CLASSROOM RESOURCES

*Traditional Native Games*

**Books:**


- This adaptation of a popular Native American story pits animals against birds in a contest to settle an all-too-human question: Who’s better? Here, it’s the teeth versus the wings in stickball, a lacrosse-style game in which the players hold a stick in each hand. When the contestants take their sides, the anomalous bat, who sports both teeth and wings, is rejected by both teams. Finally, the bear shows sympathy, saying, “You are not very big, but sometimes even the small ones can help.” Bat is benched, however, until the animals catch on to the birds’ obvious advantage: with ball in beak, the birds fly high above the playing field. Recommended for Pre-K–4th grade.


- Provides young readers with stories that educate and entertain. For educators, explains the background of some games and cultural protocols for including certain games in the book.


- “The Game” was a major part of indigenous society in North America long before the arrival of the Europeans. This work explores the philosophical foundation of athletics and “The Game” in Native American societies. Note: Currently out of print.


- Describes the sport of lacrosse, its origins, and its connections to the Iroquois, or Haudenosaunee, peoples. Thirteen-year-old Monte Lyons, an Iroquois Indian, lives on the Onondaga Nation Territory with his parents and many other relatives. Monte, like most of his family and friends, loves to play the ball game now called lacrosse. Through lots of photographs, illustrations, and good storytelling, children can see how lacrosse sticks and wampum belts are made. And, the book also reminds its readers of the important and significant role that Native Americans played and continue to play in the history of the United States.

- This downloadable e-book, developed by the International Traditional Games Society model, includes lesson plans on Native American traditional games. Students will learn Native American vocabulary, concepts of Native games, and game rules. Additional teacher resources are supplied with each lesson. Activities and model lessons plans designed for grades K–10.


- Great general book for grades 1–6. Explains Native origins of games such as hockey, lacrosse, and volleyball. In addition, it explains other clever Native inventions. This book will give students a perspective on the true innovation and genius of Native American people from hundreds of years ago.


- This book is an excellent resource for teachers searching for ways to bring the Native experience into the classroom. Through reading recommendations, poems, and stories, this clear and concise book will point teachers with non-Native perspectives to classroom approaches for all grade levels. It also explains what books to read, why they are important, and the general learning outcomes students can expect from the resources. Books recommended apply to grades K–10.

**Websites:**


- An excellent website devoted to teaching students about the Mesoamerican ballgame in a fun and interactive way. Brought to you by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mint Museum of Art, this educational website covers all aspects of the Mesoamerican ballgame from the uniforms to the rules of the game and the archaeological evidence that still survives today. This is an entertaining website for students of all ages.

[http://www.choctaw.org/culture/stickball.html](http://www.choctaw.org/culture/stickball.html)

- This website gives a brief and reliable overview of the traditional Choctaw game of stickball. Good resource to review before approaching contemporary stickball practice.
The teacher may need to translate this article into easier, more digestible reading material for younger students. Grades 7–10.

http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/Buffalo/PB15.html

- This website provides historical images from the Minnesota Historical Society of different Ojibwe communities playing the moccasin game, along with narrative about the game’s cultural importance. It include Ojibwe language related to the moccasin game as well as betting practices, cultural values, and information about how the game is played and some of the medicine associated with it. Ideal for grades 4–7.

http://www.letsmove.gov/blog/2014/06/30/lets-move-indian-country-celebrates-3rd-anniversary

- The Let’s Move campaign celebrates its third anniversary by promoting physical activity and healthy habits among the youth of Indian Country. This article discusses the Let’s Move campaign’s focus on the Pueblo of Zuni in New Mexico and its traditional dance practice. It explores the foundational importance of movement and activity in Native communities.

http://www.naigcouncil.com/history.php

- The North American Indigenous Games Council is the primary authority on rules and regulations of North American indigenous games. This is a great contact resource for specific questions on Native games and for questions regarding cultural sensitivity.


- This page, published by the National Library of Medicine, describes the health benefits of Native games, the health and mental impact games have on Native communities, and a few traditional Native games from several tribes.

http://www.powwows.com/2014/07/07/watch-the-iroquois-nationals-attack-at-world-lacrosse-championship/#ixzz36u6wTDZq

- The Iroquois Nation’s lacrosse team should have a chance at winning first place with the addition of the Thompson brothers, Lyle and Miles, along with their cousin Ty (Onondaga). The video clip embedded within the article highlights the brothers’ connection to their heritage through playing the game of their ancestors. This clip is 7 minutes long and engaging for learners above a 4th-grade level.
The website of the Native Games Society, which is devoted to the recovery, restoration, and reintroduction of traditional Native American games. This website includes information including why preserving and practicing games is vital to honoring and teaching about different tribes. An electronic book of K–12 lesson plans ($15) includes a list of eight traditional games and brief instructions.

This website promotes the Native voice and perspective through educational Native filmmaking. Films can be purchased in sets or individually. They are accompanied with lesson plans and education guides with step-by-step classroom instructions. Check the website for details on how educators can screen the films for free.

Capital Public Radio: “In College Lacrosse, Two Brothers Flirt with Making History”

An article about two University of Albany lacrosse-playing brothers, Miles and Lyle Thompson (Onondaga). This article illustrates the strong Native presence that still exists in the sport. The article explains the value both brothers put on their culture, for example their effort to relearn their Native language to better communicate on the field. Both brothers were awarded the Tewaaraton Award, the highest award in college lacrosse. The irony is that this is the first time this award has gone to anyone of Native background, and Native people made the game possible.

Herald Standard: “Raven Thin Elk a Special Girl and an Amazing Athlete”

This article provides the reader with a contemporary look into the athletic careers of young American Indian people. Eleven-year-old Natayla “Raven” Thin Elk (Lakota, Sioux) was recently honored with a plaque at A. L. Wilson Elementary School for winning the 2014 PAWF Women’s State Wrestling Championship. She is the first Native American in Pennsylvania and first female in the Wilson Elementary School district to win the Women’s State Wrestling Championship. This article describes her life as both an accomplished athlete and her effort to remain close to her culture and spirituality.
Film Resources

**Choctaw Stickball: The Little Brother of War**, 16 min.

- This short video describes the Choctaw game of stickball through the first-person experiences of some of the youth players in Oklahoma. This video shows the rough tendencies of the game, its cultural traditions, and rules of the oldest field game in America. Great for 4th grade and above.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyvTjTWK9_g

**Games of the North**, Jonathon Stanton, 2010, Starseed Media, 27 min.

*Games of the North: Playing for Survival* is a short film that documents the Native games of the Arctic. Incredible firsthand narrative by young Native athletes preserving the games of their ancestors. The film can be purchased through Vision Maker Media.
  http://www.airos.org/films/games-north-playing-survival

**Handgame**, Larry Johnson, 2001, 57 min

- “Handgame” gives the audience a view into the historic roots of current gambling games in some Native Societies. By documenting the traditional “handgame” the audience is exposed to different reservation communities and fun characters who keep traditional ways of thinking through game playing alive.. Recommended for ages 5 + up.

**Indian Relay**, Charles Dye. 2013, 55 min.

- “Indian Relay” follows three teams from different American Indian communities as they get ready to compete in a high intensity Indian Relay season. With each competitor looking to win, “Indian Relay” traces contemporary Native American competitions back to the historical tie some Native American tribes have with their horses. Grades 10 and above. Additional educational material available in “Teacher Resources”

**Lady Thunderhawks**, Finn Ryan, Wisconsin Lab, 2012, 3 min 45 sec

This video tells the story of Oneida Senior Jessica House and the impact the successful girls basketball team has had on the Oneida community. Jessica discusses the emphasis her culture has taught her about discipline and respect and how it has positively affected her basketball career. Grades 4 and above.
  http://theways.org/story/lady-thunderhawks


- A full-length film that follows the path of two brothers from the Onondaga Nation as they pursue their dream to play college lacrosse at Syracuse University. A great opportunity for students to take an intimate look into Native life and perspectives on school, athletics,
and family. The film can be purchased through Vision Maker Media. 
[http://www.indiannet.org/films/medicine-game](http://www.indiannet.org/films/medicine-game)

*Native American Sports Camp with Chris Carmichael*, 1993, 7 min.  
• A Native American (Pueblo) sports camp encourages youth to find the best of themselves through physical activity, specifically mountain biking. This short video helps illustrate athletic activity emphasis in Native communities.  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY1zvPtivBs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY1zvPtivBs)

*Sacred Stick*, Danforth Michelle, Loew, Patty PH.D.60 min, 2013  
Sacred Stick gives the viewer a look into the historical, cultural and spiritual significance of Lacrosse to American Indian People. The film focuses on the world famous Iroquois Nationals team. Suitable for grades 6 and above. The film can be purchased through Vision Maker Media.  [http://nativetelecom.org/films/sacred-stick](http://nativetelecom.org/films/sacred-stick)

*Classroom Resources*

*Games of the North* Viewer Discussion Guide
[http://www.airos.org/sites/default/files/resources/edu_vdg_gotn_0.pdf](http://www.airos.org/sites/default/files/resources/edu_vdg_gotn_0.pdf)

- This 6-page discussion guide is designed to accompany the *Games of the North* film and encourage discourse and a deeper understanding of the film. The discussion guide Along with questions, the guide also supplies facts about the First Nations people of Alaska and Canada. The guide also lists “ideas for action” on how to conquer racism, respect and value the environment, and learn more about northern game events. Grades 7 or higher.

*Games of the North* Viewer Education Guide
[http://www.airos.org/sites/default/files/resources/edu_eg_gotn_0.pdf](http://www.airos.org/sites/default/files/resources/edu_eg_gotn_0.pdf)

- The *Games of the North* Viewer Education Guide is a 25-page resource that clearly outlines learning objectives for students to learn, analyze, and apply concepts of survival taught in *Games of the North*. The education guide contains lesson plans, national curriculum standards, and various educational exercises. Grades 7 or higher.

*Indian Relay* Education Guides

- This education guide is a detailed resource meant to be paired with the documentary *Indian Relay*. You may choose guides for elementary, middle or high school students. These educational guides create a deeper understanding of and connection to Montana horse culture. Includes writing, reflective, and art lesson models.

*Lacrosse* Education Guide
The Lacrosse Education Guide accompanies the films *The Medicine Game* and *Sacred Stick*. This education guide is full of lessons plans such as “Family and Traditions” that create connections for students on the history of lacrosse, Native American values, and culture. Designed for grades 9–12.