

Title

Severalty Act.

Grade Level

7th Grade.

Theme

Lakota Land Allotment.

Duration

Two 40-minute class periods.

Goal

Introduce students to the meaning of land allotment and how this applies to their lives today, tomorrow, and for future generations.

Objectives

Students will understand how the Severalty Act changed the dynamics of a Lakota way of understanding the land for millennia.

South Dakota Standards

Multiple programs and pathways will support improved student achievement across the curriculum.

Cultural Concept

The Oglala Lakota people understood land as communal holdings. The severalty act (allotment of land) broke the land into parcels owned by individuals. This went against the request of the Oglala council. They petitioned that the land be allotted to the council in fee simple versus to individuals in trust (Paul Robertson).

Cultural Background

Land is basic to Indian people: they are part of it and it is part of them; it is their Grandmother. The land provides life; it is the source of spiritual origins and sustaining, which in turn provide a landscape of cultural and emotional meaning. The lands of the prairie helped to make the Lakota tribal communities generous places where giving and sharing were the main beliefs.

Student Activities

Allotment map reading—Have students locate a section on an allotment map provided by the teacher. The students will work in pairs and randomly pick a section to write down the Legal Land Description using terms used in the Township and Range System. Surveying vocabulary terminology will be taught prior to this student activity.

Resources

- Vocabulary—Surveying Terminology.
- Copy of Severalty Act.
- Copies of Allotment Maps for students.
- Instructor example for student Observation and instructor instruction.
- Colored pencils.
- Pencils.
- Paper.
- Copies of Allotment Maps for student assessments.

Assessment

Each student will be given an allotment map of one of the South Dakota Reservations. Each student will randomly pick from a bowl a section number. After each student has selected their random number, they will write down the Legal Land Description on the back of their allotment map. The student will also color their selected section on the allotment map.

References

United States Government. (8 February 1887). An act to provide for the allotment of lands in severalty to Indians on the various reservations, and to extend the protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians, and for other purposes, 49th States and the Territories over the Indians, and for other purposes, 49th Cong. Transcript retrieved from the National Archives and Records Administration's "Our documents" website:
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=50&page=transcript>

For surveying terminology and example of writing legal descriptions, see:
<http://www.outfitters.com/genealogy/land/rfb-land.html>.

Developer

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