

SEWAM AMERICAN INDIAN DANCE

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDY GUIDE



Confidence, culture, creativity, respect, and critical thinking through diverse arts and education programming.

Aligned with California State Schools Content Standards

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Dear Teachers,

We could never begin to teach all that there is to learn about the Native American people. This workshop is intended to expose students to the Native culture, more specifically the people of the Plains; and hopefully cultivate an appreciation and interest in learning more. Within the Native American culture, there is rich diversity, as illustrated in the image below of moccasin. This diversity is reflected the richness of the people coming from different environments, traditions, and beliefs...not unlike the diversity of your classrooms.

In order to facilitate a deeper understanding of cultural differences and similarities we strongly encourage you to complete the activity on Pg. 5 of this study guide. It will help demonstrate how diverse cultures are affected by environment and geography, helping students appreciate the differences in cultures and dangers of stereotypes.



We believe in the benefits of education through the arts. We hope you'll review this study guide with your students in preparation of the classroom visits and workshop. The lesson plans at the end of this guide are suggestions you can adapt to the individual needs of your students.

Enjoy this great journey with your students.



Goals and Objectives of Workshop

Goals

Students will be exposed to the Native American culture through dance, art, & sign language

Objectives

- Artist will provide an overview of the geography, music and customs of the Plains Indians
- Understand that some Native dances are social and often have spiritual significance
- Students will learn Native American sign language and a hoop dance in a hands-on workshop that will be both educational and fun

California Content Standards

3.1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Dance

3.2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Dance

3.3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Dance

3.4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works of Dance

3.5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Dance to Learning in Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers



Pre-Workshop Activity: My Culture

Goal: To help students explore their own family/cultural history and traditions; and see how the culture in our classroom is both similar and different. (Please keep in mind some students may be adopted and/or fostered.) Students can expand this worksheet to a "Book About Me" and include family interviews. **Write your responses below:**

Our family name and the country it is from:

My family consists of:

Special days my family celebrates:

What my family does together:

Special places we have visited:



Overview of the Pre-Workshop Classroom Visit

Goal

Exploring Native American culture while understanding & acknowledging that we are all individuals with diverse backgrounds; looking at cultural differences with respect



Discussion

- This workshop will be very fluid, adapting to how your students respond to materials and concepts presented
- Description of the Plains people, general information regarding Native Americans, education and responsibility for Native youth will be covered
- Discuss with students why it is important to study the Native culture
- Talk about the people who lived on the land first
- The artist will bring the supplies and students will spend last 20 minutes learning about and making corn husk dolls (we ask teachers to refrain from mentioning this project in advance to avoid misconceptions)
- How can you use an inanimate object to express your feelings or show respect
- Native people did not view dolls as toys, rather a way to tell stories



How Much Do You Already Know?

Ask yourself the following questions and test your knowledge.

1. Do Native Americans still exist?
2. How many tribes are there in the US?
3. Name some different homes Native people lived in.
4. What would make Native tribes different from each other?



Interesting Facts about Plains Indians

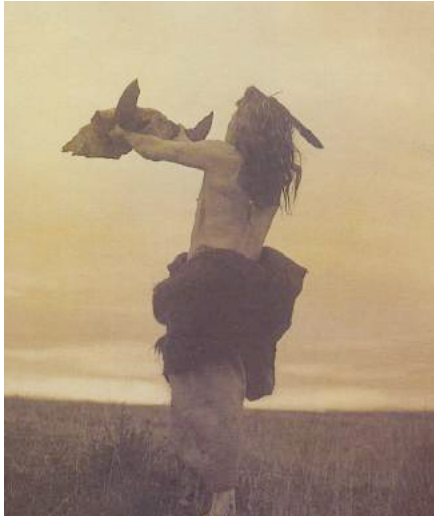


- The Great Plains region is very large! It includes three Canadian provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba) and ten states (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas).
- 1. There were many different tribes that comprised the Plains Indians: Absaroke, Apache, Arapaho, Arikara, Assiniboine, Atakapa, Blackfoot, including two sub-groups, the Blood and Piegan, Brule, Cheyenne, Comanche, Crow, Gros Ventre, Hidatsa, Hunkpapa, Iowa, Kansa, Karankawa, Kiowa, Loup, Mandan, Missouri, Omaha, Osage, Oto, Pawnee, Ponca, Quapaw, Sioux, including five sub-groups, the Oglala, Santee, Sisseton, Teton and Yankton.
- Plains Indians were very skilled farmers. Planting in the spring, hunting in the summer and harvesting before winter, they were able to survive harsh weather conditions. Prior to the introduction of horses in the 1700's they would hunt bison on foot, trapping them in gullies or driving them over cliffs. Every part of the animal was used; either for food, clothing, shelter, cooking implements, etc. The introduction of the horse forever changed their approach to hunting. Use of the horse allowed hunters to venture beyond the surrounding villages into long-distance pursuits of large herds.
- Because of the many diverse tribes, the use of sign language became necessary and common.





People of the Plains for Teacher Use



It has been said that Native people do not have a religion, but rather a way of life. Everything a Native person has been taught reflects some relationship and/or responsibility with his/her environment. There is truly a science to how Native peoples lived. With all things that provide subsistence there is a ritual procedure. There is recognition of a Great Being from birth until death and from the time when one awakens to the time of sleep.

Environment - The interior of the North American continent consists of vast plains and prairies stretching from northern Manitoba to the lowlands of Texas. Hills rise up like strange islands in an inland sea: the Black hills, the South Dakota Badlands, and the Sand Hills of Nebraska. River valleys, hidden until the prairie suddenly drops away, provide water, trees, plant and animal life and refuge from the biting prairie winds. Humans clung to the rivers, initially living off the resources of the valleys, including bear, deer, rabbit and game birds. They hunted bison on foot, trapping them in gullies or driving them over cliffs. Around 1,000 years ago, some groups migrated into the Plains and nomadic groups began to settle in villages, transforming fertile flood plains into gardens. Climatic changes often necessitated adjustments to the village lifestyle when droughts harmed the corn, beans, squash, tobacco and other crops. Villages might also have been forced to relocate because of scarce timber for lodges and fire, or occasional warfare.

Art - Many books have been written about collections of Native American art, most of them from a non-Indian point of view. Too often, this art becomes separated from the unique environment that influenced its creation and development. Taken out of the tribal context and interpreted solely in terms of the dominant society's understanding of it, the most important perspective of all is conspicuously absent. No word exists in the hundreds of Native American languages that can come close to our definition of art. As we use the word *art* today to describe the visual beauty of Native American wares, we identify the decorative display of how Indians apply the world around them into their everyday lives. Painting appears to have a long tradition on the Plains. Ancient hunters left painted and incised symbols on the wall of cliffs and caves. On a bison kill site in southern Montana that was in use over two thousand years ago



petroglyphs were found, which vary in age. Rock “art” was often found in connection with hunting sites and may have had ritualistic meaning. As late as the early nineteenth century these ancient drawings retained significance for the Plains people.

Clothing- People of the Plains made clothing from what was around them to suit their climate. Men's hide shirts and jackets were adorned with paint, fringe, and quillwork, and the wearers often painted symbols from their dreams on these garments. In many tribes, leggings were fashionable garments for both men and women. Decorated with fringe, paint, and ribbon and sometimes attached to moccasins, men's leggings typically were cut from animal hide, while most women's leggings seen today are cloth. Men also wore apron-like breechcloths that were attached to the leggings. Women wore hide dresses, which typically features beadwork along with paint, elk's teeth, and tin cones that resembled small bells. Beadwork also can be seen on men's vests, armbands, blanket strips, cradle wrappers, footwear, bags and pouches, and riding gear. Jewelry, in the form of shell, bone, stone, clay, and wooden ornaments, has been common with Native American tribes since the earliest times. For the Plains tribes, materials that were extremely rare or difficult to obtain, such as seashells and bear claws, were especially valuable.



A look at housing (architecture)- A critical factor in the adaptation to a more mobile life was the tepee. This conical dwelling, developed by Indians of the northern forests, fit perfectly in Plains life. In early days on the Plains, tepees were much smaller because it was so difficult to drag the cumbersome poles over long distances. Since horses were able to drag longer, heavier poles than dogs, the size of these dwellings naturally increased.



The cone shape worked well against winds and could accommodate a family of ten. The poles and bison skins with which it was constructed could be quickly dismantled and transported by horse-drawn travois.

Hoop Dance



We do not know exactly where the Hoop Dance began or the exact meaning behind the dance. However, Hoop dancing has a deep history surrounded by similar stories believed to explain the origins.

In its original form, the Hoop Dance is believed to have been part of a healing ceremony designed to restore balance and harmony in the world. In that form, the dance is not exhibited to the public. In recent years, a public form of the dance has been developed. Some of the

early dancers believed that each time a dancer passed through a hoop while dancing, he added one year to his life.

One story of the Hoop Dance, centers on a legend of a dying man who wanted to leave something of importance on earth. The Creator gave him a single hoop made of wood and told him that for each living thing he could create, one more hoop would be added. As he added hoops, he became stronger and created the forms of other living things. Contemporary hoop dancers, using as many as 40 reeds or wooden hoops, can create many shapes, including butterflies, turtles, eagles, flowers, and snakes. They represent living things and show how everything is connected and how it grows and changes.



Sign Language

SIGN LANGUAGE

As people separated into groups, the way they spoke slowly changed. Eventually, there were many different languages. To overcome the problems of not understanding their neighbors, the tribes on the Great Plains invented sign language— a clever way of communicating without words. Gesturing with their hands, chieftains made peace bargains, hunting parties discussed the whereabouts of game, and Mandan farmers traded surplus corn for Sioux buffalo skins.

Hello Riding a horse Peace Friend

During the workshop we will be reviewing/learning:

Phrase I

Education is not the enemy. A weak or broken heart is the enemy. Stay strong in your love to the Creator. You will be strong forever.

Phrase II

The world has been created. Created for us to live. Live with a strong road. The road will give you sunrise in your heart and life in the stars.

Words

All	Eat	Man
All gone	Father	Me
Angry	Friend	Mother
Beautiful	Girl	Sad
Book	Go	Strong
Boy	Good	Walk
Dance	Happy	Woman
Drink	Love	You



Glossary



Buffalo/Bison - Plains Indians depended on bison meat, hide, bone and sinew for their survival. Westward expansion, growth of the railroad, and over hunting reduced the herds to near extinction, from six million to barely a thousand.

Calendar Sticks - Strips of wood a yard or so long marking the passage of time. Carvings on the flattened side told stories of major events each year. The “calendar stick keeper” would be able to tell the stories over the years.



Catlin, George – Painter (1794-1872) The “Wild West” proved a great tourist attraction. Stories of buffalo hunts, Indian warriors and, of course, heroic white cowboys were very popular with non-Indians. Artists such as Catlin contributed to whites’ fascination portraying vivid images of Indian life.



Chief Joseph - A leader of the Nez Perce of Oregon (1840-1904) Joseph at first enjoyed peaceful relations with whites until 1855 when the U.S. government tried to take away land that had been promised as a reservation. On June 12, 1877 fighting broke out. Joseph showed great skill and courage in eluding troops and enemy Indian bands for three months. He was forced to surrender on October 5.

Code Talkers - During the First World War, Germans who tapped into Allied lines could not understand the strange words used by the Choctaw Code Talkers. In the Second World War, the US Army Signal Corps used men from several Indian nations. The US Marine Corps used 420 Navajo men to convey important messages in the Pacific. The Japanese were never able to crack the encoded Navajo communication. Example: “submarine” was translated into Navajo as “iron fish”.





Creation Myths - Creation stories of settled farming peoples tell of emergence from the earth. Creation stories of many traditional hunting and gathering peoples reflect their traditional questing lives, searching for game or seeking visions. Europeans tend to favor the migration theories derived from the systematic analysis of sites, artifacts, chronological tables and maps; none of which have been proven.



Cultural Regions – Connection to the land was very important to the Plains Indians way of life including customs and beliefs.



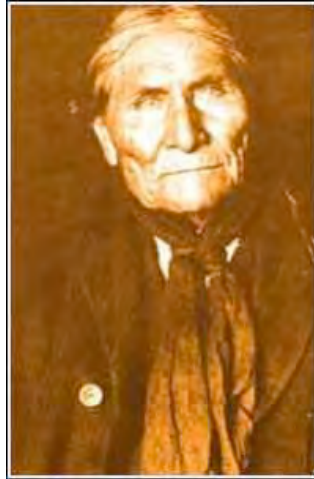
Curtis, Edward - (1868-1952) Between the year 1900 and 1930 Curtis took thousands of photographs of nearly all native tribes west of the Mississippi River. Curtis often created “staged” pictures that reflected European ideas of Indian life that were not necessarily accurate, creating the stereotype of the “noble savage”.

Dawes (General Allotment) Act - This act of 1887 sought to break up tribal lands into small plots of at most 160 acres, a policy alien to Indian traditions of communality. The result was the loss of 95 million acres of reservation land.

Drumming - The roundness of the drum symbolizes unity of the past, present, and future. This unity is a circle that binds all people. The beating of the drum represents the eternal rhythms of nature.



Five Civilized Tribes - In 1830, the Indian Removal Act, by President Andrew Jackson, forbade Indians to remain east of the Mississippi. The measure was aimed mainly at the peoples who, ironically, had done so much to accommodate the white man that they were known as the Five Civilized Tribes (the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Creek and Cherokee).



Geronimo (Goyathlay) - Chiricahua Apache Chief (1829-1909) Goyathlay, the one who yawns. He was given his Spanish name by Mexicans after a number of daring raids. His resistance to whites and his phenomenal guerilla warfare tactics captured the imagination of both Indian and non-Indian alike. After surrendering in 1886 the army sent him and his followers to Florida and eventually to Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Hohokam – Man-made irrigation canals up to ten miles long in the desert of Arizona near Phoenix. These canals were established in order to water fields of corn, squash, beans, tobacco, and cotton. Some of those same canals are still being used today.



Horses - In 1547 horses were introduced by the Spanish, and their use brought about dramatic change. The first Native acquisition of horses was by the Shoshone and Ute tribes initially using them only as packhorses around 1650.

Iroquois League - sometime before the 15th century, five Iroquois groups (the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Seneca) formed a league or confederacy called the Five Nations of the Haudenosaunee (“People of the Longhouse”). The league, which extended from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, was joined by a sixth nation, the Tuscarora, in 1714. The Iroquois League created what would be the foundation for the Constitution of the United States.



Lacrosse - La crosse (“crosier”), the name given to the game by a French missionary in the 17th century because the players’ curved stick reminded him of a bishop’s crook. The Iroquois regarded it as a gift from the Creator and played it as part of ceremonial occasions, such as planting and harvest rituals, as a way of pleasing spirits.



Language – There are more than 300 distinct Indian languages; around 2,000 dialects; at least 57 language families (California alone is home to 20 and is more linguistically diverse than the whole of Europe).

Wilma Mankiller - Principal chief of the Cherokee (1985-1995) She was the first woman Deputy Chief in Cherokee history in 1983. In 1969 she joined the Alcatraz occupation and later went on to teach at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.



Petroglyphs - Engravings on large rocks with pictures appearing to represent birds, animals, fish, people, hands, feet, abstract designs, and fantastic beings. No one knows the exact number of petroglyph rock sites, though one researcher claims that there are 7,564 sites “known to exist” in Utah alone. Arizona and California are probably

not far behind Utah, with New Mexico, Nevada, and Colorado with lesser quantities.

Plains - The Plains extends from southern Canada to the middle of Texas. These tribes are popular for teepees, buffalo hunting, and mastering the horse. Also with so many different tribes on the Plains a common form of communication was necessary, thus the Plains Indians created a sign language.

Powwow - The term “powwow” probably derives from the Algonquian word ‘pauau’, meaning a gathering of people. For Natives, the powwow refers to a traditional large tribal or intertribal secular gathering that encompasses singing, dancing, giveaways and honoring ceremonies.



Reservation - Between 1784 and 1871, native North Americans ceded nearly two billion acres to whites in 370 treaties that were often signed under duress or as a result of deliberate trickery. Today, about a quarter of all Indians live on 278 federal and state reservations, in pueblos and rancherias, or on tribal trust lands.



Sand paintings - Sand paintings are used by the Navajo for curing ceremonies where the patient sits on the painting facing east.



Sitting Bull - Teton Sioux chief (1831-1890) symbolizes the Indian virtues of generosity, bravery and tenacity. At the age of 10 he proved his generosity by killing a buffalo calf and giving the meat to the needy. In 1876 he helped lead Lakota and Cheyenne forces that annihilated Custer's forces at the Little Bighorn River.

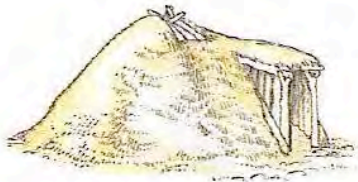
Steelworkers - The reputation for Mohawks' apparent indifference to heights spread and many Mohawks and other Iroquois were employed in the construction of most of the steel-framed skyscrapers that dominated the New York skyline after 1900. They also worked elsewhere in the U.S. including San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge.





Map Handout

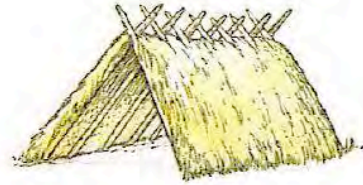




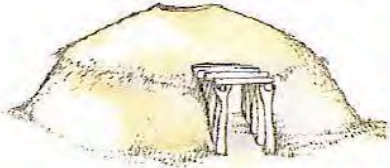
Navajo sod or adobe hogan



Plains buffalo hide tipi



Yukon double lean-to



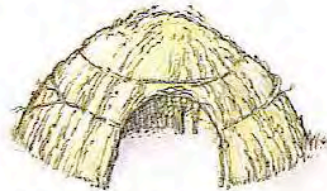
Prairie earthlodge



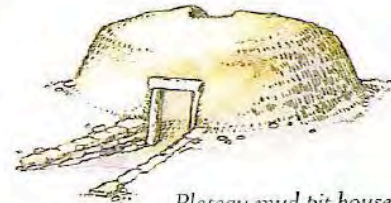
Seminole stilt chickee



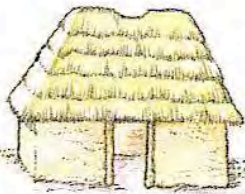
Arctic domed snow house



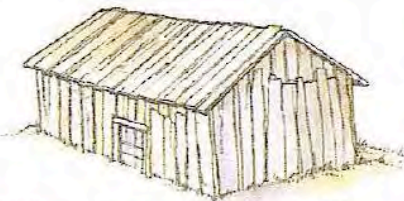
Great Basin thatched wickiup



Plateau mud pit house



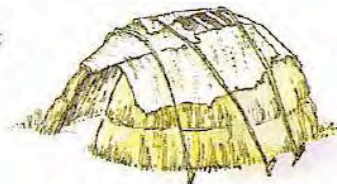
Southeastern wattle and daub hut



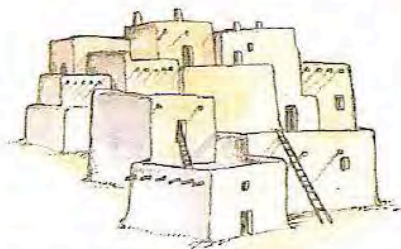
Northwest Coast multifamily plank house

NATIVE DWELLINGS

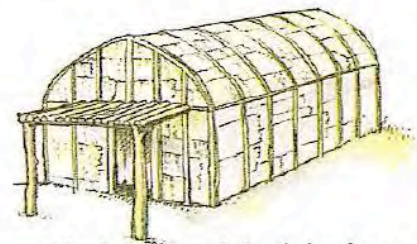
Illustrated here is a selection of common dwellings that reflect the role of the environment as well as cultural and migratory practices of the many Indian tribes.



Algonquian mat or bark wigwam



Southwest stone or adobe pueblo



Northeastern multifamily longhouse

People and Events: A closer look at history

Native American Civilization

1300 - Native American population in North and Central America reached its peak. The population of Mexico was believed to be over 30 million and of North America between 12 and 15 million.

1492 - The paramount chief of the Arawaks, Guacanagari, rescued the crew and cargo of the *Santa Maria* when it went aground on a coral reef off the north coast of a Caribbean island.

1700 - Many of the tribes that acquired horses migrated to the Plains

1828 - Sequoyah invented a Cherokee alphabet and system of writing, used this new language to create a Cherokee newspaper



1829 - Gold was discovered on Cherokee lands. Thousands poured into the area searching for gold. Georgia legislature passed laws making it illegal for Cherokees to mine gold, testify against a white man, or hold political assemblies.

1830 - The Indian Removal Law was passed, requiring that all southern Indians move to new lands west of the Mississippi.

1865 - War on the Northern Plains

1880's - Buffalo were nearly extinct

Western Civilization

1347 - First outbreak of the Bubonic Plague in Europe. Over 20 million Europeans died.

1493 - Columbus returned to Spain with two dozen captured Arawaks and declared that he had found India. The king and queen gave him 17 ships, 1200 colonists, 300 soldiers, and 34 horses and assorted animals for a second expedition.

1500 - Spanish royal decree made Indians of the New World "vassals of the crown." (the native people were seen as labor to be granted)

1504 - Amerigo Vespucci realized that this was not part of Asia but rather a New World, which led a geographer to name the land America.

1819 - Spain sold Florida and what we now consider Alabama and Georgia to the US.

1821 - Mexico declared independence from Spain.

1825 - The Erie Canal opened.

1829 - Andrew Jackson elected President of the United States

1865 - Civil War ended



Fun Questions to Ask When Studying Another Culture

- What is the environment & climate the people live in? What era are you looking into?

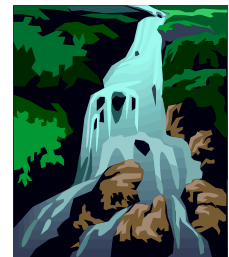


- What animals exist in the area? What animals could be used for food and clothing? What animals make distinct sounds? Could these be used for music? Are there animals with distinct



habits such as storing food, scare tactics, hunting, or hiding?

- What water resources are available? Are they year around sources? Could these be used for travel? How about food? What about farming?

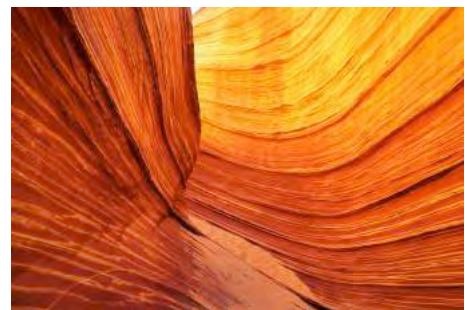


- What plant life is available? Can they be used for food, clothing, shelter, medicine, or poison? How about color dye?



- What geology sources are around? Maybe some of these can be used for weapons or tools. Perhaps color dye, jewelry, or carving.

- Are there neighbors to the culture you're studying? Are they friends or enemies? How do they communicate? Do they trade, and if so what?





Ideas for Lesson Plans

- **Geography/Social Studies:**

There are over 550 distinct tribes in the United States. Between these tribes and those of Canada and Northern Mexico, the languages, traditions and dances differ greatly. Look at a map of the United States and identify which tribes live or lived in which states. There are probably some students with Native American ancestry. Do they know which tribes or where they lived?
- **Life Skills:**

Lead students in a discussion about stereotypes. Today, Native Americans live like everybody else does in the 21st century. Some customs have become associated with all Native American tribes. For instance, although the Plains Dances have been popularized through Powwows, not every Native American tribe held the custom of Powwows. (The term “Powwow” probably derives from the Algonquian word “Pauau”, meaning, “a gathering of people”.) Here are some myths to dispel: Indians do not tap their mouths and make a “whooping” sound. Not all Indians lived in tepees. Indians don’t say “How”.
- **Social Studies/Environmental studies:**

The environment plays a significant role in the development of a culture. It determines available food sources, affects clothing, shelter and belief systems. Research some of the Plains Indians tribes (look at the resource list) and differentiate between the customs and lifestyles of different tribes. What effect might geography or environmental factors have had on the customs of those tribes. How would people live in the snow of the Northwest coast versus the desert of the Southwest? The mountains and lakes of the West versus the marsh and grasslands of the Southeast? How would they build their homes? What would they eat? What celebrations do you think they would have and why?
- **Music/Dance:**

What reasons or occasions could we use to celebrate? Maybe seasons, an annual event, or a victory? Think of some others. Make up a dance or a song that reflects your environment such as your classroom, your city or your hobbies.
- **Sports:**

Elk hunting game - an Elk “antler-like” racket used to catch a ring
- **Art:**

Beaded story bracelets: the use of colored beads to tell stories



Suggested Resources

Books:

The Native Americans: The indigenous People of North America - Colin F. Taylor- Salamander Books, 1989

Native Americans: A history in pictures Arlene Hirschfelder- Dorling Kindersley Pub., Inc., 2000

The Encyclopedia of Native America Trudy Griffin-Pierce- New York, Viking, 1995

Powwow: Images Along the Red Road Ben Marra- New York, Abrams, 1996

1491: America Before Columbus National Geographic- National Geographic, Vol. 180, No. 4 (October 1991)

The People Shall Continue Simon Ortiz- Emeryville, Children's Book Press, 1977

Websites:

Census Data: *US American Indians and Alaska Natives*

(Under "A" find American Indians and Alaska Natives [choose "population"]

www.census.gov

Census Data: Canadian Native Peoples

www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980113/d980113.htm

Native Artists and Authors

www.hanksville.org

Indian Country Today: weekly national newspaper covering national Native news

www.indiancountry.com

National Museum of the American Indian Resource Center, N.Y.:

www.coexus.si.edu

Native Tech: information on the technology of Native Americans:

www.nativeweb.org/nativetech/

Smithsonian Institute

www.si.edu/newstart.htm/

Windspeaker: National Native newspaper of Canada

www.ammsa.com/windspeaker/

Videos:

Film Resource:

www.shenandoahfilms.com



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Native Universe. National Geographic Society. Smithsonian Institution, 2004.

Native American Arts and Crafts. Smithmark Publishers, Inc. NY, 1995.

Native Americans. Eds. Thomas, David Hurst and Pendleton, Lorann. Weldon Owen, Inc, Time Warner Books, 1995.

An Educational Read & Color Book of California Indians. Ed. Spizzirri, Linda. Spizzirri Publishing, Inc., South Dakota, 1986.

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Photo Credit:

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Student Evaluation

We are glad you were able to attend the *SEWAM DANCE* performance and/or workshop! We would like to know what you have learned through this experience. As you write or draw, please remember classroom visitors, the actual performance, and workshop.

I learned that _____.

I really liked the _____.

Any other thoughts: _____

_____.

Please share a drawing that describes what you have learned from the experience.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw a picture describing their learning experience.