

Public Library Collection Development for an Elementary School

Social Studies Curriculum-Based Assessment

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Introduction

The North Olympic Library System and the Port Angeles School District recently received three collaborative grants from the Washington State Library for the purpose of creating collections at the public library and school district that support Social Studies Curriculum Based Assessments (CBA). Since databases are already covered, the library system is looking for print and free resources that are no older than 5-6 years about the theme, "Humans and the Environment" for a K-6th grade audience. The Humans and the Environment CBA requires that students draw conclusions about how people affect the environment as they meet their needs, how the environment affects people, and how the environment influences the development of a culture's lifestyle, traditions, and beliefs. Students must also use a map to explain the interaction between people and their environment. Teachers develop essential questions to guide the CBA and determine the content focus of the issue. Based on my discussion with Jennifer Knight, youth services librarian at the Port Angeles main branch, and my research on current curriculum for the CBAs, I decided to focus on Native Americans and the environment.

Although the scope seemed pretty well defined, deciding what types of sources to include, finding materials that spanned the age range, and establishing priorities about currency and quality was challenging. In terms of what types of sources to include, I knew that I wanted sources about Native Americans that talked about specific tribes (potentially in the form of an encyclopedia or set of volumes), atlases, and books about the environment. While there have been a number of resources published in the past 15 years or so about Native Americans, it was difficult to find quality sources to compare once I limited the search to the past 5-6 years. This

became even more apparent when I decided that I needed two sets of books about Native Americans, one for a younger (Grades K-2) audience and one for an older (Grades 3-6) audience. There have been tons of books published about the environment recently, but finding the right books that discussed the environment with regards to humans but did not focus too heavily on hard science or activism was tricky.

While there are thousands of websites out there on Native Americans and the environment, most seem unreliable, aimed at an older audience or are difficult to navigate. Honestly the books I found seem better in many ways, particularly on a sensitive topic such as Native Americans. Since this is a "real-life" project, I will include a list of the best websites I found in my information for Jennifer Knight, but might not include any in my final annotated list of resources for this class.

Process

I started by looking at the Washington State Social Studies website about the Humans and the Environment CBA. Information on the Humans and the Environment CBA website includes directions to the students, a sample rubric for 3rd grade, and sample responses mapped to the rubric, an exemplar papers with annotations. There are also suggested directions for teachers of how to discuss the CBA with students, develop essential questions, establish a writing checklist, and provide a graphic organizer to students. The link to "other resources" did not have anything listed for the Humans and the Environment CBA. However, another CBA also in the geography category had a link to a website called Facing the Future that was said to provide in-depth essays on the interconnections of global issues. That website is also of use to the Humans and the Environment CBA, so I took note of it.

After looking at the information particular to the Humans and the Environment CBA, I also looked at the Washington State website about the CBAs in general and found links to the Washington Library Media Association, Washington State History Museum, World Affairs Council, National Archives, Mead School District, Central Valley School District, and Seattle School District. At this point, I followed a lot of links, with my interest in finding booklists as well as suggested websites related to the CBA. Many of the links ended up not being particularly useful because they dealt with CBAs other than the Human and the Environment one, provided resources only for middle school and high school students, or were only aimed at teachers creating lesson plans with few to no sources listed.

The Washington Library Media Association (WLMA) was helpful in recommending website resources for social studies (in general) and providing links to other school districts' resources for social studies or the CBA. School district resources, whether suggested by WLMA or the Washington State CBA website, were the most useful in finding booklists and suggested resources that were actually aimed at students. The Mead County School District and Whatcom County Library System websites on the CBA were particularly informative. Not only did they list print sources, they also provided links to videos, websites, recognized tribes' websites, and Dewey numbers applicable to the CBA. I started an Excel list at this point of the print and electronic sources I wanted to review.

I then went to BWI Title Tales, a site on collection development and ordering for the public library. Students can create a free account and use the extensive search features and bibliographies. What was particularly helpful is that BWI Title Tales collocates reviews from all different sources (Booklist, School Library Journal, Kirkus, Horn Book, VOYA, etc.) in one place. At this point, however, I was still compiling a thorough list of resources to review, and so

I went to the Core Bibliographies section, which includes a selective list of titles in various areas that are appropriate for juvenile and young adult readers and include starred and positively reviewed titles. I decided to look at the bibliographies from the 000s (General Works), the 500s (Natural Sciences & Math), and the 900s (Geography & History). Because there were over 1000 titles each in the 500s and 900s core bibliographies, I started with the 900s since that was the most pertinent area. While it might have been faster to go to the advanced search right away, I wanted to get a sense of what was out there and found browsing pretty easy because many of the books were not related to my topic. I added titles to my growing Excel list, noting the title, author, series, date, age level, and price. When I started browsing through the 500s, I realized that there were so many that were not important that I decided to do an advanced search instead. I searched for environment in the 500 field for the age range (K-6th) and then browsed through those results.

I also looked at award-winners appointed by the National Council for the Social Studies from the past 4 years and put anything that seemed relevant to the topic on the Excel list. By this point, I started requesting items from Seattle Public Library and King County Library so I could look at the actual books.

I noticed that certain publishers seemed to come up again and again, so I went to different publishers' sites to browse their collection, including Gareth Stevens, Benchmark, Crabtree, Heinemann-Raintree, and Greenwood. To my pleasant surprise, I discovered that Gareth Stevens, Crabtree, and Heinemann-Raintree actually had booklists that directly and purposefully connected to state standards. While I had already discovered many of those books, there were some that I had not, which I then added to the list.

In addition to my online research, I also went and browsed the library collections in person. I went to the central branch of Seattle Public Library and the Redmond branch of King County Library and paid particular attention to the 500s, 912s, 970s, and reference sections. I also went to Barnes and Noble, Borders, and the University of Washington bookstores to browse their collections, particularly for any new titles libraries may not have acquired or processed yet. The University of Washington bookstore was particularly helpful because the children's department had an entire section devoted to social studies books. There were some I was able to read there that I had not been able to get from the libraries.

I looked on Amazon as well, both to see if there were reviews for books that BWI Title Tales did not have reviews for and also to browse the collection. The search-inside-this-book feature for many newer titles was helpful for books that I was not able to physically review. I also searched Amazon listmania lists, although they did not end up being particularly useful since titles were older and there were no direct lists on the CBA like I was hoping.

I also went to the Internet Public Library and used the Ask-a-Librarian Reference Service, which was helpful. I was pointed to free curriculum online related to the Humans and the Environment CBA and the online reference shelf for education topics on the Internet Public Library. From the online reference shelf, I found the Librarian's Internet Index. Both of these had lists of librarian-approved websites related to the topic, although I still did not find any that were much better than the books I had.

The last thing I did was follow the bibliographies of books that I read. Mostly, I had either already heard of the titles at this point or the titles were too old for me to consider, but there were some I had disregarded already and decided to take a second look. I realized that

websites come and go quickly—there were many books in which half of their recommended websites were broken links and the books were not even that old.

I have attached the Excel list I compiled as an appendix in order to give a sense of the books I did not choose.

Annotations

Adare, S., Birchfield, D.L., Burgan, M., Stone, A. M., & Stout, M. (2003). *Native American Peoples*. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens Pub.

Titles in the Native American Peoples series include Apache, Aztec, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Comanche, Cree, Mohawk, Navajo, Nez Perce, Ojibwe, Seminole, and Sioux. This is an excellent series for 4th – 6th graders with captioned photographs from the past and the present and the same four chapters across all the books that make the books easy-to-use: (1) Origins, (2) History, (3) Traditional way of life, and (4) Today. Numerous sidebars have information such as quotations from members of the tribe, information about the language, or details about a person, place, event, or significant object. I particularly liked comparing the small map at the beginning of the traditional territories with the small map at the end of the current territories. The glossary, timeline, index, things to think about, and further resources at the end were thoughtfully organized and understandable.

Andre, J.-A., Jumbo, S., McLeod, T., & Willett, M. (2008). *Land is our storybook*. Calgary: Fifth House.

Four books (*We Feel Good Out Here*, *Living Stories*, *The Delta Is My Home*, *Come and Learn with Me*) out of ten total have been published in this series that focuses on the

lands and people of Canada's Northwest Territories from (rarely heard) first-person voices. Books discuss traditional practices and beliefs as well as current life, from a woman who was sent to a residential school at age seven and is now reconnecting with her Gwich'in culture to a young boy who has learned about hunting, fishing, and the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit cultures in the Delta region to the wisdom and stories of Tlicho elders told to young people. Looks at current humans and their connection with the environment and culture and includes colorful photographs and a glossary.

Dennis, Y. W., & Hirschfelder, A. B. (2003). *Children of native America today*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Pub.

Many books focus on the history of Native Americans, but this book discusses the lives of contemporary Native people from across the U.S. Features 25 tribes (out of 500 total) with a 2-page spread for each that has photo illustrations and information, including a sidebar of fast facts with locations of reservations/communities, population, prominent people, and tribes. Students may need help distilling how humans interact with the environment, but overall it is a great guide to contemporary Native America.

Foster, K. (2008). *Atlas of North America*. Picture Window Books world atlases. Minneapolis, MN: Picture Window Books.

This atlas for 1st-3rd graders is bright, colorful, and easy-to-read with different maps of countries, landforms, bodies of water, climate, plants, animals, population, resources, and transportation. While the text is short and focuses on examples rather than being comprehensive (for example, only a few different types of plants from each ecosystem are mentioned), the maps are understandable even for beginning readers and can relate to

the First Americans series (which has no maps) when talking about where cultures live and how they interact with the environment.

Gore, A. (2007). *An inconvenient truth: The crisis of global warming*. New York: Viking.

An award-winner with starred reviews from *School Library Journal* and *Booklist*, this companion to Al Gore's documentary adapted for an upper elementary through high school audience is a visually stunning book with compelling information. Clearly-written language, approachable chapter divisions, understandable graphs, spectacular photographs, and a discussion of the changing earth with respect to human impact make this a must-have for any library. Relates to the Humans and the Environment CBA in discussing how the environment is changing because of human endeavors.

Gray-Kanatiiosh, B. A. (2007). *Checkerboard social studies library*. Edina, MN: ABDO Pub.

While I generally like the First Americans series by Benchmark Books about Native American tribes better for the younger crowd since they have more comprehensive information in an easily organized format with better illustrations and further suggested research, the Native American series by ABDO Publishing covers a large amount of tribes that are not represented in any other books I found. Such tribes include Caddo, Cahuilla, Chickasaw, Creek, Gabrielino, Kiowa, Kumeyaay, Maidu, Miwok, Modoc, Mojave, Ohlone, Paiute, Pawnee, Pomo, Salinan, Ute, Yokut, and Yurok. The author is an Akwesasne Mohawk with research interests on Native tribes and the law. Easy-to-read for the 1st through 3rd grade crowd (but with pretty terribly drawn illustrations), the books discuss life among the society, myths, war, contact with Europeans, a significant person, and the society today.

King, D. C., & Whiteley, P. M. (2008). *First people*. New York: DK Publishing.

Visually appealing with colorful glossy pages full of vivid photographs and illustrations of objects, places, and people from past and present, this book follows Native Americans across time in 7 chapters: (1) The beginning, (2) The emergence of Indian cultures, (3) First encounter with Europeans, (4) The European impact, (5) The contest for a continent, (6) The struggle to survive, and (7) A people's revival. Discusses tribes within the 10 basic cultural regions with a brightly colored map showing the different areas and includes information on how Native American cultures adapted to their environment in those areas. Contemporary issues and events are discussed, but not much is included about sovereignty or treaty rights and contemporary information may go over many students' heads.

Bjorklund, R., Broida, M., Burgan, M., Casey, C., DeCapua, S., Dell, P., Hicks, D. A., & King, D. C. (2006). *First Americans*. New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark.

An introductory series on Native Americans for 2nd – 5th graders of 24 tribes, with 12 more due to be published in 2010. Each book has four chapters: (1) The land and the people, (2) Daily life, (3) Beliefs, and (4) The present and future, and ends with a timeline, glossary, further resources, and index. Captioned pictures are photographs and illustrations from the past and present. Sidebars have recipes, activities, language information, traditional stories, or biographies of famous people. Not all have maps, which would be useful, and there could be more information at the end about the tribe currently, but overall the books are engaging and straightforward and perfect for student reports.

Landon, R., & MacDonald, D. (2008). *A Native American thought of it: Amazing inventions and innovations*. We thought of it. Toronto: Annick Press.

Written by an Ojibway tribe member from Ontario in collaboration with a children's book author, this book explores inventions and endeavors of Native Americans in North America from the past to the present in different categories, such as shelter or hunting, with bright pictures and photos from the past and present. A map at the beginning shows the location of tribes across North America. The book relates to the CBA by explaining how such inventions depended or depends on the tribe's environment and culture, highlighting the vibrant past and contemporary culture.

National Geographic Society. (2009). *National Geographic Student Atlas of the World*. Paw Prints.

Comprehensive atlas for 4th grade and up that has world maps of physical systems (geologic history, climate, vegetation) and human systems (political, population, languages, religions, economies, etc.) as well as continent maps of different types. Compared to other atlases, such as the Kingfisher Student Atlas or the DK School Atlas, this atlas had the best information related to humans and the environment and did not go into detail about every country, which would have been unnecessary and superfluous.

National Geographic Society (U.S.). (2006). *National Geographic our world: A child's first picture atlas*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.

A Notable Social Studies book, this atlas for grades K-3rd uses clear language and brightly colored maps with fun illustrations. Starts off with a general overview of globes, maps, and landforms before giving specific details about each continent, including a map

and photographs of people, animals, and places. Great for beginning readers to develop a basic understanding of the world through maps.

Philip, N. (2006). *The great circle: A history of the First Nations*. New York: Clarion Books.

Received starred reviews from Booklist and School Library Journal and is definitely for students in at least 5th grade since the text is wordy and the table of contents somewhat vague. That said, the book is a well-balanced report about the conflicts between North American Native tribes and European settlers and how they related to the difference in worldviews. Interesting discussion of how humans react and adapt to a changing environment. Primary source information, sobering historical photographs, and an engaging narrative make this book a worthwhile addition to all library collections.

Webster, C. (2003). *Washington*. From sea to shining sea. New York: Children's Press.

This easy-to-read book about Washington State for 2nd-5th graders covers geography and natural resources, history, government, and people. Ends with an almanac, a timeline, a gallery of famous people, a glossary, further resources, and an index. While information about government and the state bird/flag/animal may not be as useful for the CBA, information about the land and people and the map of resources are pertinent and provide a good overview of the state. Colorful pictures and sidebars make the book readable, with one of the only downsides being that some of the maps are not labeled as well.

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