Wampum: Money vs. Communication

Wampum was used as decoration and communication for the Native Americans until the early European colonists came to America.

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Grade Level: 4-5
Duration: 1 class period

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT FIVE: ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY
16. The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

Arizona Geography Strand

CONCEPT 4 Human Systems
GRADE 4
PO 4 Describe the cultural characteristics (e.g., food, clothing, housing, sports, customs, beliefs) of Arizona’s diverse population.

CONCEPT 5 Environment and Society
GRADE 5
PO 1 Describe the ways European colonists and Native Americans viewed, adapted, and used the environment.

Other Arizona Standards

Mathematics Common Core Standards
Operations and Algebraic Thinking
4.OA.5. Generate a number or shape pattern that follows a given rule. Identify apparent features of the pattern that were not explicit in the rule itself.

Measurement and Data
4.MD.1. Know relative sizes of measurement units within one system of units including km, m, cm; kg, g; lb, oz.; l, ml; hr, min, sec. Within a single system of measurement, express measurements in a larger unit in terms of a smaller unit. Record measurement equivalents in a two-column table.
5.MD.1. Convert among different-sized standard measurement units within a given measurement system (e.g., convert 5 cm to 0.05 m), and use these conversions in solving multi-step, real world problems.

Standards for Mathematical Practice
4.MP.2. and 5.MP.2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

Strand 1 American History
Grade 5
Concept 3: Exploration and Colonization
PO 1. Recognize that Native American tribes resided throughout North America before the period of European exploration and colonization.
PO 7. Describe interactions (e.g., agricultural and cultural exchanges, alliances, conflicts) between Native Americans and European settlers.

Strand 5 Economics
Concept 1 Foundations of Economics
PO. 3 Identify how voluntary exchange helps both buyers and sellers as in colonial trade in North America.
Wampum: Money vs. Communication

Overview
Wampum, a string of beads, is sometimes considered the money of the Indians. Wampum was also used as a form of communication between Indian tribes. When the European colonists arrived in America, wampum was used as a medium of exchange, since there was no metal for coins. Eventually wampum was mass-produced by the Dutch and became less valuable. It ceased to be legal tender in 1792 with the introduction of U.S. coinage laws.

Purpose
In this lesson, students will read background information about wampum and calculate lengths of strings of beads in metric and the customary units.

Materials
- Wampum Background Information Sheet.
- Transparency or wall map of the United States
- Wampum pictures
- Paper, pencil
- Math Assessments (meters and customary units)
- Geography Assessment
- Answer keys
- Grading Rubric for Mathematics Questions

Objectives
The student will be able to:

1. Identify the uses for wampum.
2. Calculate units of measure within the metric or customary systems of measurement.
3. Continue a pattern following a given rule.

Prerequisite skill: Students should have experience changing units within the metric system.

1. Distribute and read the Wampum Background Information Sheet and Wampum Pictures.
2. Discuss the uses and history of wampum for Indians and European colonists.
3. Locate on the U.S. map where the shells to make wampum were found. Then locate where wampum was used on the U.S. map.
4. Students complete the math and geography assessments.

Assessment
Mastery will be 5 out of 6 correct answers on the geography assessment. The calculations of the math assessment will be evaluated using the grading rubric (4 points possible for each problem). Competency is 29 points out of 36 possible points for each system of measurement.

Extensions
Students could make their own strings of beads using small glass beads. They could determine the value of the strings of beads.

Students could read and look at the book Wampum: Belts of the Iroquois, by Tehanetorens.

Sources
- www.thebeadsite.com
- www.peace45turtleisland.org/pages/wampum2.htm
- www.newton.dep.anl.gov/natbltn/700-799/nb725.htm
- www.slider.com/enc/55000/wampum.htm
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- www.wampumworks.com/history.html
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