



GeoCivics Lesson: *The Taino influence in culture*

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Teacher(s): Rosa M. Jiménez Otero	Unit Title: Unit 3- The First Settlers: The Indigenous Society Title: The Taino Influence in Culture	Grade Level: 4th grade
Notes: I anticipate this lesson to take three 50-minute class sessions to complete.		
Pre-existing Knowledge: N/A		
Overview of Content: “Except for a few Spanish chronicles, such as Fray Ramón Pané’s <i>Relación de las antigüedades de los indios</i> (An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians, 1497), there are few written records of Taíno culture. Luckily, science has given important clues about the Taínos’ rise and decline, debunking the common misconception (known as the “myth of the Taino extinction”) that Taínos were wiped out by Spanish colonialism. In fact, Taíno descendants, along with their culture and language, remain an important part of Caribbean life today. Many Taíno words, such as canoe, hammock, and tobacco, still exist in today’s Spanish and English vocabulary. In places like the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, islanders proudly refer to themselves as “quisqueyanos” or “boricuas,” a reference to the Taíno name of their respective islands. In addition, new research by political scientists like Tony Castanha and biologists like Juan C. Martínez Cruzado have confirmed the legacy of Taíno culture in modern-day Puerto Rican society. Martínez Cruzado for example employed genetic testing to determine that 61.1% of Puerto Ricans carry Taíno ancestry. The Taíno then remain central to understanding the history and the cultural diversity of the Caribbean.” “The Taínos emerged c. 1200 C.E. They are descendants of the Arawaks who migrated from the northern coastal region of South America to the Caribbean where they settled in the Greater Antilles. While the Island Caribs (a different Indigenous people) resided in the Lesser Antilles, the Taínos, whose name translates into “good people,” occupied the islands of Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Eastern Cuba. The Taínos were the first to come into contact with the Spanish when, in 1492,		

Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Hispaniola (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic), formerly known as Española, meaning “Spanish.” -- [Khan Academy](#)

Purpose: *What students will learn:*

Students will learn about the Taino heritage and their own heritage. Students will also be able to identify and understand important contributions that the Taino gave to our vocabulary, traditions, music, food, and other social aspects.

National & State Social Studies Standard(s):

National Social Studies Standard:

- Cultures are dynamic and change over time. The study of culture prepares students to ask and answer questions such as: What is culture? What roles does culture play in human and societal development? What are the common characteristics across cultures? How is unity developed within and among cultures? What is the role of diversity and how is it maintained within a culture? How do various aspects of culture such as belief systems, religious faith, or political ideals, influence other parts of a culture such as its institutions or literature, music, and art? How does culture change over time to accommodate different ideas, and beliefs? How does cultural diffusion occur within and across communities, regions, and nations?

Puerto Rico Social Studies Standard: Change and continuity - studies the life of societies in the context of changes and transformations that occur over time.

- [4.cc.1](#) - It distinguishes historical places of Puerto Rico, indigenous ceremonial parks, caves, archaeological settlements, fortifications, colonial style architecture, among others.
- [4.cc.6](#) - Critically describes processes that occur in the history of Puerto Rico such as confrontation, domination, slavery, cultural miscegenation and uprising, evangelization, and exploitation among others.

Geography Standard(s):

National Geography Standards:

- [Standard 6](#) - How culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions.
- [Standard 12](#) - The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Puerto Rico Geography Standards: People Places and Environment - Analyzes the interaction between people, places, regions, and the environment, and develops the ability to apply and modify geographic perspectives that affect human life.

- [4.PLA.2.1](#) - It presents examples in the Taino, African and Puerto Rican context, understanding the chronological process of these events and the duration in different periods of time.
- [4. PLA. 7](#) - Recognizes the relationship between geographic space and human cultural, economic, political, and social activities.

ELA Standards:

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

4. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

ISTE Teacher and/or Student Standard:

Teacher:

- **Facilitator: 2.6.d-** model and nurture creativity and creative expression to communicate ideas, knowledge or connections.

Language Functions:

- **Summarizing and Informing:** Students use language to identify, report or describe information
- **Comparing and Contrasting:** Students use language to describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas
- **Inquiry/Seeking Information:** Students use language to observe and explore the environment, acquire information, inquire

Culturally Responsive Lesson Strategies:

- **VOICE:** Lesson/Assignment allows places for students to work together cooperatively or share their learning experiences
- **CONNECTION:** Lesson/Activity incorporates real-life connections and representations from various cultures and life experiences.

Objective(s):

Students will be able to:

- Analyze and comprehend texts that are related to the existence of the Tainos in Puerto Rico and what they have contributed to Puerto Rico in the context of different cultural aspects such as vocabulary, religion, traditions, food and music.
- Relate elements of Taino culture to their own culture, comparing and contrasting similarities and differences.
- Create a class presentation describing the Taino culture and their own culture and how they are similar and different.

SIOP

SIOP Elements		
Preparation	Scaffolding	Grouping Option
Adapting content	Modeling	Whole class
Linking to background	Guided practice	Small groups
Linking to past learning	Independent practice	Partners
Strategies used	Comprehensible input	Independent

Integrating Processes	Application	Assessment
Reading Writing Speaking Listening	Hands-On Meaningful Linked to objectives Promotes engagement	Individual Group Written Oral

Evidence of Mastery

Formative - After students work as a group to research cultural activities/objects of the Taino in response to Inquiry Question #1: “What cultural activities and objects are elements of the Taino culture?”, each group will orally share out their research findings to the class, and the teacher will make note of each group’s presentation as a formative assessment.

Summative - Students will prepare a presentation using PowerPoint or Google Sides or by creating a Chart to share what they have learned about the Taino culture and about their own. Each student will then individually give their presentation to the class, and the teacher will assess the students’ presentations using the Presentation Rubric below with a score of 30 pts. or higher indicating mastery.

Presentation Rubric

Exceeds Expectations	Includes very precise and accurate information giving 3 or more examples of each item: cultural traditions, cultural activities and cultural objects from both the presenter’s culture and the Taino culture. At least one image for each item is included and a very clear and detailed explanation of each item is given, including information about how each item compares and contrasts with each other.	35 + pts.
Meets Expectations	Includes precise and accurate information giving at least two examples of each item: cultural traditions, cultural activities, and cultural objects for both the presenter’s culture and the Taino culture. Images of many items are included and a clear explanation of each is given, including information about how each item compares and contrasts with each other.	30 pts.
Approaches Expectations	Includes some precise and accurate information giving at least 1 example of each of the following items: cultural traditions, cultural activities, and cultural objects from both the presenter’s culture and the	20 pts.

	Taino culture. Some information is given about how some of these items compare and contrast with each other.	
Fails to Meet Expectations	Includes information giving only 1 or 0 examples of each of the following items: cultural traditions, cultural activities, and cultural objects of the presenter and of the Taino culture. No information is given about how these items compare and contrast with each other.	0 to 15 pts.

Key vocabulary:

- **Symbols:** A symbol is a mark, sign, or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object, or relationship.
- **Culture:** Culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down
- **Cemi:** The Cemi stone, with its three cardinal points, is a fundamental symbol in the Taino religion. Many Tainos name the three points "Yocahu Bagua Maorocoti," which is another word for the Creator, Yaya, as represented by the world's indigenous peoples at the time of the coming of Guamikinas (the European "covered people").
- **Petroglyphs:** Petroglyphs are rock carvings (rock paintings are called pictographs) made by pecking directly on the rock surface using a stone chisel and a hammerstone.
- **Archaeologist:** The study of human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture. The archaeological record consists of artifacts, architecture, biofacts or ecofacts, sites, and cultural landscapes.
- **Indigenous:** Relating to the earliest known inhabitants of a place and especially of a place that was colonized by a now-dominant group

Materials:

- Map of US Territories (in Lesson Materials document)
- Teacher Resource: Map of Puerto Rico (in Lesson Materials Document)
- Video: *How Taino Culture Affects Us Today:* (Link in Sources below)
- Video: *9 Facts about The Tainos! First To Meet Columbus in Americas:* (Link in Sources below)
- Computer and Projection device for the teacher to show videos to the class
- Student access to computers/laptops to conduct research
- Research Sites for Taino Cultural Activities and Objects: (Links in Sources below)
 - Copies of the Venn Diagram Handout - one per student (In Lesson Materials Document)
- Student access to PowerPoint and/or Google Slides to create a class presentation
- Copies of large Chart paper and markers and/or pencils, etc. as an option for students to create their class presentations.
- Copy of the Presentation Rubric (above in Lesson Plan)

- **Territory:** Most people think of the United States of America as being comprised of 50 states, but the country also includes 16 territories. US territories are not sovereign entities, like states, but do fall under the jurisdiction and protection of the Federal Government. Furthermore, their inhabitants receive certain benefits based on their territorial classification, but they do not have all of the rights of American citizens, such as voting and Congressional representation.

Sources:

- Map of U.S. Territories: [File:Spanish Caribbean Islands in the American Viceroyalties 1600.png - Wikipedia](#)
- Online Article: *Tribal Government of the Jatibonicu Taino People of Puerto Rico*: <https://www.taino-tribe.org>
- Online Article: *Tainos: A Culture to Remember*: <https://medium.com>
- *Digital Inquiry Group Materials in Spanish*: <https://sheg.stanford.edu/sheg-materials-spanish>
- Video: *How Taino Culture Affects Us Today*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_RMy1Pz5S8&t=86s
- Video: *9 Facts about The Tainos! First To Meet Columbus in Americas*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzDs6Yb1RSg>

Research Sites for Taino Cultural Activities and Objects:

- <https://global.si.edu/success-stories/caribbean-indigenous-legacies-project-celebrating-taino-culture>
- <https://www.prfdance.org/taino.resources.htm>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLVPBSf2nq8>
- <https://medium.com/@viewpr/ta%C3%ADnos-a-culture-to-remember-b109a460880b>
- [The Dictionary Of The Spoken Taino Language](#)

Teacher Resource: Online Site- Taino Resources: <https://www.prfdance.org/taino.resources.htm>

Engage

Teacher Will:

(NOTE) Strategically partner ELLs/SPED students as needed to provide language and/or learning support as needed, having partners discuss together before sharing out their responses with the class.

1. Ask students to share special celebrations, foods, activities, etc. that their family participates in. Ask why they believe these

Student Will:

1. Participate in the class discussion about the types of traditions their family participates

events or foods are important to their family. Ask students if what they are describing is part of their culture.

What is culture?:

2. The teacher discusses what culture is with the class, and *introduces and discusses the vocabulary word - culture, and its meaning.*
3. Let students know that they are going to learn about the early Taino culture in the US Territory of Puerto Rico. Show the Map of U.S. Territories (in Lesson Materials Document) to students to see where Puerto Rico is, and *introduce and discuss the vocabulary word - territory, and its definition.*
4. Show students the following two short videos, and *have them take notes* about the what they learn about Tainos:
 - Video: How Taino Culture Affects Us Today:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_RM_y1Pz5S8&t=86s
 - Video: 9 Facts about The Tainos! First To Meet Columbus in Americas:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzDs6Yb1RSg>
5. Discuss the videos' content with the class, by asking and discussing the following: *"Did anything surprise you?" "Did anything look familiar?" "What were some original Taino traditions, art, music, food, and other social aspects?"*

in by sharing out their family's celebrations, foods, and activities.

(Grouping: Whole class) (Preparation: Linking to background) (Integrated Processes: Listening/ Speaking)

2. Engage in the class discussion of what culture is, and think about how what they shared above is part of their culture.

(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking)

3. View the Territory Map and make note of where Puerto Rico is on the map. Engage in the class discussion of the meaning of the word territory,

(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking)

4. Watch Tainos videos and take notes on what they hear and learn about the Tainos.

(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading)

5. Participate in the class discussion of the videos watched and respond to the teacher's questions connecting to what they already know and have learned from the videos about the Tainos.

(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to past learning)

Explore

Teacher Will:

IQ #1: What cultural activities and objects are elements of the Taino culture?

(NOTE) Strategically group ELLs/SPED students as needed to provide language and/or learning support as needed,

Student Will:

1. Introduce Inquiry Question #1 to the class, and tell the students that they are now going to work together in their groups to research **cultural activities and objects** of the Taino using the links below. Tell students they are to take notes on all information they find about Tainos cultural activities and objects, and any interesting things they read about the Tainos culture.

Here are some suggested research sites:

- <https://global.si.edu/success-stories/caribbean-indigenous-legacies-project-celebrating-taino-culture>
- <https://www.prfdance.org/taino.resources.htm>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLVPBSf2nq8>
- <https://medium.com/@viewpr/ta%C3%ADnos-a-culture-to-remember-b109a460880b>
- [The Dictionary Of The Spoken Taino Language](#)

1. Reflect on Inquiry Question #1, and then work in small groups to research cultural activities and objects of the Tainos using their computers and each one will write down the information they find.

(Grouping: Whole class/Small groups)
(Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing) **(Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement)**

Explain - Formative Assessment

Teacher Will:

1. Present IQ #1 to the class again - **“What cultural activities and objects are elements of the Taino culture?”** and then have each group of students share out their research findings with the class. The teacher will take note of each group’s information shared for use as a formative assessment of student learning.

(Preparation: Linking to past learning)

2. The teacher will then introduce, by writing on the board, the other vocabulary words, and will discuss with the students how these connect to what students have researched and shared out.

Student Will:

1. Reflect on Inquiry Question #1 and think about what they have learned through their research. Then each student group will share out with the class what they have learned from their research.

(Grouping; Whole class/Small groups)
(Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking)
(Assessment: Group/Oral)

2. Read and listen to the new vocabulary introduced by the teacher, discuss with the class how these connect to what they have learned through their research.

(Grouping: Whole class) **(Preparation: Linking to past learning)**

Elaborate

Teacher Will:

IQ #2: What cultural activities and objects of the Taino culture are found in our own culture?

1. Introduce IQ #2 to the class, and have students think about their research findings, and then revisit and talk about their earlier class discussion of their own cultural objects, traditions, etc. and have students think about how these compare to what they have learned about Taino culture.

(NOTE) For teachers on the US mainland or in another US Territory, students will compare their own traditions and objects with those of the Taino.

2. Pass out copies of the Venn Diagram Handout (In Lesson Materials Document) and have students *individually* create a Venn diagram in order to compare and contrast their *own cultural traditions* and objects with those of the Taino society that they learned about during research.

(NOTE): The teacher can partner ELLs/SPED students to provide support for students to fill out their Venn Diagrams if needed.

3. When done, have students share their diagrams with the class and discuss how their own culture compares and contrasts with the Taino culture.

Student Will:

1. Reflect on Inquiry Question #2 and think about what they have researched about the Taino culture and think about and review their earlier discussion of their own cultural objects and traditions, and discuss with the class how their own cultural elements compare to what they have learned about the Taino culture.

(Grouping: Whole class/Independent)
(Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading) (Preparation: Linking to past learning)

2. Use what they have learned and discussed with the class to create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting their own cultural objects and traditions with those of the Taino.

(Grouping: Independent (or Partners))
(Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)

3. Share out their Venn Diagrams with the class, and discuss how their own cultural traditions and objects compare and contrast with those of the Taino.

Evaluate

Teacher Will:

Specific cultural activity,

1. Have students prepare a presentation using PowerPoint or Google Slides or by creating a Chart with images to share what they have learned about the Taino culture and about their own. The teacher will present the Presentation Rubric to the students and discuss the expectations given.

Student Will:

1. Create a group presentation using either PowerPoint, Google slides or Chart paper and by using the criteria on the Presentation Rubric presented by the teacher as a guide.

(Grouping: Independent (or partners if needed))
Preparation: Linking to past learning)

(NOTE) The teacher will provide support for ELLs/SPED students as needed by partnering students and/or by providing online resources to help in creating their presentations.

(Scaffolding: Guided Practice)

2. When done creating their presentations, the teacher will have each student present their presentation to the class, and follow up by engaging the students in a whole group discussion about whether or not they see any early Taino culture reflected in their own, and in what ways. The teacher will use the Presentation Rubric to assess student's presentations with a score of 30 pts. or higher indicating mastery.

(Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)

2. Present to the class their findings through their PowerPoint, Google Slides or on a Chart and discuss the information orally as they give their presentation to their classmates. Then engage with the class in a discussion of whether they see any early Taino culture reflected in their own.

(Assessment: Individual/Oral/Written)

Extensions: Class will discuss other activities that they can plan to increase students and the communities knowledge about the importance of this topic:

- Taino areyto
- Art exhibition
- Taino food preparation
- Concrete poems
- Creating a skit about Taino life
- Having a game of Batu in our school following the taino rules