


Google Arts & Culture

An Introduction to Native American History and Culture



in association with  sixredmarbles

Basket Dance at San Ildefonso Pueblo, Pablita Velarde, Bandelier National Monument, National Park Service

Pablita Velarde

How to Make the Most of This Lesson

This lesson serves as a **road map** for your journey through a rich and exciting collection of online content made available by **Google Arts & Culture's partners**. You will explore photographs, slideshows, voice recordings, and more. The images in this lesson are just a sample of what's available to you via the **Google Arts & Culture** website.

You can complete this lesson independently or with fellow students, a teacher, or another adult. The content is accessible to a wide range of ages, but it's especially geared toward students ages 13 to 16.

Your journey in this lesson will take you through three major topics:

Chapter 1: Native America before Conquest

Chapter 2: Native American Life under the U.S. Government

Chapter 3: A Look at the Present

Chapter 4: Native Artistic Traditions

You'll see some helpful signs along the way:



Estimated time for completing the chapter



Audio recording or video



Link to more online content



Learning activity

Tools for Learning

Below are tools for learning that you may need for Digital Discovery lessons:



A device that connects to the Internet (a computer or tablet)



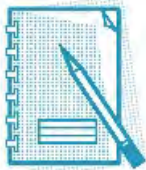
A tool for writing your responses and big ideas (pen, pencil, computer, etc.)



Art supplies (markers, crayons, paint)



Scissors



A notebook



Scrap paper

Explore! Google Arts & Culture pictures are **big**. If you want to explore a picture in greater detail, click on the magnifying glass symbol and zoom in with the zoom slider. By dragging the white box around, you can see even **tiny** details.

Welcome to *An Introduction to Native American History and Culture*

Many thousands of years ago, people arrived in the Americas from the north on foot and by boat. They spread throughout the North American continent and all the way to South America. Over time, many culture groups and **Tribal Nations** developed across North America in what is now Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Today, some of the largest are the Navajo, the Sioux, the Ojibwe, and the Tlingit-Haida. This lesson gives a brief look at the history of Native America, from preinvasion to modern times. At the end of the lesson, you will think about what you learned and then reflect on an art piece.

What Will You Do?

1. Learn about the development of some early cultures and Native American Nations.
2. See what happened to Native America after Europeans invaded.
3. Get a glimpse of Native American successes in the modern era.
4. View a variety of Native American artforms.



Navajo Man in Blue Shirt, Allan Houser Circa 1963, Bureau of Indian Affairs Museum Program

What's in this lesson?

1. Review the early history of Native America.
2. Learn about the devastating impact of the Indian Removal Act.
3. Read a selection of stories about Native Americans today.
4. See some traditional and contemporary artworks by Native people.

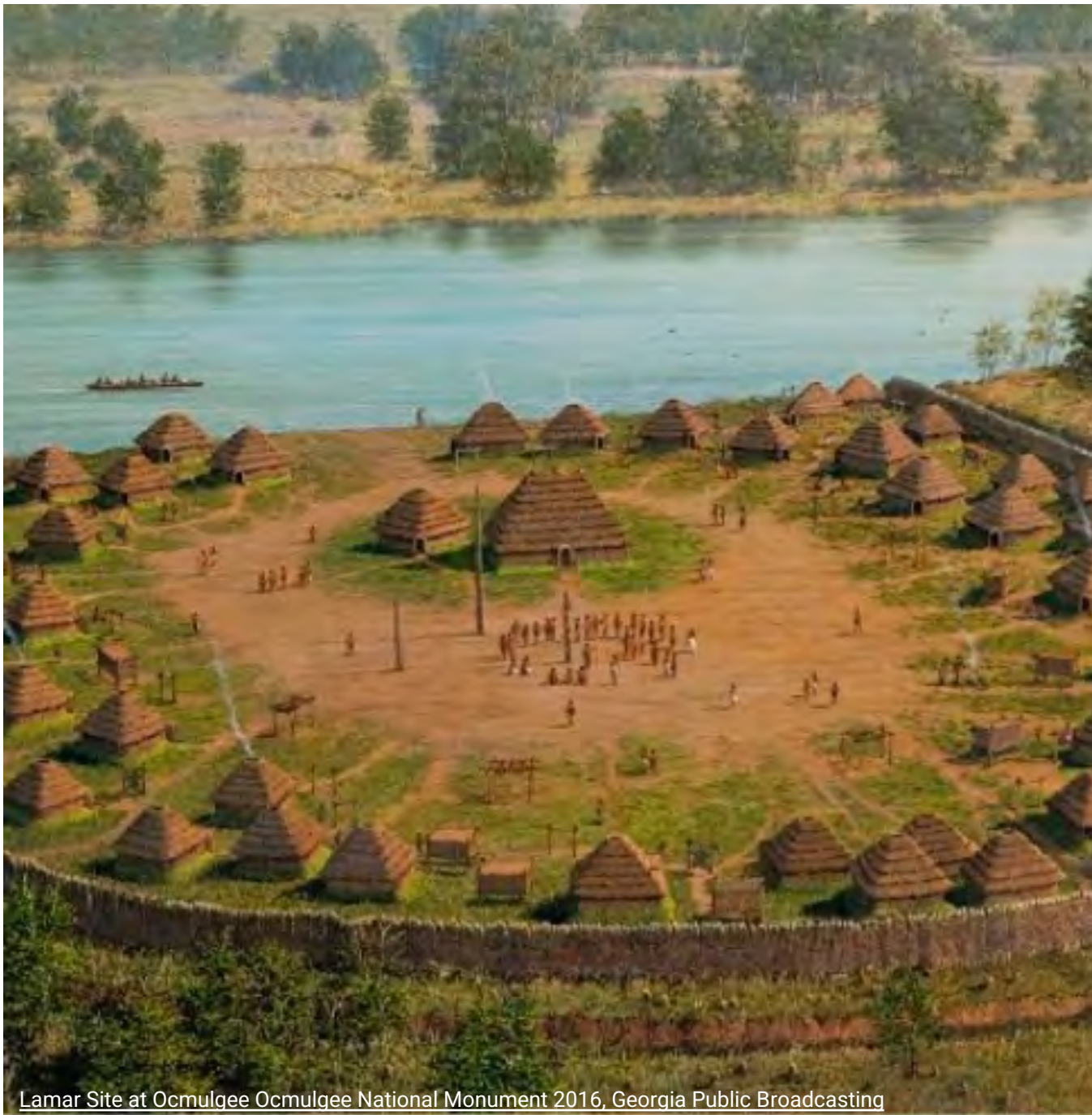
By participating in this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Understand how different early Native cultures developed according to their environment.
2. Identify the impact of Indian removal.
3. Find out how varied Native experiences are in the United States today.
4. Name some traditional Native American artforms.

Vocabulary

Tribal Nations, bison, convert, Powhatan Confederacy, treaties, expeditions, syllabary, Indian Removal Act, Indian Territory, sovereign, Cherokee Nation, reservations, chief, band, climate change, ecosystems, media, quillwork, abstract, representational

Need help with some of these terms? See the glossary at the end of this lesson.



Lamar Site at Ocmulgee Ocmulgee National Monument 2016, Georgia Public Broadcasting

Native America before Conquest



What is this chapter about?

How the first people came to the Americas and developed different cultures



How long with this chapter take?

1 hour

Chapter 1: Warming Up

Before you explore, answer the questions below in your notebook.

Consider



1. What does the word *adapt* mean? Look it up in a dictionary if needed.
 - In what ways do people adapt to their environments?
 - How do you think early Native Americans adapted?

Discover

2. What might early Native American culture groups have done for food and shelter? If they settled, what locations might they have chosen? Explain your answers.

Early Native Peoples

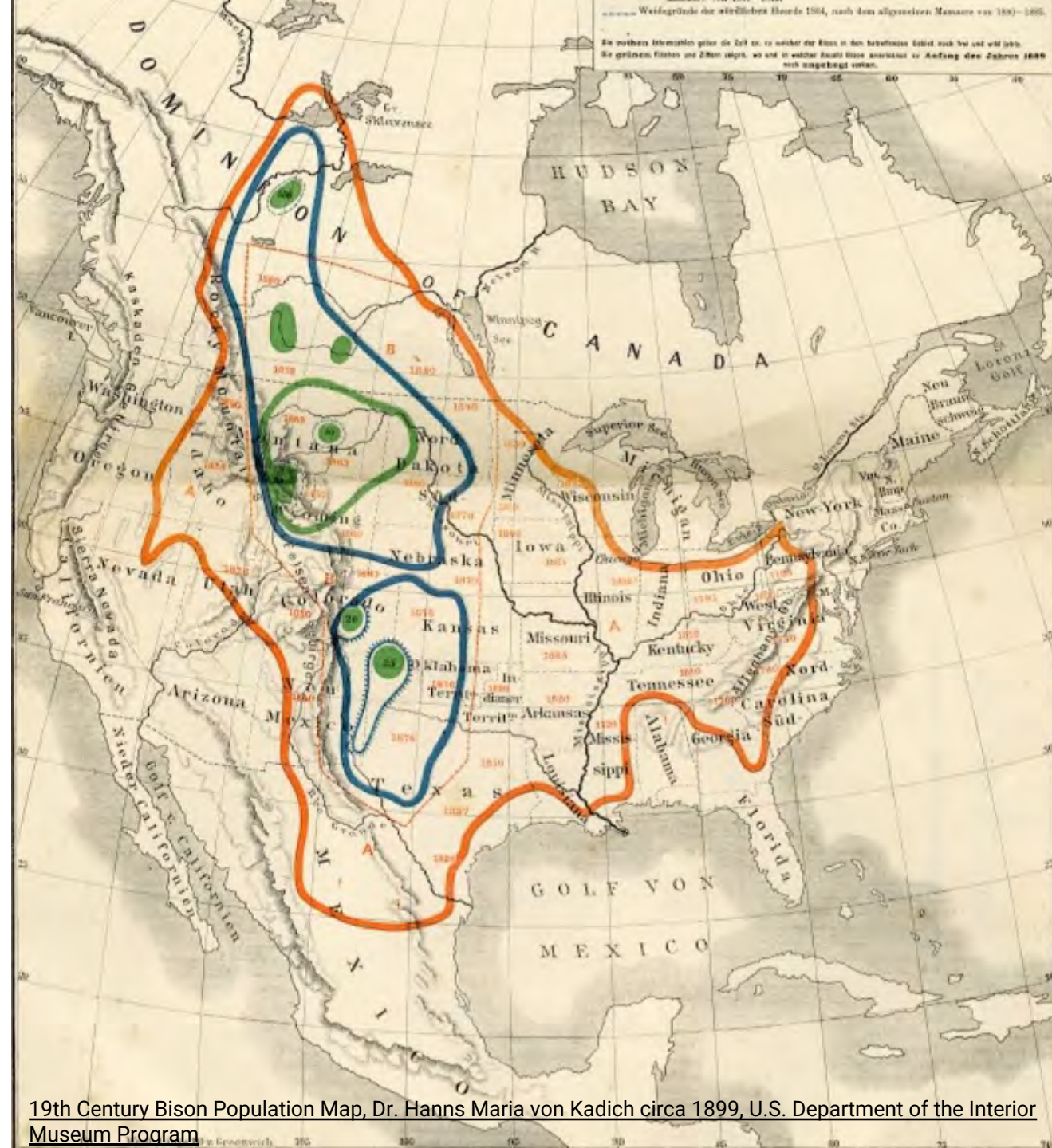
Some researchers believe that the first people in the Americas could've arrived as far back as 33,000 years ago. They came from the north, both on foot and by boat along the coast, as large ice sheets covering North America began to melt. Evidence shows that many early peoples followed herds of animals across the land. One of the most important animals to many Native peoples was the **bison**. The bison provided food, clothing, shelter, and tools.

Over thousands of years, different culture groups developed throughout North America. They adapted their lifeways to their surroundings and built thriving communities. Their homelands reached across what we now think of as the borders between North American nations. There were vast differences in language, settlement patterns, and cultural traditions.



Learn more about the significance of the bison [here](#).

The orange line on this historical map shows the extent of the original bison grazing grounds. You can see that the area covers much of the modern-day United States.



19th Century Bison Population Map, Dr. Hanns Maria von Kadich circa 1899, U.S. Department of the Interior Museum Program

The Hohokam

One of the earliest groups that researchers have evidence for is the Hohokam. The Hohokam lived between two rivers in what is now Arizona, beginning around 1 CE. They were farmers who irrigated their fields. They are also well known for their decorative arts. The later occupants of the area, the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Tohono O'odham (Papago), are thought to be the direct descendants of the Hohokam people.



Learn more about the Hohokam in [this story](#).

The Anasazi

Another group of early people in the American Southwest was the Anasazi—ancestors of the people we know today as the Pueblo tribes. The Anasazi lived in the area of what is now Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, beginning around 100 CE. At first, the Anasazi hunted and gathered food. Later, they grew crops, including corn and beans. Early Anasazi lived in caves, but later people built homes out of stone. Around 1100 CE, the Anasazi began building elaborate cliff dwellings high off the ground.



Puebloan cliff dwellings in Mesa Verde National Park CyArk

This photograph shows one of the cliff dwellings in Mesa Verde National Park.



Learn more about the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde in [this story](#).

See artifacts from the Anasazi and other peoples in [this story](#).

The Mississippians

The Mississippian culture was another early group of Native Americans. The Mississippians are believed to have lived mostly in the midwestern and southeastern parts of what is now the United States, beginning around 700 to 900 CE. They lived near rivers and were farmers of crops like corn and squash.



Learn more about the Mississippian culture [here](#) and [here](#).





The Mississippians are well known for their artwork and for their massive ceremonial mounds, like the one shown here. The mounds are believed to have been used for religious purposes and as burial grounds.



Learn more about the Mississippians' mounds [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Effects of the Spanish Arrival on Native Peoples

In 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas, on a small Caribbean island. He was leading an exploration for Spain, trying to find a sea route to India. Columbus believed he had reached India when he met the local people, the Taino. He called the Taino *los indios*—the *Indians* in Spanish. Columbus’s journey sparked a wave of exploration and colonization of the Americas. The Spanish wanted precious metals, gems, and spices. They also wanted to **convert** native people to Christianity. Colonizers refused to acknowledge native people’s nations or culture. They forced many native people into slavery. Millions died from brutal treatment and diseases brought by the Spanish. Some experts believe that as much as 95 percent of the Native American population died in the years after the invasion.



Mission San Juan Bautista CyArk 2012-12-19

After moving inland from the Caribbean, the Spanish gradually made their way into North America. They established missions—churches built to spread the Christian faith—to convert Native Americans. This mission, San Juan Bautista, is a remnant of their efforts. It is located in California.



Explore a California building inspired by Spanish colonial architecture [here](#).

Other Nations Send Colonists

Other nations—England, France, and the Netherlands—also sent out exploratory voyages, beginning in the late 1400s. In the 1500s, they began trying to build settlements, ignoring the fact that, in many cases, they were occupying land already claimed by native peoples. England's first colony—Roanoke (1587)—failed. In 1607 English colonists arrived in Virginia and established Jamestown. One of the leaders was Captain John Smith.



Learn more about Smith, the map shown here, and early Virginia in [this exhibit](#).



Virginia: Discovered and Discribed by Captain John Smith. Graven by William Hole. 1606. Library of Virginia

The Powhatan and Jamestown

Jamestown was located on the territory of the **Powhatan Confederacy**, a group of Algonquian peoples named for their powerful leader, Powhatan. Powhatan's daughter, Matoaka (Pocahontas was a nickname) often brought the hungry English colonists food and served as a negotiator between the groups. Relations between the groups were initially good. Over time, however, conflict developed.

In 1614 Matoaka was abducted by the English when they were at war with the Powhatan. During her captivity, she learned English and English customs. She married an English colonist, John Rolfe, in 1614. In 1616, the pair traveled to England. Other Powhatan made the trip as well. The colonists wanted English leaders to see that the relationship with the Powhatan was successful. The portrait shown here was made during her trip there. Matoaka was treated as royalty during the trip.



Learn more about this portrait of Matoaka in [this story](#).



Pocahontas, illustration in *Baziliwlogia A Booke of Kings, L...* Simon van de Passe 1616, National Portrait Gallery.

Effects of Colonial Expansion

The Jamestown colony eventually became very profitable. Throughout the 1600s and early 1700s, new groups of English settlers arrived and built colonies. Spain and France controlled other areas shown on the map. Initially, some English colonists established friendly relations with Native Americans. Over time, however, colonial expansion and competition for resources led to battles between settlers and Native Americans. Native American communities were often destroyed as colonists invaded their lands.



Read about the Creek and the founding of Georgia [here](#).



Chapter 1: Wrapping Up

Now that you've read the chapter, reflect on what you've learned by answering the question below.



The early Native Americans that you've learned about lived in different parts of the United States and had different forms of housing. What did the different groups have in common?

Chapter 2:

Native American Life under the U.S. Government



What is this chapter about?

The impact of U.S. government policies on Native Americans



How long will this chapter take?

1 hour



Chapter 2: Warming Up

Before you explore, answer the questions in your notebook.

Consider



1. Have you always lived in the same place, or have you moved around a lot? What do you think it would be like to be forced by the government to move to a different state or country?

Discover

2. How do people preserve the traditions that are important to them over time?

Cherokee nation. Constitution.
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The Early United States

In 1775, hostilities broke out between the British and American colonists. In 1776, the American colonies declared independence from Great Britain. War raged for more than seven years. Some Native American groups sided with the British. They hoped the British might help protect their lands. Others sided with the colonists.

In September 1783, the United States became an independent nation. Its leaders worked to set up a new government. In the country's first years, problems grew with other nations and within the United States itself. Leaders determined they needed a new plan for government. They enacted the U.S. Constitution in 1788.

Problems also grew for Native Americans. The U.S. government pressured many groups to give up their lands to white settlers. The resulting **treaties** forced Native Americans out of their homelands.



See how the Cherokee Nation modeled its 1827 Constitution after the U.S. Constitution in [this exhibit](#).



Westward Expansion

In 1803 U.S. leaders purchased the Louisiana Territory from France. This vast region west of the Mississippi River almost doubled the size of the United States. President Thomas Jefferson authorized **expeditions** to explore the new lands and to make contact with the Native Americans there. One of these was the Corps of Discovery, better known as the Lewis and Clark expedition.

The group left Missouri in May 1804 and traveled across North America. Sacagawea, a Shoshone, joined the expedition as a guide partway through the journey. The group reached the American West Coast in November 1805. They then made their way back. They documented plants, animals, people, and landforms throughout their journey.



Learn more about Sacagawea and other famous Native Americans [here](#).

Sacagawea, a Shoshone, served as a guide for the Lewis and Clark expedition.



Sequoyah and the Cherokee Writing System

Some Native Americans tried to adapt their customs and traditions to those of White Americans as the United States grew and expanded. One Cherokee—Sequoyah—saw White Americans' ability to read and write as a source of their power over Native peoples. He began working on a written form of the Cherokee language in 1806.

By 1821, Sequoyah had completed a **syllabary** of the Cherokee language. He showed other Cherokee how it worked by sending messages from one community to another. Teachers taught the writing system in Cherokee schools, where children quickly learned it. Newspapers and books could now be published in the Cherokee language.



Learn more about Sequoyah, the writing system, and the Cherokee Nation [here](#).



This portrait shows Sequoyah holding a page showing the writing system.



Sequoyah Portrait, Henry Inman, Georgia Public Broadcasting

The War of 1812 and the Creek War

In 1812 war between Britain and the United States broke out again. The two nations had been fighting over trade for years.

A related conflict developed among Native American peoples in the Southeast. Shawnee leader Tecumseh traveled there to encourage the Creek and other groups to resist white Americans and support the British. A civil war—the Creek War—broke out. A group of Creek called the Red Sticks attacked white settlements. In August 1813 U.S. general Andrew Jackson led an army of 5,000 against the Red Sticks, destroying Native American villages in the process. Other Creek, along with groups of Choctaw and Cherokee, aligned themselves with the white Americans.

In 1814, at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Jackson's army destroyed remaining Red Sticks forces. The Creek were then forced to sign a treaty giving up 23 million acres of their land to the U.S. government.



Read more about how the War of 1812 divided the Creek in [this exhibit](#).



Battle of Tohopeka—Death of Major Montgomery The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art 1847, Georgia Public Broadcasting

The Cherokee Are Forced Out of Georgia

This victory and Native American compliance with U.S. laws didn't stop white American demands, however. In 1829, discovery of gold in Georgia led to a rush of white settlers onto Cherokee lands. The Georgia state government began giving parcels of land to white settlers, ignoring Cherokee legal claims to the land. This map shows the Cherokee Nation between 1820 and 1868.

"They came afoot, on horseback, and in wagons, acting more like crazy men than anything else."

—prospector Benjamin Parks, describing the Georgia gold rush in the *Atlanta Journal*



Cherokee Nation Map, Georgia Public Broadcasting 2016, Georgia Public Broadcasting



Read more about the Georgia gold rush and the seizure of Cherokee lands [here](#).



The Devastation of the Indian Removal Act

Georgia's land lotteries were made legal by the **Indian Removal Act**, signed by President Andrew Jackson in 1830. This act required all Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River to leave their homelands and to move to a designated **Indian Territory** west of the Mississippi.

In 1832 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee Nation wasn't subject to laws passed by Congress because it was a **sovereign** nation. This meant that the court didn't support the removal of the Cherokee from their lands. Jackson ignored the court's ruling and continued forcing Native Americans from their homelands. Tens of thousands of Native Americans had been forcibly removed by 1840. Then, white settlers began moving into Indian Territory claiming Native Americans' lands once more. In 1907, Indian Territory became the state of Oklahoma.



Read more about this Supreme Court case [here](#).

John Ross, principal chief of the Cherokee Nation from 1828 to 1866

The New Echota Treaty

Believing that the U.S. government would not back down from Indian removal, a small group of Cherokee signed a treaty with the U.S. government. They agreed to give up their lands and move west. Chief Ross protested, saying that the signers didn't represent the **Cherokee Nation** as a whole. Cherokee were rounded up and forced to march west. The treaty signers were later executed by their people for betraying the nation.



Read more about Cherokee removal and the Trail of Tears [here](#).



Signing the Treaty of New Echota Ed Jackson 2016 Georgia Public Broadcasting

Continued Loss of Native Homelands

Southeastern Native Americans weren't the only ones who faced broken treaties and land seizure. Native Americans in other parts of North America were gradually pushed off their lands onto **reservations** by white settlers. As the United States spread west, Native Americans and white settlers came into frequent, often violent conflict.



See the role Fort Laramie played in the West in [this exhibit](#).



Photograph along the parade ground of Fort Laramie, CyArk

Red Cloud Defends His People's Lands

Many Native Americans in the West tried to resist White expansion onto their lands. Red Cloud, an Oglala-Lakota **chief**, led a coalition of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho in a war against the U.S. army from 1865 to 1867. The goal was to stop the flood of settlers invading Native Americans' best hunting grounds. The government had been planning a road from Fort Laramie to Montana. Red Cloud led constant attacks on U.S. army workers, forcing them to stop development of the road.

Red Cloud signed a treaty with the U.S. government in 1868, agreeing to peace in exchange for protection of Lakota lands. The treaty was broken, and the Lakota were forced onto the Pine Ridge Reservation. Red Cloud led efforts there to establish a school for educating his people, seeing that as a means of protecting their future. Red Cloud Indian School remains part of life in the Pine Ridge Reservation today.



Find out more about the effects of western expansion [here](#).



Red Cloud, Charles Milton Bell, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Teshunke Witko and Tatanka Iyotanka Continue Resistance

Even though Red Cloud and other Native American leaders in the West ultimately made peace agreements with the U.S. government, some Native leaders chose to continue the fight to protect their lands and livelihoods. Teshunke Witko, also known as Crazy Horse, was a chief of the Oglala **band** of Lakota Sioux. He refused to surrender to White Americans and led several successful attacks against the U.S. army. He and Chief Tatanka Iyotanka (Sitting Bull) of the Hunkpapa Lakota were responsible for the defeat of Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer at Little Bighorn.

Teshunke Witko was eventually forced to surrender by U.S. troops and was taken prisoner. He died during a fight with army soldiers trying to confine him. He is still seen by his people as a symbol of strength and resistance, as is Tatanka Iyotanka, the last Native American chief to surrender his rifle.



See a portrait photograph of Tatanka Iyotanka [here](#).





In spite of being forced off of their lands onto reservations, Native Americans held on to their cultural traditions and continued to fight for their own sovereignty and rights. Ancestors paved the way for Native Americans today, who continue to work to maintain thriving communities with their cultural traditions intact.

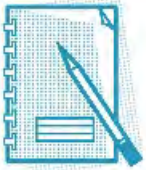


Learn more about famous Native Americans [here](#).

See how Native American women preserved traditions [here](#).

Chapter 2: Wrapping Up

Now that you've read the chapter, reflect on what you've learned by answering the question below.



You've seen how Native Americans were forced to leave their homelands through the policy of Indian removal. How do you think they kept their traditions alive for future generations?



Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska - Ho-Chunk Village Honoring Nations Google 360° Tour 2017, Honoring Nations

Chapter 3:

A Look at the Present



What is this chapter about?

A brief look at the strength and resilience of Native communities across the United States



How long will this chapter take?

1 hour

Chapter 3: Warming Up

Before you explore, answer the questions in your notebook.

Consider

1. Where do Native Americans live in the United States today? Do you have a Native community in your state? If you don't know, do some online research to find out, and write down that information.



Discover

2. What issues of concern might many Native people share in today's world?

Preserving the Past While Looking Toward the Future

The Inuit are native to the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. They and other Alaskan Native peoples face issues of **climate change** and its serious impact on the **ecosystems** of Alaska and the Arctic as a whole. These changes impact the lifeways of the communities that rely upon the area's natural resources. Alaska faces many diverse and critical issues. Photographer Brian Adams, who took the photographs on this and the next two slides, documents the landscapes and the people of Alaska. His work shows people's change, adaptation, and resilience.



LEANN ALEXIA AND MOLLY ANN NAPOKA Brian Adams 2016 Anchorage Museum

These girls are Yup'ik and live in Tuluksak, Alaska. Each lists math as a favorite subject.



[This part](#) of Adams's series focuses on the people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta of southwest Alaska. The photographs and stories show how people maintain tradition alongside modern ways.



Thomas Ahgupuk is Inupiaq and lives in Shishmaref, Alaska. He is an artist who carves jewelry and decorative items from the bones and tusks of walrus. He also carves whale bones and caribou antlers. Ivory is his favorite material to work with.



[This story](#) focuses on the villages in the Western Arctic region of Alaska.



Dyrell Lincoln and Justice Nukapigak are Inupiaq and live in Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska. In this photograph, they are in the tenth grade and are shoveling snow off the basketball court so that they can play. Their team made it to the state championships, placing third. The boys hope to play basketball in college.



[This story](#) focuses on the villages in the Arctic Coast region of Alaska.

Success Stories in Self-Government

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development was founded in 1987 to help support and honor social and economic development among Native American nations. There are 574 federally recognized Indian Nations in the United States. Depending on the culture group, they are referred to as tribes, bands, pueblos, communities, and native villages. Each one decides the best ways for its community to grow and flourish. Their governments determine how to educate children, pass on community values and traditions, and train future leaders. The Harvard Project honors outstanding achievements in self-governance through its Honoring Nations Awards.

This photograph shows an award given for intergovernmental relations to the Coast Salish Gathering. The Coast Salish of Washington State were recognized for gathering local, state, province, and Canadian and U.S. national government leaders to discuss and determine effective environmental strategies and practices that are relevant to the Coast Salish and others in the region.



Learn more about other honorees [here](#).



Coast Salish Gathering, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community - 2010 Honoring Nations Award Honoring Nations, The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development



The Citizen Potawatomi Nation in Oklahoma also received an Honoring Nations Award. The nation was recognized for its efforts to train college-aged, high-achieving Potawatomi on Potawatomi government, culture, and economic development through a six-week internship. The goal is to inspire interns to become future leaders.



Learn more about the Potawatomi Leadership Program in [this exhibit](#).

Potawatomi Leadership Program, Citizen Potawatomi Nation - 2014 Honoring Nations Award, Honoring Nations, The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development



Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (YDSP) is one of three federally recognized Native American tribes, and the only Pueblo, in the state of Texas. It received an Honoring Nations Award for its efforts in establishing comprehensive rules for citizenship.

Celebrating the Honoring Nations Award



Learn more about this project [here](#).



Chapter 3: Wrapping Up

Now that you've read the chapter, reflect on what you've learned by answering the question below.



What issue(s) of concern did you find that many Native people share in today's world? Explain your answer.

Chapter 4:

Native American Artistic Traditions



What is this chapter about?

The media used in traditional and modern Native art



How long will this chapter take?

1 hour

Chapter 4: Warming Up

Before you explore, answer the questions in your notebook.

Consider

1. You have probably taken an art class at some point in your schooling. What kinds of materials did you use?

Discover

2. What kinds of materials do you think Native people from long ago used? What about today?



A Variety of Media

Native Americans throughout history have produced art in many types of **media**. From everyday objects to those used for ceremonies, artworks reveal cultural traditions and personal experiences. Although there are many Native art practices, this chapter focuses on **quillwork**, beadwork, painting, and basketmaking.



View these exhibits to see a sampling of Native American art by region:



[Southeast](#)

[Northwest Coast](#)

[West](#)

[Southwest](#)

["When It's Peach Pickin' Time in Georgia, It's Apple Pickin' Time at the BIA" T. C. Cannon 1971 U.S. Department of the Interior](#)

Quillwork

Quillwork is an art form unique to Native Americans. It involves embroidery using the quills of porcupines and sometimes bird feathers, which are naturally white. The quills are soaked in dyes to color them. Dyes are made of materials from plants.

Quillwork was practiced for hundreds of years before the arrival of white settlers on the Great Plains. During the 1700s and 1800s, quilling arts reached their highest level of development. Then, the artform died out, but modern artists have revived the tradition.

Quillwork was used to decorate shirts, moccasins (shown at right), jewelry, baskets, and other objects. It is one of the most recognizable art forms of the Great Plains today.



See more examples of quillwork [here](#).

See one way the Anishinaabe used quillwork [here](#).

View an exhibit on moccasins [here](#).



[Men's Quilled Moccasins, unknown \(Sioux\), Sioux Indian Museum \(R.69.2.22\)1900, U.S. Department of the Interior](#)

Beadwork

One of the best-known Native art forms is beadwork. Early Native American artists created large beads from natural materials, such as bone and shell, using wood or stone tools. With the arrival of Europeans came smaller beads in large quantities, which Native Americans used to make the beaded designs like this one.



View [this exhibit](#) to see more quillwork and beadwork pieces.

See how Plains Native Americans used the U.S. flag in their beadwork [here](#).



[Beaded Baby Carrier, Mrs. Grouse Running \(probably Cheyenne River Sioux\), Sioux Indian Museum, U.S. Department of the Interior](#)



Many modern Native American artists continue the beadwork tradition, in addition to working in other media as well. These moccasins were made by artist Gaye Fowler, who is of Jewish and Cree Metis ancestry.



See more works of art by Fowler and three other Native Americans arts [here](#).

Painting

Early Native Americans painted designs on rocks. Later, artists painted hides, typically from bison. Europeans brought paper to the Americas, and many artists painted on paper after bison became scarce. Modern Native American painters use many different media, including oil on canvas, acrylic, and watercolor. Some have even returned to the hide painting tradition. Subject matter is both **abstract** and **representational**.



Learn more about traditional and modern Native American painting [here](#) and [here](#).



["Dakota Eagle Dancer" Oscar Howe 1962, U.S. Department of the Interior](#)

Basketry

Native Americans have made baskets for thousands of years. Their techniques have been passed down through many generations of people. Today, baskets are thought of as decorative, but they were a necessity for early peoples. They were used for storage, carrying items, and serving food. As a result, they were crafted in different shapes and sizes and of different materials.

Though they were everyday objects, Native peoples spent a great deal of time and effort on basketry design. Patterns were passed down from person to person. Their construction was time consuming—as many as 1,000 stitches could be required to craft one basket.

The materials used reflect the location of the maker. In the Northeast, people used soft grasses. In the Southeast, makers used wicker and pine needles. Northwest people used spruce root and cedar bark. People in the Southwest used yucca and sumac.



Read more about Native American basketmaking [here](#) and [here](#).

The artist who made these baskets used spruce root, bear grass, dyed porcupine quills, and maidenhair fern.



Creativity in the Everyday

As you've seen throughout this chapter, Native American artistic traditions have been carried down over thousands of years. From everyday tools to ceremonial objects, the items reflect the creativity and ingenuity of their makers.



Would you like to learn more about Native American functional yet beautiful pieces? View more Native American artifacts [here](#) and [here](#).

See the work of contemporary Inuit ceramicists [here](#).



Yarn Bag Winnebago 1890/1910 Grand Teton National Park, National Park Service

Chapter 4: Wrapping Up

Now that you've read the chapter, reflect on what you've learned by answering the question below.



What common Native American artforms did you learn about in this chapter?

Digital Learning in Action

So, what did you learn? Read the questions and complete the learning activities below to extend your learning based on what you just experienced.



Reflect Answer these questions:

- Who were some of the early Native peoples?
- What impact does environment have on how a culture develops? Give some examples from the lesson.
- What issues do modern Native Americans have to handle in their communities?



Summarize: Describe the materials used by early Native Americans to create art. For what purposes were some of their creations used?



Create: Look at the artwork shown here. It is called “Trade Canoe: Adrift.” It is Native American artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith’s interpretation of the experience of Syrian refugees in the modern world. The piece reflects on Smith’s own Native American heritage. Write a paragraph describing how this piece reflects Native experiences after the European invasion. If you need to look more closely at the painting, go [here](#).



Glossary

- **abstract:** expressing ideas in art without using elements to create a realistic picture
- **band:** a small kinship-based group of Native Americans
- **bison:** large, shaggy mammal that typically lives and migrates in herds
- **Cherokee Nation:** the sovereign tribal government of the Cherokee people
- **chief:** the head political officer of a Native American group, tribe, or Tribal Nation
- **climate change:** major, long-lasting changes to Earth's climate and weather patterns
- **convert:** to bring about a change to religious beliefs
- **ecosystems:** communities of organisms living in an environment as a unit
- **expeditions:** journeys taken for a particular purpose
- **Indian Removal Act:** an 1830 law of the U.S. Congress, signed by President Andrew Jackson, that removed Native Americans east of the Mississippi River from their homelands; was one of the first legal steps to creating a reservation system
- **Indian Territory:** a former territory designation for Native Americans that is located in the modern-day state of Oklahoma
- **media:** types of artistic expression
- **Powhatan Confederacy:** an alliance of around 30 Algonquian-speaking Native American tribes that lived in areas of what is today Virginia and Maryland
- **quillwork:** decorative work in bird or porcupine quills
- **representational:** in art, a likeness or image
- **reservations:** areas of public lands set aside for Native Americans
- **sovereign:** possessing supreme political power
- **syllabary:** a set of characters that represent syllables in a language
- **treaties:** written agreements between governments or peoples
- **Tribal Nations:** the collection of 574 sovereign Native American groups—tribes, bands, nations, pueblos, communities, or native villages