



AMERICAN INDIAN BIAS CHECK

Effective Standards of Evaluation

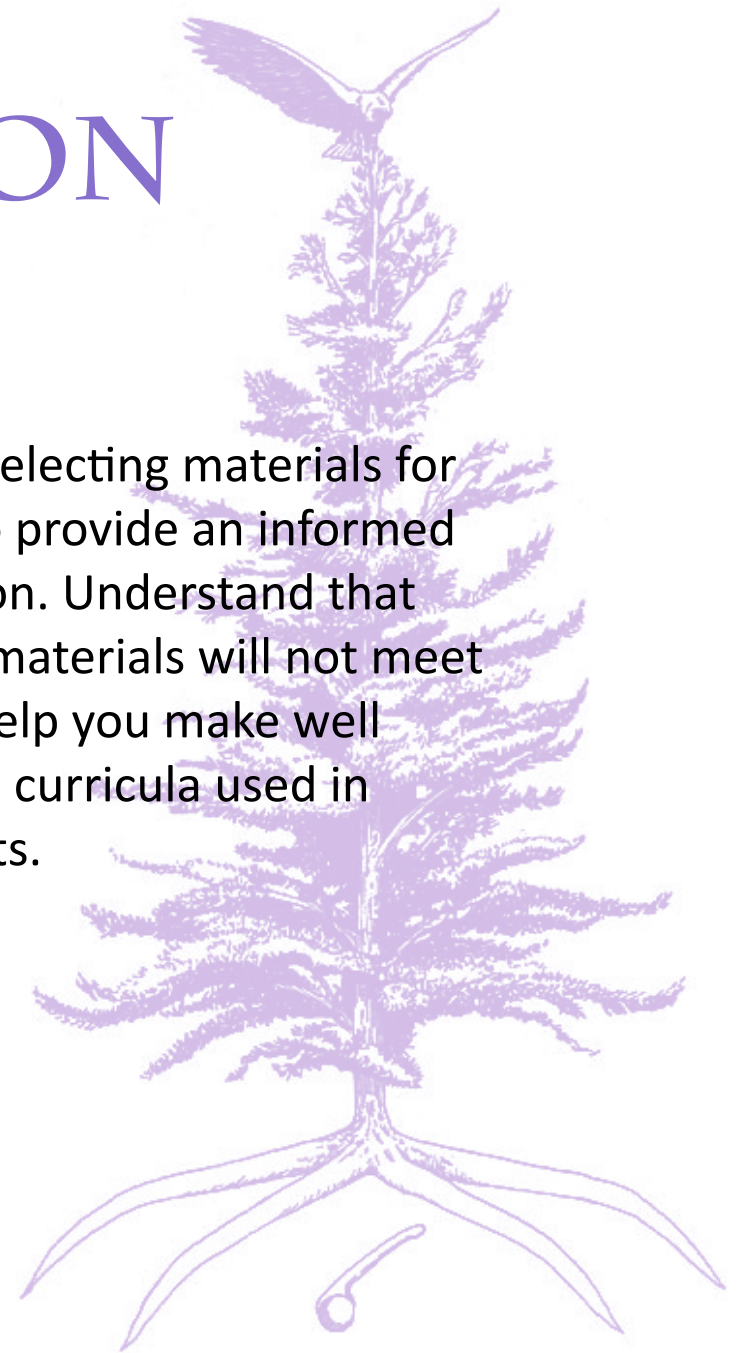
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INTRODUCTION

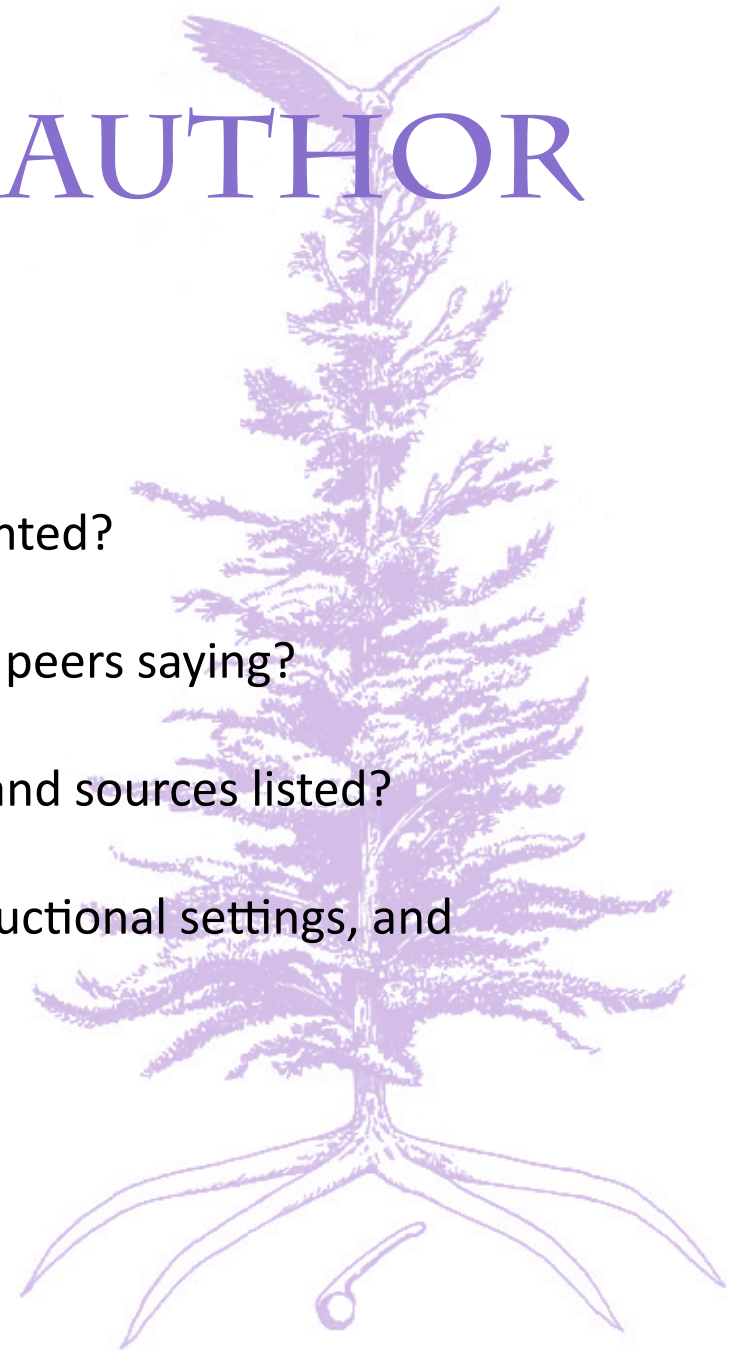
The following is intended to be a guide in selecting materials for your classroom. The standards are given to provide an informed and strong framework for quality instruction. Understand that many books, video and other educational materials will not meet every standard. This guide is intended to help you make well informed decisions on material, media and curricula used in during your instructional time with students.





1. CHECK THE AUTHOR

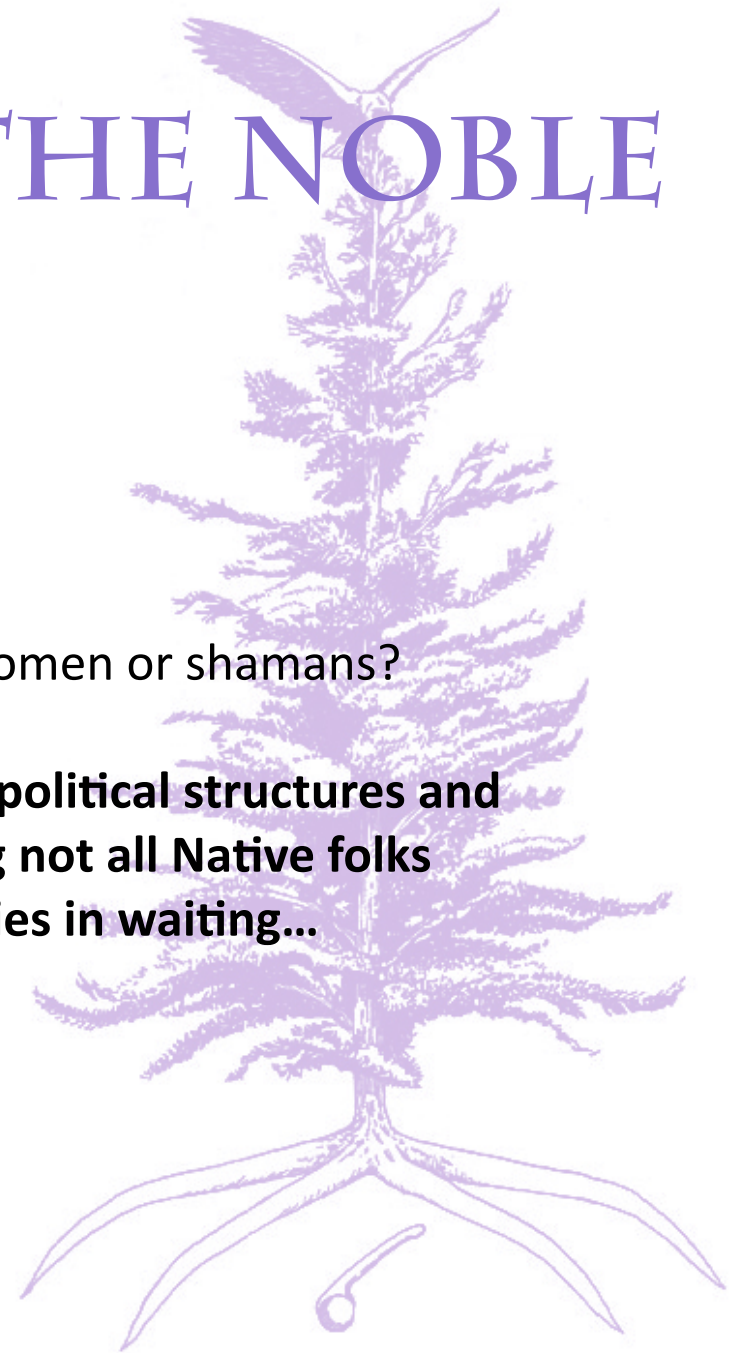
- What is the author's background?
- Is the author trained in the subject presented?
- Look at reviews of the material, what are peers saying?
- Pay attention to the acknowledgements and sources listed?
- Has the material been used in other instructional settings, and are there models for use?





2. LOOK FOR THE NOBLE

- Is the woman a queen or a princess?
- Is the man a chief, a scout, a warrior?
- Are elders depicted as medicine men / women or shamans?
- **Find material that reflects actual Native political structures and terms of recognition, while understanding not all Native folks are chiefs, braves, lords, princesses or ladies in waiting...**



3. LIFESTYLES

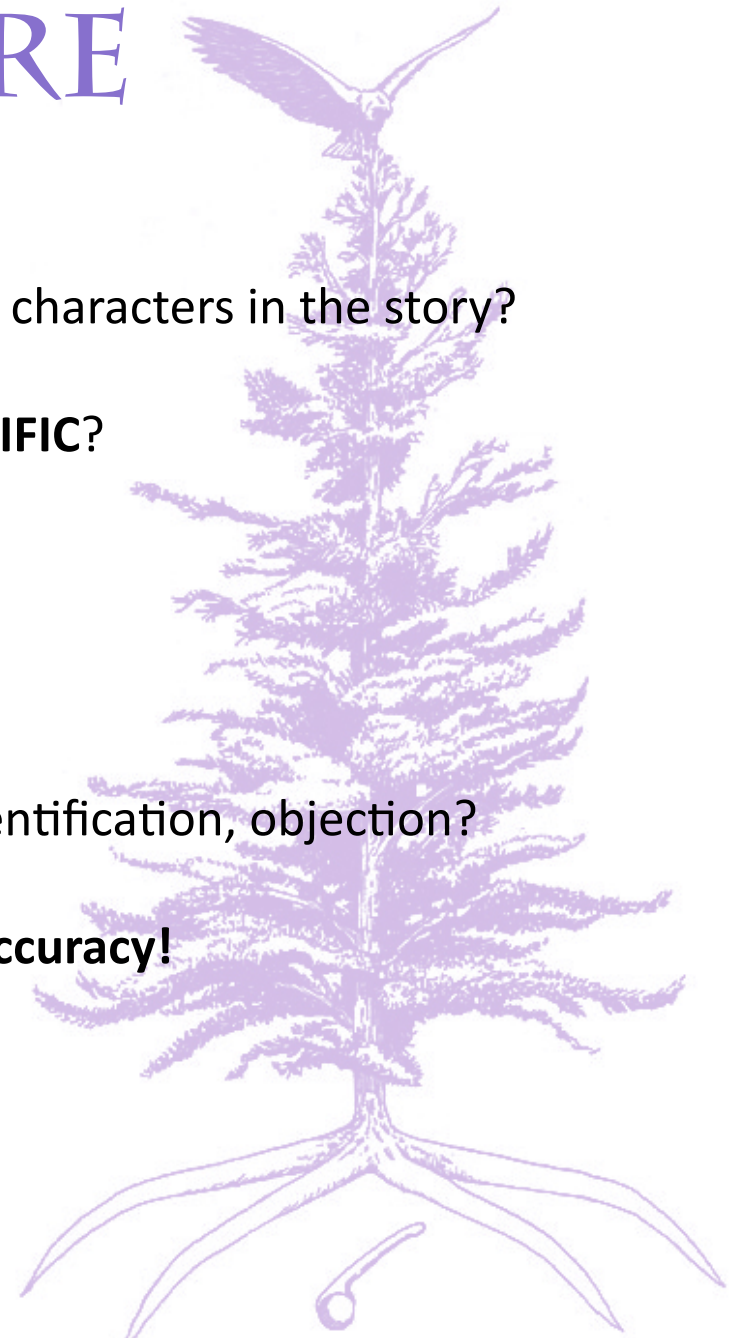
- Is everything past tense?
- Does the total experience of your lesson support people as a vanishing race?
- **Try to get all of your material to reflect historical continuity!**





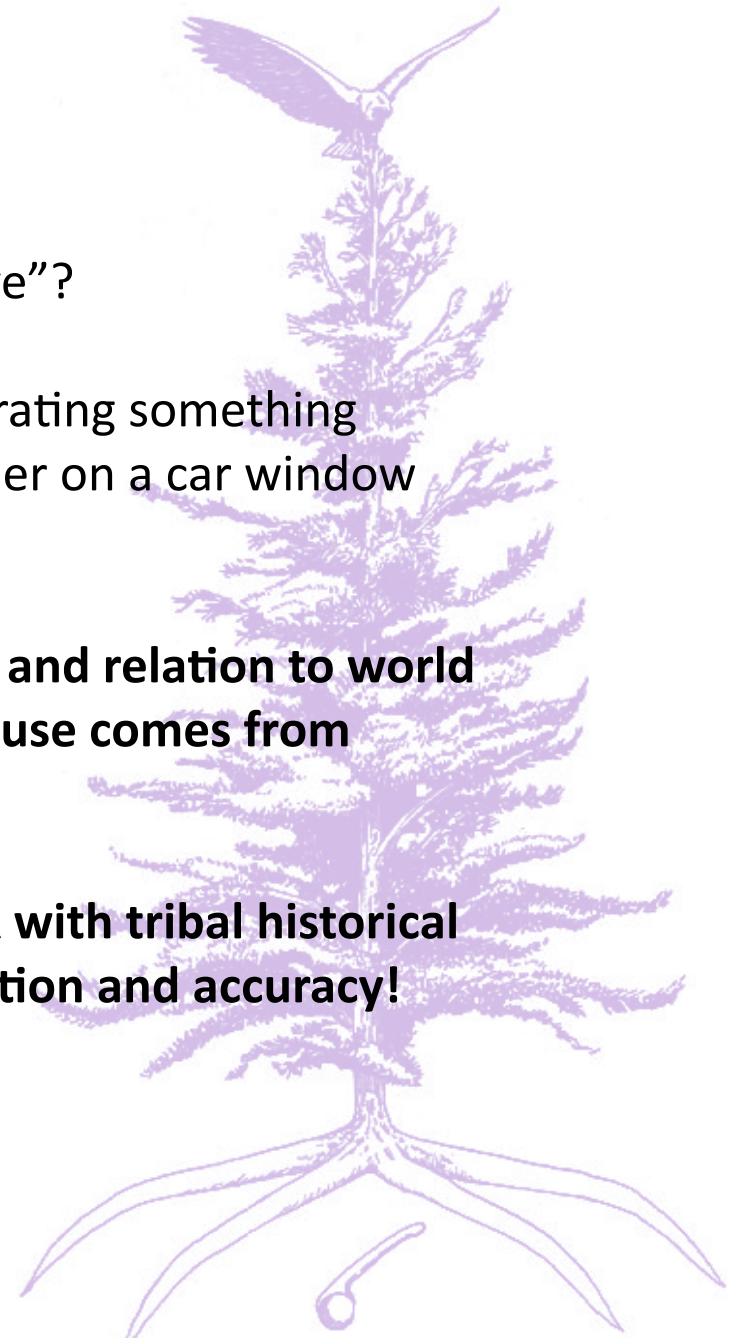
4. THE CULTURE

- Does the author use ridiculous names for characters in the story?
- Is the culture represented **TRIBALLY SPECIFIC**?
- Is religion presented as backwards?
- Is superstition used?
- Are Indian cultures the basis for alpha identification, objection?
- **Reach for historical and contemporary accuracy!**



5. USE OF ART

- Is cultural material presented as “Primitive”?
- Is the focus of the art project about decorating something unrelated to the design, like a Dream catcher on a car window mirror, or sage bundle work in bathrooms?
- **Remember, art usually had functionality and relation to world view, so be sure any art you would like to use comes from authentic sources.**
- **Be tribally specific, so you can fact check with tribal historical preservation or culture centers for inspiration and accuracy!**



6. DIALOGUE

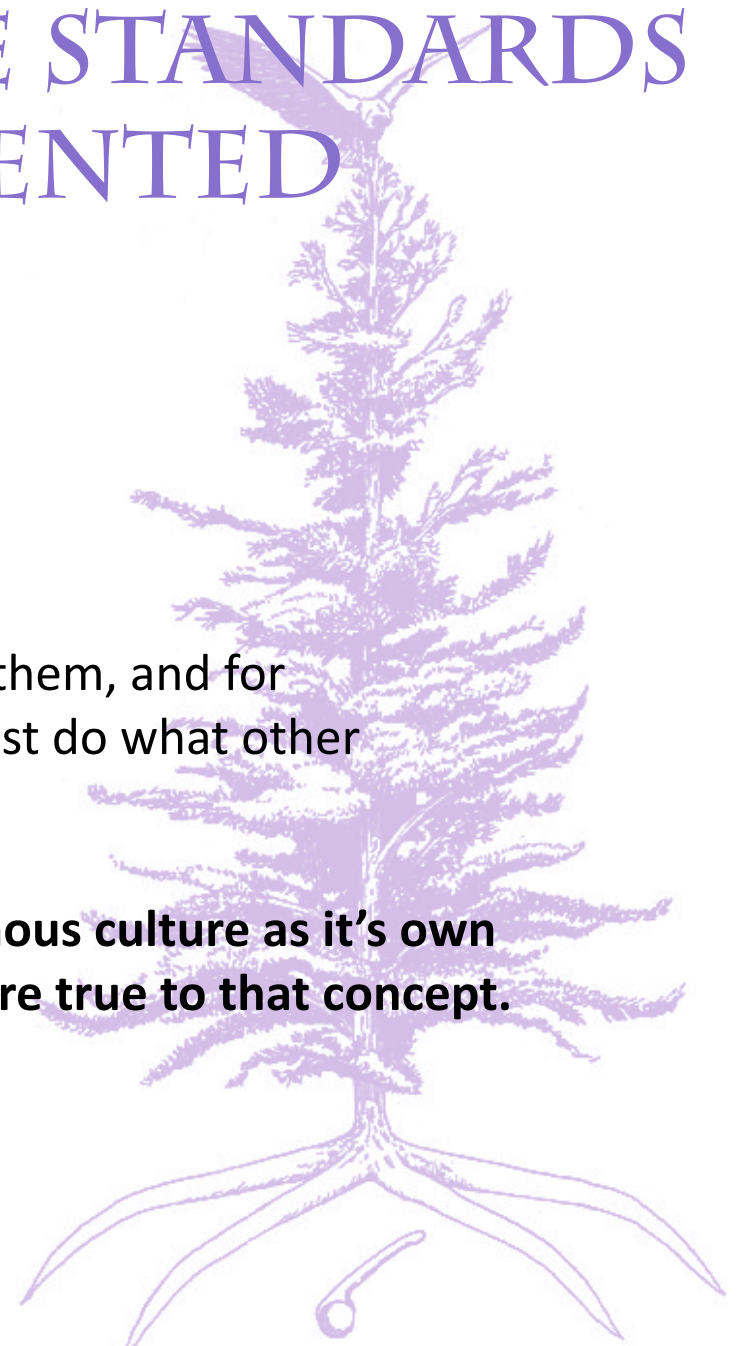
- Do Native characters talk in a broken English or in terms like Ugg, Ummm and Ahhh?
- **Many Native cultures stressed oratory as a dedicated profession, and were often multi-lingual in complex languages and dialects!**





8. QUESTION THE STANDARDS OF WHAT IS PRESENTED AS SUCCESS!

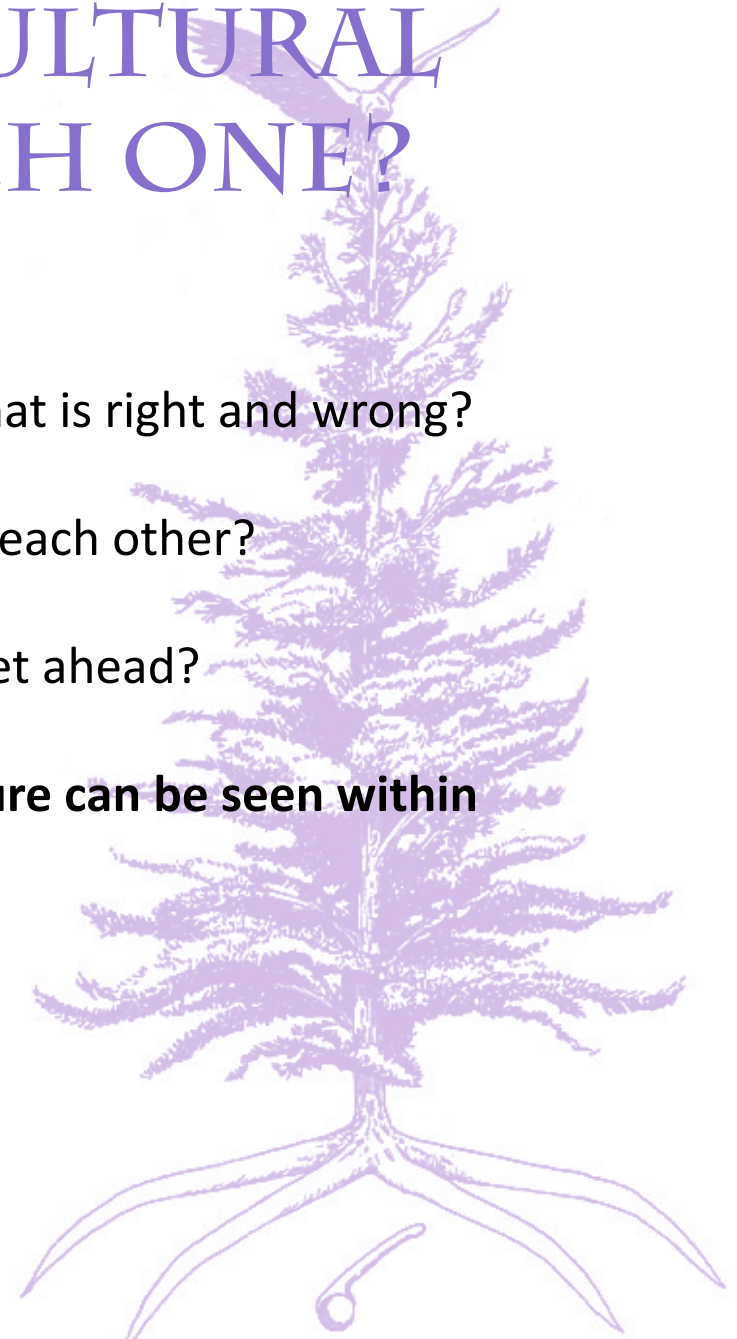
- Are Indigenous people child-like?
- Helpless?
- Do other cultures know what is good for them, and for Indigenous characters to be successful, must do what other cultures tell them to do?
- **Find resources that demonstrate Indigenous culture as it's own standard of success, and characters that are true to that concept.**





9. NORMATIVE CULTURAL BEHAVIOR, WHICH ONE?

- Is culture used as a moral backdrop of what is right and wrong?
- Are cultures compared as unfavorable to each other?
- Does it take another culture's values to get ahead?
- **Find or convert existing material so culture can be seen within its own normative standards.**





10. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

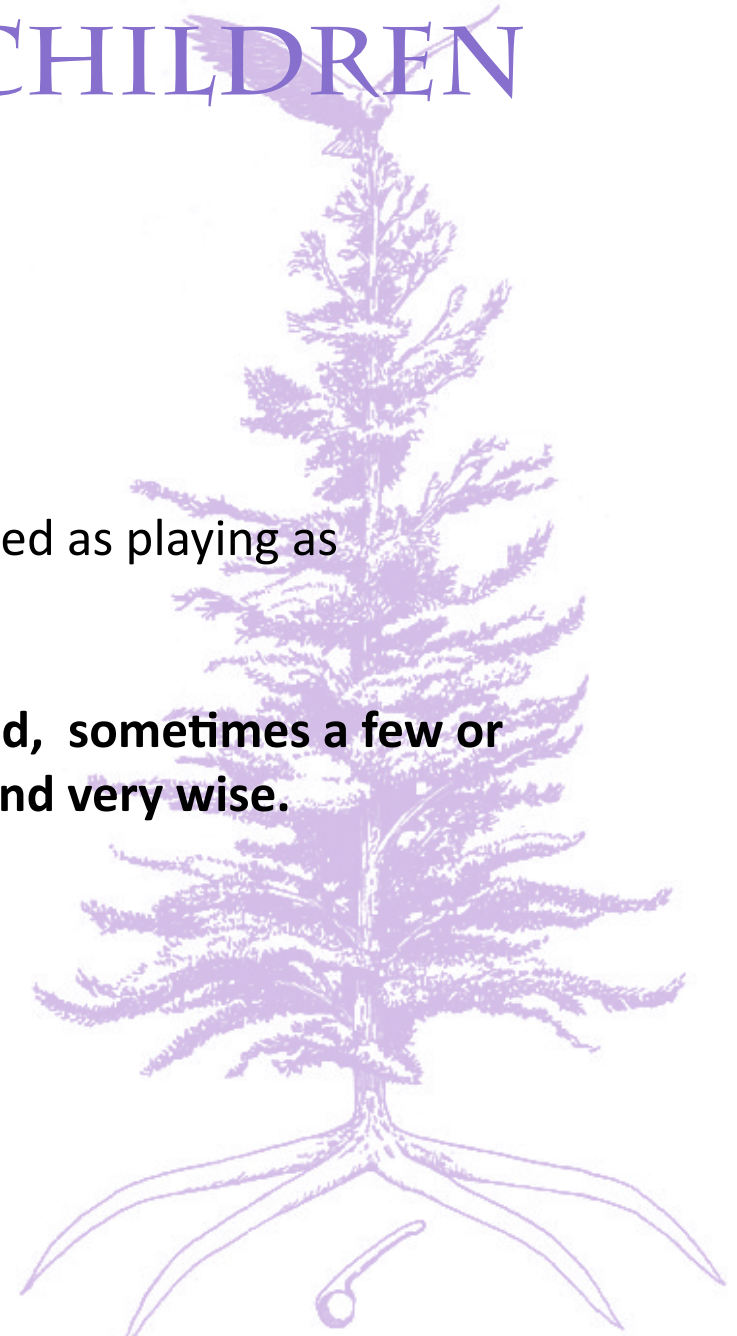
- Are women subservient to men?
- Do they wait for the hunters and scout while being non-productive?
- Are they seen as drudges?
- Are they treated badly by men?
- Are they a princess?
- **Women are valued and important to Native culture, get material that demonstrates that story!**





11. THE ROLE OF CHILDREN

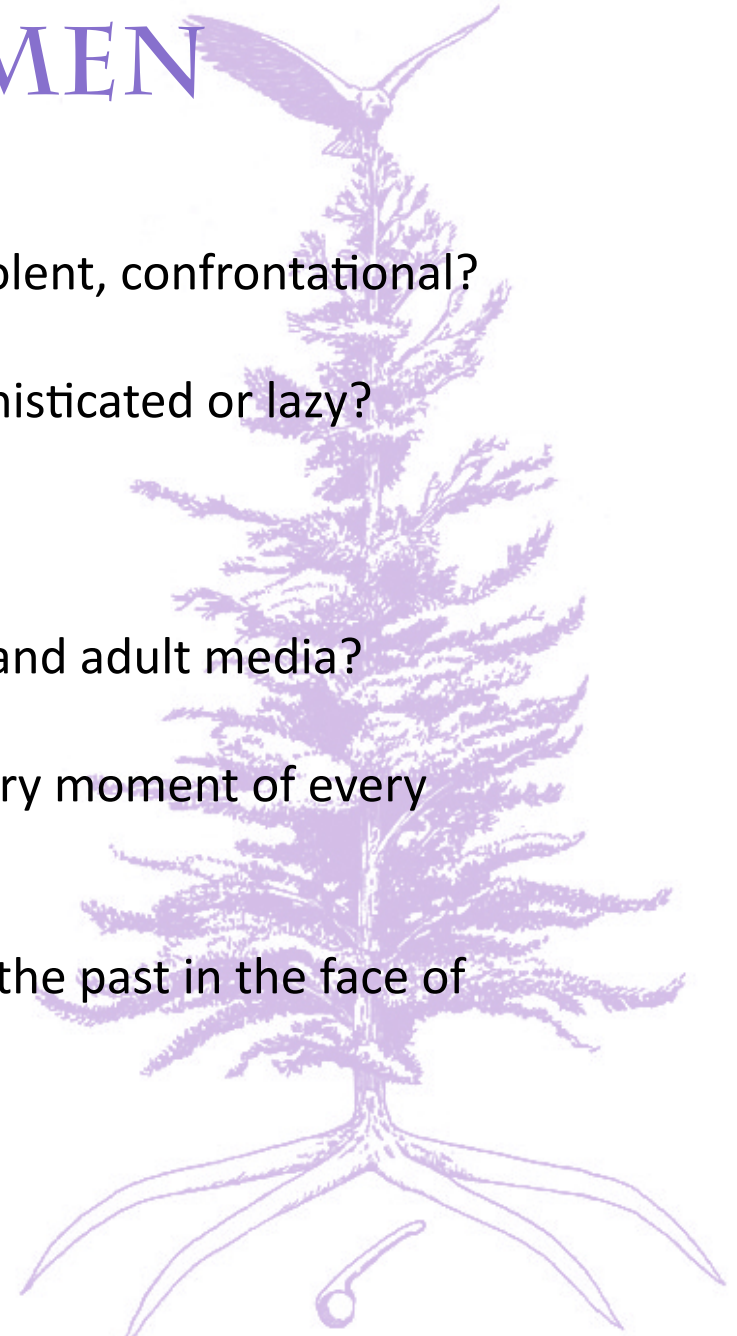
- Are children simplistic?
- Children of nature?
- Are children from another culture depicted as playing as American Indians?
- **Children are central and highly respected, sometimes a few or all are held as elders in Native societies and very wise.**





12. THE ROLE OF MEN

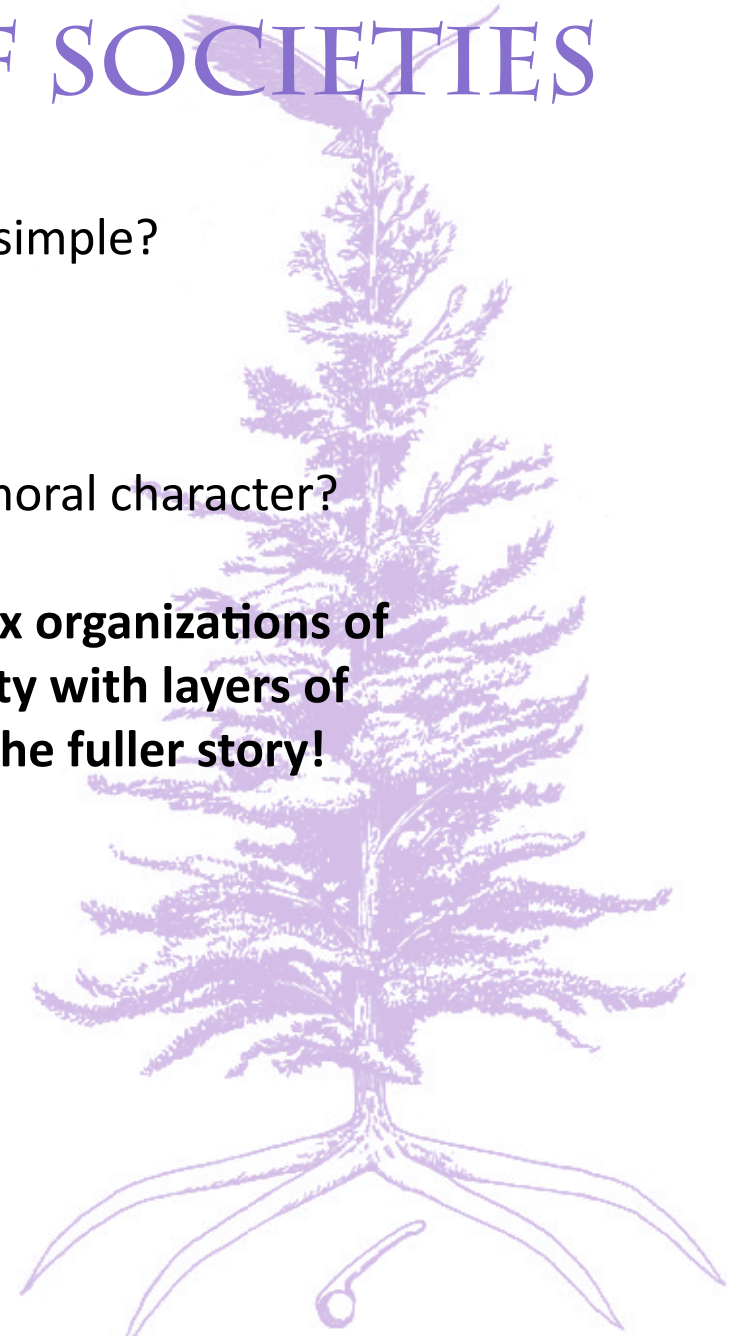
- Are men written or shown as unstable, violent, confrontational?
- Depicted as ignorant, uneducated, unsophisticated or lazy?
- Are they disrespectful to women?
- Are they hyper-sexualized in young adult and adult media?
- Are they the most “wise” or insightful every moment of every minute or every day?
- Are they depicted as a-historical, living in the past in the face of modernity?





13. PORTRAYAL OF SOCIETIES

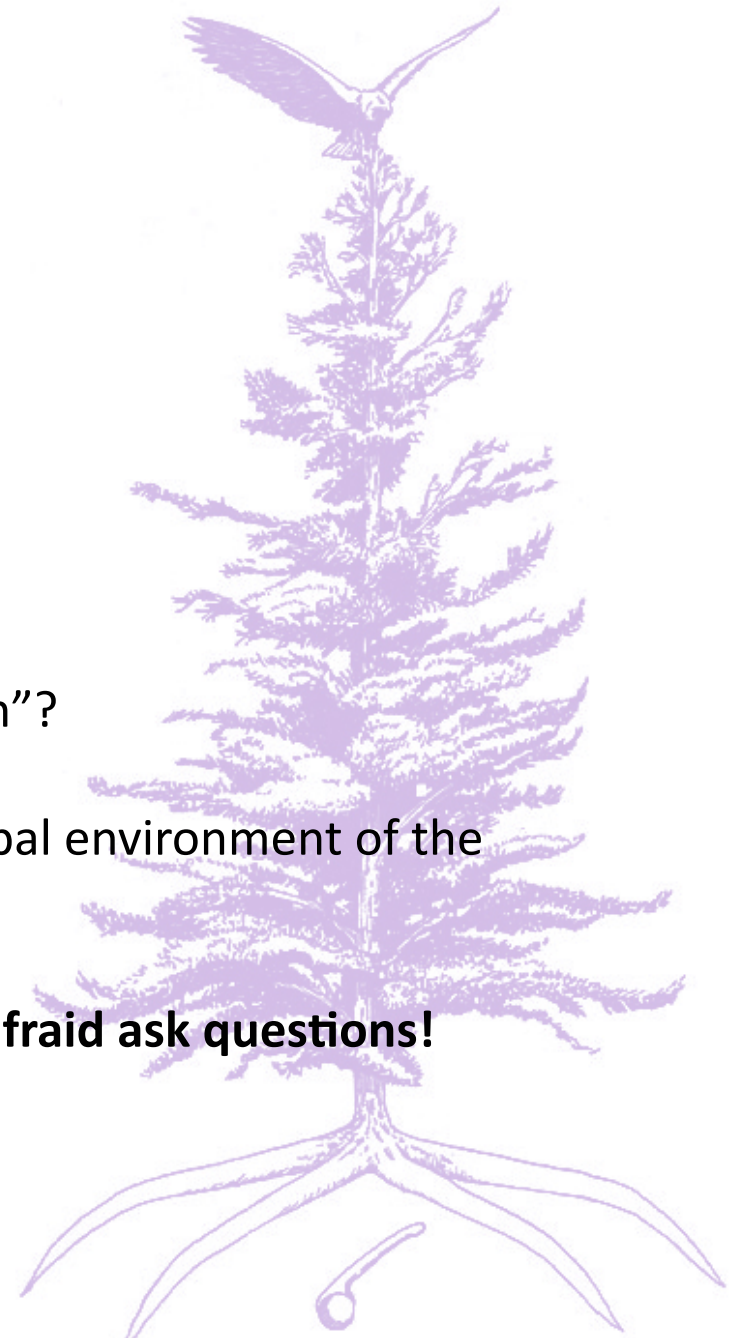
- Is the depiction of society savage and/or simple?
- Is society shown to be extinct?
- Is it shown to be a place of no values or moral character?
- **Indigenous societies were highly complex organizations of under appreciated complexity and diversity with layers of meaning. Find sources that demonstrate the fuller story!**





14. LOOK AT THE ILLUSTRATIONS!

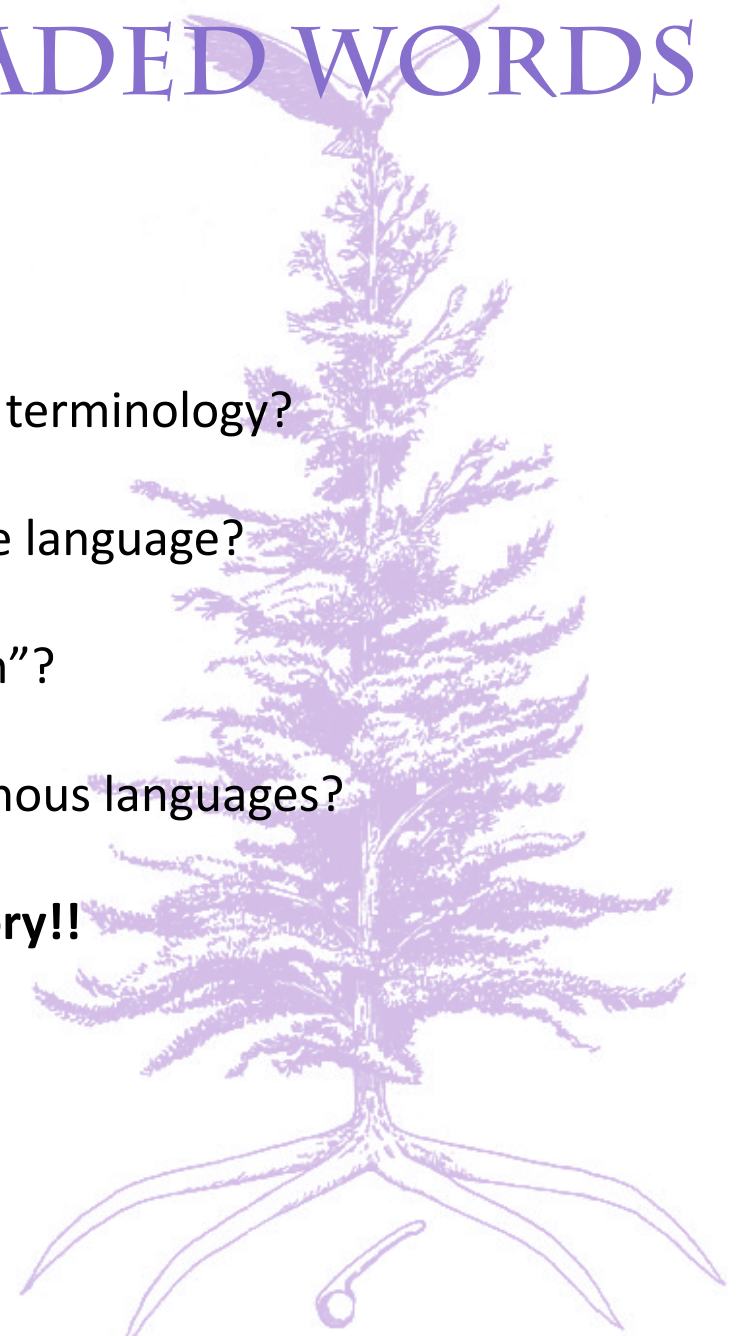
- Are one color illustrations evident?
- Do all the “Indian” characters look alike?
- Are animals dressed as Native children?
- Are other cultures seen as playing “Indian”?
- Do the illustrations match the specific tribal environment of the Nation or tribe depicted?
- **Be critical of illustrations, and don't be afraid ask questions!**





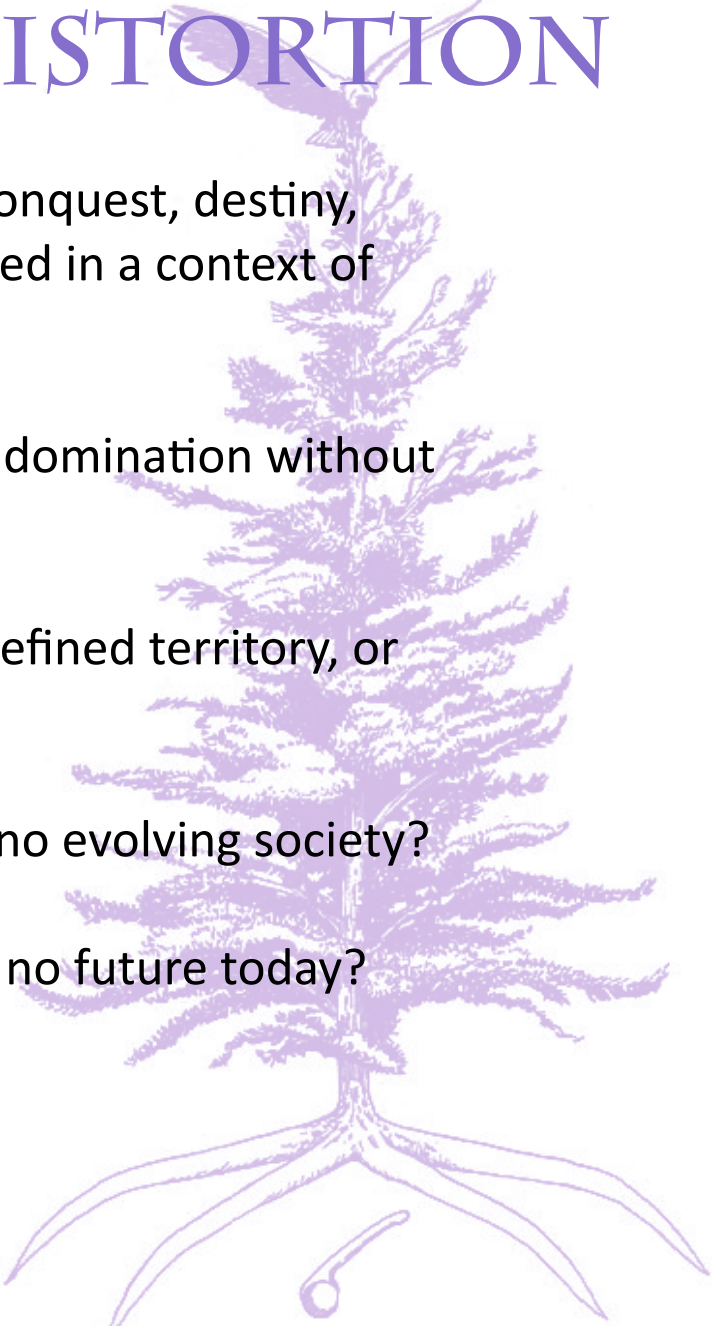
15. LOOK FOR LOADED WORDS

- Is the word squaw used?
- Are Native people depicted in animalistic terminology?
- Are groups shown in adverse comparative language?
- Are other cultures seen as playing “Indian”?
- Are there any notes or showing of Indigenous languages?
- **Don't fall for the trick of revisionist history!!**





16. HISTORICAL DISTORTION

- Look for words like primitive, massacre, conquest, destiny, savage, heathen — all manifested terms used in a context of judgment.
 - Are Native populations seen as accepting domination without resistance?
 - Are American Indians seen as having no defined territory, or specific and articulated civilizations?
 - Are Indigenous cultures shown as having no evolving society?
 - Are Indians seen as living in the past with no future today?
 - **Find ways to show historical continuity!**
- 



SUMMARY

The standards are for use when reviewing texts, video, music, other media and lesson plans when preparing to teach American Indian subjects. No one particular item may ever satisfy all of the standards presented, but you can get great ideas from reviewing your existing library and terrific ideas for finding new sources. Please remember to integrate your subject matter through your entire school year!

Yaw wa ko!

