



Drawing History

*Exploring Primary Sources through the
Charles Washakie Hide Painting*

Overview

Primary sources are the raw materials of history. Through written documents, maps, photos, and even artwork, these sources allow the people of the past to tell their own story. In this program, students will use the Charles Washakie Hide Painting to explore the role of primary sources in research and experience while learning about the purposes and creation of American Indian hide paintings and the Sun Dance.

Grade

Secondary (6th – 12th Grade)

Duration

One to Two 45 – 50 minute class periods

Subject

Social Studies

Language Arts

Standards of Learning Met

Social Studies

- SS8.2.1: Compare and contrast the ways various groups (e.g., cliques, clubs, ethnic communities, and American Indian tribes) meet human needs and concerns (e.g., self-esteem, friendship, and heritage) and contribute to identity, situations, and events
- SS8.2.2: Examine and evaluate how human expression (e.g., language, literature, arts, architecture, traditions, beliefs, and spirituality) contributes to the development and transmission of culture
- SS8.2.3: Compare and contrast the unique cultural characteristics of various groups within Wyoming and the nation
- SS8.2.4: Explain the cultural contributions of and tensions between groups in Wyoming, the United States, and the World (e.g., racial, ethnic, social and institutional)
- SS8.4.4: Identify historical interactions between and among individuals, groups, and/or institutions (e.g., family, neighborhood, political, economic, religious, social, cultural, and workplace)
- SS8.4.5: Identify relevant primary and secondary sources for research. Compare and contrast treatment of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources
- SS12.2.1: Analyze and evaluate the ways various groups (e.g., social, political, and cultural) meet human needs and concerns (e.g., individual needs and common good) and contribute to identity (e.g., group, national, and global), situations, and events



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- SS12.2.2: Analyze human experience and cultural expression (e.g., language, literature, arts, traditions, beliefs, spirituality, values, and behavior) and illustrate integrated views of a specific culture
- SS12.2.3: Evaluate how the unique characteristics of cultural groups have contributed and continue to influence Wyoming's history and contemporary life (e.g., tribes, explorers, early settlers, and immigrants)
- SS12.2.4: Analyze and critique the conflicts resulting from cultural assimilation and cultural preservation in Wyoming, the United States, and the World (e.g., racial, ethnic, social, and institutional)
- SS12.4.1: Describe patterns of change (cause and effect) and evaluate how past events impacted future events and the modern world.
- SS12.4.4: Describe the historical interactions between and among individuals, groups, and/or institutions (e.g., family, neighborhood, political, economic, religious, social, cultural, and workplace) and their impact on significant historical events
- SS12.4.5: Using primary and secondary sources, apply historical research methods to interpret and evaluate important historical events from multiple perspectives

Language Arts

- W.8.6: Uses precise language, domain - specific vocabulary, and information including facts, concrete details, quotations, and definitions to introduce and develop a topic.
- W.8.7: Provides an organizational structure to convey ideas and information clearly, including varied transitional words and phrases and a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.
- W.8.8: Establishes and maintains a formal style
- SL.8.1: Analyzes the purpose of information presented in different media and formats, evaluates motives behind the presentation, and critiques the reasoning and relevance of the speaker's argument and claims
- W.12.6: Develops a topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples
- W.12.7: Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; includes appropriate and varied transitional words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text; provides a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
- W.12.8: Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone
- SL.12.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric*
- SL.12.4: Presents information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective; makes a strategic use of digital media; adapts speech to a variety of contexts and tasks



Objectives

Student will be able to...

- Define and use primary sources
- Define secondary source and distinguish from primary sources
- Gain an understanding of why primary sources are utilized in historical research
- Use words and visual images to represent essential themes from their own experiences

Materials

Included

- Reproduction of Charles Washakie's Hide Painting
- Sample Lesson Plan
- *About the Object* Information Sheet
- *Using Primary & Secondary Sources* Information Sheets

Needed

- Whiteboard, chalkboard, newspaper pad
- Collection of sources both primary and secondary (i.e. newspaper, letter, map, government document, photograph, non-fiction book, artwork, video documentary, etc.)
- Old magazines to be used as a collage resource

Key Terms

Primary Source – a resource that provides first-hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation.

Secondary Source - a secondhand account about people, events, topics, or places that is based on what some other writer has experienced.

Hide Painting – a mineral-based painting on an animal hide which tells the stories of individuals or bands, and can be found on teepees, buffalo or elk robes, or on garments. *See a more detailed description on the About the Object information sheet.*

Sun Dance – a religious ceremony spanning several days meant to thank the deities for past blessings and to ask for continued food and safety. *See a more detailed description on the Object Fact Sheet.*

Historical Perspective – an understanding of the main issues, individuals, and contributions made during that period of time.

Sample Lesson Plan

1. Open a discussion on primary sources and secondary sources by having students define “primary source” and “secondary source”. What distinguishes the two? Have students name examples while listing them on the whiteboard or newspaper pad. Group the examples according to whether they are primary or secondary. Feel free to use the *Using Primary & Secondary Sources* information sheets included to help in discussion.
2. Hand out (or have students select from) the collection of sources either individually or in small groups. Have students describe the source to the class and define it as either a primary or secondary source.
3. Display Charles Washakie's Hide Painting. Using the *About the Object* information sheet, briefly describe the history of the painting. Is this a primary or secondary source? Why?



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What is happening? What does the source tell us about the event depicted? Why is a hide painting the chosen medium to depict this event? Allow students to verbalize any observations about characters and actions included on the Painting. Explain the Sun Dance and how it is depicted in Charles Washakie's Hide Painting. (Use additional photographs and resources if desired.)

4. Have students think of an event or experience from their lives. Using the hide painting as a guide, allow students the time to make a visual representation of the event or experience. This can be hand-drawn, a collage, a digital or audio/visual creation or a combination of the four. Encourage students to include both literal, character representations, as well as metaphorical, conceptual representations. Have each student write a brief description of the event and how it is represented in the artwork. Provide time for class sharing if desired.

Homework

The artwork and written description can both be assigned as homework if time runs short.

Suggested Reading

Spier, Leslie. "The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians: Its Development and Diffusion." *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*. Vol. 16 (7). New York City, NY: Order of the Trustees. 1921. Accessible online at <http://bit.ly/rTYxNN>.



About the Object
Charles Washakie Hide Painting
Carbon County Museum

Hide Painting, Charles Washakie, Shoshoni, ca. 1916

General Information

A hide painting is a mineral-based painting on an animal hide which tells the stories of individuals or bands, and it can be found on teepees, buffalo or elk robes, or on garments.

The American Indians of the Northern Plains wore hides for both practical and ceremonial purposes. They wore hides in winter, with the fur on the inside for warmth. When people were sick, they often wore a hide painted with symbols to hasten healing. Women sometimes wore painted hides to promote childbearing. Political and spiritual leaders wore special hides that might depict a warrior's heroism or record important events in the history of the tribe.

Women often wore hides that they painted with geometric patterns and shapes. Men usually wore hides that told a story in pictures.

Some tribes used hide paintings to record their history. Tribal leaders chose the single most important event of each year, and added one picture representing that event to the hide painting. Members of the tribe often identified the year they were born by referring to the event depicted on these "winter count" hides" (text adapted from the Smithsonian Institution's *Tracking the Buffalo: Stories from a Buffalo Hide Painting*).

Who made it?

This hide painting was done by Charles Washakie (waa-shu-kee) around 1916 and is a copy of a hide painting done by his father, Chief Washakie, an important Shoshoni figure from the Wind River Reservation. Charles was known to often help his father with his hide paintings later in Chief Washakie's life, and this hide painting was made using traditional methods. However, Chief Washakie's original hide painting only has one chief depicted in a headdress, where for an unknown reason, Charles' copy depicts two.

What inspired it?

This hide depicts a scene before the Sun Dance. We know this because only the center pole is visible (no brace arches or any of the other twelve poles). A buffalo head is hanging from the pole, but none of the other sacred elements are seen. The hide also depicts a buffalo hunt before the Sun Dance as well as dancers for the ceremony.

The Sun Dance is a religious event originating among the Plains tribes where numerous bands come together in mid-summer, usually in July. Legend places its beginnings with a warrior wandering alone looking for food for his starving tribe. While out in the wilderness, he met a deity, fasted, and was taught a ritual that, when performed, brought the buffalo. As time passed, the Sun Dance grew in importance for calling rain and food, uniting bands together, and renewing chieftain ranks.

The Sun Dance involves a medicine pole (representing the Thunderbird or the Christian God) anchored upright in the ground surrounded by twelve smaller poles (representing the Thunderbird's tail feathers or the twelve disciples) standing in a circle. Rafters meet at the top of the pole, but no roof is erected. Brush or canvas is gathered around the sides for shade. Objects are hung from the center pole to represent specific things: red willow (peace and tranquility), a buffalo head (appreciation for blessings received), a beaver pelt (industry), a long braid of hair (sacrifice), and an eagle's tail feathers. Men fast for three days while women tempt them with food. Each day, the dancers face East as drums and whistles play. Dancers keep their eyes on the sun during the day of dancing. On the fourth morning, all participants give thanks before washing off the ceremonial paint and eating.

Things to look for...



Deerhide – the medium for the hide painting, it was smoked prior to the painting to make it waterproof and to add color.



Horses – eighteen red, green, blue, and brown horses can be found on the hide; some with riders and some without. Artists often painted horses more decoratively using colors not normally ascribed to the animal.



Buffalo – seventeen adult buffalo (or American Bison) can be seen covering the hide in various stages of the hunt: both being pursued and embattling the hunters.



Dancers – three dancers can be seen toward the center of the painting. These dancers are drawn with arched backs, a stylized component of Shoshoni paintings.



Drummers – five drummers can be seen toward the center of the hide surrounding the outline of a drum. These drummers would be located outside the Sun Dance shelter for the majority of the ceremony.



Chiefs – notice the two figures wearing feathered headdresses and porcupine quill breastplates. The original hide painting done by Chief Washakie only depicted one chief. For an unknown reason, Charles Washakie's version shows two.



Sun Dance Pole – the Sun Dance pole can be seen at the center of the painting. It has a bison head hanging from the top. Notice the bison head still has its hide. Bison skulls were a sign of famine for the Shoshoni. For the Sun Dance and its representative blessings, the bison head is depicted with its hide, horns, and eyes.

Using Primary & Secondary Sources

Primary sources are the “raw materials” of history. They consist of original documents and objects produced during a specific time period by people involved in a specific event.

Primary sources allow the people of the past to tell their own story. Examining primary sources gives students a powerful sense of history and the complexity of the past. Helping students analyze primary sources can also guide them toward higher-order thinking and better critical thinking and analysis skills.

Secondary sources are those documents and objects produced by those not directly involved in an event or time period, “a friend-of-a-friend’s” account. They often draw upon primary sources for information.

Primary Sources

Autobiography
Pamphlets
Photographs
Maps
Government Documents
Letters
Artifacts
Tablets
Sound Recordings
Oral History

Secondary Sources

Biography
Newspaper Articles
Textbooks
Non-fiction Essay or Book
Magazine Article



Why Use Primary Sources?

Primary sources provide a window into the past—unfiltered access to the record of artistic, social, scientific and political thought and achievement during the specific period under study, produced by people who lived during that period.

Bringing young people into close contact with these unique, often profoundly personal, documents and objects can give them a very real sense of what it was like to be alive during a long-past era.

1. Engage students

- Primary sources help students relate in a personal way to events of the past and promote a deeper understanding of history as a series of human events.
- Because primary sources are snippets of history, they encourage students to seek additional evidence through research.
- First-person accounts of events helps make them more real, fostering active reading and response.

2. Develop critical thinking skills

- Many state standards support teaching with primary sources, which require students to be both critical and analytical as they read and examine documents and objects.
- Primary sources are often incomplete and have little context. Students must use prior knowledge and work with multiple primary sources to find patterns.
- In analyzing primary sources, students move from concrete observations and facts to questioning and making inferences about the materials.
- Questions of creator bias, purpose, and point of view may challenge students' assumptions.

3. Construct knowledge

- Inquiry into primary sources encourages students to wrestle with contradictions and compare multiple sources that represent differing points of view, confronting the complexity of the past.
- Students construct knowledge as they form reasoned conclusions, base their conclusions on evidence, and connect primary sources to the context in which they were created, synthesizing information from multiple sources.
- Integrating what they glean from comparing primary sources with what they already know, and what they learn from research, allows students to construct content knowledge and deepen understanding.

