

Self-Guided School Tour

GRADES 7–12

NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF THE
AMERICAN
INDIAN

TEACHERS: These activities are intended to help you facilitate conversation with students as you explore the museum.

People, Places, and Environments: For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have observed, survived in, interacted with, and developed diverse cultures and cultivated deep, abiding relationships with their homelands. These foundations continue to influence American Indian relationships and interactions with the land today.

4th LEVEL: *Our Universes—Hupa*

LOOK

Have students spend time looking at the objects in the exhibition and watching the videos.

ASK

- + How do the objects in the exhibit show the tribe's connection to the land? What items do you see that make you think that?
- + What are the Hupa's main dances? How are these dances connected to the land?
- + In what ways have the changes to their environment disrupted Hupa culture and traditions?
- + Why do you think it would be important for the Hupa to continue their dances and ceremonies? How do the Hupa feel about it?
- + With all these challenges the Hupa face, how could their traditions be adapted so they continue?
- + How does it make you feel to be required to seek permission from a federal agency to continue traditions that have been taking place for hundreds of years?

EXPLAIN

Approximately 2,000 Hupa live in the Hoopa Valley of northwestern California on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation. Their reservation contains approximately 133 miles of rivers and streams, a section of the Trinity River and 3200 acres of wetlands. The Hupas practice three main dances during the fall: White Deer Skin Dance, Brush Dance, and the Jump Dance. These dances are important because they cleanse, heal, and rejuvenate the community and the land. Today, Hupa traditions, like those of other American Indian nations, continue to be challenged due to many factors such as poor forestry management, water pollution, dams, etc.



Hupa Jump Dance headdress, early 20th c. Deer hide, yew, woodpecker scalps, blue jay scalps, sinew, thread, 94 x 23 x 0.8 cm. NMAI 00/1210.

Hupa men at a Woodpecker or Jump dance, 1895. Pecwan, California. Photo by A. W. Ericson. NMAI P18096



4th LEVEL:

Nation to Nation: Treaties between the United States and American Indian Nations

LOOK

Take students to the area titled “Bad Acts / Bad Paper” and have them look at the boarding school section.

ASK

- + *What does it mean to be “civilized”? How are civilized people different from uncivilized people?*
- + *Who decides who is civilized and who is not?*
- + *What is a boarding school? How is it different from public school?*
- + *What do you think it would be like to go to a boarding school?*
- + *How would you cope with being separated from your parents and forced to speak a foreign language?*
- + *What do you think it would have been like to go to an American Indian boarding school?*
- + *How do you think boarding schools affected American Indian cultures?*

EXPLAIN

American Indian peoples never thought of themselves as uncivilized. They had governments, religions, and social systems, and they wanted to stay civilized in their own way. However, the United States believed that in order to prevent American Indian parents from raising their children in their own cultures, it was important to send them far away to boarding schools. At the boarding schools children could be shut off from Indian languages, values, and traditions. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School used military discipline to train children in mainstream American culture. Children would be punished if they were caught speaking their languages or practicing their traditions. At these schools, boys were taught farming and trades, and girls were taught sewing and cooking. Today, as a result of these schools, not all Native people speak their traditional languages or practice their traditional religions.



Photos taken of Chiricahua Apache children upon arrival at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1886 (at left) and four months later, in 1887 (at right), for purposes of publicizing the school’s progress in transforming Indian children and fulfilling its mission to “civilize” them. Photos by J. N. Choate. NMAI Po6848, Po6847



Iroquois lacrosse stick, ca. 1890.
Carved and bent wood, hide, 135.3 x
18.6 x 5.4 cm. NMAI 00/8792.

3rd LEVEL: Window on Collections—Toys & Games

LOOK

Have the students take a moment and look at the toys and games in the case. Next, bring their attention to the shinny game stick (long “L” shaped sticks) and the lacrosse stick.

ASK

- + *What toys and games do you see that are familiar to you? Which is most interesting to you? Why?*
- + *What do you think this long pole is used for? (Point to the shinny game stick.)*
- + *How do you think it was played?*
- + *Do you think all tribes played shinny? Why or why not?*
- + *What do you think this object is? (Point to the lacrosse stick.) How do you think people played with it?*
- + *Do you think all tribes played lacrosse?*
- + *What might be the benefits of playing these games?*



Yaquina [Confederated Tribes of Siletz] shinny stick, 1900–10.
Siletz Reservation, Oregon. Wood, 93 x 3 x 6 cm. NMAI 04/7532

EXPLAIN

Games have always been, and still are, an important part of American Indian cultures. Not only are they fun to play but many of them teach the importance of physical strength, well-being, and team building. Team sports also offer opportunities for communities to socialize. Not all American Indian nations played the same games; it depended on where they lived. Shinny is a sport traditionally played in teams and is kind of like a combination of hockey and soccer. There are many different types of shinny, which can have 10 to 20 people playing in a field as long as 75 yards. At each end of the field there are goalies. Players use the sticks to hit and push a stuffed deer-hide ball across the opponent’s goal line. In another version played by the Potawatomi Nation of Kansas, two deer hide balls are tied together and tossed in the air instead of rolled over the ground. Lacrosse is a modern game that originated with the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). It is modeled after the Native game of stickball. It was a game that was played on a field as short as one hundred yards or as long as two miles. It was played to resolve disputes and to bring families, communities, and nations together.



Made of plant fiber, these sandals would have carried a *chaski* (messenger runner) from a half mile to five miles at top speed.

Inka sandals, AD 1450–1532. Cusco region, Peru. Plant fiber. Left: 21.3 × 9.2 × 3.2 cm; Right: 20.6 × 10.2 × 3.2 cm. NMAI 11/363.

3rd LEVEL: The Great Inka Road: Engineering an Empire

LOOK

Take students to the section that introduces the Inka Road, then take them to the section on *chaskis*.

ASK

- + How many miles was the Inka Road system?
- + Why would the Inka build such a large road system?
- + How many *suyus* (regions) did the Inka Road connect?
- + How did Inka leaders keep all the different regions of the Inka Empire connected?
- + What is a *chaski*?
- + How many miles did one *chaski* run? Could you run that many miles?
- + What kind of shoes did the *chaski* wear? How were they worn? Could you run in these type of shoes?

EXPLAIN

The Inka controlled a road system of 25,000 miles. The road was only used for official business of Inka leaders to connect the four *suyus* (regions) that made up the Inka Empire. Inka leaders used the road to move armies, food, information, and many other things. *Chaskis*, or runners, carried messages of official business throughout the empire. Young men with excellent running skills were usually chosen for this occupation. *Chaskis* were trained in schools to memorize messages and to read *kipus*, objects made of colored string knotted in various ways to record census data, the movement of goods and people throughout the empire, and religious and military information. Twenty-five runners could cover about 150 miles in one day using a relay system.

Inka *paqcha* (ritual vessel) in the form of a sandaled foot, ca. AD 1450–1532. Lambayeque Region, Peru. Pottery, clay slip, 18.5 x 8.9 x 10 cm. NMAI 15/7496.

