

THE **BOOTH** MUSEUM

# American Indians:

## Cultures and Contributions



Booth Western Art Museum Education Department  
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Smithsonian  
Affiliate

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This guide was created by the Education Department at the Booth Western Art Museum.  
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# What is the Correct Terminology: American Indian or Native American?

Both of these terms are acceptable, but whenever possible it is best to use the specific tribal name when discussing or describing Native people. In the United States, Native American has been widely used but is falling out of favor with some groups, and the terms American Indian or indigenous American are preferred by many Native people. According to a 1995 Department of Labor poll, 50% of Native respondents preferred the term American Indian while 37% preferred the term Native American. Other acceptable terms used to describe Native people in North America include First Nations (primarily used in Canada), Indigenous American, and Alaska/Alaskan Native.

As a Smithsonian affiliate, Booth Western Art Museum follows the guidelines of the Smithsonian and uses the term American Indian when referring collectively to the Native peoples of North America. For more information from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, please refer to their Native Knowledge 360° Did You Know? Webpage: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/didyouknow#topq2>



© Lakota Sioux, *Beaded horse-mask with American flags*, c. 1890. Erik & Renee Lee collection.

# Lesson Plan Summary: Use Your Voice!

**Summary:** Students will learn about contemporary American Indian water rights activist Autumn Peltier and examine the effects of water pollution and overexploitation on human communities and the environment. Using universal symbols, students will design a poster to “use their voice” and communicate their own ideas about ways to conserve and protect the water supply.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand the effect that water pollution has on humans, animals, and plants.
- Develop solutions to water pollution and construct reasons to support them.
- Recognize how American Indians, like Autumn Peltier, are contributing to and making a difference in our world.
- Create artwork that incorporates universal themes and symbolic images that relate to water conservation.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** S3L2a,b, SS3H1c, ELAGSE3W1a,b, VA3.CR.1a.

**National Standards:** NGSS 3-LS4-3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A,B, VA:Cr3.1.3a, VA:Re.7.2.3a, NSS-USH.K-4.4B, NSS-USH.3-4.4E.

## **Materials Provided:**

Lesson Plan with teacher background information, student handouts, activities and answer keys.

## **Additional Materials Needed:**

- (Optional) Computer, smart TV, etc. that is capable of playing YouTube videos
- Pencils
- Paper for poster making
- Art supplies to add color to posters (i.e. crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.)

## **Procedure:**

1. Using information from the teacher background guide, briefly explain to students the importance of water rights issues to American Indians and the effects of water pollution on human communities and the environment.
2. Pass out packets and read with students about Autumn Peltier.
3. Optional— show (all or part) of Autumn Peltier’s speech before the United Nations in 2018.
4. Complete the rest of the activities in the packet (conservation writing response, word search, universal symbols matching game, and “Use Your Voice” poster making).

## **Additional Resources:**

Global News (2018). World Water Day: Indigenous Canadian teen addresses UN General Assembly. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6LcaTWTx8g>

Nath, Ishani. (2020). This 15-Year-Old Is Teaching Us All to be More Responsible About Water. *Flare: How I Made It*. Retrieved from <https://www.flare.com/how-i-made-it/autumn-peltier/>

Learning Junction (2018) Water Pollution | Water Contamination | Video for Kids. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Om42Lppkd9w&t=26s>

McCarthy, J. & Keetin, O. (2020, May 22). The Navajo Nation’s Lack of Clean Water Has Fueled a COVID-19 Crisis. *Global Citizen*. Retrieved from <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/navajo-nation-covid-19-outbreak/>

# American Indian Water Rights Background Information

In 2010 the United Nations declared access to clean water and sanitation basic human rights. However, approximately 780 million people around the world still lack access to safe water. North American Indians in Canada (where Native American tribes/nations are referred to as First Nations) and here in the United States are among those who are often unable to access clean water.

American Indians heavily rely on water sources not just for drinking and washing, but for agricultural irrigation, subsistence fishing, care of their livestock, firefighting, etc. Water rights, therefore, are an important issue in many American Indian communities. Because American Indian tribes are recognized as sovereign, self-governing entities by the United States and Canadian governments, the process for systematically classifying water rights in indigenous communities involves litigation and negotiation between tribal, state, and federal governments, water districts, businesses, utility companies, and other local community members. Not surprisingly, water rights disputes are rarely resolved quickly and are ongoing sources of frustration for the tribes and create friction between American Indian communities and state/federal governments.

As of 2019 in Canada, the home of “water warrior” Autumn Peltier, approximately 73% of First Nations’ water systems were at high or medium risk of contamination and at any given time there can be 150 or more boil water advisories in First Nations communities (some of which have been in effect for over 20 years). In the United States, 58 out of every 1,000 American Indian households lack plumbing and access to fresh water, compared to just 3 out of every 1,000 homes for non-Native households. The Navajo Nation, in particular, has struggled with water access issues. Approximately 30% of Navajo people do not have access to clean, reliable drinking water. This lack of access to clean water has played a significant role in the devastating outbreak of COVID-19 in Navajo communities. Without the ability to wash their hands and clothes regularly, the Navajo Nation was more susceptible to the spread of COVID-19.

American Indian water rights activists, like Autumn, have been increasingly pressuring governments to honor treaties and form fair water rights agreements, often as part of a wider campaign of environmental protection. In recent years much media attention has been garnered by American Indians protesting the Keystone Pipeline, an oil pipeline that would pass through or near tribal lands and water sources. American Indians fear that potential spills and leaks from the pipeline will further endanger their already precarious water supply.



© Pax Ahmisa Gethen, 2016, Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA 4.0



# Water Pollution/Conservation Background Information

Unsafe drinking water contaminated by pollution and overexploitation of water resources are issues that all communities must contend with. However, it is more difficult for some communities than others to invest the resources necessary to protect and conserve their water supply .

## What can cause water pollution?

Water pollution can come from residential and industrial sources and is categorized as either **point source** or **non-point source** pollution. Point source pollution is pollution that comes from a single place, like an industrial facility piping wastewater into a local stream. Non-point source pollution is pollution that comes from many places and ends up in the same water system. A major source of non-point source pollution is rainwater runoff, which transports pollutants from urban and agricultural areas to water sources.

**Overexploitation** of water typically occurs when a community uses too much of their water source too fast, leaving them without enough water to meet the needs of the community.

## What are the effects of water pollution?

Water pollution and overexploitation not only affects humans, but animals, plants, and entire ecosystems as well. Chemical pollution can kill animals directly, result in genetic changes that negatively affect their offspring, or cause their eggs to become unviable. Pollution from sewage and fertilizers causes **eutrophication** of water sources – when excess nutrients and minerals cause an algae bloom that deoxygenates the water and kills the animal inhabitants. Pesticides can kill insects that live or develop in water (dragonflies, for example, live the first stage of their lives as larvae in water). Insects are a vital link in the food chain, so the animals that rely on them experience die offs when insect populations decline. Overexploitation of water sources also results in habitat loss for animals that make their homes in and around the water, or that rely on them as drinking sources. Amphibians, in particular, are at great risk of harm from water pollution and overexploitation, as they have permeable skin that can absorb pollutants and they spend much of their lives in water. Entire ecosystems can collapse when water sources are depleted.

## What can we do to prevent water pollution and conserve water?

There are many steps that individuals and communities can take to ensure the safety of their water supply. At home, individuals can conserve water and help protect their water supply with simple actions like:

- Reducing plastic consumption by reusing or recycling plastic when you can.
- Taking shorter showers and turning off the water while brushing teeth.
- Not flushing medicine, tissues, wrappers, or dust cloths down your toilet.
- Not pouring cooking fat, oil or grease down the sink.
- Reducing or eliminating the use of lawn chemicals and pesticides and always disposing of contaminants like motor oil properly.

Community governments can take steps to protect and conserve their water supply by updating wastewater treatment methods, monitoring the use of agricultural fertilizers, and regulating residential water use especially in times of drought.

# Autumn Peltier Speaks Out!



“Keep going, don’t look back, and if you have an idea, just do it; no one is going to wait for you or tell you what to do, use your voice and speak up for our planet.”

~ Autumn Peltier

UN Photo by Manuel Elias

Autumn Peltier is a member of the Wiikwemkoong First Nation of Canada. Often called the “Water Warrior,” Autumn uses her voice to **advocate** (support and argue for) water rights and water conservation. When she was 8 years old she learned that many people around the world, including some in her own community, did not have access to clean water that was safe to drink or wash with. One reason water can become unsafe is because of pollution. **Pollution** is when harmful materials are introduced into an environment (like rivers, lakes, and oceans) that can contaminate it and make it unfit for use. Autumn began to speak out about this problem, and people listened.

When she was 12 years old, Autumn met the Prime Minister of Canada at a ceremony and bravely voiced her concerns. The next year, she stood in front of the whole world to address the United Nations about the need to protect the water supply from pollution and ensure that everyone has clean, safe water. When she was 15, Autumn became the Chief Water Commissioner of the Anishinabek Nation. Autumn proves that young people, just like you, can use their voices to make a difference!



Shonto Begay (Dineh’/Navajo), *In the Shadows of Ancestors*, 2018. “Water served as a perfect vehicle to express blessings for the sustenance of life. Ancient dwellings reflect in the water.”

There are lots of reasons why people struggle to get safe water, but many times it is because the water in their communities has become too polluted or their water source was **overexploited** (when people use too much of a resource too fast).

Animals and plants are affected by pollution and overexploitation of water too. Pollution can kill animals and plants, and overuse of water results in habitat loss for animals that make their homes in and around water sources.

On the lines below, list some things that people can do to help protect and **conserve** (keep safe) water supplies for other people, animals, and plants. Why do you think these ideas would work?

[illegible]

When you have finished sharing your ideas, look for what pollutes water in the word search below!

## What Pollutes Water?

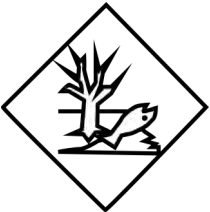
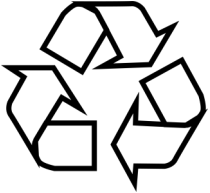
A	C	I	D	G	M	O	V	N	Z
U	T	O	D	C	E	Y	I	V	R
G	U	T	F	H	D	W	S	M	S
R	V	R	E	E	I	W	E	E	A
Q	L	A	F	M	C	P	W	T	Z
O	W	S	O	I	I	T	A	A	E
I	F	H	O	C	N	O	G	L	I
L	L	C	D	A	E	K	E	S	W
S	X	G	R	L	R	R	S	U	D
R	P	L	A	S	T	I	C	S	I

ACID	CHEMICALS	FOOD
MEDICINE	METALS	OIL
PLASTICS	SEWAGE	TRASH



# Universal Symbols

**Symbols** are images or objects that represent ideas. Symbols can communicate meaning to many people around the world without using words. Can you match these universal symbols with the correct name and definition?



**Radioactive:** A symbol that informs people about having or producing a powerful and dangerous form of energy (called radiation).

**Poison:** A symbol that informs people about chemical substances that cause harm to people and animals. Examples of poisons are gases, cleaning products, and animal bites.

**Caution/Warning:** A symbol that informs people about a possible danger or trouble.

**Biohazard:** A symbol that informs people about biological or chemical materials, situations or conditions that are dangerous to people and environments. Examples of biohazards are viruses, bodily fluids, and sharp objects.

**No Littering:** A symbol that informs people to not throw away waste or trash on the ground in public places.

**Recycle:** A symbol that informs people about making materials that have been used before into something new. This symbol is usually displayed on trashcans for people to place materials like plastic, metal and paper inside.

**Environmental Hazard:** A symbol that informs people about materials and situations that have the potential to harm people, animals and the environment. These hazards are classified into categories of chemical, physical, biological and cultural hazards.

## Use Your Voice Art Activity

It's time to use your voice! On a separate piece of paper, draw your own poster advocating for water conservation. Using the reasons you identified, communicate some of the ways people can conserve and protect water. Think about using symbols present in the Universal Symbols matching sheet.

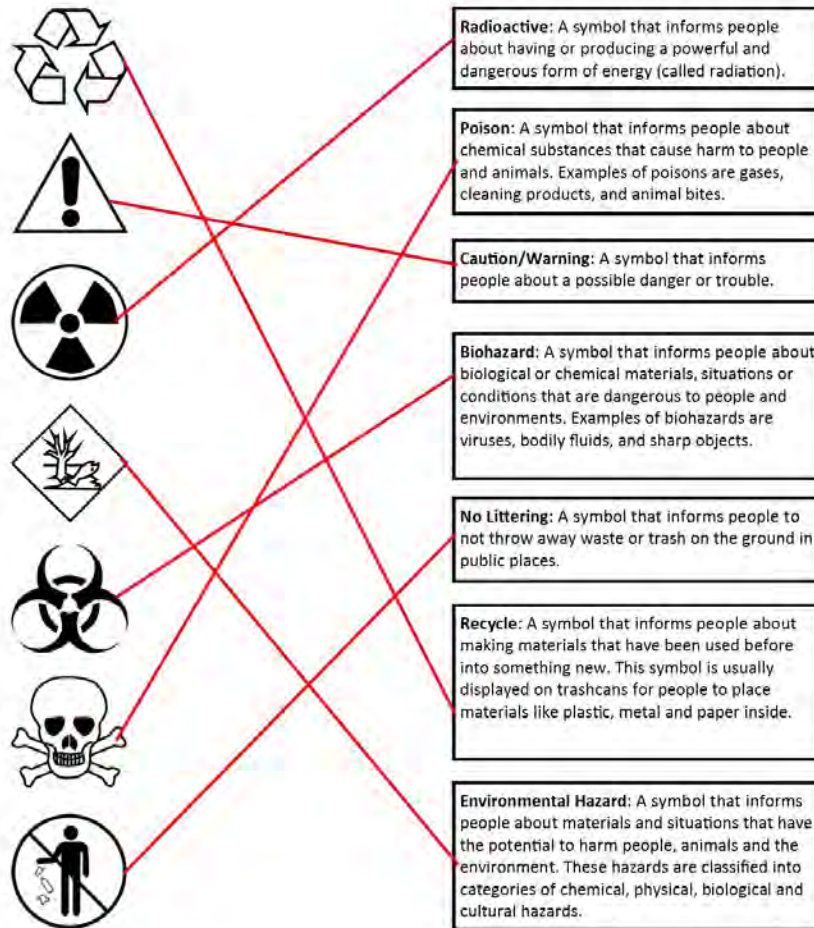
What are images that come to mind when you think about water conservation? You could use water droplets, clouds, rivers, oceans, lakes, waves, or faucets to symbolize water. Consider using images of trash, waste, single use plastics, smog or smoke stacks to symbolize pollution. Encourage conservation of the environment by using images of nature like plants, animals and landscapes.

There are many ways that you can communicate ideas (images, words, songs, speeches, etc.). Which way do you think will work best for the message you are trying to tell?

Below are a couple of examples of posters to give you some ideas of how you can use your voice!

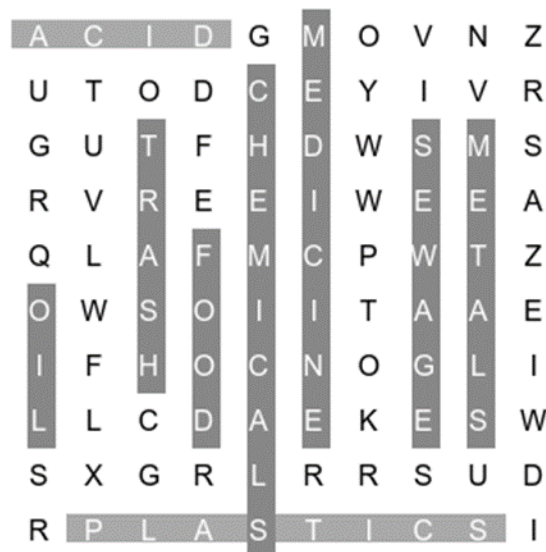


# Key for “What Pollutes Water?” Word Search and “Universal Symbols” Matching



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

## What Pollutes Water?



ACID	CHEMICALS	FOOD
MEDICINE	METALS	OIL
PLASTICS	SEWAGE	TRASH



# Lesson Plan Summary: Let's Play Picaria!

**Summary:** Students will create a Picaria game board by dividing squares into fractions and then play the game with a classmate.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand a fraction as the quantity formed when a whole is partitioned into equal parts.
- Recognize that shapes can be partitioned into parts with equal areas.
- Create a Picaria game board incorporating art skills as a way to improve interdisciplinary understanding.
- Combine multiple elements of art and principles of design when creating Picaria game boards (i.e. geometric shapes, color, line, and symmetrical balance).

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** MGSE3.NF.1, MGSE3.G.2, VA3.CR.2b, VA3.CN.2a.

**National Standards:** CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.NF.A.1, CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.G.A.2.

**Materials Provided:**

Picaria Student Handout with step-by-step instructions

**Additional Materials Needed:**

- Paper to draw Picaria board on (Option to use construction paper to create a bright and colorful game board)
- Pencils
- Rulers (optional)
- Art supplies to add color to Picaria game boards (i.e. crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.)
- Items to use for game pieces:
  - For one Picaria game board, you will need three game pieces of one color and three game pieces of another color (for a total of six game pieces, three pieces per player).
  - Suggested items for game pieces include construction paper pieces that students create themselves, or two kinds of dry beans, colored beads, coins, or candies.

**Procedure:**

1. **Explain:** People all over the world from many different cultures enjoy playing board games, and have been playing them for a long time. In fact, the oldest known board game is over 5,000 years old! Many game boards have designs that are made of **geometric** shapes like squares, circles, and triangles.
2. **Ask:** Can you think of any game boards that use geometric shapes? (Checkers, Chess, Monopoly, Twister, Sorry, etc.)
3. **Explain:** Picaria is a game that is played by Pueblo American Indian cultures of the southwestern United States. Today we're going to make our own Picaria boards and play!
4. Pass out Picaria instructions (or project onto a screen) and follow instructions to create the board and play the game.

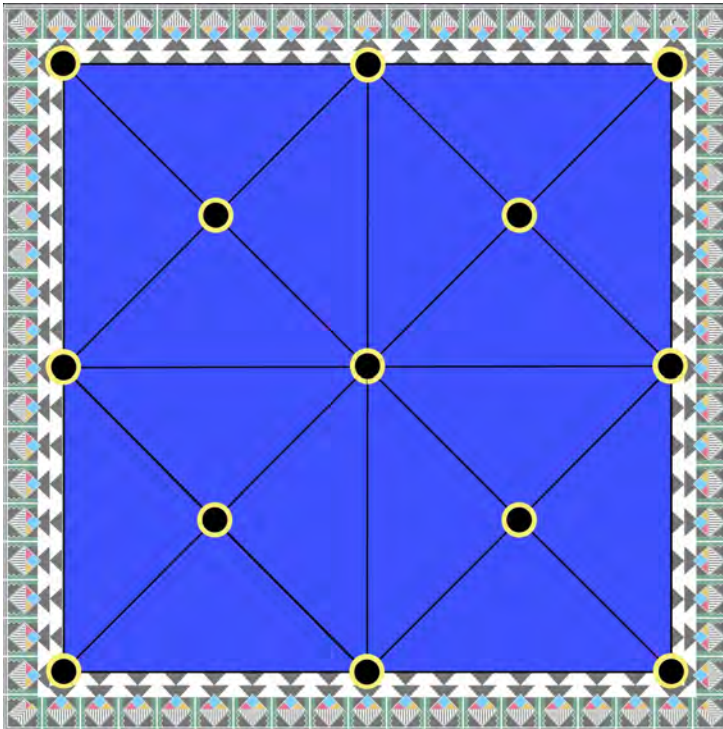
**Additional Resources:**

What Do We Do All Day? (2020 January 30). How to Play Picaria: abstract strategy game. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm-1\\_aNMCs8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm-1_aNMCs8)

Bernard, L. & Gamble, K. (2019 April 1). Picaria. In *Indigenous Logic Math Games* (28-29). Board of Education Burnaby School District 41 Indigenous Education Program, Canada. Retrieved from <https://burnabyschools.ca/indigenouseducation/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/01/logic-games3.pdf>

Zaslavsky, C. (1998). *Math Games & Activities from Around the World*. Picaria, p. 10-11. Chicago Review Press; 1st edition. Retrieved from [https://www.amazon.com/Math-Games-Activities-Around-World/dp/1556522878/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1232823203&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Math-Games-Activities-Around-World/dp/1556522878/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1232823203&sr=8-1)

# Let's Play Picaria!



Picaria is a traditional game played by Pueblo American Indian cultures of the Southwest. Picaria is played on a board made up of squares and triangles. Before you can play, you will need to make your board!

**Follow the instructions on the next page to create your own Picaria board. Draw the lines in pencil first, then trace with a marker.**

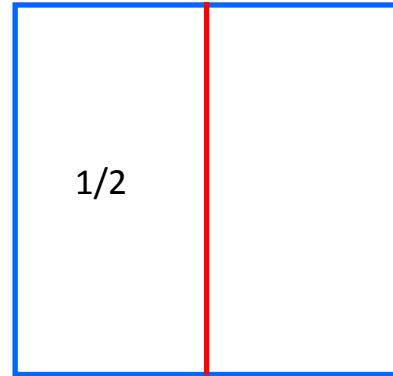
## How To Play

- Picaria is played with **2 players**. Each player gets **3 playing pieces** of one color, called counters. You can make your own counters out of dry beans, beads, candies, or even pieces of paper.
- Players take turns **placing their counters**, one at a time, onto the dots, except the dot in the center. When each player has placed their 3 counters, they take turns moving **1 counter at a time** along any line to the next empty dot - **jumping** over another counter **is not allowed**.
- The goal is to get all 3 of your counters in a **straight line**, similar to Tic-Tac-Toe. Try to get 3 your counters in a row, but also try to block the other player from doing so. During the moving phase you can place a counter on the dot in the center.
- The first player to get **3 counters in a row** wins!

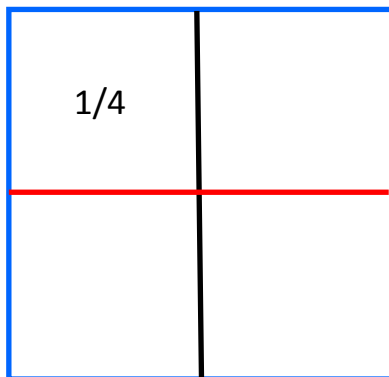
1) On a piece of construction paper, draw one big square that takes up almost the whole page:



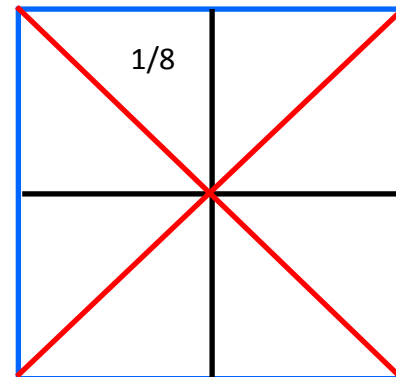
2) Draw a straight line down the middle of the big square. Now you have two sections, each section is **one half** ( $1/2$ ) of the Picaria board.



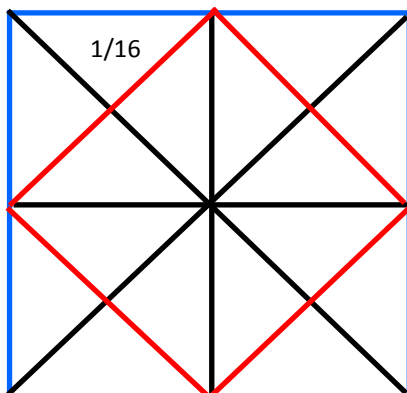
3) Draw a line going across the page, so it looks like a big plus sign. Now you have four sections, each section is **one fourth** ( $1/4$ ) of the Picaria board.



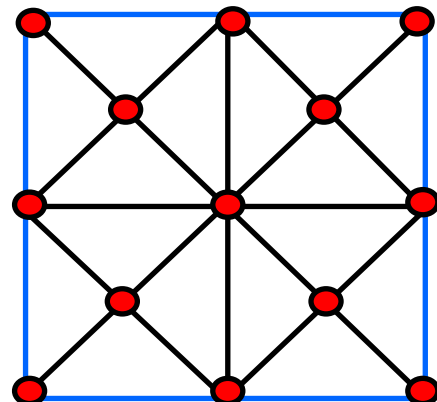
4) Create a big "X" by drawing two diagonal lines that start in a corner of your board, going through the center of the board, and across to the opposite corner. Now you have eight sections, each section is **one eighth** ( $1/8$ ) of the Picaria board.



5) Draw a big diamond shape. This will create four small X's inside each of the four small squares. Now you have 16 sections, each section is **one sixteenth** ( $1/16$ ) of the Picaria board.



6) Finally, draw big dots on each corner of the four small squares, and at the center of each "X". Now you are ready to play!





# Lesson Plan Summary: Feel the Beat

**Summary:** Students will make their own rattles and explore American Indian music by singing, clapping, and rattling along with Lakota children's songs.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand that American Indian cultures have their own styles of music and that American Indians are still making music today.
- Describe how sounds and music are used in our everyday lives.
- Recognize beats, rhythms, and patterns in songs.
- Create their own musical instrument by combining materials in creative ways to turn their rattles into works of art.
- Perform Lakota songs using voice and instruments with others as a way to explore music of varied cultures and time periods in history .

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** SS2H1c, SS3E1a, ESGM3.PR.1, ESGM3.PR.2, ESGM3.CN.2, VA3.CN.2a.

**National Standards:** MU:Pr6.1.3b, MU:Re7.1.3a, NSS-USH.3-4.3A, NSS-USH.3-4.6A.

## **Materials Provided:**

Activity procedures with background information, discussion questions, music from the Lakota Language Consortium, and step-by-step instructions on how to create rattles.

*Itsy Bitsy Spider* lyric sheet

## **Additional Materials Needed:**

- Computer, smart TV, etc. that is capable of playing YouTube videos
- Materials for rattles (per student):
  - 2 small (6-inch diameter) paper plates
  - 1 craft stick
  - 5-10 dry beans
  - Art supplies to add color to the rattles (i.e. crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.)
  - Stapler and staples
  - Masking tape

## **Additional Resources:**

Lakota Language Consortium. Retrieved from <https://lakhota.org/>

Smithsonian Institution. American Indian Music. Retrieved from <https://music.si.edu/spotlight/native-american-music>

Native American Music Awards Winners. Retrieved from <https://www.nativeamericanmusicawards.com/winners-music>

PowWows.com YouTube Channel. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/c/Powwows/featured>

Strand, K. Singing in the Harvest: Music from the Zuni. Smithsonian Folk Ways Recordings. Retrieved from <https://folkways.si.edu/singing-in-the-harvest-music-from-the-zuni/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>

Library of Congress. Omaha Indian Music Collection. Retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/collections/omaha-indian-music/about-this-collection/>

# Feel the Beat Lesson Plan Procedures

- **Explain** – For thousands of years, people all over the world have made music. The type of music that people make is influenced by their **culture** (the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time), their experiences, and their resources. American Indian music styles can be **traditional** (having been around for a very long time), **contemporary** (from recent times), or a mixture of both. It is important to remember that there is not just one style of American Indian music. Different tribes, nations, cultures, and individuals have their own unique sounds.
- **Ask** – Why do you think people make music, and listen to music? Can you think of some ways that people use music in their daily lives?
- **Explain** – The Lakota are an American Indian tribe that is part of the Great Sioux Nation. We are going to listen to some songs in the Lakota language and make music along with them.
- Pass out *Iktómi Čistila* (Itsy Bitsy Spider) lyric sheets and play the first 25 seconds of *Iktómi Čistila* (Itsy Bitsy Spider) from the Lakota Language Consortium's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiGXmNbUxwE&list=PLWebueRr1D00pFt-FHxjitGWB88xHFXas&index=4>.
- Have students read the lyrics aloud along with you, and then try to sing along with the song.



Allan Houser, *Mescalero Drummer*, 1984. Bronze. 24 x 17 x 13.5". © Chiinde LLC.

# Feel the Beat Lesson Plan Procedures

- **Explain** – Many cultures around the world use rattles or shakers to make music. We are going to make our own rattles and play along with another Lakota song.
- Show students images of rattles in the handout provided on page 18. **Ask:** Why do you think different tribes made rattles out of different materials? Each tribe used their **natural resources**, materials from the environment around them, to create these instruments.

- **To make the rattles:**

- Each student gets 2 paper plates, 1 craft stick, and 5-10 dry beans.
  - Instruct them to color/decorate the **back side** of each paper plate.
  - Next, they will use the masking tape to affix the craft stick to the bottom of the **inside** (non-decorated side) of one of the paper plates.
  - Have students put the 2 paper plates together so that the decorated sides are facing out, and the stick is in the middle.
  - Staple the plates together, starting at the bottom on either side of the stick. Only staple about halfway around, so students can add the beans.
  - Have students place their beans inside their rattles.
  - Finish stapling together.
- When students are done making their rattles, play *Ithúŋkala Olówaŋ* from the Lakota Language

Consortium's YouTube page: [https://](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wePsMpi9t58&list=PLWebueRr1D00pFt-FHxjitGWB88xHFXas&index=21)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wePsMpi9t58&list=PLWebueRr1D00pFt-FHxjitGWB88xHFXas&index=21](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wePsMpi9t58&list=PLWebueRr1D00pFt-FHxjitGWB88xHFXas&index=21).

- Have students practice by clapping along to find the beat. Then have them rattle along with the song.
- Finally, students will put their singing and rattling skills together by singing Itsy Bitsy Spider while accompanying with their rattles. You may wish to have students take turns in groups performing for the class so that they can practice their audience etiquette skills.





# American Indian Rattles



Media/Materials: Animal bladder, deerhide/deerskin, feather/feathers, glass bead/beads

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Hunkpapa Lakota [Standing Rock] Rattle. Standing Rock Reservation; Sioux County, Corson County; North Dakota, South Dakota. USA. Date Created: 1964-1965. Retrieved from [https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI\\_274513?q=lakota+rattle&fq=data\\_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online\\_media\\_type%3A%22Images%22&record=7&hlterm=lakota%2Brattle&inline=true](https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI_274513?q=lakota+rattle&fq=data_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online_media_type%3A%22Images%22&record=7&hlterm=lakota%2Brattle&inline=true)



Media/Materials: Gourd, wood, commercial suede

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo) Rattle. Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo), San Juan Reservation; Rio Arriba County; New Mexico; USA. Date Created: 1978. Retrieved from [https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI\\_272891?q=american+indian+rattle&fq=data\\_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online\\_media\\_type%3A%22Images%22&record=712&hlterm=american%2Bindian%2Brattle&inline=true](https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI_272891?q=american+indian+rattle&fq=data_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online_media_type%3A%22Images%22&record=712&hlterm=american%2Bindian%2Brattle&inline=true)



Media/Materials: Gourd, wood, paint, twine/string

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Eastern Band of Cherokee Rattle. North Carolina; USA. Date Created: circa 1930. Retrieved from [https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI\\_202575?q=american+indian+rattle&fq=data\\_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online\\_media\\_type%3A%22Images%22&record=444&hlterm=american%2Bindian%2Brattle&inline=true](https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI_202575?q=american+indian+rattle&fq=data_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online_media_type%3A%22Images%22&record=444&hlterm=american%2Bindian%2Brattle&inline=true)

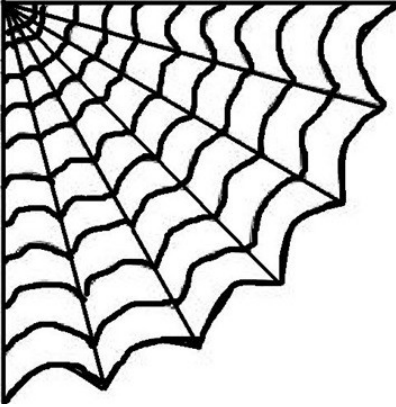


Media/Materials: Gourd, cottonwood, feather/feathers, twine/string, paint

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Pueblo Rattle. Arizona or New Mexico; USA. Date Created: 1963. Retrieved from [https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI\\_272895?q=american+indian+rattle&fq=data\\_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online\\_media\\_type%3A%22Images%22&record=716&hlterm=american%2Bindian%2Brattle&inline=true](https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI_272895?q=american+indian+rattle&fq=data_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+the+American+Indian%22&fq=online_media_type%3A%22Images%22&record=716&hlterm=american%2Bindian%2Brattle&inline=true)

# Iktómi Čistila

## (Itsy Bitsy Spider)



Did you know that there used to be hundreds of American Indian languages spoken in what is now the United States? Of those, only about 150 are still spoken today and most are in danger of becoming extinct - Lakota is one of these threatened languages. Preserving remaining **indigenous** languages is very important because language helps people connect with their history and cultural identity. This version of Itsy Bitsy Spider can help people learn to speak Lakota.

Let's give it a try!

**Ik - tó - mi    čis - či - la    wa - náǎ - ča    waŋ a-li.**

*Eek - toe - me    chis - chee - la    wah - nah - cha    wah ah - lee*

**Yuŋ - kǎŋ    ma - ģá - žu    na ik - tó    hiŋh - pá - yé.**

*Yoon - kah    mah - gah - zhoo    nah eek - toe    hick - pah - yay*

**Kas - ki - ya - hiŋ    na    ak - hé    maš - té.    Ak - hé**

*Kahs - kee - yah - hee    nah    ahk - hay    mosh - tay.    Ahk - hay*

**Ik - tó - mi    čis - či - la    wa - náǎ - ča    waŋ a-li.**

*Eek - toe - me    chis - chee - la    wah - nah - cha    wah ah - lee*

Lyrics provided by the Lakota Language Consortium

## Extension Activity: “I Hear, I Feel, I Wonder”

Share with students the American Indian instruments on the handout provided and instruct them to listen for these instruments in the songs they are about to listen to. Then, play (all or part) of the following songs by American Indian artists.

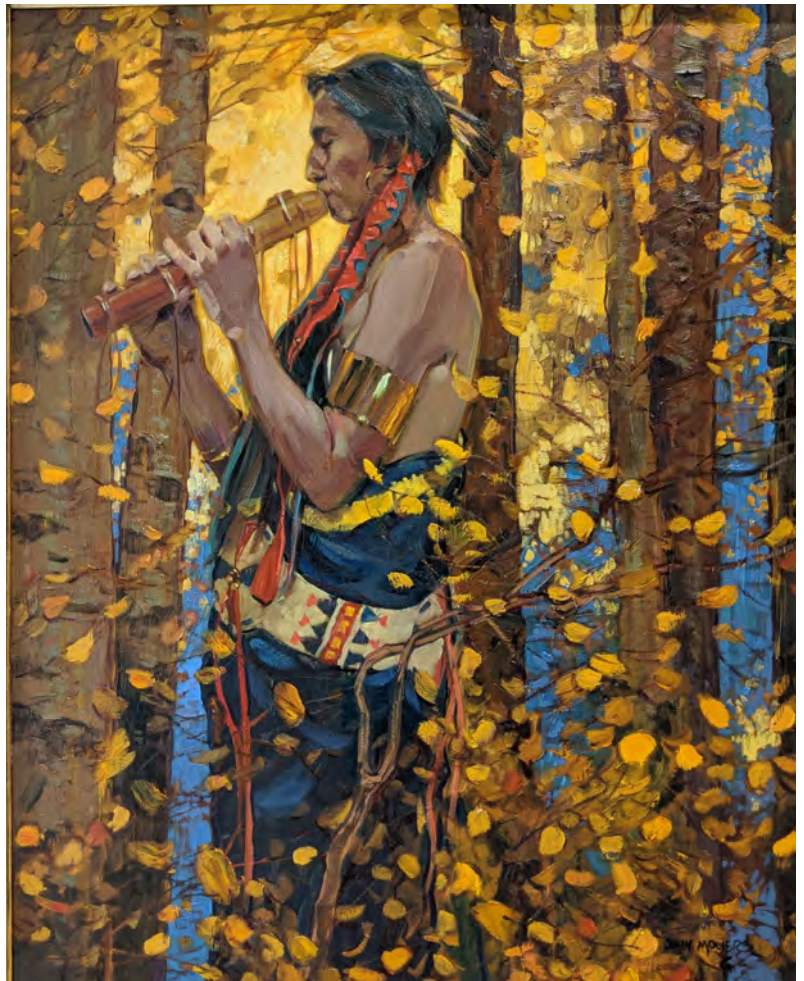
1. Ryan Little Eagle, *An Eagle’s Heart Song*, from the Ryan Little Eagle Music YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cihITGxZNRM>
2. Northern Cree Singers, *Feel The Rhythm*, from the Northern Cree Singers YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYq8Gi2X210>
3. Fawn Wood, *Grandmother’s Song*, from the Fawn Wood YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwJTS4UFuJE>
4. A Tribe Called Red, *Stadium Pow Wow*, from the A Tribe Called Red YouTube page: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m\\_07N1TiqM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m_07N1TiqM)
5. DJ Shub featuring Northern Cree Singers, *Indomitable*, from the DJ Shub YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTJvpfkRRdA>

After each song, have students respond to the song with the statements:

**“I hear...”** (Do they hear instruments? Which instruments? Do they hear voices? Is there a pattern they can identify?)

**“I feel...”** (How does the music make them feel? What emotions, memories, thoughts, etc. does this song trigger?)

**“I wonder...”** (Do they have any questions about the song or about the artist? How might they go about finding the answers to their questions?)



© John Moyers, *The Suitor’s Song*, Not dated. Oil on canvas. Tia Collection.



# More Instruments!

American Indians used a wide variety of musical instruments, all created with the **natural resources** that were available to them. Though the materials and crafting techniques used to create the instruments vary from tribe to tribe, the instrument types below are commonly found among many American Indian groups.

## Flute



Media/Materials: Cedar, birchbark, leather

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Thomas J. Dorsey (Tom Two Arrows). Lenape (Delaware) flute. Date created: 1969. Retrieved from: [https://www.si.edu/object/flute:NMAI\\_277172](https://www.si.edu/object/flute:NMAI_277172)

## Drum



Media/Materials: Wood, rawhide, suede, hide thongs

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Cochiti Pueblo drum and drumstick. Date created: 1940-1960. Retrieved from: [https://www.si.edu/object/drum-and-drumstick:NMAI\\_278092](https://www.si.edu/object/drum-and-drumstick:NMAI_278092)

## Rasp/Idiophone



Media/Materials: Wood

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889. Pueblo rasp. Date created: 19th century. Retrieved from: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/501286>

## Jingles



Media/Materials: Wood, metal, leather

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889. Sioux Chegah-Skah-Hdah (Dance Wand). Date created: 19th century. Retrieved from: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/501213>

# Lesson Plan Summary: Looking Closely with artist Emmi Whitehorse

**Summary:** Students will examine how contemporary Navaho (originally spelled Navajo) artist, Emmi Whitehorse, looks closely at the world around her to explore nature and fossils in new ways.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand that American Indian artists explore their culture in different ways and continue to contribute to American life by making art today.
- Recognize how fossils tell past stories about an environment and the organisms that used to live there.
- Discover how artists use their skills and knowledge to improve understanding in scientific fields.
- Create artwork based on close observation of objects, organisms or artifacts of choice.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** SS2H1c, S3E2a, VA3.CR.2a, VA3.CN.1a,b,c, VA3.CN.2.

**National Standards:** NGSS 3-LS4-1, VA:Re.7.1.3a, VA:Re.7.2.3a, VA:Cn10.1.3a.

## **Materials Provided:**

Student Handout with background information and art activity instructions.

## **Additional Materials Needed:**

- Pencils
- For observational drawing activity, each student will need:
  - A separate piece of paper to draw on
  - An object, organism or artifact to draw (i.e. rocks, minerals, fossils, plants, flowers, trees, leaves, seed pods, feathers, shells, etc.)
  - Art supplies to add color to the drawings (i.e. crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.)

## **Procedure:**

1. Guide students through information provided in the handouts.
2. Complete the observational drawing art activity.

## **Additional Resources:**

ChiaroscuroSantaFe. (2015). Emmi Whitehorse—Navajo Artist. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaoLnJi7z8Q&t=29s>

American Museum of Natural History. (2013). Rare Fossils of Ancient Trilobites. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iXaINPd64E>

National Geographic. (2019). Fossils 101 | National Geographic. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRuSmxJo\\_iA&t=29s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRuSmxJo_iA&t=29s)

TEDx Talks. (2015). The art of science and the science of art | Ikumi Kayama | TEDxFoggyBottom. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX8sqJYj06I&t=29s>

Heyn, A. (2019). Teach Your Youngest Students to Draw from Life. Article on Media/Techniques from *The Art of Education University*. Retrieved from <https://theartofeducation.edu/2019/09/27/extra-teach-youngest-students-draw-life/>

# Looking Closely with Emmi Whitehorse



Emmi Whitehorse is a Navaho/Navajo artist who has always loved creating art. When she grew up, she did not have access to technology. Instead, she spent a lot of time outdoors in nature. Emmi said, “the land, the light and clouds changed every minute, everyday and it held my attention. I began looking at it more closely.”

Emmi creates artwork based on **observation**, or what she sees when she looks closely at the world around her. The themes, symbols and ideas in Emmi’s artwork all relate to nature. She uses **organic** shapes “that you can see in nature, lines, circles, fans created by plants or shrubs.”

When asked why she likes to create art inspired by the nature of where she lives (also known as the Dinétah, or the homeland) she said,

“It is the shapes, or textures, the dried seed pods that look alien under a magnifying glass that interests me. When I draw these items, they began a life of their own. I spotlight them as these are items of things that people forget about. They are often ignored, taken for granted. There is life teeming underneath all organic matter. The recycling of organic matter has an energy all its own. This feeds the renewal of new life.”

Emmi hopes that her artwork has a positive impact on her community. Because she was able to achieve her dream of becoming an artist, she wants to inspire young students (like you) to achieve their dreams too!



© Emmi Whitehorse, **Clouded**, 2018. Oil, mixed media, paper mounted on canvas. Collection of the Artist.



# Looking Closely with Emmi Whitehorse

Emmi is inspired by nature that she observes, like seed pods. One species of seed pod she often draws are Lotus Seed Pods (pictured to the right). For Emmi, the holes that are packed closely together remind her of “seeds or planetary clusters of stars or gases.”



© Jbbrillo, 2007, Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA 3.0

Look at her artwork below, ***Straw Flowers***. What do you see that reminds you of things you have seen in nature? How do the colors, shapes, and textures remind you of nature? Write what you see on the lines below!

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© Emmi Whitehorse, ***Straw Flowers***, 2019. Pastels, oil pastels on paper mounted on canvas. Collection of the Artist.

# Fossils and the Cambrian Explosion

See Emmi's artwork on the next page, called **Cambrian Explosion**. The **Cambrian Explosion** was an event around 500 million years ago when many **organisms** (living things) began to evolve in new and different ways. Simple organisms became complex, and began to look like organisms that are still around today. We know this because of the **fossils** that have been found from this period of history.

**Fossils** are the remains of living things (such as plants, bones, or footprints) from the past that you can see in stone. When a plant or animals dies, sometimes it is **preserved** in rock or stone, which keeps it in its original state or in good condition. This is how scientists learn about organisms that lived a long time ago but have become **extinct** (no longer existing or around). Fossils teach scientists how the environment and organisms were different in the past. The first fossils discovered from the Cambrian Explosion were **Trilobites** (pictured to the right), an extinct species of arthropod.

Examples of arthropods living today include crustaceans like crabs and lobster.



© Kennethgass, 2019, Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA 4.0

When Emmi creates artwork, she hopes to, “create small environments or worlds that people can fall into, imagine flying through, noticing lines move or wiggle here and there. One can see new things everyday, something they missed seeing before.”

Look at Emmi's piece **Cambrian Nursery**. What organisms do you think lived in this environment? What do you think they looked like? Write your answers on the lines below!

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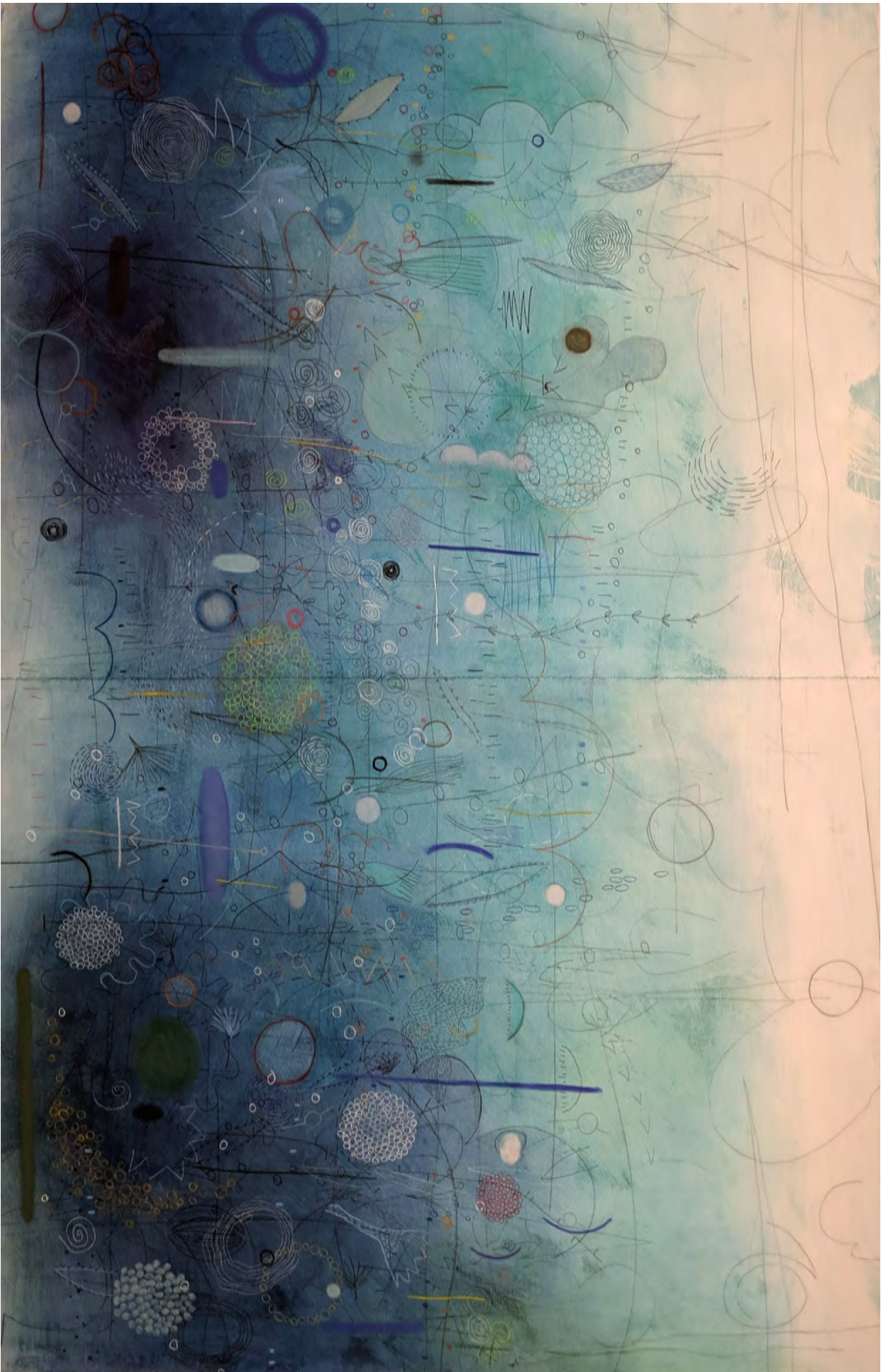
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© Emmi Whitehorse, *Cambrian Nursery*, 2018. Oil, mixed media, paper mounted on canvas. Collection of the Artist.



# Draw from Life like Emmi Whitehorse

It's your turn to create artwork that explores nature! When artists draw something that is in front of them, it is called **observational drawing**. Long before cameras were invented, the only way to document how something looked was to draw or paint it. Even today, artwork that shows nature in great detail is often used by scientists. For example:

- Artwork of the human body is used by doctors and nurses and people learning to practice medicine.
- Artwork of organisms can show undiscovered species and are used by **Botanists** (scientists who study plants) and **Zoologists** (scientists who study animals).
- **Archeologists** are scientists who study human history by looking at **artifacts**, objects made by people in the past. When archeologists find artifacts, they will draw pictures of them to show what they look like in as much detail as possible.

Emmi looks closely at the world around her when she is creating her art. She is inspired by things around her like architecture, fabric textures and prints, rough and polished minerals, fossils, plants, trees, gardens, dried leaves, and seed pods.

1. Find an object, organism or artifact near you. Look closely at it and draw what you see on a separate piece of paper with as much detail as possible. Remember to look back and forth from your object to your paper often!

2. Color in your artwork. Look closely at your object to see if there are any surprise colors hiding in your object. If you don't know what color to choose, Emmi often selects her colors randomly (without looking) as a challenge!



When you are done, write about your artwork. What did you draw? Why did you use the colors you chose? What do you like about your artwork? What would you do differently if you drew it again?

# Lesson Plan Summary: Explore Your World with artist Tony Abeyta

**Summary:** Students will examine how contemporary Navajo artist, Tony Abeyta, paints his everyday world through exploring the nature around him, his experiences, and the culture of the Navajo Nation.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Recognize how American Indians are making contributions to American life and art today.
- Understand how the regions where American Indians settled in North America influenced what natural resources were available.
- Discuss how myths are shaped by American Indian culture and how they are told through oral histories and artwork. Analyze these stories through examining main ideas and key details.
- Create artwork inspired by the themes and symbols present within the art of contemporary American Indian artist, Tony Abeyta.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** SS3H1, SSE1a, S3L1c, ELAGSE3RL1, ELAGSE3RL2, ELAGSE3RI2, VA3.CR.1a, VA3.CR.2a,b, VA3.CN.1a,b,c, VA3.CN.2,

**National Standards:** NGSS 3-LS4-3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1, VA:Cr1.1.3a, VA:Cr3.1.3a, VA:Pr6.1.3a, VA:Re.7.2.3a, NSS-USH.K-4.1B, NSS-USH.K-4.2B, NSS-USH.K-4.3A, NSS-USH.3-4.3A.

## **Materials Provided:**

Student Handout with background information, worksheets and art activity instructions.

## **Additional Materials Needed:**

- Pencils
- For portal drawing activity, each student will need:
  - Separate piece of paper to draw on
  - Art supplies to add color to the drawings (i.e. crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.)

## **Procedure:**

1. Guide students through information provided in the handouts.
2. Complete the activities provided (student written reflections on artwork, American animals map matching activity, and portal drawing art activity).

## **Additional Resources:**

Netzer, Jaime. (2016). Navajo Contemporary Artist Tony Abeyta. Cowboys & Indians: The Premier Magazine of the West. Retrieved from <https://www.cowboysindians.com/2016/03/navajo-contemporary-artist-tony-abeyta/>

Fears, Darryl. (2015). As salmon vanish in the dry Pacific Northwest, so does Native Heritage. The Washington Post. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/as-salmon-vanish-in-the-dry-pacific-northwest-so-does-native-heritage/2015/07/30/2ae9f7a6-2f14-11e5-8f36-18d1d501920d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/as-salmon-vanish-in-the-dry-pacific-northwest-so-does-native-heritage/2015/07/30/2ae9f7a6-2f14-11e5-8f36-18d1d501920d_story.html)

National Geographic. (2017). See What Canyon Life Is Like for a Navajo Pageant Winner | Short Film Showcase. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ga5Fc6cBHI&t=84s>

Smithsonian American Art Museum (2019). Buffalo ≠ Bison. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neVVde87boU&list=PL--lcfCuiHzlAGYnIPB4WVn9P6jLvOvvT&index=3&t=0s>

# Exploring the Art of Tony Abeyta



Tony Abeyta is a contemporary Navajo/ American Indian painter. He creates art that shares new ideas and shows a different way of looking at the world around him. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tony used his art to help raise money for people in the Navajo Nation who needed supplies. Tony also teaches art to young American Indian artists.

Tony explores nature and his everyday life through his artwork. Sometimes Tony paints his hobbies like fishing, hiking, biking, or spending time outdoors. He also paints things he sees in nature like water, plants, birds, animals and landscapes. Tony gained his connection with nature from growing up in a Navajo **community**, or group of people.

Tony says that many American Indian people are **environmentalists**, or people who work to protect the natural world from pollution and other threats (See p. 6 to learn about another environmentalist, Autumn Peltier). This is because many American Indian people care about nature. He explained,

“If your sensitivity is connected to the Earth, your hometown, or where you came from. You have a direct relationship with nature. Then you are an environmentalist. You may not think of yourself as an environmentalist, but you care about your hometown. You don’t want them to pollute the water. You don’t want them to destroy a forest, or tear it up and mine it for ore and uranium.”



© Tony Abeyta, *Storm Over Many Farms*, 2018. Oil on canvas. Collection of the Artist.

Tony said that when people live in small rural communities, they live closer to nature and have experiences of “what it feels like to swim in a cold river, to hike to the top of a mountain, or to look over canyons.” Can you think of a time when you were close to nature?



# American Animals with Tony Abeyta

A part of Tony Abeyta's connection to nature is his love of animals. Tony says many American Indians like animals because animals hold **symbolic** meaning, or meaning that is shown without words. He explained that a bear can be the symbol of a protector because of their strength and how they care for their cubs. A bear paw can also be a symbol for medicine because they are "always digging around in roots, plants, and herbs."

The animals that American Indians include in their creation stories, myths, and culture depends on where they live. The map on the next page shows regions where American Indians settled in North America. Some animals can only live in certain parts of North America because of what they need to survive in a **habitat**, the place or type of place where a plant or animal normally lives or grows.

For example, American Indian tribes in the **Northwest Coast** region of North America have a connection to Salmon. Salmon live in the Pacific Ocean, but will swim down streams and rivers in Washington and Oregon to lay their eggs. American Indians who lived along these rivers depended on salmon as a source of food from nature, also known as a **natural resource**. Tony Abeyta is from the Navajo Nation, which is located in the **Southwest** region of North America. In this region, Navajo people have a close relationship with animals like spiders, coyotes and eagles.

Look below at Tony Abeyta's artwork, **Yosemite**, a painting of Yosemite Valley in Yosemite National Park. Write on the lines below what kind of animals you think would live in this valley and why you think they live here.

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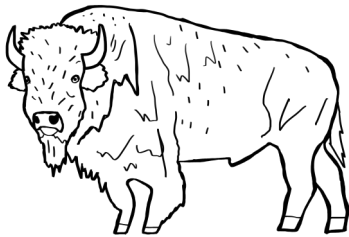
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© Tony Abeyta, **Yosemite**, Not dated. Mixed media. Tia Collection.

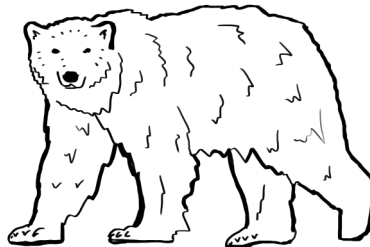
# American Animals Map Matching

Look below at the pictures of American animals and the map of the regions where American Indians settled in North America. Write what region of the country these animals might live in on the line under the animal's picture. **Hint:** some animals might live in two or more regions.



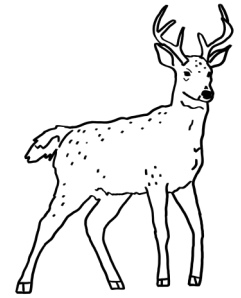
Bison

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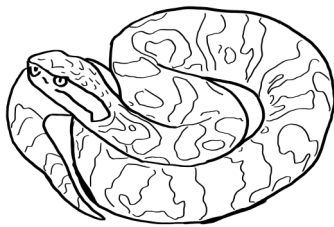
Polar Bear

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White-Tailed Deer

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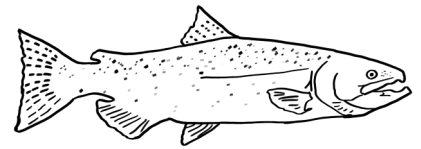
Cottonmouth/Water Moccasin

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Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep

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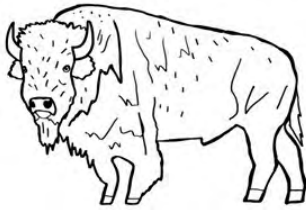


Chinook Salmon

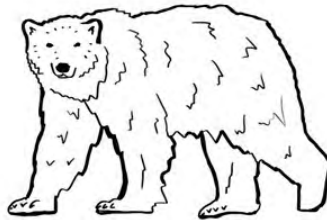
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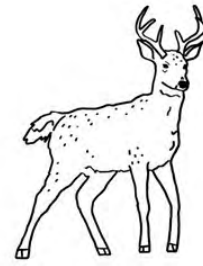
# American Animals Map Matching Key



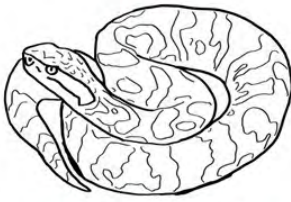
Bison  
Plains



Polar Bear  
Arctic



White-Tailed Deer  
Eastern Woodlands



Cottonmouth/Water Moccasin  
Eastern Woodlands Southeast



Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep  
Great Basin



Chinook Salmon  
Northwest Coast

## Extension Activity

Ask students to explain why these animals thrive in one habitat and not another. Polar Bears and Bison are good examples to show the environment provides the climate, resources and food they need to survive.

Discuss how American Indians who lived in these regions used their environment to obtain food, clothing, and shelter. Eastern Woodland American Indians used White-Tailed Deer as a source of food in addition to clothing (buckskin jackets and leggings). Plains American Indians used the Bison for food, clothing and shelter. Below is a link to a short video on Buffalo.

Smithsonian Channel. (2016). Native Americans Saw Buffalo as More Than Just Food.

Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXvdMfyg2mQ>



# Exploring New Worlds with Tony Abeyta

Tony Abeyta was raised in Navajo culture. **Culture** describes the beliefs and different ways that people live. A group of people, or **community**, can have different beliefs that relate to their history, homeland or rituals. As a Navajo painter, Tony Abeyta creates artwork that is inspired by the stories and myths from his culture.

A **myth** is a story that was told in an ancient culture to explain a practice, belief or natural occurrence. Many American Indian tribes tell different myths to explain how they settled in a particular place, where they came from, and why they believe certain things. These myths are often shared through **oral history**, or recorded information about the past that you learn from talking to people about their experiences. Myths can also be told through artwork!

Tony Abeyta tells the Navajo creation myth through his artwork on the next page called **Blue Corn Portal**. Look at this painting on the next page. Stare at the painting for three minutes and try to notice as many details as you can. After you have done this, answer the questions below. You can answer these questions by yourself or as a group.

**What is going on here?**

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**What do you see that makes you say that?**

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**What more can you find?**

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# Exploring New Worlds with Tony Abeyta

During an **oral history** interview, Tony Abeyta was asked what his painting *Blue Corn Portal* was about. Below is how he answered.

Read Tony Abeyta's story and look closely for important details and themes. A vocabulary list of **bolded** words in his story is below.

"It's telling the story about the Navajo creation **myth**. We believe we **emerged** from the underground, the Earth itself. In a period of time there was four worlds that they went through. Each world had different things like birds and insects and people, first man, first woman, and there's a coyote in the story...

Most of those paintings are based on the very moment where we **emerged** into this world, called the **glittering** world. I think it's called the glittering world because it's the first time you are able to see the **cosmos** and the stars. So, all of the animals are **emerging** from this place. We believe we **emerged** through hollow **reed**, and we came out through an ant pile – like an ant hill. We see the stars. The seeds and the plants that were underneath the ground. They get to bloom. The corn can grow so it has a new world that we live, that we are in now, today.

That's just that one moment, when we find this **portal**—like a doorway—and a place where they can come out. Whether that's a cave, an ant hill, or a hollow reed. The birds get to take flight and can finally fly up into the sky. Animals can go make homes on the surface. They begin another chapter. That's the story of **emergence**... I made it a night sky as opposed to the day. I wanted to show stars because I think that's when it happened." -Tony Abeyta, 2020.

**Myth:** a story that was told in an ancient culture to explain a practice, belief or natural occurrence.

**Emerge** (emerged, emerging, and emergence): to rise or appear from a hidden or unknown place. To come out into view. Tony uses his word to describe how the Navajo believe they came into the world in their creation myth.

**Glittering:** shining brightly.

**Cosmos:** the universe especially when it is understood as an ordered system.

**Reed:** a tall, thin grass that grows in wet areas.

**Portal:** a large gateway or door that will get you into another place like a building.





© Tony Abeyta, *Blue Corn Portal*, 1997. Oil on canvas. 54 x 70". Collection of the Booth Western Art Museum.



# Exploring New Worlds Art Activity

How does Tony Abeyta describe the world the Navajo people appear in?

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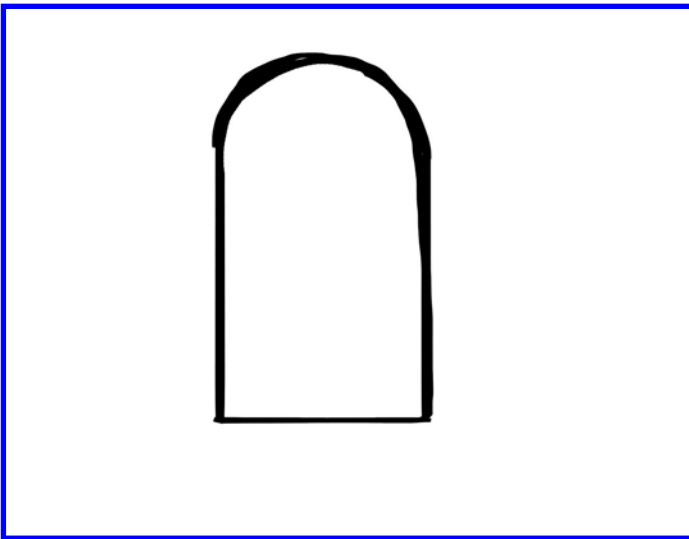
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A **portal** is a large gateway or door that will get you into another place like a building. Tony Abeyta says that the portal the Navajo took to the glittering world was like coming through a hollow reed, an ant pile, and a cave. What are other kinds of portals or gateways that you can think of?

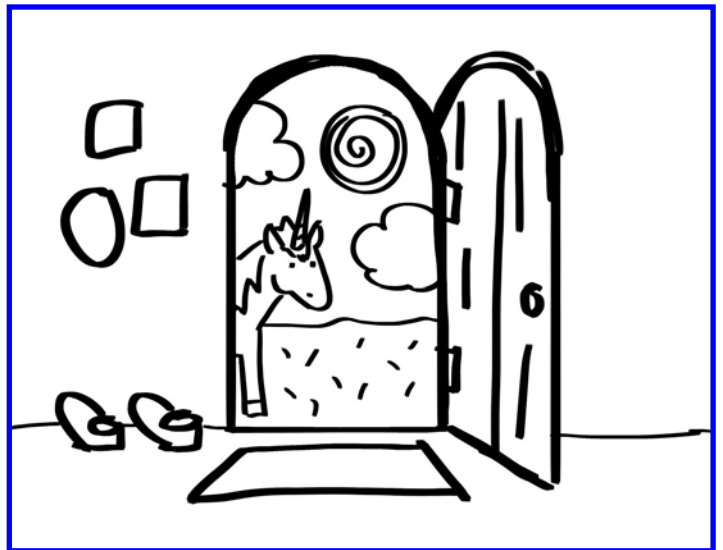
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On your own piece of paper, draw your own portal! Think of using different kinds of portals that you listed above. Your portal could be a doorway that leads inside a house, a window that looks outside, a hole in a fence, the screen of a phone, the hole of a birdhouse, or a keyhole. The possibilities are endless!



1. Begin by drawing the **shape** of your portal. In Tony Abeyta's piece *Blue Corn Portal*, the portal's shape looks like the letter "T". Think about what your portal or gateway is before you draw the shape.



2. Inside of the portal, draw a new world to explore! Use your **imagination** to detail objects with **line**. Outside of the portal, draw objects that tell you about the world we are about to leave. Add **color** to create a bright and vibrant work of art!

# Lesson Plan Summary: Rhythm in Art, Words, and Music with Shonto Begay

**Summary:** Students will understand how artists like Dineh' painter Shonto Begay use art as a way to explore language and music.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Recognize how American Indians are making contributions to American life and art today.
- Understand how artists are inspired by language skills, like syllables, as a way to create art in new ways.
- Create artwork that incorporates performing musical rhythms from songs and beats created by students.
- Create artwork that expresses feelings and emotions through the use of multiple elements of art like line and color.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** SS3H1c, ELAGSE3RF3c, ESGM3.PR.2a, ESGM3.CN.1a, VA3.CR.2, VA3.CN.1a, VA3.CN.2a.

**National Standards:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3.3.C, MU:Cn11.0.3a, VA:Re.7.1.3a, VA:Cr2.1.3a.

## **Materials Provided:**

Student Handout with background information, worksheets, answer key, additional activity suggestions, and art activity instructions.

## **Additional Materials Needed:**

- (Optional) Computer, smartphone, tablet, etc. that is capable of accessing an internet browser to search for the **Chrome Music Lab: Rhythm** webpage.
- Pencils
- For Art, Emotion and Rhythm drawing activities, each student will need:
  - Separate pieces of paper to draw on (may need 2-4)
  - Art supplies to add color to the drawings (i.e. crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.)

## **Procedure:**

1. Guide students through information provided in the handouts.
2. Complete the activities provided (multi-syllable worksheet and art, emotion and rhythm challenges).

## **Additional Resources:**

Heather Jaasko-Fisher. Lesson Plan: Moccasin Madness! Navajo and Apache Moccasin Game Songs.

Smithsonian Folk Ways Recordings. Retrieved from <https://folkways.si.edu/moccasin-madness-navajo-apache-game-songs/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>

Begay, Shonto. (2000). The Magic Of Spider Woman. Retrieved from [https://www.amazon.com/Magic-Spider-Woman-Lois-Duncan/dp/0590461567/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?dchild=1&qid=1596573659&refinements=p\\_27%3AShonto+Begay&s=books&sr=1-5](https://www.amazon.com/Magic-Spider-Woman-Lois-Duncan/dp/0590461567/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&qid=1596573659&refinements=p_27%3AShonto+Begay&s=books&sr=1-5)

Design Dojo. (2018). The Element of Line. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTnnHYDco9g&t=28s>

# Rhythm in Art, Words, and Music with Shonto Begay



Shonto Begay is a Dineh' artist and painter. **Dineh'** or **Diné** is what the Navajo/Navaho people call themselves in their own language. **Dineh'** means "people" in the Navajo/Navaho language. Shonto paints to document, or record, his life. Shonto said that "I believe with all my heart that art saves lives. It did mine." He hopes his artwork encourages young people to share their creativity .

Shonto paints in his own **style**, or his own way of doing something, or creating, his art. He describes it as, "a visual chant and prayers in **syllables**... as drumming with paintbrushes. The words in brushstrokes."

## Rhythm in Syllables

**Syllables** are any one of the parts into which a word is naturally divided when it is pronounced. For example, the word "pencil" has two syllables, the first is "pen" the second is "cil". Syllables break up words into chunks. Longer words will have **multiple syllables**. Breaking long words down into their syllables can help us read, pronounce, and understand them. This can help us understand the meaning of long words.

Let's try to break down the word **Navaho** into its syllables.

First, how many vowels are in the word **Navaho**? (Hint, the vowels are a, e, i, o, and u).

Underlining the vowels helps to see them more clearly, like this: **Navaho**

This shows us that there are three vowels.

Second, are the vowels together or separate? Meaning, are the vowels touching each other or are there consonants between them? If they are separate, then the number of vowels tells you how many syllables are in that word.

In the word **Navaho**, all of the vowels are separate. This means that this word has **three syllables**.

Because there are three separate vowels and three separate syllables, you will draw three dashed lines and write each syllable on a dashed line. Like this:

Na    va    ho

Ready to try this on your own? Move onto the next page!



# Breaking down Multi-Syllable

Below is a list of multi-syllable words. Begin by asking:

1. How many vowels are in this word? Underline the vowels to help spot them!
2. Are the vowels together or separate? If they are separate, then the number of vowels tells you how many syllables are in that word.

Once you have figured out how many syllables the word has, draw that many dashes next to the word. Write the syllables on each of the dashes. The first word is done for you as an example.

**Navaho:**     Na     va     ho

**Together:**

**Organism:**

**Environment:**

**Lakota:**

**American:**

**Electrical:**

**Cultural:**

**Artifact:**

**Computer:**

**However:**

# Multi-Syllable Key

**Navaho:**    Na       va       ho

**Together:** To       geth       er

**Organism:** Or       gan       ism

**Environment:** En       vi       ron       ment

**Lakota:**    La       ko       ta

**American:** A       mer       i       can

**Electrical:** E       lec       tri       cal

**Cultural:**    Cul       tur       al

**Artifact:**    Ar       ti       fact

**Computer:**    Com       pu       ter

**However:**    How       ev       er

## Extension Activity

This activity is an introduction to breakdowns of simple multi-syllable words. Extension activities can include examining words with vowel teams or silent “e”.

There are several active strategies students can take to further understand syllables, such as:

- Clapping, drumming or jumping to the beat of each syllable.
- Looking at a mirror or placing their hand on their chin when they pronounce a word. The amount of times their mouth opens or their jaw drops is the number of syllables in each word.

### **Additional Resources:**

Reading Rockets. Syllable Games. [https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/syllable\\_games](https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/syllable_games)

# Can You Feel the Rhythm of the Art?

Dineh' artist Shonto Begay describes his art style as visual syllables. Just like syllables break down a word into smaller chunks, Shonto's artwork is made up of many small **lines**. In the painting on the right, Shonto paints straight, curved, and swirling lines that we can see in the sky, snow, road, and on the truck.



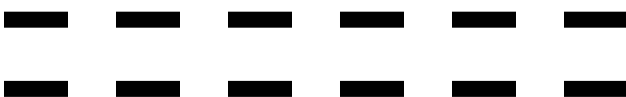
© Shonto Begay, *Our Promised Road*, 2007. Acrylic on canvas. 43 x 72".

Shonto also describes how he paints with a paintbrush as drumming. When you draw dotted or dashed lines, you have to pick up your pencil and put your pencil down on your paper. This is a lot like tapping a drumstick on a drum! Your pencil even makes a noise that sounds like a beat you might hear in a song. This regular, repeated pattern of sounds or movements is what musicians call **rhythm**. Lets try it out!

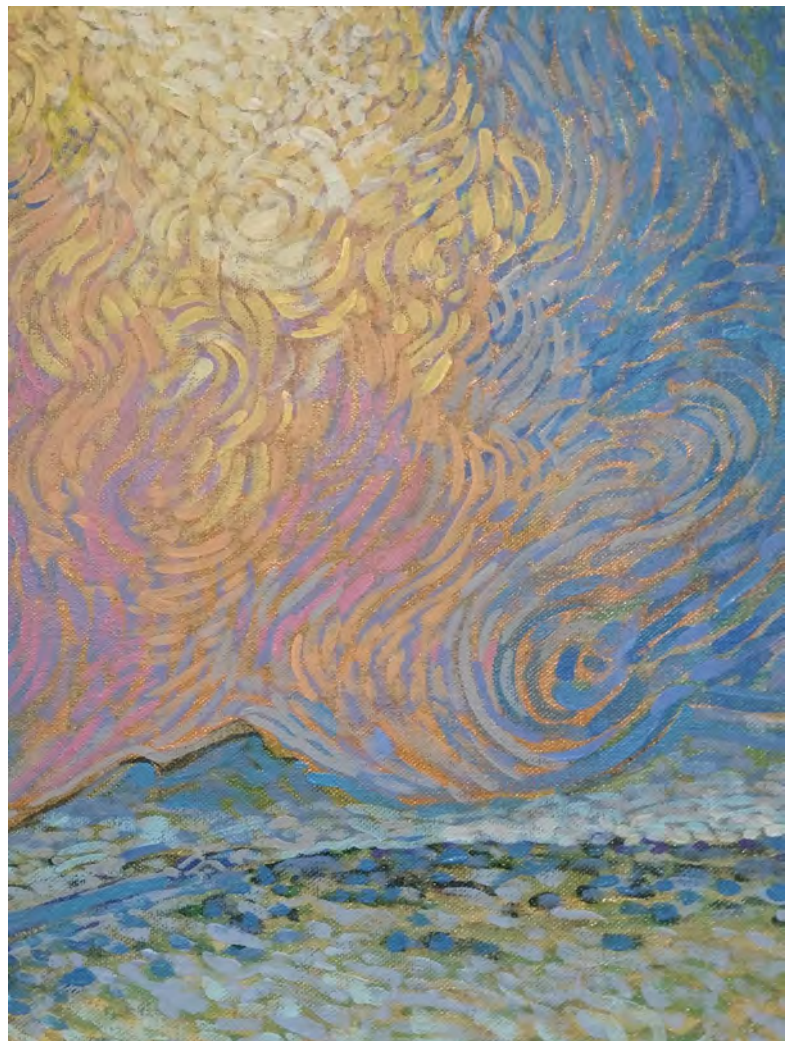
Below is a line with long dashed. Draw along these dashed lines with a pencil.



Below is a line with short dashes. Draw along these dashed lines with your pencil.



Consider the sounds your pencil made on the paper as you drew along them. How did they sound different?



© Shonto Begay, *Our Promised Road*, 2007. Acrylic on canvas. 43 x 72". Close-up image of top right corner.

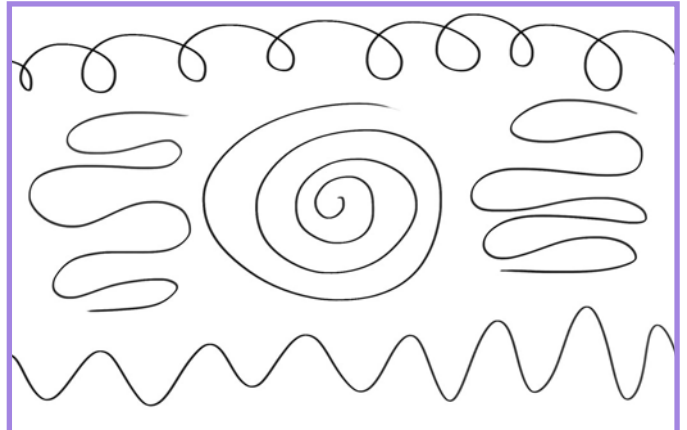


# Lines and Emotion

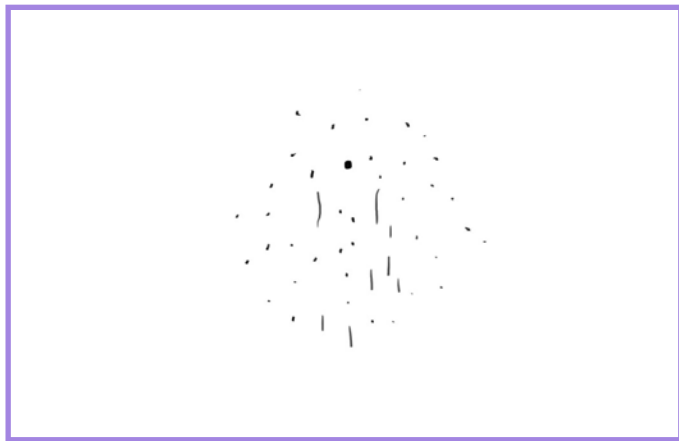
Artists will use lines as a way to communicate strong feelings, or **emotions**. Sometimes artists want to draw how they feel or make the person looking at the artwork, the **viewer**, think of an emotion they have felt before. Let's look at some examples below.



When you feel **angry** you may feel upset, mad, or want to yell! Angry lines could be thick, zig-zag, sharp, or uneven. If you draw when you are angry, you might press your pencil down hard onto your paper or draw very fast with uneven movements.



When you feel **joy** you may feel happy, excited, or want to smile and laugh! Joyful lines could be light, curved, swirly, or smooth. If you draw when you are joyful, you might move your pencil lightly across the paper and make smooth movements.



When you feel **sad**, you may feel lonely, gloomy, or want to cry. Sad lines could be short, thin, or dots. If you draw when you are sad, you might draw small lines and leave areas on your paper blank. You might move your pencil slowly on the paper.



When you feel **fear**, you may feel anxious, confused, or want to hide from danger. Fearful lines could be tangled, scribbles, or a mixture of different lines (like straight and curved). If you draw when you are afraid, you might draw lots of lines close together and change your movements often.

# Art and Emotion Challenge

Create your own artwork that communicates an **emotion**. Choose an emotion from the list below that you want your artwork to be about.

Anger	Lonely	Annoyed	Embarrassed
Joy	Gloomy	Scared	Surprised
Fear	Heartbroken	Jealous	Bored
Sad	Nervous	Surprised	Silly
Disgust	Confused	Tired	Safe
Love	Stressed	Cheerful	Disappointed
Peace	Confident	Friendly	Grumpy
Happy	Mad	Proud	Worried

On your own piece of paper, draw the **emotion** you chose only using **lines**. Look at the **Lots of Lines** sheet for a list of different kinds of lines. Think about,

- Other words that describe an emotion. This can help you choose which kinds of lines you should use in your drawing.
- When I feel an emotion, how do I move my body? This can change how you move your pencil on your piece of paper.

**Color Challenge:** After drawing with a black pencil, think about drawing with a colored pencil, marker, or crayon. Artists also use **color** as a way to communicate emotions in their artwork. When thinking about your emotion, is there a color that it reminds you of? Some examples are given below. Remember that one color can mean many different and opposite emotions. Different colors can also have the same emotions.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • <b>Blue:</b> sad, calm, peace.                 | • <b>Orange:</b> excited, surprised, cheerful. |
| • <b>Red:</b> love, anger, mad, terrified.       | • <b>Green:</b> calm, jealous, disgust.        |
| • <b>Yellow:</b> happy, joy, cheerful, friendly. | • <b>Purple:</b> proud, confident, fear.       |

# Art and Rhythm Challenge

On your own piece of paper, experiment with drawing different kinds of **dashed** lines that sound like the beats you would hear in a song. Try drawing long, short, curved, straight and swirling lines.

While listening to a song, trying drawing along to the rhythm that you hear. If you want to try creating your own beats and rhythms, you can visit **Chrome Music Lab: Rhythm** from an internet browser (link below). Create your own rhythms and try drawing along to them.

<https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Rhythm/>

Line and Color are Elements of Art. Rhythm is a Principle of Design. To learn more, visit the addition resource sheet on page 54.

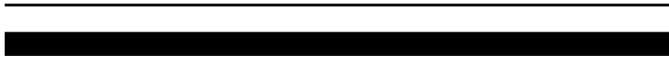
# THE BOOTH MUSEUM

## Lots of Lines!

Artists draw with lines to create shapes, patterns, and textures. Explore the different kinds of lines that are shown below. Think about how you can use them in your own artwork.

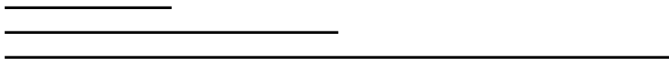
### Width

Thick and thin, or a combination of both.



### Length

Long and short lines.



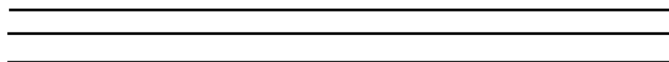
### Vertical

Lines that go up and down.



### Horizontal

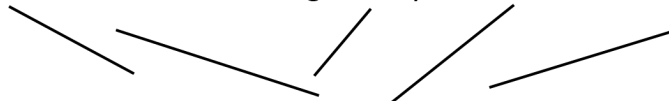
Lines that go side to side.



### Diagonal

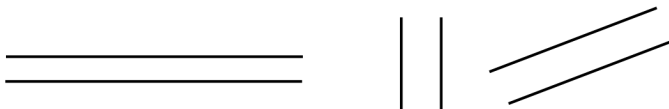
Lines that do not go up and down or side to side.

These lines can go in any direction.



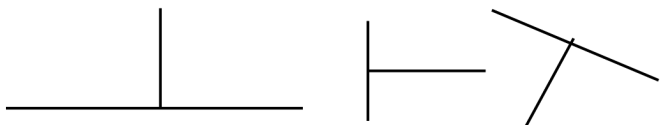
### Parallel

Lines that run next to each other but never touch.



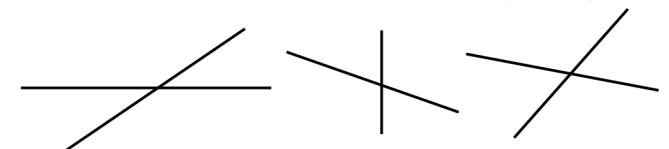
### Perpendicular

Lines that cross to create right angles.

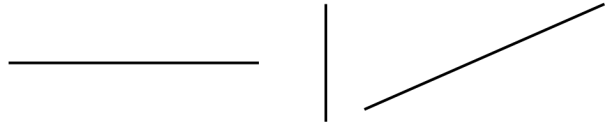


### Intersections

Lines that cross but do not create right angles.



### Straight



### Curved



### Broken/Dotted



### Stippling



### Hatching

Lines drawn close together in the same direction. Often used in shading.

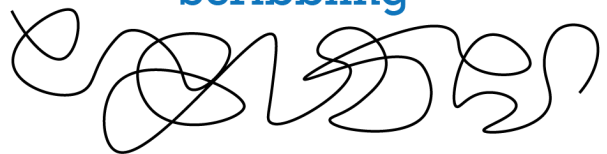


### Cross Hatching

Hatching Lines that cross and create "X" shapes.



### Scribbling



### Zig Zag



### Spiral





# Lesson Plan Summary: Portraits of the Past

**Summary:** Using Visual Thinking Strategies, the teacher will guide students in an analysis of the works of painter and author George Catlin. Then, students will engage in a creative writing activity inspired by Catlin's own descriptions of his work.

**Objectives:** After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand that they can make meaning from a piece of art by observing and analyzing elements of the artwork, and realize that interpretations of meaning can vary from person to person.
- Recognize that art can be a type of historical document that records and preserves information about the past.
- Create a fictional narrative based upon their examination of a piece of art.

**Georgia Standards of Excellence:** VA3.RE.1c, VA3.CN.2 , ELAGSE3RL1 , ELAGSE3RI7, ELAGSE3W3a,b, ELAGSE3SL1

**National Standards:** VA:Cn11.1.3a, VA:Re.7.2.3a, VA:Re8.1.3a, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3a,b, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.

**Materials Provided:**

Visual Thinking Strategies teacher information  
Portraits of the Past student handouts

**Additional Materials Needed:**

Pencils

**Procedure:**

1. Guide students through the Visual Thinking Strategies activity.
2. **Explain:** George Catlin was a painter and author who made several trips to the American west in the 1830s. During these trips, he painted portraits of American Indians that documented their culture and lifestyle. He also published several books documenting his experiences among the American Indians during his travels. Catlin's paintings and books are both **primary sources** that people can use to learn about the past.
3. Pass out Portraits of the Past student handouts.
4. Guide students through the activities in the handouts.

**Additional Resources:**

What Are Visual Thinking Strategies? Castellani Art Museum, Niagara University. Retrieved from <http://www.castellaniartmuseum.org/assets/Images/Documents-pdfs-applications/All-Lessons-VTS-Resource.pdf>

George Catlin Collection: Smithsonian American Art Museum. Retrieved from <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/george-catlin-782>

Catlin's Letters and Notes. Retrieved from <https://user.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/catlin/index.html>

# Visual Thinking Strategies Activity Procedures

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is an inquiry-based teaching strategy for all grade levels. You do not need any special art training to use this strategy. The strategy is very simple: You, the teacher, act as facilitator and ask students a set of questions while looking at images. After each student's response, you paraphrase what the student said. The goal of VTS is not to teach the history of a work of art but, rather, to encourage students to observe independently and to back up their comments with evidence.

To facilitate VTS, choose a work that is not abstract. For this lesson, students will examine George Catlin's *Tóh-to-wah-kón-da-pee, Blue Medicine, a Medicine Man of the Ting-ta-to-ah Band* (On the following page).

Ask students to look closely and silently at it for a minute or two. Three questions guide the discussion:

- "What's going on here?"
- "What do you see that makes you say that?"
- "What more can we find?"

Spend time looking at this painting with students and pointing to elements in the painting as they are brought up. Facilitate responses by asking discussion questions such as: "What are some of the different things you see this man wearing? What is he holding in his hands?" At the beginning students should simply identify things they see, no matter how big or small it might seem. Artists always have a reason for including things within their artwork!

Affirm students by paraphrasing their answers. Paraphrasing their answers is an important component of VTS —it lets students know that they have been heard and that their contributions to the discussion are valid.

After discussing what they see, the discussion can delve into what the painting means by asking questions like, "Why do you think this man is holding a rattle and a drum?" Why do you think this man painted his face this way?"

# Visual Thinking Strategies



George Catlin, *Tóh-to-wah-kón-da-pee, Blue Medicine, a Medicine Man of the Ting-ta-to-ah Band*, 1835, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985.66.73



# Portraits of the Past



George Catlin, *His-oo-sán-chees, Little Spaniard, a Warrior*, 1834, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985.66.51

George Catlin painted His-soo-sán-chees, of the Comanche tribe, in 1834. Look closely at the painting above. What do you notice about what His-soo-sán-chees is wearing and holding? What do you think might be going on in the painting? What can you learn about his way of life from this painting? **Write your observations on the lines below!**

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In one of his letters, which he later published in a book, Catlin wrote:

“[His-soo-sán-chees] is one of the most extraordinary men at present living in these regions. He has been all his life thrown into the front of battle and danger...and commanded the highest admiration and respect of the tribe for his daring and adventurous career. I have here represented him as he stood for me, with his shield on his arm, with his quiver slung, and his lance of fourteen feet in length in his right hand. This extraordinary little man, whose figure was light, seemed to be all bone and muscle, and exhibited immense power, by the curve of the bones in his legs and his arms. We had many exhibitions of his extraordinary strength, as well as agility; and of his gentlemanly politeness and friendship.”

(Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, no. 42, 1841)

What are some of the **descriptive words** Catlin uses to describe His-soo-sán-chees in his letter? Underline some of the descriptive words you see. If you were unable to see the painting, would Catlin’s description allow you to imagine what His-soo-sán-chees looked like? How do you think George Catlin showed His-soo-sán-chees’s personality in the painting?

**Write your thoughts on the lines below!**

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In Catlin’s portraits, his subjects are often holding objects that are important to them. If you were going to have your portrait painted, what **meaningful** objects would you be holding?

**Sketch them below!**



George Catlin, *Mah-kée-mee-teuv, Grizzly Bear, Chief of the Tribe*, 1831, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985.66.218

Imagine that the year is 1831, and you have just painted Mah-kée-mee-teuv (pictured above). Below, write a letter describing his appearance and personality to your family and friends back home!

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 1831

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_



# Additional Resources: Compiled List

## Websites - General Information

- Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian educator resources - <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>
- Interactive map showing pre-contact indigenous territories and languages - <https://native-land.ca/>
- Library of Congress: Native American Spaces (digitized historical maps and atlases relating to American Indians) - <https://guides.loc.gov/native-american-spaces/cartographic-resources>
- Library of Congress teacher resources - <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/native-americans/>
- Digital Public Library of America Primary Source Sets: Native Americans - <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets?subject=native-americans>
- National Archives DocsTeach program teacher resources - <https://www.docsteach.org/topics/american-indians>
- Native American Heritage Month.Gov teacher resources - <https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers/>

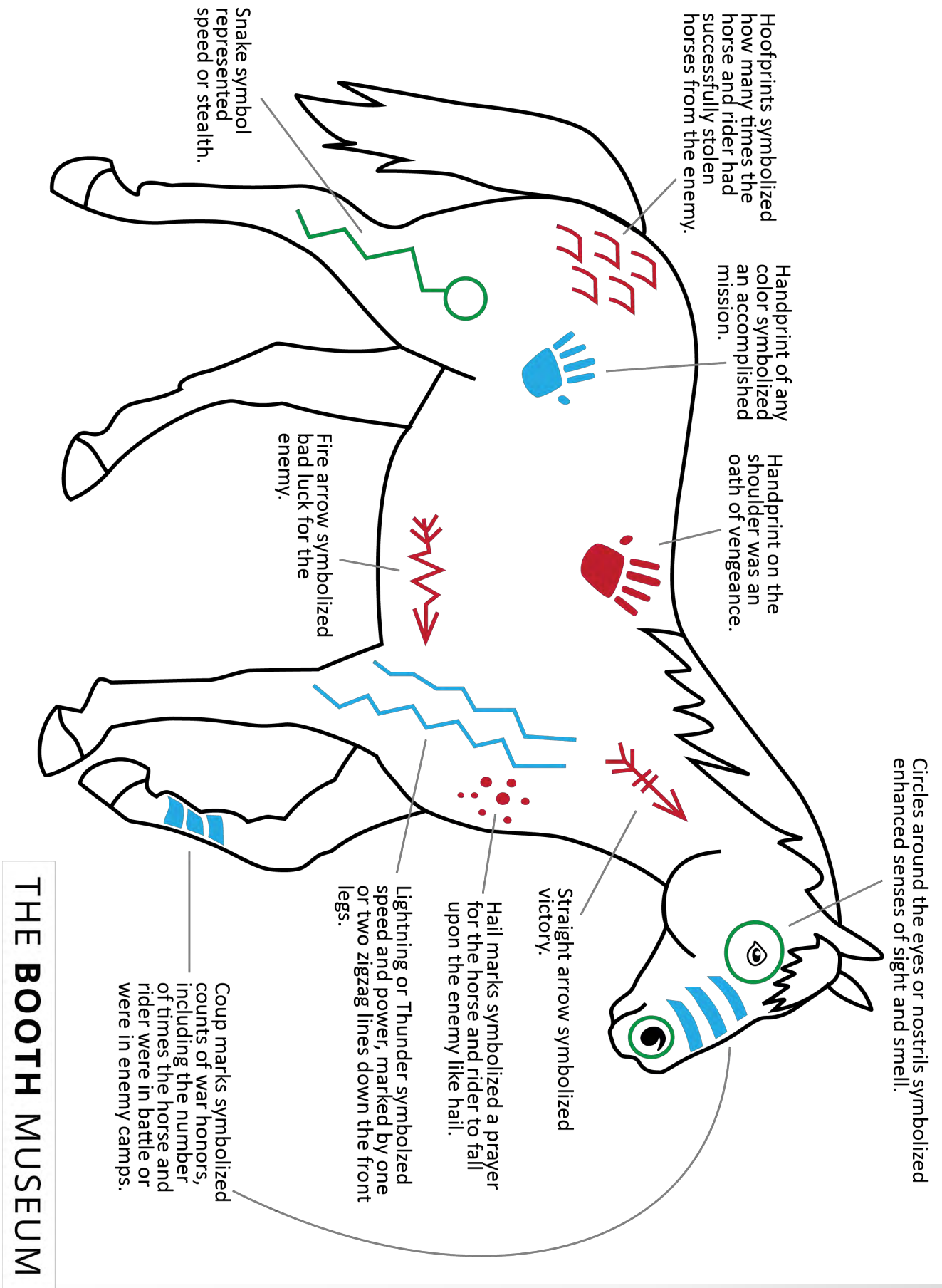
## Websites - Language and Music

- Lakota Language Consortium - <https://lakhota.org/> (website) <https://www.llcbookstore.com/> (store)
- Gayle Ross, Cherokee storyteller at World Storytelling Café - <https://worldstorytellingcafe.com/gayle-ross/>
- Cherokee Language Learning Center (includes free printable posters, books, and coloring pages) - <https://language.cherokee.org/>
- Muscogee Language Program (includes video lessons, word lists, and audio recordings) - <https://www.mcn-nsn.gov/services/mvskoke-language-program/>
- Smithsonian: Native Words, Native Warriors (information and lesson plans relating to the Navajo Code Talkers of WWII) - <https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/index.html>
- Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian store - <https://americanindian.si.edu/store>

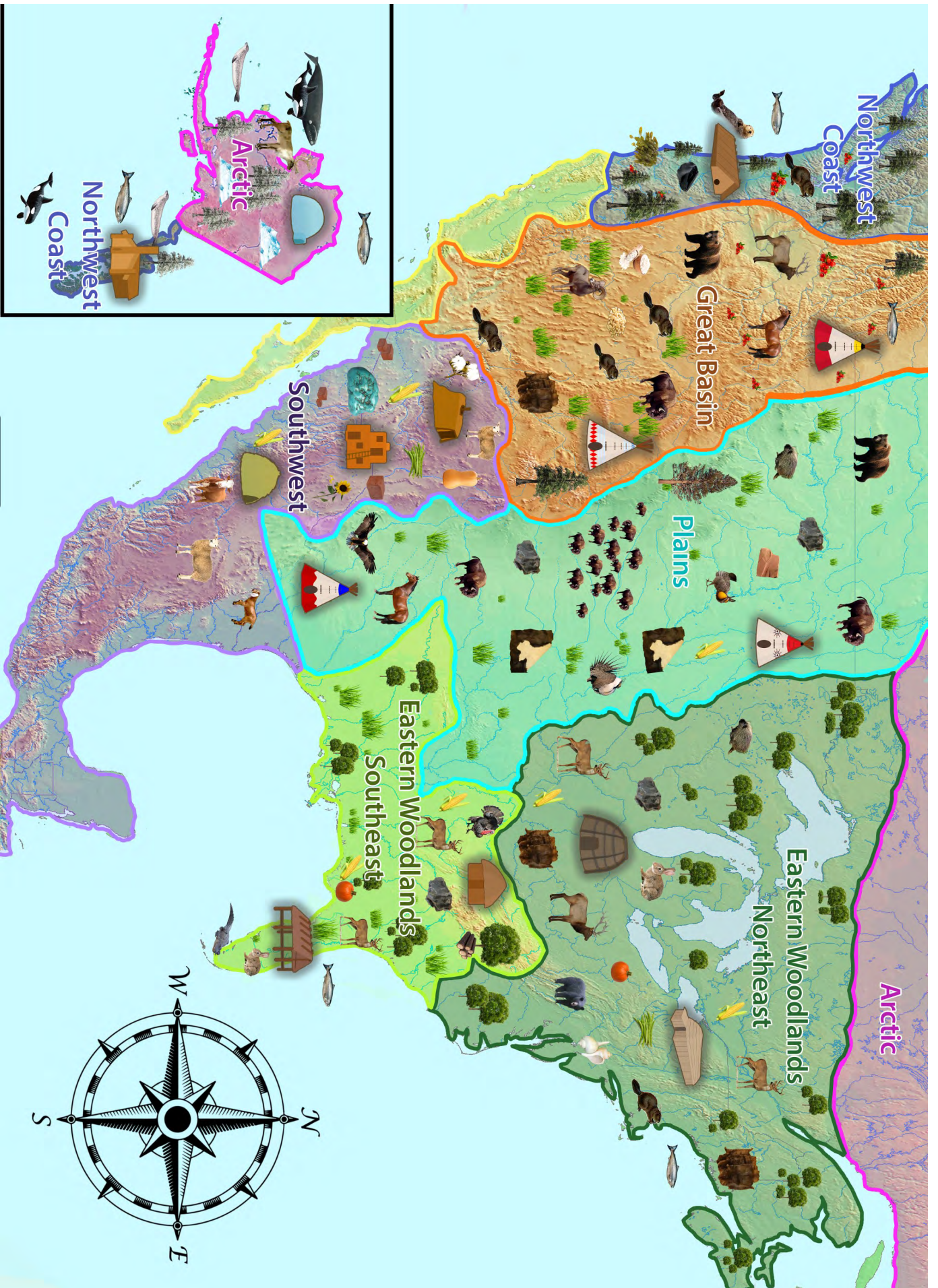
## Children's Books and Shows

- "How Rabbit Tricked Otter and Other Cherokee Trickster Stories" book by Gayle Ross - <https://www.amazon.com/How-Rabbit-Tricked-Otter-Trickster/dp/0060212853>
- "Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story" by Kevin Noble Maillard - <https://www.amazon.com/Fry-Bread-Native-American-Family/dp/1626727465>
- "Native American Heroes" by Dawn Quigley - <https://shop.scholastic.com/teachers-ecommerce/teacher/books/native-american-heroes-9781338565669.html>
- "Jingle Dancer" by Cynthia Leitich Smith - <https://www.amazon.com/Jingle-Dancer-Cynthia-Leitich-Smith/dp/068816241X>
- "Bowwow Powwow" by Brenda J. Child - <https://www.amazon.com/Bowwow-Powwow-Brenda-J-Child/dp/1681340771>
- "Molly of Denali" PBS Kids series is the first children's show to feature an Alaska Native main character. <https://pbskids.org/molly/>

# Additional Resources: Painted Ponies Symbols









## THE BOOTH MUSEUM

# Elements of Art & Principles of Design

### Line

A path created by a point moving in space. A mark with greater length than width. Can be vertical, horizontal, straight, curved, thick, thin, etc.



### Shape

A two-dimensional (2D), or flat enclosed line. Shapes can be **geometric**, like circles, squares and triangles, or **organic**, mimicing shapes found in nature.



### Form

a three-dimensional (3D) shape that has length, width and **depth**. This includes spheres, cubes and pyramids.



### Texture

A surface that can be seen (**implied**) or felt (**actual**). Examples of words that describe texture are rough, smooth, soft, prickly, etc.



### Color

Light reflected off of an object. White is pure light and black is the absence of light. A color's **hue** is the unique name, like red, blue, purple, etc. A color's **value** is how light or dark it is. A color's **intensity** or saturation is how bright or dull it is.



### Space

The area around, between or within objects. **Positive** space describes the shape of object itself. **Negative** space is the area around objects that has shape. Space can also describe depth.



### Value

The lightness or darkness of a color. The progression of value creates a gradation scale. **Tints** are when white is mixed with a hue. **Shades** are when black is mixed with a hue.



### Balance

The distribution of visual weight to create **stability**. **Symmetrical** balance occurs when objects are equally distributed on both sides. **Asymmetrical** balance occurs when objects are different on both sides. **Radial** balance occurs when elements are arranged around a central point.



### Emphasis/Dominance

The part of the design where the viewer's eye goes first. The **focal point** is the central point of attention in an artwork. This area could be different in size, color, texture, shape, etc.



### Proportion/Scale

The feeling of unity created when all parts of an artwork (sizes or amounts) relate well with each other.



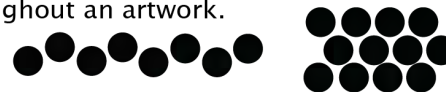
### Movement/Rhythm

The path the viewer's eye takes through an artwork that implies a sense of motion. **Rhythm** is described as a feeling of organized movement throughout an artwork. This can occur through line, shape or color.



### Pattern/Repetition

The repeating of an object or symbol in a planned way throughout an artwork.



### Variety/Contrast

The use of several elements of art that create **difference** within an artwork to convey visual interest.



### Unity

The feeling of **harmony** between all the elements within an artwork which creates a sense of wholeness and completeness.

