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The following lesson was created by **Clarice Baumgartner**, a teacher participating in the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers entitled Touch the Past: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Region.

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Band, Tribe, or Chiefdom?

Grade Level: High School

Subject: World History

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify the differences between band, tribe, and chiefdom societies.
Students will be able to categorize different cultures based on their characteristics.

Standards: Wisconsin Social Studies Performance Standards

B.12.9 Select significant changes caused by technology, industrialization, urbanization, and population growth, and analyze the effects of these changes in the United States and the world.

B.12.13 Analyze examples of ongoing change within and across cultures, such as the development of ancient civilizations; the rise of nation-states; and social, economic, and political revolutions

E.12.6 Analyze the means by which and extent to which groups and institutions can influence people, events, and cultures in both historical and contemporary settings

E.12.5 Describe the ways cultural and social groups are defined and how they have changed over time

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials/Supplies:

Band, Tribe, and Chiefdom Powerpoint
Band, Tribe, and Chiefdom Notes Handout
Culture Description Cards

Vocabulary:

Band
Tribe
Chiefdom
Subsistence Pattern
Egalitarian
Microband
Macroband
Stratified

Background:

There is no background information that students need to be aware of, as it is intended to set the stage for further discussion of early human history. The instructor should be familiar with bands, tribes, and chiefdoms, and be prepared to talk about how population and available resources may impact the level of each society.

Setting the Stage:

To encourage students to think about how and why people organize themselves in different ways, at the beginning of class I will ask students to do a quick write to answer the following questions: What are the benefits of having a large population? What are the challenges? When students are finished writing, we will discuss as a large group.

Procedure:

At the beginning of class, students will review the aspects of culture with a partner to help recall important aspects of human cultures. Students will then take notes to go with the Band, Tribe, or Chiefdom PowerPoint.

Students will then be divided into groups of three. Each group will receive six Culture Description Cards. Students will read each card and decide if the society that is described is a band, tribe, or chiefdom and label that on their handout. Students will also highlight clues that helped them reach their decision on the cards.

The "Answer Key" for this activity is as follows:

Band - Inuit, Aboriginal Australians
Tribe - Masaai, Hopi
Chiefdom - Native Hawaiians, Chibcha

Closure:

After each group has sorted their cultures, they will pick one to share with the class. Each group will select one culture, briefly explain it to the class, and then discuss why they placed it in the group that they did. We will discuss any examples that students found particularly challenging or any questions they may have at this point.

Evaluation:

Students will be formally evaluated on this material on the unit test. This will include vocabulary questions, matching questions, and an application question related to the material covered during this lesson.

Links/Extension:

This lesson helps set the stage for other content covered during this unit including how and why humans shifted from hunting and gathering to agriculture. This lesson also sets the stage for two units that follow this unit on state level societies and empires. During these portions of the course, I will have students compare the more complex cultures to the ones we covered in this lesson.

This lesson could clearly be linked to a number of other social sciences, most notably political science and sociology. It could also be applied to environmental science classes by having students examine the impact each of these types of cultures have on their environment and comparing it to the impact of modern, Western societies on the environment today.

References:

Chase-Dunn, Christopher, and Elena Ermolaeva. "The Ancient Hawaiian World-System: Research Questions." Institute for Research on World Systems, University of California, Riverside, 1994. Web. 30 July 2014. <www.irows.ucr.edu/papers/irows4.txt>.

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Timan, Matthew Ole. "Changing Culture of the Maasai." (n.d.): n. pag. *Serengeti.org*. Serengeti National Park. Web. 30 July 2014. <http://www.serengeti.org/download/Changing_Culture.pdf>.

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Attachments

Bands, Tribes, and Chiefdoms PowerPoint
Set of Six Culture Description Cards

Inuit

The Inuit are a group of people who live in Alaska and Northern Canada. Traditionally, the Inuit lived in small groups that were primarily based on family. These groups moved frequently to ensure that the group could collect enough food to sustain themselves. The Inuit primarily ate caribou, whales, seals, and occasionally were able to gather berries. These activities were more successful if many people participated, and the Inuit traditionally shared food and labor with other members of their community. The Inuit had many rules and traditions that all members were expected to follow, but no one person was responsible for enforcing these rules. The entire community was expected to follow and enforce these expectations. In extreme cases, the adults of the community might discuss the appropriate punishment for an offender publicly before deciding as a group what should be done. These measures were essential because every group member relied on everyone else to survive in the Arctic.

What kind of society is this?

Maasai

The Masai are a group of people who live in Kenya and Tanzania. The Maasai care for large herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, and they rely on these animals for the majority of their food. The Maasai live in small huts, and each village is surrounded by a thick wall of thorn bushes. This barrier helps protect the livestock from lions and other predators at night. Surrounding each village is an area of land where the Maasai graze their animals. This land is owned communally by the village and every family has a right to use it. Each village has a leader, and this leader is chosen by the village as a whole. There are also religious leaders who are responsible for conducting rituals.

What kind of society is this?

Hawaiians

Native Hawaiians are one of several Polynesian groups who live on islands in the Pacific Ocean. The most important crop in Hawaii was the sweet potato, which spread to Hawaii from Peru. The sweet potato allowed the islands to support relatively large numbers of people. Fish and birds were important sources of protein and other nutrients. Each island was divided into a series of districts and regions that were controlled by leaders who had varying levels of status. For example, each region had a konohiki. His job was to collect food from commoners and pass it along to leaders who had more power than he did. At the head of each society was a powerful leader who controlled the group's navy, led attacks on other groups, and protected their own people from similar attacks.

What kind of society is this?

Source: Chase-Dunn, Christopher, and Elena Ermolaeva. "The Ancient Hawaiian World-System: Research Questions." Institute for Research on World Systems, University of California, Riverside, 1994. Web. 30 July 2014. <www.irows.ucr.edu/papers/irows4.txt>.

Aboriginal Australians

Aboriginal people are indigenous to Australia. Aboriginal people have traditionally lived in small groups that were primarily made up of several extended families. They were semi-nomadic, and traveled from place to place to hunt animals and gather important wild resources. If there was a conflict between two people, it was usually settled by a decision that every member of the group could help make. Medicine men performed important rituals and ceremonies for the group.

What kind of society is this?

Source: Fryer-Smith, Stephanie. "Aspects of Traditional Aboriginal Culture." *Aboriginal Benchbook for Western Australian Courts*. Carlton Victoria: Australian Institute of Judicial Administration Incorporated, 2002. 2:1-:27. *Aboriginal Benchbook for Western Australian Courts*. Australian Institute of Judicial Administration Incorporated. Web. 30 July 2014. <<http://www.ajja.org.au/online/ICABenchbook/BenchbookChapter2.pdf>>.

Hopi

The Hopi are a Native American group. Most Hopi members live in the American Southwest. The Hopi traditionally lived in villages. These villages were often located on the edges of plateaus. The Hopi built sturdy, multi-story houses that were made out of stone and adobe. The Hopi survived by planting crops and herding sheep. In order to make sure that each member of the village had access to enough resources, land is owned collectively by all tribe members. This land is then divided up and given to individual families to use. Village elders have some political power and influence, but most decisions are made by the group. The Hopi are also known for their textiles and pottery.

What kind of society is this?

Chibcha

The Chibcha are a group of people that were indigenous to the area now known as Columbia in South America. Chibcha society was divided into several classes, including commoners, elites, and a single leader with a lot of political power. This leader was believed to have the ability to change the weather and seasons. The leader had many officials that were responsible for managing agricultural activities, trade, and justice. Commoners had less status in society. Commoners often traded produce in large markets for goods they needed to survive. In contrast, the leader and his officials traded goods like salt and emeralds that were considerably more valuable, and often had large quantities of valuable goods that belonged to them personally. Commoners did not have access to salt and emeralds.

What kind of society is this?

Bands, Tribes, and Chiefdoms

	Band	Tribe	Chiefdom
Population			
Subsistence Pattern			
Egalitarian or Stratified?			
Settlement			

Rituals, Beliefs, and Traditions			
Other Notes			
Examples			