Investigating a Wintu Roundhouse

Instructions for the Teacher

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Part One: Geography
Instructions for the Teacher

Materials

*For Each Student*

•  "Investigating a Wintu Roundhouse: Part One" (Archaeology Notebook, pages 1-5)

*For the Teacher*

•  Transparency of the Wintu shelter photograph from the cover, or project it with an LCD projector from the website.
•  Additional illustrations and photographs of plants and animals for the "Geographic Location of the Wintu People’s Traditional Territory" can be found on the website.
•  10 feet of string or light rope.

Preparing to Teach

1.  Make a transparency of the historic photographs of roundhouses (pages 7-8).
2.  Make a copy of "Investigating a Wintu Roundhouse: Part One" (page 1) for each student.
3.  Post the essential question: “How can investigating the Wintu roundhouse help us understand the Wintu people and their culture?”
4.  Post the Word Bank words.

Word Bank

*ancestor:* a person from whom one is descended like a mother, father, or grandparent

*biospy:* history of a person’s life as told by another person

*ceremony:* an important, meaningful event

*cewel:* a Wintu word for “house”

*cultural:* related to the customs, beliefs, laws, and all other ways of being that is shared by people in a certain society or group

*ethnobotanist:* someone who studies the traditional use of plants

*graduate school:* university study after college

*herbalist:* someone who uses plants for healing

*precipitation:* water that comes from the sky such as rain or snow

*reproductions:* something that is created to look like something else

*tradition:* cultural practices or beliefs that are handed down

*traditionally:* according to tradition

Uncover Prior Knowledge

How can investigating the Wintu roundhouse help us understand the Wintu people and their culture? Inform students that this question will guide their learning.

1.  Tell students that they are going to continue playing the role of an archaeologist as they investigate the roundhouse, a type of shelter used by the Wintu people.
2.  Write the word “roundhouse” on a board or overhead and show the students the photograph of a roundhouse at the same time. Ask them:
   •  What does the design of the roundhouse suggest about the materials the Wintu used to build their shelter?
   •  If students suggest the Wintu probably used material (wood, dirt, etc.), ask how might the Wintu have constructed the roundhouse using these materials?
   •  How might the Wintu have used their roundhouse?

Note: Roundhouses may have been used as gathering spaces for communal activities, ceremony, dancing, and possibly as living spaces in some cases. Students will learn about different roundhouse designs, construction methods, and functions throughout this guide. This activity is designed to generate student speculation and give the teacher an opportunity to gage students’ prior knowledge, not necessarily answer these questions at this time.
Discover New Knowledge

1. Go over the cover sheet information for **PART ONE** (PAGE 1) and look at the data sources students will use in their investigation.

2. As a class, read Ted Dawson’s biography (page 2). Have students describe the meaning of the word culture from lesson three. Assist students in creating a definition for biography, tradition, ethnobotanist, herbalist, graduate school, ceremony, cewel, reproductions, ancestor, precipitation, and culture, and add them to the word bank.

3. Estimate the size of a Wintu roundhouse using the following procedure:
   a. Go outside as a class if possible. This activity can occur in a large indoor space if necessary.
   b. As a group, estimate how big 20 feet across is, and make a class circle to show your estimate.
   c. Mark the diameter with small stones, tape, pieces of string, or students in at least four places.
   d. Have one person stand in the middle of the circle with a piece of string 10 feet long.
   e. Have a second person stretch the string to its full length and then walk around the perimeter of the circle.
   f. Have the rest of the class adjust their circle to match the outside person holding the string.
   g. How close was your estimate to 20 feet?
   h. Ask students: How many people do you think could gather in this roundhouse?
   i. Tell students that there may be 50-75 people living in the village at one time. Could they all gather in here?
   j. Tell students that a Wintu village would have one large round shelter about this size per village. They would have several smaller round shelters as well, about half this size.
   k. Ask students why they think there may have been one larger shelter with many smaller shelters in a village.

4. Once the students have returned to the classroom, teams of two will read together “Geographic Location of the Wintu People’s Traditional Territory” (page 3) and then analyze the data. Alternatively, read the section as a class and analyze the data as a group. Discuss student responses as a class.
EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED RESPONSES

Geographic Location of the Wintu People’s Traditional Territory

1. The tribe historically lived in northern California. Today many still live in northern California, but others live all over the world.
2. Students should use text, photographs, and illustrations provided to draw a landscape of Redding, California. It doesn’t need to be accurate; the goal is to make the place more concrete
3. Below 32 degrees Fahrenheit; over 100 degrees Fahrenheit
4. Example: A shelter that stays warm in the winter and cool in the summer.
Investigating a Wintu Roundhouse

Archaeology Notebook

Part One: Geography ................. p. 1
Part Two: History ................. p. 6
Part Three: Archaeology ............. p. 16
Part Four: Today ................. p. 24
Assessment ................. p. 30
In this investigation you will use geography, history, and archaeology to learn about a Wintu roundhouse, village, and the people who lived there. You will look at historic photographs and read oral histories. You will “make” an archaeological site and classify artifacts. You will infer how the geographic location of the Wintu people shaped the roundhouse. You will use what you learned to plan and draw a shelter that protects you from bad weather. In a final composition you will report what you learned.
Part One: Geography

You are an archaeologist. Your question is:

*What can we learn about the history and lives of the Wintu people by investigating a roundhouse?*

**Investigation Activities**

1. Read a *biography* of Mr. Ted Dawson, “Meet Mr. Ted Dawson, a Nor Rel Muk Wintu Indian” (page 2).
2. Estimate the size of a large roundhouse with the whole class (teacher led).
3. Read “Geographic Location of the Wintu People's Traditional Territory” (page 3).
4. Complete Data Collection Sheet “Geographic Location of the Wintu People's Traditional Territory” (page 5).

**Data Sources**

- A *biography* of Mr. Ted Dawson (page 2)
- The article “Geographic Location of the Wintu People's Traditional Territory” (page 3)

**Word Bank** (words are in bold the first time they appear in the text)

- **ancestor**: a person from whom one is descended like a mother, father, or grandparent
- **biography**: history of a person’s life as told by another person
- **ceremony**: an important, meaningful event
- **cewel**: a Wintu word for “house”
- **cultural**: related to the customs, beliefs, laws, and all other ways of being that is shared by people in a certain society or group
- **ethnobotanist**: someone who studies the traditional use of plants
- **graduate school**: university study after college
- **herbalist**: someone who uses plants for healing
- **precipitation**: water that comes from the sky such as rain or snow
- **reproductions**: something that is created to look like something else
- **tradition**: cultural practices or beliefs that are handed down
- **traditionally**: according to tradition
Meet Mr. Ted Dawson, a Nor Rel Muk Wintu Indian

Meet Ted Dawson, a Nor Rel Muk Wintu Indian from Trinity County in northern California. The Nor Rel Muk Wintu people are from the West Mountains (Klamath Mountains). They are mountain people from the west side of the Sacramento River. Traditionally, they did not cross the River.

Mr. Dawson is an ethnobotanist, herbalist, and educator. He teaches about the relationships between people and plants. Mr. Dawson has had a lot of education in order to teach about health, plants, and people. He has earned many graduate degrees during his training.

His Nor Rel Muk grandmother and great grandmother took him everywhere when he was little. He began learning about plants from them.

In the 1980’s, Ted was in Santa Cruz, California finishing graduate school to become a Health Educator. During sweat lodge ceremonies, a medicine man told him to come home. He returned to the Redding, California area where he has lived since.

In the early 1800’s, settlers came to Redding, California and the Wintu people moved into the hills. Before that time, Wintu people lived in Redding and in the surrounding areas for thousands of years in villages. In these villages were a type of shelter called a cewel, a Wintu house. To say the word cewel, first say the letter "q." Next, say "ewel," as in "jewel."

Mr. Dawson makes reproductions of cedar bark-covered cewels that were the homes of his ancestors. They are sometimes called bark houses. He uses them to teach about the Wintu people. You can find one of his reproductions on display at the Turtle Bay Exploration Park.
Geographic Location of the Wintu People's Traditional Territory

Many groups of people all over northern California traditionally used roundhouses. Many still do. The Wintu people are one group that built roundhouses. The Wintu people lived in villages beside the northern part of the Sacramento River. It is the largest river in California. They also lived beside rivers and creeks that flow into the Sacramento River.

Wintu people lived in the area that is now Redding, California in the flat Sacramento Valley beside the River. They also lived in the flatter parts of the Klamath and Cascade mountains. Two important mountains to the Wintu people are Mount Shasta and Mount Lassen.

Because of the Sacramento Valley's heat and rich soil, plants grow well all year long. This area has 30-40 inches of precipitation a year. The average annual air temperature is 64 degrees Fahrenheit, but it varies. Temperatures are often over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer. Temperatures can reach below freezing, or 32 degrees Fahrenheit, in the winter. Redding has sunny skies almost 250 days a year.

Forests of grey pine and oak trees now grow where Wintu villages were. In the past, these areas would have been more open with fewer trees. Grasses and manzanita are common plants. Incense cedars grow near the mountains. Black-tailed deer, mountain lion, coyote, brush rabbit, birds, reptiles, fish, and shellfish are common animals in the region. Mussels, trout, deer, pine nuts, acorns, and salmon were popular foods. The Wintu traditionally ate and used many different plants and animals, but salmon and acorns were the most important.
Today the Wintu people live all over the United States, but many still live in northern California. Wintu people work many jobs. They may work in education, law, medicine, or other fields. They also participate in cultural events that honor their history and observe Wintu spiritual practices.
Geographic Location of the Wintu People's Traditional Territory:
Analyzing Data

1. Where did the Wintu people live in earlier times? Do they still live in the same place today?

2. Draw a picture below that shows what the landscape in the Redding, California area looks like. Label each part of the landscape.

3. In degrees Fahrenheit, how cold can it get in the winter in this area? In degrees Fahrenheit, how hot can it get in the summer in this area?

4. What kind of shelter would be needed and wanted in the summer? How about in the winter?