

UNIT 1: HIGH SCHOOL – UNITED STATES HISTORY

OUR FOUNDATIONS: FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS AND THE BOLDT DECISION (BOLDT I AND II)

Level 1

Instructional Support Materials

[On Sovereignty Article](#)

[On Sovereignty Article \(Spanish Language Version\)](#)

[The Boldt Decision Article](#)

[The Boldt Decision Article \(Spanish Language Version\)](#)

[Map - Washington State](#)

[Map - Ceded Areas of Washington State](#)

[Map - Indian Reservations of Washington State](#)

Learning Goals

For NW students to understand tribal sovereignty at a local *and* Constitutional level, it is imperative that students study the 1974 Boldt Decision. Students will:

- Explain the Boldt Decision and its impact on NW tribes
- Define tribal sovereignty
- Understand the importance of salmon to NW tribes and tribal sovereignty
- Explain the Boldt Decision as an example of promoting justice

Time: 1 class period

Teacher Preparation

- Pre-reading of *On Sovereignty* article
- Successful teaching of Constitutional principles
- Exploration of several tribal websites on Salmon Recovery, such as [Spirit of the Salmon](#), [Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission](#), and the [Columbia Inter-Tribal Fish Commission](#).

Learning Activities

Day 1:

1. Connect today's activity to your Constitution unit by providing students current, real life, close to home examples of Constitutional principles. (Suggestion: This might be part of a larger exercise where many constitutional principle examples are examined).

2. Ask students to brainstorm symbols of social and political justice (olive branch, dove, peace sign, American flag, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, United Nations logo, etc.)
3. Show a picture of a salmon and ask, “Is *this* a symbol of justice?”
4. Why or why not?
5. Discuss the significance of the salmon to northwest tribal people. See [Spirit of the Salmon](#) website as a reference.
6. Make the following points as you discuss the salmon:
 - a. At the time of the signing of the treaties that guaranteed tribal fishing rights, salmon were in abundance. No one could have predicted such a drastic and devastating decline in salmon populations.
 - b. Salmon were so abundant, that many tribal people say that fish along the Columbia were so thick during spawning that they could walk across the river on their backs.
 - c. The threat of salmon extinction also threatened the livelihood, lifeways, and very fabric of tribal people.
 - d. This began a long battle called “The Fish Wars” where the United States—on behalf of 14 Northwest tribes—sued Washington State over tribal fishing rights. This was not only an economic victory, it was a decision that promoted, and continues to promote, justice for Indian and non-Indian people.
7. Distribute the article on the *Boldt Decision*.
8. Read aloud and emphasize the examples of injustice and justice.
9. As homework or a classroom activity, have students create their political cartoon. One is provided in the article as an example. There are also political cartoon lesson plans if your students need more information on how to write and interpret political cartoons: [“Analyzing the Purpose and Meaning of Political Cartoons”](#) on ReadWriteThink.org
10. Share political cartoons at the next class.
11. Upon completion, ask, “What does this 42 year-old decision do for Indians today? Say about justice?” Answers will vary.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO END YOUR STUDY HERE, SOME QUESTIONS TO PRESENT TO CLASSES AS YOUR STUDY CONTINUES:

1. What are the Constitutional provisions for Indian tribes? Are they still valid? (Review Supremacy and Commerce Clauses)
 2. Why is/was justice for Indian tribes and tribal people so hard to achieve?
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