

Classroom Connections

SCHOOL TOUR | *Beyond the Buffalo*

Grade Levels: 3rd — 8th

The
Nelson-Atkins
Museum
of Art



Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock/Okinawan/Hawaiian, born 1977), *Adaptation*, 2011. Commercial shoes, glass and 24k gold-plated beads, polyester tassels. Each: 6 1/2 x 3 3/8 x 8 1/2 inches (16.51 x 8.57 x 21.59 cm). Purchase: A. Keith Brodtkin Fund for the Acquisition of Contemporary American Indian Art, 2011.42.A,B | *Bandolier Bag*, Delaware, Kansas, ca. 1850. Cotton and wool cloth, glass beads, wool yarn, and silk ribbon, 29 1/8 x 24 1/8 inches (73.99 x 61.29 cm). Gift of Ned Jalbert, 2009.77.1

CURRICULUM AREAS ADDRESSED IN THIS TOUR:

Visual Arts Standards (KS)

- Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Visual Art Standards (MO)

- Analyze and evaluate art using art vocabulary.
- Explain how artworks reflect the cultures in which they were created.
- Explain how historical events and social ideas are reflected in artworks from selected cultures or historical time periods.

History, Government, and Social Studies Standards (KS)

- The student will investigate beliefs, contributions, ideas, and/or diverse populations and connect them to contemporary issues.
- The student will investigate the relationships among people, places, ideas, and/or the environment and connect those relationships to contemporary issues.

Social Studies Standards (MO)

- Analyze how people are affected by, depend on, adapt to, and change their physical environments in the past and in the present.
- Compare cultural characteristics across historical time periods.
- Analyze the preservation of cultural life, celebrations, traditions, and commemorations over time.

TOUR DESCRIPTION:

This tour introduces students to Native American cultures from four North American geographic regions. In learning about native peoples of the Woodlands, Plains, Southwest, and Northwest Coast, students will understand that Native American art of the past and the present reflects its cultural, historical, spiritual, and geographic contexts.

TOUR OBJECTIVES:

- Students will understand that Native American artists may use oral tradition and a deliberate visual language to communicate their beliefs and cultural values.
- Students will understand that Native American artists use materials indigenous to their local environments as well as materials acquired from elsewhere.
- Students will understand that past and contemporary Native American artists value tradition and innovation.

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To schedule a tour:
nelson-atkins.org/educators/school-tours

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

Learning Through Objects

During their tour, students will consider what art objects can tell us about the indigenous artists and cultures that produced them. To prepare for your visit, encourage students to practice this skill in the classroom. Show students one or more of the images below, and have them discuss the following:

- What do you think this object is made from? How long ago do you think it was made?
- What do you think its purpose was? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What might we be able to guess about this culture, based only on the object we're looking at?



Primrose Adams (Haida, b. 1926) and Robert Davidson (Haida, b. 1946), *Painted Basketry Hat*, ca. 1978. View online at bit.ly/2v04yTZ.



Shield, Arikara (North Dakota), ca. 1850. View online at bit.ly/2xjTHSm.



Lonnie Vigil (Nambe, New Mexico, born 1949), *Micaceous Pottery Jar*, 2007. View online at bit.ly/39y4EOo.

Art, Values, and Spirituality

Many of the objects students will see during their tour have a profound spiritual significance for the cultures that produced them. These objects can communicate cultural values and beliefs through visual language. For example, the Arikara shield shown above depicts the owner's guardian spirit, while other works featuring plant or animal designs suggest the importance placed on respecting nature within the Native worldview. Invite students to brainstorm other cultural values that exist in our world. What values and objects are important to them or their families?

Considering Environmental Context

This tour features objects from the Woodlands, Plains, Southwest, and Northwest Coast regions of North America. To become familiar with these regions, students can use atlases, online encyclopedias, or other geographic sources to learn about their climate, terrain, and natural resources.



AFTER YOUR VISIT

Responding Through Art

After seeing examples of visual imagery tied to cultural values, have students develop elements of their own visual language. Encourage students to brainstorm symbols that could represent values that are important to them (i.e. clasped hands for friendship or a lightbulb for intelligence). Then, instruct students to create original artworks using those symbolic elements to communicate their personal values.

Digging Deeper

Activate students' research skills by doing an in-depth investigation into one of the Native American nations they saw represented at the museum. Using print and web sources, students can learn about the history, beliefs, traditional practices, and contemporary lives of one of the following groups:

Ojibwa

Algonquian

Delaware

Cheyenne

Pawnee

Sioux / Lakota

Hopi

Apache

Navajo / Diné

Kwakiutl / Kwakwaka'wakw

Haida

Tlingit

GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATED TO NATIVE AMERICAN ART

Bison:	Also called <i>buffalo</i> , this large, powerful animal was of central importance to many Plains tribes
Fetish:	An object believed to have magical or supernatural power
Finger weaving:	A type of weaving common to many Native American cultures; it is done without a loom and was traditionally used to make items like belts and sashes
Flora and fauna:	Plant and animal life
Indigenous:	Native to or originating in a particular place
Katsina:	Any one of over 500 divine or ancestor spirits sacred to the Pueblo Indians of the American Southwest; they are represented in small wooden figures decorated with distinctive markings
Ledger drawing:	A type of drawing made by Plains Indian artists of the nineteenth century; they were made with pencil, ink, and watercolor on the pages of old ledger (account) books and recorded the lives and deeds of their creators
Media:	Materials used to make works of art
Natural resources:	Materials found in nature that are necessary or useful to humans; examples include water, minerals, and forests
Pattern:	A repeated design; patterns can be linear (repeating in lines) or radial (repeating out from the center of a circle)
Pictograph:	A symbol in the form of a picture
Powwow:	A Native American festival that involves singing, dancing, feasting, and the celebration of indigenous cultures
Pueblo:	A village consisting of <i>adobe</i> (clay brick) or stone structures built by Native Americans of the Southwest; also refers collectively to the Native American nations, such as the Hopi, who traditionally built and occupied these villages
Quillwork:	An art form practiced by some Native American peoples that involves using softened, dyed porcupine quills to create designs on clothing or other items
Symbolism:	Using signs to represent ideas, people, events, etc.
Values:	Principles or standards of behavior; something considered to be important in life
Visual language:	A system of communication that relies on visual elements
Winter count:	A drawing that depicts important community or individual events for a particular time period and is created as a historical record by many Plains tribes

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Art Connection Kit: Plains Indians* / *Art Connection Kit: Native American **Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**

Our Art Connection Kits provide tangible, multisensory objects that can help students deepen their understanding of Native American cultures and the art they produce. Each kit includes a selection of books, music, video, natural materials, fragrances, and artifacts for students to explore. Available in the ERC.

Do All Indians Live in Tipis? **National Museum of the American Indian**

This Smithsonian publication breaks down common myths and stereotypes about Native Americans and provides a readable introduction to Native history and contemporary cultures. Available in the ERC.

Trickster: Native American Tales, A Graphic Collection **Edited by Matt Dembicki**

This collection of trickster tales from a variety of Native American cultures employs the talents of graphic artists and Native storytellers to give traditional stories a contemporary twist. Each tale is illustrated in a comic book style and offers insight into beliefs about the world and how it came to be. Available in the ERC.

Native Knowledge 360° **National Museum of the American Indian**

This site was developed to support educators who teach about Native American history or cultures. It provides a range of educational resources, including interactive digital lessons, videos, teaching posters, and teacher guides.

www.nmai.si.edu/nk360

Native American Heritage Collection **PBS Learning Media**

On this site, you can explore lessons and video clips taken from PBS programming to learn about many different aspects of traditional and contemporary Native American life.

kcpt.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/NativeAmericanHeritage



EDUCATOR RESOURCE CENTER

The ERC can help you expand your pre- and post-visit activities to connect students' museum experience with your classroom curriculum. The ERC offers:

- Curriculum consultations
- Circulating resources
- Professional development workshops

Visit **nelson-atkins.org/educators/resources** for info.