Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the myriad of issues affecting American Indian lands and the abilities of tribes and tribal communities to exercise sovereign powers.

RATIONALE
The third standard grapples with a variety of issues concerning Indian land that are relevant today. The evolution of federal Indian land policy has created a special “trust relationship” between the US federal government and American Indian tribes and tribal communities which extends to the lands they occupy. This trust relationship has created a complex set of issues that must be thoroughly understood by Indian communities in order for them to effectively exercise their sovereign powers and prevent further land loss, regain lost lands, realize benefits from good land stewardship and revitalize traditional connections to the lands. While contemporary challenges tribes face are very complex, these lessons will introduce the students to some basic concepts and knowledge that will stimulate their thinking about the importance of land to their community. Contemporary issues include continued land losses, land management problems, jurisdictional conflict, natural resource disputes, infrastructure shortcomings and the protection of sacred sites.

Lesson 1: Develop knowledge of Indian homelands, territories, and the natural resources the land provides.

Achievement Goal: Explain the following terms: “natural resources”, “interdependence”, “ecology”, “biodiversity”, and “sustainability”.

Students will be introduced to the ideas surrounding the sustainable use of Indian lands and natural resources in accordance with traditional knowledge and values.
Lesson 2: Study real-life examples of the sustainable use of Indian lands and tribally controlled natural resources.

Achievement Goal: Study the ways several Indian tribes and tribal communities work to make sure their natural resources for fishing, hunting, and gathering are protected for future generations.

Due to the fact that tribes are sovereign governments, many tribes and tribal communities have departments within their tribal government which actively protect and repair the environment and natural resources on tribal lands. In this lesson, the students will be introduced to the idea of Tribal Resource Departments and learn more about the work of the Tribal Resource Department on their reservation and other reservations.

Lesson 3: Develop knowledge of the types of Indian land “ownership” including tribal trust, individual trust, Indian fee, and non-Indian fee ownership, all within reservation boundaries.

Achievement Goal: Using maps, demonstrate how land is owned by the tribe, by tribal individuals, and by non-tribal members.

In this lesson, students will be introduced to the allotment of Indian lands, different types of land ownership on reservations, and the affect it has on tribal communities and the ability of tribal governments to govern.

Lesson 4: Develop knowledge of tribal sovereignty and how the exercise of sovereignty affects tribal governance and land management.

Achievement Goal: Explain the concepts of “sovereignty” and “self-determination” and how these powers help tribes protect land.

In this lesson, students will be asked to perform a thought experiment which will reveal to them the importance of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. They will then learn more about what sovereignty is, how it relates to them, and how to spell the difficult word.
Achievement Goal:
Explain the following terms and relate to traditional values: "natural resources", "interdependence", "ecology", "biodiversity", "sustainability", and "biomimicry".

Time:
2-3 class periods

Core:
Natural Sciences

Grades: 3rd – 5th

Background:
“Once you learn to read the land, I have no fear of what you will do to it, or with it. And I know many pleasant things it will do to you.” - Aldo Leopold, conservationist.

As generation after generation lives on the same land, people develop an intimate understanding of that place. They adapt to the needs and demands of the land and the land in turn sustains them into the future.

This type of relationship characterized the life-ways of many American Indian tribes before the arrival of non-native settlers. In order to survive, it was necessary for native peoples not only to have extensive knowledge about foods and natural materials to make shelter and clothes, but they needed to know what to do (or avoid doing) to the environment which enabled it to yield the things they needed to survive.

Thus, Indian ancestors already knew about several concepts that are often used when modern natural or social scientists discuss ways in which modern society should reduce the destructive impact it has on the natural environment. Such terms include “natural resources”, “interdependence”, “biodiversity”, “sustainability”, and “biomimicry”.

This lesson will introduce these terms to students and discuss the how they relate to Indian land values. Students will explore the meaning of these terms by studying the ecosystem of the Great Plains prairie.
Preparation:

- **Vocabulary Terms**: natural resources, interdependence, ecology, biodiversity, sustainability, and biomimicry.

- Review the following websites, which contain several video clips and lesson plans that will present to the students the main ideas of this lesson:
  
  - [http://catlinclassroom.si.edu](http://catlinclassroom.si.edu). The Smithsonian Institution’s educational website about landscape painter George Catlin. For the purposes of this lesson, select the “Western Landscape” section of the site, and of the figures around the campfire, select the video segment “Wes Jackson: The Changing Ecology of the Prairie.” Review the lesson plan “At Home on the Prairie” in the “For Teachers” section of the website at [http://catlinclassroom.si.edu/lessonplans/wl-c.html](http://catlinclassroom.si.edu/lessonplans/wl-c.html).
  
  
  

- Set up internet access in a way that allows you to present the relevant sections of the websites above to the students.

- Print off copies of the Cris Cross puzzle at the end of this lesson to hand out to the students.

Student Activity (Day 1):

- Using the webpage “Prairie Comeback”, introduce the students to the concept of an ecosystem, in which a community of organisms in the environment sustains itself and works as a unit. Point out that the great diversity of plants on the prairie were hearty in terms of surviving fires. After the fires, the green shoots of the new plants fed bison. The bison, on the other hand, helped the plants grow because they reduced the groundcover that would hinder the growth of the plants. The interdependence of hearty plant diversity, occasional fires, and bison helped sustain the health of the prairie and the existence of the organisms living in that environment.

- Show Walter Bigbee’s presentation on the importance of buffalo to native tribes to your students, using the transcript of Bigbee’s presentation to narrate the slide show.

- Using the information above as an example, help the children define the following terms:
  
  - **Ecosystem** - A self-sustaining area in the environment; a natural community of organisms in the environment.
  
  - **Natural resources** – A resource is something that is used for support or help. A resource may be a person, such as a parent or teacher or relative, or a thing, such as a dictionary. A natural resource is a thing that comes from nature that supports or helps animals or people. It is a gift from nature that we rely on.
  
  - **Interdependence** - Organisms depending on each other for their mutual survival.
  
  - **Biodiversity** - The variety of living things in an ecosystem. Biodiversity is created when organisms adapt to the environment in different ways over a long period of time. When they adapt to the environment, they usually begin to rely on other organisms in the environment and other organisms also rely on them.
  
  - **Observation** - Closely watching something or someone in order to learn from them.
  
  - **Sustainability** - Making sure the environment is healthy and supports people in the future.
  
  - **Biomimicry** - Learning from and imitating things in nature in order to make man-made things and processes better.
- Habitat - An area where an organism or natural community lives.

With these ideas in mind, have the children follow the “Growing Prairie” activity and record their observations over the next few weeks. Make sure the children understand why they are doing this activity by repeating the terms above and asking them how they relate to the activity.

Write the terms on the board and have the students complete the Criss Cross puzzle appended to this lesson. Have them attach it to the sheets where they will be recording their observations for the “Growing Prairie” Activity.

Student Activity: (Day 2)

- Begin the lesson by discussing how bison were important to tribes in the Great Plains. Ask the students why such an animal would be important to the tribes.

- Have the children view the online “campfire story” video clip at [http://catlinclassroom.si.edu](http://catlinclassroom.si.edu) entitled “The Changing Ecology of the Prairie” in the Western Landscape portion of the website.

- After the clip has been shown, explain to students that Indian people are now reintroducing bison into areas where they were exterminated long ago. Using the Intertribal Bison Cooperative website listed above, describe the cooperative to the students and the organization’s mission.

- Discuss how other tribes are doing similar things with other animals and habitats. Have the students view the “Return of the Wolf” video at PBS’s American Field Guide website mentioned above. After the clip, ask the students to compare and contrast the two projects. As an example, point out that the wolf is a predator and the bison is a plant-eater. Have the children think about the effects this difference creates in reintroduction of the animals to their original habitats.

- Ask the students to perform Activity III in the “At Home on the Prairie” lesson plan at the Catlin website. This will give the children a chance to think about their own environment and homeland. When researching and writing about natural resources and endangered animals, have them use at least 5 of the words found in the Criss Cross puzzle attached to their “Growing Prairie” observations.

Evaluation:

- Assess the student’s understanding of the terms and how they relate to traditional land values.

- Assess the student’s ability to think of the environment and ecology in a holistic manner.

- Assess the student’s ability to make observations and record them during the “Growing Prairie” activity.

- Assess the student’s ability to apply the terms to a variety of situations – the study of the prairie, the Nez Perce reintroduction of the wolf into parts of Idaho, and in their research and writing about their own community environment.

Resources:

1. [http://catlinclassroom.si.edu](http://catlinclassroom.si.edu), The Smithsonian Institution’s Campfire Stories with George Catlin
6. [http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com](http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com), Criss Cross Puzzle generator
Across
4. A community of organisms and their environment that works as an ecological unit
7. An area in which an organism or natural community lives
8. A complex grasslands ecosystem
11. The children of the future
12. Large prairie animals with fur, hooves and horns

Down
1. Gifts of nature we rely on
2. Extended family members
3. Learning from and imitating things in nature
5. Watching in order to learn from something or someone
6. The variety of living things
9. Organisms depending on each other to exist
10. Keeping the environment healthy into the future
ANSWERS

Across
4. A community of organisms and their environment that works as an ecological unit (ecosystem)
7. An area in which an organism or natural community lives (habitat)
8. A complex grasslands ecosystem (prairie)
11. The children of the future (Seventh Generation)
12. Large prairie animals with fur, hooves and horns (bison)

Down
1. Gifts of nature we rely on (natural resources)
2. Extended family members (relatives)
3. Learning from and imitating things in nature (biomimicry)
5. Watching in order to learn from something or someone (observation)
6. The variety of living things (biodiversity)
9. Organisms depending on each other to exist (interdependence)
10. Keeping the environment healthy into the future (sustainability)
Achievement Goal:
Study the ways several Indian tribes and tribal communities work to make sure their lands are healthy and natural resources for fishing, hunting, and gathering are protected for future generations.

Time:
Four class periods

Core:
Civics/Government, Geography

Grades: 3rd – 5th

Background:
Due to the fact that tribes are sovereign governments, many tribes and tribal communities have departments within their tribal government which actively protect and repair the environment and natural resources on tribal lands. In this lesson, the students will be introduced to the idea of Tribal Resource Departments and learn more about the work of the Tribal Resource Department on their reservation and other reservations.

Preparation:
- Prepare Internet access for students to view the websites of other Tribal Resource Departments around the country. To keep the students on task, you may want to prepare a one-page worksheet for the students to fill out the answers to three basic questions about the tribes’ Natural Resource Department:
  - What are the natural resources available on the tribe’s land?
  - How does the tribe make sure their lands are healthy and maintain their fishing, hunting or gathering capabilities?
  - How do they make sure their natural gifts are protected for the future generations?
After the students find answers to these questions about the department, supply them with the supplies necessary to write directly to the departments.

Student Activity: (Class periods 1-3)
1. Have students locate the following tribes on a map showing US reservations:
   - Nez Perce Tribe (ID)
2. As you are going through the tribes, ask to students to briefly brainstorm what natural resources these tribes might have on their reservations.

3. Have the students select one of the tribes. Ask them to go to explore the tribe’s Natural Resource Department website (the addresses are listed in the resource section of this lesson).
   - What natural resources are found on tribal lands?
   - How does the tribe maintain their fishing, hunting or gathering capabilities?
   - How do they make sure their natural gifts are protected for the future generations?

4. After the students answer these questions, ask them to find the department’s mailing address and compose a brief letter to the department asking them about stewardship on their reservation. Brief them on an appropriate format for the letter and make sure they address the letter properly. In the letters, have the children ask the department for brochures or maps and any other information about the protection of natural resources on tribal lands. Have the children ask additional questions they might be interested in, such as “Do you involve young tribal members in the work of your department?” or “Does your tribe hold any festivals or tribal get-togethers to celebrate the natural resources on the reservation?” Remind children they should include in their letters a statement that this information is for a classroom project and they would appreciate a response by a particular date. Collect these letters from the children, review them, and mail them.

5. After the responses come in from the departments, ask the students to review the information in class. After they review the information, ask the students to write-up a brief article about the Natural Resource Department, complete with any maps or images they received from the tribe. Inform them these articles will be placed in a class newspaper called the Natural Resource Gazette. When the students are finished with their brief reports, compile into a newspaper or booklet format. Make copies of the newspaper. Give a copy to each student and send one to each natural resource department that participated in this activity.

Evaluation:
- Assess the student’s ability to perform simple internet research based on how they answer the three questions about their selected tribal resource department.
- Assess the student’s ability to write simple letters of inquiry.
- Assess the student’s ability to synthesize information into a brief article.
Resources:

- Tulalip, http://www.tulalip.nsn.us/
- Pueblo of Sandia, http://www.sandiapueblo.nsn.us/environment_department.html

If you wish to include or explore other tribes, visit a helpful list of Tribal Governments at State and Local Government on the Net, http://www.statelocalgov.net/other-na.htm.
Achievement Goal:
Study Indian reservation maps to understand that there are different types of landowners and types of land ownership within reservations boundaries.

Time:
Three class periods

Core:
Civics/Government

Grades: 3rd – 5th

Background:
There is a common misconception that tribes own all the land within reservation boundaries. In reality, pieces of land within reservation boundaries are owned by many different people and groups. In some cases, tribes actually own very little land within their own reservation boundaries. For example, the Crow Tribe in Montana owns only 27% of land inside reservation boundaries. The Quinault Tribe in Washington state owns only 5.7%.

This is a result of the General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act. When Congress enacted the General Allotment Act in 1887, tribal lands were divided into parcels known as “allotments” and given to individual Indians. Thus, the land was no longer owned by the tribe, but by individual people. In doing this, the US government hoped that individual ownership of land would “civilize” Indians, give Indians a reason to stay in one place, cultivate land, disregard the cohesiveness of the tribe, and adopt the habits, practices, and interests of the new settler population.

The General Allotment Act failed to assimilate Indians. The Act was nevertheless one of the single most important events in modern Indian land tenure history because of its destructive impact on the Indian land base. Simply explained, as the land became the property of individuals, it was possible for this land to become fee land, or land that was not “in-trust” and thus no responsibility of the federal government to protect. When it became fee land, it became taxable. Many Indian allottees were unaware of this and, as a result, they had to sell the land when they found that they owed large sums of money to the US government. This land often went to non-tribal members.

Furthermore, tribal land that was not given to tribal members was often declared as “surplus” and sold to non-Indians or held by the federal government. Thus, land was sold to
non-tribal members and companies, which created the complex patterns of land ownership on Indian reservations.

In this lesson, students will be introduced to the allotment of Indian lands, different types of land ownership on reservations, and the affect it has on tribal communities and the ability of tribal governments to govern.

Preparation:
- Examine Imre Sutton’s map “Samples of Reservation Tenure” appended to the end of this lesson. If possible, project this map onto a wall or replicate it on a larger poster board.
- For the activity in this lesson, you will need a white or black board, colored chalk (or whiteboard markers), index cards, or construction paper and tape. On the board, draw the borders of an imaginary Indian reservation. Within this reservation, draw several geographical features such rivers, lakes, an ocean coast, watersheds, mountains, rich agricultural areas, towns, roads, unproductive or arid lands, forests, sacred sites, etc.
- Next, draw a 6 x 6 grid over the map, creating 36 possible “allotments” on the reservation (of course, you can enlarge the grid to more than 6 squares on a side if you wish and depending on the number of students in your classroom.) Number each square on the map.
- For however many squares there are on the map, write the numbers on small piece of paper and place in a hat or bowl. Students will draw their land parcel number from the hat or bowl.
- Take the index cards and count out off enough to give to each student. On 20% of these cards, write “Tribe - Tribal Trust”, on 25% write “Tribal member – Trust Allotment”, on 25% write “Tribal member – fee land”, on 20% write “Non-Tribal member – fee land”, and on the remaining 10% write “Federal Government – federally owned land”. Shuffle the cards.
- If possible, invite staff person from the tribe’s land office to the classroom to speak to the children about ownership of land within reservation boundaries.

Student Activity:
- Begin the lesson by asking the children about the land on which they live – whether their parents own the land, if it is tribally owned but assigned to the family, or if there is some other circumstance. Ask them about the land on which important places like the school, hospital, or parks are located. Do individuals own these lands or are they owned by the tribe?
- Discuss with the students the different types of owners of land within reservation boundaries. Land can be owned by the tribe, by tribal members, by the federal government, by the church, or by non-tribal members.
- Discuss with the students the different types of land ownership, such as “trust” land and “fee” land. Explain to the students that trust land is land which cannot be sold without permission from the federal government, because it is protected by the federal government for the tribes and tribal individuals to use. Trust lands are also not taxed and fall under the authority of the tribe for government. Explain that this is a result of the treaties. Explain to them that fee land is land that can be bought and sold without permission from the federal government. Explain that this fee land is found on reservations because of the Dawes Act, although this conflicts with the treaties.
- Pass out the index cards to the students. Explain to them the first term on the card is the type of landowner they will role play. The second term is the type of land they own.
- Have the students with the tribe cards group together. Instruct them that they will have to work together for the remainder of the activity and that they cannot sell tribal land but they may exchange it for trust land owned by tribal members. Tell the tribe group that they will also want to discourage individual trust land to be sold out of trust because then they could not govern over the land.
- Do the same thing with the students with the Federal Government index cards but instruct them that they will have to work with you during the activity.
• For the students with tribal member cards with trust land, remind them that tribal land cannot be sold without permission from the federal government, but the land can be exchanged for tribal trust land. They may work individually in this activity.

• For the students who are tribal members who own fee land, remind them they can sell the land to anyone, but they also have to pay taxes. They will work individually in this activity.

• Tell the students with non-tribal member cards that they can only attempt to buy or exchange their land for fee land, not trust land. They may, however, lease trust land. You may want to write all of these restrictions on the board for the students in case they forget.

• Have each student in the room draw a number from the hat. Have them find the square with the number they drew out of the hat. (If there are any squares left over, let the tribal members who have allotments draw again.) Using a particular color representing the tribal land, tribal member allotment, tribal member fee, non-tribal member fee, and government owned land, have them write their initials in the square. Have the students in the tribal government group go first.

• As students are drawing their number and initialing their square, have them think about the reservation’s geographic features. Ask the tribal group to discuss what sort of things they can do with the land they have (schools, housing, forestry, fisheries, bison ranges, etc.) and if they should strategically attempt to acquire different pieces of land in order to improve the lives of tribal members. Ask the rest of the students to think about similar things – what kind land is theirs, what natural resources it contains and what natural resources are near it, what access does the land give to other natural resources, what they can do on the land they have, if they would like to try to trade for another piece of land, and who they may be able to trade with.

• After the students have given some thought to their land holdings, tell them that they are allowed to attempt to exchange their land in accordance with the rules above. If an exchange is made, change the initials and colors on the board to reflect the change. If students go to the federal government for permission to convert their trust land into fee, ask the buyer and seller questions such as what they will do with land. You may make the process as easy or difficult as you please and you may make decisions that are not consistent with each other. You and the students you are working with may also give land to the tribe and take land away.

• You may make this activity as simple or as complex as you like. You may add money to the simulation by giving each student 5 blank index cards representing money or fake monopoly money. You may have several rounds of trading and buying and in each round, have a member of the federal government collect taxes from the fee land owners and give money to the fee land owners if they claim to use the land for a business, a farm, or ranch. You may hold elections and have the tribal members to vote people out of the tribal government. All the while, encourage students to negotiate respectfully and with patience, emphasizing that this is an extremely important skill.

• After the activity, ask the students to share their thoughts about this activity. Give them hypothetical situations using the map, such as what would happen if there were a crime on a piece of fee land. Who would govern this? What if there was a non-tribal polluter on a river or lake that is also adjacent to tribal lands? How does the tribe prioritize what lands it wants to acquire within reservation boundaries?

• Ask a land officer from your own reservation or a reservation nearby to visit the class. It would be particularly helpful if he or she is able to bring a map illustrating how land ownership is distributed on the reservation. Stories of real transactions (without using real names or other identifying factors) are important to help children this age understand land issues. Older students may have information about the location and status of lands that belong to their own families. Ask the land officer to speak on the following issues pertaining to the reservation pertinent:
  o The history of land allotment
  o Examples of land fractionation
  o Trust land
  o Fee land
  o Examples of land exchange
  o Examples of land consolidation
Ways to handle heirship of land

Evaluation:

- Assess the student’s strategic thinking about their parcel of land. Observe the student’s understanding of their role as a particular type of land owner and the restrictions placed on their possible land transactions. Assess the way in which the students cooperate and negotiate with each other.

- While you are asking the students hypothetical questions, observe their understanding of how different types of ownership within reservation boundaries either helps or hinders the tribe and tribal members.

- Assess the student’s understanding of the complexities of land ownership on Indian reservations as reflected in their questions to the tribal land office staff person.

Resources:


2. http://www.indianlandtenure.org/ILTFallotment/allotindex/index.htm. The Indian Land Tenure Foundation’s Allotment pages provides an introduction to the history of allotment, a list of frequently asked questions, and other information that may help you understand the General Allotment Act and its impact on Indian Country.
FIG. P. 4. Sample Tenures on Reservations, circa 1960s. It is patent that many of the tenures identified on these sample maps would have changed after more than forty years, but they do exemplify the tenurial situation on trust lands. For many reservations, because of allotment, a high percentage of holdings are in non-Indian hands. Source of map: I. Sutton. (1975), Indian Land Tenure, 1975, map p. 85; see also Francis P. Prucha, (1990), Atlas of American Indian Affairs (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press). Another map of tenure patterns, for the Rosebud Sioux I. R., is figure 4.4. Map copyrighted by Imre Sutton.
Achievement Goal:
Explain the concepts of “sovereignty” and “self-determination” and how these powers help tribes protect land for tribal members.

Time:
Three class period

Core:
Civics/Government

Grades: 3rd – 5th

Background:
To explain it simply, tribal sovereignty means the power of a tribe to govern itself, its members, and make decisions about its land. The powers of sovereign governments include the power to enact laws, to establish systems of justice, the power to require people to abide by established laws, the power to tax, the power to zone property, the power to regulate hunting and fishing and so on.

The sovereignty of the tribe is important to Indian self-determination. Self-determination is the aspiration of a group of people which have a separate and distinct identity to determine its own future in its own way.

Why are these ideas important? In this lesson, students will be asked to perform a thought experiment which will reveal to them the importance of tribal sovereignty and self-determination. They will then learn more about what sovereignty is, how it relates to them, and how to spell the difficult word.

Preparation:
• Be familiar with several types of tribal government.

Student Activity:
• Define and discuss with the students the ideas of sovereignty and self-determination.
• In order to explain the importance of sovereignty and self-determination to young students, have them think back to lessons that focus on how biodiversity is good for the planet. Remind them of how organisms change as they adapt to particular environments and adopt different characteristics to ensure they survive. Now, relate this environmental diversity to the diversity of human communities in
the world. Describe how communities naturally find ways to adapt to and survive in the world. Some of these adaptations are technological innovations, some of these adaptations occur within language, but some of these adaptations help people in the group relate to and cooperate with one another, which helps the group survive. From some of these adaptations, people derive beliefs that make their lives meaningful. Because human beings are imaginative and innovative, these beliefs and adaptations create distinct cultures and these cultures help people understand their world.

- After explaining this, have the students close their eyes and perform the following thought experiment. Ask them to imagine what it would be like to have people with a very different culture and a different language come into the classroom and begin forcing the students to act a particular way. Ask the students to imagine being told not to speak in their language and not to believe in certain things that help them understand the world. Tell the students to imagine how they would feel if these people told them that their beliefs are unintelligent and that the student, their families, and friends belong to an inferior people. Ask the children to imagine how they would feel if they saw these people settle in land that was previously the land of the children’s ancestors. Ask them to imagine their relatives beginning to act more like these invaders and forget the language they used growing up. After this thought experiment, ask the students to open their eyes. Explain to the students that this sort of situation occurred when Europeans began to settle North America.

- Again, define the words sovereignty and self-determination for the students. Ask them to describe how these things protect Indian communities and individuals. Ask them: Is it better to be governed by people who do not understand your community, or by members of your community? Is it better to follow your own visions about your future, or be told what you should do and who you should be when you grow up? Emphasize that differences between people are neither good nor bad, but occur naturally. What is important is that people learn to respect each others’ differences.

- Ask the students to think about what sovereignty requires. This maybe a tough question, so prompt them by writing the words land, economy, self-government, and culture on the board. You may want to write one word at a time and have the children focus on brainstorming about that particular aspect. Here are some suggested ideas you may what to explain to the students:
  - **Land:** Land is sacred, the basis of tribal economy as well as a place to continue cultural traditions. Maintaining a homeland for future generations is important for all tribes. Additionally, many tribes still rely on the natural resources of the land.
  - **Economy:** Some Indian tribes lease their reservation lands. Natural resources such as trees, water, fish, and minerals may give tribes economic power.
  - **Self-Governance:** One of the most basic powers of a sovereign people is to select their form of government. Each of the approximately 550 Indian tribes in the United States has a unique form of government. Some tribes have chosen to develop their form of self-government in accordance with their political and cultural history. Some tribes have adopted a governmental similar to the U.S. Still others, such as the Pueblos of New Mexico, have chosen to retain their traditional forms of government.
  - **Culture:** Culture guides tribal government and the economy. Traditions are part of daily life. When cultural characteristics are lost, erosion of a nation can quickly occur. Language, customs, religion, dress and beliefs are cultural attributes that are crucial to the survival of any society or sovereign nation.

- On the board, write the words “Land,” “Economy,” “Government” and “Culture”. Discuss how each of these factor into the role of sovereignty on the reservation. Give local examples.

- Have the students select one of the four basic principles of sovereignty and draw a picture illustrating the principle, with a short written explanation.

- Display the pictures and explanations in the hall, library or other location within the school.

- Spelling the word sovereignty can be difficult for young students. Help them remember how to spell it by using a pneumonic approach such as:
  
  **Several Old Vultures Eat Raisins Even In Great Northern Territories, Yes?**

- Discuss the form of tribal government used on the reservation or reservations most students in your class identify with.
• Make copies of the essays and send to your local newspaper with a note asking if they would publish several of them.

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**Evaluation:**

• Have the students spell sovereignty in a spelling test.
• Assess the student’s understanding of the importance of tribal sovereignty and self-determination.
• Assess the student’s pictures to determine if they comprehend the meaning of sovereignty and the relationship of land, economy, government, and culture to sovereignty.

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**Resources:**

1. Listing of federally and state recognized tribes with links to official websites, Evergreen State University, http://www.evergreen.edu/library/govdocs/tribalgov/index.html