This is a two or three day lesson designed for a high school English language and grammar class that uses a variety of sources that have students consider significant issues related to the American frontier experience and its ongoing legacy. The prompts lead students to formulate an informed opinion on the use of Native American symbols as school mascots.

Unit: Myth or History

Concepts: The Frontier/Manifest Destiny/Native American Identity

Initial Readings


Identity Readings


ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time-2 hours

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

Since the 1970s American Indians and organizations have worked to eliminate the use of Native American mascots and images for schools and sports teams. In 2005 the National Collegiate Athletic Association banned the use of Native American images or nicknames during post-season tournaments, and in May Oregon voted to prohibit the use of Native American mascots at any of its state schools. Opponents of Native American team names like the Washington Redskins argue that such uses not only mock and trivialize Native American culture and religion but also cultivate racist attitudes. Those in support of using Native American mascots and images claim that using Native American names and images not only honors American Indians but also promotes Native American culture. In the case of the Florida State University, the Seminole Tribe of Florida helped create the mascot. And the Ute Tribal Council has given the University of Utah permission to use the tribe’s name.
Carefully read the following seven sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that evaluates the most important factors the federal government should consider in deciding whether to prohibit all schools and sports teams from using Native American names, images, mascots, and logos.

Make sure your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc… or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Psychology magazine)

Source B (Online blog)
Kline, R. Neal. “NCAA Native American Mascot Controversy.”
http://www.bernardgoldberg.com/ncaa-native-american-mascot-controversy/

Source C (A policy survey)
“Most Indians Say Name of Washington ‘Redskins’ Is Acceptable, While 9 Percent Call It Offensive.”
http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/NewsDetails.aspx?myId=89

Source D (An online political newspaper)
Brovsky, Cindy. “Legislators Fume over Native American Mascots.”
http://coloradostatesman.com/content/991564-legislators-fume-over-native-american-mascots

Source E (From a nationally known newspaper)
Davey, Monica. “In Twist, Tribe Fights for College Nickname.”

Source F (An online essay)
Rider, David P. “‘Indians’ and Animals: A Comparative Essay.”
http://www.aistm.org/david_rider_essay.htm

Source G (An online comic website dedicated to Native American issues)
“Can You Imagine?”
http://www.bluecorncomics.com/wahoo.htm