

Jamestown, Québec and Santa Fe: Three North American Beginnings

Topic/Content: Thinking About Names

The names for peoples and places that are familiar today reflect a history of colonization. Seventeenth-century Europeans did not come to North America to adapt to Native people's languages. They believed they were entitled to rule and rename the continent and its peoples.

Yet, many Native place names persisted. Europeans' minority status and their dependence on Native people's local knowledge led them to retain many existing names. In recent times, terms for Native groups have changed once again as indigenous people have reclaimed the power to name themselves.

Main Messages:

- What we call ourselves and what others call us is important.
- Some of today's disagreements and misunderstandings about the names of groups (as large as a nation/ethnic group or as small as a sports team) have their origins in this period.

Applicable Standards of Learning:

Based on information compiled from:

Virginia Public Schools

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml>

New Mexico Public Schools

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/standards/index.html>

Ontario Ministry of Education

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/>

Students will:

- Develop a general understanding of early settlements in North America;
- Recognize that North Americans are a people of diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions;
- Describe how European immigrants, Africans, and indigenous peoples influenced the cultural landscape of North America;
- Describe cultural interactions that led to cooperation and conflict; and
- Make connections between past and present.