

A Teacher's Guide to the Native Peoples of the Plains



JOURNEYS
INTO
AMERICAN
INDIAN
TERRITORY

Journeys Into American Indian Territory offers educational programs in schools for grades K-7, as well as teacher training programs. We also provide educational resources on Native Americans that teachers can use in their classrooms.



Native Americans were the original inhabitants of the Americas. Today they remain a diverse group of peoples with unique practices and lifeways. During your Journeys Into American Indian Territory program you and your students will learn about these people and their important place in the history of the United States of America.

THE PEOPLE

The plains Indians were incredibly well adapted to their physical environment, which consisted mainly of tall grass prairies in the east and short grasslands in the west. This open environment allowed for herds of animals, like buffalo (bison) to roam free. By paying close attention to their surroundings, Plains Indians obtained food, clothing and shelter efficiently and respectfully.



GENDER ROLES

Native American societies separated the jobs and responsibilities of men and women. Plains Indian women were responsible for most needs of the family. Their responsibilities included raising children, taking care of elders, butchering animals, tanning hides, making tipis, setting up and taking down tipi encampments, food preparation, and maintaining the home. Men's main responsibilities were hunting and warfare. These two dangerous tasks required cooperation and good relationships among men.



CHILDREN

Before the arrival of Europeans, Indian children did not go to school to learn as they do today. Instead they listened to stories told by their elders and played games to learn what they needed to know in order to grow up and be good people. Children spent a lot of time exploring their surroundings to gain as much knowledge of their environment as they could.



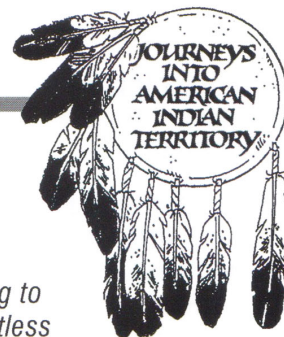
GAMES

Two main categories of games in Indian cultures were games of chance and games of skill. Games taught children the skills they needed to learn to survive and they reminded adults of the importance of cooperation. Games were also used to help settle disputes.





Journeys Into American Indian Territory



A Teacher's Guide to the Native Peoples of the Plains

Throughout history Native peoples have been misunderstood and misrepresented, leading to many stereotypes that prevail to this day. One is the idea of the "vanishing Indian." Countless children currently have this view and believe there are no Indians alive today. The latest census shows that there approximately 4.1 million American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States. They make up approximately 1.5 percent of the population. One of the purposes of the Journeys program as well as this teachers guide is to confront stereotypes and offer alternative understandings of Native Americans in history and in contemporary American society.

A Letter from the Director

Dear Educator,

Thank you for choosing the Journeys into American Indian Territory interactive educational program. The Journeys experience is intended to give students a basic understanding of the lifeways of the original inhabitants of America. In addition, it provides students with an introduction to the physical environment of our region prior to European contact, and an understanding of how nature provided the raw materials Eastern Woodlands peoples needed in order to survive.

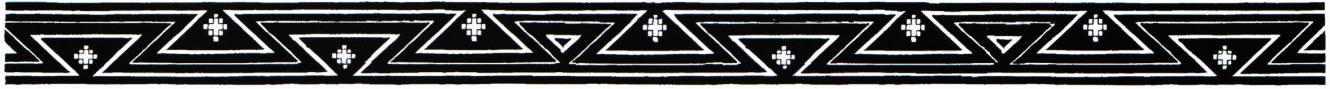
During our program traditional songs, stories and games are shared as well as firsthand experiences that reflect the depth of tribal traditions and histories. Through the varied learning experiences in our program students move beyond stereotypes to a more accurate understanding of Native Americans as human beings, and as important contributors to our past and the world we know today.

We hope this guide will assist you in developing pre and post Journeys program activities.
Thank you again and I hope your students enjoy the Journeys experience!

Warm Regards
Robert Vetter

Journeys Into American Indian Territory
P.O. Box 575, Eastport, NY 11941 (631) 878-8655
www.indianjourneys.com





RECOMMENDED BOOKS: PLAINS INDIANS

FOR CHILDREN

In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse by Joseph Marshall III, Amulet Books, 2015.
Buffalo Song by Joseph Bruchac, National Geographic School Publications, 2013.
Jingle Dresser by Cynthia Leitich Smith, William and Morrow and Company, 2000.
Tasunka, A Lakota Horse Legend by Donald R. Montlieaux, S. Dakota State Historical Society, 2014.
This Land Is My Land by George Littlechild, Children's Book Press, 2003.
The Star Purple: A Lakota Story by S.D. Nelson, Harry N. Abrams Publishing, 2003.
Gift Horse: A Lakota Story by S.D. Nelson, Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2016.
Buffalo Bird Girl: A Hidatsa Story by S.D. Nelson, Harry N. Abrams Publishing 2012.
Cheyenne Again by Eve Bunting, HMH Books for Young Readers, 2002.
Iktomi Loses His Eyes: A Plains Indian Story by Paul Goble, Orchard Books, 1999.

ON GENERAL TOPIC OF NATIVE AMERICANS

The People Shall Continue by Simon J. Ortiz, Children's Book Press, 2017.
We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom and Michaela Goade, Roaring Brook Press, 2020.
When the Rain Sings: Poems by Young Native Americans by Lee Francis, Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, 1999.
When We Were Alone by David Robertson, Highwater Press, 2016.
Young Water Protectors by Aslan Tudor, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018.
I Am Not a Number by Jenny Kay Dupuis, Kathy Kacer and Gillian Newland, Second Story Press, 2019.
Native American Animal Stories by Joseph Bruchac, Fulcrum Publishing, 1992.

FOR TEACHERS

Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children (Contemporary American Indian Issues No. 7) by Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin, University of California, American Indian Studies, 4 Edition, 1998.
Lessons from Turtle Island: Native Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms by Guy W. Jones and Sally Moomaw, Redleaf Press, 2002.
Native Americans Today: Resources for Educators Grades 4-8 by Arlene Hirschfelder and Yvonne Beamer, Libraries Unlimited, 2000.

INTERNET RESOURCES

BOOKLISTS

- Books by Joe Bruchac
http://www.josephbruchac.com/published_books.html
- Native Languages of the Americas
(includes books for children)
www.native-languages.org/books.htm
- Goodminds.com – Web search that enables you to search for native books and music using the following categories: author, title, Indian nation or region, subject or grade level
Homepage - <http://www.goodminds.com/homepage.htm>
Online Search Database - <http://www.goodminds.com/sframe.htm>

FOR TEACHERS

- Teaching about Native Americans
<http://www.oyate.org/>
- American Museum of Natural History – Educators' Guide
www.amnh.org/education/resources/exhibitions/totems/all_index.php
LOOK FOR:
Discover Eastern Woodland Indians at the American Museum of Natural History (PDF file)
Hall of Eastern Woodland Indians Educators' Guide (PDF file and website)
Booklist: Native American Myths (website suggested books for children)
Analyzing Images of Culture (PDF file of curriculum materials)
Multiple Cultures, Multiple Identities (PDF file of curriculum materials)
When Cultures Travel (PDF file of curriculum materials)
- Native American Nations
<http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/nations.html>
- Teacher's Guide to Native Americans
<http://www.theteachersguide.com/nativeamericans.html>
- Index of Native American Teaching Resources on the Internet
<http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAteach.html>

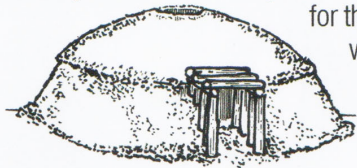
FOR KIDS

www.Nativetech.org
www.nativelanguages.org/kids.htm
www.kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/native-americans



HOUSING

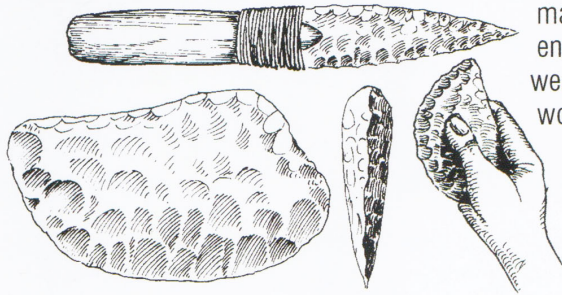
At the time of European contact, the Plains Indians were living in vilages comprised of **earthlodges**. Tipis were in use at the time, but were not as common as earthlodges. After horses were introduced, Plains Indians moved around more, in order to follow the large herds of roaming buffalo. Therefore they did not need permanent structures for their homes. They began to live in tipis because they were fast and easy to set up and take down. It was the women who owned the tipis, and had the responsibility of taking down and putting them back up. Although Plains Indian people today no longer live in tipis, the tipi is still an important part of their culture, as it is seen as a sacred place.



no longer live in tipis, the tipi is still an important part of their culture, as it is seen as a sacred place.

TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

Before Native people obtained trade items such as guns, metal knives, and metal gardening tools from Europeans they made tools and weapons from materials in the natural environment. Tools and weapons were made from a variety of raw materials, such as bone, stone, wood, and fiber. Stone projectile points (often called arrowheads) were produced through a process called **flintknapping**. Bone could also be carved or ground to a sharp point and attached to a spear or arrow.



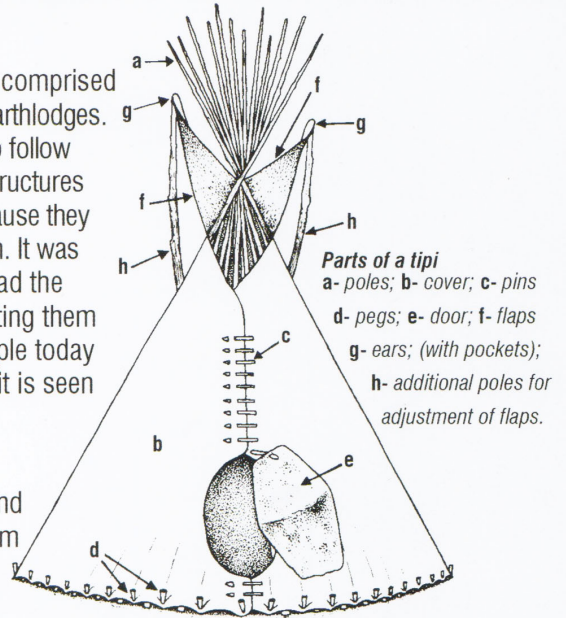
Tools and weapons were made from a variety of raw materials, such as bone, stone, wood, and fiber. Stone projectile points (often called arrowheads) were produced through a process called **flintknapping**. Bone could also be carved or ground to a sharp point and attached to a spear or arrow.

AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN TODAY

Today's Native American children much like mainstream children.

They go to similar schools whether their school is on or off a reservation

They live in contemporary houses and most watch the same television shows and play games as non-Native children. Some have little or no knowledge of the history and culture of their tribe or nation and cannot speak their Native language. Others live in traditional families where Native customs, religion, games, language, songs, and dances are encouraged, American Indian life today for this reason is sometimes described as "living with a foot in two worlds."



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE JOURNEYS WORKSHOP...

- Learn a Native song or dance
- Play a traditional Plains game
- Make an age appropriate craft
- See and touch objects in our moving museum
- Hear a traditional story
- Experience an interactive walk-through of a real tipi





Plains Key Terms:

Projectile Point- A point used on the end of a weapon such as an arrow or spear. It was most often made of stone, but could also be made of horn or bone.

Rawhide- animal skin which was scraped to remove flesh and fur, then dried in the sun. The resulting material was used to make moccasin soles, drum heads, containers, suitcases, to set broken bones and other uses.

Buckskin- animal skin which was first scraped as in making rawhide, then tanned to make it soft. The brains of the animal were rubbed onto the skin in order to tan it. Buckskin was used to make dresses, shirts, breechcloths, leggings, coats, moccasins, pouches and other items.

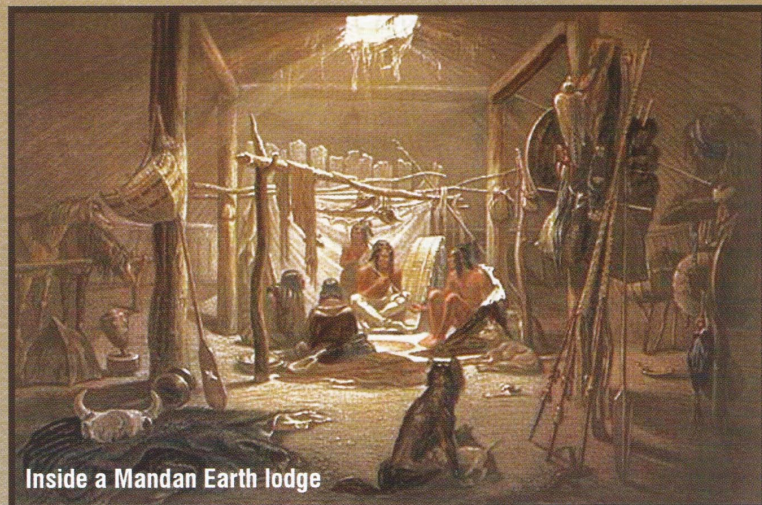
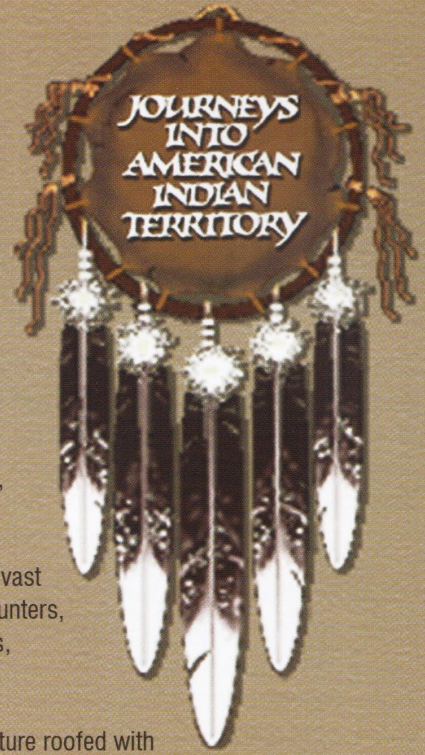
Nomadic hunter-gatherers- people who traveled across vast areas in order to survive. Plains Indian men were bison hunters, and women gathered foods like nuts, roots, seeds, berries, and greens.

Earth lodge- a circular dome-shaped wood-framed structure roofed with dirt. This was a permanent or semi-permanent house used by tribes who stayed more or less in one place, but sent their men out to hunt for buffalo when necessary.

Tipi- a house shaped like a cone, framed by wooden poles and covered with animal skins (generally buffalo). After the 1880's, most tipis were covered with canvas. This was an easily moveable home, ideal for people on the move following the herds of buffalo on the Plains.

Earth paint- colors made of iron-containing clays ground into a powder and mixed with a gluey substance to make them stick.

Vision Quest- a ceremony where a person went to a lonely spot and fasted from food and water in order to receive a revelation. This was most common for young men, but could be undergone by either a man or woman of any age. A vision or dream that came to the person would guide and provide meaning to his or her life.



Inside a Mandan Earth lodge