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**Celebrate Books about and by Native Americans**

In this list we have selected resources for children and young adults, including:

\*books that portray contemporary native characters as individuals not stereotypes;

\* books that accurately present Native American history – people, events, and legends;

\* publishers with a special interest in Native American books;

\* awards that recognize the best in Native American literature

First, some comments about evaluating books, looking for the presence of stereotypes, historical inaccuracies, or not presenting a Native American perspective.

**Judge for Yourself!** Here is from an evaluation guide prepared by Anselmo Ramon, Tohono O’odham, former Director of Native American Studies Department in Tucson Unified School District, to help teachers become more aware of stereotyping. He defines stereotype as “…conventional, over-simplified identification based on a few exterior qualities.”

Be aware of :

\*stereotype “secondary stock characters,” such as physical appearance, e.g. raven black hair, tall and straight as an arrow. Or stereotyped cultural references such as “one with mother earth, seeker of visions…”;

\* portrayal of Native American cultures as simplistic or primitive;

\*speaking of Native people in the past tense;

\* slang references, such as “Indian-giver, savages, redskin, squaw, chief, or “How? Ugh…” and common sayings like “acting like a bunch of wild Indians.”

\* Identifying an individual as Indian or Native American rather than by their tribal affiliation, eg. We would not say, “Jenny who is white”, we would say, “Jenny who is Czech or from Iceland.” Similarly a Native may be Lakota, or Navajo. All Indians are NOT the same!’

\* cartoonish portrayals In picture books or graphic novels;

\*in textbooks, in every aspect of the curriculum, is Native American culture, history, knowledge, included? Look for inaccuracies, omissions, bias, ethnocentrism, e.g. from whose point of view is the text written?

Ellen Levine once said:

*“Rest on Truth for authority rather than taking authority for truth.”*

Kazanzakis:

*The only thing more real than truth is legend.”*

BOOK LIST

**General Background Books and Resources**

[www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org) Oyate is a “Native organization working to see that the lives and histories of Native people are portrayed honestly…for all children, it is as important as it has ever been to learn the truths of history.” Their work includes critical evaluation of books and curricula with Indian themes; conducting workshops, listing resources, and distributing teacher books and materials with an emphasis on writing and illustration by Native people.

A Broken Flute, The Native Experience in Books for Children. Edited by Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin. 2005.

Through Indian Eyes, The Native Experience in Books for Children. Edited by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale. 1987. Contains thoughtful essays.

**General References**:

Lasting Echoes. An Oral History of Native American People.

Joseph Bruchac. 1997.

Extraordinary American Indians. Susan Avery and Linda Skinner. 1992

Many Nations, An alphabet of Native America, Joseph Bruchac. 1997

Children of Native America Today. Yvonne Wakim Dennis and Arlene Hirschfelder. Shakti for Children, Charlesbridge. 2003.

Keepers of the Night: Native American Stories and Nocturnal Activities for Children, Caduto and Bruchac. 1994.

Native American Stories / Keepers of the Earth. Caduto and Bruchac.1991.

Keepers of the Animals. Caduto and Bruchac. 1991.

An Indian Winter, Russell Freedman. 1992.

Spider Spins A Story: Fourteen Legends from Native America. Edited by Jill May. 1997.

**Re-Seeing History, Culture and Legends**

Thanksgiving, a Native Perspective. Seale, Slapin, and Silverman 1995: an excellent place to begin with classroom curriculum and re-thinking.

1621, A New Look at Thanksgiving. Catherine O'Neill Grace and Margaret Bruchac. 2001.

Black Elk’s Vision, a Lakota Story, S.D. Nelson,Abrams, 2010.

Code Talker: A Noel about the Navajo Marines of WWII, Joseph Bruchac, Dial, 2005

Lasting Echoes: An Oral History of Native American People, Joseph Bruchac, Silver Whistle, 1997.

Wounded Knee, Neil Waldman,Atheneum Books, 2001.

Sequoyah, The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing, James Rumford, translated by Anna Sixkiller Huckaby, Houghton,Mifflin, 2004.

Crossing Bok Chitto, A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom.

Tim Tingle. 2007.

Cherokee Indians, Native American series. Suzanne Morgan Williams. 2003.

Any of Caduto and Bruchac’s “Keepers” books (see books listed above)

**Picture Books**

Lessons from Turtle Island:  Native Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms, by Guy Jones and Sally Moomaw - recommended by Joseph Bruchac (This marvelous resource should be in every American school").

The following weave contemporary and traditional:

When the Shadbush Blooms. Carla Messinger with Susan Katz. 2007.

Powwow’s Coming. Linda Boyden. 2007.

Giveaways: An ABC Book of Loanwords from the Americas, Linda Boyden, 2013

The Blue Roses, Linda Boyden, 2003, winner of Lee & Low New Voices Award, Paterson Prize & Wordcraft Circle’s Book of the Year.

The Butterfly Dance. Gerald Dawavendewa 2001

Meet Mindy, A Native Girl from the Southwest, My World: Young Native Americans Today series. Susan Secakuku. 2003.

The Unbreakable Code. Sara Hunter. 1996.

Navajo Year, A Walk Through Many Seasons. Nancy Flood. 2006.

Grandmother’s Pigeon. Louise Erdrich

Secret of the Dance. Andrea Spalding and Alfred Scow, illus. by Gait

Whale Snow. Debby D. Edwardson, illus by A. Patterson

Little Coyote Runs Away. Craig Kee Strete, illus by H. Stevenson

Cowboy Up, Ride the Navajo Rodeo, Nancy Bo Flood, 2013

The Hogan That Great-Grandfather Built, Nancy Bo Flood, 2014

Young people need books that describe contemporary children who are Native American, not just historical accounts as though Indian children lived “past tense,” only a long time ago. The following books have “real” individual characters and engaging stories that include traditional celebrations continued in contemporary ways – with family, food, music and even dance:

Cowboy Up, Ride the Navajo Rodeo, Nancy Bo Flood, 2013

Secret of the Dance - Spalding and Scow

Whale Snow – Debby D. Edwardson

Jingle Dancer – Cynthia Leitich Smith

The Butterfly Dance – Gerald Dawavendewa

Powwow’s Coming – Linda Boyden

When the Shadbush Blooms – Messinger with Katz

**Historical Picture Books**:

Jim Thorpe’s Bright Path. Bruchac. 2004.

The Unbreakable Code. Hunter. 1996.

Navajo Long Walk. Bruchac and Begay. 2002.

Little Woman Warrior Who Came Home, A Story of the Navajo Long Walk.

Yazzie. 2006.

Buffalo Bird Girl, A Hidatsa Story, S.D. Nelson, 2013.

A Boy Called Slow, The True Story of Sitting Bull. Bruchac. 1994.

Will Rogers, Frank Keating, illus. by Mike Wimmer. 2002

Zitkala-sa, Red Bird Sings

Dance in a Buffalo Skull, written by Zitkala-sa, illustrated by SD Nelson

Beauty Beside Me, Stories of My Grandmother’s Skirts, Seraphine Yazzie, 2012.

Salty Pie, Tim Tingle

**Legends, Myths, Stories:**

The Flute Player, An Apache Folklore. Michael Lacapa. 1990.

The Magic Hummingbird, A Hopi Folktale. Malotki, Lomatuway’ma, Lacapa.

The Boy Who Dreamed of an Acorn. Casler/ Shonto Begay.1994.

**Middle Grade and Young Adult:**

The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sherman Alexie:

If I Ever Get Out of Here, Eric Gansworth, 2013

Eagle Song. 1997. Hidden Roots. 2004, Joseph Bruchac: \* see [www.josephbruchac.com](http://www.josephbruchac.com) for a complete list

Counting Coup, Becoming a Crow Chief and the Reservation and Beyond.

Native Joseph Medicine Crow

Trailblazers: Native Athletes in Action! Vincent Schilling. 2007

The Birchbark House. Louise Erdrich

Craig Strete: Death Chants, short stories. 1988. Powerful magical realism

My Name is Not Easy, Debby Dahl Edwardson, 2011 (Alaskan)

The Lesser Blessed.  Richard Van Camp. 1996.

**Historical Middle-Grade and Young Adult:**

Code Talker. Bruchac. 2005.

Jim Thorpe, Original All-American. Bruchac. 2006.

Keeping the Rope Straight: Annie Dodge Wauneka’s Life of Service to the Navajo. Carolyn Niethammer. 2006.

Indian Signals and Sign Language, Fronval andDubois;

Indian Sign Language, Tomkins

**Poetry and Anthologies**

Walking on Earth & Touching the Sky, Poetry & Prose by Lakota Youth at Red Cloud Indian School, edited by McLaughlin, 20012.

Night Is Gone, Day Is Still Coming: Stories and Poems by American Indian Teens & Young Adults, edited by Annette Pina Ochoa, Betsy Franco, & Traci Gourdine, 2003

For a Girl Becoming, Joy Harjo illus by M. McDonald, 2009.

Tse’yi’ Deep in the Rock, Reflections on Canyon de Chelly, Laura Tohe, photographs by Stephen Strom. 2005

Looks Like Daylight, Deborah Ellis, 2013. (interviews with NA teens)

Skins, Contemporary Indigenous Writing, edited by Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm & Josie Douglas

Native Trailblazers Series, edited by Kigafus & Ernst, Seventh Generation

Moccasin Thunder: American Indian Stories for Today, edited by Lori Marie Carlson, 2005

Trickster, Native American Tales, A Graphic Collection by Dembicki

**Authors to Know and Read**

Joseph Bruchac His websites include a wealth of resources including a listing of all books written/illustrated by Native Americans.

Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

Linda Boyden

S.D. Nelson

Sherman Alexie, also look at his adult novels, poetry, & movies

Simon Ortiz

Joy Harjo

Shonto Begay

The Delorias: Ella Cara, Vine Sr., Philip, and Vine Jr.: adult books

Erdrich sisters: Louise, Heidi

M.Scott Momaday

Luci Tapahonso

Leslie Marmon Silko

Michael Dorris

Sherman Alexie

Cynthia Leitig Smith: e.g. Jingle Dancer; Rain Is Not My Indian Name

Tim Tingle: note his new books: How I Became a Ghost; Saltypie, 2010 !!

Baje Whitethorne, Sr.: picture books: Sunpainters; Father’s Boots, etc.

Byrd Baylor (not Native American but her picture books capture the sense of desert and respect for life): Hawk, I’m Your Brother, The Other Way to Listen

**Awards for Writers:**

American Indian Library Association: American Indian Youth Book Awards

The New Voices Award  [http://www.leeandlow.com/p/new\_voices\_award.mhtml](http://www.leeandlow.com/p/new_voices_award.mhtml" \t "_blank)

The New Visions Award (from Tu Books, an imprint of Lee and Low Books) [http://www.leeandlow.com/p/new\_visions\_kudos.mhtml](http://www.leeandlow.com/p/new_visions_kudos.mhtml" \t "_blank)

The SCBWI On-The-Verge Emerging Voices Award: [http://www.scbwi.org/Pages.aspx/On-The-Verge-Emerging-Voices-Award](http://www.scbwi.org/Pages.aspx/On-The-Verge-Emerging-Voices-Award" \t "_blank)

**Publishers** – a selection

Abrams [www.abramsbooks.com](http://www.abramsbooks.com)

BoydsMill Press (Highlights)

Cinco Puntos Press, www.cincopuntos.com

Groundwood Books [www.houseofanansi.com](http://www.houseofanansi.com)

Lee and Low A list of their Native American/American Indian titles:  
http://www.leeandlow.com

Fulcrum Publishers, Golden, Colorado

Orca Book Publishers, Canada, [www.orcabook.com](http://www.orcabook.com)

Oyate, [www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org)

Salina Bookshelf, Flagstaff, AZ

Arte Pueblo Press

Charlesbridge Press: Global Fund for Children

University of Arizona Press: Sun Tracks, American Indian Literary Series

Seventh Generation, 1-888-260-8458, www.bookpubco.com

Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian

**Bookstores:**

Birchbark Books catalogue

Smithsonian: National Museum of the American Indian

**Internet Sources:**

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

published A Broken Flute; and Through Indian Eyes

<http://AILA.library.sd.gov> American Indian Library Association: American Indian Youth Book Awards, awarded biannually

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com>

Blog site of Debbie Reese: American Indians in Children’s Literature

[www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit\_resoources/diversity/native](http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit_resoources/diversity/native)

[www.ibby.org](http://www.ibby.org) International Board of Books for Young People,

publishes Bookbird: A Journal of Inter/l Children’s Lit.

[www.usbby.org](http://www.usbby.org) US IBBY

Bridges to Understanding,

Crossing Boundaries with Children’s Books

[www.shakti.org](http://www.shakti.org) Shakti for Children

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

[www.papertigers.org](http://www.papertigers.org) blog and website multicultrual with a focus on Pacific Rim

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

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

[www.nativeauthors.com](http://www.nativeauthors.com) hundreds of titles and biographical information about most American Indian authors in print

[www.ndcenter.org](http://www.ndcenter.org) The Ndakinna Education Center, Greenfield Center, NY offers hands-on learning experiences about Native American culture and traditions and the natural world.

[www.saratoganativefestival.org](http://www.saratoganativefestival.org) The Saratoga Native American Festival, next festival is Oct 3/4th, 2009

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

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

www.nmai.sm.gov Smithsonian: National Museum of American Indians

General, Multicultural: Bookseller and author Elizabeth Bluemle, whose blog Shelftalker appears on the Publishers Weekly website   
   
[http://www.librarything.com/catalog/shelftalker](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/shelftalker" \t "_blank)

Blog: Heart of a Child, Rob Reid, [www.rapnrob.com](http://www.rapnrob.com) posted 8-19-2013:

“American Indian Books for Young Adults”

**This list is neither inclusive nor without error. Please send your suggestions. Thank you!**

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