GRADE 4-6: SOCIAL STUDIES

COMPARATIVE STUDY: FNMI, MAORI AND AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINALS

**Purpose:** Students will investigate the influence of the natural environment on the development of early civilizations around the world. Specifically, students will examine First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Peoples in Canada, Maori People in New Zealand and Australian Aboriginals by comparing these civilizations.

**Estimated time:** 120 minutes

**Resources required:**
- Bristol board for presentations (optional)
- Resources for research (e.g., books, encyclopaedias, Internet, etc.)

**Resources included:**
- Blackline masters 1 and 2

**Activity:**
1. As a class, create a definition for the following terms. Write the terms and definitions on the front board:
   - Civilization
   - Aboriginal
   - Geographic region

2. Ask students to provide any examples of early civilizations they might have heard of or studied in this class.

3. Tell students they will be examining some examples of early civilizations of Aboriginal Peoples in different regions.

4. Begin the conversation by telling students that when European nations explored the world in the mid-17th century, looking for resources and areas to expand to, Aboriginal Peoples were living in different geographic regions around the world. Students will specifically be learning about the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

5. Ask students to describe how geography could have influenced early Aboriginal civilizations (e.g., trade routes established to reach remote areas, access to rivers that led to the use of canoes, access to large plains that could have led to unique farming techniques, etc.). List their answers on the board.

6. Divide students into three groups to research an early Aboriginal civilization—FNMI, Maori and Australian Aboriginals. If the groups are too large, divide each section into two smaller groups. In their groups, students will research their section focusing on the following topics and create a presentation for the class to help their peers learn. Students may divide the topics up among the group members.

7. Encourage students to use a variety of resources around the classroom and in the library (e.g., books, encyclopaedias, the Internet, etc.) to research their topics. Refer to the resources section below for suggestions to further assist students in their research.

8. Allow for most of the research and presentation preparation to take place during class time. Instruct students to finish what they didn’t complete in class at home. When research is complete and presentations are ready, bring the class back together.

9. Distribute the blackline masters. Tell students to fill in the chart on blackline master 1 during the presentations as they learn about the lifestyles of the three groups.

10. Once the presentations have all taken place, instruct students to form groups of two to three students.

11. Using their charts as a reference, have students fill in the Venn diagram. Review the purpose of Venn diagrams with the class, if necessary. Students should review and analyze their notes on the presentations for the similarities and differences between the three groups. The information that is unique should fill the large section of the circles, one for each of the groups. Information that is similar between two groups should fill the sections where the two group’s circles overlap and information that is shared between the three groups should fill the centre section.

12. After students have finished filling in the Venn diagram, ask students to share their comparative findings. Review the content with the entire class to ensure everyone understands the similarities and differences between the three groups.
■ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the lesson plans, share these resources with your students:

- Websites to begin research for students:
  - Maori: www.virtualoceania.net/newzealand/culture/maori/
  - Australian Aboriginals: www.infoplease.com/spot/aboriginal1.html
  - FNMI: www.med.uottawa.ca/sim/data/Aboriginal_Intro_e.htm

- Resources for educators:
  - Additional list of books and resources for teachers on Aboriginal Education (from Queen's University Faculty of Education)
    http://library.queensu.ca/webedu/grad/aboriginal.pdf
  - Aboriginal Educational Resources (from Wilfrid Laurier Faculty of Education)