



INDIGENOUS WISDOM: CENTURIES OF PUEBLO IMPACT IN NEW MEXICO

A Pueblo-Based Educational Curriculum • IndianPuebloEducation.org

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

2nd Edition

Title of Unit: Symbols, Language and Meaning

Content Area: English/Language Arts

Grade Level: 9-10

Author: Carlotta Martza

Co-Editors:

Azella Humetewa, MBA-Ed. (Kewa/Acoma)

K-8 Head of School, Native American Community Academy

Glenabah Martinez, Ph. D. (Taos/Diné)

Director, UNM Institute for American Indian Education

Associate Professor, Department of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies - UNM

Natalie Martinez, Ph. D. (Laguna)

UNM Institute of American Indian Education, Faculty Member

Christine Sims, Ph. D. (Acoma)

UNM Institute of American Indian Education

Associate Professor, Department of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies - UNM

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505.843.7270 | www.IndianPuebloEducation.org

Section A: Introductory Materials

Name: Carlotta Martza

Title of Unit: Symbols, Language and Meaning

Content Area: Language Arts

Grades: 9-10th grades

Rationale:

The focus of this unit is to explore and analyze how meanings embedded in Native American iconography have been utilized and sustained since time immemorial. In the southwest, symbols and icons depicted on rocks, cultural wares, regalia, and other objects have stood the test of time despite cycles of innumerable interpretations, physical acts of vandalism and monetary exploitation. Symbols and icons present in Pueblo cultures are vital links to sacred beliefs, customs, historical events and other realms of unspoken understandings. These ancient designs have survived the rigors of colonization, from the trivial to sublime. What were once symbols and icons depicted on everyday objects and daily life for Pueblo people have been thrust into contemporary arenas of fashion adornment, fine art galleries, "tourist traps" and tattoo shops. Students will be introduced to a variety of symbols and icons in this unit. They will survey and reflect on their own understandings of timeless designs that speak their own language from another time and place. They will be introduced to a contemporary Pueblo artist and poet, Nora Naranjo-Morse from Santa Clara Pueblo. She has worked with clay since her childhood and is renowned throughout the world for her mud creations. Through her poetry, she explores many unresolved questions about Native American art and its place in mainstream American commerce.

Unit Goals

- ❑ Students will understand that the act of reading is not limited to texts and books, but as well, to icons and designs that can also represent cultures, ideas, events, concepts and history.
- ❑ Students will explore various interpretations of Native American iconography and their use as a means of communication in ancient and modern times including their eventual transformation and commodification in contemporary contexts.
- ❑ Students will compare and contrast ancient, contemporary and universal forms of iconography.

Standards

CCSS-
Conventions of Standard English CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.4
Key Ideas and Details CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.3
Craft and Structure CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L9-10.6

Section B: Lesson Plan One Title:

How do I view the world?

Duration: 50 minutes

Grade Levels: 9th and 10th

Lesson Objectives:

- ☐ Students will be able to select specific symbols and icons that represent their world view(s).
- ☐ Students will explore the meanings and significance of symbols and icons to various cultural groups.

Prerequisite Skills:

- ☐ Participation in group discussions.
- ☐ Ability to apply creative and/or artistic skills in individual and group work.
- ☐ Willingness to engage in cooperative group work

Materials and Resources:

- ☐ If a Smartboard is not available, provide butcher paper for the group activity in this lesson.
- ☐ Copies of: *A History of New Mexico Since Statehood*. Richard Melzer, Robert Torrez, and Sandra K. Mathews. (2011). University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque, New Mexico. Pages: 34-35 (New Mexico's State Flag and Song) and Page 149 (paragraphs 2 and 3).

Guiding Questions:

1. How do symbols represent one's identity and origin?
2. How do ancient and modern iconographies frame world views?

Core Values: Love, Reverence, Respect, Compassion

Procedure:

1. Define, discuss and present four examples for each of the following vocabulary/terms:
 - A. **Symbol(s):** 1. a thing representing something else. 2. character with a fixed meaning-symbolism. SYNS: 1. REPRESENTATION, token, sign, emblem, figure, image. 2. SIGN character, mark, letter. (Source: *Color Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus*)
 - B. **Icon:** 1. (also ikon) a sacred painting or mosaic. 2. Computing a graphic symbol on a computer screen. (Source: *Color Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus*)
 - C. **Iconography:**
 1. The symbols used in a work of art or art movement;
 2. The conventional significance attached to such symbols;

3. A collection of pictures of a particular subject, such as Christ;
4. The representation of the subjects of icons or portraits, esp. on coins. (Source: www.dictionary.com)

D. **Sacred:** adj. connected to a god or goddess and greatly revered; to do with religion. (Source: *Color Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus*)

2. Brainstorm Exercise (15-20 minutes): After students become familiar with the vocabulary/terms, have students brainstorm and draw 20 of their own symbols/icons on a separate sheet of paper.
3. Ask students to pick two or more symbols, depending on class size, and draw them on the board or butcher paper. (Depending on class size, duration for this task will be determined by the instructor).
3. After students have compiled their drawings, post these prominently in the classroom and facilitate a class discussion posing the following questions:
 - What kind of symbols and icons have been illustrated by the class? What meanings do these symbols and icons represent? Do any of these symbols and icons represent similar meanings for you?
 - What kind of symbols/icons have you observed being used or represented within your family, community or culture?
 - What determines whether a symbol is defined as "sacred"?
 - Why are some symbols/icons worth more in monetary value than others?
4. Monitor discussion time and provide enough time for students to complete a Fast Write response.

Assessment:

Closure exercise/class ticket: Have students write a half-page (5-7 sentences) Fast Write response to the following question: Which family, community or cultural icon is most sacred to you and why? Explain. Collect student responses at the end of class.

Modifications/Accommodations:

1. Lesson will incorporate accommodations for student IEPs.
2. Provide visual examples.
3. Pre-teach vocabulary and terminologies.
4. Provide one-to-one partner to assist as needed.

Notes to Teacher:

Before implementing this lesson, it is recommended to view the following DVD, *Remembered Earth: New Mexico's High Desert A poetic journey through a storied landscape*

of the American West. Available on YouTube. Type in: "Remembered Earth - New Mexico's High Desert." The documentary is about 30 minutes. It's an excellent visual and historical reference for the Unit.

Lesson Plan Two

Title: Exploring Native American Iconography

Duration: 50 minutes

Grade Levels: 9th and 10th

Lesson Objectives:

- ❑ Students will be able to explore how Native American tribes use symbols and icons as another form of language and way of communicating.
- ❑ Students will be able to interpret their own understanding of icons and symbols.
- ❑ Students will be able to investigate meanings embedded in ancient Native American symbols and icons.

Prerequisite Skills:

- ❑ Participation in prior group discussion (Lesson One) about personal and cultural meanings of various Native American symbols and icons.
- ❑ Ability to apply creative and/or artistic skills in individual and group work.
- ❑ Willingness to engage in cooperative group discussions

Materials and resources:

- ❑ Web site: <https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/>
- ❑ Brief bio about Nora Naranjo-Morse. Available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/nora-naranjo-morse>
- ❑ Web site for Popsicle Stick Method. Description available at: <http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/popsicle>

Guiding Questions:

1. How do symbols represent one's identity and home/origin?
2. How do ancient and modern iconographies frame world views?
3. How has history influenced meanings behind iconographies, sacred, secular and monetary realms?

Core Values: Love/Reverence, Respect, Compassion

Procedure:

1. Begin class utilizing student writing responses from closure exercise/exit ticket in Lesson One asking four students to share their responses aloud. Students may

volunteer or use the "Popsicle Stick Method" (Google "Popsicle Stick" for detailed explanation and procedure) to elicit responses.

2. Facilitate an opening discussion by including other relevant topics and posing follow-up questions to students in order to enrich the discussion.
3. Hand out map of New Mexico Tribes (Handout # 1) and have students identify locations of the following Pueblos: Zia, Zuni and Santa Clara.
4. After students share their responses, the teacher will introduce four sacred icons specific to tribes in New Mexico. If a Smartboard is in the classroom, post the following website for students to view these icons. If a Smartboard is not available, use a projector to display the following information on a screen.
<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/sun-symbol.htm>
<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/zuni-bear-symbol.htm>
<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/heartline-symbol.htm>
<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/turtle-symbol.htm>
<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/rain-symbol.htm>
5. Read aloud the information for each sacred icon illustrated on the above websites and pose the following questions for class discussion:
 - What do you know about these sacred symbols/icons?
 - Where have you seen these symbols/icons? (e.g. jewelry, furniture, clothing, art galleries, etc.)
 - Do you know of other tribes who use similar symbols/icons?
 - Do you know of any New Mexico art shows/events where you may have seen these icons represented in various art forms?
 - Do you know any Native American artist(s) who financially support themselves through their art?
6. Introduce Pueblo artist and poet, Nora Naranjo Morse, from Santa Clara Pueblo by reading aloud to the class her brief biography. Refer to the following web site for brief introductory information: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/nora-naranjo-morse>

Assessment:

Closure exercise/class ticket: As a group, have students provide oral responses to the following questions:

- What Pueblo is Nora Naranjo-Morse from? Where is her Pueblo located?
- What is the title of her book?

- In your opinion would you consider her art to be "traditional" or "nontraditional?" What do you think is meant by these terms when describing New Mexico Pueblo art?

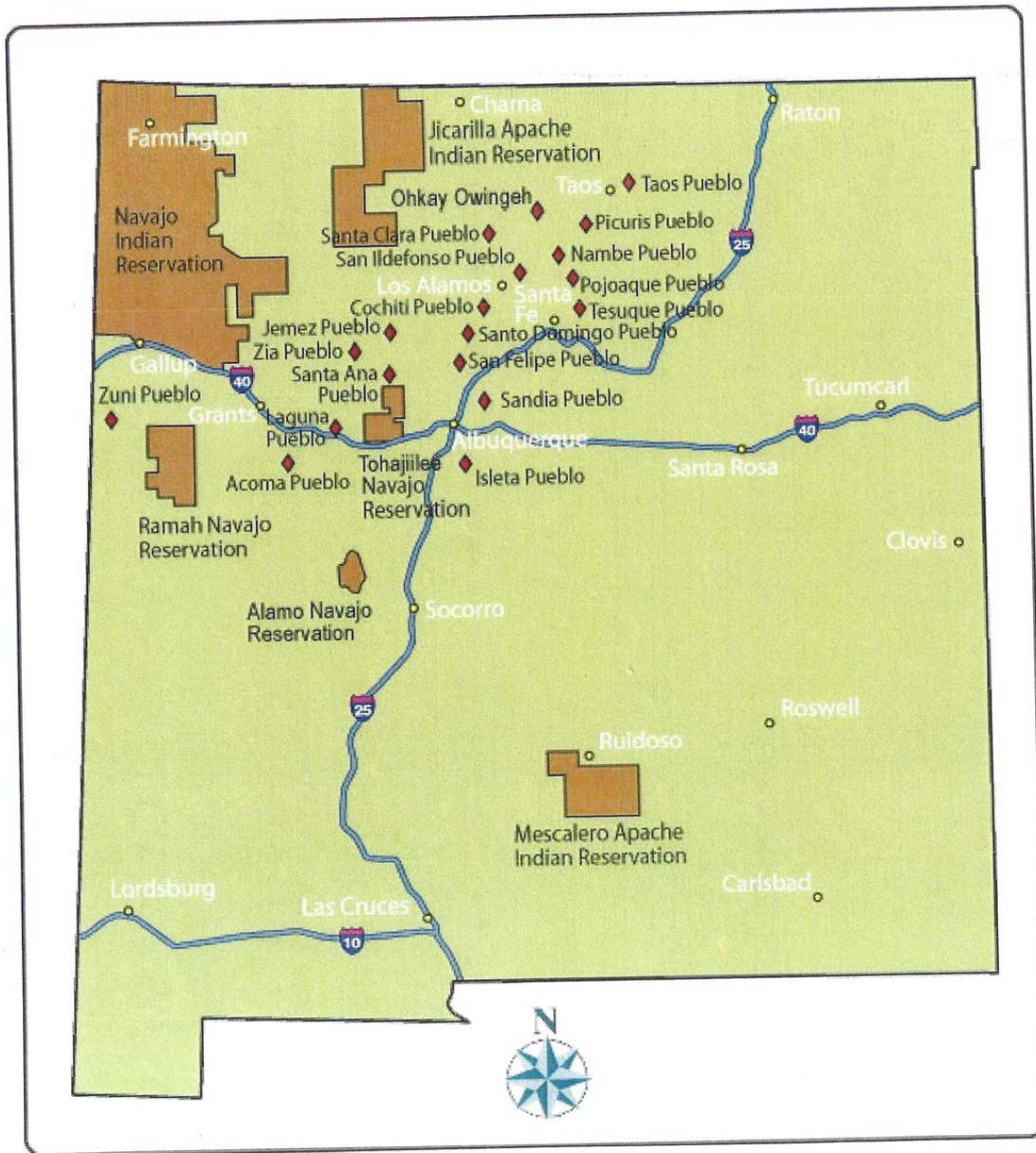
Modifications/Accommodations:

1. Incorporate accommodations for student IEPs.
2. Provide visual examples.

Notes to Teacher:

If time permits or there is a need for including additional materials, use the following textbook if it is available: *A History of New Mexico Since Statehood*. Written by Richard Melzer, Robert Torrez, and Sandra K. Mathews. University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2011. Pages: 34-35 (New Mexico's State Flag and Song), and Page 149 (paragraphs 2 and 3).

Handout #1: Map of New Mexico with locations of Pueblos and Tribes



Lesson Plan Three Title:

"Pieces of Earth"

Duration: 50 minutes

Grade Levels: 9th and 10th

Lesson Objectives:

- ❑ Students will be able to analyze how Native American iconography has changed from ways of communicating, recording history, to a process of commodification.
- ❑ Students will be able to apply various poetic devices, including imagery, metaphors and alliteration.
- ❑ Students will be able to practice creative writing skills and compose a Free Verse poem.

Prerequisite Skills:

- ❑ Familiarity with application of poetic devices and the writing process.
- ❑ Practice in applying creative writing skills.
- ❑ Practice in applying critical thinking skills.

Materials and Resources:

- ❑ Handout #1: Nora Naranjo-Morse biography. Available at: <https://www.cla.purdue.edu/WAAW/peterson/Naranjo.html>
- ❑ Handout #2 Poem: *Mud Woman's First Encounter With The World of Money and Business*

Guiding Questions:

1. How has history influenced meanings behind Native American symbols and icons?

Core Values: Love, Reverence, Respect, Compassion

Procedure:

1. Provide copies of Nora Naranjo-Morse's biography to students. Review background history of this well-known Pueblo artist. What are some significant aspects of her history and career?
2. Read entire background article aloud to students to provide more familiarity for the reading of her poem, *Mud Woman's First Encounter With The World of Money and Business*.
3. Review the following vocabulary and their meanings before reading her poem: ceremony, idiosyncrasies, surging, resume, innuendos, intimidating, dimension, sensuous, profitable, venture, dictated, wholesale.
4. Review basic tenets of a free verse poem (e.g. no fixed pattern/structure, or rhyme scheme).
5. After reviewing vocabulary, distribute copies of Handout #2, *Mud Woman's First Encounter With The World of Money and Business*.
6. Do a first reading of the poem aloud for the class. (Note: Lines 62, 63, 64, 70 are in the Tewa language).

7. Instruct students to do a second reading on their own. When they are finished, begin the next stage of analyzing the poem posing your own questions and using the following recommended questions. Note: Interpretation of poems, in general, are open to broad understandings, therefore, it is recommended that instructors utilize their own questions to begin the process of analyzing the poem. The following is a list of recommended questions:

- a. In lines 24-28, Mud Woman is describing her response to the business woman's questions, *"First of all dear, do you have a resume? You know, something written that would identify you to the public. Who is your family?"*
 - i. *"trying desperately to connect this business woman's voice with*
 - ii. *her questions..."*

Ask: Why is there a sense of desperation with Mud Woman and her interaction with the business woman?

- b. Lines 29-30, *"The center of what Mud Woman knew to be real was shifting with each moment in the gallery."*

Ask: What are some examples of the "shifting"?

- c. Ask: Who sets the standards for what Native Art should be?

- d. Ask: What is your opinion about lines 50-51: *"However, if for some reason you make it big, I can be the first to say, 'I discovered you.'*

Ask: How do you think Mud Woman felt with this comment?

8. After analysis of the poem and class discussions on individual interpretations, inform the students about the final assignment: Free Verse Poem

Assessment:

- ☐ Students will write a Free Verse Poem in response to the following prompt: How has Pueblo iconography changed from its use in prehistoric times to modern day consumption for the masses? To help students get started, have them think how they would respond to Nora Naranjo-Morse's poem.

Free Verse Poem Requirements:

- a. Four stanzas
- b. Five lines for each stanza
- c. Include imagery
- d. Produce two drafts

- ☐ Evaluation of student's work can be done using the following checklist with assigned points.

Free Verse Poem
Checklist

Name Date

- 1 (10) Format: structure, neatness and visual appeal.
- 2 (10) Fulfilled requirements: 20 lines total, four stanzas, five lines for each stanza.
- 3 (10) Language: effective word choice and evocative.
- 4 (10) Poetic devices: imagery, use of metaphors and alliteration.
- 5 (10) Title: captures essence of poem and stands out as original.
- 6 (10) Content: communicates details, overall theme, tone and establishes a mood.
- 7 (10) Creativity: original ideas and capturing of "Wow!" moments.
- 8 (10) Voice: authenticity and strength of ideas.
- 9 (10) Grammar and mechanics: sentence structure, correct tenses and punctuation.
- 10 (10) Overall Effort: sincere effort was reflective in the final piece.

_____ (100) TOTAL POINTS

Comments

Modifications/Accommodations:

1. Lesson will incorporate accommodations for student IEPs.
2. Extended time will be provided for writing assignments.
3. Provide one-on-one instruction and conferencing.

Notes to Teacher:

1. If you want to read more poetry by Nora Naranjo-Morse, her book, *Mud Woman, Poems from the Clay*, is available on amazon.com. A new copy is \$17.95. Used copy prices start at 0 to .01. Shipping cost is \$4.00.
2. At the end of Lesson #3, there might not be enough time for the Free Verse Poem writing assignment. This lesson can be extended to another day. This will depend on class time and size.

Culminating Activity:

After completion of Free Verse poems, the teacher will designate a day for Poetry Readings. Students can be asked to volunteer or make it a requirement as an extension of Lesson Three. Student readings can be kept informal and plan it as a celebration for completing their poem and sharing their writings as a classroom community event. Depending on the teacher, other creative ideas can be added to match student group dynamics.

Handout #2:

Mud Woman's First Encounter With the World of Money and Business

From *Mud Woman, Poems from the Clay* by Nora Naranjo-Morse

1 She unwrapped her clay figures,
2 Unfolding the cloth each was nestled in,
3 carefully, almost with ceremony.
4 Concerning herself with the specific curves, bends and
5 idiosyncrasies, that made each piece her own.
6 Standing these forms upright, displaying them from
7 one side to the next, Mud Woman
8 could feel her pride surging upward
9 from a secret part within her,
10 translating into a smile that passed her lips.
11 All of this in front of the gallery owner.
12 After all the creations were unveiled, Mud Woman held her
13 breath.
14 The gallery owner, peering
from behind fashionably designed
16 bifocals, examined each piece
17 with an awareness Mud Woman
18 knew very little of.
19 The owner cleared her throat, asking:
20 "First of all dear, do you have a resume? You know,
21 something written that would identify you to the public.
22 Who is your family?
23 Are any of them well known in the Indian art world?" 2
4 Mud Woman hesitated, trying desperately to connect
25 this business woman's voice with her questions.
26 like a foreigner trying to comprehend
27 the innuendos of a new language, unexpected
28 and somewhat intimidating.
29 The center of what Mud Woman knew to be real
30 was shifting with each moment in the gallery.
31 The format of this exchange was a new dimension
32 from what was taken for granted at home,
33 where the clay, moist and smooth,
34 waited to be rounded and coiled
35 into sensuous shapes, in a workroom
36 Mud Woman and her man had built
37 of earth too.
38 All this struggled against a blaring radio
39 with poor reception and noon hour
40 traffic bustling beyond the frame walls.
41 Handling each piece, the merchant quickly judged
42 whether or not Mud Woman's work would be a profitable
43 venture.

44 "Well," she began, "your work is
45 strangely different, certainly not traditional
46 Santa Clara pottery and I'm not
47 sure there is a market for
48 your particular style, especially
49 since no one knows who you are.
50 However, if for some reason you make it big,
51 I can be the first to say, 'I discovered you.'
52 So, I'll buy a few pieces and we'll see how it goes."
53 Without looking up, she opened a large, black checkbook,
54 quickly scribbling the needed information to make
55 the gallery's check valuable.
56 Hesitantly, Mud Woman exchanged her work for the
57 unexpectedly smaller sum that wholesale prices dictated.
58 After a few polite, but obviously strained pleasantries
59 Mud Woman left, leaving behind her
60 shaped pieces of earth.
61 Walking against the honks of a harried
62 lunch crowd, Nan chu Kweejo spoke:
63 "Navi ayu, ti gin nau na muu,
64 nai sa aweh kucha?"
65 "My daughter, is this the way it goes,
66 this pottery business?"
67 Hearing this, Mud Woman lowered her head,
68 walking against the crowd of workers
69 returning from lunch.
70 Nan chu Kweejo's question,
71 clouded Mud Woman's vision with a mist
72 of lost innocence,
73 as she left the city
74 and the world of
75 money and business behind.