

**The Struggle of the Plains Indians and the Massacre at Wounded Knee (1850's  
thru 1890's)**  
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## **I. Lesson Plan Summary**

- a. Summary: This lesson is intended to focus on the conflicts created on the Great Plains as a result of westward migration by settlers and the reaction by many Native tribes to hold onto their cultures and, as an extension of their cultures, the land they lived on. This lesson is brief, yet it spotlights some of the major events related to this subject. The activities will include reading skills, analysis, cause and effect relationships, first person narration, and a persuasive writing activity.
- b. Objectives: The students will learn about the conflicts that were brought about between the Plains Indians and the U.S. military as a result of Westward Movement, with special emphasis on the Massacre at Wounded Knee. Standards that are covered include: SSA 1.4.2, SSB 1.4.4, and SSB 2.4.6 of the Sunshine State Standards.
- c. The event or time period focus is the mid to late 1800's and the Plains Wars, especially focusing on the Sioux Nation and the Massacre at Wounded Knee.
- d. This activity is intended for the high school level (Regular classes), but could easily be tailored for the use within a middle school classroom.
- e. The materials needed for this lesson include: Call to Freedom Textbook by Holt (2003 Florida edition); Student handouts for activities; internet access.
- f. This lesson is intended to extend for three 45-minute classes. Extra time could be extended as follow-up homework or in class as needed.

## **II. Lesson Procedures**

**First Day:** The unit lesson could begin with a brief introduction to the topic of westward migration and extend into questions about what knowledge the students might have about the conflicts between the Natives and the U.S. military and settlers.

Following this introduction, the students would be grouped into twos or threes for a Think/Pair/Share hybrid activity. The students would read from pages 546-550 and share their thoughts on key events and people of this activity. The groups would be expected to develop a set of questions/observations as they read for an eventual class discussion. This activity would probably continue until the end of the first day's time period.

**Second Day:** The class will have the first half of the class period to work individually to analyze and determine the **Cause and Effect** relationships of events that took place during the time period of focus using the attached Cause and Effect activity. **Author's note:** *This activity was created for use with this specific textbook so this activity may have to be reformatted to suit the needs of teachers using different textbooks.* Students who need extra time could possibly finish the assignment for homework or at a later date.

Following this individual activity, the class will discuss the variety of questions and answers that were developed during the previous days' activity. Hopefully, there will be a sense of volunteerism among your students. If not, then simply call the groups at your pleasure or perhaps have group that just discussed or issued their question pick the next group for discussion. It is advisable, due to time constraints, to have

one question/observation from one group at a time so as to hopefully involve each group. This activity will easily conclude the second day of this lesson.

**Third Day:** On this day your students will need access your school's computer lab. The teacher should provide the following web address: <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/knee.htm> so that the class may read an eyewitness account of a participant to the Massacre at Wounded Knee.

I always provide a set of comprehension questions, 3 in all, for the students to answer from the preface/background information that precedes the eyewitness account.

The questions that I provide are pretty basic:

1. What reasons did the Sioux have to be upset and even anxious by the morning of December 29, 1890?
2. Explain the purpose of the Ghost Dance and why this activity seemed to scare the Indian Agent stationed at Pine Ridge.
3. Describe the outcome of the violence that exploded at Wounded Knee.

The students should then read the firsthand account of Philip Wells, a mixed blood Sioux who served as a scout for the U.S. Army at Wounded Knee.

With the knowledge that the students have gained from the focus on the Massacre at Wounded Knee, and with the added insight of other conflicts involving the Plains Indians during this time period, the students will be expected to write out a short witness statement of what they saw at the Massacre at Wounded Knee in an effort to defend the actions of the Sioux Indians, and conversely, question the reaction of some, if not all of the soldiers.

The students would be required to write their witness statement from the viewpoint of one of the Sioux Indians, using information from both the background information and the testimony of Philip Wells. This short essay would have to emote the viewpoint of the Natives in the manner of a persuasive essay. The Persuasive essay should be 3 to 4 paragraphs in length, although some students may use some dramatic flair to expand their viewpoints. This portion of the assignment may require extra time, possibly homework or an extension for another day.

### **III. Activities:**

**Day One:** Teacher introduction followed by small group reading analysis and discussion.

**Day Two:** Individual student activity followed by Class Discussion from the small group activity of the previous day.

**Day Three:** Primary source reading and examination. Persuasive short essay.

### **IV. Assessment:**

For the individual Cause and Effect assignment I grade traditionally based on accuracy of student responses.

Class participation grades are provided for the students during the small group activities of the first day.

Evaluation for the Persuasive Writing of the third day is completed using a basic Extended Response Essay Rubric associated with Florida Writes standards.

### **V. Resources**

Those resources that were used to develop this lesson include the Call to Freedom 2003 edition textbook and the eyewitness to history website, specifically: <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/knee.htm>

The credit for the article used for the development of this lesson plan belongs to: Massacre At Wounded Knee, 1890," EyeWitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (1998).

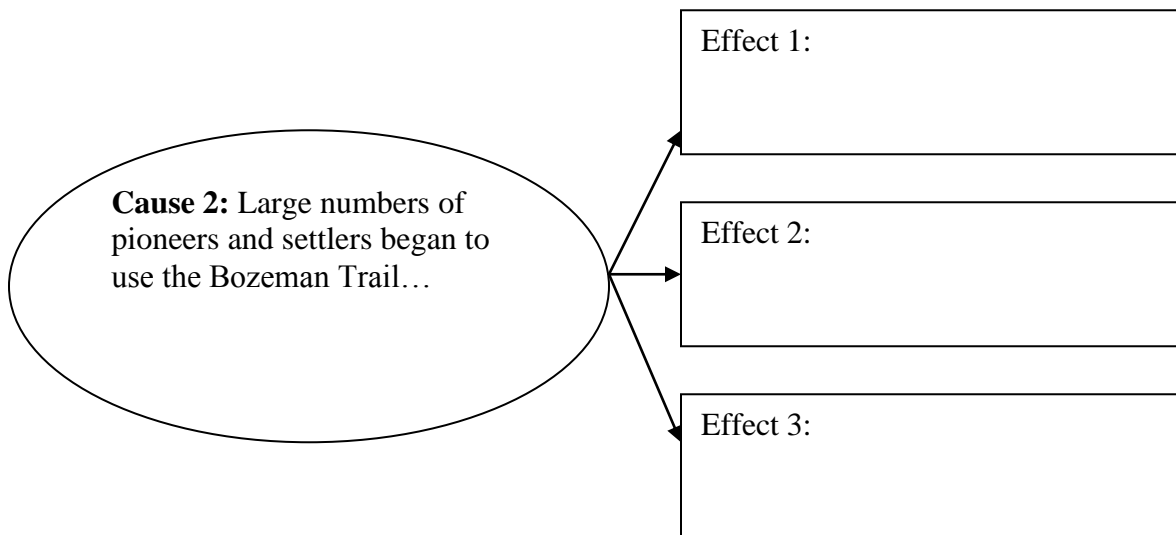
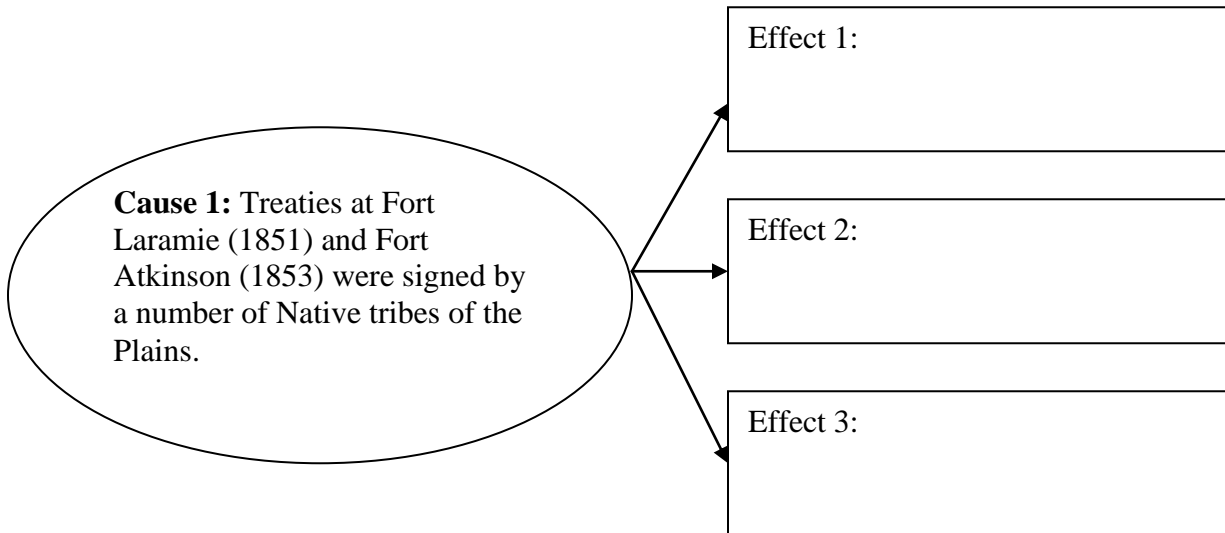
Name:

Date:

Class Period:

### Cause and Effect Chart: The Plains Indians and Western Settlement

Directions: After reading each cause, list the effects. Fill in all boxes/bubbles.



**Cause 3:** Claims were made of a gold discovery in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory, land that belonged to the Sioux nation.

Effect 1:

Effect 2:

Effect 3:

Effect 4:

**Cause 4:** Reservation police are sent to arrest the Sioux leader, Sitting Bull, in 1890 at the Standing Rock Reservation.

Effect 1:

Effect 2:

Effect 3:

Effect 4:

Effect 5: