The United States and the Issue of Genocide

FOUNDATION: UNIT V. International Human Rights in the Domestic US Context
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LENGTH
4 days

NEBRASKA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS
World History: 12.2.10
US History: 12.1.4

McREL NATIONAL STANDARDS
US History: 9.1, 9.2

OBJECTIVES
1. Students will research the Genocide Convention and the United States position on this topic.
2. Based on their understanding of this convention, students will determine whether the term “genocide” applies to the experience of the Native Americans in the United States as it relates to three specific events:
   - Sand Creek Massacre
   - Massacre at Wounded Knee
   - Trail of Tears

MATERIALS
Websites:
- House of Representatives Support for Genocide Convention
  http://www.congress.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/R?cp108%3AFLD010%3A%401(hr130)
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
  http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/genocide.htm
- Prevent Genocide International (supplemental site)
  http://www.preventgenocide.org/
- Sand Creek Massacre National Historical Site
  http://www.nps.gov/sand/historyculture/index.htm
- Wounded Knee Massacre
  http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/woundedknee/WKmscr.html
- Cherokee Trail of Tears
  http://www.nps.gov/archive/trte/TRTE/history.htm
- Trail of Tears
  http://www.ngeorgia.com/history/nghisttt.html

Day One:
I. Using the above website from the House of Representatives, have students read the information and then prepare a short essay that explains their understanding of the term genocide and where the United States stood on ratification of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Day Two – Three:
II. Divide students into the following three groups for a class debate:
   a. Acts of genocide have been committed in the United States against the Native American population.
   b. Acts of genocide have not been committed in the United States against the Native American population.
   c. Debate panel moderators
IV. Explain that students will use their understanding of the 19 Articles of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide to supplement their position in the debate (second website above).

V. Have students divide up and research the basic history of the following:
   a. Sand Creek Massacre
   b. Massacre at Wounded Knee
   c. Trail of Tears

VI. Based on their understanding of the events above and the position they hold in the debate activity, have students prepare questions/arguments to support their position.

Day Four:

VII. Engage in a debate guided by the panel moderators.