Students are encouraged to speculate on how these differences informed both accommodation and misunderstanding between the two groups.

Essential Questions

- How has social disagreement and collaboration benefited Pennsylvania society?
- What role does analysis have in historical construction?

Objectives

- Recognize the idea of worldview as a way of understanding/viewing cultural difference.
- Understand key differences between Native American and European worldview vis a vis time, property, land, communication, and social/political relations, and identify how these differences shaped interactions such as diplomatic negotiations.
- Distinguish different points of view for historical events.
- Recognize point of view in historical narratives and how it shapes the telling of history.

Primary Sources

- *Apology of the Paxton Volunteers*
- *Correspondence, Israel Pemberton captive inquiry*
- *The Number of What is Killed and Captivated in Bethel Township, Lancaster County*
- *Grievances of the Back Inhabitants*

Other Materials

- *Worldview worksheet*
- *"The Indians Giving a Talk to Colonel Bouquet in a Conference at a Council Fire near his camp on the Banks of the Muskingum in North America in Oct. 1764....,"* an engraving by Benjamin West. According to "An historical account of the expedition against the Ohio Indians," the Muskingum camp was selected as the site for the negotiation of prisoners because many Native American settlements were situated in close proximity to this location. It was the intention of the Europeans to display their military strength and to easily engage these numerous settlements in battle if the negotiations were not successful.

Suggested Instructional Procedures

1. Warm up: Activate prior knowledge by conducting a warm up exercise in which students react quickly to a series of words related to the colonial encounter of Native Americans and Europeans.

Explain to students that you will be reading a series of words related to Native Americans and when Europeans first encountered one another on North American shores. Ask them to write down the first word that comes to mind when they hear each term. You will then call out each term and give them only about 10 seconds to write a response. The effectiveness of this exercise is to determine the prior knowledge of the students and to turn their minds towards thinking about words associated with the unit.

Words you might use include:

- European
- Savage
- Indian
- Native
- Primitive
- Settler
- Diplomat
- Colonist

Review each word and ask students to share their responses, listing them on the board. Afterward, go back and look at what is written down. Assign a plus, minus, or 0 beside each word according to the kind of feeling (positive, negative, or neutral) evoked by the term. When the exercise is completed have the class discuss: What kinds of feelings are evoked by specific terms? What patterns do they see in responses that were neutral, positive, or negative? Are any of the responses stereotypical? How and why?

2. Infer worldview: Have students examine the engraving "*The Indians Giving a Talk to Colonel Bouquet...*," by Benjamin West, from *An historical account of the expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the year 1764*.

Note the location of the engraving: The caption of the engraving reads, "The Indians giving a talk to Colonel Bouquet in a conference at a council fire near his camp on the banks of the Muskingum in North America in Oct. 1764." It is important to note that according to *An historical account of the expedition against the Ohio Indians*, the Muskingum camp was selected as the site for the negotiation of prisoners because many Native American settlements were situated in close proximity to this location. It was the intention of the Europeans to display their military strength and to easily engage these settlements in battle if the negotiations were not successful.

In groups have students quickly write down the differences in the ways Native Americans and Europeans are represented in the engraving. You can either hand out a print out of the engraving or use a Smart Board or projector.

Some patterns they should notice include:

- Native Americans are seated on the ground; Europeans are seated on chairs.
- Native Americans are all leaning forward listening intently to what is being said and have intense expressions on their faces; Europeans are writing everything down.
- Native American figure in the center is gesturing dramatically and holding something in his hand (wampum); Europeans are partially turning away and one man pulls his body away with his hand across his chest.
- Native Americans are positioned in the engraving so that their background is of the landscape; Europeans are framed by a man-made wooden structure.
- Ask students to infer what the implications of these patterns are for communication modes. Observe, for example:
 - Native Americans have a comfort with nature and more open body posture.
 - Native Americans use oral communication; Europeans rely on formal writing.

3. Introduce and discuss the concept of cultural worldview. Ask the class "Who created the engraving?" Tell students that the engraving is an example of the worldview the Europeans held during the colonial era. Describe worldview as a kind of "cultural sunglasses" through which we see and experience the world. Discuss how worldview is a deep kind of cultural understanding that shapes our reality but usually lies beneath the level of everyday awareness. Thus, worldview seems "natural" even though it is cultural.

Compare and contrast Native and European worldviews in terms of time, relationship to nature, ownership of property, and social interaction. Using the *Worldview worksheet*, create a diagram with students that map out these differences. Have students discuss, in pairs or small groups, how the patterns represented in the engraving embody these differences.

4. Process ideas. Write two of the following questions on the board:

- What do you think would be the worldview from a Native American perspective?
- What do you think a European's worldview be?
- Given differences in worldview, what challenges did Native Americans and Europeans face when interacting with one another?
- How might these differences of worldview have led to misunderstandings or conflict even when both parties had good intentions?

Have students pick one these topics and write a short essay answering the posed question. Collect the essays at the end of the class period. This could also be used as a take home activity.

Expansion

To take this lesson deeper, have students read *The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers* in light of the documents about *grievances*, *killings*, and *capture*. Discuss the differences in worldview. There are several examples such as:

- City residents (Quakers) vs Frontier residents (Volunteers)
- Europeans vs Native Americans

Some possible discussion questions include:

- How would you describe the Quakers relationship with the Native Americans? With the volunteers?
- Should the Volunteers be punished for murdering Native Americans?
- Do you think this deposition swayed the public to the side of the volunteers?

Vocabulary

- *Diplomacy*: negotiation between nations.
- *Native American*: indigenous or original inhabitants of the Americas prior to European arrival.
- *Negotiator*: an individual who has the authority to represent or speak for a nation or other entity during a diplomatic conference or any other process whereby diverse parties resolve disputes, agree upon courses of action, or bargain for advantage.
- *Paxton Boys*: frontier settlers who attacked Indians living at Conestoga, Lancaster County, in 1763.
- *Treaty*: binding agreement under international law.
- *Worldview*: an integrated system of deeply held, largely unconscious beliefs and concepts about the universe (natural and/or supernatural), society, and the self.