



# Sign Language

**SIGN LANGUAGE**

**A**s 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

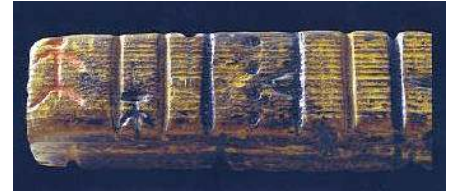


# Glossary



**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.



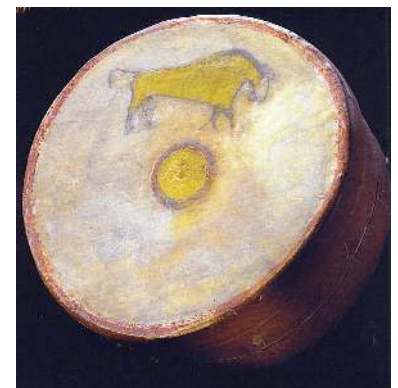
**Cultural Regions** – Connection to the land was very important to the Plains Indians way of life including customs and beliefs.



**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”.

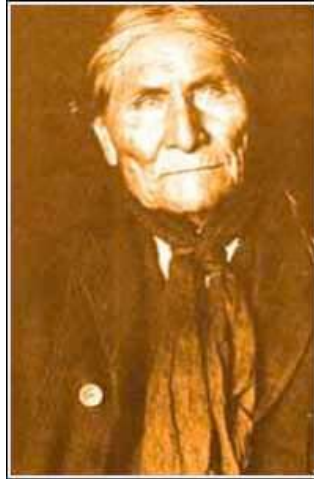
**Dawes (General Allotment) Act** - This act of 1887 sought to break up tribal lands into small plots of at most 160 acres, a policy alien to Indian traditions of communality. The result was the loss of 95 million acres of reservation land.

**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.



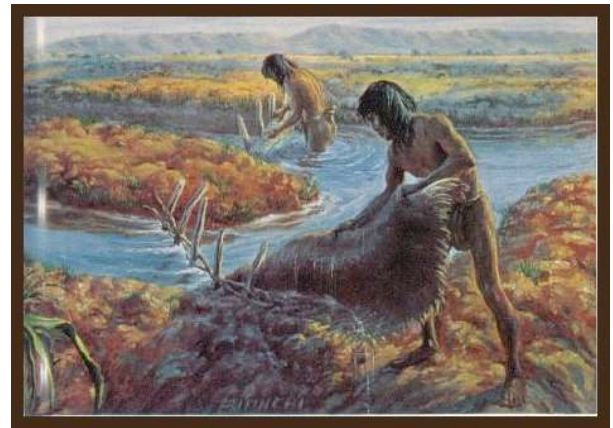
**Five Civilized Tribes** - In 1830, the Indian Removal Act, by President Andrew Jackson, forbade Indians to remain east of the Mississippi. The measure was aimed mainly at the peoples who, ironically, had done so much to accommodate the white man that they were known as the Five Civilized Tribes (the 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

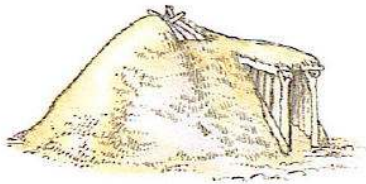




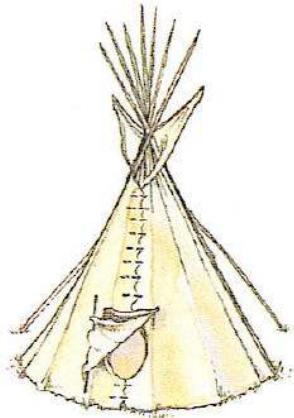


# Map Handout

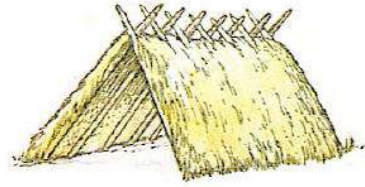




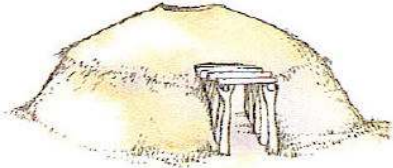
*Navajo sod or adobe hogan*



*Plains buffalo hide tipi*



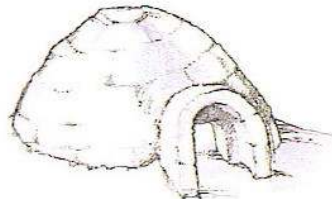
*Yukon double lean-to*



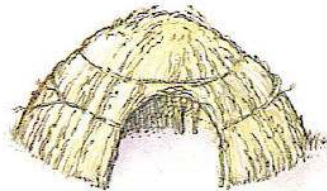
*Prairie earthlodge*



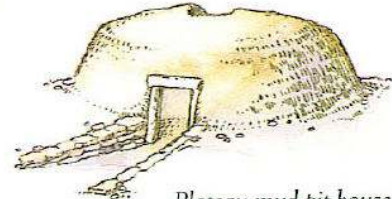
*Seminole stilt chickee*



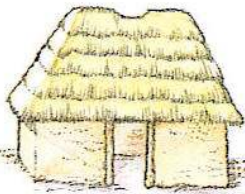
*Arctic domed snow house*



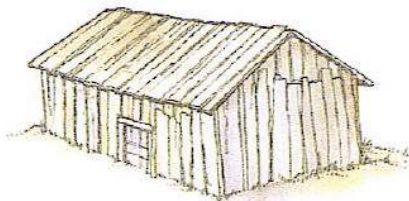
*Great Basin thatched wickiup*



*Plateau mud pit house*



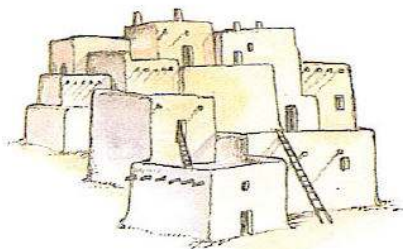
*Southeastern wattle and daub hut*



*Northwest Coast multifamily plank house*



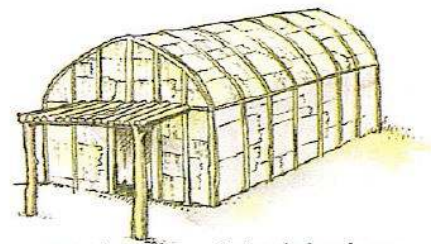
*Algonquian mat or bark wigwam*



*Southwest stone or adobe pueblo*

**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.



*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?

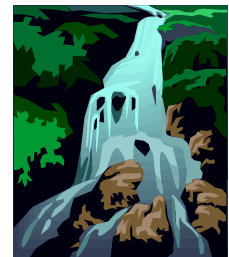


- What animals exist in the area? What animals could be used for food and clothing? What animals make distinct sounds? Could these be used for music? Are there animals with distinct



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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 verses the desert of the Southwest? The mountains and lakes of the West verses 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](http://www.census.gov)

Census Data: Canadian Native Peoples

[www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980113/d980113.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980113/d980113.htm)

### **Native Artists and Authors**

[www.hanksville.org](http://www.hanksville.org)

**Indian Country Today:** weekly national newspaper covering national Native news

[www.indiancountry.com](http://www.indiancountry.com)

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

[www.coexus.si.edu](http://www.coexus.si.edu)

**Native Tech:** information on the technology of Native Americans:

[www.nativeweb.org/nativetech/](http://www.nativeweb.org/nativetech/)

### **Smithsonian Institute**

[www.si.edu/newstart.htm/](http://www.si.edu/newstart.htm/)

**Windspeaker:** National Native newspaper of Canada

[www.ammsa.com/windspeaker/](http://www.ammsa.com/windspeaker/)

### **Videos:**

**Film Resource:**

[www.shenandoahfilms.com](http://www.shenandoahfilms.com)



## Bibliography

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

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1. (cover) Eddie Madril; 2. (page 3) Native Universe, 2004; 3. (page 6) The Native Americans, An Illustrated History, 1993; 4. (page 10) Native Universe, 2004; 5. (page 11) Native American Arts and Crafts, 1995; 6. (page 12) (top) Native Universe, 2004, (bottom) kevinlocke.com; 7. (page 13) Native Americans, 1995; 8. (page 14) (top left) Native Universe, 2004, (center) pbs.org, (bottom) Native Universe, 2004; 9. (page 15) (top) Native Americans, An Illustrated History, 1993, (center) pbs.org, (bottom) Native Universe, 2004; 10. (page 16) (top) Native Universe, 2004, (center) <http://carbon.cudenver.edu/stc-link/hohokam/water.htm>, (bottom) Native Universe, 2004; 11. (page 17) (right) Native Universe, 2004, (center) [crystalinks.com/petroglyphs.html](http://crystalinks.com/petroglyphs.html), (bottom) The Native Americans, An Illustrated History, 1993; 12. (page 18) (top) Native Americans, An Illustrated History, 1993, (center) npr.org; 13. (page 19) Native Americans, 1995; 14. (page 20) The Native Americans, An Illustrated History, 1993; 15. (page 21) The Native Americans, 1995; 16. (page 22) Microsoft Office ClipArt; 17. (page 23) Eddie Madril; 18. (page 24) kevinlocke.com; 19. (page 25) The Native Americans, An Illustrated History, 1993; 20. (pages 27 – 32) An Educational Read & Color Book of California Indians, 1986.



# 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.