Grades: 6th - 8th Grade  
Lesson: 4  
Unit: 2: American Indian land tenure history  
Subject: English Language Arts  
Additional Subject(s): History/Social Studies; Science  
Achievement Goal: Understand a tribe’s land tenure history, focusing on the allotment and assimilation era in American Indian federal policy.  
Time: Two class periods

Lesson Description:  
Introduce students to the topics of Removal and Relocation, Allotment and Assimilation, and Reorganization and Self-Government. Students will research the tribal land tenure history of their own tribe or of other tribes.

Teacher Background:  
Vine Deloria and Clifford M. Lytle, two scholars of American Indian history, have described federal Indian policy as occurring in six periods: Discovery, Conquest, and Treaty-Making (1532-1828); Removal and Relocation (1828-1887); Allotment and Assimilation (1887-1928); Reorganization and Self-Government (1928-1945); Termination (1945-1961); and Self-Determination (1961-Present).  

Lessons one and two in this standard explore the Discovery, Conquest, and Treaty-Making period of federal Indian policy. This lesson will introduce students to the next three periods of American Indian history: Removal and Relocation; Allotment and Assimilation; and Reorganization and Self-Government.  

Knowledge of these periods of history is essential to a complete understanding of modern Indian land tenure issues. While this lesson will introduce the defining characteristics of these eras of American Indian history, the best way for students to explore this era is to study their own tribe or the land history of other tribes during these eras. In doing so, they will learn how to perform basic tribal land history research.

Standards:  
This lesson aligns with Common Core standards RH1, RH2, RH4, RH8.

6th Grade  
RH1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.  
RH2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.  
RH4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.  
RH7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Associated California State Academic Content Standards  
For general guidelines for aligning discussions, writing, and research activities with English Language Arts Standards, see Using Lessons of Our California Land to Help Students Meet California State Content Standards.

Teacher Preparation Resources:  
- There are three visuals that will be very useful to explain the three eras of land tenure history
studied in this lesson. They are all found in Imre Sutton’s book, *Indian Land Tenure*, and attached here for the educator’s convenience. These maps are “Indian Redistributions.” “Land Tenure Changes,” and “Samples of Reservation Tenure.” Make these maps available for students to examine in class. For online versions, see the Lesson Resources section.

- OU Law Center Indian Land Titles, see bullet four, American Indian Territoriality, an Online Research Guide by Imre Sutton, preface page four, for the Map: “Land Tenure Changes (hypothetical example).”
- OU Law Center Indian Land Titles, see bullet four, American Indian Territoriality, an Online Research Guide by Imre Sutton, preface page 5, for the Map: “Samples of Reservation Tenure.”

- The resources for the students’ case study research will, of course, depend on which tribes are studied. However, there are several online sources that will help the students reconstruct a tribal land tenure history of the tribe. You will want to review them yourself before the class period in order to make sure information pertinent to the selected tribe is available on the site and to help the students navigate the information there.
  - Kappler’s Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties. For this lesson, you will want to direct students to Volume II for treaty research.
  - The Library of Congress, “Indian Cessions in the U.S.: 1784-1894.” Direct the students to perform the search by tribe name.
  - The United States Geological Survey has online maps of Indian reservations of tribes currently recognized by the federal government.
- In speaking to your class about U.S. expansion into the west, you may find the “Exploration and Settlement” maps at the University of Texas online map library helpful.
- For information on the North Fork Mono Tribe, see Tribal Chairman Ron Goode’s Chronology of Land Tenure, and for a map of allotments, rancherias, and reservations in California see the Map of California Indian Homelands and Trust Lands.

**Student Activity:**

**Part One**

1. Begin the lesson by discussing U.S. expansion into the western parts of the North America. Explain that in the late 1700s, treaties began to be used to draw boundaries between Indian country and U.S. territory. Treaties were also made to secure “rights of way” and land for forts and trading posts. Since France, England, and Spain were abandoning their colonizing efforts in the U.S., tribes could no longer make strategic alliances with those European states, which weakened their position with respect to the growing military and economic power of the United States government. Beginning around 1828, the U.S. government began to adopt the policy of removing Indians to other lands to make way for non-Native settlement. To illustrate the effects of this policy, show the students Sutton’s map, “Indian Redistributions.” Emphasize that this period of time in Indian history has been called the “Removal and Relocation” era, in which many tribes were forced to cede their lands in exchange for vastly smaller areas that were, in many cases, hundreds of miles away from their tribal territory. (If students ask about the resistance of tribes to this, you may want to show them the “Indian Battles” maps. You may also want to point out that federal Indian affairs were the responsibility of the U.S. War Department until 1849. See Felix Cohen’s Handbook of Federal Indian Law, page 10, for further reading.)
2. Describe that in California, treaties negotiated in 1851 and 1852 by United States government agents were never ratified by the United States Senate. In many areas of California where reservations were not established, the United States government allotted land from the public domain (such as national forests) to Native American individuals or families. Later, so-called “landless Indians” received small plots of land called rancherias.
3. Transition to introducing the allotment and assimilation era of American Indian history by showing the students Imre Sutton’s “Land Tenure Changes” map. Point out to the students that this is a hypothetical map. Review the changes in Indian land tenure by pointing out and distinguishing between aboriginal territory, ceded territory, and reservation boundaries. Point
out the graphic representing land allotments on the reservation. Introduce the concept of allotment to the students. Emphasize that “public domain allotments” also exist on land outside of reservations, and that reservation allotments and public domain allotments are lands held in trust for individual tribal members by the United States federal government.

4. Show “Tribal Territory, Reservations, Rancherias, and Allotments in South Central California” to the class. Discuss the differences between the aboriginal territory and the trust lands of the Mono, Paiute, Yokuts, and Tubatulabal peoples of California, pointing out that because the Treaties of 1851-52 were never ratified, the extensive homelands of these Native nations were never ceded by treaty to the United States.

5. Show a map of American Indian reservations to the students and have them identify their own location as well as the present-day homelands of a few other tribes. See, for instance, the U.S. Census maps and the map of California Tribal Homelands listed in the Lesson Resources section.

6. Have the students access and read the introduction pages to the Indian Land Tenure Foundation’s allotment web pages listed in the Lesson Resources section. Although this information applies mostly to reservation allotments, contemporary issues such as fractionation are common to both reservation allotments and public domain allotments. Ask students the following questions: What does allotment mean? How many acres were usually allotted to Indian individuals? Why did advocates of allotment believe the Dawes Act would help civilize Indians? How did land allotted to Indians often become owned by non-Natives?

7. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group to read and report on one of the main effects of allotment (fractionation, checkerboarding and landlessness). You may have to help out the fractionation groups due to the complexity of the subject. After they have read their assigned pages, have the groups combine into larger groups in which each allotment effect will be described and explained by at least one student. Have the students present to each other in the small groups what they found out about the effects of allotment. They should not be reading directly from the website, but describing what they read and understand in their own words or using drawings.

8. After these discussions are complete, ask the students what they found interesting or confusing in a full-class discussion.

9. Remind students that the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) began another era in Indian land tenure history that emphasized the reorganization of Indian governments and the power of Indian tribes to govern themselves. Briefly go over the sections of the IRA as summarized on the Indian Land Tenure Foundation website.

Part Two

1. Write the three eras of federal Indian policy covered in Part One on the board: Removal and Relocation (1828-1887); Allotment and Assimilation (1887-1928); and Reorganization and Self-Government (1928-1945). Ask the students to list the defining characteristics of these eras on the on board.

2. The students will be researching the tribal land tenure history of their tribe or of other tribes they may be interested in using the resources mentioned in the Teacher Preparation section of this lesson.

3. After their research, the students should be able to describe: the tribe’s aboriginal territory; the date of their treaty (or treaties) and land cession, if any; the size and location of the original reservation and any changes to reservation borders; if the tribe was allotted, when and how this occurred; and the location of the tribe’s reservation and allotment lands today. For extra credit, see if the students can find out the size of the modern day reservation and how much of the reservation is tribally owned.

4. After the students research their tribe, ask them to write a two-page report on their tribe’s land tenure history. Encourage them to use maps, illustrations, or timelines to help organize and present their findings.
1. One goal of this lesson is to teach students about the three eras in American Indian history—removal and relocation, allotment and assimilation, and reorganization and self-government—and how they affected Indian land tenure. Through the in-class discussions, assess the students’ understanding of the different periods of federal policy. Students should be able to describe contemporary issues surrounding allotment, including fractionation. Assess this understanding by observing the small group discussions and the larger in-class discussion.

2. Another goal of this lesson is for students to reconstruct the basic tribal land history of their tribe using internet resources. In part, this will also allow you to assess their understanding of the themes described above. In reviewing the students’ brief two-page reports, assess the students’ ability to perform basic research on their tribe using treaties, maps, and other online resources.

Lesson Resources:

- Kappler’s Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties
- The Library of Congress, Indian Land Cession in the U.S., 1784-1894
- Indian Land Tenure Foundation's Website
- Indian Land Tenure Foundation's Allotment Information Page
- U.S. Census Bureau Maps of Indian Reservations
- U.S. Census Bureau Wall Map of Indian Reservations
- A Brief Historical Overview of the Relationship between the Federal Government and American Indian: From Colonial Times to the Present, The American Indian Civics Project, Center for Indian Community Development at Humboldt State University
- United States Geological Survey
- University of Texas
- Felix Cohen’s Handbook of Federal Indian Law
- OU Law Center Indian Land Titles
- For information on the North Fork Mono Tribe, see Tribal Chairman Ron Goode’s Chronology of Land Tenure
- Map of California Indian Homelands and Trust Lands
- Map of North Fork Mono (Nium) Homelands
- North Fork Mono Territory description

Source URL: http://www.lessonsofourland.org/lessons/allotment-and-fractionation

Links:

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Allotment and Fractionation

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