

Unit 5, Lesson 14: Trick or Treaty - The Walking Purchase of 1737

Lesson Overview

The warm-up to this lesson is designed to be a fun way to prepare students to transfer into the core content of this lesson which is the Walking Purchase of 1737. From the perspective of Lenni Lenape Indians, this “Purchase” tricked them into what the European Americans considered to be a large transfer of property.

Students will analyze Benjamin West’s The Treaty of Penn with the Indians to set the stage for one motivation for West’s famous painting. They will then read about the Walking Purchase.

Delaware Content Standards:

- History Standard 1, 4-5 [Chronology]: Students will study historical events and persons within a given time frame in order to create a chronology and identify related cause-effect factors.
- History Standard 2a, 4-5 [Analysis]: Students will draw historical conclusions and construct historical accounts from primary and secondary source materials
- History Standard 2b, 4-5 [Analysis]: Students will examine historical materials relating to a particular region, society, or theme; chronologically arrange them; and analyze change over time.
- History Standard 3, 4-5 [Interpretation]: Students will explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and relate this explanation to the evidence presented or the point-of-view of the author.

Common Core ELA Standards:

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2](#): Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7](#) Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

Big Ideas: cause-effect, change over time

Essential Questions:

- What effect did the Walking Purchase have on relations between the Native Americans and European colonists?

Enduring Understandings:

Students will understand that land treaties negotiated between European colonists and Native Americans were frequently unfair to Native Americans and hurt relationships between the two groups of people.

Resources:

- [Google Slides](#)
- [Resource 1: Warm Up](#)
- [Resource 2: Warm Up](#)
- [Resource 3: The Treaty of Penn with the Indians by Benjamin West \(1771-1772\)](#)

- [Resource 4: William Penn’s Message to Indians in Pennsylvania \(February 25, 1682\)](#)
- [Resource 5: Story of the Walking Purchase](#)
- [Resource 6: Check for Understanding](#)

Procedures:

1. **Warm Up:** Separate the students into two sides of the room. Have the two sides face one other. Tell them that they are going to receive a piece of paper with a brief assignment on it. The papers you distribute must remain upside down until you say begin. Give one side of the room [Resource 1](#). Give the other side [Resource 2](#). Don’t let students know that they are receiving different resources. Do not pass out the papers until you provide the following instructions:

Warm Up Activity Instructions

- A. Tell the students that they are about to engage in a competition.
- B. When they turn their papers over they should look for the box at the bottom of the grid that has the word “START” in it.
- C. Then find the box at the top of the grid that has the word “FINISH” in it.
- D. Their task will be to write the letters W and P in all of the empty white boxes from “Start” to “Finish.” The Ws and Ps must be entered in alternating boxes i.e., first box = W; second box = P; third box = W; fourth box = P and on and on.
- E. To win, all students on one side of the room have to have filled in all of the empty white boxes with Ws and Ps. They have to be shaded in order, one at a time beginning with “Start” and ending with “Finish.”
- F. When you have completely shaded all of the boxes, put your head down so I know when one side is finished.
- G. The winning side will receive an award (teacher can decide what that award will be e.g., a treat, extra time at recess, no homework).
- H. Any violations of rules will result in said individual becoming ineligible for the award.
- I. Any not filling in the boxes correctly (i.e., alternating Ws and Ps) will also be ineligible to receive an award and the errors must be corrected before your side is declared the winner.

[you may want to designate the first student to finish on each side as the rules checker for his or her side]

Any questions? Say “Begin” when you are ready. Be sure to walk around the room making sure students are following directions - particularly the rule that they have to fill in each box one at a time

IMPORTANT NOTE for the Teacher: The side receiving Resource 2 will have a significant advantage but that is what happened to the Lenape in their “Walking Purchase” of 1737. The Ws and Ps are the first letters in “Walking Purchase.” Don’t explain this to the students until they have read about the Walking Purchase but feel free to tell them that they will understand why you did this activity and gave one side an advantage toward the end of the

lesson. Hopefully, *they will be able to explain the connection* between the Warm-Up and the Walking Purchase after they have read about it.

2. **Historic Art Analysis:** Project a copy of Benjamin West’s Painting on [Resource 3](#) for students to see.

For the Teacher

The following information about the painting is found on the website [here](#)

Benjamin West’s *Penn’s Treaty with the Indians* (1772) illustrates a scene in which the Quaker leader and “founder” of Pennsylvania William Penn is trading peacefully with leaders of the Lenni Lenape and Delaware peoples. It is a recounting of a popular belief that in 1682, Penn met with the Lenni Lenape and Delaware peoples under an elm tree at Shackamaxon and traded gifts for land. He had been granted the rights to the land by King Charles II of England, but as a Quaker he is shown choosing to do what was morally and ethically right within his beliefs and negotiating peacefully to compensate the Native Americans who were living in what the colonists called Pennsylvania Colony.

3. **Sourcing Exercise:** Ask students to look at the information beneath the painting.
 - Who painted this and when was it painted? [[Benjamin West, 1771-1772](#)]
 - When did the meeting illustrated in the painting take place? [[1682](#)]
4. **Drawing for Understanding:** Have students take out a piece of paper and draw the scene from their first birthday celebration.
 - a. After they’ve had some time to draw, ask them:
 - i. Does your drawing show what actually happened on your first birthday?
 - ii. Do you really know what that big day in your lives must have looked like?
 - iii. Is your drawing fact or imagination/interpretation or a bit of both?
5. **Document Analysis:** Distribute copies of [Resource 4 - William Penn’s Message to the Indians](#).
Note - this document has been modified so that grade 4 students can comprehend it.
 - a. Tell students that William Penn is the man who the King of England gave the colony of Pennsylvania to. They are about to read a message that William Penn (who was still in England) had one of his friends bring to the Native Americans who lived in Pennsylvania.
 - b. Have students read the message. Then, have them complete the formative Check for Understanding at the bottom of the page. Provide feedback on their responses. Some students may be able to offer credible explanations that do not appear in the Answer Key below.

Answer Key

- Conclusion 1: Paragraph 2
- Conclusion 2: Paragraph 5
- Conclusion 3: Paragraph 4
- Conclusion 4: Paragraph 1 2 4 5
- Conclusion 5: Paragraph 4

6. **Historic Art Analysis:** Distribute copies of [Resource 3](#). Draw students' attention back to Benjamin West's painting and have them work with a partner or in small groups to answer the following question at the bottom of Resource 3 [suggested answers in blue below]:
- Who is in the painting? [[Native Americans, merchants from the British colony of Pennsylvania, William Penn](#),
 - What are they doing? [[exchanging gifts - a custom of Native Americans as part of diplomacy](#)]
 - What details in the painting serve as evidence for your conclusion? [depends on students' conclusions but the man kneeling is giving cloth to the Lenape leader. Others in the painting have other yellow and green cloths draped around them](#)]
 - Is the painting a primary or secondary source? [[it is secondary in this context as it was drawn nearly 100 years after the event it illustrates](#)]
 - Do you think the artist was actually there when this meeting took place? [[no, few if any lived that long in those days](#)]
 - Should we conclude that the scene in this painting actually happened as it is shown to have happened? [[some, perhaps, but it is mostly an interpretation](#)]
 - Is there a possibility that it shows some things that really happened? What might make you believe that what the artist drew is an accurate representation of what happened in 1682? [[e.g., there were records of the event, maybe a history of Pennsylvania written by someone who lived in 1682 and interviewed people or witnessed the event...](#)]
 - Why do you think the artist painted this? What is the painting trying to do to those who look at it? [[make people believe that the English colonists in Pennsylvania treated Lenape people fairly and with respect](#)]
7. **Reading: The Walking Purchase.** Distribute copies of [Resource 5: Story of the Walking Purchase](#). Prior to beginning the reading, tell students that they will be asked to...
- summarize what they have read with details from the reading
 - explain how the information in the visual contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- When students finish reading, assign students to a partner and each takes a number 1 or 2. They should assume identities as Partner #1 or Partner #2.
 - Task 1:** Partner #1 summarizes what they have read with details from the reading. Partner 2 adds to and enhances the summary - being sure to correct any errors.
 - Whole group sharing - ask volunteers to share summaries with the whole class, while you check for understanding.
 - Task 2:** Partners #2 explain how the information in the visual contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. Then Partners #1 adds to and enhances the summary - being sure to correct any errors.
 - Whole group sharing - ask volunteers to share summaries with the whole class, while you check for understanding.
8. **Debrief the Lesson and Warm-Up:** Say...Now, think back to the warm-up.
- Can you now make the connection between the warm-up and the story of the Walking Purchase? [[the warm-up was similar to the activities described in the Walking Purchase reading. One side had an unfair advantage](#)]
 - Did any of you think that the warm-up activity was unfair? [[yes](#)] [That's how the Lenape felt.](#)
 - Did some of you have to follow a winding trail of blocks that the Lenape thought would be followed as part of the Walking Purchase? [those who had Resource 1](#)
 - Did some of you follow a straight trail of blocks like the one that the Penn family carved out? [those who had Resource 2](#)

9. **Additional Checks for Understanding:** Distribute copies of [Resource 6](#) and have students complete the checks for understanding.
10. **Debrief** Benjamin West's The Treaty of Penn with the Indians.

For the Teacher

The following is adapted from a SmartHistory website teacher's guide [here](#):

"...the painting doesn't show the reality of the relationship between the Pennsylvania colonizers and the local Native groups. It was commissioned about 100 years after the scene it shows, and is meant to show the way people wanted to believe that colonization happened. It was an important narrative for people in the colonies to believe that "at least at this time we traded well with our neighbors. That we have business practices and religious practices and cultural practices that perpetuate peace." It is essentially depicting a myth.

A work of propaganda

The painting was also meant to bolster the reputation of William Penn's son Thomas, who hadn't been very fair in his dealings with the local Natives [recall the Walking Purchase], and whose near royal authority over the colony was not popular on the eve of the revolutionary War. Thomas Penn was the one who commissioned the painting. It helped to be able to point to something that showed that he and his ancestors had been kind, benevolent, and fair.

Images that persuade

The painter, Benjamin West, has placed the bolt of white cloth being offered to the Native Americans at the center of the painting, emphasizing the idea of trade. He also shows other Native people in the painting wearing cloth in shades of green, yellow, red, and blue. It is meant to emphasize that the colonists had offered something that the Native people really wanted and that the trading was fair. The scene also emphasizes an idea of peace: the Quakers are unarmed and the Native people have set down their bows and arrows. The seated Native man at the center front who is looking at the bolt of fabric is shown holding what looks like a peace pipe. In addition, we can see Native houses under the tree and European houses being built in the background, implying that the two groups lived together in harmony rather than the reality of the Lenni Lenape being pushed off of their land through coercion and violence."

Additional Resources for the Teacher

1. **[Optional] Show the SmartHistory Video [here](#).** In this 4+ minute video, [Monica Zimmerman](#), [Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts](#) and [Dr. Beth Harris](#) offer analysis of Benjamin West's Painting entitled The Treaty of Penn with the Indians. This website includes an online quiz that measures understanding of the painting and other resources relating to information about the painting and Walking Purchase. A Teacher's Guide to the painting is accessible via [this link](#).
2. Pamphlet about the "Walking Purchase" [here](#)