

## Unit 6, Lesson 2: Encountering the Wigwam



### Maryland Social Studies Standards and Framework

Standard: Social Studies Skills and Processes

Topic: Answer Social Studies questions

Standard: Social Studies Skills and Processes

Topic: Acquire Social Studies information

Standard: Peoples of the Nations and World

Topic: Elements of Culture

MCCR Grade 4

MCCR Standards: RI.4.1, W.4.1, W.4.9, SS.6.1

### Objective(s):

Students will:

- Construct a sound historical interpretation.
- Make and record observations.
- Compare and describe the elements of culture including shelter, recreation, education, oral traditions, art, music, and language of Native American societies.

### Essential Questions:

What are some examples of primary sources?

How can primary sources help us understand the past?

### Grade Level:

3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>

### Overview:

This lesson directs students to create a journal entry and then examine it with a critical eye to uncover its factual and subjective components. By doing this, students will gain an understanding of how primary sources hold clues to understanding our shared history and the challenges we encounter when trying to understand them.

### Teacher Background:

Primary sources directly connect people to the past by linking them with the people that originally created or used them and the context in which they existed. These sources include printed materials, the physical environment, culturally modified materials (artifacts), art and photographs, electronic media recordings, and oral history. Primary sources can contain valuable information that gives historians an otherwise unseen glimpse of life in a particular place during a particular time. These glimpses, or personal accounts, often contain details of events, settings, or descriptions that may not have otherwise been documented, as is the case with the paintings by John White. Although a rich source of information, it is important to remember that they reflect a singular view of an event and must be read critically

John White was an artist and cartographer. In 1585, he accompanied a voyage from England to North Carolina's Outer Banks under the plan of Sir Walter Raleigh to settle "Virginia." During his time spent on Roanoke Island, he made a series of over seventy watercolor drawings of indigenous

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people, plants, and animals. The purpose of his paintings was to create an accurate depiction of the inhabitants and environment in the New World for the people of England. White's illustrations remain a tremendous reference of the people, animals, and environment before the arrival of the colonists.\*

The Woodland Indians in Maryland lived in round wigwams or oval longhouse-like structures. These longhouses were much shorter than typical 100 foot long Iroquoian ones found in the Iroquoian heartland in upstate New York. Father Andrew White, and early Maryland colonist, recorded that the Yaocomico called their homes, *witchotts*. Wigwam is a general Algonquian term meaning dwelling or home.

The frames of these houses were made from young trees, or saplings. The saplings were cut down and the bark was peeled off the outside. The ends of the poles were buried in holes in the ground while the tops were bent over and tied together to make arches. A series of arches were tied together to make a large oval frame. For a round wigwam, the poles were placed in a circle and the tops were pulled together in the center creating a dome. Once the frame was done, it was covered with mats that were woven out of grasses that grew in the nearby marshes. Large sheets of tree bark or animal hides were also used to cover the houses. The round houses were 12 – 15 feet in diameter, while the oval longhouses were 12 – 15 wide and up to 30 feet in length.

*\* Although White's paintings depict life of Algonquian Indians on North Carolina's coast, historians believe the everyday lives of Maryland Indians would have been similar.*

### Lesson Procedure:

1. Display the laminated image of John White's painting of the Indian Village of Pomeiooc for the class.
2. Briefly discuss John White, how his drawings came to be, and what they mean for people living today.
3. Now, display the laminated photograph of the Woodland Indian replica wigwam where all students in the class can see it. Direct each student to use the "Encountering the Wigwam" worksheet to individually write a short journal entry describing what they see. Entries should be one to three paragraphs long and be as descriptive as possible.
4. After all students have completed their descriptions, ask each student to present his/hers to the class. As the descriptions are being presented, take note of the differences and similarities of the works. Once all have been presented, lead a discussion of the descriptions. Questions might include:
  - a. Were all the descriptions the same?
  - b. If everyone was looking at the same picture, why were the descriptions different?
  - c. What details did everyone mention? What details did only a few students mention?
  - d. How might a person's background or experiences influence the way they record information?
  - e. What role does a person's perception play in the way they record information?
  - f. Is there any such thing as an objective truth?
  - g. Which parts of the student descriptions are fact and which are opinion? Is it hard to tell which are which?

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### Materials:

John White's painting of the Indian Village of Pomeiooc

Color photograph - Replica of an Eastern Woodland Indian Wigwam

Encountering the Wigwam Worksheet

### Related Resources:

*Close Encounters of the First Kind, 1585-1767*, MSA SC 2221-1-17 <http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/stagser/s1259/121/4198/html/0000.html>

The Our Documents Initiative <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/index.php?flash=true&>

Teaching American History in Maryland (MD State Archives)  
<http://teachingamericanhistorymd.net/>