

# The Rock-Knocking Native Americans



How can acorns, bark, mud, rocks and other things commonly found in nature be useful?

Native American ingenuity!

## The Approach

Billy utilizes comprehensive sensory integration through song, dance, audience participation and a multi-dimensional backdrop to communicate the daily living skills of the Pre-Columbus Native Americans along with their simple yet ingenious uses of the woodland environment.

The audience discovers what life is like with very few metal utensils, wheels without engines and no stores! Hunting methods, types and uses of crops, construction of dwellings, fabrication of clothing, and the manufacture of weapons are all explored as students sing and dance along with Billy B.

## The Objective

Students will gain a new appreciation of our country's history as well as the use of natural resources for food, clothing, shelter and tools by Native Americans. The skill of "trading" is also learned as students do the *Rock Knocking* rap.

Older students will also become familiar with Columbus, his motivation and his financing.



## The Result

Billy B did a very good job educating the kids. Even though I had parent volunteers, some teachers stayed to watch because they enjoyed his show.

*PTA Representative*

"...I like the part when you made the sound with the (deer) antlers like they were crashing into each other"

*3rd grade student*

## Suggested Pre-Performance Activities

Discuss the following concepts with students:

1. Many different tribes and cultures have existed for thousands of years in America.
2. The students' own ancestors have been here a much shorter time as Columbus was the first European to come to America 500 years ago.
3. Many Native Americans are now living on reservations as well as within the general populations of this country.
4. Read Nathaniel Benchley "Small Wolf" (grades 3-6) or the "Two Feet" series by Margaret Friskies (grades K-2).

## The Rock-Knocking Native Americans In the Classroom

### Vocabulary Words

**arrowhead** - a sharp pointed tip attached to an arrow.

**bark** - the rough outer covering of the woody stems of trees or bushes.

**crooked knife** - a utilitarian knife used for carving. The "crooked knife" is a common knife found amongst the Native Americans of the Eastern Woodlands. The *crooked* refers to its unusual shape with the handle set at an oblique angle to the blade.

**flint** - a very hard grayish black fine-grained form of quartz that produces a spark when struck with steel. Flint was used in prehistoric times to make tools.

**hide** (animal skin) - the skin of some larger animals, e.g. deer, cattle, or buffalo.

**long house** - built by native peoples in various parts of North America, sometimes reaching over 100 m (330 ft) but generally around 5 to 7 m (16 to 23 ft) wide. The dominant theory is that walls were made of sharpened and fire-hardened poles (up to 1,000 saplings for a 50 m (160 ft) house) driven into the ground and the roof consisted of leaves and grass. Strips of bark were then woven horizontally through the lines of poles to form more or less weatherproof walls, with doors usually in one end of the house, although doors also were built into sides of especially long longhouses.

**metal** - a chemical element that is malleable and ductile, usually solid, has a characteristic luster, and is a good conductor of heat and electricity, e.g. copper or iron.

**Native American** - a member of any of the indigenous peoples of North, South, or Central America.

**obsidian** - a jet-black volcanic glass, chemically similar to granite and formed by the rapid cooling of molten lava, which was used by early civilizations for manufacturing tools and ceremonial objects.

**percussion** - the impact of one object striking another, or the noise or shock created when two objects hit each other.

**preserve** - to keep something protected from anything that would cause its current quality or condition to change or deteriorate or cause it to fall out of use.

**quartz** - a common, hard, usually colorless, transparent crystalline mineral.

**resources** - a naturally occurring material, e.g. coal or wood, which can be exploited by people.

**sap** - a watery liquid containing mineral salts, sugars, and other nutrients that circulates through the conducting tissues of a plant.

**sapling** - a young tree with a slender trunk.

**shaft** - a long narrow rod that forms the body of a spear, arrow, harpoon, or other projectile. Or, either of the two parallel bars by which an animal is harnessed to a cart or wagon.

**slate** - a fine-grained metamorphic rock that splits easily into layers. Formerly used for writing on, especially by school students. It could be wiped clean and reused indefinitely.



**squash** - the fruit of any plant of the gourd family, cooked and eaten as a vegetable.

**tool** - an object designed to do a specific kind of work.

**tracks** - a mark left by a moving person, animal, or thing, e.g. a footprint, an animal's paw print.

**trap/trapping** - catch an animal and kill it or prevent it from escaping, e.g. a concealed pit or a mechanical device that springs shut.

**tribe** - a society or division of a society whose members have ancestry, customs, beliefs, and leadership in common.

**wigwam** - a Native North American hut made by covering a conical or dome-shaped framework of poles with woven rush mats or sheets of bark.

## Post Performance Activities

Discuss the following concepts:

1. The Hollywood stereotype of the plains Indians. Discuss the difference between their environment and that of the woodland Indians. Also, have the students discuss their own ancestors.
2. What sort of natural conditions would create hardships for woodland Native Americans. Why and how would these conditions cause hardship? What would the consequences be?

### VOCABULARY ACTIVITY

Provide written research on the different types of "flint-knapping" or give a simple description of what "flint-knapping" is.

### WRITING ACTIVITY

Write an entry into a daily diary as a Pre-Columbus Native American. Explain what was eaten, how it was caught or grown, and how it was prepared, etc.

### ARTS ACTIVITIES

Have an enactment of the making of a cooking utensil as a Native American.

Use mime to enact the final approach and position of a hunter.

Recreate the show's tapestry from memory, including songs from the show.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

The students could actually try to construct a bark cooking utensil or projectile point (arrowhead).

# Teacher Resources

Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. #15, Smithsonian Publication

"Earth Medicine, Earth Food-Plant Remedies, Drugs and Natural Foods of the North American Indians" by Michael A. Weiner

## CLASSROOM READING

1. "Indians" by Edwin Tunis
2. "First Americans-Tribes of North America" by Jane Watson
3. "Indians, the First American" by Kathleen Ernst Any of Eritt Callahan's publications

# National Science Education Standards

*The Rock-Knocking Native Americans* conveys connections to the following standards:

## Physical Sciences

\_ Properties of objects and materials

## Life Sciences

\_ Populations and ecosystems

\_ Organisms and environments

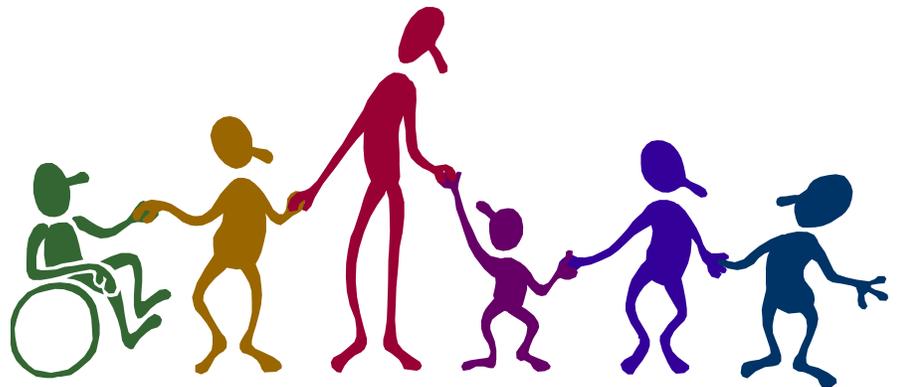
## Personal and Social Perspectives

\_ Types of resources

\_ Changes in environments

\_ Populations, resources, and environments

\_ Characteristics and changes in populations



National Research Council. *National Science Education Standards*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1996.