

# ALASKA NATIVE RIGHTS SINCE STATEHOOD

*How has the situation in Alaska changed?*

Level: High School (grades 9-12)

## Background

From the Alaska Purchase of 1867, it took 89 years for the area to attain statehood in 1959. During that time the people who lived in the district (later a territory) struggled to create a system of government so that they could rule themselves independently. Use of the land and natural resources and the role and rights of the indigenous Native peoples were among the important issues with which people wrestled. The campaign for statehood peaked in 1955 with the Alaska constitutional convention, after which voters approved a constitution that took effect upon statehood.



## Summary

Students read sections of the *Eight Stars of Gold* exhibit catalog to get a glimpse of the issues of Alaska Native rights and sovereignty prior to statehood. They investigate and research land rights and the conditions of Alaska Natives over the past century and write compare/ contrast papers based on their findings.

## Estimated Time

- 50 minutes for initial discussion, followed by 100 – 150 minutes (or two/three class periods) for research and timelines drafting
- 50 minutes for final presentations, and response and evaluation

## In this activity students will focus on the following:

### Alaska Content Standards

#### Government and Citizenship

- C.3 Understand the constitution of Alaska and the Statehood Compact
- C.4 Understand the importance of the historical and current roles of Alaska Native communities
- C.7 Understand the obligations that land and resource ownership place on the residents and government of the state
- D.3 Understand how national politics are interrelated with the politics and interests of the state

## Activities

### Step One: Read, summarize and discuss

- Have the students read, “The Alaska Purchase and the steps toward statehood” (Eight Stars of Gold, pp. 5 – 7 and pp. 14 – 17 ). Ask students to note references to the management of fishing and hunting rights at the time and to any references to Alaska Natives.
- After reading, have several students orally summarize the two sections, including references to land rights and Alaska Natives, and to add any other information they may have about this period of Alaska’s history.
- In either a large class format or in smaller groups, have students discuss the questions:
  1. In what ways do absentee business interests still control the state?
  2. To what degree do you think Alaska still has “colonial status?” What would change that status?
- Students should cite specific examples to support their opinions.
- OPTION: Have students write a persuasive essay or debate the two questions.

### Step Two: Read and research

- Divide the class into two groups. Each group must choose a reporter who will verbally report to the class the work of the group at a later date. Using the Internet and printed resources, students individually or in pairs within the groups, read and research key events and issues relating to fishing and hunting in Alaska and/or the rights of Alaska Natives. In their reading and research, students should look for any interplay between land rights and the use of the land

by Alaska Natives and be able to describe those relationships throughout Alaska's history. A good starting point is the exhibit catalog that they just read and the on-line state historical newspaper archive.

- Group 1: Research the rights and responsibilities of Alaska Natives from 1900 – present. Draft a timeline of significant events in the history of Alaska Natives .
- Group 2: Research the management of fishing and hunting rights in Alaska from 1900 – present. Draft a general 100-year timeline of the management of fishing and hunting rights in the state.
- Both groups should write key events in a summary form on the group's timeline. The key events can be political, economic, social and/or environmental. Explanations of why selected events are key events should also accompany the timeline. Students can attach the explanations with index cards, a printout, a written key, etc.

### Step Three: Report and evaluate presentations

- After investigating and noting key events, a reporter for one group presents the timeline and the rationale for why each of the key events on the timeline is there. Members of the other group then ask questions to clarify or extend the points made by the presenting group. Any questions that the group cannot answer are noted on the board or chart paper for future research and inquiry.
- The second group then presents and answers questions.

### Assessment

Individuals use the Oral Presentation Scoring Guide to evaluate their own and others' work. The teacher evaluations summarizes and provides feedback to each group.

### Materials

- Chart paper and markers for timeline
- Oral Presentation Scoring Guide

### Vocabulary

**sovereignty** n. Supreme power, especially over a body politic; enjoying autonomy

### Resources

Exhibit catalog: Spartz, India. *Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag*. Juneau: Alaska State Museum, 2001.

Alaska Geographic Alliance

[www.ak-geo-alliance.org/](http://www.ak-geo-alliance.org/)

This excellent resource for research about Alaska includes maps, charts, and data in a format easily understood by students.

Alaska Newspaper Project

[www.library.state.ak.us/hist/newspaper.html](http://www.library.state.ak.us/hist/newspaper.html)

McPhee, John. *Coming Into the Country*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976.

This book has opinions and analyses of issues relating to land rights in Alaska, pp. 17 -21 and 83 -87

For a historical look at Alaska Natives:

Alaska's Gold

[www.library.state.ak.us/goldrush](http://www.library.state.ak.us/goldrush)

This database has primary source documents with lessons about Alaska's Lode. It is a searchable database with over 3,000 documents. Go to Legacy, then "How did the Gold Rush Impact Native Alaskans?" Read, "Can the Land be Shared?" and the laws, the primary source documents that describe a significant case involving the Tanana Indians in 1915.

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network

[www.ankn.uaf.edu](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu).

This site provides a searchable database, suitable for students, on all aspects of Native life and history.

Langdon, Steve. *The Native People of Alaska*. Anchorage: Greatland Graphics, 1993. ISBN 92-074225 The introduction and chapter seven provide a good source for student research. This excellent book provides a complete chapter on each Alaska Native Group.

Ritter, Harry. *Alaska's History: The People, Land and Events of the North Country*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1993. ISBN 0-88240-432-6 This is excellent and concise review providing snapshots of key events in Alaska history.

For a historical look at the history of hunting and fishing rights:

ANCSA: 1971

[www.alaskool.org/projects/subsistence/timeline/ANCSA.htm](http://www.alaskool.org/projects/subsistence/timeline/ANCSA.htm)

Frequently Asked Questions about Alaska: a historical timeline

<http://sled.alaska.edu/akfaq/akchron.html>

Legal History of the Subsistence Issue

[www.akrepublicans.org/Ogansubsistence.htm](http://www.akrepublicans.org/Ogansubsistence.htm)

Native American fishing rights

[www.indians.org/library/bibf.html](http://www.indians.org/library/bibf.html)

Native Americans and the Environment

[www.cnie.org/NAE/arctic.html](http://www.cnie.org/NAE/arctic.html)

## Oral Presentation Scoring Guide: Grades 3-12

**SCORING:** Speakers may receive any score from 1 to 5 in each of the seven dimensions when the speech shows characteristics from more than one column. For example: A speaker's ideas and content may "show clear purpose" (5), but have "skimpy supporting details" (3); thus the rating would be a 4 for ideas and content. (Sitka School District: Oral Checklist, 11/25/96)

DIMENSION \ SCORE	1	3	5
IDEAS/CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purpose unclear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Central idea lacking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Little/no knowledge of topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details missing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purpose reasonably clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ideas could be more insightful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of topic limited</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Skimpy supporting details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear purpose</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ideas conveyed in original, insightful manner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Knows topic well</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Effective amount of detail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Holds readers' attention</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Little sense of direction or sequence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details, events do not relate to topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No clear beginning or ending</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No transitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ideas/details in sequence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details missing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Weak start or finish</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some transitions missing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details fit, sequence effective</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details enhance listeners' interest</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strong intro/satisfying conclusion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transitions work well</li> </ul>
RAPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Little effort to deal w/topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tone inappropriate for both audience interest and/or level of knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tries to deal honestly with topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Style/tone may or may not be appropriate to audience interest and/or level of knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Honest, sincere, cares for topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Style and tone capitalize on audience interest and level of knowledge</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speaks directly to listener</li> </ul>
LANGUAGE SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Limited vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete thoughts make it hard to understand and follow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate, but ordinary vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Awkward wording occasionally make understanding unclear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accurate, interesting vocabulary appropriate to topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wording is full, rich, enhances understanding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eloquent, smooth, natural sentence structure</li> </ul>
PHYSICAL DELIVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Delivery distracting, posture and movement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Minimal or absent eye contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some nervous gestures, stiff, tense or too relaxed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sporadic eye contact or with only one person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed posture, confident</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintains eye contact w/audience</li> </ul>
VOCAL DELIVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enunciation, volume or pacing a problem</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to hear or understand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monotone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Frequent pauses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to follow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Generally uses appropriate enunciation, volume, pacing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes difficult to understand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ordinary inflection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Random pauses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some gap fillers ("um," "er," etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enunciates clearly, effective volume, pacing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Easily understood</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inflection conveys emotion and enhances meaning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pauses to collect thoughts or build suspense</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Easy to follow</li> </ul>
VISUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual aid is present</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not show careful preparation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> May be unrelated to topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual aid adds meaning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preparation is adequate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual aid is somewhat related to presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual aid enhances presentation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Carefully prepared</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interesting, appropriate to topic</li> </ul>

