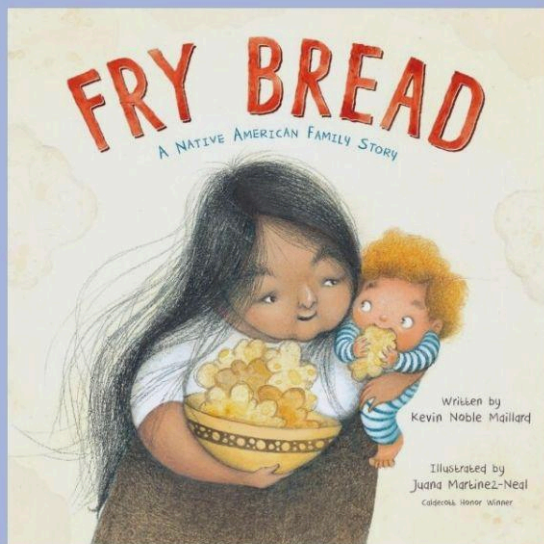


CALIFORNIA Native American Studies MODEL CURRICULUM



NASMC
Native American
Studies
Model Curriculum

Early Native Literacy

Grade Level: K-2nd Grades

Subjects: English Language Arts, Social Sciences

Materials Needed:

- Computers for each student
- Whiteboard and markers
- Chart paper and markers
- Printed copies of redwood tree diagrams
- Notebooks or journals

Curriculum Themes: (Check that apply)

- ☒ History
- ☒ Cultural Strengths
- ☒ Law/Government
- ☒ Relationship to Place
- ☒ Cross Curricular Integration

Unit Authors and Researchers

This unit was researched, authored, and edited by the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center, California Indian Education for All, and the San Diego County Office of Education. Key writers and researchers of this unit are Elia Mahoney, Cassiopeia Guthrie and Taylor Melgoza. The unit resources were designed and created from funding through the California Department of Education's Native American Studies Model Curriculum grant and contract.

California Native American Studies Model Curriculum

The California Native American Studies Model Curriculum (NASMC) will support the design and development of open-source lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist California K-12 educators in teaching about California Native American Studies. Per AB 167, the NASMC is defined as lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist educators in teaching about Native American Studies.

Unit Objectives:

- Recognize Native American resilience and cultural contributions through literature and historical accounts.
- Understand the historical and contemporary experiences of Native American individuals and communities, particularly in areas such as food traditions and sports.
- Identify and discuss themes of family, community, strength, and tradition as experienced by Native American families.
- Explore diverse Native American perspectives and understand the importance of sharing and honoring cultural stories.
- Recognize tribal symbols and representations (e.g., tribal seals, flags) to deepen understanding of political nationhood and sovereignty.
- Develop empathy and personal connections by reflecting on their own family traditions and stories.
- Build foundational literacy skills aligned to grade-level standards in reading, speaking, listening, and writing.
- Engage in arts integration activities that enhance understanding through visual arts, soundscapes, and creative expression.

Overview

This unit, Early Native Literacy, is designed to introduce young learners to Native American histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences through literature, visual arts, and reflective discussion. The unit centers around two key texts: *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard and *Contenders: Two Native Baseball Players, One World Series* by Traci Sorell. Both books highlight Native American resilience, the power of



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community, and the importance of preserving and sharing cultural identity. The unit is guided by core themes include cultural strengths, sovereignty, and Indigenous knowledge systems, all supported by the 5E instructional model: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate.

The first lesson: Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story (FBANAFS), is a story about Native American resilience. Through the use of verse, FBANAFS uses fry bread to pull together themes of family, diversity, history and cultural traditions. Above all, it showcases the important message that Native Americans are still here. United States Reservation Era federal policy removed American Indians from their homelands and onto reservations. On reservations, Native communities found themselves with limited economic prospects, and land that was difficult to farm. According to Kevin Noble Maillard (2019), the book's author, "exiled Natives strived to retain...old traditions...[while creating] new ones, especially for food. They took the federal rations of "powdered, canned, and other dry, government-issued foods" and created what we know today as fry bread (FBANAFS, Author's Note, para.2).

The second lesson, Contenders: Two Native Baseball Players, One World Series, is a nonfiction book about two baseball players, John Meyers and Charles Bender) who faced off in the 1911 World Series. This picture book pulls together themes of resilience and the fight for representation in sports. Through this lens, students examine issues of discrimination, perseverance, and achievement. They explore how these athletes navigated barriers and became symbols of strength for their communities. Students engage in historical inquiry, character analysis, and creative projects like designing their own baseball cards. This lesson is aligned to upper K–3 literacy and social studies standards and emphasizes the ongoing contributions of Native Americans to national narratives.

Core Themes:

- History and sovereignty
- Cultural strengths and Indigenous knowledge systems
- Language Arts, Visual Arts and ELA integration
- Representation and Identity
- Voice and Perspective

Students will:

- Connect their own family traditions and experiences with those shared in Native stories. Reflect on how food, sports, and place can hold cultural meaning.
- Describe how Native communities adapted to challenges (e.g., using government rations to create fry bread, succeeding in sports despite discrimination).
- Identify key characters, settings, and events in the texts and explain their significance.
- Extend understanding by comparing tribal seals to state symbols to explore **sovereignty** and political identity.
- Reflect on the contributions and contemporary presence of Native peoples.

Lesson Highlights:

Lesson 1: Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story

- Students will learn about how Native American families have been important throughout history and how they work together to stay strong and keep their traditions.
- Students will understand that even when things are hard, people can be strong and keep going. They will learn that Native Americans have shown strength over time.

Lesson 2: Contenders: Two Native Baseball Players, One World Series

- Students will understand the challenges and barriers faced by Native American athletes in the early 20th century, especially in major leagues like MLB.
- Students will learn about the importance of the World Series in the early 20th century and how it served as both a personal and cultural milestone for players like Bender and Meyers.

Pedagogical Approach:

Each lesson follows a 5E learning model—Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate—and includes:

- Video-based storytelling from Native voices



- Hands-on activities and group projects
- Scaffolded strategies for differentiation
- Formative and summative assessments
- Emphasis on respect, reciprocity, and reverence in learning



Early Native Literacy
Lesson 1: Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story
Grade Level: K-2nd Grades
Subjects: English Language Arts
Time Frame: 90 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Computers for each student
 - FryBread Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6gE1FdpBho>
 - We suggest the teacher read the actual book aloud to the whole class, or project the story for the whole class to watch together, in addition to students watching it on their own devices.
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Curriculum Themes: (check all that apply)

- ☒ History
 - ☒ Cultural Strengths
 - ☐ Law/Government
 - ☒ Relationship to Place
 - ☐ Cross Curricular Integration
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Learning Goals:

- Students will learn about how Native American families have been important throughout history and how they work together to stay strong and keep their traditions.
 - Students will understand that even when things are hard, people can be strong and keep going. They will learn that Native Americans have shown strength over time.
 - Students will share how they feel about the story of fry bread and think about how food, family, and traditions are important in their own lives.
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Instructional Standards:

Kindergarten:

- **RL.K.1:** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.K.2:** Retell familiar stories, including key details.
- **RL.K.3:** Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
- **RL.K.6:** With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

First Grade:

- **RL.1.1:** Students should be able to ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.1.2:** Students should be able to retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- **RL.1.3:** Students should be able to describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details
- **RL.1.6:** Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

Second Grade:



- **RL.2.1:** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
 - **RL.2.6:** Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
 - **W.2.1:** Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
 - **W.2.5:** With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
 - **W.2.8:** Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
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Engage

- Activating Prior Knowledge
 - Start by discussing how some families have foods that are very special to them. Have students think about foods their families consider special and why this is.

Explore

- Introduce anticipated vocabulary from the story
- Highlight text features
 - Point out the cover art, and ask, “What do you see on the cover of the book?”
 - Ask students to make predictions about what the story will be about.
 - [Read the story to the students](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6qE1FdpBho) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6qE1FdpBho>)

Explain

- Introduce the author
 - Introduce Kevin Noble Maillard, author of the book. Discuss why his fry bread is important to his family.
 - Discuss the author’s Native American heritage, their tribal nation, and their tribal nation’s seal.
- Re-read the story to the students

Elaborate and Extend

- Have students answer the reflective questions centered around the 6Ps:
 - 6Ps Reflective Discussion Questions
 - Place
 - Think of a place that is important to you. Why is it important to you?
 - What people, stories, or celebrations do you associate with this place?
 - How is fry bread connected to a special place for the characters of the story?
 - Presence
 - How is the author of the story helping people know that his Native American family and community are still here?
 - Perspectives
 - Why do you think it is important to make sure everyone shares their views, opinions, stories, experiences and perspectives?
 - Why is it important for Native American communities to share their stories and perspectives?



- Political Nationhood
 - Every nation has a flag or seal that represents them. Compare and contrast the California flag and the Seminole Tribal Nation, Mekusukey Band from Oklahoma seal. What do you notice?
- Power
 - Think of a time when you needed to be strong. What helped you get and maintain that strength?
- Partnerships
 - What is something new you learned about Native American communities and cultures?
 - What did you learn about the author of FBNAFS, Kevin Noble Maillard and his tribal nation?
- Writing Your Traditional Food Story
 - Have students create their own book about foods that are special to their family.

Additional Information for Teachers

Music Connections

The McKay School of Education at Brigham Young University developed seven music and sound-based activities centered around FBNAFS.

- FBNAFS infuses a multi-sensory approach to describing Fry Bread. [Activity 2: Fry Bread Soundscapes](https://education.byu.edu/arts/lessons/fry-bread) is a wonderful extension to further explore the sense of hearing (<https://education.byu.edu/arts/lessons/fry-bread>)



Early Native Literacy

Lesson 2: Contenders: Two Native Baseball Players, One World Series

Grade Level: K-2nd Grades

Subjects: English Language Arts, Social Sciences

Time Frame: 90 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- Students will understand the challenges and barriers faced by Native American athletes in the early 20th century, especially in major leagues like MLB.
 - Students will learn about the importance of the World Series in the early 20th century and how it served as both a personal and cultural milestone for players like Bender and Meyers.
 - Students will develop empathy by examining the personal stories and experiences of Bender and Meyers, relating to their perseverance and achievements.
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Materials Needed:

- Chart Paper or whiteboard
 - Markers
 - Student notebooks
 - Contenders Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xAITUFreQo>
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Curriculum Themes: (check all that apply)

- ☒ History
 - ☒ Cultural Strengths
 - ☒ Law/Government
 - ☐ Relationship to Place
 - ☒ Cross Curricular Integration
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History Social Science

- 3.2 Students describe the American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past.
 - 4. Discuss the interaction of new settlers with the already established Indians of the region.

Kindergarten:

- **RL.K.1:** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
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- **RL.K.3:** Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
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First Grade:

- **RL.1.1:** Students should be able to ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.1.2:** Students should be able to retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- **RL.1.3:** Students should be able to describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details
- **RL.1.6:** Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

Second Grade:

- **RL.2.1:** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of



key details in a text.

- **RL.2.6:** Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
 - **W.2.1:** Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
 - **W.2.5:** With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
 - **W.2.8:** Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
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Engage

- Activating Prior Knowledge
 - Have you ever played a sport before? What type of qualities make a strong team player?

Explore

- Introduce anticipated vocabulary from the story
 - **indigeneity/history** (e.g. indigenous, heritage, reservation)
 - **baseball** (e.g. inning, double, homerun)
- Highlight text features
 - Point out the over art, and ask, “What do you see on the cover of the book?”
 - Ask students to make predictions about what the story will be about.
 - Read the story to the students: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xAITUFreQo>

Explain

- Introduce the author
 - Introduce Traci Sorell who is a Cherokee and the author of the book.
 - Discuss the author’s Native American heritage, their tribal nation, and their tribal nation’s seal
 - Cherokee Nation Website: <https://www.cherokee.org/>
- Re-read the story to the students: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xAITUFreQo>

Elaborate and Extend

- Have students answer the reflective questions centered around the 6Ps:
 - 6Ps Reflective Discussion Questions
 - Place
 - Think about the significance of home or community for athletes today—how do their places of origin still impact their journeys in sports?
 - Presence
 - How is the author of the story helping people know more about Native American athletes and the community are still here?
 - Perspectives
 - Why do you think it is important to make sure everyone shares their views, opinions, stories, experiences and perspectives?
 - Why is it important for Native American communities to share their stories and perspectives?
 - Political Nationhood
 - Every nation has a flag or seal that represents them. Compare and contrast the California flag and the Cherokee seal. What do you notice?
 - Power



- Think of a time when you needed to be strong. What helped you get and maintain that strength?
- Partnerships
 - What is something new you learned about Native American communities and cultures?
 - What did you learn about the author of *Contenders*, Traci Sorell and her tribal nation?
- Student baseball cards
 - Have students create their own baseball card similar to the ones shared in the book.

