

#4 Chapter Books - Young Adult Novels, Biographies, Plays

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The items **highlighted in yellow** indicate books that appear on the Accelerated Reader List. To access that list for viewing or ordering, go to <http://www.arbookfind.com/>

Achimoona. (Canadian Cree/French). Introduction by Maria Campbell. Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House, 1992. 98 pp. ISBN 0-920079-16-4

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3

Short Stories - Grades 3 and up

Summary:

Achimoona, which means “stories” in Cree, is a collection of tales by Native writers, Jordan Wheeler, Wes Fineday, Harvey Knight, and others. The stories are full of magic and music, ranging from realism to fantasy, adventure to allegory, set in the present but replete with echoes of the past. . . . In her introduction, Maria Campbell tells young readers about the changing role of storytellers in Native society, and of their continuing importance as teachers and historians.

With stories complemented by full-color reproductions of works by Native artists, including Allen Sapp, Gerald McMaster, Michael Lonechild, and others, *Achimoona* is an “Our Choice” selection of the Canadian Children’s Book Centre.

Awiakta, Marilou (**Cherokee**). ***Rising Fawn and the Fire Mystery***. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, Inc., 1992. 74 pp. ISBN: 13-978-1-55591- 600-8

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6

Juvenile Historical Fiction

Summary:

In 1833, thousands of Choctaw people experienced the horrifying chaos of the Indian Removal. This novel tells the story of a young Choctaw girl who is rescued by a soldier and left with a white family in Memphis. “Through the mystery of ceremonial fire, she discovers how to survive without abandoning her heritage.” Illustrated by Beverly Bringle, Choctaw.

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph. (**Abenaki/Slavic**) ***Arrow Over the Door***. Illustrated by James Watling. New York: Puffin Books, 1998. 89 pp. ISBN 0-8037-2078-5

Essential Understanding #1, #2, #5, #6

Juvenile Historical Fiction - Chapter Book – Grades 4 - 9

Summary:

Set in the summer of 1777 when the British army is approaching and the Indians in the area seem ready to attack. When Stands Straight’s party, Abenaki, enters the Quaker Meetinghouse where Samuel worships, the two boys share an encounter that neither will ever forget. Told in alternating viewpoints, *The Arrow over the Door* is based on a true story.” From the Author’s Note: . . . *a tale of a group of hostile Indians coming to the Friends (Quaker) Meetinghouse in nearby Easton, New York,*

during the Revolutionary War, seeing that the people gathered there were people of peace, and being so moved that they embraced them as friends. That story from what in 1777 was called “Saratoga meeting,” and is now known as “Easton meeting,” stuck with me over the years.

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph (**Abenaki**). *Code Talker*. New York: Dial Books, 2005. 231 pp. ISBN: 0-8037-2921-9

Essential Understanding #1, #2, #6

Young Adult Novel - Grades 6 and up

Summary:

This is a novel about the Navajo Marines of World War II, told from the perspective of Ned Begay, a fictional young Navajo, who wants to join the “cause – especially when he hears that Navajos are being specifically recruited by the Marine Corps.”

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph. (**Abenaki/Slavic**) *Eagle Song*. Illustrated by Dan Andreasen. New York: Penguin Putnam Books, 1997. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8037-1918-3

Essential Understanding #1, #2, #6

Juvenile Fiction – Grades 3 - 8

Summary:

Danny’s father, Richard Bigtree, is an iron worker who regularly travels from their Akwesasne community just south of the Canadian border to different construction jobs in New York. When Danny’s mother accepts a position as a social worker with the American Indian Community House in Manhattan, the family moves to Brooklyn where Danny’s father works.

But having left his Indian community on the reservation, Danny finds himself very different from the rest of the fourth graders in this new school. His father helps him deal with this conflict. He makes his children laugh with stories and jokes, and he teaches Danny about his heritage: the Mohawk clan system; the importance of women in their culture; the importance of the eagle and the Peace Hymn or Eagle’s Song; and the story of *Aionwahta* (Hiawatha) and Peacemaker who formed the plan for a Great League of Peace, the plan that had impressed Benjamin Franklin as he considered what form the government of the colonies would take.

One day, Richard Bigtree comes to Danny’s class as a guest speaker to tell the story of Peacemaker. At recess the next day, someone calls him “Hiawatha,” and a basketball thrown at Danny hits him square in the face and causes a serious bloody nose. In the end, Danny’s father helps him gain the courage he needs to try to make peace with the class bully.

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph (**Abenaki**). *Children of the Longhouse*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996. 150 pp. ISBN 0-8037-1793-8

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3

Young adult novel - Grade 5 - 8

Summary:

The Mohawk, The Flint Nation, were one of the Six Iroquois Nations which were organized under The Great Law of Peace, the forerunner of the United States Constitution. Ohkwa'ri and Otsi:stia are eleven-year-old twins, at home in a Flint Nation village in the late 1400's.

The children learn the ways of their people through historical and sacred story, while they work and play beside their elders. But they also come into conflict with an older group of boys after Ohkwa'ri overhears their plans of war against a people who had once made slaves of the Mohawk people.

As Ohkwa'ri and Otsi:stia change and grow, they learn about the importance of peace and the obligation of all people to give thanks for all gifts. They learn to respect the elders and the powerful role women and men hold in maintaining peace, and they learn about the ways to avoid conflicts.

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph(**Abenaki/Slavic**). *The Heart of a Chief*. New York: Puffin Books, 1998. 153 pp. ISBN: 0-8037-2276-1

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Young-adult fiction – Grades 4 and up

Summary:

The Heart of a Chief begins on Chris Nicola's first day as a sixth grade student in an off reservation school. One of only four reservation kids, he experiences the conflicts of stereotype and discrimination. But Chris learns to assert himself and confront those issues while getting good grades, making friends with other marginalized students, taking a leadership role in a class project about Indian mascots where he feels like a "lightning rod for the whole issue of the team name," and proving himself emotionally and physically strong.

Although the issues in *The Heart of a Chief* are real, the author Bruchac chose not to establish the setting on a real reservation because the issues of "casino gambling, leadership, and alcohol abuse are too sensitive" for him to do that. Instead, he has created an imaginary but contemporary Penacook Reservation. The Penacook are one of the Western Abenaki nations, who are Bruchac's people, but they are not federally recognized and they don't have a reservation.

It is fair to question the believability of these actions for a ten-year-old boy such as Chris, in a new school and a family history of a mother killed in an auto accident and a father in a treatment program. *The Heart of a Chief* is an engaging story, though, and it presents many teachable points about universal issues that teachers can use to support Essential Understandings of Indians.

In the end, Chris remembers and applies this lesson: "So much depends on the way you look at things. That is what Doda is always telling me, and I see how right he is. Instead of giving up, I have to look for the pony (145-46)." (reference to the joke on page 145) "I know that whatever happens to me from now on, whether it is good or bad, I will always remember this: that the heart of a true chief beats with the hearts of the people (153)."

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph(**Abenaki/Slavic**). *Hidden Roots*. Greenfield Center, NY: Bowman Books, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-557-71168-0

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #5, #6

Young-Adult Fiction based on historical events - Grades 7 and up

Summary:

In this 1964 first-person narrative, eleven-year-old Howard Camp lives with his mother and Jake, his angry father, a hard-working mill-worker in rural upstate New York near the Hudson River and a man-made reservoir that flooded out homes and people in the Sacandaga Valley. A shy boy who practices keeping his head down to avoid embarrassment, Howard changes and grows at school when he discovers the library and books, taking home *Treasure Island* and then *The Last of the Mohicans*, the 19th Century novel set in the same region as Howard now lives. He's drawn into a basketball game, and his peers realize he can really play well.

For Howard, Indians are the "other," either noble or savage people of a romantic past, or the "dirt-poor half-Indian families that lived up on the other side of the mountain" because they "lived in shacks not teepees."

As the story progresses, Howard grows to understand the causes of his father's occasional episodes of rage and violence toward his wife and son. But most important, Howard learns about the tragedy of "voluntary" sterilization law, part of the Vermont Eugenics Project from 1931 until the 1960's, and its effect on the self-image and lives of those closest to him.

The historical situation for the French/Cree Métis in Montana is similarly tragic. After the execution of Louis Reil in Canada, they hid to avoid persecution and possible death. Through a study of this novel, students can learn about and understand the tragic impact of Federal and State policies on Indian people, and the contrast between stereotypes and realistic images of Indians. But the style of writing can also serve as an outstanding model for teaching concepts of ideas based on very specific details, sentence fluency, word choice, voice and figurative language.

This edition includes a preface by Dorothea Susag and Book Discussion Questions at the end, created for the Office of Public Instruction's Public Library American Indian Literature Book Bags.

Bruchac, Joseph (**Abenaki/Slavic**). *Jim Thorpe: Original All-American*. New York: SPEAK Penguin Books, 2006. 276 pp. ISBN: 978-0-14-241233-6

Essential Understandings #1,#2,#5,#6

Fictionalized Biography - Grades 5 and Up

Summary:

Deemed the "Greatest Athlete of the 20th Century," Jim Thorpe played professional football, baseball, tennis, and he won Olympic gold medals in track and field, medals taken and returned in 1883. His father wanted him and his twin brother to attend an Indian boarding school so he could learn to live in the modern world. When family tragedy struck, Jim ran away from school until he ended up at Pennsylvania's Carlisle Indian School where coach Pop Warner recognized Jim's athletic excellence. This novel focuses on those years at Carlisle and his college football days. To add background, teachers might obtain the DVD, the biography of *Jim Thorpe: The World's Greatest Athlete*, produced by Tom and Joseph Bruckac, Moira Productions Film & DVD, 2009.

www.jimthorpefilm.com

Bruchac, Joseph (Abenaki/Slavic). *Pushing Up the Sky: Seven Native American Plays for Children*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. 94 pp. ISBN: 0-8037-2168-4

Essential Understandings #1, #3

Drama - Grades 3 - 7

Summary:

Bruchac has adapted seven traditional tales from Native peoples around North America as plays for children themselves to perform. Each play has parts that can be adjusted to suit the size of a particular group, with suggestions for props, scenery, and costumes that children can help to create.

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph. (Abenaki/Slavic). *Sacajawea*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 2000. 200 pp. ISBN: 0-15-202234-1

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #6

Juvenile Historical Fiction - Grades 4-12

Summary:

Sacajawea is told in alternating points of view—by Sacajawea herself and by William Clark—and including authentic excerpts from Clark’s journals. Bruchac provides a Selected Bibliography on the last page with a website of the *Bismarck Tribune* and articles entitled *Sakakawea and the Fur Traders*.

www.ndonline.com/TribWebPage/Sakakawea/sakakindex.html

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph Bruchac, Joseph. (Abenaki/Slavic). *Skeleton Man*. New York: Harper Collins, 2001. 114 pp. ISBN: 0-06-440888-4

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #6

Juvenile Fiction - Grades 4-12

Summary:

When Molly’s parents don’t come home, she remembers an Akwesasne story her Mohawk father used to tell about the Skelton Man who ate all his own flesh because it was an easy way to get food. When only his bones remain, he begins to eat his relatives until a rabbit she’d saved from the river helps her to “outwit” the Skeleton Man. Following a similar narrative, this contemporary 10-year-old survives a system that placed her in the home of a strange and terrifying uncle. This good vs. evil story builds to a frightening climax as Molly flees the uncle. But an understanding teacher, her dreams, a rabbit, and the power of traditional story have helped her to free herself and her parents from the “Skeleton Man.”

AR Book: Bruchac, Joseph. (Abenaki/Slavic) *The Warriors*. Plain City, OH: Darby Creek Publishing, 2003. 126 pp. ISBN 1-58196-022-0

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #6

Juvenile Fiction - Grades 5 and up

Summary:

Jake Forrest is Iroquois, living on the Tuscarora Reservation near Niagara Falls. He is the son of an iron worker killed in Montreal when scaffolding fell on him. Playing lacrosse and being with his aunt and uncle who keep the faith culture alive, surrounded by other Indians, makes Jake’s home, the place

of his heart where he can be himself. But his mother has been studying law in Maryland, and she misses him. To make her happy, he agrees to leave home for Maryland where he'll try a classy boarding school where his mother hopes he can change their stereotype of "Indian." She also asks him not to play lacrosse because she wants him to devote all his time to his studies.

Above the doors of the school, Jake reads "Weltmore Warriors' Proud History," with a statue of a nearly naked Indian: "the way many people wanted to see Indians—not as real human beings, but as symbols of something fierce and untamed." Jake is struck by the contrast between this image and what lacrosse meant to his people, and more than anything he wants to be around people who really understand him.

Eventually his mother agrees to let him play, and he changes and grows after his coach is shot by a sniper. Jake shows his coach, the fans, and himself that lacrosse "truly was just like a prayer, reminding him of who he really was, reminding him to always be mindful and thankful."

The Warriors is an excellent contemporary story about a young athlete who sometimes sees himself following the path of Jim Thorpe as he merges a life away from his people with the strong memories and valued traditions.

AR Book: Carvell, Marlene. *Sweetgrass Basket*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2005. 243 pp. ISBN: 0-525-47547-8

Essential Understandings #2, #5

Juvenile Fiction/Historical Fiction - Grades 7-12

Summary:

In prose poetry and alternating voices, award-winning author Marlene Carvell weaves a heartbreakingly beautiful story based on the real-life experiences of thousands of American Indian children. Mattie and Sarah are two Mohawk sisters sent to an off-reservation school after the death of their mother. *Sweetgrass Basket* was inspired by the experiences of her husband's great-aunt Margaret, who attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in the early 1900's.

AR Book: Carvell, Marlene. *Who will tell my brother?* New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 2002. 150 pp. ISBN: 0-7868-1657-0

Essential Understandings #2, #5, #6

Juvenile Fiction/Historical Fiction - Grades 7-12

Summary:

Winner of IRA Children's Book Award, this first-person narrative of Evan Hill is based on the real-life experiences of the author's son who fought to change the name of the school's mascot. This sensitive and painful story about the way one person can make a significant difference is written in lyrical poetry/prose which ends with Evan's voice: "I know my struggle is not over. It is a struggle which will continue as long as people see others as different. But I know I have made a difference, and I know I am no longer alone."

Dembicki, Matt, Ed. *Trickster: Native American Tales—A Graphic Collection*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Books, 2010. 228 pp. ISBN: 978-1-55591-724-1

Essential Understandings #3

Graphic Anthology of 21 Trickster Stories – Grades 5 and up

Summary:

Having previously written a graphic novel, the editor was drawn to Alfonso Ortiz and Richard Erdoes' collection, *American Indian Trickster Tales*. Dembicki wanted to produce a book that would "serve as a bridge for reading to learn more about the original people of this land and to foster a greater appreciation and understanding among all inhabitants." As he approached the project, he "wanted the stories to be authentic, meaning they would have to be written by Native American storytellers. . . . To ensure a proper fit between the written stories and the illustrations, the storytellers each selected an artist from a pool of contributing talents to render their stories. Additionally, the storytellers approved the storyboards(225)."

Although the stories themselves don't include any information about the particular tribes who own these stories, the backgrounds of the storytellers and artists are cited in the back. Teachers can use the biographies and tribes to search for more information about the people.

Storytellers, their cultural affiliations, and their stories:

1. John Active: Yup'ik; "Raven the Trickster" (19)
2. Joyce (Childers) Bear, Muscogee Creek; "How the Alligator Got His Brown, Scaly Skin" (123)
3. Roy Boney Jr., Cherokee and Eldrene Douma, Pueblo; "Horned Toad Lady and Coyote" (55)
4. James Bruchac, Abenaki and Joseph Bruchac, Abenaki; "Azban and the Crayfish" (33)
5. Thomas C. Cummings Jr., Hawai'i; Puapualenalena, Wizard Dog of Waipi'o Valley (161)
6. Sunny Dooley, Dine Navajo; "Mai and the Cliff-Dwelling Birds" (215)
7. Dayton Edmonds, Caddo; "Coyote and the Pebbles" (5)
8. Mary Eyley, Cowlitz; "The Dangerous Beaver" (103)
9. Beckee Garris, Catawba; "The Yehasuri: The Little Wild Indians (137)
10. Jack Gladstone, Blackfeet; "The Bear Who Stole the Chinook" (185)
11. Jimm Goodtracks, Ioway/Otoe and Dimi Macheras, Chickaloon/Athabaskan; "Ishjinki and Buzzard" (173)
12. Elaine Grinnel, S'klallam; "The Wolf and the Mink" (89)
13. Dan Jones, Ojibwe; "Waynaboozhoo and the Geese" (143)
14. John Bear Mitchell, Penobscot; "Espun and Grandfather" (203)
15. Jonathan Perry, Aquinnah Wampanoag; "Moshup's Bridge" (71)
16. Greg Rodgers, Choctaw/Chickasaw; "Giddy Up, Wolfie" (111)
17. David "Tim" Smith, Winnebago; "Trickster and the Great Chief" (47)
18. Joseph Stands with Many, Cherokee and Jonathan Perry, Aquinnah Wampanoag; "How Wildcat Caught a Turkey" (194)
19. Michael Thompson, Myskoke Creek, Eirik Thorsgard, Slahala, Thappenish Paiute, Shawnee, and more; "Rabbit and the Tug-Of-War" (63)
20. Eirik Thorsgard, Slahala, Thappenish Paiute, Shawnee, and more; "When Coyote Decided to Get married" (149)

21. Tim Tingle, Oklahoma Choctaw; “Rabbit’s Choctaw Tail Tale” (79)

AR Book: Dorris, Michael (**Modoc**). *Guests*. New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 1994. 120 pp. ISBN: 0-78681356-3

Essential Understandings #2, #3, #6

Juvenile Fiction – Grades 5 and up

Summary:

“Moss’s father has invited outsiders to the harvest feast,” and he doesn’t want strangers to spoil this special time for his family. So he runs away to the woods where he meets a girl who is also escaping the rules of her family – rules that forbid her to express herself because it contradicts the mores of her people. Women shouldn’t dress and act like men. Perhaps these people are the American Indians who first “hosted” the English, but the story is more about a young man who grows up. He wonders, “What should I be as a man?” His grandfather responds with profound wisdom: “Ah . . . Won’t that be an interesting thing for us all to discover.”(119)

AR Book: Dorris, Michael (**Modoc**). *Morning Girl*. New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 1994. 74 pp. ISBN: 1-56282-284-5

Essential Understandings #2, #5, #6

Juvenile Fiction – Grades 3-7

Summary:

In alternating chapters--and in separate voices, Michael Dorris creates the lives of two Taino children on a Bahamian island in 1492. Twelve-year-old Morning Girl is “always doing things in her dreams, swimming or searching on the beach for unbroken shells or figuring out a good place to fish.” Star Boy, her brother, sees “everything so upside down from [her].” At the end, they welcome “the strangers [Columbus and his men]. With dramatic irony, Dorris closes his story of Morning Girl and Star Boy with an excerpt from one of Christopher Columbus’ letters to the King and Queen of Spain, October 11, 1492. “...They should be good and intelligent servants, for I see that they say very quickly everything that is said to them . . . at the time of my departure I will take six of them from here to Your Highnesses in order that they may learn to speak.” Lacking the action that many young readers demand, the strong sensory images, flowing language, and realistic characterizations make *Morning Girl* appealing to all ages.

AR Book: Dorris, Michael. (**Modoc**) *Sees Behind Trees*. New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 1997. ISBN: 0-7868-1357-1

Essential Understandings #2

Juvenile Fiction - Grades 4 - 9

Summary:

Sees Behind Trees was listed as A School Library Journal Best Book, A Publishers Weekly Best Book, and A Book Links Best Book of 1996. “No matter how hard he tries, nearsighted Walnut just can’t earn his adult name the way other boys do, by hitting a target with a bow and arrow. With his highly developed other senses, however, he shows he can “see what can’t be seen” and earns a new

name: Sees Behind Trees.” “Set in sixteenth-century America, this richly imagined and gorgeously rite-of-passage story has the gravity of legend . . . Dorris once again demonstrates that he is a brilliant and deeply humane writer whose words can show you something you have never seen.” *Booklist* (starred review)

AR Book: Dorris, Michael. **(Modoc) *The Window***. New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 1999. ISBN:078681373-3

Essential Understandings #2, #5

Juvenile Fiction - Grades 6 - 9

Summary:

The Window was listed as a 1998 Notable Book for the Global Society and a New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age, as well as a Horn Book Fan Fare Book for 1998. This is not typical young adult fiction, where vocabulary and images are often simplified for less mature readers. Written in vividly crafted prose, Dorris tells the story of Rayona, an eleven-year-old girl – half Black, she believes, and half Indian – whose mother is placed in a month-long rehabilitation program in Seattle, Washington. After two foster situations that don’t work out, Rayona’s often absent African-American father decides to fly her to Louisville, Kentucky, to stay with relatives she has never met – his *Irish* mother, aunt, and grandmother. Through a series of “windows,” both literal and metaphorical, enlightening and painful, Rayona learns to accept herself, her mixed heritage, and the love of her extended family.

Eastman, Charles A. **(Santee Sioux). *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains***. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. 241 pp. ISBN: 0-9-32-6720-7

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Biography - Grades 4 and up

Summary:

An important alternative to many popular biographies of American Indian warriors and leaders, this collection from the Native perspective provides sensitive, and sometimes first-hand, stories of fifteen Plains leaders. (*Roots and Branches* 155)

AR Book: Edwardson, Debby Dahl. ***My Name is Not Easy***. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011. 248 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7614-5980-4

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #5, #6

Young Adult Historical Fiction – Grades 7 and up

Summary:

My Name is Not Easy was a 2011 National Book Award Finalist in Young People's Literature. Although fiction, the story is based on real events (between 1960 and 1964) and actual stories of Alaskan children who attended high schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs because no secondary schools existed in the remote villages until 1976.

Native Alaskan teens from various tribes, “Indians,” and whites, arrive by plane to Interior Alaska’s fictional Sacred Heart boarding school, where the nuns or priests replace their Iñupiaq, Yu’pik,

and Athabascan names with those much easier to pronounce. The stories are told from the perspectives of Luke (whose Iñupiaq “name is not easy,”), Sonny, Chickie (a scrappy blonde freckle-faced daughter of “Swede”), Donna (an orphan who wears a St. Christopher medal a nun gave her), and Amiq (a wise-guy leader).

While each character faces challenges typical for all teens, Edwardson brilliantly draws another powerful antagonist—language: “Sister looks out the window, and I do, too, still chewing on that stringy word: *notarized*. It sounds like something that might hurt(20).” And then, “All right then, gentlemen. You two may follow. I’ll get you settled *after*.” “*After* feels like a big black hole, and Sister is perched on the edge of it, clutching Isaac. Isaac’s eyes are spots of bright black terror(21).”

The students in this school prevail, and Luke “puts the pen right there on that line” and signs his Iñupiaq name, *Aamaugak*(226). According to the Author’s Note, “The ‘family’ network that boarding-school students created among themselves still survives today and has been instrumental in affecting the many political changes that marked twentieth-century history in Native Alaska. . . . Most of those who organized and ran the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act corporations were once boarding-school students (248).”

Several incidents within the novel actually happened:

- the military’s Cold Weather Research iodine-131 experiments with children from villages north of the Arctic Circle;
- The Barrow Duck-In demonstration—“civil disobedience”—where local people protested the law forbidding them to hunt ducks in the fall and spring, the only time they flew over Alaska;
- Project Chariot—the plan to drop an Atomic Bomb 189 times the size of the one dropped on Hiroshima to create a new harbor;
- the Good Friday earthquake of 1964, the “second-largest earthquake ever recorded” with accompanying tsunamis;
- a plane crashed while transporting young people from boarding school to the remote villages, killing the middle of three brothers. Debby Edwardson married the oldest, “Luke,” the one who had a premonition and stayed at school that summer.

This is an amazing novel for its realistic portrayal of characters and its use of fresh figurative language. Debby Edwardson is a powerful lyric writer, who weaves metaphor through dialog and story, on page after page, like the masters: Debra Earling and Louise Erdrich.

AR Book: Erdrich, Louise (**Turtle Mountain Chippewa**). *The Birchbark House*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 1999. ISBN: 0-7868-80300-2 239 243 pp.

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Young Adult Novel - Grades 4 and up

Summary:

Louise Erdrich’s first novel for young readers, and the first book she has illustrated herself, *The Birchbark House* was inspired by Erdrich and her mother’s research into their own family history. The novel begins with the discovery of a baby girl, the only Anishinabe who survived a smallpox epidemic on a small island at the southern tip of Lake Superior in 1847. Over half of the novel describes the lives

of these agricultural people, who tap maple trees each spring for syrup and sugar, who move to ricing camp to harvest and feast every fall, who move to a cedar log house before winter, and who return to the maple-sugaring camp and build their birchbark houses every spring.

But this happy cycle of events is tragically interrupted when a weak man enters their camp and dies of smallpox the next day. Members of the community fall ill and are separated. Omakayas' grandmother is the one who moves in to take care of them, and Omakayas survives the epidemic.

In *The Birchbark House* Erdrich's strong poetic voice and her knowledge of the cultural ways of the early Ojibwa people create a vivid experience in place and time. Incorporating traditional stories, as told by the grandmother, with historical experiences, and traditional ways, many Ojibwa terms that are defined within the text, it is a good novel for young people.

AR Book: Erdrich, Louise (**Turtle Mountain Chippewa/German**). *The Game of Silence*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005. 255 pp ISBN 0-06-029789-1 256 pp.

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Novel - Grades 4 and up

Summary:

A sequel to *The Birchbark House*, with maps and Ojibwe Language vocabulary at the end, this is the story of a nine-year-old Omakayas who moves West with her family in 1849. *The Game of Silence* has received the 2005 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction.

Erdrich, Louise (**Turtle Mountain Chippewa/German**). *The Porcupine Year*. New York, NY: Harper Collins. ISBN: 978-0-06-029787-9 192 pp.

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6

Novel - Grades 4 and up

Summary:

The Porcupine Year is the third in the *Birchbark House* series. It begins with Omakayas, a dreamer, at age twelve. Her family is searching for a new home from the shores of Lake Superior along the rivers of northern Minnesota, and they struggle with weather and so many other hardships. But Omakayas learns to carry on no matter what.

Erdrich, Louise (**Turtle Mountain Chippewa/German**). *Chickadee*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-06-057790-2 195 pp.

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6

Novel – Grades 5 and up

Summary:

Chickadee is the fourth in a series that covers the experiences of an Ojibwe family over 100 years. Chickadee is the smaller twin born to Omakayas. Because his brother plays a trick on an older and mean man, Chickadee is kidnapped by the Zhigaag's two sons who take him to the Plains country so he can be their servant. Through separation and the family's struggles to be reunited, Chickadee lives up to his namesake: the Chickadee, a "small thing with great powers." This novel also features the travels west of the Métis (French Canadian and Chippewa/Ojibse heritage).

Fournel, Kelly(**Metis**). *Native Women of Courage*. Summertown, TN: 7th Generation Green Press, 2007. 78 pp.

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Biography Grades 4 and up

Summary:

The women featured include Suzanne Rochon-Burnett(Metis), Pauline Johnson-Tekahionwake(Mohawk), Thocmetony (Sarah) Winnemucca(Northern Paiute), Maria Tallchief(Osage), Wilma Mankiller(Cherokee), Mary Kim Titla(Apache), Lorna B. Williams(Lil'wat First Nation), Susan Aglukark(Inuit), Winona LaDuke(White Earth Anishinaabeg), Sandra Lovelace Nicholas (Maliseet/Tobique First Nation)

Guest, Jacqueline. (**Métis**). *Free Throw*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2011. 165 pp. ISBN: 1-55277-686-7

Essential Understandings #2, #6

Young Adult Sports Story: Grades 6 and up

Summary:

The American Indian Library Association has selected "Free Throw" (2011) and "Triple Threat" (2011), both written by Jacqueline Guest ; as two of the recipients of the fourth [American Indian Youth Literature Awards](#). The awards were announced at the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting, held Jan. 20-24 in Dallas, and will be presented at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif. June 21-26.

Guest, Jacqueline. (**Métis**). *Triple Threat*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2011. 165 pp. ISBN: 1-55277-690-5

Essential Understandings #2, #6

Young Adult Sports Story: Grades 6 and up

AR Book: Hale, Janet Campbell (**Coeur d'Alene**). *The Owl's Song*. Bantam Books, 1991. 153 pp. ISBN: 0-06-097642

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Young Adult Novel Grades 7 and up

Summary:

As a child on the reservation in Idaho, Billy White Hawk would listen to the aged Waluwetsu tell stories about the times before the Suyappi (white men) came, and before the Jesuit missionaries. . . . But Waluwetsu also told of the coming time when the owl, who brings messages of coming death, will sing "for our race." In spite of the theme of alienation and loss, Janet Campbell Hale's novel affirms the values of tradition, ancestors, dreams, and "manhood" visions brought by the Manitous. (*Roots and Branches* 161-2)

Ihimaera, Witi. *The Whale Rider*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 2003. ISBN: 9-78-152 050 160

Summary: Kahu is eight, and she is a descendant of the whale riders where only males have inherited the title of chief. Without an heir, she wants to try, despite her great-grandfather's objection. She can communicate with whales, a sacred gift.

Book: Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (**Inuvialuit-Inuit**). *Fatty Legs: A True Story*. Artwork by Liz Amini-Holmes. New York: Annick Press, Ltd., 2010. 105 pp. ISBN: 978-1-55451-246-1
Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Memoir Grades 5 and up

Summary:

For a year, Olemaun begs her father and mother to let her attend the Aklavik boarding school across the sea from her home on Banks Island, one of many in the Arctic Ocean. She wants to read, to know what's in all those colorful books her sister can read, and she doesn't let her sister's stories of cruelty and loneliness change her mind. Every year her father would travel there to trade furs for staples, and finally, when she's eight years old, he concedes and tearfully leaves her with the nuns and brothers. A strong girl, she immediately comes in conflict with one nun, Raven, Olemaun calls her, when the nun changes her name from Olemaun to Margaret and makes her wear red stockings that cause her peers to laugh at and mock her. Thanks to a sympathetic nun, the Swan, Olemaun learns to overcome the abuse, and she learns to read. After two years, she returns home with a desire to never return. However, when her younger sisters want to go to the school, and her father is forced to send his children there in order to receive commodities, she accompanies them back to school.

With a map, definitions of terms, black and white photos of life in the schools and Olemaun's family and community, and with over twenty-five fine full-color illustrations, this memoir vividly relates the harsh truths for native children across the entire North American continent. The rhetoric is alive with metaphor: "They plucked us from our homes on the scattered islands of the Arctic Ocean and carried us back to the nests they called schools, in Aklavik." Olemaun's resistance and strength, along with her deep desire to learn to read and to risk the hardships at boarding school, easily compare with the characteristics and subsequent suffering and survival of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin or Zitkala-Sa in *American Indian Stories*.

Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (**Inuvialuit-Inuit**). *A Stranger at Home*. Artwork by Liz Amini-Holmes. New York: Annick Press, Ltd., 2011. 124 pp. ISBN: 978-1-55451-361-1

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Memoir Grades 5 and up

Summary:

The second collaboration between Christy Jordan-Fenton and her mother-in-law, Margaret, this sequel to *Fatty Legs* features Olemaun/Margaret returning after two years at boarding school. But it's not the home she expected, and she is a stranger. Her clothes are "English" and she's been indoctrinated to the Catholic/Christian ways of prayer and Bible reading. She remembers little of her native language, and now she is an "outsider" to her mother and to others in the community; not even the dogs recognize her new scent. She soon learns that she will not really return to her home on Banks

Island, north of the Arctic Circle. Instead her family has moved from their rural home to the Hudson's Bay Company's outpost in Tuktoyaktuk.

At the end of the winter, Olemaun's father—who knows how to read and write English—convinces her to return to the boarding school with her younger sisters, telling her these hard words: "Without learning their language and how to read and write it, we won't survive. The clerk has your mother sign for supplies we did not buy(95)." At the school, Margaret protects her sisters, trusting that she can use what they're learning to make their lives better at home. This publication follows the same format as the first one, with twenty-three photos of Olemaun and her family in Tuk.

AR Book: Littlefield, Holly. *Children of the Indian Boarding Schools*. Picture the American Past Series. First Avenue Editions—an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, Inc., 2001. 46 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0088-4

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Photo Essay Grades 4 and up

Summary:

A photo essay about Indian boarding schools, 1879 to the present, in three chapters with further resources, photographs of children at schools across the country, a map of the Off-Reservation Indian Boarding Schools in the United States, and a time line. For children from fourth grade and up, this book looks at the mostly dark experience of children.

Chapter One, "School Away from Home," provides a background of European "exploration" and invasion, consequent treaties, and the hard reservation life, and the conflicts for parents and children when the children left.

Chapter Two, "Learning New Ways," very specifically describes what the schools required of the children.

Chapter Three, "After the boarding Schools," examines the lives of boarding school students after the age of eighteen, with specific focus on Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Zitkala-Ša), Chauncy Yellow Robe, Jim Thorpe.

For further study, this book can be used to help children learn how to study historical photographs (40-44).

AR Book: Loyie, Larry (**Cree**) with Constance Brissenden. *As Long as the Rivers Flow*. Illustrated by Heather D. Holmlund. Toronto: A Groundwood Book, 2002. 40 pp ISBN 0-88899-473-7

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Juvenile Biography - Grades 4 - 8

Summary:

At the beginning of the summer of 1944, ten-year-old Lawrence overhears the adults talking about the school he will be attending in the fall. A priest will gather up the children and take them far away to a school where they will live in dormitories and learn English. If the parents resist or try to hide the children, they will be arrested.

Like other First Nations children, he learned through observation, practice, stories and ceremonies and gained the skills needed to survive, as well as the values, language and history that enabled them to pass on their heritage.

Lawrence cares for a baby owl abandoned by its parents, and he helps his mother smoke hide, while he also watches his grandmother make winter moccasins. The family hunts, picks berries and medicine plants, and his grandmother kills a giant grizzly with one shot. When they return home, the family tells stories in the evenings. Not long after, a truck comes to take Lawrence and his brothers and sisters to their new school.

An epilogue describes the fate of children like Lawrence who were forcibly taken from their families and put in government-sponsored residential schools.

McNickle, D'Arcy (**Salish/Métis**). *Runner in the Sun*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. 249 pp.

Essential Understandings #2, #3, #6

Young Adult Fiction - Grades 6 and up

Summary:

Salt, a young Indian boy, is sent on a long journey southward in search of some "unknown" that will save his people, who are threatened by poverty, drought, and discord from within (*Roots and Branches* 169).

AR Book: Medicine Crow, Joseph (**Crow**). *Counting Coup: Becoming a Crow Chief on the Reservation and Beyond*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic, 2006. 128 pp. ISBN: 0-7922-5391-4

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Memoir, Culture, History Grades 5 and up

Summary:

Counting Coup is a memoir that begins "In the old tribal days" and the Crow warrior tradition and ends with Joe Medicine Crow reciting his war deeds to his relatives after returning from Germany and WW II. Having accomplished all four "Coups, he is declared a "full-fledged Crow war chief, the last traditional chief of the Crows." Medicine Crow was the first male to earn a Master's degree. He has received an honorary doctorate and is now the official tribal historian of the Crow people. This humorous, poignant and most honest memoir rings clear with Medicine Crow's voice, and the reader can easily imagine the story-telling situation where you hear these stories just as they are told. "Trained as a warrior by his grandfather Yellowtail, Winter Man [Medicine Crow and later High Bird] bathes in icy rivers, races horses, plays games with his friends," attends Baptist school and then boarding school. He retells his elders' personal, humorous, and daring stories about events such as the Battle of the Little Bighorn, frequently contradicting commonly held beliefs and stereotypes about Indians, about the Crows, and about relationships between tribes. "Warfare was our highest art, but Plains Indian warfare was not about killing. It was about intelligence, leadership, and honor."(18)

AR Book: Monture, Joel (**Mohawk**). *Cloudwalker: Contemporary Native American Stories*. Illustrated by Carson Waterman. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1996. 58 pp ISBN: 1-55591-225-7

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #6

Juvenile Fiction - Grades 3 -8

Summary:

With an introduction about the impact of culture contact on Native people and children who are “straddling two cultures,” this book features six contemporary short stories and a glossary. “These stories are about life and loss, creativity and destruction. They are from the point of view of native children, who themselves are learning about their worlds, which seem to rush at greater speeds.”(Monture)

“What happens when Virgil, a Mohawk boy, walks on a high beam, trying to imitate his father? Louis, a Cree, never thought he would be building the new family canoe after his father falls through the old one. Betty, who is Koyukon from Alaska, wants to stay home and watch TV with her best friend, but she’s in for a real surprise when she experiences her first potlatch.”

AR Book: Olsen, Sylvia with Rita Morris and Ann Sam. *No Time to Say Goodbye: Children’s Stories of Kuper Island Residential School*. Winlaw, BC: Sono Nis Press, 2001. ISBN: 10-1-55039-121-6 186 pp.

Essential Understandings #2, #3, #5

Fiction - Grades 7 and up

Themes: At Home within Circles, Between Two Worlds, Cultural and Personal Loss and Survival, Change and Growth

Summary:

Based on the recollections of a number of Tsartlip First Nations people, this is a fictionalized version of their story. The children in this story were taken by government agents from Tsartlip Day School to Kuper Island Residential School. Isolated and separated from family and community, they suffer abuse and discrimination, with the suggestion of sexual abuse of a young girl. However, “in spite of the harsh realities of the residential school, the children find adventure in escape, challenge in competition, and camaraderie with their fellow students.” A very engaging read, *No Time to Say Goodbye* is one of the best fictional accounts of this dramatic and tragic time in the lives of native children in Canada and the United States.

Pilkington, Doris *Nugi Garimara. Rabbit-Proof Fence*. New York: Hyperion Miramax books, 2002. ISBN 0-7868-8784-2 134 pp.

Essential Understandings #2, #5

Memoir - Grades 4 and up

Themes: At Home within Circles, Between Two Worlds, Cultural and Personal Loss and Survival, Change and Growth

Summary:

Doris Pilkington is the daughter of Molly, the child of an Australian aboriginal woman and a white father. Like the boarding-school experience of Native children in America, Molly and two sisters were taken by force to be educated and assimilated, and trained to work for whites, in a school miles from their home. *Rabbit-Proof Fence* is the story of their amazing month-long escape from the Moore River Native Settlement to their home in Jigalong across miles of desert, following the fence that

crosses Australia from north to south. First published in 1996, Pilkington's story is dedicated to "all of my mother's and aunty's children and their descendants for inspiration, encouragement and determination."

Schilling, Vincent (**Mohawk**). *Native Athletes in Action*. Summertown, TN: 7th Generation Green Press, 2007. 125 pp.

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Biography – Grades 4 and up

Summary:

The Athletes featured include Richard Dionne(Sioux), Cheri Becerra-madsen(Omaha), Cory Witherill(Navajo), Alwyn Morris (Mohawk), Naomi Lang(Karuk), Beau Kemp, Choctaw and Chickasaw), Shelly Hruska(Metis), Jordin Tootoo(Inuit), Mike Edwards(Cherokee), Ross Anderson (Cheyenne/ Arapaho, Mescalero Apache), Stephanie Murata(Osage), Jim Thorpe(Sauk and Fox), Delby Powless(Mohawk).

Schilling, Vincent (**Mohawk**). *Native Men of Courage*. Summertown, TN: 7th Generation Green Press, 2008. 116 pp.

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Biography—Grades 4 and up

Summary:

The men featured include Golden Eagles Hotshots, Patrick Brzeau(Algonquin), Chief Red Hawk(Cherokee), Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell(Cheyenne), Chief Tom Porter(Mohawk), Larry Mercurieff(Aleut), Chief Frank Abraham(Ojibwe), Stanley Vollant(Innu), Raymond Cross(Mandan and Hidatsa), Lieutenant Mark Bowman(Choctaw).

AR Book: Smith, Cynthia Leitich Smith. (**Muscogee Creek**). *Indian Shoes*. Illustrated by Jim Madsen. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. ISBN 0-06-029531-7

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Fiction Chapter Book Grades 2 - 8

Summary:

"Indian Shoes" is the first of five humorous and heartwarming stories about Ray and his Grampa Halfmoon who live in Chicago, far from their Seminole-Cherokee relatives, Uncle Leonard and Aunt Wilhelmina, in Oklahoma. With the same repetitive and rhythmic and vivid imagery of *Jingle Dancer*, *Indian Shoes* portrays the warm relationship between a young boy and his grandfather who tells "old-time Cherokee, Seminole, and family stories," even while they watch a Cubs baseball game at Wrigley Field. The collection demonstrates the way grandfather and grandson make loving sacrifices for each other and for their neighbors and friends. They overcome embarrassing situations, and frequently race against time and nature.

AR Book: Smith, Cynthia Leitich Smith. (**Muscogee Creek**). *Rain is Not My Indian Name*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.135 pp ISBN 0-06-029504-X

Essential Understandings #2, #6

Young Adult Fiction

Summary:

Cassidy Rain Berghoff lives in a predominantly white midwestern community, fictional Hannesburg, Kansas.. When her best friend, a white boy, dies, her grief is further exacerbated by the shunning she experiences from his mother. Her Aunt Georgia runs an Indian summer camp, and she pulls Rain out of her seclusion to photograph the people and events at the camp. This is a powerful first-person novel about friendship and loss, living between two worlds, self-esteem. In the Author's Note at the end, Smith says: "For those of you facing a loss in your own lives, I hope that this story offered some comfort." It's one of its greatest strengths!

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk(Lakota). ***The Chichi Hoohoo Bogeyman***. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2008 63 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8032-1745-4

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #6

Juvenile Fiction - Grades 4 - 8

Summary:

The Chichi Hoohoo Bogeyman is about adventure, loyalty to peers, responsibilities to parents and to grandparents, the effects of stereotypes on children, and the strength of traditional cultural values and beliefs. When three cousins meet a strange man in the woods, they playfully name him the Chichi Hoohoo Bogeyman, after hearing Uncle George tell a story about his car honking in the middle of the night. Just as many parents have used the "bogeyman" to discipline their children, the Crow have used the *chedah*, the Sioux people have used the *chichi* spirit, which represents the enemy, and the Hopi have used the *hoohoo* to inspire children to behave appropriately.

Sneve realistically portrays three young girls with distinct personalities and backgrounds who come into conflict with each other, with parents and grandparents, and with the surrounding world of humans and nature. By the end of the story, they have learned the importance of responsibility, of honesty, and of compassion for those who are different.

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk. (Lakota). ***Grandpa Was a Cowboy & an Indian & Other Stories***. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2000. 116 pp. ISBN: 0-8032-9300-3

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Summary:

The first group of stories is of Lakota and Dakota generations today. The second group of stories occur in the nineteenth century, and they teach the need for cross-cultural understanding. The third section includes traditional Sioux(Lakota) stories.

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk. (Lakota). ***Lana's Lakota Moons***. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. 116 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8032-6028-3

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Summary:

Two pre-teen cousins are growing up in the Episcopal Christian and Lakota ways, through the influence of their grandparents. They learn about the Lakota calendar and traditional practices that occurred during each month. But they also learn about Iktomi, and they learn how to make star quilts. There's frequent tension between the narrator (Lori) and Lana, but it's most apparent when they vie for the friendship of a Hmong girl who has just enrolled in their school.

Lakota culture and tradition is skillfully woven in this engaging story, but Sneve also subtly addresses an issue about Indians in popular fiction. When a Lakota hoop dancer visits their school, he asks: "Are there any American Indians in this room?" After Lana proudly admits to being Lakota, a Cheyenne boy speaks up also. The white boy sitting next to him argues and says, "You're not either." And then he pokes his buddy and whispers: "Okay, if you're an Indian, we get to put you in the cupboard!"

After class, the white boys are waiting to "put him in the dumpster—it's like a cupboard." Lana enters the fight and all three are hauled to the principal's office. This is what Lana reported Mr. Parker said to them: "we should respect each other and that one didn't put real people in the cupboard and certainly not in a dumpster." (36-38)

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk. (**Ponca/Lakota**). *Standing Bear of the Ponca*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. 48 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8032-2826-9

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7

Biography Grades 3 and up

Summary:

In nine chapters, Sneve tells the story of the Ponca tribe and their leader, Standing Bear (1829-1908), who "led the way for American Indians to seek justice." (36-37)

Standing Bear and his people suffered displacement and loss, as they tried to accommodate to the expectations of the American government and the white people who had come to settle the west. But over the years, treaties were broken, and the Ponca were forced to travel by wagon and on foot from their homelands on the Niobrara to Indian Territory.

Standing Bear's most remarkable achievement occurred when he stood before a judge in a case called "Standing Bear vs. Crook." In defense of Indian personhood, he said, "That hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be the same color as yours. I am a man. The same God made us both." (27)

Judge Elmer Dundy, on May 12, 1879, ruled that "an Indian was a person with the same rights as those of white people."

The book includes a Glossary and a Timeline beginning in 1803 with the Louisiana Purchase that included the area of Nebraska and the Ponca homelands. *Standing Bear of the Ponca* is an outstanding and engaging resource for children to learn about the impact of federal Indian policies in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk. (**Lakota and Ponca**). *Standing Bear of the Ponca*. Lincoln, Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press, 2013. 43 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8032-2826-9

Essential Understandings: All

Biography Grades 4 and up

Summary:

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk. (Lakota). *They Led A Nation: The Sioux Chiefs*.

Sioux Falls, SD, 1975. 46 pp. ISBN: 88498-027-8

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #4, #5, #6

Biography Grades 4 and up

Summary:

Biographical and Pictorial Essays of 20 Dakota Leaders.

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk(Lakota).*The Trickster and the Troll*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. 108 pp. ISBN 0-8032-9263-5

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Juvenile Fiction - Grades 4 - 8

Summary:

In her author's note, Sneve explains the "duality" of her children's heritage—Lakota/Sioux and Norwegian, particularly with respect to the characters from stories of both cultures. Her story begins with Iktomi "going along," on the Dakota prairie when he meets a "beast who causes the ground to tremble." Iktomi is blown away by Troll's size and ugliness, his incessant singing in the morning, his propensity for tears. But they share a common problem—they both have lost their people.

Humorous for the first sixty pages, *The Trickster and the Troll* turns tragic when they find the Lakota who have died at the hands of the military, and Olaf whose family suffers from hunger, cold and death in this new strange land. Finding themselves separated from or unwanted by their people, Iktomi and Troll listen to each other's stories and travel to the Paha Sapa, the Blackhills, where they live in a cave for many years.

Eventually, they leave and locate their people. Iktomi peers in the window of a family living in a house, not a lodge, and listens to the grandmother telling her grandchildren a story of "Iktomi, who was going along." Troll hears an old man, Olaf, begin his story to the children with "Once, long ago in Norway, a mother asked a troll to travel to America with her children . . ." (106)

In the *Trickster and the Troll*, readers can see how both peoples suffer and survive, as they experience temporary loss of language, tradition, and community while they cope with dramatic change. This book provides a very engaging yet different approach to teaching about perspectives and the way they influence our relationships.

In her Introduction, Driving Hawk Sneve says, "With the loss of language many cultural elements were also lost or submerged beneath an "Americanized" facade. This story tells of this loss through the eyes of folk heroes. They were exiles, submerged in cultural denial until a new generation became nostalgic for a way they never knew."

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk. (Lakota). *When Thunders Spoke*. Illustrated by Oren Lyons. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. 95 pp. ISBN: 0-8032-9220-1

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #5, #6

Juvenile Fiction - Grade 4 - 8

Summary:

When Thunders Spoke is a contemporary story of Norman, a young Sioux who collects rough agates to trade for candy at the trading post. Out of respect for his grandfather, Norman makes a treacherous climb up the west side of a butte, the “place of the Thunders,” because his grandfather believes something good would happen. Eventually Norman must make a decision after a tourist asks him to lead him to the place where he found all the agates.

The story demonstrates the very realistic conflicts between traditional cultural and spiritual ways and materialism, individualism, and Christianity as expressed by his mother and the local pastor. Norman changes and grows when he learns, from his grandfather, to “honor the old ways even as [he lives] in the new” ways of the dominant culture. In the end, Norman and his grandfather give “the *coup* stick back to the earth.” The non-Indian characters in the book represent stereotypes of whites who are ignorant and at times disrespectful of Indian ways. They are interested in serving their own material needs at the expense of the Indians.

Standing Bear, Luther (**Lakota**). *My Indian Boyhood*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1931. 190 pp. ISBN: 0-8032-9186-8

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6

Memoir/Autobiography - Grades 3 and up

Summary:

“Standing Bear details many native beliefs and interpretations, as well as the symbolism, of the things of nature that guided the very lives of the Lakota, and makes lucid many conceptions that white people have usually regarded as mere superstition because not understood.” *Saturday Review of Literature*

AR Book: Sterling, Shirley (**Interior Salish**). *My Name is Seepetza*. Vancouver BC: Groundwood Press, 1992. 126 pp. ISBN: 0-88899-165-7 (*Roots and Branches* 181)

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #5, #6

Young Adult Novel Grades 7 and up

Summary:

Written in diary form, Sterling has created a novel based on her own experiences. As a ten-year-old attending an Indian residential school, she is forced to deny all that being Indian means to her. The novel covers one school year in which she experiences conflicts with teachers, nuns, priests, and other students. The novel concludes with her return to the Joyaska Ranch, her “home.” This is a story of living “Between Two Worlds,” two cultures, two religions, and two ages.

AR Book: Taylor, Drew Hayden(**Ojibway**). *The Night Wanderer: A Native Gothic Novel*. New York: Annick Press, 2007. 216 pp. ISBN13:978-1-55451-099-3

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #5, #6

Young Adult Graphic Novel Grades 7 and up

Summary:

Sixteen-year-old Tiffany Hunter lives with her father and grandmother at the edge of the woods on the Otter Lake Ojibway Reserve, but she attends a mostly white high school off the reservation. She dates a popular white boy whose parents and friends disapprove of his friendship with this Native girl, and she resents her father's attempts to control her. With tension already present in their home, her father decides to invite a stranger from France to stay with them as long as he wishes. Mystery surrounds this visitor, Pierre L'Errant —his age, his background, his habits, his knowledge of the Ojibway people from long ago, his propensity for staying up all night, his appearing and disappearing "as though the night had swallowed him whole," and his never eating meals with the family. None in the family suspects he is a vampire, and his reason for returning to Otter Lake, the place of his birth before the arrival of the white man, isn't revealed until the end.

Despite the chilling suspense and mystery in this story, most important is the way this stranger helps Tiffany Hunter change and grow as he tells her a story. It's a story of a young boy who "snuck away without telling his parents. He was young and already thought he knew everything. . ." (204)

He remembered all of this and told the girl, holding back nothing, glad to rid himself of the memories. He talked and talked, weaving such an intricate story that the girl felt she was actually there. Or, at the very least, that Pierre L'Errant had been there. (205)

In the end, Tiffany learns to accept herself, to appreciate her Ojibway heritage, and to assume responsibility for her place in her family.

The Night Wanderer is fine writing, with natural dialogue, engaging description, complex characters, and a satisfying but realistic resolution. A mix of romance and mystery, the novel also reveals the experiences of modern Native youth, as they work through the tension of old and new ways to establish their unique identities in both worlds.

Taylor, Drew Hayden(Ojibway). *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock/Education is Our Right*. Saskatoon, SK, 1990. 139 pp ISBN: 0-920079-64-4

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Drama - Grades 7 - 12

Summary:

Obtusely echoing Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol*, the first play, *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock*, dramatizes the story of three boys who hold a surprise "Toronto," a word for "where people gather to trade . . . a place where important things happen."

When Rusty travels to an age-old dreaming place on the Birch Island Reserve to drink his beer and listen to his walkman, he is suddenly joined by Keesic, a pre-contact Odawa boy, and later by Michael from 2095, an intellectual, who applies his knowledge of history and his analytical abilities to understand the other two boys.

Keesie challenges Rusty to learn and practice The Old Ways, to know the language, the rituals, the sacred ceremonies, and Michael shows both boys how very much will be lost before the people begin to recover. As the play ends, the audience is left with the hope that Rusty will find a way to apply The Old Ways to the problems in the future.

Education is Our Right also borrows from Charles Dickens, but in this version, the Spirits of Education Past, Present, and Future attempt to show the minister of Indian Affairs the error of his ways. The play was produced less than a year after Pierre Cadieux, then the Federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs in Quebec, announced a cap on post-secondary education for Native students. The walk to the nation's capital, a hunger strike in Ottawa, residential schools, and the Elders' storytelling in the play are all based on real incidents.

Tingle, Tim (**Choctaw**). *Danny Blackgoat: Navajo Prisoner*. Summertown, TN: 7th Generation, 2013. 151 pp. ISBN 978-1-939053-03-9

**Essential Understandings: All
Young-Adult Historical Novel**

Summary:

In 1864, The U.S. Army forcibly removed Navajos (Diné) from their homeland in Arizona and New Mexico to Fort Sumner at Bosque Redondo. Known as the "Long Walk," the horrific journey to imprisonment covered 300 miles, and hundreds died during those 18 days. The slaughter of livestock and burning of orchards, as well as the cruel capture of over 10,000 people, lasted a few years. The federal government intended to keep the Navajos on a reservation so their homelands could be opened up to American settlement and ranching. The Treaty of Bosque Redondo, on June 1, 1868, ended the removal, and the people were "allowed" to return to their homelands.

This is the story of a sixteen-year old Navajo boy who had tended sheep for his family. But the soldiers came and slaughtered the sheep and burned his home and then took him by force to Fort Davis, where one prisoner befriends him, as well as a soldier who is married to a Navajo woman. But Danny suffers brutal abuse and threats of death from another prisoner who is in charge of many prisoner field workers. Danny survives each day by remembering his grandfather's words of wisdom. Eventually, his friend, Jim Davis, helps him escape to seek his own freedom. The novel ends with his escape on a horse Jim Davis has given him, and he begins his very dangerous journey back to his homeland.

Like the Northern Cheyenne, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and the Seminole and all the tribes moved to reservations away from their homelands, the Navajo's story resonates with cultural and personal loss and survival. Today, we see the impact of war and hunger and oppression on children around the world. Although historical, Tingle's novel is most contemporary.

Tingle, Tim (**Choctaw**). *Danny Blackgoat: Rugged Road to Freedom*. Summertown, TN: 7th Generation, 2014. 163 pp. ISBN 978-1-939053-05-3

**Essential Understandings: All
Young-Adult Historical Novel**

Summary:

This is the sequel to *Danny Blackgoat: Navajo Prisoner*. Danny has escaped from Fort Davis and intends to help his family who are prisoners at Fort Sumner. On this "rugged road," he survives the challenges of Manny, a slave trader and his army, the threat of dying of hunger and thirst. But his

friend Rick and the Grady family help him. Through the near-death experiences, and his efforts to locate his loved ones and to save those the slave traders have captured, Danny learns this:

“When a problem seemed impossible to solve, he was not looking hard enough for the answer.”(138)

Tingle, Tim (**Choctaw**). **No Name**. Summertown, TN: 7th Generation, 2014. 158 pp. ISBN 1-939053-06-0
Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #6

Young Adult Novel 7-up

Summary:

Bobby Byington is a Choctaw teenager who lives with his abusive alcoholic father. His mother has left, and with nowhere to go, he secretly digs a deep hole in the ground behind his house. He covers it with an old door and glues leaves all over it so his hiding spot won't be detected by his father. So for a week, he lives in that hole, and only his best friend and the girl next door, and his father's best friend—Mr. Robison, teacher and coach. To help Bobby, Mr. Robison tells him an old Choctaw story about a young boy his father called “No Name.” Ashamed of himself, like Bobby, No Name eventually achieves self-worth and claims the name with pride as his own. Mr. Robison encourages Bobby to come out, just to play a little basketball, and Bobby's father apologizes and brings Bobby back into the house. The first big game of the season, Bobby is one of the starters, and he hopes to see his father watch him with pride. But instead, he shows up drunk. After the game, Bobby borrows a friend's truck to chase after his father who has driven away. When Bobby skids on the road and off a bridge, he nearly dies from drowning, and he even sees his grandmother and others he has loved who died before. But when he returns to his critically ill body, his father and mother both are standing by his bedside. In the end, his father promises to never drink again, and his mother promises to be there to support them both.

Tingle's moving storytelling weaves traditional story and the struggles so many young people face.

AR Book: Tingle, Tim (**Choctaw**). **Walking the Choctaw Road**. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2003. 142 pp. ISBN 978-1-939053-03-9

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6

Collection of Stories 4 and up

Summary:

The first story in this collection has been published as the picture book: “Crossing Bok Chitto.” In his introduction he says: “In considering which stories to include in *Walking the Choctaw Road*, a primary consideration was the question, “What is Choctaw?” I chose to include stories that, in my estimation, best reflect the history and beliefs of the Choctaws—members of the Oklahoma Choctaw Nation and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw. Seen as a body, the narratives will give the reader a sense of what it is to be Choctaw, and why the Choctaws have operated so successfully in mainstream American society (2).” He hopes these stories “will inspire the reader to recognize the valuable treasures surrounding you. The stories of your family and friends are your key to who you are and how you came to be.”

AR Book: Wallis, Velma (Athabascan). *Bird Girl and the Man who Followed the Sun: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1997. 224 pp. ISBN: 0-06-097728-0

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #6

Young Adult Novel - 7 and up

Summary:

Bird Girl is rooted in the legends of Alaska's Athabascan Indians. Two rebels search for individualism but learn true wisdom. Bird Girl is an independent young hunter who is ordered to marry and conform to her tribe's traditional role for women. To avoid that pressure, she decides instead to leave the tribe with a young man named Daagoo, another rebel. They leave Alaska to journey south in search of the legendary Land of the Sun. But eventually they find a way to come home home again."

AR Book: Wallis, Velma (Athabascan). *Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival*. Seattle, WA: Epicenter Press, 1993. 145 pp. ISBN - 0-945397-18-6

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #6

Legend/Novel Grades 4 and up

Summary:

Out of her Athabascan heritage, through mothers and daughters, and mothers and daughters, Velma Wallis tells this story of two elderly women who are abandoned by their tribe. In the face of certain starvation, the tribal leaders decide to make a "practical" decision and leave them behind where they will surely die. But the previously dependent women decide to "die trying." And so we have a story of survival, of ingenuity, of the strength of interdependence, and finally of reconciliation with those who abandoned them. This is a powerful story that addresses problems of aging, care for the elderly, survival in nature, commitment to relatives and community, and the age-old conflict between the rights of the individual and the common good.

Two Old Women can be read aloud in three hours; students can read it independently as well. The activities and questions included in the unit may easily be adapted for any grade level 5 - 12, and most can be accomplished having just listened to the story. However, teachers will need to select from the activities and questions, or adapt, what is appropriate for their grade level.

Zitkala-Ša (Yankton/Dakota). *American Indian Stories*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1979. 195 pp. ISBN: 0-9-32-9902-8 (*Roots and Branches* 191)

Essential Understandings #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6

Biographical Essay and Short Stories Grades 5 and up

Summary:

Scholars believe that Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) was one of the first Native writers to publish without the gloss of non-Native editors. She was born on the Yankton Reservation in 1876 to a white father and a Yankton Dakota mother, *Tate I Yohin Win* (Reaches for the Wind), from whom she learned the ways of her people. The first three stories in this collection are the three autobiographical essays that Zitkala-Ša originally published in 1900 in *The Atlantic Monthly* when she

was teaching at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. The writing is typical of turn-of-the-century writing – frequently quite formal.

In *American Indian Stories*, Zitkala-Ša develops characters who play Iktomi. Using irony, the writer and her characters also outsmart the trickster to prove that her Dakota people were strong and civilized, and those who lured Indian children, with the intention of exploiting or changing them were weak and corrupt.