Native American Heritage Month

November is Native American Heritage Month, which was first declared by President George H.W. Bush in 1990. The month provides an opportunity to commemorate the rich and diverse cultures, traditions and histories and acknowledge the important contributions of Native American/Indigenous people. It is also an important time to educate the general public, as well as young people in schools, about the bias, discrimination and unique challenges faced by Native
American/Indigenous people both historically and currently and the ways in which they have confronted these challenges.

In schools and classrooms, Native American Heritage Month is good time to explore Native American history and culture as well as the injustices faced by them and how that injustice has been and continues to be confronted and overcome. However, as with other similarly themed months, it is important not to isolate Native American history and culture into one month during the year. Below are curriculum and other educational resources to bring the themes of Native American Heritage Month to your classroom in November and throughout the year.

Lesson Plans

LESSON PLAN

**Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples Day?**

HIGH SCHOOL

Should we change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day? Students reflect on primary source material to gain insight into why some cities and states have changed the holiday's name and consider their own points of view.
**Lessons Plan**

**Lewis and Clark: The Unheard Voices**

*Elementary School, Middle School, High School*

This multi-grade unit takes an in-depth look at the history of U.S. expansion and Indian policy, and present the voices and perspectives of Native Americans on the Lewis and Clark expedition.

![Image of a Native American figure](image-url)

*George Littlechild*

---

**Privilege, Discrimination and Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System**

*High School*

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to reflect on the killing of Michael Brown through the lens of race, privilege and power. Students will learn more about unearned privilege, examine the various levels of racial disparities in the criminal justice system and explore the role white privilege plays in the different interactions whites and people of color have with community service providers, such as law enforcement.

![Image of a protest scene](image-url)
Why is the Washington Redskins' name controversial? Middle and high school students explore and reflect on different perspectives to understand and determine their own points of view.

Should Washington's NFL Team Change Their Name

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Why is the Washington Redskins' name controversial? Middle and high school students explore and reflect on different perspectives to understand and determine their own points of view.
Fry Bread: A Native American Family Tradition
This book is a celebration of old and new, traditional and modern, similarity and difference—telling the story of a modern Native American family.

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

Shin-chi’s Canoe
When Shi-shi-etko and Shin-chi arrive at the Indian Residential School, Shi-shi-etko reminds her younger brother that they can only use their English names and that they are not allowed to speak to each other.
Thunder Boy Jr.

Thunder Boy Jr. is named after his dad, but he wants a name that’s all his own.

When We Were Alone

This book tells the story about a difficult time in history and one of empowerment and strength.
Other Resources

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Sports, Mascots and Bias**

The Washington D.C's football team's name continues to spark controversy. Here are tips and strategies for family conversations with youth about mascots, slurs, names and epithets.

---

**PRESS RELEASE**

*Adidas Applauded for Offering to Assist Schools in Moving Away from Offensive Native American Nicknames and Mascots*

---

**PRESS RELEASE**

*ADL Welcomes Patent Office Decision Deeming Redskins Name ‘Disparaging’ to Native Americans*