

The Appaloosa - Horse of the Nez Perce

Evelyn Carter, Solo Greene, Jackie Taylor, D’Lisa Pinkham
Nez Perce Indian Reservation, Lapwai, Idaho

Summary

Students predict the route of the Nez Perce during the Nez Perce War, and examine the suitability of the Appaloosa horse for traveling the terrain.

Grade level

Fourth

Time required

One to two hours

Materials

Tag board

[Pictures and photos of Appaloosa horses](#)

[Historic photos of Nez Perce on horseback](#)

[Map of Nez Perce aboriginal territory](#)

[Satellite image of Nez Perce aboriginal territory](#)

Butcher paper

Index cards

Goals

By completing this lesson the student will

- 1) gain awareness of the terrain traveled by the Nez Perce during the war of 1877,
- 2) gain proficiency in using geographical terms accurately,
- 3) gain experience in interpreting satellite images and
- 4) learn about the Appaloosa horse.

Science standards addressed

National Science Standards

- Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry
- Characteristics of organisms
- Changes in Earth and sky

American Indian Science Standards

- Elements of the pre-contact North American environment and how changes to them were brought on by the arrival of Europeans in North America
- Technologies, diseases, warfare, and other factors and how they affected pre- and post-Columbian American Indian population densities

- Elements of science and technology in the fields of medicine, botany, psychology and ecology which have benefited from the contributions of American Indians

Teacher tips

A brief summary of the Nez Perce War of 1877 should be given to the students. Students should also have advance knowledge of the terrain of the Nez Perce aboriginal territory, and should be able to use geographical terms to describe it. A globe should be in the room and maps displayed to show different terrains and states traveled by the Nez Perce in the War of 1877. For more information about the history of the Nez Perce, their aboriginal territory and the War of 1877, refer to the books and web sites listed in the Resources section.

Use the small horse drawings provided with this lessons as stencils to make small horse shaped pieces out of tag board for use in the student presentations and with their games.

Background information

Before the Treaty of 1855, the Nez Perce traveled approximately 13.5 million acres of land, enveloping a majority of the northwestern United States. In the Treaty of 1855, the Nez Perce Reservation was reduced to 7.5 million acres. The 1863 Treaty, also known as the “Steal” or “Thief” Treaty, reduced the reservation to approximately 750,000 acres.

In the early to mid-1700’s, the Nez Perce was introduced to the horse. The Nez Perce people learned to ride and soon became expert horsemen. They were known for the quantity and quality of horses they owned. With the acquisition of horses, the lifestyle of the Nez Perce changed dramatically. The horse became a form of personal wealth, an item of trade, a means of transportation, an ally on the hunt or warpath, a treasure to be stolen or protected, and a way of traveling distances and to places formerly unheard of. Horses raised by the Nez Perce were known to be sure-footed, hard-hoofed, and durable, with endless stamina and endurance. Careful animal husbandry by the tribe refined the breed of horse known as the Appaloosa. The name Appaloosa is derived from the Palouse Valley, which runs through the states of Washington and Idaho.

Today, the Nez Perce actively breed and raise Appaloosa horses. A new breed of horse developed by tribal members, known as the Nez Perce Horse, has recently been registered as well. Horses are still being used in tribal, social, and ceremonial events. Young tribal members are learning how to ride and care for horses in order to continue an important horse culture.

Procedure

Engagement

- 1) Give student groups satellite images of the aboriginal territory of the Nez Perce. Ask them to work together to locate rivers, mountains and other landforms.
- 2) Show pictures of different types of horses, including historic pictures of Nez Perce people on horses. Ask students to note how the Appaloosa differs from other breeds of horses.

- 3) Invite a tribal person from the Appaloosa Horse Club or Nez Perce Horse Program to come and speak to the students about the Appaloosa and Nez Perce Horse, or take students on a field trip there. Facts about the make-up of the Appaloosa should be given to show how the horse was able to manage difficult trails.

Exploration

- 1) Give a rough outline of the Nez Perce aboriginal territory to each group of students. Ask them to use the satellite images to determine a route that may have been used by the Nez Perce long ago to travel to various areas for hunting, trading, fishing, etc. This is an open-ended problem, with no single right answer. Have students draw their proposed routes on their maps.
- 2) Ask student groups to again use satellite images and map to draw a likely trail the Nez Perce may have traveled during the Nez Perce War of 1877.

Explanation

Ask student groups to report to the class, in story or factual form, why they chose their route. Have them use small paper laminated horses to move along their route on the satellite image as they explain their choices. They should use geographical terms in their explanation.

Elaboration

Ask student pairs to create a board game, in which players travel through the states traveled by the Nez Perce during the War of 1877. They should create game cards that incorporate the facts that they have learned about the Nez Perce, the War of 1877, the Appaloosa horse, and the terrain of Nez Perce aboriginal territory.

Evaluation

- 1) Assess student understanding of the lesson content by examining the board games they create.
- 2) Utilize a student-made rubric to evaluate the students on their route decisions.

Follow up activities

- 1) The students could compare the uses of the Appaloosa horse during the late 1800's and early 1900's with the Appaloosa of today.
- 2) Students could employ the concept of scale by measuring on the map, then calculating the actual distance that Chief Joseph and his people traveled.
- 3) Ask student to research how the Nez Perce decorated their horses for special occasions. Students could make horse regalia as an art extension activity. Bring in historical and contemporary photos or the items themselves for students to view.
- 4) Students can learn more about the anatomy of the horse by exploring the web sites listed in the Resource section.
- 5) Enrich the lesson by utilizing the children's literature about Appaloosas listed in the Resource section.

Resources

Books

Landeem, D. & Crow, J. (1997). I am of this land: Wetes pe m'e wes. Lapwai, ID: Nez Perce Tribe.

Gulick, B. (1994). Chief Joseph country: Land of the Nez Perce. Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers.

Wilfong, C. (1990). Following the Nez Perce Trail: A guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press.

Children's literature

Gulick, B. (1968). The moon-eyed appaloosa. New York: Paperback Library.

Liloia, T. & Liloia, C. (2000). The appaloosa kid. Xlibris Corporation..

Gentle, V. & Perry, J. (2001). Appaloosas - Great American horses. Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens.

Haas, J.& Apple, M. (2002). Appaloosa zebra: A horse lover's alphabet. Harper Collins Juvenile Books.

Pavia, A., et al. (1998). Appaloosa spirit (Spirit of the horse). Bowtie Press.

Goble, P. (1993). The girl who loved wild horses. New York: Aladdin Publishing.

Web sites

Horse Fun – A site made for kids to have fun while learning about horses.
<http://www.horsefun.com>

Southern Oregon Horse Association – Contains diverse information, including pages on specific breeds such as the Appaloosa.
<http://www.sohahorses.org>

The following sites contain information, including pictures and maps about Chief Joseph, treaties, and wars of the Nez Perce

Digital Safari Nez Perce Site - www.cccoe.k12.ca.us/mdtech/nativeamerican/nezperce/

U.S. Forest Service Nez Perce National Historic Trail - www.fs.fed.us/npnht/

National Park Service Nez Perce National Historic Park and Big Hole Battlefield –
www.nps.gov/nepe/sites.htm