



Montana  
**Office of Public Instruction**  
 Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

# Social Studies Model Lesson Plan

## Human Expression and the Transmission of Culture – Winter Counts

Grades 7-8

### Stage 1 Desired Results

**Established Goals:**

**Social Studies Standard 4, Benchmark 8.6** Investigate, interpret, and analyze American Indian historical viewpoints concerning major events.

**Understandings:**

- History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. (EU 6)
- Students will develop an understanding of how one American Indian tribe maintained historical records in addition to using oral traditions.
- Students will gain insight into how one tribal group perceived major historical events.

**Essential Questions:**

- Why is it important to record history?
- To what extent do multiple perspectives on historical topics influence our understanding?
- Would you consider a winter count as an example of written/recorded history? Explain.

*Students will be able to...*

- Interpret various symbols from a Nakota winter count and describe why this means of recording history complements tribal oral traditions.

*Students will know...*

- winter counts were one form of written communication used by some tribes to document historical events.

### Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

**Performance Tasks:**

1. Examine and interpret winter count symbols. Students will also draw pictures/images to retell a story from their own family history and share with the class.

### Stage 3 Learning Plan

**Learning Activities:**

Prior to teaching this lesson, please visit the following website and download the teaching activities developed by the National Museum of the American Indian. There are some excellent teaching ideas/activities associated with learning about winter counts. “Lone Dog Winter Count: Keeping History Alive”

[http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/poster\\_lone\\_dog\\_final.pdf](http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/poster_lone_dog_final.pdf)



## *Human Expression and the Transmission of Culture – Winter Counts*

It is highly suggested that if you have a high speed internet connection with a projector that you go to the following website to display winter count images and explanations as a way to introduce the topic.

<http://wintercounts.si.edu/>

Ask students if they know what a winter count is. Have them brainstorm possible answers.

Pose the following question to the students – Besides winter counts what are some other ways American Indians maintained historical records of events and issues?

Tell students that tribes have used oral traditions supported by other evidence such as paintings, beadwork, drawings, pictographs etc...in maintaining a cohesive history. In these lessons the focus will be on the tribes known as Sioux (Dakota, Lakota or Nakota) and some of their winter counts.

Ask students which two Montana reservations have members of these tribes currently living there.  
(Answer: Ft. Belknap and Ft. Peck)

Refer to the "Lone Dog Winter Count" lesson plan for specific classroom activities and assessments regarding winter counts.

### **Resources:**

Excellent questions and ideas for teaching about winter counts can be accessed here:

[http://wintercounts.si.edu/html\\_version/pdfs/curriculum.pdf](http://wintercounts.si.edu/html_version/pdfs/curriculum.pdf)

<http://wintercounts.si.edu/>

[http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/poster\\_lone\\_dog\\_final.pdf](http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/poster_lone_dog_final.pdf)