



Lesson Plan: This Land is My Land, Not Yours

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will participate in a role-playing activity that presents a hypothetical scenario in which the U.S. government seeks to restore Native Americans to their historic homelands by asking current landowners to sell their land and move. The class will then explore how a similar situation is playing out in modern-day South Africa.

The lesson features a clip from the film **Promised Land**, which looks at the complex issues of South African land reform and racial reconciliation by following two black communities trying to reclaim land from which they say their ancestors were removed under apartheid. For more information on the history of South Africa, see the [Related Resources](#) section of this lesson plan.

POV documentaries can be recorded off-the-air and used for educational purposes for up to one year from their initial broadcasts. In addition, POV offers a lending library of DVDs and VHS tapes that you can borrow any time during the school year — FOR FREE! Get started by joining our Community Network:

www.amdoc.org/outreach/events/

Please visit our Film Library at http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_filmlibrary.php to find other films suitable for classroom use or to make this film a part of your school's permanent collection.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Examine how the U.S. government forced Native Americans to leave their land and eventually moved them to reservations.
- Discuss a hypothetical land restitution scenario from a given perspective.
- Explore land reform issues and racial reconciliation in South Africa after the end of apartheid.
- Compare and contrast the situation of Native Americans in the United States with similar situations in South Africa.

GRADE LEVELS

9-12

SUBJECT AREAS

Civics, Geography, U.S. History, World History, Current Events

MATERIALS

- Internet access and equipment to show the class an online video clip
- [Handout A](#) (PDF file)
- [Handout B](#) (PDF file)
- Handout: [Viewing Guide](#) (PDF file)

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED

One 50-minute class period, plus homework time

FILM CLIP

Clip 1: "Land Reform in South Africa" (length 14:52)

The clip begins at the beginning of the film with archival footage of men in uniform walking with dogs and people being forced from their homes. It ends when Blessing Mphela says, "It is a result of history that we find ourselves in this situation."

ACTIVITY

1. Provide half the students in the class with Handout A and the other half with Handout B. Give students a few minutes to read their handouts and react in writing to the scenarios presented.
2. Tell each student with Handout A to pair with a classmate with Handout B or group students into pairs. Ask students to share the scenarios from their handouts with their partners and explain their reactions to them from their given perspectives. Challenge pairs to determine how the government should decide who gets the land in question.
3. Invite a number of pairs to summarize their discussions and solutions (or impasses) with the class. Have students discuss who they think should pay the price for such historical wrongs and why.
4. Tell the class that countries around the world struggle with how to address injustices from the past with their citizens. One such country is South Africa.
5. Distribute and review the Viewing Guide for this lesson and then show the video clip "Land Reform in South Africa." Students should take notes on the Viewing Guide as they watch.
6. For homework, tell students to create Venn diagrams that compare and contrast the situation of Native Americans in the United States with the situation of South Africans currently involved in land reform issues.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Students can be assessed on:

- Meaningful contributions to the partner activity.
- Thoughtful responses on the Viewing Guide.

EXTENSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

- Conduct a more detailed exploration of the history and emotions underlying South African land reform by asking students to write plays based on the land claim stories featured in **Promised Land**. To prepare, tell them to watch the entire film and read the Q&A About Land Claims in South Africa (http://www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland/land_reform.php) on the POV website. Students may write these plays individually, or they may collaborate in small groups outside of class using online wikis. If possible, allow students to perform their plays in a theater setting or as video productions.
- Look further into the history of how Native Americans were dispossessed of their land by having students read *Trail of Tears* by Gloria Jahoda and/or *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown. Have students keep journals as they read to capture questions to discuss with the class or to

research. Also ask students to use their journals to record their reflections on the events described. Then, have students analyze information in textbooks about this time period and determine whether or not the Native American perspective is represented appropriately.

- Watch the section of **Promised Land** (from 17:53 to 24:23) that features Roger Roman, a white farmer who was inspired by the book *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* to give away his land in South Africa to black people. Also, review the film [update on Roger Roman](#) (http://www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland/roger_roman.php) on the POV website. How does Roman's philosophy about land reconciliation compare to that of other white farmers featured in the film? Do students think his ideas of rapid, transformative land reform are realistic? Why or why not? What are the advantages and disadvantages of fast versus slow change?
- Examine how the policies of apartheid once governed the everyday lives of black people in South Africa. Read the *NewsHour* Extra handout [Apartheid in Practice](#) (http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/lessonplans/world/safrica_apartheid.pdf) and discuss how these racist policies might influence a black South African's quest for land restitution. Also, have students consider how South Africa's treatment of black people under apartheid compares to the treatment of black people historically in the United States.
- Compare and contrast land reform issues in South Africa with those in Latin America in post-colonial times. Assign student groups Latin American countries to research. Have each group present to the class a summary of the land issues, the ways in which they were addressed and the outcome of those decisions. Are there any patterns? How could the experiences in these countries inform the situation in South Africa? Have students summarize their findings and their recommendations for how best to achieve equitable and stable land reform in a policy brief for the president of South Africa.

RESOURCES

Indian Removal

http://www.pbs.org/kcet/andrewjackson/themes/indian_removal.html

The website for the series *Andrew Jackson: Good, Evil and the Presidency* explains President Andrew Jackson's position on Indian rights. Two short video clips summarize this period in U.S. history and provide a scholarly discussion of its impact.

Indian Removal: 1814-1858

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html>

The *Africans in America* website describes the policies of the U.S. government that led to the forced removal of Indians east of the Mississippi River.

Key Dates in South African Land History

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/land/ct_safrica.html

This *NewsHour* timeline lays out important developments in South African land history from 1806 to 2005.

STANDARDS

These standards are drawn from “Content Knowledge,” a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) available at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.

Behavioral Studies

Standard 4: Understands conflict, cooperation and interdependence among individuals, groups and institutions.

Civics

Standard 14: Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life.

Standard 25: Understands issues regarding personal, political and economic rights.

Geography

Standard 9: Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on Earth’s surface.

Language Arts

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

U.S. History

Standard 9: Understands the United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans.

World History

Standard 44: Understands the search for community, stability and peace in an interdependent world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cari Ladd, M.Ed., is an educational writer with a background in secondary education and media development. Previously, she served as PBS Interactive’s director of education, overseeing the development of curricular resources tied to PBS programs, the PBS TeacherSource website (now PBS Teachers) and online teacher professional development services. She has also taught in Maryland and Northern Virginia.