

What Are the Cardinal Directions?

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Summary

Students will be introduced to the concept of the cardinal directions.

Grade level

Kindergarten

Time required

60 minutes

Materials

Direction signs

[Okanogan Salish words for cardinal directions and celestial bodies](#)

Drawing paper and crayons

Cardinal Directions song (attached)

Goals

By completing this lesson, students will

- 1) learn the use of the words North, South, East, and West to describe directions,
- 2) become aware of the directionality of some cultural events and sites,
- 3) learn the Okanogan words for the Cardinal Directions and
- 4) develop inquiry process skills.

Science standards addressed

National Science Standards

- Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry
- Organisms and environments
- Objects in the sky

American Indian Science Standards

- Changes in Earth's surface, weather fluctuations and movements of celestial objects and how they affected historical American Indian community locations, annual migrations, and agricultural and ceremonial cycles
- Objects in the sky as exemplified by historical American Indian lunar calendars, traditional stories, and knowledge of weather patterns, constellations and the habits of birds

Background information

Ancestors of the twelve aboriginal tribes which now comprise the Colville Confederated Tribes were nomads who followed the seasons in search of food. Their territories were grouped primarily around waterways such as the Columbia River, the San Poil River, the Okanogan River, the Snake River and the Wallowa River. These people traveled throughout the Northwest into Canada, and often gathered with other groups for traditional activities. Specific areas were used for traditional season activities such as root digging, berry picking, fishing, hunting, and trading. Invite an elder to talk with students about these areas. Use these and other cultural sites as reference points for the cardinal directions.

Procedure

Engagement

- 1) Ask students to name the four directions. Discuss.
- 2) Sing the Cardinal Directions song with students.

Exploration

Take students outside to look at their surroundings. Point to each direction and ask the students what they see. For example:

- West - Omak or the Cascade Mountains
- East - Shistlepote Mountain or Omak Lake
- North - the grave yard
- South - Table Rock or Okanogan

Explanation

Show students cards with the words, North, South, East, and West written in English and Okanogan Salish on them. Have students practice saying the names of the directions in both languages as you mount the directional signs on the appropriate walls. Encourage students to share what they saw in that direction.

Elaboration

- 1) Invite an elder to talk with students about the traditional activities and cultural sites of Colville people that are located in the various areas of the reservation, particularly in the areas that students observed as landmarks in the four directions.
- 2) Ask students to think of things that occur in a particular direction. Have them draw pictures of directional events to place on the walls under the directional signs. For example:
 - Moss growing on the north side of trees
 - Birds migrating north and south
 - Sun rising in the east, setting in the west
 - Wind directions
 - Rivers flowing west toward the Pacific Ocean
 - Directions of roads

Evaluation

Assess student understanding through informal discussion with them about the directions while they are drawing their pictures.

Resources

Web sites

University of Missouri-Kansas City Instructional Materials Center - Original version of Directions Song
www.umkc.edu/imc/song-cds.htm

Cardinal Directions Song

Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

If you like the sunshine best,
Travel east or travel west,
If you like the cold and snow,
North is the way to go.
If you like Okanogan,
Head down south for lots of fun!