

Resources for Engaging Indigenous Literatures in K-12 Classrooms

This list was compiled by Dr. Mandy Suhr-Sytsma in collaboration with members of the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures (ASAIL). The list focuses on resources for K-12 teachers who wish to engage Indigenous literatures and related topics in their classrooms. The list is not exhaustive. Those who consult it are encouraged to submit additional resources to the ASAIL officers (identified on the ASAIL website). The list will be updated periodically based on such suggestions. The list was last updated in November of 2016.

Online Resources

- Debbie Reese’s American Indians in Children’s Literature Blog
 - “Established in 2006, American Indians in Children’s Literature (AICL) provides critical perspectives and analysis of indigenous peoples in children’s and young adult books, the school curriculum, popular culture, and society.”
 - This site is the most extensive out there on children’s literature by and about Indigenous peoples. The site includes reviews, resources for educators, “best of” lists, commentary on current issues (like mascot debates), and more. You can browse and search by specific titles, tribal nations, or topics.

- Oyate.org Website
 - The organization Oyate promotes children’s literature—especially literature authored and illustrated by Native people—and curricula that portrays American Indians with "historical accuracy, cultural appropriateness and without anti-Indian bias and stereotypes."
 - The site hosts reviews and resources, including resources on Thanksgiving and on “How to Tell the Difference” between appropriate and inappropriate representations of American Indians in children’s books.
 - For hundreds of book reviews, see Oyate’s print publication *A Broken Flute*.

- American Indian Librarian Association’s Website
 - “An affiliate of the American Library Association (ALA), the American Indian Library Association is a membership action group that addresses the library-related needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Members are individuals and institutions interested in the development of programs to improve Indian library, cultural, and informational services in school, public, and research libraries on reservations. AILA is also committed to disseminating information about Indian cultures, languages, values, and information needs to the library community. AILA cosponsors an annual conference and holds a yearly business meeting in conjunction with the American Library Association annual meeting. It publishes the American Indian Libraries Newsletter twice a year.”
 - Their website includes an extensive annotated list of resources for educators along with book reviews, newsletters, and information about events.

- American Indian/Indigenous Education Website of Northern Arizona University’s College of Education

- Maintained by Education Professor Jon Reyhner, this site contains a resources and links on a range of topics including children’s literature and reading/literacy.
- Cynthia Leitich Smith’s page on Native American Themes in Children's & YA Books
 - Includes tips for teachers, librarians, and parents along with bibliographies and reviews of Native-authored children’s and YA literature.
- Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian Website
 - They host a newsletter, an annotated list of resources, lesson plans, and information about events for educators.
- National Education Association Website
 - The “Native American and Alaska Native Heritage Month, Grades K-5” page includes lesson plans, activities, and resources.
- Websites of Regionally-Specific organizations
 - The Indian Education page of the Montana Office of Public Instruction includes a wealth of curriculum resources, many by Indigenous scholars and teachers, about Indigenous communities broadly as well as those based in Montana
 - The Alaska Native Knowledge Network website includes a database of lessons and units searchable by content, cultural standards, cultural region, and grade level along with many other resources.
 - The Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS) website includes information, news about events, and K-12 classroom resources focused on Oceti Sakowin (“Sioux”) communities.
 - The Native Reader MN Blog by Anishinaabe teacher-scholar Dawn Quigley includes book reviews and links to many general Native American curriculum resources as well as links to resources for educators addressing the Minnesota Language Arts Standards requiring teachers to focus on literary works by and about Native American communities in Minnesota.
- Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures (ASAIL) Website & Listserv
 - In addition to this resource guide, the ASAIL site includes examples of syllabi, assignments, and other materials.
 - Become an ASAIL member to access our active listserv of scholar/teachers and to receive the academic journal *Studies in American Indian Literature*, the only journal in the US that focuses exclusively on American Indian literatures.
- The Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA) Website
 - “ILSA is a scholarly body based in lands claimed by Canada that focuses on the teaching and study of Indigenous peoples' literatures.”
 - The “Resources” page includes descriptions of new works in the field and links to websites of Indigenous presses (the presses offer an incredible range of resources, especially for teachers addressing Canadian Aboriginal literatures).
- Official Websites of Tribal/Band Governments

- These often provide information about the history and contemporary life of the community, links to other resources, and contact information.
- Official sites typically include statements claiming official status, messages from tribal leaders, and information about services for tribal members. Contact the tribe directly to verify that a site is truly official.
- Don't rely on websites alone. Get in touch with community leaders.
- Indigenous-Operated News Media Sites
 - Indian Country Today: This flagship American Indian newspaper features many full-length stories online.
 - Indianz.com: Operated by the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and Noble Savage Media, a Native American-owned media firm, this site publishes two to three feature stories per day. They also summarize stories found in a variety of other news sources, and share links to other Native American websites.
 - Native Voice One: The Native American Radio Service: This site features a five-minute long daily National Native News Podcast and a wealth of other audio programming on Indigenous issues.
 - Turtle Talk: This blog hosted by the Indigenous Law and Policy Center at the Michigan State University College of Law features frequent posts on current Indigenous law and policy issues. It also has links to many other Native news media and social media sources, including the websites of Indigenous activist organizations, local tribal newspapers, and Twitter campaigns.

Print Resources

- Oyate's *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (2005) includes hundreds of reviews of books by and about Native Americans.
- *Lessons from Turtle Island: Native Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms* (2002) by Guy W. Jones and Sally Moomaw is highly recommended by Debbie Reese and others.
- *Roots and Branches: A Resource of Native American Literature-Themes, Lessons, and Bibliographies* (1998) by Dorothea Susag focuses on Indigenous histories and literatures of the North Central U.S. but also attends to other Indigenous texts and contexts.
- *American Indian Themes in Young Adult Literature* (2005) by Paulette F. Molin (Anishinaabe) discusses contemporary YA fiction, historical YA fiction, and non-fiction by and about Native Americans.
- Paul DePasquale and Doris Wolf's "Select Bibliography of Canadian Picture Books for Children by Aboriginal Authors," printed in *Canadian Children's Literature* 115-116 (Fall-Winter 2004, pages 144-159) provides an overview of several children's literature works by Canadian Aboriginal writers and illustrators.
- The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)'s 2008 book *Sherman Alexie in the Classroom: "This is not a silent movie. Our voices will save our lives"* offers ideas for teaching Alexie's poetry and short stories as well as novels.
- Literary Texts with Accompanying Teaching Resources
 - There is not space here to provide an extensive list of Native-authored literary texts appropriate for K-12 settings. Other resources listed in this document offer such lists and reviews. It is worth noting, however, that some literary texts come with curricular resources, and that these materials vary in quality. Look for

resources researched by qualified scholars/educators who involved Native communities in the production of the resources.

- *Native Daughters: Oklahoma* is an example of a book with a well-researched accompanying curriculum guide. The guide, available as a free pdf download from the University of Nebraska Press website, was written by a group of experienced Native women educators. Aimed at eight graders in Oklahoma, it includes detailed lesson plans coded for Oklahoma state standards.

Academic Journals

- Academic journals can help teachers deepen their knowledge of Indigenous texts and contexts. While some journals are open access, others are only available via personal or institutional subscription. K-12 teachers often network with colleagues who have university affiliations to gain access to subscription-based journals.
- *Studies in American Indian Literatures* is the only journal in the US that focuses exclusively on American Indian literatures. ASAIL members receive print copies of this quarterly journal. It is also available online via *Project Muse* and other databases.
- Native American and Indigenous Studies Journals
 - Some General Journals: *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, *American Indian Quarterly*, *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, *Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association*, *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, *Tribal College Journal*, *Native Studies Review*, *Transmotion*, and *Wicazo Sa Review*
 - Some Education-Focused Journals: *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, and *Journal of American Indian Education*

People Resources

- Birchbark Books. Louise Erdrich's bookstore located in Minneapolis, MN. The staff is great. Call (612) 374-4023 to ask for recommendations and advice (and to buy books!).
- Local Indigenous community leaders. Reach out to these folks, seek their advice on curricula, and invite them to participate in programming at your school.
- Faculty and staff at educational institutions in your region: tribal colleges, other colleges and universities, community education centers, museums, historical societies, etc. Collaborate with folks from these places, and get on their email lists to hear about events.
- Teacher-Scholars at academic conferences like the Native American Literature Symposium (NALS), the Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA) Annual Gathering, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) Annual Meeting, the Canadian Association for the Study of Indigenous Education (CASIE) Annual Conference, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Annual Convention, Northern Arizona University's College of Education's Annual Indian/Indigenous Teacher Education Conference, and more.