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**CLASSROOM RESOURCES AND MORE
IN HONOR OF
NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
NOV 2019**

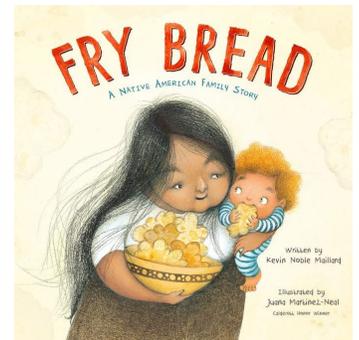
“The antidote to feel-good history is not feel-bad history, but honest and inclusive history.”
— James W. Loewen, *Plagues & Pilgrims: The Truth about the First Thanksgiving*

Classroom Resources:

Grades: Pre-K-2

[Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story](#) by Kevin Noble Maillard, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

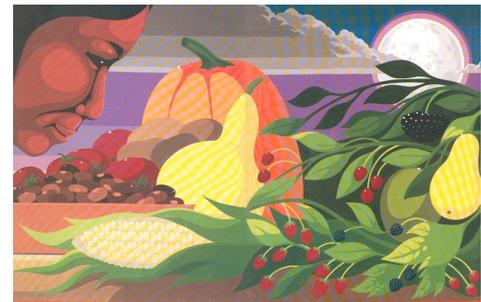
#1 bestseller on amazon’s children’s Native American books list! In an interview with a reporter from [Indian Country Today](#), illustrator Martinez-Neal said: “My idea was for people finding their nations and you know, that feeling of reading your name, looking for it and finding it,” she said. “That feeling of being there, like part of it that you are seen.”



Grades K-7

[7 Thanksgiving books for kids written from the Native perspective](#)

Source: Blog: [coolmompicks.com](#)



Grades K-12

[6 Stories \(Videos\) that Explore Native Storytelling and Contemporary Culture](#)

Source: PBS

Synopsis from website: “Native American Heritage Month has evolved from its beginnings as a week-long celebration in 1986, when President Reagan proclaimed the week of November 23-30, 1986 as “American Indian Week.” Every President since 1995 has issued annual proclamations designating the month of November as the time to celebrate the culture, accomplishments, and contributions of people who were the first inhabitants of the United States. To begin the month-long celebration we found six videos that highlight Native storytellers as well as Indigenous stories. Through dance, family traditions, and music, these stories show the diversity and long history of Indigenous people across the United States.”

Grades 4-8

[“Everyone’s History Matters: The Wampanoag Indian Thanksgiving Story Deserves to Be Known”](#)

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

Synopsis: “The version of Thanksgiving most of us know, while pleasant, isn’t terribly accurate. Told from a perspective that frames the Pilgrims as the main characters, the story leaves out major details, glorifying the Pilgrims’ endeavor and the holiday it birthed, forcing the Wampanoag Indians into forgotten roles. It also erases a monumentally sad history. When we pay homage to the Pilgrims and their bravery, and react to the tragic background of America’s founding myth with silence, we essentially support a mindset that only some people’s history matters.”

Grades 4-9

[“American Indian Perspectives on Thanksgiving”](#) Source:

National Museum of the American Indian Education Office

Synopsis: This excellent teacher resource includes the readings, visuals and classroom ideas. Each section ends with ideas for younger students and older students (see right). The guide says grades 4-8, but I think 9th graders would enjoy some of the activities for older students. ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒

- **For younger students:** Have them talk (or write) about what it means for humans and plants and animals to have a reciprocal (or shared) relationship. Include the specific examples of the salmon and buffalo and their roles in Native communities as providers of both physical and cultural sustenance.
- **For older students:** Listen to the National Public Radio story, “A Navajo Student Feels the Tug of Home,” which can be found at www.nmai.si.edu/education/thanksgiving. As a group, discuss why it is difficult for the Navajo students to leave their communities to go to college. How will Colleen, the student studying levels of uranium in desert plants, help her community and its environment?

Grades 6-10

[“A Thanksgiving Message from Seven Amazing Native Americans”](#) Source: Project652.com

Suggestion: Distribute 7 sources to groups of students. Have students read their selection. What do they learn? What surprises them? What questions did the piece raise for them (what do they wonder about)? Terms: primary source, indigenous, a historical fallacy Further exploration: What similar themes do students notice among 2 or more narratives? In what significant ways do the narratives differ?



FURTHER READING AND EXPLORATION

[3 ways to expand Native American curriculum beyond Thanksgiving myths](#) Source: Education Dive

From the website: “Children's and young adult author [Cynthia Leitich Smith](#) sees room for educators to push beyond their lessons a bit when it comes to teaching these topics, suggesting curriculum can be integrated throughout the school year — and across any discipline — with just a bit more sleuthing on the part of teachers and students alike.”

[“Decolonizing Thanksgiving: A Toolkit for Combatting Racism in Schools”](#) Source: medium.com

Synopsis: An excellent compilation of resources for teachers who want to change the way they approach teaching about Native peoples, Indigenous Peoples Day, and Thanksgiving. The author writes: **By taking a decolonizing approach to teaching about Thanksgiving, teachers and families reject the myths of Thanksgiving and harmful stereotypes about Native peoples.** Instead, teachers and families can de-romanticize this holiday, by engaging Native perspectives that recognize the diversity of Indigenous peoples and their contemporary presence in 21st-century America. With children's books like Sally Hunter's [“Four Seasons of Corn: A Winnebago Tradition,”](#) educators can examine historical methods of subsistence and show how these traditions still exist today. Furthermore, teachers can examine the myths of Thanksgiving with students. [Older students can even analyze contemporary Native responses to Thanksgiving.](#)

[“Thinking About Thanksgiving”](#) Source: “Reading While White” blogspot

Synopsis: How much truth does your Thanksgiving collection tell? When is the last time you evaluated each book for accuracy? Sadly, I have found I can't reliably trust professional reviews to evaluate Thanksgiving books, or most children's books with First Nations/Native content; I depend on the resources from Oyate and Debbie Reese's blog to help me parse the presentation, and ask questions when I can't tell for sure myself. I wish more reviewers would do this, and I challenge you to try it, this month. I can pretty much promise you librarians there is something in your Thanksgiving collection that is worth weeding, so this is good and easy practice.

It is possible to have broader collections that allow for the many ways in which people approach this holiday, and tomorrow you will hear from Angie about how to develop your Thanksgiving display after your weeding.

[“Two-Spirits and Pan-LGBT Identity”](#) Source: @jenwalkingstick on twitter



Synopsis: From @jenwalkingstick: “Two-Spirit is a modern pan-Indian term....The general consensus is that two spirits are people who express their gender beyond a colonial binary.” She discusses the controversy around the phrase, “Two-Spirit” (a phrase she disputes). She states that she still respects those who call themselves, “Two-Spirit” (A great example of both/and thinking).

