



THE INSTITUTE FOR
AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES
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Activity Ideas For *The Hartford Courant's* “News in Education” Articles

The Institute for American Indian Studies' Education Department has been writing articles for *the Hartford Courant's* “News in Education” website. The activities below go along with the articles, which are aligned with Common Core Standards and are intended for various reading levels. Please feel free to modify the activities to fit your situation. Questions or comments can be directed to education@iaismuseum.org. Thank you for the important role you play in our communities.

Link to Articles: <https://www.nieonline.com/courantnie/iais.cfm>

Article 5: “Timeless Traditions: Connecting the Past to the Present Through Stories”

Suggested Reading Level: Grade 5

- *Story-Share*: Have students develop their own story that teaches a lesson. Students can share them with their peers and/or family. For instance, students could design a story for someone that is younger than them.
 - Have them ask themselves: “What do you think is an important lesson for someone to learn?” “What advice would you give to that person?” They would then create a story based on this advice.
 - Review elements of what makes a good story using the story “How Chipmunk Got His Stripes.”
 - These include a protagonist, or main character (Chipmunk); an antagonist, or character in conflict with the protagonist (Bear); an inciting action (Chipmunk wanting to play with Bear); a Conflict (Bear not wanting to play with Chipmunk and getting angry when Chipmunk doesn't listen leading to him trapping

Chipmunk); and a Resolution (Bear letting Chipmunk go, but not before leaving him with a striped pattern).

- You might have students record their stories to share them with classmates.
- If you have them read or tell their stories, you will also want to review with them what makes a good storyteller. Storytellers are animated, might use props to help them tell their stories, and use different voices for different characters or to get different emotions across.
- *Interview an Elder:* Elders are highly respected in Native American cultures because they help to pass down knowledge from generation to generation. Students are likely surrounded by elders in their own communities. Have them interview someone in their community who they consider an Elder about a time in their life where they learned a valuable lesson.
 - Students might choose a parent, grand-parent, aunt/uncle, neighbor, family friend, religious leader, or a teacher. You will want to remind the students to ask for permission first.
 - **If they are doing this activity during the COVID-19 situation you will want to have them maintain social distance, for the safety of their elders. Interviews can be conducted over the phone, by Skype, etc.**
 - Students will likely need help with formulating questions. StoryCorps, which is an independent oral history project featured on NPR, provides a good list of such questions on a variety of different topics: <https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/>.
 - If the Elder is ok with it, have the student record the interview so that they can share them with their peers. Otherwise, you could have students write a brief report or retell the story and explain what the lesson is.
 - If students are recording the interviews, you may want to suggest that they discuss the topic with their Elder before they start recording, to make sure that they both are comfortable.
- *Storyboard:* A storyboard is something that is used in movies and television shows when planning out how to film the various scenes. Have your students create a storyboard for the story “How Chipmunk Got His Stripes,” another traditional story, or a story from their own culture (Goldilocks, Aesops’ Fables, Anansi, etc), as if they were going to adapt it into a short film.

- For inspiration, have students watch *Crow: The Legend*, an animated adaptation of a Native American legend, starring John Legend and Oprah Winfrey, among others. This short film had Native American involvement and is available on Youtube through John Legend's channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO4PrtAKu2E>.
- Students should think about how they could film each scene in the traditional Native American story they choose. Are there any parts of the story that they could expand upon? How could they get the characters' personalities across to the viewers? Most importantly, how could they retell the story without changing the primary lesson?
- For a bit of fun, have students think about which actors they would choose to voice the various characters in the story.