

Portola Expedition

Central Historical Questions:

What do Portola Expedition diaries tell us about Native Americans in California?

Materials:

- California Indians and Spanish Explorers PPT
- Timeline
- Images A-B
- Visual Analysis Questions
- Documents A-D
- Guiding Questions
- Corroboration Organizer

Plan of Instruction:

1. Use the PowerPoint and Timeline to establish background information on Native Americans in California and the first European explorers.
 - a. Slide 2: Native Americans in California before the Spanish.
 - i. Native Americans have lived in the geographic area of California for thousands of years. Prior to the first Europeans arriving in what is today the state of California, there were approximately 300,000 Native Americans, constituting about 500 different sub-tribes and approximately 100 different languages, across the state.
 - b. Slide 3: Spanish Exploration
 - i. Europeans began exploring the state in the 16th century, when an expedition led by Spanish Conquistador Juan Cabrillo sailed up the California coast in 1542 and claimed the land for Spain.
 - c. Slide 7: English and Russian Exploration
 - i. It is important to note that the Spanish were not the only Europeans planning to establish a presence in California. In 1579, Sir Francis Drake, an English explorer, stopped in Northern California during his expedition around North and South America and claimed the area for England.
 - ii. And, after decades of Russian fur traders working down the Pacific Coast from Alaska, the Russian-American Fur Company set up Fort Ross in Northern California in 1812.
2. Explain that today we are going to learn about the native people who lived in California when Europeans began exploring and colonizing the land. We are going to begin by examining two images and then we are going to analyze two diary entries from members of the Spanish Portola expedition in 1769.
3. Visual Inquiry: Explain to students that we are going to begin by looking at two images to consider the question: How did Native Americans live in California when Europeans arrived?
 - a. Pass out image A and lead students through the leveled visual analysis questions.
 - i. What do you notice about this picture?

- What do you notice about the people in this image?
 - What do you notice about the setting?
 - What do you notice about what the people are wearing?
 - What do you notice about what the people are doing?
- ii. What do you think is happening in this picture?
- Who do you think the people are?
 - What do you think they are doing?
 - Where do you think they are going?
 - What is the evidence for your claims?
- b. Pass out image B and lead student through the leveled visual analysis questions.
- i. What do you notice about this picture?
- What do you notice about the people in this image?
 - What do you notice about the setting?
 - What do you notice about what the people are wearing?
 - What do you notice about what the people are doing?
- ii. What do you think is happening in this picture?
- Who do you think the people are?
 - What do you think they are doing?
 - Where do you think they are going?
 - What is the evidence for your claims?
- c. Corroborate and consider the reliability of the images.
- i. What are similarities and differences between these pictures?
- ii. How do these images help you understand what life was like for Native Americans in California when Europeans arrived?
- iii. What else would you want to know about these pictures when using them as evidence for how Native Americans lived in California when Europeans arrived?
- d. Source and contextualize the images.
- i. Share source notes of these images with students. Explain that the first painting is a depiction of Native Americans from the San Francisco Bay Area created by the artist Louis Choris, a Russian-German artist who traveled to Northern California as part of a Russian expedition in 1816. The people in the images were most likely Coastal Miwok or Ohlone Indians.
- ii. The second picture depicts Chumash Indians from what is today the coastal area that runs from Ventura to Santa Barbara. The image is a mural in Lompoc, California that was created by artist Robert Thomas and a team of 20 artists. The mural was sponsored by the Lompoc Museum as part of a project to make murals throughout Lompoc
- iii. Turn and talk: How does this information help you evaluate these paintings as evidence of how Native Americans lived in California

- when Europeans arrived? What are the strengths and limitations of these paintings?
 - iv. Whose perspective is missing from these paintings?
 - v. Where else might we look for more evidence about the lives of Native Americans before Europeans arrived?
4. Explain to students that they are now going to explore two diary entries from Spanish explorers to see what they tell us about Native Americans in California. Return to the PowerPoint and Timeline to provide background information on the Portola Expedition.
- a. Slide 4-6: The Portola Expedition
 - i. In 1762, King Carlos III of Spain appointed Gaspar de Portola governor of California and sent Portola to explore California and set up a system of missions. Missions were religious outposts established to help expand the Spanish presence in California and to convert Native Americans to Christianity. The expedition included soldiers, mapmakers, engineers, and Catholic friars or Padres, such as Junipero Serra and Juan Crespi.
 - ii. The expedition set out from Baja, California in January 1769. It landed in San Diego in July of that year. After founding the first mission in San Diego, the expedition began heading north. Their goal was to locate Monterey Bay, which Cabrillo had described in his voyage up the coast.
 - b. Slides 8-9: California Missions
 - i. As previously noted, during the Portola expedition, the first mission was founded in San Diego. In the decades following the expedition, 21 missions were built across northern and southern California, from San Diego to just north of San Francisco in Sonoma. Several of the missions were built in areas where the Portola expedition traveled.
 - c. Slide 8-10: Native Americans in California.
 - i. During the expedition, the Spanish came into contact with several Native American sub-tribes and villages. For most, this was the first time Native Americans had come into contact with any Europeans.
 - d. Slide 11: Central Historical Question
 - i. Explain to students that they are now going to look at two diary entries written by members of the Portola expedition that describe Native Americans. The question that we are going to explore is: What do Portola Expedition diary entries tell us about Native Americans in California?
5. Document Analysis:
- a. Hand out Document A along with the Guiding Questions and Graphic Organizer.
 - i. *Source*: Before reading the diary, students source it by answering guiding questions 1-3.
 - Share out responses.
 - ii. *Close Reading*: In pairs, students read the document and complete the Corroboration Organizer for Document A.
 - Share out responses.

- iii. *Corroboration*: Students complete guiding questions 4-5.
 - Share out responses.
 - b. Hand out Document B.
 - i. *Source*: Before reading the diary, students source it by answering guiding questions 1-3.
 - Share out responses.
 - ii. *Close Reading*: In pairs, students read the document and complete the Corroboration Organizer for Document B.
 - Share out responses.
 - iii. *Corroboration*: Students complete guiding questions 4-5.
 - Share out responses.
6. Final Discussion:
- a. What do these documents tell us about Native Americans in California?
 - b. What do they suggest about how Native Americans and Spanish explorers in California interacted?
 - c. How do the diary entries compare to the images?
 - d. Whose perspective is missing? Why?
 - e. Where else might we investigate to learn more about Native Americans in California?
 - f. Where else might we look to learn more about how the Spanish and Native Americans interacted with each other?
7. Writing: Write a paragraph that addresses the question: What do these documents tell us about Native Americans in California? Use evidence from the two diary entries to support your answer

Portola Expedition Timeline

1500 – Population of Native Americans in California was approximately 300,000.

1542 – Spanish explorer Juan Cabrillo claimed what is today California for the Spanish empire.

1579 – English explorer Sir Francis Drake lands north of San Francisco Bay and claims land for England.

1767 – King Carlos III of Spain appointed Gaspar de Portola governor of California and sent Portola to explore California and set up a system of missions.

1769, January - Portola expedition began in Baja, California.

1769, July 14 – Portola expedition arrived to San Diego.

1769, July 16 - Junipero Serra founded Mission San Diego, the first of 21 Spanish missions built in California.

1769, October 30 – Portola Expedition arrived in the San Francisco Bay area.

1769, November – Portola Expedition began return trip to Mexico.

1776 – Spanish Mission founded on San Francisco Bay.

1812 – Russians established Fort Ross, approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco Bay.

Visual Analysis Questions

Image A
1) What do you notice about this picture? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you notice about the people in this image?• What do you notice about the setting?• What do you notice about what the people are wearing?• What do you notice about what the people are doing?
2) What do you think is happening in this picture? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who do you think the people are?• What do you think they are doing?• Where do you think they are going?• What is the evidence for your claims?

Image B
1) What do you notice about this picture? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you notice about the people in this image?• What do you notice about the setting?• What do you notice about what the people are wearing?• What do you notice about what the people are doing?
2) What do you think is happening in this picture? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who do you think the people are?• What do you think they are doing?• Where do you think they are going?• What is the evidence for your claims?

Comparing Image A and B
1) What are similarities and differences between these pictures?
2) How do these images help you understand what life was like for Native Americans in California when Europeans arrived?
3) What else would you want to know about these pictures when using them as evidence for how Native Americans lived in California when Europeans arrived?

Document A: Miguel Costansó (Modified)

Miguel Costansó was a Spanish mapmaker and engineer. He was part of the Portola Expedition and kept a diary of his travels.

We broke camp in the morning and headed west-southwest. We reached the coast and came in sight of a real town. It had the most people and was the best arranged of all we had seen up to that time. We counted as many as thirty large houses, **spherical** in form, well built, and **thatched** with grass. We judged from the large number of people that came out to meet us that there were about four hundred people in the town.

These natives are well built and of a good **disposition**, very **agile** and alert, **diligent** and skillful. Their canoes were made of good pine boards, which are joined together and **calked** well. The canoes have a good shape and will hold eight to ten men. The natives use the canoes with skill. Three or four men go out to sea in them to fish. They use long double-bladed paddles and row with great agility and swiftness.

All their work is neat and well done. They gave us some baskets or trays made of reeds, with different designs, and wooden plates and bowls of different forms and sizes in exchange for strings of glass beads. They gave us a large quantity of fish, particularly the kind known as bonito, which tastes as good as fish caught in Spain.

Vocabulary

spherical: round in shape

thatch: a roof covering

disposition: a person's personality

agile: able to move quickly

diligent: hard working and dedicated

calk: to seal a crack or seam with waterproof filler

Source: Miguel Costansó, diary entry, August 14, 1769, close to what is today Ventura.

Document B: Juan Crespi (Modified)

Juan Crespi was a Spanish priest and missionary. He served as the chief diary writer of the Portola Expedition and focused on locating sites to build missions.

As soon as we had reached the place the whole village came over. They were all of very well-behaved, fair, and well-bearded **heathens**, who received us with much kindness and pleasure. They have their village near the beach, about half a **league** from our camping place; but they also have their little houses in this valley, and live in them. The valley has a great deal of land, much of it good. In the middle of it there is an **arroyo** with plenty of running water, which goes to the beach.

I believe the place is a good site for a mission so the **conversion** of this village may **proceed**.

They brought us large shares of big dark-colored tamales made from their grass-seeds. Our soldiers said they were very good and rich. They (the natives) were with us during almost all the time we spent here, very happy and friendly, bringing a lot of tamales again at every meal time.

Vocabulary

heathen: a disrespectful term for a person who does not follow one of the major religions of the world

league: a measure of distance equal to about three miles

arroyo: a steep sided valley cut by running water

conversion: persuading someone to change their religious beliefs

proceed: move forward

Source: Juan Crespi, diary entry, October 24th-25th, 1769, San Gregorio Creek.

Guiding Questions

Document A

Answer questions 1-3 before reading the document.

1) (Sourcing) Who wrote this diary entry?

2) (Sourcing) Where was this entry written?

3) Which Native American tribes do you think the author is describing in this diary entry?

Answer Questions 4 and 5 after reading the document and completing the graphic organizer.

4) Why do you think the author wrote this diary entry?

5) (Corroboration) How does this document compare to Image A and Image B?

Document B

Answer questions 1-3 before reading the document.

1) (Sourcing) Who wrote this diary entry?

2) (Sourcing) Where was this entry written?

3) Which Native American tribes do you think the author is describing in this diary entry?

Answer Questions 4 and 5 after reading the document and completing the graphic organizer.

4) Why do you think the author wrote this diary entry?

5) (Corroboration) How does this document compare to Image A, Image B, and Document A?