



SOCIAL SCIENCE

The Legacy of Treaty-Making in Western Oregon

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

- Tribal government
- Sovereignty
- Treaties with the United States
- History
- Genocide, federal policy, and laws

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- Describe the process of treaty-making.
- Explain the history of the treaties between the U.S. government and Native peoples, including the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- Describe the past and current impact of treaty violations on the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why are treaties important?
- How do historical events impact the present?

LOGISTICS

- Where does the activity take place?
Classroom (virtual or in-person)
- How are the students organized?
 - ☑ Whole class ☑ Teams: 2 – 4
 - ☑ Pairs ☑ Individually

TIME REQUIRED

Two hours

Overview

In this lesson, students will develop an understanding about the history and significance of treaties between the United States and the Tribes and bands that make up the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Students will learn first about key terminology and the process of treaty-making. Next, students will examine primary documents to consider the impact of treaty violations from the perspective of some of the Indigenous leaders who signed treaties with the federal government. Finally, students will listen to a firsthand account from a contemporary Siletz Tribal member discussing his experiences learning about the history of western Oregon treaties as a youth.

Background for teachers

The treaties made with Indigenous people across the United States are as diverse as the hundreds of different Tribal nations who signed them. Nowhere is this truer than in western Oregon. Between 1853 and 1855, the federal government negotiated eight treaties with the dozens of Tribes and bands who had lived in western Oregon since time immemorial, forcing them to agree to cede all their ancestral territory and confederate



on a permanent reservation where they were to receive payments in goods, services, supplies, and other support. The complicated history behind these agreements continues to inform the political, economic, and social realities of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians to this day.

In the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Congress stated that in new U.S. territories “[t]he utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent.” However, treaty-making in western Oregon totally lacked good faith, as federal officials prioritized strengthening their claim on a valuable region over negotiating title with Tribal peoples. American settlers began pouring over the Oregon Trail in the early 1840s while Oregon was still disputed territory with Great Britain. Congress accelerated the emigration in 1850 with the Oregon Donation Land Act, offering hundreds of free acres of land to “every white settler or occupant of the public lands.” Concurrent legislation did direct federal officials to negotiate treaties with Native people

STANDARDS

Oregon social science standards¹

6.1 - Compare and contrast early forms of governance including the treatment of historically marginalized groups and individuals via the study of early major Western and non-Western civilizations.

6.3 - Examine the origins, purposes, and impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements.

6.18 - Evaluate the impact of systems of colonial cultures on the Indigenous peoples, such as termination, sovereignty, and treaties.

Oregon English Language Arts standards

6.RI.1 - Analyze what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially; cite textual evidence to support the analysis.

6.SL.2 - Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

¹ In 2018, the Oregon State Board of Education adopted grade-level social science standards for civics, geography, economics, financial literacy, history, historical thinking, and social science analysis. In February 2021, the board adopted new social science standards, integrating ethnic studies into each of the social science domains, and removed the co-identified multicultural standards. School districts may implement the 2021 social science standards beginning in March 2021. School districts are not required to implement the new standards until the 2026–27 school year. This lesson uses the 2021 version of the Oregon social sciences standards.



in order to gain title to this land, but the timing of the two acts guaranteed that treaty negotiation would occur in the context of ongoing settlement and dispossession—especially in the most heavily settled districts of Oregon, like the fertile Willamette Valley and gold-rich Rogue Valley.

Early attempts at treaty negotiation only complicated the situation. Settlers expected treaty negotiators to convince Native people living in western Oregon to agree to cede all their ancestral homelands and remove to eastern Oregon. But once negotiations began, Native leaders living along the Columbia River, southern Oregon coast, and Willamette Valley rejected proposals to move to such a drastically different environment. Instead, Native people insisted on retaining parcels in their ancestral territories where they could continue to live in their homelands and use their traditional fishing sites, hunting grounds, and gathering areas.

The provisions allowing Native people to remain in western Oregon made the treaties politically toxic. Lacking both popular and bureaucratic support, the U.S. Senate refused to consider ratifying these early attempts at treaties. Rather than a new beginning, Native leaders saw treaties they signed in good faith ignored by settlers and federal officials who continued to encroach on their lands in violation of U.S. policy. In the meantime, the discovery of gold in southern Oregon and northern California pressurized interactions between Native people and newly arrived settlers eager to strike it rich. Within just a couple of

MATERIALS

- Slides (PowerPoint slide deck)
- Handout: Why treaties matter: Guiding questions
- Handout: Reading primary sources
- Handout: Primary source jigsaw
- Handout: Primary sources
- Handout: Critical listening guide
- Handout: Treaty importance script
- Audio transcript
- Chapter 10 of *The People Are Dancing Again* [for teacher reference]

VOCABULARY

- **Treaty** - A treaty is a formal agreement between sovereign nations who recognize each other's right to govern their own people and territory.
- **Sovereignty** - The inherent authority of a nation to govern itself. Tribal sovereignty is the inherent right of a Tribal nation to create its own constitution, governance structure, and laws; negotiate government-to-government treaties and other legal agreements with other sovereign nations; control and manage land and resources under its jurisdiction; and govern the affairs of its citizens.
- **Cede** - To surrender possession.

(Continued on next page)

years, small-scale conflicts and skirmishes grew into outright warfare in the Rogue River Valley as frustrated Native leaders refused to yield any more territory to settlers and miners, who had begun to call for the outright extermination of Native people living in the region. Before long, the violence metastasized into pitched battles between Native people, the federal army, and settler militia groups. These battles calmed (temporarily) only after a negotiated peace between Tribal leaders and territorial officials.

To federal officials, these opening incidents of the Rogue River Wars served as both a reminder of the importance of finalizing treaties and an opportunity to learn from past failures. The agreement that temporarily ended the conflict in southern Oregon was negotiated at Table Rocks, near present day Medford, and came to be known as the Table Rock Treaty. Signed by representatives from Takelma, Shasta, and Athabaskan-speaking groups from the Upper Rogue and its tributaries, the text of the treaty reflects attempts by federal negotiators to balance Native people's refusal to leave their homelands with local settlers' calls to kill or completely remove all Native people from the area. The solution was an unprecedented clause that established a temporary reservation at Table Rock with the provision that "a suitable selection shall be made by the direction of the President of the

VOCABULARY *(Continued)*

- **Ratify** - Approval by all the parties to the treaty before the treaty is legally binding. Under U.S. law, the U.S. Senate must ratify a treaty for it to officially take effect.
- **Indigenous nations** - The governments and political structures of Indigenous peoples.
- **Supreme law of the land** - Highest form of law a nation can have. In the United States, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land—superseding all other laws or legislation. Ratified treaties are also referred to as the supreme law of the land.
- **Governance** - To have the authority to make decisions for a larger group of people, land, or resources.



United States for their permanent residence and buildings erected thereon and provision made for their removal.”²

This strategy worked. The U.S. Senate promptly ratified the Table Rock Treaty, and it came to serve as treaty template language for the rest of western Oregon. Between 1853 and 1855, federal officials crossed the region negotiating an additional six ratified treaties with Tribes from across western Oregon, including another agreement at Table Rock in which Tribes who signed the original Table Rock Treaty agreed to confederate with additional Tribes and bands. These treaties all allowed Native people temporary reserves with the provision that the president would establish a different permanent reservation later. The U.S. Senate ratified all these treaties.

The Oregon coast proved the exception to this process. Treaty negotiators forced Native peoples along the entire Oregon coast to sign the same agreement with no room for negotiation in what came to be known as the Coast Treaty. This time, the treaty contained an actual proposal for a permanent reservation, a seemingly out-of-the-way strip of the central Oregon coast that appeared to have little agricultural or mining value. When the Coast Treaty was finalized and sent off on the long journey to Washington, D.C., via ship, there was no reason to assume that it would not be ratified as well.

² Ratified Indian Treaty 263: Rogue River - Table Rock near Rogue River, Oregon Territory, September 10, 1853.

ADAPTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING



The lesson is primarily structured around group discussion and exploration, but much of it can be adapted for distance- or independent-learning purposes. A suggested sequence follows. Be sure all students have either print or electronic access to the materials described.

Activity 1. What is a treaty?

- Share the questions with students via email in advance. Play the NPR video on an online platform for students to watch remotely. Write student vocabulary on the slides or on another virtual platform.

Activity 2. The eight western Oregon treaties

- Share the slides in a virtual format.
- Facilitate online discussion using whole group or individual chat application.

Activity 3. Primary source jigsaw

- Share the slides in a virtual format.
- Provide students with the primary source material, guide, and discussion questions.
- Assign students into virtual “home” and “expert” breakout groups.

Activity 4. Critical listening

- Share audio using a virtual platform.
- Ask students to complete the “Critical Listening Guide.”
- Debrief with whole group using a virtual platform.
- Consider playing audio multiple times for comprehension.

Instead, something unexpected happened. Months before sending the Coast Treaty, federal officials sent a separate request to reserve a nearly identical parcel of land on the central Oregon coast from further settlement to ensure that the permanent reservation promised in the already-ratified treaties would remain free of settlers while final treaty negotiations were completed. This message was delayed for months but did eventually arrive in Washington, D.C.—just ahead of the Coast Treaty. Acting immediately, the Indian Office validated the request and worked with President Pierce to not only protect the land from settlers but also to establish the Coast (Siletz) Reservation via executive order. The Coast Treaty arrived just days after the executive order but languished in the federal bureaucracy, delayed by the Indian Office, which was content that executive order had already established a nearly identical reservation to the one promised in the Coast Treaty. It was to be the permanent home for Tribes from across western Oregon.

This small difference in timing had huge consequences. Ordinarily, reservations established by executive order have fewer constitutional protections because they lack the status of “supreme Law of the Land”³ provided by U.S. Senate ratification. The Coast (Siletz) Reservation should have been recognized as having this legal status in perpetuity, since the historical record makes clear it was designed to be the permanent reservation promised in the ratified treaties. However, because the Coast Treaty remained unratified, the new reservation was mistakenly interpreted as legally vulnerable. Moving forward, federal officials would ignore the relationship between the ratified treaties and the Coast (Siletz) Reservation to justify a series of illegal reductions to the reservation land base. The government continued to fulfill some promises of support that were negotiated in the treaties. However, by ignoring the treaty basis of the reservation, federal officials undermined the most important part of the agreements—making what should have been a permanent land base vulnerable to the whims of future Congresses and presidential administrations.

³ See Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

For Siletz people, this complicated history represents a staggering assortment of betrayals and broken promises—each unique to the specific circumstances of each Tribe or Band that was removed to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation. For example, Dené(Athabaskan)-speaking peoples on the southern Oregon coast signed not one but two treaties in good faith only to find neither ratified by the government. Still forced to remove to the reservation and abandon their homelands, these peoples found none of the support that had been promised in the treaties once they arrived. Meanwhile, people who had signed ratified treaties from places like the Willamette and Rogue valleys saw the permanent reservation they had been promised chopped away by a government that claimed the reservation lacked a legal basis in treaties. For many people, even the idea that permanent reservations mentioned in the treaties would be so far from their homelands seemed a betrayal. Treaties were negotiated across multiple languages, with communication going from Tribal languages to Chinook Jargon (a regional trade language based on Chinook) before English, which only deepened the misunderstandings.

To prepare for this lesson teachers should

- Read chapter 10 (“Losing the Land”) of *The People Are Dancing Again*
- Review all handouts for this lesson
- Ensure students will have access to all materials (printed and/or electronic) needed to participate in this lesson (see “Materials” section above)
- Prepare classroom audiovisual technology to display PowerPoint slides, video, and websites

References

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. (n.d.). Our heritage. <https://www.ctsi.nsn.us/heritage/>

Kappler, C. J. (1927). Indian affairs: Laws and treaties. <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/kapplers>

Wilkinson, C. (2010). *The people are dancing again: The history of the Siletz Tribe of western Oregon*. University of Washington Press.

Additional resources for teachers

- Confederated Tribes of Siletz website: <https://www.ctsi.nsn.us/>
- OPB *Broken Treaties* documentary (23:45–30:06): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHq6ncJJ35w>
- Native Governance Center video “Why do treaties matter?”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCHZVSSXDwc>
- NPR video “Why treaties matter”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bexvE4lZRG0>
- “Breaking down broken promises: Standing Rock explained”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rqob7UiCkcw>

Considerations for teachers

Assessment

The core activity of this lesson focuses on student engagement with primary texts. Teachers can assess student learning by monitoring student participation in class discussions.

Practices

1. *Small groups* – Small group activities allow students to share and analyze ideas with three to five other people. This practice can be good for students who do not want to share their ideas with the whole class and/or who may be afraid of others’ reactions. The teacher should monitor group discussions to determine the degree to which students are understanding the concepts and contributing to the group.
2. *Classroom discussion* – Large group, whole class discussion allows students to express their thoughts and hear the thoughts of others. For the instructor, this practice is a good way to take the pulse of the group and see what general themes are emerging. For students, large group discussion can be a way to express themselves or to hear differing perspectives from others.

Learning targets

- I can define key terminology and the process of treaty-making.
- I can describe the history of the treaties between the U.S. government and Native peoples of western Oregon, including the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- I understand the past and current impact of treaty violations on the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

Reflection/closure

Sum up the lesson by asking students the following questions:

- How does learning about the treaties signed in western Oregon change your understanding of Oregon history?
- How would you explain the history of western Oregon treaties to someone that hadn't learned about it before?

Appendix

Materials included in the electronic folder that support this lesson are:

- Chapter 10 of *The People Are Dancing Again*
- Critical Listening Guide.pdf
- Oregon Treaties Primary Sources.pdf
- Primary Source Jigsaw - Expert Group Guiding Questions.pdf
- Reading Primary Sources.pdf
- Treaties_Slides.pptx
- Treaty Importance Personal Script.pdf
- Treaty Importance Personal.mp3
- Why Treaties Matter - Guiding Questions.pdf

Activity 1

What is a treaty?

Time: 30 – 45 minutes

Step 1

Share with students that in this first activity they will learn what treaties are, some key vocabulary, and why treaties impact people today.

Step 2

Distribute one copy per student of the handout “Why Treaties Matter: Guiding Questions.”

Say:

We are going to watch a video from National Public Radio that talks about treaties and how they impact us today. As you watch the video, keep in mind the guiding questions on your handout.

Why Treaties Matter: Guiding Questions

3. Write down any vocabulary used in the video that you do not understand.
4. Who can make treaties?
5. What do treaties do?
6. What are some common misconceptions about treaties?
7. What else did you learn about treaties that you did not know before?

Activity 1 *(Continued)*

Step 3

Play the **NPR video** twice. The first time, ask students to focus on writing down any words used in the video that they do not understand (guiding question #1). When the first run-through of the video is complete, students and teachers will collaborate to identify and define new vocabulary words. The teacher will start by writing down the following vocabulary words on a shared writing surface (such as the whiteboard):

- Sovereign/sovereignty
- Ratify
- Cede
- Indigenous nations
- Supreme law of the land

Say:

Here are some terms from the video that may be new to you: sovereign or sovereignty, ratify, cede, Indigenous nations, and supreme law of the land. What other terms were new to you? Understanding the meaning of these terms will help us as we learn more about the history of treaties in western Oregon.

Step 4

Ask students to share their answers with the whole class. Teachers (or students) will then write the terminology on the board. Once students have shared their vocabulary words, the teacher will play the NPR video for the second time. This time, students will answer guiding questions 2–5. While students are watching, the teacher will write down the vocabulary definitions to prepare for the next activity.

Activity 1 *(Continued)*

Step 5

Ask students if they have any clarifying questions before moving on to the next activity.

Step 6

Facilitate a classroom discussion on the purpose of treaties and why they remain relevant today.

Key points

- **Why treaties were signed** – Treaties were signed for many reasons. From the American perspective, the most obvious motivation was for the United States to gain legal title to Indigenous land. But treaties were also an important way for the United States to assert its own sovereignty. The United States was a new nation in the 1700s to mid-1850s, so many other countries did not recognize it as a sovereign nation. Because treaty-making is only possible between sovereign governments, the U.S. government signed treaties with Indigenous nations to gain global recognition from other governments who had negotiated with Native peoples for many years before the United States even existed.
- **What treaties do** – Treaties are an agreement between sovereign nations. Many treaties signed between the United States and Native nations consisted of agreements to guarantee permanent reservations, hunting and fishing rights, payments, health care, and education to Indigenous people in exchange for ceding their ancestral land to the United States.

Activity 1 (Continued)

- **Common misconceptions about treaties**

- *Treaties gave Native nations rights from the U.S. government.* Actually, by signing treaties, Native people gave limited rights to the United States (mainly title to land). Numerous Supreme Court decisions have reaffirmed that Native nations retain all rights not explicitly granted in treaties by virtue of their sovereign status.
- *Treaties are not relevant today.* This is not true. Treaties are as legally binding today as they were when they were signed. According to the U.S. Constitution, treaties are the supreme law of the land and override any other legislation or law. Even though the U.S. government has violated most treaties with Native people, the treaties remain legally enforceable.

- **Current-day violations** – One of the most newsworthy recent treaty violations involves the Dakota Access Pipeline. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe asserts that the construction of this pipeline violates Article II of the Fort Laramie Treaty, which guarantees undisturbed use of reservation lands. If time allows, it may be useful to share the following video with students to help orient them to the Standing Rock protests and their implication for Tribal nations as a whole: **“Breaking Down Broken Promises: Standing Rock Explained”** (6 minutes)



Activity 2

The eight western Oregon treaties (teacher presentation)

Time: 30 minutes

Step 1

Share slideshow and key points (slides 1–13).

Slide 1. Western Oregon Treaties

Say:

Now that we have learned what treaties are about and why they are important, we are going to learn about the history of treaties here in western Oregon in particular.

Slide 2. Vocabulary review

Remind students of the definition of each vocabulary word. Ask students to keep the definitions in a notebook for recall.

Say:

Before we dive in, let's review the vocabulary from earlier in the lesson. Knowing this terminology will help us understand the impact of treaties in our own region.

Activity 2 (Continued)

Slide 4. Treaties in the United States

Vocabulary: Sovereignty, ratify (ratification)

Say:

Sovereignty means having the authority to govern. The sovereignty of Native nations predates the U.S. Constitution. Long before the first contact with Euro-American settlers, Native nations had individual and independent governance structures.

Native nations signed more than 365 treaties with the U.S. government from 1777 to 1871. Although this may seem like distant history, treaties are living documents that still matter for both Native and non-Native people and nations today. Treaties affirm a nation's sovereignty, the right to self-govern, and the ability to ensure what's best for their people. Signing treaties demonstrates that both sides recognize the other's right to govern.

In one of the most common types of treaties made between the United States and Tribes, the Tribes would cede a portion of their territory in exchange for compensation (like money or guaranteed services like schools or hospitals) while maintaining part of their ancestral territory as a reservation.

Slide 5. Western Oregon: 1853–1855

Vocabulary: Bands, cede, ratify

Say:

Many of those features are common in the treaties signed in Oregon, but treaty-making in western Oregon was much more complicated.

Let's learn more about the general history of treaty-making in western Oregon. Between 1853 and 1855, the U.S. government negotiated eight treaties with Indigenous peoples who lived west of the Cascade Range. At this time, dozens of distinct bands across the region were forced to cede nearly all their ancestral

Activity 2 (Continued)

territory in exchange for specific promises outlined in treaty documents. However, the negotiations did not end cleanly when treaties were ratified. Instead, the western Oregon treaties contained open-ended language that created lasting problems for the Siletz Tribe.

For example, most of these treaties designated temporary reservations, stating that the president would choose permanent sites later. This open-ended language about future reservations was an unprecedented—the United States had never negotiated this way with Indigenous Tribes before. The open-ended language would have profound impacts.

Slide 6. U.S. perspective

Vocabulary: Oregon Donation Land Act

Say:

Why did the U.S. government and Native nations negotiate treaties in western Oregon and include this new provision about temporary reservations? Let's start with the U.S. perspective. To encourage the settlement of Oregon Territory by settlers loyal to the United States (instead of the British in Canada), the U.S. government passed the Oregon Donation Land Act. This legislation was incredibly generous: it offered hundreds of free acres to each settler willing to move to Oregon—free land from the government!

The government promised the land for free even though it still belonged to the Indigenous peoples who were living here—and had been for millennia. As settlers rushed to Oregon Territory, the government's solution was to try and remove Native people from western Oregon all at once to one reservation located east of the Cascades, which had a drastically different environment from their ancestral territories.

Activity 2 (Continued)

Ask:

Has anyone ever visited central or eastern Oregon? How does the landscape and environment compare to western Oregon?

Say:

That's right! Eastern Oregon and western Oregon are totally different landscapes. This plan would have required Indigenous people to completely rearrange their lives and give up everything they knew about how to make a living. But it appeared increasingly urgent to find a way to get Indian land—especially once settlers in southern Oregon began stoking violence and war by attacking Native people, burning villages, and massacring entire families. Federal officials included the provision about a different permanent reservation to fulfill the plan to completely remove Native people from all parts of western Oregon.

Slide 7. Native perspective

Say:

Native people had no interest in leaving their homelands. They refused to sign treaties allowing them to be removed across the mountains, but they often had no choice but to negotiate to escape violence and attacks from settlers. Native people did fight back against settlers who tried to steal their land, but they were outnumbered. In negotiating treaties, many Native leaders hoped that the agreements could bring peace. When they signed, Native people believed that they would have an opportunity to remain in at least a portion of their homelands.

Slide 8. Table Rock Treaty

Say:

Let's discuss one ratified treaty as an important example. Many treaties negotiated in western Oregon were modeled on the Table Rock Treaty, which was signed near present-day Medford by Takelma, Shasta, and Athabaskan-speaking leaders.



Activity 2 (Continued)

This agreement was signed after an 1853 outbreak of warfare between the U.S. government, settler vigilantes, and Tribal people that was stoked by miners in the region who advocated for the outright extermination of all Native people.

This treaty established a reservation at Table Rock but also was the first to include the provision that the president could later select a “suitable” permanent reservation for Tribes of western Oregon. The U.S. Senate quickly ratified the Table Rock Treaty.

Slide 9. Ratified treaties across western Oregon

Say:

Over the next two years (1853 to 1855), federal officials negotiated six additional treaties with Tribes from western Oregon modeled on this agreement. Most included the provisions to set up a temporary reservation with the caveat that the president could later designate a different permanent reservation. All these treaties were also ratified by the U.S. Senate.

Slide 10. Coast (Siletz) Reservation

Say:

As these treaties were being negotiated, there was ongoing violence and warfare in southern Oregon. In addition, the U.S. Army refused to enforce the provisions of the Table Rock Treaty to protect Native people. This convinced federal officials that provisions for temporary reservations on Tribal homelands needed to be replaced immediately.

Knowing that Native people would never move east of the mountains, federal officials established the Coast (Siletz) Reservation in 1855 as the permanent reservation mentioned in the ratified treaties. At the time, the central Oregon coast was extremely inaccessible and appeared to lack the farmland and gold that was drawing most settlers to Oregon.

Activity 2 (Continued)

Slide 11. Coast Treaty

Say:

The history of treaty-making with Tribes on the Oregon coast looked very different, which further complicated matters. Treaty negotiators forced Native peoples living along the entire Oregon coast to sign the same treaty.

Unlike the other treaties signed in western Oregon, the Coast Treaty talked about immediate removal to a permanent reservation. More importantly, the Coast Treaty was never ratified by the Senate. By the time the Coast Treaty arrived in Washington, D.C. for approval, the Coast (Siletz) Reservation—which was meant to be the reservation for people from across western Oregon—had already been established through an executive order by the president. Federal officials might have believed that there was no need to ratify the treaty since the Coast (Siletz) Reservation had already been created.

Almost immediately, the U.S. Army began removing people from across western Oregon to the new reservation—both people whose treaties had been ratified and people who signed the Coast Treaty.

Slide 12. Consequences of timing

Say:

This small detail in timing had huge consequences. Reservations created by treaties have strong legal protections because the U.S. Constitution says that treaties ratified by the Senate are the supreme law of the land. In later years, the U.S. government began to deny the link between the ratified treaties and the Coast (Siletz) Reservation. They said that the reservation had been created to fulfill the Coast Treaty and, since the Coast Treaty hadn't been ratified, the reservation didn't have legal protection under the supreme law of the land. This lie was enabled by the complex history and unique nature of treaties in western Oregon and would impact the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians for generations to come.

Activity 2 *(Continued)***Slide 13. Broken promises****Say:**

Within the decade, the U.S. government began reducing the size of the Coast (Siletz) Reservation based on this lie—ignoring and denying that it was the permanent reservation promised in the many ratified treaties. These reductions were a staggering betrayal to the Native peoples who had agreed to the treaties under the condition that the U.S. government would uphold its end of the bargain and provide a permanent reservation.

In fact, many Native peoples who signed ratified treaties saw this as a double betrayal. They did not think the permanent reservation would be so far from their original homelands. For people from southern Oregon especially, the damp, cold environment on the Oregon coast was drastically different from their ancestral homelands. Just a decade after they were forced to remove to such a foreign environment, the government began to deny that the reservation had anything to do with their treaties at all.

For the people who signed the Coast Treaty, things were just as unfair. The Native peoples who signed the Coast Treaty were still forced to uphold their end of the bargain and leave their homelands for the new Coast (Siletz) Reservation. But once they arrived, they found that the U.S. government had not delivered any of the compensation or support promised in their treaty because the Senate never ratified the agreement. They would also watch their new homes be illegally reduced in size in the coming years.



Activity 3

Primary source jigsaw

Time: 45 minutes

Say:

Today we are going to take a closer look at how Native leaders remembered the negotiations and thought about the decision to remove people to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation by looking at speeches given by two headmen who were removed to the reservation from southern Oregon.

Although the legacies of Indigenous leaders of this time may be well remembered in their own communities, it is rare to find Indigenous leaders quoted in their own words. These speeches were given in 1857, at a meeting with a special inspector sent to Siletz to investigate the severe problems on reservations throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Step 1

Provide students with the handout “Reading Primary Sources.” Students should use this document as a guide for reading comprehension. Assign students into small “home” groups of two to four students. Assign one of the primary source materials to each student (i.e., for a group of four: two students will read the excerpts from Tyee George’s speech and two will read the excerpt from Tyee John’s speech).

Step 2

Ask students to review the questions in the “Reading Primary Sources” document while they read the assigned primary source material. Walk around the room to check on student understanding as they read the material.

Activity 3 *(Continued)*

Step 2

Ask students to review the questions in the “Reading Primary Sources” document while they read the assigned primary source material. Walk around the room to check on student understanding as they read the material.

Step 3

Organize students with the same reading selection into “expert” groups to discuss what they learned. Ask students to answer the questions in the “Primary Source Jigsaw – Expert Group Guiding Questions” document. Circle the room to support student understanding and teamwork.

Step 4

Ask students to return to their “home” groups to share what they have learned.

Activity 4

Critical listening⁴

Time: 45 minutes each

Step 1

Explain to students that in this activity they will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how treaty violations have impacted the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians by critically listening to audio text provided by a representative of the Tribe.

Say:

As we heard in the video, treaties aren't just something from the past—they continue to have a big impact on modern Tribal governments and on the lives of Tribal people in big and small ways. In this final activity, we will listen to a Siletz Tribal member describing how he learned about treaties as a young person and came to understand this history that we are talking about today.

Step 2

Pass out “Critical Listening Guide” handout.

Step 3

Have students listen closely to the audio all the way through without stopping or taking notes. Allow students to briefly discuss their initial reactions.

⁴ This activity was adapted from Learning for Justice: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/community-inquiry/critical-listening-guide>.

Activity 4 *(Continued)*

Step 4

Pass out the transcript. Have students listen to the audio again with the transcript and guide in hand. Pause the audio to point out key features, using the “Critical Listening Guide” handout to structure the conversation. Ask students to annotate their transcripts with their responses to describe the context, audience, purpose, values, and style of the audio text.

Step 5

Have students listen to the audio all the way through without stopping. Allow time for students to complete the “Critical Listening Guide” handout.

Step 6

Ask students to share how their understanding of treaties may have changed or deepened since the first activity.