



# Five Senses Literature Lessons

## American History: Indigenous People of North America and Hawai'i Level: Yellow

A picture book history with  
developmentally appropriate, hands-on  
activities for children ages 6 - 10.

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Five Senses Learning, LLC  
First Edition

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## *Why start American History with Native Americans?*

When I decided to write a history curriculum, I knew I wanted to start by writing about Native Americans. Native American history is United States history. Native Americans were living in North America for many thousands of years before Europeans arrived. Their story is an essential part of the history of the United States of America as a whole. That story is complex and exciting. There is so much to learn that it can be hard to know where to start and what to include when teaching children. There is not one single story to be told about Native Americans. There are many, many stories, and it would take years to cover anywhere near a majority of them. In this curriculum, I have done my best to gather a wide range of stories to help portray Native Americans as the complex and diverse group of people that they are.

There are currently 562 Native American tribes recognized by the United States Federal Government. There are several more groups of indigenous people that are not formally recognized. This unit study cannot attempt to teach the long and complicated history of so many diverse groups of people. The goal of this unit is not to be an exhaustive resource, but to instead convey the complexity of the Native American story in a child-friendly manner. The stories here have been selected for a variety of time, place, and experience.

This unit includes stories from a few of the many different Native American tribes from distant regions of North America. There are stories from the east coast, west coast, southwest, middle of the country or the plains, Canada, Mexico, and Hawai'i. Please take your time as you start each unit to show your child on a map where the story takes place. This will expose your child to North American geography and the many biomes that exist here. In addition to the people in these stories, pay attention to the animals and land. Point out to your child the different plants and animals in the pictures and discuss what is different in each story.

If you have knowledge or connections to local tribes, access to Native American museums or other ways to expand this learning experience, please take advantage of those opportunities. This unit is, hopefully, a jumping off point to learn more about the Native Americans who not only lived in North America for thousands of years before European settlers arrived but also those who still live in the United States today.

## Symbol Key

For quick reference, we have color coded our lessons with our flower petal system. This should allow you to see at a glance the many ways you are helping your child learn and grow each week.



Red - Language Arts and Reading



Orange - Child Development (including social skills and physical development)



Yellow - Life Skills, Cooking, Arts and Crafts



Green - STEM, Science, Math and Engineering



Blue - Social Studies, Geography

In addition to the flower petals, different symbols indicate external resources, tips and important information which supplements the lesson.



Website - This icon means we recommend visiting a website for an extra activity, hand outs or other materials to supplement the lesson.



YouTube - This icon means there is a video to go along with the lesson.



Tip/Hint - This icon indicates some extra information or a tip to help with the lesson.



Appendix - This icon indicates that there are worksheets or additional pages in the appendix to support the lesson.



Looking Deeper - This icon indicates a note about how to expand the lesson or dive deeper into a particular aspect of the lesson if your child is interested. These additional resources are optional and are provided to give you ideas about how to expand the subject matter to support your child's particular interests.



Why It Works - This icon indicates a discussion about child development, occupational therapy strategies and techniques, and the science behind why the activity in the lesson is more important than it may seem.



Teacher's Resources - This icon indicates some additional material included to give you better understanding of the people or topic. The material included may not be suitable for children but will give you information to help provide context for the rest of the lesson.



Literature Notes - This icon indicates notes about the story or people for you to read before starting the lesson with your child.

# The Mound Builders



## Primary Resource

*Journey to Cahokia* by Albert Lorenz



## Secondary Resource

*Come Look with Me: American Indian Art* by Stephanie Salmonon



## Supply List

- U.S. map
- Playdough
- Large pan or surface for the play dough assignment
- Kitchen utensils
- Paper
- Pencil, crayons, markers
- Lacrosse sticks and ball (optional)



## Memory Work

Tell me, and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember.  
Involve me, and I'll understand.

– Tribe Unknown



## Literature Notes

This is a fascinating story, because of the time period of the book. This story takes place long before any of our other books and details the lives of groups of Native Americans who no longer existed by the time Europeans arrived in America. The culture of the Mound Builders and their tribe is lost to history. This story is a fictional story about a child living hundreds of years ago, who travels with his family and sees the work of the mound builders.

The term "Mound Builders" refers to a number of different groups who lived in North America as early as 3500 BCE until the 16th century. An anthropologist wrote this story after an extensive study of the archaeological evidence we have about their way of life. The book has many interesting facts and an extended bibliography detailing how the author worked hard to make this story as accurate a description as possible. Read the author's notes yourself before reading the book with your child, for your own more in-depth understanding.



## Geography

In this book, Little Hawk and his tribe travel from their village, which is just south of Lake Erie in Ohio, to Cahokia, which is on the banks of the Mississippi River in Illinois. The front of the book has an excellent map showing the rivers and the route the family takes in the story. Using the map in the book for your reference, draw the path that the Little Hawk traveled on your map for your child to see. Examine the states they would have traveled through. Discuss how state borders are often rivers, which explains why they appear to be traveling along the border of Kentucky for much of the journey.



## Literature

*Journey to Cahokia* has elaborate, detailed pictures with a lot of things going on in each image. As you read the book with your student, take time to look at the pictures. Study what all the people are doing, what tools they are using and even what tattoos they have. This book is worth reading more than once, to look for all those details. If your child doesn't enjoy hearing the book aloud, have them instead spend the second day looking at the book and studying the pictures. Challenge them to find Little Hawk in each picture with people. In each image of a village, ask them to look for what the women are doing, and the men. Ask them what the children are doing.



Learning to look for the details in the pictures, teaches children to examine literature more closely for small details. Later, when they are reading chapter books, they will need to read carefully to pick up on the words used to describe things that are going on beyond the obvious plot line. Teach them to look closer at the pictures to see what is going on in this story.



## Art Appreciation

Study pages 24-25 in *Come Look with Me: American Indian Art* to see a bowl found in a mound in Alabama. Read the questions about the art and discuss it with your child.

There are also several pictures of artifacts in *Journey to Cahokia*, which you can examine with your child and discuss.



## Social Studies – Sports: Lacrosse

Lacrosse is a field game invented by the Native Americans and played by many tribes by the time the first Europeans arrived in America. The origins of the game are unclear. Many tribes across the country have a similar game and competitions between tribes that were local to one another appear to have been a common occurrence.

The game is somewhat similar to soccer, in that there is a field with goals on either end and players are trying to score by getting the ball into their opponent's goal. The small ball is passed from stick to stick by the players. Players cannot touch the ball with their hands. Tossing and catching the ball from stick to stick is the first step in learning to play, much like playing catch with a glove is the first step in learning to play baseball.



Watching part of this highlight reel of the 2017 Women's College Championships in Lacrosse can give you an idea of what the sport looks like when played.

 <https://youtu.be/GWCmeJEY8dQ>

This video provides a simple guide to the basics of the modern sport.

 <https://youtu.be/kaZjGKdbGBQ>

If your child is interested in trying to play, this is a video of a child demonstrating some basic skills of passing and catching the ball with the stick and other basic skills.

 <https://youtu.be/8f039MVQn7k>



The motor coordination to play lacrosse develops excellent hand-eye coordination, and if your child is interested, you may want to get an inexpensive set or check your local second-hand store for lacrosse equipment to experiment with. Even if your child never plays a game, learning to toss and catch the ball with the stick develops great coordination.



## Language Arts

What would you put in your burial mound? While the mound builders did make some elaborate designs like the Serpent Mound, many mounds were simple hills that were burial mounds. One or more bodies were buried with many items, and the earth piled high to create a hill. In these burial mounds, archaeologists have found many objects that they believe were important items to the dead person. Have your child make a list or draw what would go in their burial mound. This list might include a ball if they play a sport, a favorite doll, toy, book and foods they like.



## Art

Look at pictures of the Great Serpent Mound in Ohio.



<http://arcofappalachia.org/serpent-mound-earthworks/>

Or watch this quick video

 <https://youtu.be/F0GVGG5WUyw>

In our story, Little Hawk's tribe travels past this interesting mound design, but it is hard to tell what it is from the ground. As seen from above, it looks like a giant snake eating a ball. There are many theories about what this design actually is and what it means. Ask your child what they think about the mound and its shape.

Use play dough to create a model of the mound builder's construction. I like the Great Serpent for this project, as the design is easy to understand, however, you may want to look up more examples of their work if your child is interested in learning more.

This project will require a lot of play-dough, so I recommend making a batch and have included a recipe below.



## Playdough


1 cup water  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1/2 cup salt  
1 tablespoon of Cream of Tartar  
Green food coloring  
1 cup flour

Blend the water, oil, salt, Cream of Tartar and food coloring in a pot and heat until warm. Stir in the flour and knead until smooth. Store in an airtight container or zip top bag.

## Gluten-free Playdough

1/2 cup rice flour  
1/2 cup salt  
1/2 cup cornstarch  
2 teaspoons Cream of Tartar  
1 teaspoon oil  
1 cup water  
Green food coloring

Mix all the ingredients in a small pot. Cook and stir on low until it forms a ball. Cool. Store in an airtight container or zip-lock bag.

 See page 86 of the Appendix for recipe cards for this activity.

Give your child a large piece of play dough and have them roll it out flat. Learning to use a rolling pin is a wonderful motor control project, but if that is too hard, the child can just flatten the dough with their hands. This will be your base layer. Next, have the child make long snakes of dough, by rolling a strip of it between their hands, or against the table. This will be the mounds. The child can place them on top of the other dough to create a pattern. If you are attempting to recreate the Great Serpent, keep a picture close by for reference as you work.



This is a great project to do yourself beside your child as they work. This way the child can look over at what you are doing and can see what steps they may need to do next. Work slowly, and take your time. This form of instruction works well with children who have difficulty listening to directions.



Once the project is created, discuss with your student how this is a model, a smaller version of something that looks the same. You can also explain how it is like a map or an aerial view of the mound builder's work.



## Physical Education

Play Kitchen Tool Lacrosse. Gather from your kitchen a variety of large spoons, spaghetti server, spider tool, or other fun utensils, and make a paper ball. Have each of your children choose a utensil and pick one for yourself. Now try playing catch with the paper ball, using the kitchen utensil as your lacrosse stick.

This is a silly game, and very difficult to play. You can also try hitting the paper ball into a goal. Make your goal from a laundry basket or waste bin, the larger it is, the easier it should be to "score." Play to 5 points, or as long as it is fun.