
Why?

Settler-colonialism
As you learn about settler-colonialism it is important to remember this isn’t about guilt. Rather, this is a reckoning. When we don’t acknowledge our own individual roles and culpability in our settler-colonialist society, we can’t see the real impact of our actions.
We can begin by defining settler-colonialism as it relates specifically to Indigenous peoples of North America.

The goal of settler-colonization is the removal and erasure of Indigenous peoples in order to take the land for use by settlers in perpetuity.

According to Laura Hurwitz and Shawn Borque’s “Settler Colonialism Primer,” “This means that settler colonialism is not just a vicious thing of the past, such as the gold rush, but exists as long as settlers are living on appropriated land and thus exists today.”
Historically, the settler-colonial agenda involved committing genocide by murdering Indigenous peoples (see Manifest Destiny, the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 and the Wounded Knee siege of 1970, the Sand Creek Massacre, King Philip’s War and countless other conflicts).

That agenda also meant stealing land through treaties that were later broken or ignored (see the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie and the history of the Lakota and the unceded Black Hills).

Students should understand that the United States couldn’t exist without its settler-colonial foundation.
Today, settler-colonialism plays out in the erasure of Indigenous presence.

American schools do not teach about Native Americans, past or present; when they do, information is often wrong or incomplete.

Students are rarely taught about contemporary Native peoples who have survived the settler-colonial process and continue to thrive, create, practice their traditions and live modern lives.

https://connecticuthistory.org/americas-most-devastating-conflict-king-philips-war/
Mainstream media outlets rarely feature stories about Indigenous peoples, and exceptions are usually during a crisis (see #NoDAPL [Dakota Access Pipeline])...

The government diminishes and destroys Indigenous nations by denying their sovereignty or stealing land for private corporations to use for drilling, mining, fracking, farming and more.”


Occupy Wounded Knee in 1973
Need to add credit to AP for photo.
People without European Ancestry also benefit from settler-colonialism.

Enslaved Africans weren’t settlers. They had far more in common with Indigenous Americans as they were also colonized in their diaspora.

But all non-Indigenous Americans benefit from the settler-colonial system as it stands today.

It’s just that those of us with primarily European ancestry in particular continue to benefit the most from that initial colonization and erasure of Indigenous presence.
The Impacts of Colonization Today

Play this video

https://youtu.be/gZpjYGIWL_Q

Tribes of Washington State
Reflection Questions

1. How does the use of Indian mascots perpetuate negative stereotypes and unrealistic perceptions of Native Americans?

2. How has colonialism impacted your view about our mission to change BHS’ mascot name and image?