



Recommended Classroom Practices During Halloween, Thanksgiving, Native American Heritage Month, and Related Events

Extensive research has consistently shown that school curricula and learning environments are essential to the creation of students' understandings of themselves and others. This is especially true in terms of the way school curricula and resources represent Indigenous peoples, which often creates a narrow and unhealthy understanding about American Indians in the general public. As leaders of the Kansas Association for Native American Education, in an effort to combat stereotypes and create a healthier learning environment for ALL students, **we strongly recommend that educators avoid** the following activities:

- Activities that encourage non-Indians to mimic or play Indian in any manner (i.e. Halloween costumes, Thanksgiving pageantry, creating fake Indian "crafts", making fake Indian sounds by placing hand over mouth, etc.);
- Activities that mock Indians through song and dance in the name of fun ("10 Little Indians," "We are the Red Men," tomahawk chop, etc.);
- Activities and/or lessons that teach incomplete or false histories about American Indians and their historical relationships with non-Natives (Thanksgiving pageants, "reenactments" of Thanksgiving feasts, etc.).
- Activities that support and/or encourage use of American Indian mascots and accompanying imagery.

While the above activities are discouraged, **we strongly encourage** the following actions when working to improve and update school learning environments for, and with, American Indians:

- Choose curricular materials and classroom media that is up-to-date, in line with current research, and avoids age-old stereotypes;
- Seek feedback and/or resources from American Indian educators who are knowledgeable and experienced about research related to American Indians and education;
- When choosing curricular materials and event speakers, prioritize materials and presenters who are affiliated with American Indian communities.
- Retire the use of American Indian mascots and imagery.

We thank the educators and leaders who are critically examining their practices, and applaud ongoing efforts to advocate for these research-based changes. Below is a list of resources that can be used to help better understand these issues, as well as help identify more appropriate resources for educators as they search for ways to create more healthy learning environments.

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Resources for Educators

American Indians in Children's Literature

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>

IllumiNative (and Native Now): A nonprofit initiative designed to increase the visibility of - and challenge the negative narrative about - Native Nations and peoples in American society

<https://illuminatives.org/>

<https://illuminatives.org/nativenow/>

Reclaiming Native Truth: A Project to Dispel Myths and Misconceptions

<https://rnt.firstnations.org/>

National Museum of the American Indian/Smithsonian

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/?fbclid=IwAR3ZyEqEB35Ui0NnLZ79NYhA08I6vPQdOhEa-1FzCim5ADhU9gF0Uvh6uR0>

We Can Do Better: Rethinking Native Stories in Classrooms

<https://www2.ncte.org/blog/2018/11/can-better-rethinking-native-stories->

[classrooms/?fbclid=IwAR1TlekWISim23voFzGP8nHp2_vPRuyJVbuKvOW0g-BmvWCUDhKAurHVk](https://www2.ncte.org/blog/2018/11/can-better-rethinking-native-stories-classrooms/?fbclid=IwAR1TlekWISim23voFzGP8nHp2_vPRuyJVbuKvOW0g-BmvWCUDhKAurHVk)

A Racial Justice Guide to Thanksgiving for Educators and Families

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GslXaUMGplGREqvm9b_Vt-

[xlzCWwRg0nCyKtEVtIuig/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR17hPv4R44McHzeGxlewwzkGXngrfK70rAWXL4b3_R2_4rbePcAc3gdXzE](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GslXaUMGplGREqvm9b_Vt-xlzCWwRg0nCyKtEVtIuig/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR17hPv4R44McHzeGxlewwzkGXngrfK70rAWXL4b3_R2_4rbePcAc3gdXzE)

Teaching Thanksgiving in a Socially Responsible Way

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-thanksgiving-in-a-socially-responsible-way>

Decolonizing Thanksgiving: A Toolkit for Combatting Racism in Schools

<https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/decolonizing-thanksgiving-a-toolkit-for-combatting-racism-in-schools-5d4e3023a2f8>

Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots

http://www.indianmascots.com/fryberg--web-psychological_.pdf

Missing the Point: The Real Impact of Native Mascots and Team Names on American Indian and Alaska Native Youth

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2014/07/22/94214/missing-the-point/>

National Indian Education Association Resolution – Elimination of Race-Based Indian Logos, Mascots, and Names

<http://www.niea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/promoting-healthy-lifestyles-and-Well-Being%20for-native-students/2009-05.pdf>

APA Resolution Recommending the Immediate Retirement of American Indian Mascots, Symbols, Images, and Personalities by Schools, Colleges, Universities, Athletic Teams, and Organizations

<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/mascots.pdf>

Toward Responsibility: Social Studies Education that Respects and Affirms Indigenous Peoples and Nations (A Position Statement of National Council for the Social Studies)

<https://www.socialstudies.org/positions/indigenous-peoples-and-nations>

Teaching Slavery Through Children's Literature (including critical understanding of Indigenous enslavement affiliated with Thanksgiving lessons, and an interview with Dr. Debbie Reese of the American Indians in Children's Literature Blog)

<https://www.tolerance.org/podcasts/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/teaching-slavery-through-childrens-literature-part-2>