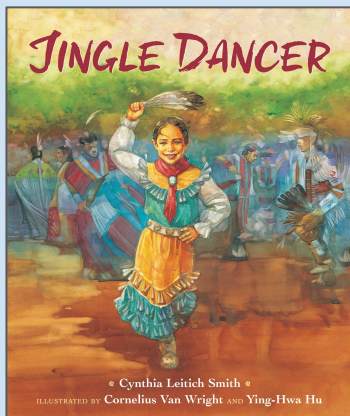


Indigenous People of America: A Paired Text Study

In Alignment with 2nd grade
Standards of Learning

Audra Vanderland



Teaching with Respect

For most of history, the stories of indigenous lives have been misrepresented and told through the lens of European colonizers. We must highlight Native voices when reading stories, studying traditions, or learning about the impacts of history. We must also [avoid wearing indigenous culture as a costume](#), not even on bulletin boards.

This text pairing centers Native voices who explore both the past and the present. It is important for students to understand that Native people are not relics of the past, but exist today. Each tribe has its own unique, living culture. This guide will help you respectfully guide students through exploring past and present.

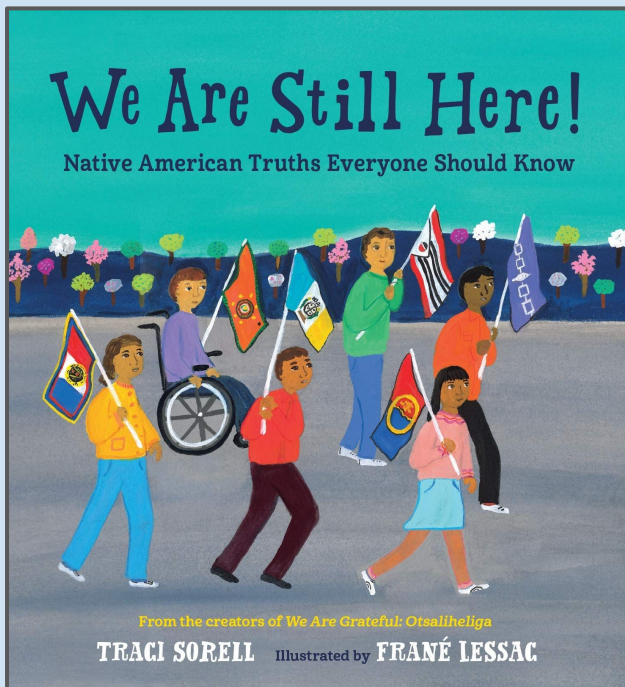
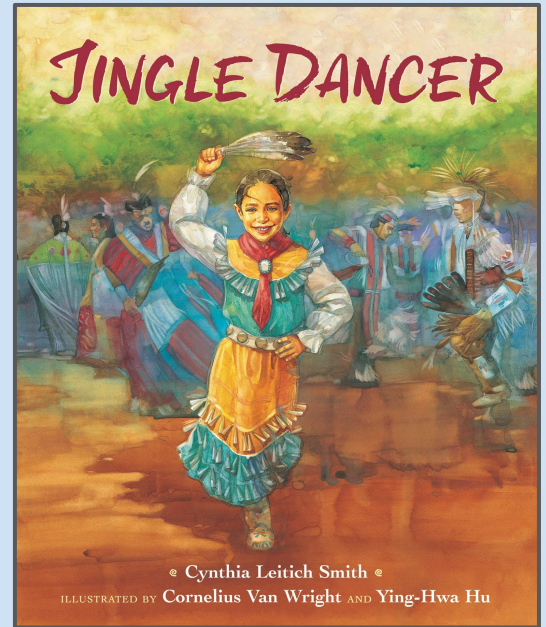
The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian has suggestions on [using appropriate language](#). Native American, American Indian, Native, or Indian are all accepted terms in the continental United States, though most prefer the name of their own tribe most. Burke Museum also has [additional suggestions](#) for teaching about indigenous peoples with respect.

Jingle Dancer

Written by Cynthia Leitich Smith

Illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright & Ying-Hwa Hu

Jingle Dancer follows the story of Jenna, who hopes to dance in the upcoming powwow, and must create her own jingle dress in time. Smith highlights the importance of family and community as they support Jenna to achieve her goal, while also showcasing Native traditions with rich, earthy illustrations. [Kirkus](#) describes it as “a useful portrayal of an important cultural event” (2010). This book was published in 2021 under a partnership with [We Need Diverse Books](#) and the development of the [Heartdrum](#) imprint.



We Are Still Here

Written by Traci Sorell

Illustrated by Frané Lessac

In *We Are Still Here*, Sorell traces an arc through history, from European settlement of Native lands to modern day, with developmentally appropriate language for 7-10 year olds. Illustrations help children understand the text, with color palettes that change to reflect the mood -- from mourning to celebration. Children also learn that Native people are still here, fighting for their rights and celebrating their culture. [Kirkus](#) declares it, “an emphatic, triumphant declaration” (2021).

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Standards of Learning

English & Language Arts

2.7: The student will read & demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, including (but not limited to): describe characters, setting, and plot events and identifying the theme.

2.8: The student will read & demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction texts, including (but not limited to): using prior background knowledge for new learning, asking & answering questions using the text as support, and drawing conclusions based on the text.

- Have students complete a character trait study of Jenna from *Jingle Dancer*. Students can use a combination of writing and drawing to detail what they have learned about Jenna, connecting it to examples from the text.
- Before reading *We Are Still Here*, create a KWL chart with students. Ask, “What do we already know about the history of Native people in America? What do we want to know?” After reading, review the chart to answer what students have learned and what they may still be interested in learning.
- Use these stories to discuss the concept of **theme**, or the author’s message. Use anchor charts to introduce or revisit the types of messages that authors may want to share. What might be the theme of these stories? Why is that theme important when we think about what we know about the history of indigenous people in America?

Researching in the Library

ELA 2.12 The student will conduct research by using available resources to gather information and answer questions to complete a research product.

ELA 1M: Create a simple presentation using multimodal tools.

Work with the librarian to develop a collection that highlight Native tribes. This can include books, as well as a curated list of links to articles in DK! Find Out or Gale In Context. Electronic resources allow for emergent readers to participate as articles include text-to-speech. Students can work individually or in pairs to create a visual that uses drawing, photos, and text to share 3-5 facts about one Native tribe that they research. The school librarian may assist students to develop questions they want to answer and developmentally appropriate citations to credit their research.





Standards of Learning

History

2.1B: Use basic map skills to locate places on maps and globes to support an understanding of American history.

Land is an important part of the indigenous story, one that *We Are Still Here* traces through the forcible removal of tribes from their lands, the creation of reservations, and relocation. The sacred value of land has been a driving force behind indigenous activism in the past and today, such as the Standing Rock protests. [Land acknowledgement](#) is one way that we understand our place in this story and honor indigenous communities. This can be done in developmentally appropriate ways.


- Use the map of the United States to identify the location of tribes mentioned in *We Are Still Here*, both the historical and current locations of the tribe. Teachers can incorporate math by measuring the distance between these locations.
- Locate your school community on a state map. Whose land is your school located on?
- The Powhatan are highlighted in the second grade curriculum (**SOL 2.3**) and resided in the state of Virginia. Have students compare the differences between the size of Powhatan lands prior to English colonization and currently.

Visual Arts

2.6: The student will explore and identify cultural and historical influences of art.

2.7: The student will describe roles of artwork and artists in communities.

In *Jingle Dancer*, readers are introduced to the ways that art, dance, and food are all part of family tradition and culture as Jenna talks about fry bread, jingle dancing, and dressing in her regalia for powwow. Collaborate with your school art instructor or with a local tribe to explore indigenous art. You may also elect to focus on one of the three indigenous tribes most studied during the second grade curriculum (Powhatan, Lakota, & Pueblo).

- Encourage students to bring in and share pictures, food, or stories from their own family celebrations. What memories do they associate with these family traditions?
 - Explore [objects from Eastern woodlands](#). Teach students to use the [look - notice - connect - wonder framework](#) from the National Museum of the American Indian
 - Extend explorations of traditional clothing and art by [studying the dolls](#) of these modern Native artists. You may want to read the interviews together as a class, or rotate among student groups to assist with their reading.
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Pre-Reading Activities



What Is A Powwow?

Introduce the concept of a powwow by watching this [short film](#) by National Geographic highlighting one of the largest powwows in America. You can also [listen to this teen](#) talking about her jingle dancing experience.



Virtual Field Trip

...and it's free!

Select a virtual field trip from the National Museum of the American Indian to introduce this unit with expert guidance. [Native Games of the Americas](#) introduces one way that cultural traditions show up in daily life.



Virginia's Indigenous Tribes A Bulletin Board

Using a large map of Virginia, note where different tribes are currently located. Add pronunciations to help students say their names correctly. Divide students into groups, assigning a Virginia tribe. Have each group choose pictures from their tribe's website to add to the bulletin board. Showcase the voices of those tribes sharing their traditions, similar to the traditions highlighted in *Jingle Dancer*.

Book Discussion

Jingle Dancer

1. Why is it so important to Jenna that she dance in the upcoming powwow?
2. How do you think Jenna feels when she completes her dress? When she dances?
3. Why did the author choose for family and friends to help with Jenna's jingle dress?
4. Each person has their own jingle dress. How are they alike and different? Why did the illustrator include so many?
5. Do you notice any other traditions (food, art, etc) in Jenna's illustrations? Why do you think the illustrator includes them?

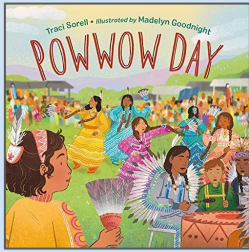
We Are Still Here

1. What do you think "we are still here" means?
2. Why did the author choose to use student presentations to tell this story?
3. The Native children in this story have lots of different hair colors and skin tones. Why did the illustrator make this decision?
4. Look at the colors the illustrator chooses to use. How do they make you feel? Do the colors change over the story?
5. What is the author's purpose?

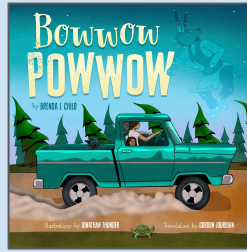
Comparative Questions

1. Do you notice any similarities between Jenna and the children in *We Are Still Here*?
2. How do the stories of *Jingle Dancer* and *We Are Still Here* compare with what you already know about Native people? What was different or new?
3. How do you think Jenna's family might have been impacted by some of the things that you learned in *We Are Still Here*?
4. Does reading *We Are Still Here* impact why you think Jenna wants to be a jingle dancer?
5. Why are stories like *Jingle Dancer* and *We Are Still Here* so important to read?

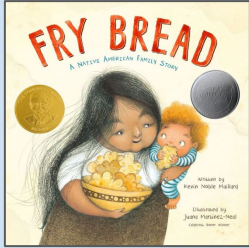




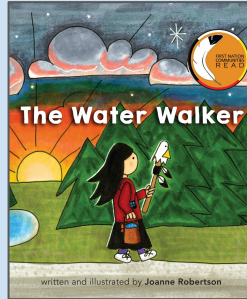
Powwow Day, by Traci Sorell, follows the story of a young girl who is unable to dance in the upcoming powwow due to an illness. Sorell teaches about community and powwows through this story, which will be published in February 2022.



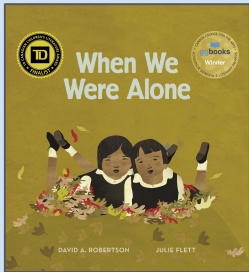
Bowwow Powwow, by Brenda Child, shares the story of Windy and a powwow she attends with her uncle. She later dreams of a powwow celebration where all the dancers are dogs. *Bowwow Powwow* is an ALA Notable Children's Book.



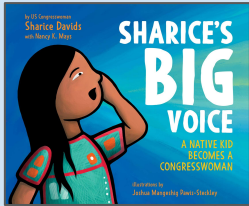
Maillard's *Fry Bread* celebrates Native cultures by connecting art, family, and history to the story of fry bread. It features an extensive author's note for adults to guide young children. *Fry Bread* won the 2020 Sibert Informational Book Medal.



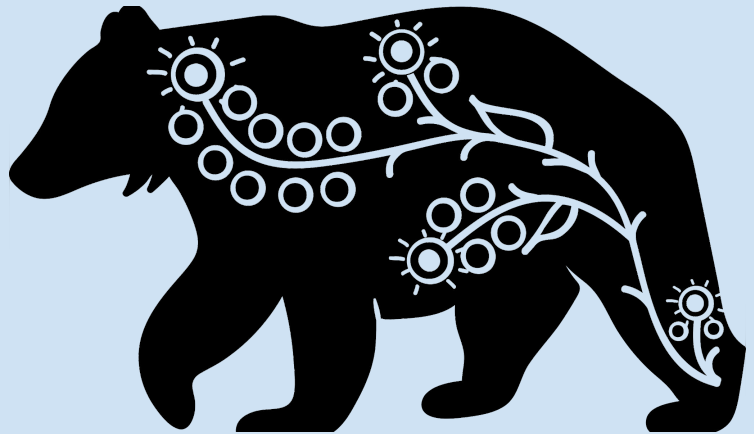
The Water Walker, by Joanne Robertson, follows an Ojibwe grandmother as she walks to raise awareness of the importance of water and need to protect it. *The Water Walker* was a First Nations community read award winner.



Robertson shares the impacts of residential schooling and family separation in *When We Were Alone*, as a young girl asks her grandmother questions about her culture. This book was nominated for a Canadian Children's Literature award.



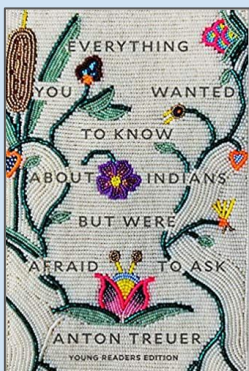
Sharice's Big Voice is a picture biography of Sharice Davids, one of the first Native Americans elected to Congress. Illustrations are done in a traditional style by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley, an Ojibwe Woodland artist.



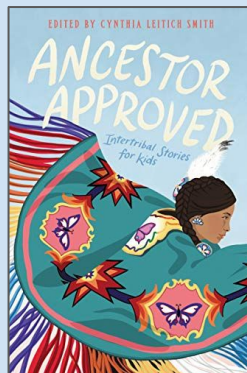
Further Reading



For Teachers or Older Audiences



The Young Readers Edition of *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask*, by Anton Treuer, answers many common questions about Native peoples -- but using language for a younger audience. Teachers may find it helpful to use this book as a resource as they guide students to research and discuss Native tribes with respect.



Ancestors Approved is a collection of fictional stories by Native authors of different indigenous backgrounds, collected by Cynthia Leitich Smith. Although designed for grades 3 and above, select poems and short stories are appropriate for reading aloud to students in the second grade classroom. Teachers may also better understand Native culture and powwow by reading this collection.

On The Web

Native Land Digital (<https://native-land.ca/>)

This website allows you to search an address anywhere in the world and locate the name of the original people who lived on that land.

Native Americans, Kids' National Geographic

National Geographic has kid-friendly articles about the Native people of different areas in the United States of America, detailing both the past and the present. Bold, high quality images support students as they explore culture and tradition.

Honoring Indigenous Experiences, PBS

PBS / VPM have crafted a series of activities to teach the richness of indigenous culture that is practiced to this day, connecting to the Molly of Denali series.



Indigenous People of Virginia

These websites are created and maintained by the Native people of Virginia. They provide information, photographs, and video that teachers can use to develop their own background knowledge or share with students as appropriate. It is important to read the story of these tribes from their own voices, rather than always reading European versions of history.

The Rappahannock Tribe
<https://www.rappahannocktribe.org/>

Chickahominy Tribe
<https://www.chickahominytribe.org/>

The Monacan Nation
<https://www.monacannation.com/>

Nansemond Indian Nation
<https://nansemond.org/>

The Pamunkey Indian Tribe
<https://pamunkey.org/>

Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe
<https://umitribe.org/>



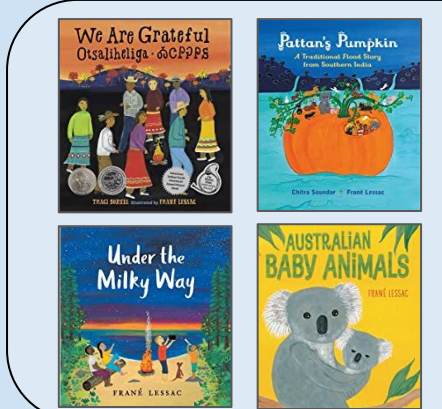
Cynthia Leitich Smith is a best-selling author and member of the Muskogee Creek nation. She has written numerous books about contemporary Native American life in children’s and young adult literature. She is also an author-curator at the Harper-Collins imprint Heartdrum, which highlights Native voices.



Cornelius Van Wright & Ying-Hwa Hu are husband and wife, often working together to illustrate children’s picture books. They frequently use watercolors to illustrate books. They have also each written or illustrated books independently of each other. They currently live in New York City.

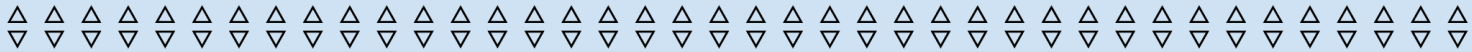


Traci Sorell is a member of the Cherokee Nation, where she lives with her family. She has written numerous books featuring Native characters, as well as working on grants, legal codes, and testifying before Congress. She has shared that her mission is to “add to the canon of literature showing that Native Nations and their citizens still exist and thrive today.”



Frané Lessac is an author-illustrator, currently living in Australia. Lessac grew up in New Jersey, attended school in California, lived in Montserrat and London -- all before settling in Australia. She writes that her goal is to “instill pride and self-esteem in children about their own unique heritage”.





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This Teacher’s Guide features art created by by Tesha, band member of the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve, located in Ontario Canada.

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