



Montana  
**Office of Public Instruction**  
 Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

# Social Studies Model Lesson Plan

## The Allotment Period – American Indian Perspectives

### High School

### Stage 1 Desired Results

#### Established Goals:

**Social Studies Standard 4, Benchmark 12.7** Analyze and illustrate the major issues concerning history, culture, tribal sovereignty, and current status of the American Indian tribes and bands in Montana and the United States (e.g., gambling, artifacts, repatriation, natural resources, language, jurisdiction)

#### Understandings:

- A basic overview/introduction into the allotment period; analyzing formal interactions with the U.S. Government and American Indian Nations.
- Focus of the lesson will be on the issues of history and tribal sovereignty through the examination of treaties and other historical documents. (EU 4)

#### Essential Questions:

- How do historical events and accompanying documents influence the relationships between the U.S. Government and Tribal Nations?
- Why is it important to understand the historical background regarding the shrinking land bases of tribal nations?

#### Students will be able to...

- understand and explain the basis for the Allotment Act.

#### Students will know...

- the historical context in which laws were made and how they are still relevant documents today.

### Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

#### Performance Tasks:

1. Research and analyze issues and events associated with the allotment period.
2. Students will gather evidence and present their findings in the form of a brief essay and oral presentation.

### Stage 3 Learning Plan

#### Learning Activities:

Excerpt from *Connecting Cultures and Classrooms: Indian Education K-12 Curriculum Guide: Language Arts, Science, Social Studies* by Sandra Fox. [www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/ConnectingCultures.pdf](http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/ConnectingCultures.pdf)

Students should understand that the Dawes Severalty Act was another government attempt at forced assimilation of Indian people. The Act specifically attacked the important traditional American Indian social principle of communal land ownership. Dividing tribal lands among individual owners not only contradicted the traditional Indian concept of communal property, but it also affected tribal identity by undermining Tribal



*The Allotment Period – American Indian Perspectives (continued)*

cohesiveness. In addition, its implementation eroded the traditional Indian concept of extended family by separating family members from one another often by many miles.

Activities adapted from [www.nebraskastudies.org](http://www.nebraskastudies.org) - Allotment lesson plan

Introduce a study of two documents in "Archives of the West":

"Indian Policy Reform" by President Chester Arthur and the "Dawes Act."

After students have read the first document make two columns on the black board, one labeled "problems" and the other "solutions." Elicit from students the following information and list their answers on the board:

- What problems does Arthur identify regarding the U.S. Government and the Indians? List them.
- What solutions does Arthur offer to remedy the situation?
- Whom does Arthur blame, if anyone, for the sorry state of Indian and U.S. relations?
- What is the "tone" of his speech?
- How does Arthur view American Indians?
- What do you think are his sources of information?
- What is your opinion of the solutions he puts forth?

Now turn to the Dawes Act. Ask students:

- In what ways does the Dawes Act seem to remedy the problems identified by Arthur?
- In what ways does the act seem to be protecting Indians?
- In what way(s) does the act weaken and dismantle the power of Indian nations?
- What do you predict will be the outcome of the Dawes Act on Indian nations?

*Analyzing the Dawes Act*

Have students read the following essay <http://www.csusm.edu/nadp/subject.htm> by Professor E.A. Schwartz, associate professor of history, California State University, San Marcos.

Assign students to write up a two-page essay about the Dawes Act asking them to address the following questions:

- Who were the most active sponsors of the Dawes Act?
- Were the sponsors aware of whether or not the kind of land allotted under the Dawes Act was actually suitable for farming?
- Was it unreasonable to believe that private property and farming were superior to communally held land devoted to hunting, gathering and/or farming?
- What role, if any, did Indians themselves play in arguing for or against the Dawes Act?
- What happened to land not allotted to Indians? What does this show about possible motives of the plan?
- What does your textbook say about the Dawes Act? Does it present multiple perspectives?

**Background information:**

Students should understand that during this period of history (1870-1900), national attitudes and policies toward Indians largely focused on controlling Indians and forcing them to change. Indians were basically

*The Allotment Period – American Indian Perspectives (continued)*

confined to their reservations and forced to adopt totally foreign ways of life – plow farming and ranching being notable examples. Federal Indian agents exerted a great deal of control on reservation lands. These agents were often corrupt, stealing the annuities and commodities that were intended for the Indian communities. This effort was reinforced by various Christian religious denominations who were given exclusive contracts to send missionaries to certain reservations. Missionaries often used assimilation strategies that were demeaning and brutal. Traditional religious practices were outlawed. This period of American history also saw the advent of the boarding school era, a time in which American Indian children were forced to attend schools far from home and family, and where their traditional ways of life were totally banned and severe punishments were exacted for even speaking a tribal language.

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

This Web site has some excellent information regarding the shrinking land base of the Blackfeet in Montana territory. <http://www.trailtribes.org/greatfalls/shrinking-reservation.htm>

National Archives Digital Classroom, Teaching With Documents Lesson Plan – Dawes Act  
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/fed-indian-policy/>

(The following four reference books were sent to all Montana school libraries – they provide an excellent starting point for research and general background information.)

Champagne, Duane (**Ojibwe**) (ed). *Native North American Almanac: A Reference Work of Native North Americans in the United States and Canada*. Detroit: Gale Publishing, 2001. This huge comprehensive volume provides historical and contemporary information about the Native peoples of North America.

This huge comprehensive volume provides historical and contemporary information about the Native peoples of North America. A broad range of topics including history and historical landmarks, health, law and legislation, activism, environment, urbanization, education, economy, languages, arts, literatures, media and gender relations makes this highly readable book essential for librarians and teachers

Davis, Mary B. (ed). *Native America in the Twentieth Century, An Encyclopedia*. 1996. All classroom teachers who are teaching anything about "Native Americans" should have this single-volume encyclopedia available and use it frequently. The emphasis is on Indian peoples today, and the involvement of a great many knowledgeable Indian people, close to much of what they describe, contributes greatly to accuracy and coverage of usually ignored matters.

Keoke, Emory Dean (**Lakota**) and Kay Marie Porterfield (eds). *Encyclopedia of American Indian Contributions to the World: 15,000 Years of Inventions and Innovations*. 2003. With entries ranging from anti-asthmatic medications to zoned biodiversity, this meticulously researched volume is a comprehensive resource to the numerous inventions and innovations made by the indigenous peoples of North, Meso-, and South America. Containing over 450 entries, alphabetically arranged and fully cross-referenced, this indispensable reference book is a must for every classroom and library.

*The Allotment Period – American Indian Perspectives (continued)*

Keoke, Emory Dean (**Lakota**) and Kay Marie Porterfield (eds). *American Indian Contributions to the World* 2005. This excellent five-volume set of Keoke's and Porterfield's earlier work is accessible to students from fourth grade through high school. The subjects covered are "Buildings, Clothing, and Art," "Food, Farming and Hunting," "Medicine and Health," "Science and Technology," and "Trade, Transportation and Warfare."

Fox, Sandra J. Ed.D. *Connecting Cultures and Classrooms: Indian Education K-12 Curriculum Guide: Language Arts, Science, Social Studies*. Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction and National Indian School Board Association, Polson, MT, Spring 2006.(131-133)

[www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/ConnectingCultures.pdf](http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/ConnectingCultures.pdf)

This document has some excellent time-lines and background information regarding treaties – see the 9-12 Social Studies section.

Juneau, Stan (**Blackfoot**). *A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy*. Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2001.

[www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/Resources/History\\_FoundationAmIndianPolicy.pdf](http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/Resources/History_FoundationAmIndianPolicy.pdf)

OPI Indian Education Web site – [www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/IEFA.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/IEFA.html)  
(guide students to the Background Resources section and to the Publication page)

Utter, Jack. *American Indians: Answers to Today's Questions*. Lake Ann, MI: National Woodlands Pub, 1993.