



Pioneer Life Post-visit

Classroom Activities

Brief Synopsis

The early pioneers have shaped the land and in turn have been shaped by it. The footprint left behind is evidence of this process. In the following activities, students will view a piece of land and compare its value from the perspective of a Native American Indian and a land surveyor. The concept of a lasting footprint will continue as students dig into their own history creating a genealogy poster.

Ages: Designed for 5th–8th grade

Time Considerations: 1 hour plus outside classroom time.

Materials:

- Activity 1
 - “Perspectives and Dividing of the Land” student worksheet.
 - Topographic map of your community and its surroundings (optional).
- Activity 2
 - Family Research Log
 - Family Tree Chart
 - various art/paper supplies for student poster

Vocabulary:

- Natural Resource, Geography, Perspectives, Genealogy, Human Footprint

Outcomes:

1. Student will demonstrate how different perspectives affect what aspects of a landscape people will notice, value, and use.
2. Students will hypothesize how the division of the land and the different treatments of those areas might affect the natural ecosystem.
3. Students will research family history and lineage to create a personalized genealogy chart.

Minnesota Academic Standards:

Social Studies: 4-8th. II.E.2, IV.C.2

Geography: 4-8th. V.C.1, V.C.1, V.D.2, V.D.1, V.D.1

Science: 4.III.A.1

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Activity 1: Perspectives and Dividing Landscapes

Background: As the pioneers moved across the United States in search of a home, they encountered new landscapes and new people. However, some of these people were not pioneers, but natives who had lived on the land for thousands of years. Both parties valued and used the land, but in different ways. Native Americans valued the landscape as a complete piece viewing the animals, plants and people as interconnected. The surveyors who mapped the land and identified its resources valued the landscape for its profitability.

Procedures:

1. Discuss with the students the relationship between land shape and land use. The physical features of an area often determine how the land is used. For example, a grist mill owner may see a river as a power source to grind grain. A farmer may see a prairie as a place with excellent soil to grow wheat.
2. Distribute the “Perspectives and Dividing Landscapes” worksheet to each student.
3. Once completed review and discuss the answers as appropriate.

Credits: from *Minnesota: A History of the Land* curriculum 2005 available at: www.historyoftheland.org

Discussion Questions:

- How do the perspectives of the Native Americans and surveyors compare and contrast?
- How might the removal of just one element (e.g., the pine forests) affect the rest of the areas?
- Which change do you think had the greatest effect on this imaginary landscape?
- How might an early pioneer visibly alter the landscape and for what purpose?
- If you could go back and restore some aspect of our landscape, which would it be and why?

Extension:

Apply the concept learned in this lesson to your own town or community. Some of your local businesses and industries exist specifically because of the landscape and natural resources of the area.

1. Have the students list the physical geological features of your town or community and its surrounding area. If Eagle Bluff was our example, the feature list would include: small creeks, the Root River, limestone bluffs, hardwood forests, natural springs, and oak savanna prairie.
2. Divide the students into learning teams of 4 to 5 students. Each team will determine how the community members have utilized the natural resources in your community. Students may need to pull information from local newspapers, business owners, and public officials. Again, using Eagle Bluff as our example: the Root River is used as a trout hatchery and tourist venue for fishing and boating. The prairie has been turned to productive farmland. The hardwood forest is harvested for its lumber. A quarry has been built to



extract the limestone from the bluffs.

3. Once the information is gathered the student will create a community advertisement poster or flyer to attract future business owners to the area. This advertisement should highlight the unique features of the area and how the resources can be utilized.
4. Lead a class discussion about the “human footprint” left behind from the decisions and actions of your community. Keep in mind footprints can have both a positive and negative impact on the environment and its community members.

Discussion Questions:

- How has your community been shaped by the land? In turn, how has the land shaped or affected your community?
- Is it possible for humans to live without affecting their landscape? Why or why not?
- What is your reaction to the following quote. “We abuse the land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see the land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect”.
Author *Aldo Leopold*

Activity 2: Trace Your Ancestry

Background: Just as humans leave a footprint on the environment, families leave a footprint from one generation to the next. Who we are: our values, family traditions, religious beliefs, occupations, home location, political stand, and so forth, are often carried on by family members. Tracing your family’s history or genealogy opens the door to a better understanding of your past and how the past has influenced who you are today.

Procedures:

1. Students should be encouraged to find out as much about their family members as possible. Avenues in which to do so may include: photo albums, cemeteries, diaries, church directories, and one on one interviews.
2. Use the Family Research Log and the Family Tree Chart Family to record such information as:
 - 1) Full names
 - 2) Date of birth and place
 - 3) Date of death and place
 - 4) Occupation
 - 5) Additional information such as: education, religion, ethnic origin, traditions, hobbies, or skills.
 - 6) Pictures of family members (optional)

Note: the Family Research Log is a generic page that can be copied

3. Now it is time to be creative! Students must display their family’s history in poster format using the information they have gathered.

Discussion Questions:

- What information did you find most interesting during your research?
- Were you able to trace back to the time when a family member immigrated to America? If so, what country did they come from and where did they settle?
- What family traditions have continued for at least three generations?
- How many family members have you met on your family tree?
- Share with the class one aspect of your life that has been influenced by your ancestors.

Teacher Tips

- The *Minnesota: A History of the Land* curriculum provides additional classroom activities and supplemental materials. Check out the website at the bottom of this page.
- For Activity 1 Extension, you may also divide the students into research groups to focus on one specific natural resource of your community and how it might be utilized.
- Using a topographic map or aerial photograph of your community will help students determine the geological features of the area.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/>
PBS Frontier House. Follow along as three modern families are placed in an 1880’s harsh environment and must live as pioneers. Site includes teacher resources, lesson plans, pioneer essays and student interactive pages.


<http://www.byub.org/ancestors/teachersguide/>

Website contains a series of classroom lessons that can be used online or downloaded.

<http://www.lhf.org/cgi-bin/gygsite.pl?2~0>
The Living History Farm. A great site to get a general idea of the tasks and tools needed to survive as a pioneer. Samples include; butter making, harvesting grain, and dipping candles.

<http://www.historyoftheland.org/>
Minnesota: The History of the Land. Site includes access to the DVD series, teacher guide, and student workbook.

<http://www.teraserver.homeadvisor.msn.com/default.aspx>
TerraServer USA. Website contains links to both topographic and aerial photographs anywhere in the United States.

Perspectives and Dividing Landscapes  **LESSON 2 WORKSHEET**

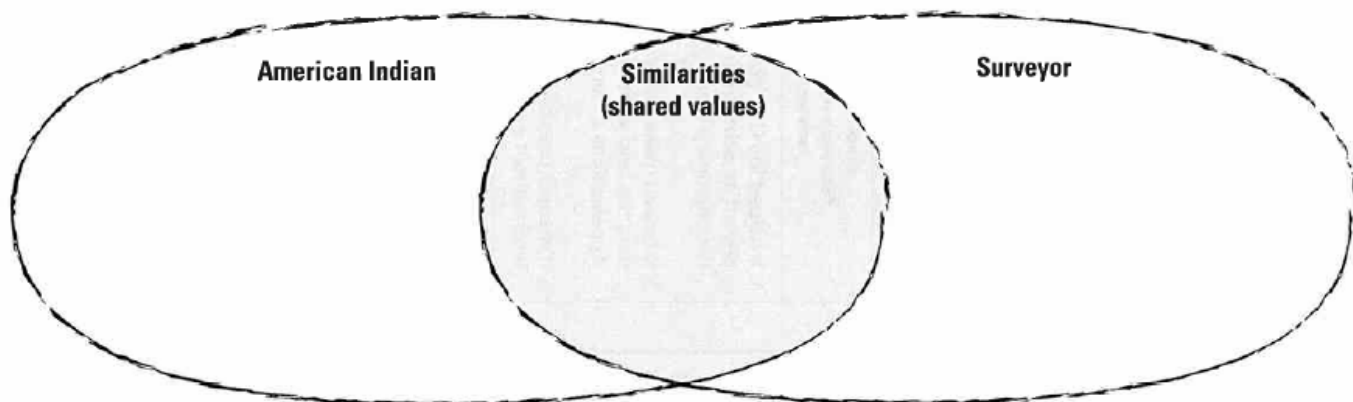
MINNESOTA
A history of the land

Perspectives and Dividing Landscapes

The values that you have affect how you see things. American Indians valued the landscape as a complete piece, with the animals, plants, and people all connected to each other. Surveyors valued the landscape for the features that could be used to make money.

Step 1

Study the map of this area, and imagine that you are an American Indian and then a surveyor. *What are the similarities and differences in the parts of the landscape that an American Indian and surveyor might have valued?*



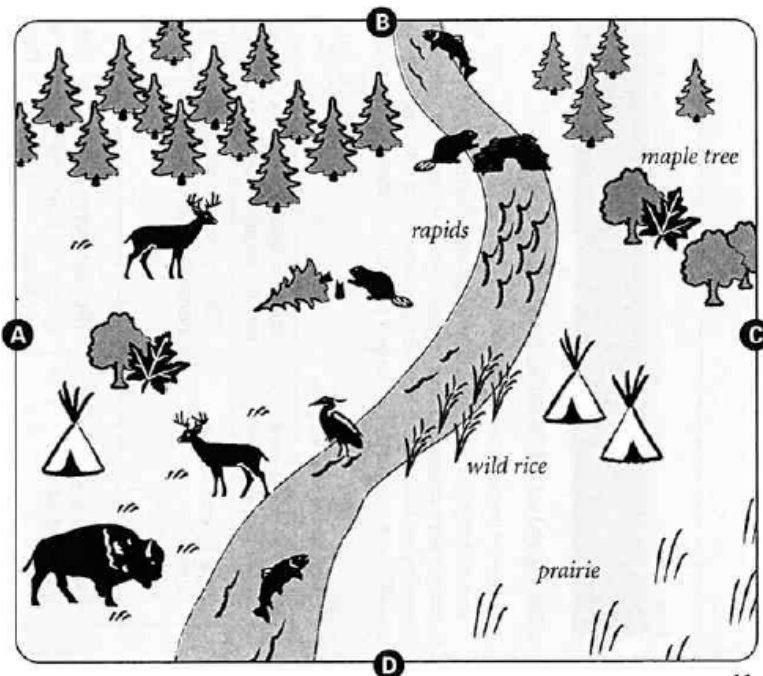
Step 2

Draw a grid line from point A to point C, and another grid line from point B to point D. Color the section that would be most appealing to a farmer *green*. Color the section that would be most appealing to a lumberjack *purple*. Color the section that would be most appealing to a mill owner *red*. (Hint: look for an area that has waterpower.)

Step 3

Imagine that each of those three sections has been altered and developed into a farm, lumbered area, and mill company and town.

How would those changes affect the animals, plants, and people in the fourth area?





FAMILY RESEARCH LOG

Parent Grandparent Great Grandparent (circle one)

Write name as:
Jennifer Marie MURRAY

Write date as
23 Jan 1954

Write place as:
Mt. Lake MN USA

Circle one: Father, Grandfather Great Grandfather		Name:	
Born		Place	
Married		Place	
Died		Place Cause of death	
Ancestry			
Occupation(s)			
Father		Mother	
Circle one: Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother		Maiden Name:	
Born		Place	
Married		Place	
Died		Place Cause of death	
Ancestry			
Occupation(s)			
Father		Mother	
Children (in birth order)			
1	Sex M/F	Name:	
Born		Place	
Died		Place	
2	Sex M/F	Name:	
Born		Place	
Died		Place	
3	Sex M/F	Name:	
Born		Place	
Died		Place	
4	Sex M/F	Name:	
Born		Place	
Died		Place	
Additional Family Information			

Directions: In each rectangle box write the first and last name of the individual and the year of birth and year of death.

Justina Theisen
1912-2003

YOUR PARENTS

Male

Female

YOUR GRANDPARENTS

Male

Female

Male

Female

YOUR GREAT GRANDPARENTS

Male

Female

Male

Female

Male

Female

Male

Female

YOU

Family Tree Chart

