

## LESSON PLAN - Boarding Schools

EALRS: (History 1) The student examines and understands major ideas, themes, developments, turning points, chronology, and cause-and-effect relationships in US, World, and Washington State history. (History 2) The student understands the origin and impact of ideas and technological developments on history and social change.

GRADE LEVEL: Secondary

BASIC CONCEPTS: Impact of the Indian Boarding Schools

ORGANIZING GENERALIZATION: “A major conflict between cultures occurred when the federal government attempted to bring American Indians into the mainstream of society following the 1871 conclusion of the treaty-signing period. The boarding school was the primary institution encouraging acculturation of Indian youth due to the school’s adherence to a regime that reflected the military fortifications in which schools were housed. Different conceptions of time and history were taught in boarding schools, and Indian students were confronted with a school culture and curriculum vastly different from their own tribal reality.” quote from *From Boarding Schools to Self Determination* by Willard Bill

CULTURE AREA: Entire United States

TIME PERIOD: 1880-1920

BACKGROUND: In the post Civil War era idealistic reformers turned their attention to the “plight” of the Indian people, they believed that with the proper education and treatment Indians could become like other citizens: patriotic, and productive members of society. One of the first efforts was by Captain Richard Henry Pratt , who founded the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. His belief in the inferiority of Indian ways to those of whites led to his guiding principle, “kill the Indian and save the man.” The devastation of the Indian Boarding Schools is still being felt by many Native American people and their communities.

OBJECTIVES:

Knowledge

**Students will:** (History 1.3) examine the influence of culture on US, World, and Washington State history, (History 3.1) explain the origin and impact of an idea on society, and (History 3.2) analyze how historical conditions shape ideas and how ideas change over time.

Skills

**Students will:** Read the included materials, comparing and contrasting Indian Boarding Schools with today’s school system, and analyzing the impact on contemporary American Indian people and communities.

Values

**Students will:** examine and discuss historical contributions to US society of various individuals and groups from different cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds, examine how

ideas have conflicted with each other, and compare the meaning of ideas in different places and cultures.

**ACTIVITIES:** Students will read the information about Indian Boarding Schools, and will either write a paper comparing and contrasting the schools to the learning environment in today's educational system, or will write a paper on the effects of the boarding schools on contemporary people and their communities.

**EXTENSIONS:** An excellent movie on this subject is available through the Washington State Historical Society Library - *Where the Spirit Lives???*- The movie could be used as an introduction to the material in this lesson or could be used to develop a deeper understanding of the injury to American Indian families during this period.

**EVALUATION:** There are, of course, many differences in the boarding school experience and the experiences of today's educational system, but there are many similarities. Students often express that they resent the authoritarian rule that some schools and teachers embrace. As our society becomes increasingly pluralistic we must become increasingly compassionate in our attitudes about minority cultures, languages, and values.

**MATERIALS/ RESOURCES:** Available from OSPI- Department of Indian Education - *From Boarding Schools to Self-Determination* by Willard Bill  
UW Library website - <http://content.lib.washington.edu>  
essay by Carolyn J. Marr -*Assimilation Through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest*  
excerpts from *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875-1928* by David Wallace Adams