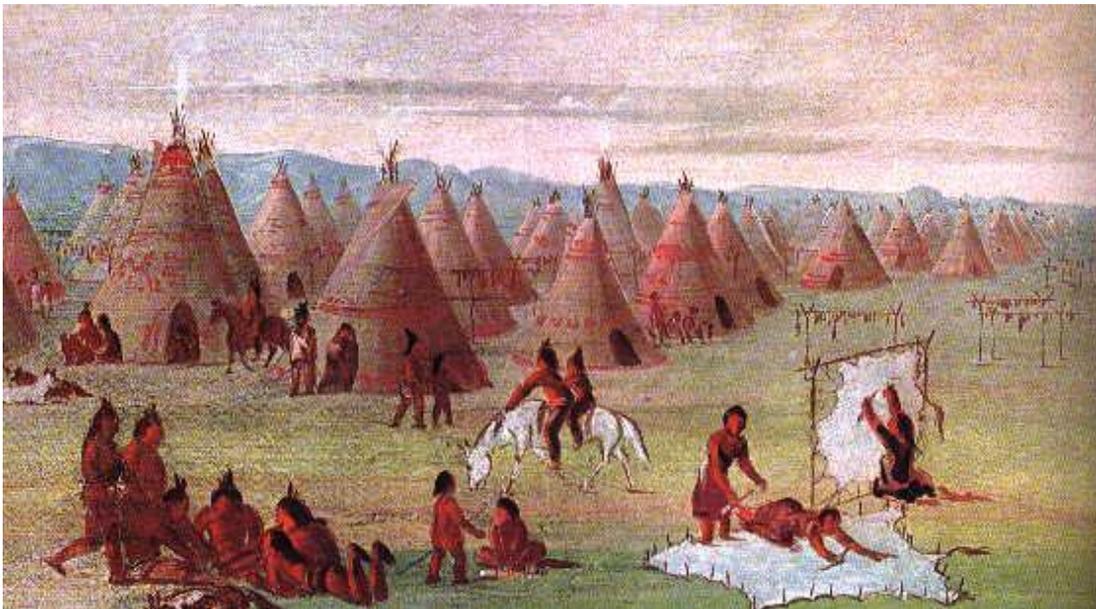


A Teacher's Guide to
The American Indian Tipi

Exploring Collaborative Learning and Thinking
in Native American Studies
for Students in Grades 3-6



Robin Moore

Dedication



To all the Students, Teachers and Parents who have participated so joyfully in our Tipi-Raisings over the years!

This is what you have taught me:

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember

I do and I understand.

My hope is that the understanding gained from this experience will help the next generation to create a more just and sustainable future for ourselves and for the planet we love.

And a special thanks to Dr. Jack Briggs, a recently-retired teacher from Friends' Central School in Philadelphia, who offered many constructive suggestions on ways to improve this guide. Jack knows what he is talking about. Besides being a gifted educator, he was one of the first teachers to introduce the Tipi-Raising program in the elementary schools, where it continues to be an annual learning experience for students, parents and teachers.

Copyright 2015 Robin Moore

Groundhog Press

Box 1311, Doylestown, PA 18901

www.robin-moore.com

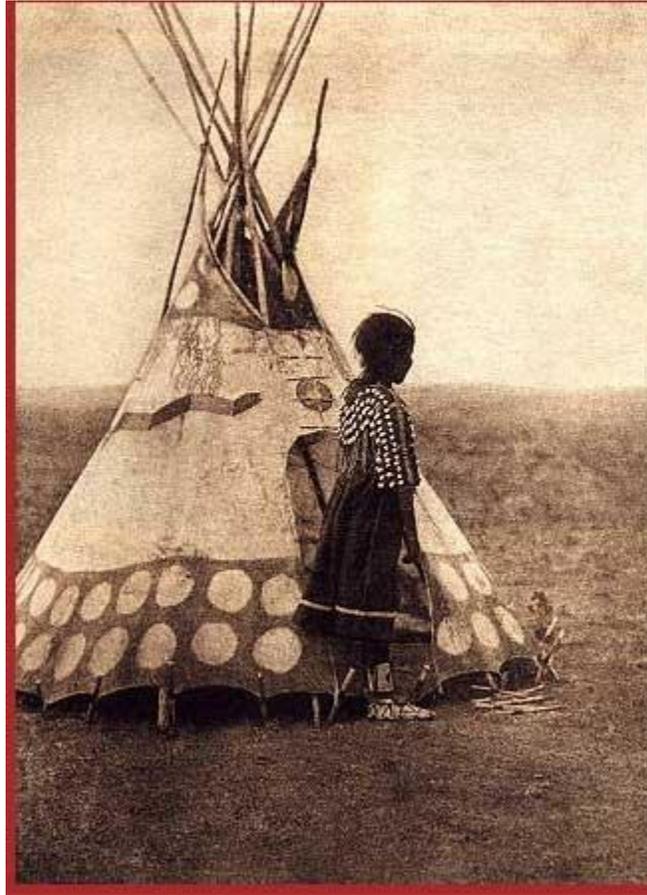
Cover Illustration: George Catlin



Table of Contents

Why a Tipi? A Constructivist Approach.....	5
Tipi-Raising Lesson Plan.....	8
History and Construction of the Tipi.....	17
Background on Tipi Living and Learning.....	21
Resources.....	25
About the Author.....	32
Printable Image Gallery.....	34
<i>Tipi: Outer View</i>	35
<i>Tipi: Cover Options</i>	36
<i>Tipi: Furnishings</i>	37
<i>Tipi: Inner View</i>	38
<i>Tipi: Transportation</i>	39
<i>Tipi Cover: Model for Decoration and Cut-Out</i>	42
<i>Map of Plains Tribes</i>	43
<i>Buffalo: Uses Diagram</i>	44
<i>Buffalo: Uses List</i>	45
<i>Map of Eastern Tribes</i>	47
<i>Map of Lenape Migrations</i>	48
<i>Lenape Dwelling</i>	49
<i>Larger Lenape Dwelling</i>	50
<i>Tipi on School Grounds</i>	51
<i>Indoor Tipi-Raising</i>	52

Why a Tipi?



A Question

What role can a tipi-raising program play in supporting educators who are covering subject matter in History, Ecology, Geography, Economy, Arts and Humanities while building basic skills in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening?

If you would have asked me that question twenty years ago, when I first began doing tipi-raising with elementary school children, I would not have known the answer.

Today, I understand much more about the learning process, thanks to some very good teachers and some very creative instructors in graduate level education. And, before we go any further, let's not forget the students, who taught me the most through their infectious enthusiasm and

willingness to participate in a new learning experience. However, this guide is designed especially for teachers who would like to get the most out of the tipi-raising experience.

It has been my pleasure to work with teachers in two different settings:

--In Elementary Schools. As a visiting author and performer in the schools, I worked closely with teachers, librarians and administrators to design and deliver living history programs which gave kids a hands-on experience which would complement the work teachers were already doing in the classroom. I learned a tremendous amount about how a creative teacher can make history come alive by encouraging students to think deeply about their experiences.

--In Higher Education. Since 2002, I have served as the Program Coordinator for the Oral Traditions Program at The Graduate Institute in Bethany, CT. This is a Masters Program for teachers of all grade levels which focuses on using the spoken word as a tool for transformative learning. The educators enrolled in the program and the professors who taught our courses introduced me to many new approaches which encourage truly creative learning and thinking.

In addition to thinking about WHAT students learn, I began to see the importance of focusing on HOW they learn. I was especially interested in the Constructivist Approach to learning. I came to understand that I had been engaged in constructivism all along, I just did not know it!

Constructivism

I learned that Constructivism is a theory about how people learn. According to an article published by the National Education Corporation,

Constructivism is basically a theory -- based on observation and scientific study -- about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore, and assess what we know.

In the classroom, the constructivist view of learning can point towards a number of different teaching practices. In the most general sense, it usually means encouraging students to use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing. The teacher makes sure she understands the students' preexisting conceptions, and guides the activity to address them and then build on them.

Constructivist teachers encourage students to constantly assess how the activity is helping them

gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, students in the constructivist classroom ideally become "expert learners." This gives them ever-broadening tools to keep learning. With a well-planned classroom environment, the students learn HOW TO LEARN.

Over the years, I have done my best to revise and refine the tipi-raising program as a way of offering teachers a learning experience which could be extended in many different directions, satisfying a wide range of learning goals. For more on the links between constructivism and the tipi-raising program, visit the Resources section.

This Guide was created as a way of providing preparation and follow-up activities for teachers who wish to incorporate the tipi program into their learning plans.



Tipi-Raising Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Native American Lifeways

Brief Program Description: A Tipi-Raising and Primitive Living Demonstration. Comparing and Contrasting Two Native American Cultures: The Lakota Sioux of the American West and the Lenape of Pennsylvania.

Grade Levels: 3-6

Subject Areas and Standard Areas:

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening: 1.6 Speaking and Listening

1.6.4. A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

History: 8.2 Pennsylvania History

8.2.4. D: Distinguish between conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations that impacted the history and development of Pennsylvania.

Environment and Ecology: 4.3 Natural Resources

4.3.4. A: Identify ways humans depend on natural resources for survival. Identify resources used to provide humans with energy, food, employment, housing and water.

Geography: 7.3 Human Characteristics of Places and Regions

7.3.4. A: Identify the human characteristics of places and regions using the following criteria: Population, Culture, Settlement, Economic Activities, Political Activities.

Economics: 6.1 Scarcity and Choice

6.1.4. A: Identify scarcity of resources in a local community.

Arts and Humanities: 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts

9.2.3. I: Identify, explain and analyze philosophical beliefs as they relate to works in the arts (e.g. classical architecture, rock music, Native American dance, contemporary American musical theatre.)

Overview:

This session focuses on comparing and contrasting two North American Indian cultures: The Lenape of the Eastern Woodlands and Sioux of the Western Plains.

Hands-on activity: Working as a team, students construct a 16-foot tipi on the school grounds. Highlight difference between Lenape bark-covered houses in semi-permanent camps with nomadic life of the buffalo-hunting Plains Indians. Note simple but elegant design of tipi in response to weather conditions and materials available in the environment.

Storytelling: Once inside, listen to Robin tell Native American story. Link to storytelling as a teaching tool among Plains Indian families. Imagine tipi as a living space for the family.

Show and Tell: View process of making deerskin clothing. Students try on primitive clothes. View wide variety of items made from deer. Demonstration of hunting tools used by Native American for both Whitetail deer and buffalo.

Discussion: Similarities and differences between how the Sioux used buffalo and how the Lenape used the Whitetail deer. Over 100 traditional uses, a use for every part. Ecological awareness of the importance of making wise use of natural resources. By discussing the emblematic relationship between Indian families and the most important animals in their lives, gain an understanding of a non-monetary economy.

Objectives:

--Students will learn that not all Indians are alike.

--Students will be introduced to the idea that many common ideas about Indians (All Indians lived in tipis and hunted buffalo, etc.) are stereotypes.

--Students will learn that modern Indian nations still exist as sovereign nations within the U.S. and have preserved and perpetuated their languages, life ways and traditions.

--Students will learn that over 500 Native Nations lived in North America. (See maps for geographic distribution of both Eastern and Western tribes.)

--Students will come to understand that Indian people responded to their environment in unique ways, depending on local conditions and availability of resources.

--Students will learn that the Lenape of Pennsylvania and the Sioux of the High Plains shared some similarities in their use of natural resources. The buffalo and the deer are “keystone” species which provided a myriad of essential raw materials for tribal peoples. In pre-history, Native people achieved a sustainable balance between human needs and preservation of the environment.

--Students will learn that our history documents a complex relationship between Anglo and Native peoples. Trade and conflict shaped settlement of Indian lands as hunting and gathering gave way to an agricultural approach to land use.

--Students will understand the importance of teamwork as they listen to instructions and work together to erect the tipi poles and lift the cover into place. (Great photo opportunity!)

Methodology:

The tipi-raising program can work as a stand-alone constructivist class project or can be used as the field experience for a thematic study of American, Pennsylvania and Native history. Teachers can use the materials in this guide as background material for their own learning and can use the student preparation and follow-up activities as time and interest allows. The resource section offers a wealth of ready-made classroom materials (books, videos, lesson plans) which can be used to bring this subject matter alive for elementary students.

Student Preparation Readings and Activities:

“History and Construction of the Tipi” by Robin Moore. (See next section)

For Sioux: *If You Lived with the Sioux Indians*. Ann McGovern. Scholastic Paperbacks, 2014. Age range: 7-10. Grade level: 2-5

McGovern gives a multifaceted view of Sioux life in the period from 1800-1850. The book is profusely illustrated, very informative and sympathetic toward the Indians and their relationship with white people. A great read-aloud.

Tipi: Home of the Nomadic Buffalo Hunter. Paul Goble. World Wisdom, 2007.

Award-winning author Paul Goble examines the construction, art and significance of the tipi. Goble shows how the tipi is more than just a home, but an expression of spiritual beliefs. Age Range: 5-8 years. Grade level: 1 and up.

Storm Maker's Tipi. Paul Goble. Atheneum, 2001. Age Range: 5-8 years. Grade Level: 1 and up.

Beautifully illustrated look at the origin of tipi designs with inspiration for creating decorated tipi covers.

Visit tipi.com site (Nomadics Tipi Makers) and look at pictures of tipis. Also consult Resource section.

Watch tipi-raising videos on YouTube. (See Resource section)

For Lenape: *The Indians of New Jersey: Dickson Among the Lenapes*. M.R Harrington. Holt, Rineheart and Winston, 1966. Age range: 9 and up. Grade Level: 4 and up.

Culturally- accurate historical fiction about an English boy among the Lenape in 1616. This book is too advanced for most elementary students to read on their own. However, the illustrations of Lenape clothing, housing and daily activities are unsurpassed. Some teachers may want to select sections of this book for read-aloud.

If You Lived with the Iroquois. Ellen Levine. Scholastic Paperbacks, 1999.

Detailed four-color paintings and a question-and-answer text bring to life the everyday world of the Iroquois, an eastern Indian confederacy of tribes which shared many similarities with the life ways of the Lenape. Age range: 7-10. Grade level: 2-5.

Follow-Up:

--Students will refine their knowledge of tipi construction. After viewing tipi images in this Guide,

--Draw picture of a tipi --What did you learn?

--Build a model of a tipi. (Teachers should try this project on their own before giving it to students.) For photo of a model village from Jack Briggs' class, see pg. 41.

Materials: poles: (Approx. 10-inch bamboo shish kabob skewers from the grocery store work well.)

Twist' em or light wire.

Paper tipi cover.

Scotch tape.

1. Cut out and decorate tipi cover. (See Printable Image Gallery, Pg. 42). Note: If you use this template, you can use a copier to make cover larger or smaller. Use blank side of the cover as the outside for decorations. Heavier paper will make a tipi cover that will stand up on its own.
2. Select three poles for the tripod. Using the tipi cover as a guide, measure to make sure that poles are tied together at the proper height. See illustration.

3. Lash three tripod poles together with wire.
4. Wrap cover around to position bases of the three poles accurately. Make sure cover fits. Do not add any more poles until the first three are correctly positioned.
5. Lay in front poles on right, then left, then lay in back poles. You may only need six poles. This depends on the size of your tipi cover.
6. Wrap cover around, tape front closed. Cover will stand up on its own once the front is taped closed. Stand smoke flaps up in proper position.
7. If you wish, add smoke flap poles, tape to ears of smoke flaps.

Students will deepen their understanding of key concepts and ideas through these Writing Prompts and Class Discussion:

Begin with Class Activity: Brainstorm together before writing individually. Make a list together of writing topics.

--What do you remember about the steps of putting up the tipi?

--What surprised you about the tipi once it was constructed and you went inside?

--What was your favorite part of this activity?

--What stood out for you as you and your classmates had this living history experience together?

Here are suggested writing prompts for individual writing followed by class discussion.

--Imagine yourself as a Sioux Indian living on the high plains. How is this landscape different from the land in our area occupied by the Eastern Woodland Indians? (Map of Western Plains. Page 42)

--Write a first person account. Imagine yourself as a child in an Indian family. How many uses of the deer and buffalo (bison) can you remember? How does your Indian family use them? See illustration on uses. Uses of Buffalo. (Page 42 and 43)

--Look at a modern map. Find the location of your school. Look at the land occupied by the Lenape. We are in Lenape country! (Page 46 and 47)

--Imagine yourself living in a Lenape bark-covered house. What would it be like in each season? (Pages 48 and 49)

Bonus:

The images of George Catlin are a wonderful glimpse of life on the Plains during the Buffalo-hunting era. Here is some background on the artist:

George Catlin was born in 1796 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. As a child he had strong interests in the out-of-doors and less in schooling. He studied and practiced law briefly, but enjoyed art more. He quit his practice and travelled to Philadelphia to take up the latter

profession in 1823. He became friends with a number of local artists, including Rembrandt Peale. He was sufficiently skillful at art to gain membership standing in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts by 1824.

With a letter of introduction to William Clark (who was the famous co-leader of the Lewis and Clark expedition), he travelled to St. Louis in 1830 and later that year and the next accompanied Governor Clark to council meetings held on the middle Missouri. This was the start of his portraits of Indians and their environment. For the next six years his typical experience was to spend the winters in or around St. Louis making money by painting portraits of the local inhabitants and the summers in Indian territory.

In 1836 he went to New York City and opened a show of his works and artifacts he had collected. He later opened shows in London and Paris. All were enthusiastically received. Due to financial misdealings, he went bankrupt in 1852. His paintings and materials were purchased by Joseph Harrison, an American, who then shipped all goods home to Philadelphia where they remained in storage until seven years after the artist's death.

Catlin returned home and from 1852 to 1860 travelled widely, both in North and South America. He repainted many of his older paintings from sketches and memory. He died in 1872.

Following the death of Joseph Harrison in 1879, his heirs offered the Catlin materials to the United States Government. The materials were transferred to the Smithsonian Institution and are now on view at various locations in Washington, DC. The second set of paintings were purchased by the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Historical Society. Catlin's paintings capture for us an image of what Indian society was like before the groups had been decimated by smallpox or internecine warfare.

George Catlin Quotes

"I have seen him shrinking from civilized approach, which came with all its vices, like the dead of night upon him. I have seen him gaze and then retreat like the frightened deer ... seen him shrinking from the soil and haunts of his boyhood, bursting the strongest ties which bound him to the earth and its pleasures. I have seen him set fire to his wigwam and smooth over the graves of his fathers ... clap his hand in silence over his mouth, and take the last look over his fair hunting ground, and turn his face in sadness to the setting sun. All this I have seen performed in nature's silent dignity ... and I have seen as often the approach of the bustling, busy, talking, whistling, hopping, elated and exulting white man, with the first dip of the ploughshare, making sacrilegious trespass on the bones of the valiant dead I have seen the grand and irresistible march of civilization. I have seen this splendid juggernaut rolling on and beheld its sweeping desolation, and held converse with the happy thousands, living

as yet beyond its influence, who have not been crushed, nor yet have dreamed of its approach."

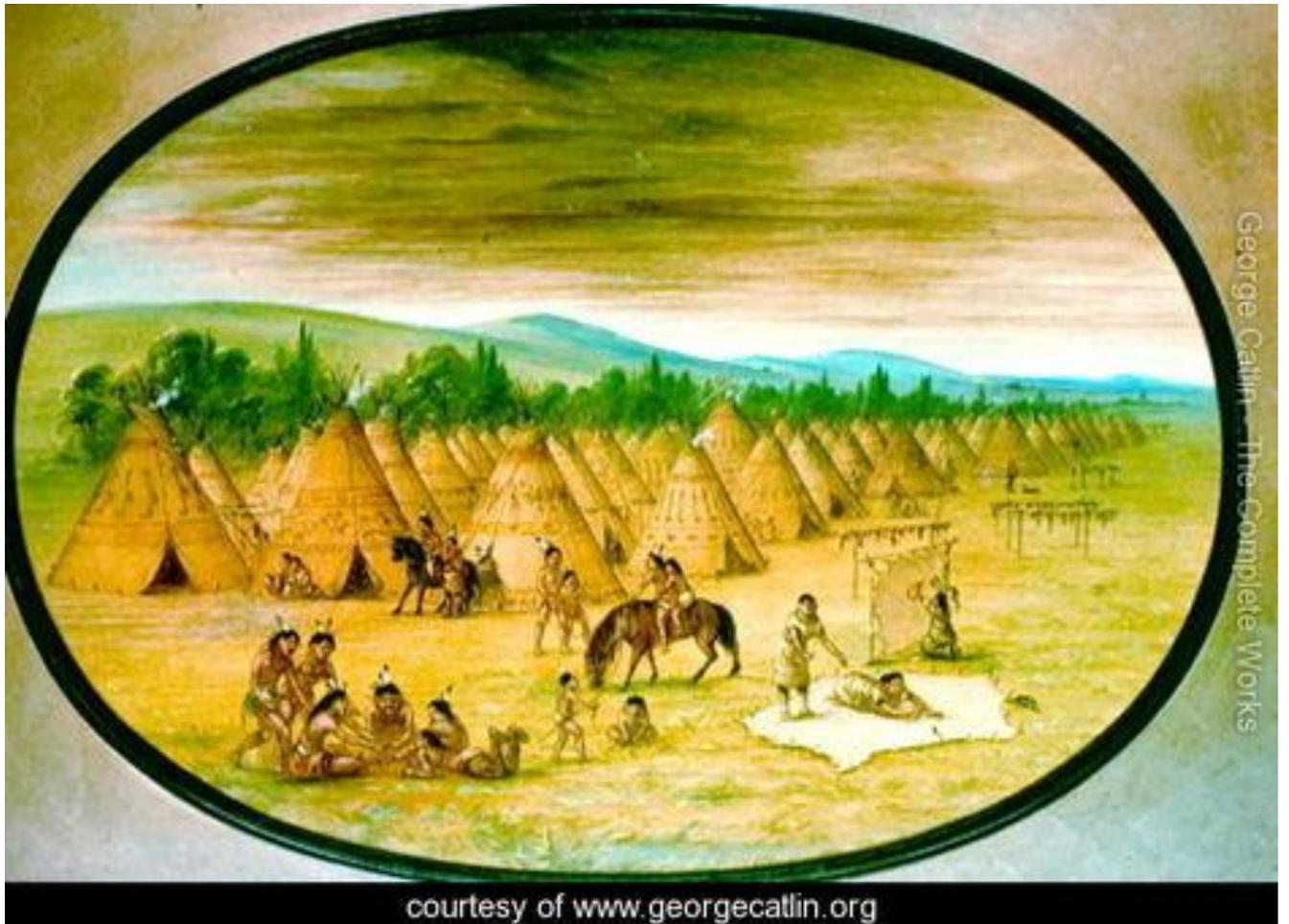
"Who will find peace with the lands? The future of humankind lies waiting for those who will come to understand their lives and take up their responsibilities to all living things. Who will listen to the trees, the animals and birds, the voices of the places of the land? As the long forgotten peoples of the respective continents rise and begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the meaning of the lands of their ancestors."

–Vine Deloria, jr.

These inspiring words are from author, activist and Native American leader Vine Deloria. Native authors offer an important perspective on the history of this continent, as seen from the viewpoint of indigenous people who still safeguard and preserve their traditions.

"The best teachers have showed me that things have to be done bit by bit. Nothing that means anything happens quickly--we only think it does. The motion of drawing back a bow and sending an arrow straight into a target takes only a split second, but it is a skill many years in the making. So it is with a life, anyone's life. I may list things that might be described as my accomplishments in these few pages, but they are only shadows of the larger truth, fragments separated from the whole cycle of becoming. And if I can tell an old-time story now about a man who is walking about, waudjoset ndatlokugan, a forest lodge man, alesakamigwi udlagwedewugan, it is because I spent many years walking about myself, listening to voices that came not just from the people but from animals and trees and storms."

--Joseph Bruchac, Prolific contemporary Native American author and storyteller.

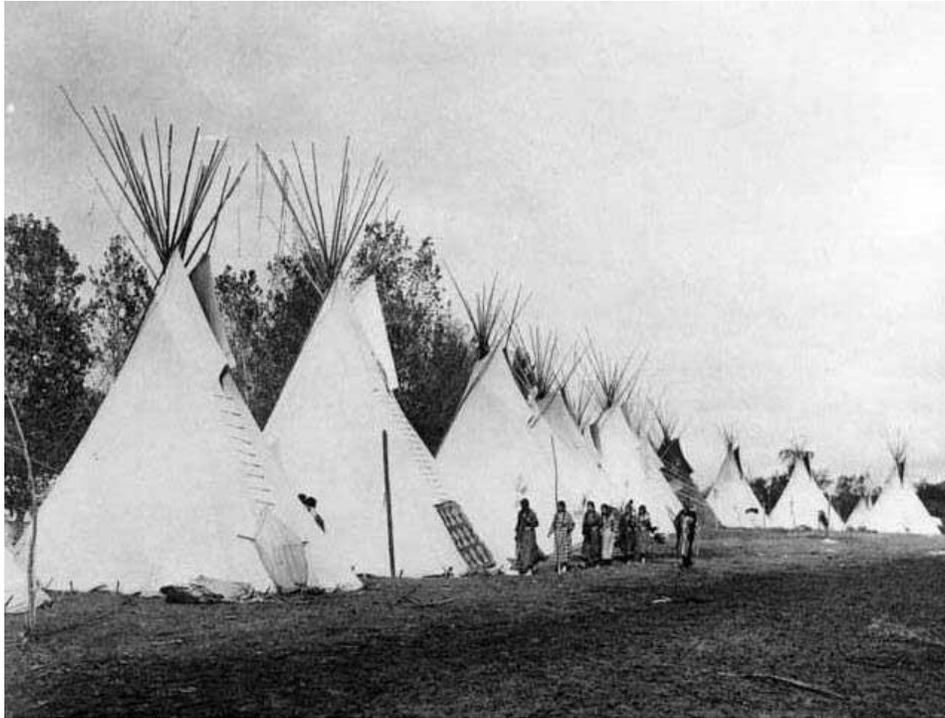


George Catlin - The Complete Works

courtesy of www.georgecatlin.org



History and Construction of the Tipi



History

Many people think that all Indians lived in tipis and that they have lived in them for thousands of years.

Neither of these statements are true.

Please consider: North America was home to over 500 nations, stretching from the arctic north to the deserts of the southwest, the forests of the east and the oceanic cultures of the coastlines. Each group responded to their environment in unique ways, devising ingenious methods for solving the problems of daily living by becoming a part of the environment that surrounded them.

The tipi is a perfect example of adaptability. While people all over the world have lived in conical structures that resemble tipis, the tribes of the western plains developed a totally unique dwelling which was perfectly suited for their nomadic way of life.

The real story of the tipi began when the horse came to the high plains. Until then, the plains were sparsely populated because of the difficulty of making a living. It was much easier to live in the woodlands of the north or the east, where game was plentiful and the ground could be cultivated.

The Spaniards brought horses to Mexico by ship. By 1650, native people in the southwest had purchased or stolen horses and begun a new way of living that had not been possible before. Now they could follow the buffalo and carry their possessions with them. They needed a totally portable structure which could be quickly assembled and taken down when needed. This was also a dwelling which needed to be able to withstand the extreme weather conditions of the open plains, in both summer and winter, and could be transported by horse.

Because the average family was moving every three or four weeks during the hunting season, men would often ride ahead in search of the herd, with women being responsible for taking down the lodge, packing up all family belongings and using tipi poles to create a drag, or travois, behind horses to carry all of the gear, shelter, children and elders to the next location. The horse, the buffalo and the tipi were the essential elements in this nomadic lifestyle.

The buffalo provided most of the essentials of living for plains people. Building a lifestyle around this primary animal made sense in a time when human population was relatively small and the herds were numerous.

This way of life spread like wildfire. Between 30 and 60 million buffalo roamed the plains. By 1750, the horse was widely used in most of western tribes. By 1860, the railroads built across the country divided the buffalo into the northern and southern herds. By 1900, less than 1,000 buffalo were left on the plains. Market hunting by both Anglo and Indians had decimated the herds. The loss of the buffalo signaled the end to nomadic plains life. With the military defeat of the tribes, the people were moved to reservations, issued canvas for tipi covers and beef to replace the buffalo, and a way of life came to an end.

Construction

Today, a revived interest in tipis, by both Native and Anglo people, has led to a renewed era in the celebration of this uniquely American way of living.

The structure of the tipi is simple yet elegant. I can tell you that after several decades of observing the tipi in every conceivable kind of weather, I have come to realize that if you know how, you can always make yourself comfortable in a tipi.

The first and most important step is to find a flat piece of ground. If the ground is sloping, your tipi will not look or feel right. The second consideration is drainage. Ideally, the ground should not puddle up in a rain or have standing water of any kind. In the tipi I pitched permanently on the property, I used a floor made of wood chips, building it up to a height of about six inches. I poured a bag of sand into the center and arranged smooth river rocks in a circle to form a fire pit. A third consideration in preparing the site is to make sure the tipi will get full sun during the day so the canvas will dry out easily. I face the doorway east to catch the rays of the rising sun. I also make sure that there are no branches that might fall on the

tipi and that I am far enough from pine trees with sap, cherry trees or blossoms that might fall down and stain the cover.

I have always enjoyed using the lodge pole pine tipi poles I order from Nomadics. They come unfinished so I sand them smooth and coat them with an oil-based deck preservative which helps them maintain their golden color and protects them from moisture and insects.

Once I have assembled the poles, lacing pins, canvas cover and rope, I am ready for a tipi raising!

I can put up a tipi by myself in about 15 minutes. But with the kids helping me it usually takes about twice as long. We move slowly and work together to accomplish each step. I take plenty of time to explain what we are doing and how we are going to do it.

I tie the first three poles of the tripod together on the ground. Then we raise the poles up and position the tripod. I always carefully measure the distance between the first three poles. If you get this measurement right, the cover will fit like a dream. If the base of the poles are even a few inches off, you are in for a tough time. The tipi cover will not fit!

Next we lay in the front poles, resting them in the front V of the tripod. Most of the poles are in the front of the tipi, this makes for a slim bundle at the point where all the poles are lashed together. I lay in the back poles on the back V of the tripod. Then I walk around clockwise with the long rope, may-pole style, binding the poles tightly to the tripod.

I leave a space in the very back for the lifting pole. The tipi cover is laid on the ground behind the tipi and the lifting pole laid on top. I tie the tipi cover to the lifting pole by a rope threaded through the topmost hem of the cover.

With one graceful motion, we push the lifting pole into place. Now all that remains is to walk the cover around to the front and pin it together with lacing pins. The final step is to raise the ears of the smoke flaps with the smoke flap poles.

This is the basic tipi set-up that I do on the school grounds.

If I were doing a more permanent set-up, I would add the fabric door, stake down the cover all around and install the tipi liner. A lot of people do not realize that the tipi has a double wall--inner and outer. The cover forms the outer wall. The liner is an inner wall, made of the same canvas fabric, which ties to the inside of poles all the way around, reaching from the ground to a height of about six feet inside the tipi.

The liner makes a great difference in the comfort of the tipi. It seals the living space from outer drafts but provides a very ingenious draft for the fire by drawing cool clean air between the walls of the tipi and funneling it up toward the smoke pole. Since warm air rises, the smoke and smells of the fire rise straight up the smoke hole, carried by the air currents flowing between the inner and outer walls of the tipi.

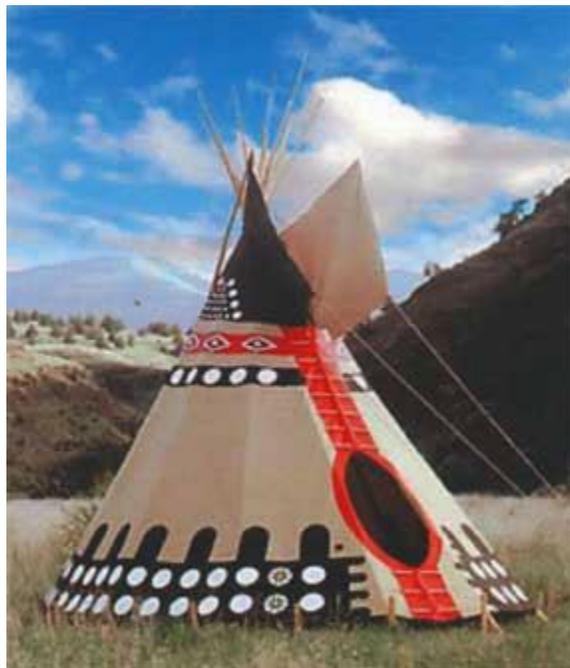
In the old days, people slept on buffalo skins laid on the ground around the fire. Nowadays, we use waterproof ground cloths and sleeping bags for a night of camping in the tipi. There is nothing quite as magical as falling asleep by the glowing coals of a fire, with the starry sky visible through the smoke hole.

In rainy weather, the smoke flap poles can be maneuvered to bring the smoke flaps forward to close the top of the tipi. Even in deep snows and windy lightning and thunderstorms, the tipi makes a safe and secure place to spend the night.

Over the years, I have owned tipis ranging from 20-foot to 16-foot to 6-foot. A 20-foot tipi is 20 feet from the ground to the point where the poles are joined together and 20 feet in diameter. I can fit about 100 third-graders in a tipi of that size. My 16-foot tipi can easily hold about 60 kids.

I started out with tipis of white canvas duck fabric but found that they became stained due to UV radiation and acid rain. I have now switched over to a tan “smoke” colored fabric which looks authentic but wears well. I experimented with painting tipi covers, using latex house paint. A painted tipi can look great! The last couple tipis I have had painted by the experts at Nomadics. When the sunlight comes through the fabric, you feel like you are living inside a stained glass window!

Visit www.tipi.com for a look at some beautiful paint jobs.



Background on Tipi Living and Learning



My Story

I am a lucky man. For more than thirty years I have made my living by writing children's books and presenting living history programs at schools, camps and festivals. At last count, I have visited more than 5,000 schools and told stories and given demonstrations of old time living skills to more than one million children, teachers and parents.

The tipi-raising program is my favorite. There is something magical about getting a group of kids together and erecting a tipi on the school grounds then spending the rest of the day using this as a teaching space for exploring Native American life ways.

I built my first tipi in 1976. It was not a very good tipi, I will admit, but it started me on a pathway that has been enormously satisfying.

Like so many others, I had only the vaguest idea of what a tipi was or what it was like to be inside one. Then I stumbled across a book that opened the door for me. The classic reference on tipi building is *The Indian Tipi: Its History, Construction and Use* by Reginald and Gladys Laubin.

I was living up in the woods in a cabin with no running water, no indoor plumbing, no central heating and trying to learn about subsistence living. I was 26 years old. I had just graduated from Pennsylvania State University and was full of ideas about the life I wanted to live. I stumbled across another book that propelled me out of the college town and up into the quiet and beauty of surrounding mountains.

This one was by Henry David Thoreau. *Walden*, his classic account of his experiment in simple living called to me in a way I could not refuse. Like Thoreau, I ended up living in the woods for a little more than two years. I learned quite a bit there, about the woods and about myself. I started writing my first book there, *The Bread Sister of Sinking Creek*, which is still in print. Like Thoreau, I wanted to pare life down to the essentials and chop my own wood and haul my own water, creating a primitive life there on the mountainside.

The tipi was one more experiment in simple living. I cut the 20-foot poles from straight pine saplings that grew at the margin of the woods and erected the tipi in a sunny meadow just downhill from the cabin, facing the doorway east, with a magnificent view of the valley below.

I made the cover from an army surplus parachute. A parachute is already more or less in the shape of a tipi. All I had to do was cut some of the nylon fabric, shape it into the ears of the smoke flaps and hand-stitch the pattern together. I closed the cover at the front with lacing pins cut from choke cherry shoots and used the same cherry wood to make wooden pegs that held the cover to the ground.

I could not have a fire inside because I was nervous about igniting the nylon fabric and it leaked like a sieve in the rain. I slept out in it a few times, but I realized that I still had so much to learn about tipi living. Mostly, it just stood in the meadow as a testament to my commitment to simple living. It was a dream I would return to years later.

As it turned out, it took me about ten years before I got back into the tipi life. In that decade, I had moved from the Penn State area in Central Pennsylvania to Montgomery County in Eastern

PA. I had married and had two children and was living in a stone farmhouse on a three-acre patch of land with a large garden, fruit trees and plenty of space to experiment with primitive living skills. My first book was published by HarperCollins and was successful enough to allow me to quit my job as a magazine editor and pursue writing historical fiction novels and performing in the public schools.

Once again, a book provided the necessary inspiration for my return to tipi living. *The Whole Earth Catalog* listed a company that made beautiful canvas cover tipis: Nomadics Tipi Makers of Bend, Oregon. This was an excellent choice. Over the years they have made six tipis for me and I have always been thrilled with the intelligent design and fine workmanship that they put into all of their tipis.

For the 20 years that we lived in Montgomery County, we kept our tipis up 365 days a year, in every season and in every kind of weather. That was how I really learned about tipis, by allowing them to teach me what this simple but beautiful structure had to offer.

The poles were Lodgepole pine, shipped from Montana and the cover was made from canvas fabric, expertly sewn by the Nomadics artisans. These were 20-foot tipis, with plenty of room for our kids to sleep out in and for our family to sit up around the fire on star-sprinkled nights and tell stories. At night, when we would build a fire inside, the entire cover would light up with a warm golden glow, like a giant Chinese lantern.

But I still had not figured out a way to include my passion for tipis in my school programs. The inspiration came from my friend Dick Humphreys who ran an environmental program on a nature trail at his property in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The local schools organized field trips which brought busloads of delighted children out to Dick's Gnome Countryside to spend the day in the woods, learning about nature and searching for gnomes, the little people who live in the woods. I saw the obvious benefits of spending the day outdoors with children, engaging all of their senses in a learning experience which they would remember for the rest of their lives.

I realized that I could do the same thing with tipi-raising. Dick encouraged me to give it a try. That was when the tipi-raising field trips began. Each fall and spring, when the weather was suitable for outdoor activities, classes would arrive by bus and spend the day on our land raising up a tipi and spending the day doing archery, fire-making, hide-tanning and other primitive living skills, getting a hands-on experience that the history books could never offer.

The format was simple: Programs were for third grade and above. I found that younger children did not have the physical strength for the hard physical work of putting up the tipi. Two classes, approximately 60 kids, along with a scattering of teachers and parents, was the ideal size.

I soon learned that with some careful instruction from me, the kids were entirely capable of erecting a 20-foot tipi by working together as a team. First we would raise the tripod, then place

the individual poles on the tripod and last of all, lift the cover into place and stake it down, tight and beautiful.

Then we would go inside the shelter we had just built and light a fire and I would tell some Native American Stories. The sight of sixty faces, looking up in wonder, in the soft golden light of the tipi is a memory I will never forget.

In more than two decades of tipi-raising, I have never had a single kid injured. Careful instruction and moving at a slow pace allows the kids to learn to work together and look out for each other as they move then lift and carry and raise the heavy poles into place. Many teachers have told me that children who are restless and difficult in a classroom setting thrive while doing physical work in the fresh air. I have certainly learned a great deal from books. I have written some books which I hope will give kids a sense of living history. But there is no substitute for getting out there and doing it; learning by doing makes us strong and resourceful learners.

But all good things must come to an end. When it was time to move from the Montgomery County property to the smaller place where we now live in Bucks County, I realized that I would not have a way to bring kids on field trips anymore; I would need a new idea. That is when I started bringing the field trips to the schools. I realized that if I down-sized slightly to a 16-foot tipi, I could load the 20-foot poles in the roof rack of my van and bring the program to the school grounds. This also saved the schools the time and expense of transportation. It also provided the rest of the students in all grades with the opportunity to come out after the tipi was set up and get a tour of the structure.

A final improvement was added by my Western Pennsylvania friend Dan Eash, a former principal and art teacher, who designed and built a wooden base which allowed me to do indoor tipi-raising. The wooden pieces are lightweight and snap together to form a huge circle, with secure footholds for the base of the poles. In a gym with a 20-foot ceiling, I can now set up a tipi no matter what the season or what the weather is doing outside.

Looking back on this amazing journey, I realize now that if you can dream it, you can do it. The dream of bringing the joy of tipi raising to school children is now a reality. I appreciate all the friends, teachers and students who have made this possible. I am sure there will be many more tipi raising in the future.

Resources



Note that most of these resources are too advanced for elementary students but provide tremendous background information for teachers to incorporate into their Native Studies lessons.

Tipi and Western Tribes

Nomadic Tipi Makers

www.tipi.com

17671 Snow Creek Road, Bend, OR 97701

This website is loaded with lots of information, along with beautiful pictures of tipis from all over the world. If you want to purchase a tipi to set up permanently, all of the ordering information is right here.

General Information Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4-ES2ViVeo>

Tipi Set-Up Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txikfkXtybk>

Laubin, Reginald and Gladys. *The Indian Tipi: Its History, Construction and Use*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1957.

This is the book that got me started, written by two Anglo authors who lived with western Indians and re-created the plains-style tipi in modern times. The most comprehensive book on the Indian tipi, filled with many fine illustrations.

Hungrywolf, Adolf. *The Tipi: Traditional Native American Shelter*. Native Voices Book Publishing Company, 2006.

This volume contains many fine archival photos and detailed illustrations of tipis and tipi camps.

Dary, David A. *The Buffalo Book: The Full Saga of the American Animal*. Swallow Press, University of Ohio Press, 1994.

The best book on the rise, fall and re-birth of the American Buffalo herds.

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw. *The Buffalo and the Indians: A Shared Destiny*. Photos by William Munoz. Clarion Books, 2006.

A well-illustrated view of the relationship between the Indian and the buffalo.

Neihardt, John G. *Black Elk Speaks*. University of Nebraska Press. 1988.

The most famous Native American book ever written. An authentic account of a Sioux healer and visionary during the twilight years of the buffalo era. Good for teacher background, too advanced for students. Some sections would be great for read-aloud to older grades.

McGovern, Ann. *If You Lived with the Sioux Indians*. Scholastic Paperbacks, 2014.

McGovern gives a multifaceted view of Sioux life in the 1880's. The book is profusely illustrated, very informative and sympathetic toward the Indians and their relationship with white people. A great read-aloud.

Lenape

Lenape Home Building Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0jfdunGbFk>

University of Penn Museum. *Native Voices, The People, Here and Now*. www.penn.museum

The best resource for teaching local Indian culture. This extensive teacher's guide offers lesson plans and resources to aid educators in presenting an accurate and culturally-sensitive view of regional Indian life.

Wallace, Paul A. *Indians in Pennsylvania*. PA Historical and Museum Commission, 2000.

Comprehensive view of what is known about the first inhabitants of our area.

Meyers, Albert Cook (editor). *William Penn's Own Account of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians*. Middle Atlantic Press, 1981.

One of the best contemporary accounts of how the Lenape actually lived and conducted themselves in early days.

Bock, William Sauts. *A Coloring Book of the First Americans: Lenape Indian Drawings*. The Middle Atlantic Press. 1974.

A wonderful illustrated view of Lenape life in early times. If you want to see what old Lenape villages looked like, this is the book. Williams Sauts Bock is the premier artist depicting Lenape Life. He has illustrated three of my books.

Harrington, M.R. *The Indians of New Jersey: Dickon Among the Lenapes*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

This is the best read-aloud book for kids about early Lenape life. This historical fiction novel is written by a careful researcher of native life and contains many helpful illustrations of dwellings, articles of clothing and lifeways. Harrington is one of the most influential anthropologists who studied the Lenape.

Geist, Valerius. *Whitetail Tracks: The Deer's History and Impact in North America*. Krause Publications. 2001.

Comprehensive information on the most important animal in the Lenape worldview.

Modern Native Tribal Communities

Native American Heritage Programs

www.lenapeprograms.org

School programs designed to present, preserve and perpetuate the history, lifeways, culture and contributions of the Lenape and other Native American groups.

Museum of Indian Culture

2825 Fish Hatchery Rd., Allentown PA 18103

www.museumofindianculture.org

Guided Tours, Research Library, Traditional Festivals, Educational Off-Site Programs.

The Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania

P.O. Box 43, Saylorsburg, PA 18353

www.lenapenation.org

Many fine resources on Lenape life in Pennsylvania.

Nanticoke-Lenni Lenape Indians of New Jersey

18 East Commerce St., Bridgeton, NJ 08302

(856) 455-6910

www.nanticoke-lenape.org

www.nanticokelenapemuseum.org

Website offers many resources on Lenape life.

Essential and General Interest Resources for Native American Studies

National Museum of the American Indian. *Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions and Answers from the National Museum of the American Indian*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2007.

Wonderful introduction to Native American Studies.

Seale, Doris (editor) *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Book for Children*. Alta Mira Press, 2006

Culturally appropriate resources.

Hirschfelder, Arlene. *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children*. Scarecrow Press. 1999.

This timely collection of essays forcefully confronts the negative racist images and stereotypes employed to dehumanize and subjugate Native Americans. These essays should galvanize classroom discussions and stimulate reflection and social change. No teacher or student of social studies should be without this work. This title should be required reading for librarians as well as educators.

Research Centers and Museums

National Museum of the American Indian

Washington, DC

www.nmai.si.edu

Teacher's Guide with Native American lesson plans, clipart and worksheets.

Mashantucket Pequot Museum

110 Pequot Trail, Mashantucket, CT 06338

800-411-9671

www.pequotmuseum.org

Native American Research Collection, A Native American Historical Collection and most importantly, an Education Collection.

The education collection not only houses books for children about Native Americans but aids in selecting them. The collection contains materials for educators that address both teaching about American Indians and selecting appropriate books. All materials are listed in online catalog at www.mpmrc.com

A Brief Overview of Teaching Strategy

What is constructivism?

Constructivism is basically a theory -- based on observation and scientific study -- about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore, and assess what we know.

In the classroom, the constructivist view of learning can point towards a number of different teaching practices. In the most general sense, it usually means encouraging students to use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing. The teacher makes sure she understands the students' preexisting conceptions, and guides the activity to address them and then build on them.

Constructivist teachers encourage students to constantly assess how the activity is helping them gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, students in the constructivist classroom ideally become "expert learners." This gives them ever-broadening tools to keep learning. With a well-planned classroom environment, the students learn HOW TO LEARN.

You might look at it as a spiral. When they continuously reflect on their experiences, students find their ideas gaining in complexity and power, and they develop increasingly strong abilities to integrate new information. One of the teacher's main roles becomes to encourage this learning and reflection process.

For example: Groups of students in a science class are discussing a problem in physics. Though the teacher knows the "answer" to the problem, she focuses on helping students restate their

questions in useful ways. She prompts each student to reflect on and examine his or her current knowledge. When one of the students comes up with the relevant concept, the teacher seizes upon it, and indicates to the group that this might be a fruitful avenue for them to explore. They design and perform relevant experiments. Afterward, the students and teacher talk about what they have learned, and how their observations and experiments helped (or did not help) them to better understand the concept.

Contrary to criticisms by some (conservative/traditional) educators, constructivism does not dismiss the active role of the teacher or the value of expert knowledge. Constructivism modifies that role, so that teachers help students to construct knowledge rather than to reproduce a series of facts. The constructivist teacher provides tools such as problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities with which students formulate and test their ideas, draw conclusions and inferences, and pool and convey their knowledge in a collaborative learning environment. Constructivism transforms the student from a passive recipient of information to an active participant in the learning process. Always guided by the teacher, students construct their knowledge actively rather than just mechanically ingesting knowledge from the teacher or the textbook.

Constructivism is also often misconstrued as a learning theory that compels students to "reinvent the wheel." In fact, constructivism taps into and triggers the student's innate curiosity about the world and how things work. Students do not reinvent the wheel but, rather, attempt to understand how it turns, how it functions. They become engaged by applying their existing knowledge and real-world experience, learning to hypothesize, testing their theories, and ultimately drawing conclusions from their findings.

The best way for you to really understand what constructivism is and what it means in your classroom is by seeing examples of it at work, speaking with others about it, and trying it yourself. As you progress through each segment of this workshop, keep in mind questions or ideas to share with your colleagues.

What are the benefits of constructivism?

--Children learn more, and enjoy learning more when they are actively involved, rather than passive listeners.

--Education works best when it concentrates on thinking and understanding, rather than on rote memorization. Constructivism concentrates on learning how to think and understand.

--Constructivist learning is transferable. In constructivist classrooms, students create organizing principles that they can take with them to other learning settings.

--Constructivism gives students ownership of what they learn, since learning is based on students' questions and explorations, and often the students have a hand in designing the assessments as well. Constructivist assessment engages the students' initiatives and personal

investments in their journals, research reports, physical models, and artistic representations. Engaging the creative instincts develops students' abilities to express knowledge through a variety of ways. The students are also more likely to retain and transfer the new knowledge to real life.

--By grounding learning activities in an authentic, real-world context, constructivism stimulates and engages students. Students in constructivist classrooms learn to question things and to apply their natural curiosity to the world.

--And, lastly, constructivism promotes social and communication skills by creating a classroom environment that emphasizes collaboration and exchange of ideas. Students must learn how to articulate their ideas clearly as well as to collaborate on tasks effectively by sharing in group projects. Students must therefore exchange ideas and so must learn to "negotiate" with others and to evaluate their contributions in a socially acceptable manner. This is essential to success in the real world, since they will always be exposed to a variety of experiences in which they will have to cooperate and navigate among the ideas of others.

"Assessment and standards are undeniably important issues, but they have always been and remain the tail that wags the dog."

--Jacqueline Grennan Brooks and Martin G. Brooks

In Search of Understanding: The Case of Constructivist Classrooms

About the Author



Author and his wife, Emerald DuCoeur, peering from the doorway of their 16-foot tipi.

Robin Moore grew up in the mountains of Central Pennsylvania, where his family has lived for more than 200 years. His ancestors came from Northern Ireland in 1798 and cleared a forty-acre farm out of the wilderness. His parents and grandparents were avid naturalists and instilled a love of nature, history and folklore.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and served as a combat infantryman with the 101st Airborne Division. He earned a Journalism Degree from Pennsylvania State University and worked as a newspaper reporter and magazine editor before beginning his full-time career as a children's book author and storyteller in 1981.

Robin has written more than a dozen award-winning books published by the world's largest publishers and has presented more than 5,000 storytelling programs and tipi-raising at public schools, camps and festivals. He holds a Master's Degree in Oral Traditions and serves on the Faculty of the Oral Traditions

Program at The Graduate Institute in Bethany, CT. Robin was named National Storyteller of the Year by the Ohio Arts Council and Author of the Year by The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association.

Today, he lives with his wife, Emerald DuCoeur, in a 1,300-acre nature preserve in Bucks County, PA. He has a busy schedule of school visits, author appearances, writing and teaching projects which allow him to share some of what he has learned in a lifetime of research and practice of living close to the land.

For more detailed info on Robin's books, school programs and writing workshops, visit him on the web at www.robin-moore.com

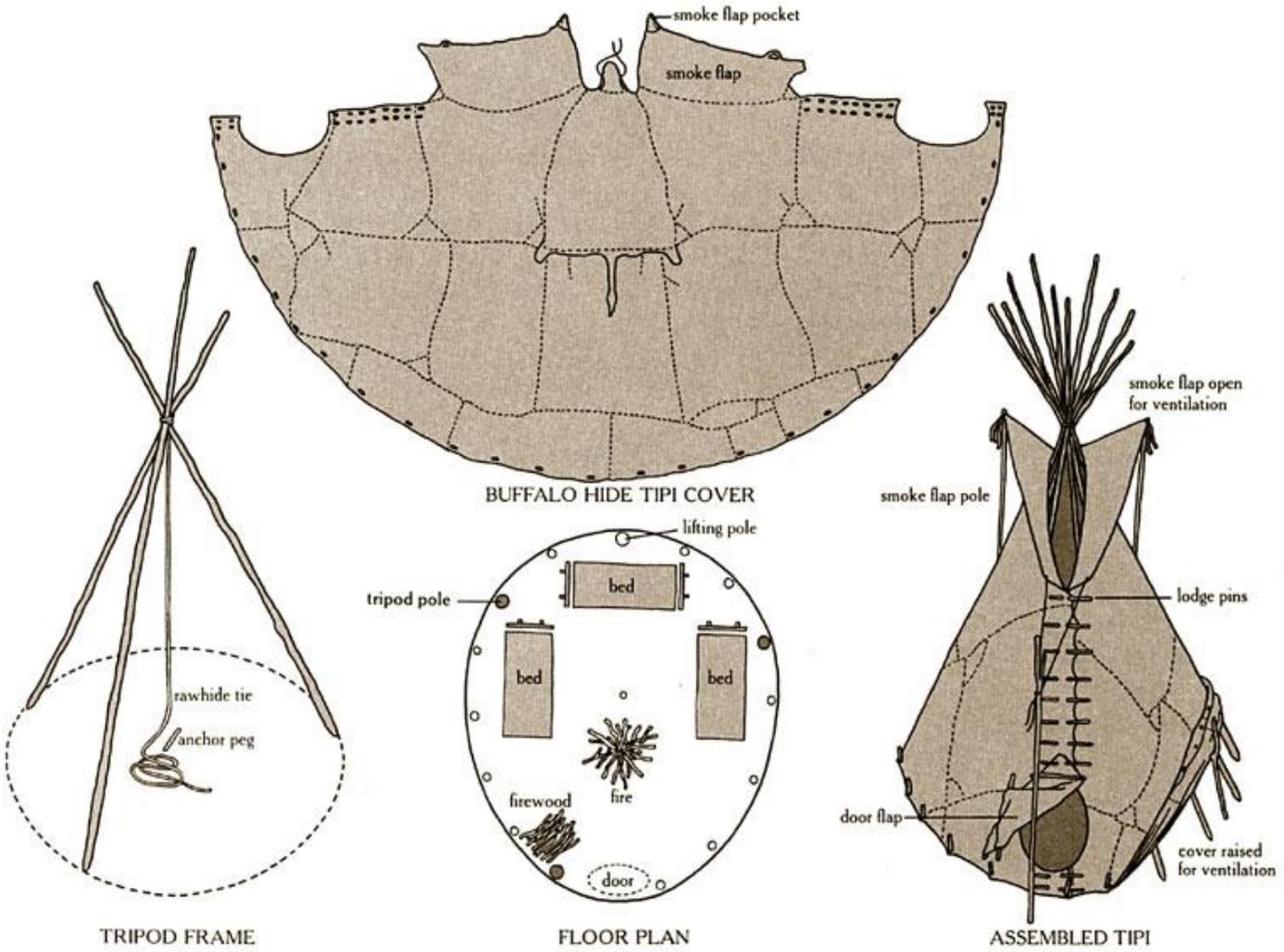
Printable Image Gallery

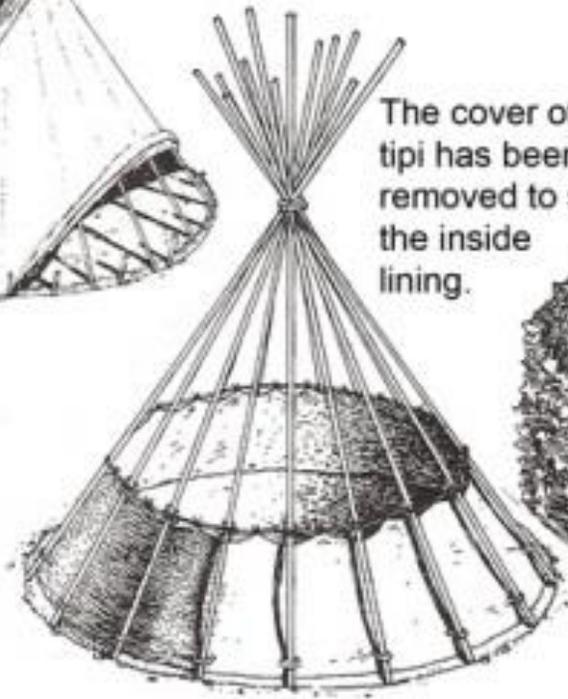
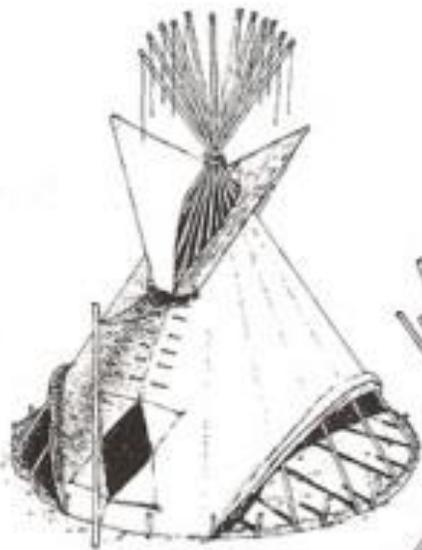
The following images can be used as companion-pieces to the material presented in the tipi-raising program.

Please remember:

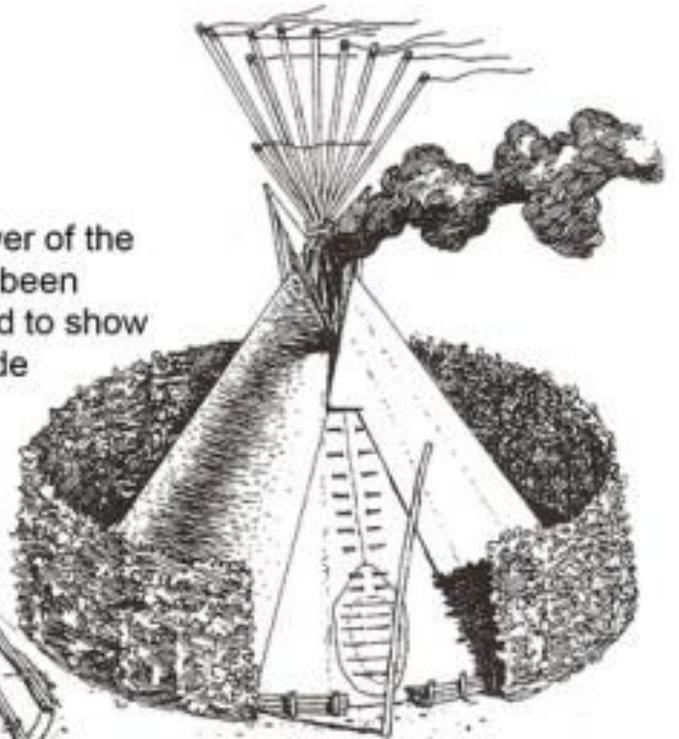
A picture is worth a thousand words but a hands-on experience is worth a thousand pictures.

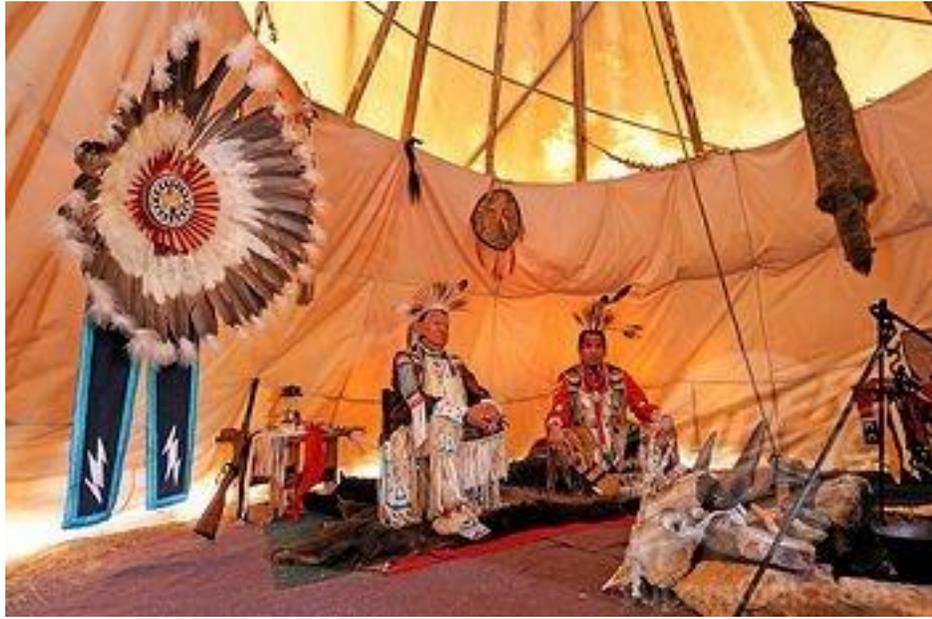
Enjoy!

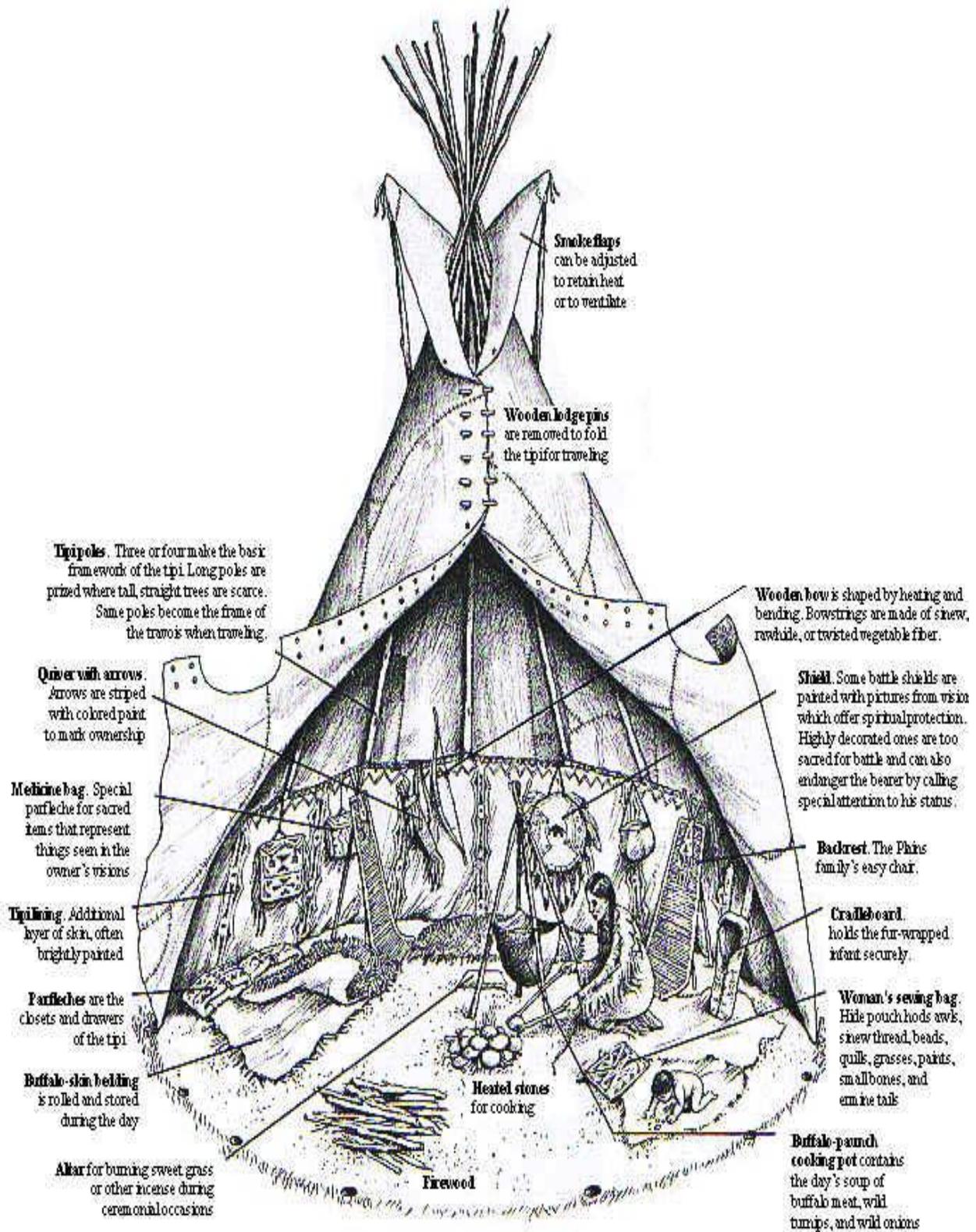




The cover of the tipi has been removed to show the inside lining.



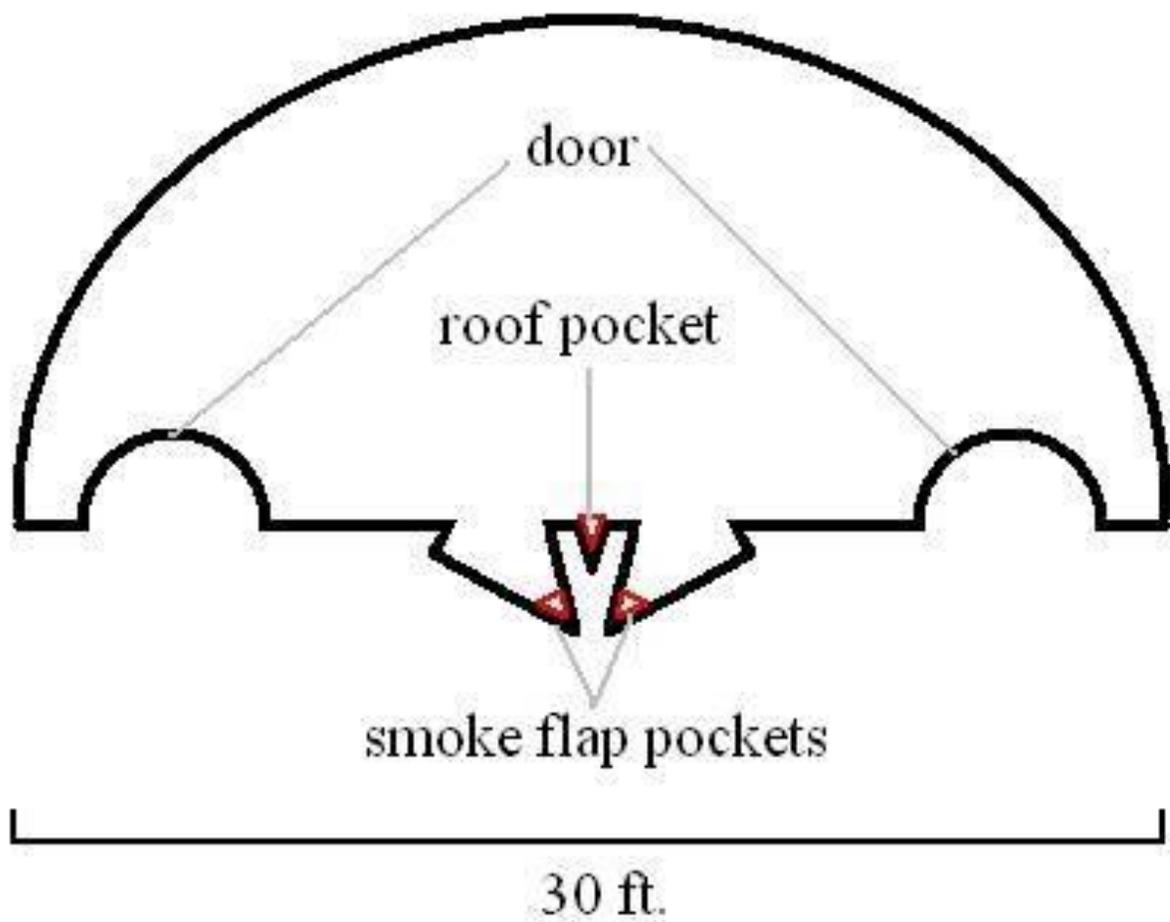


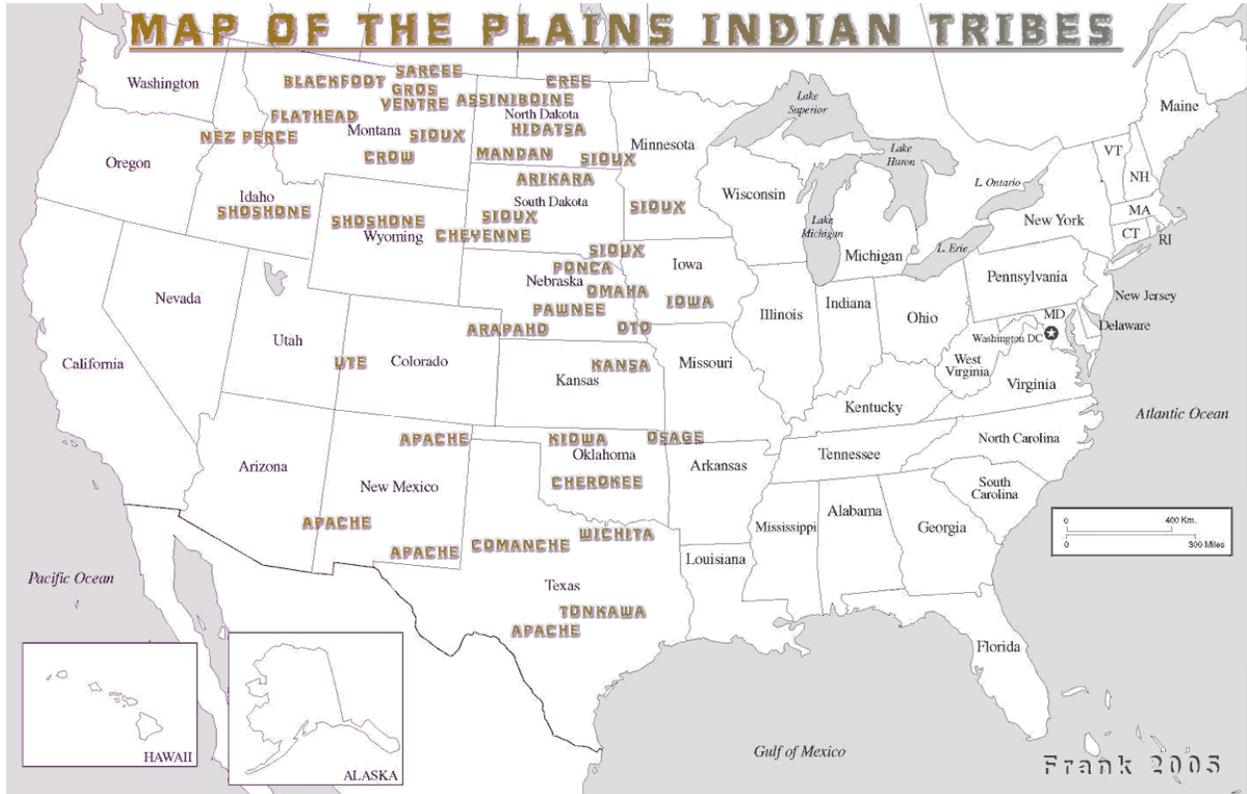


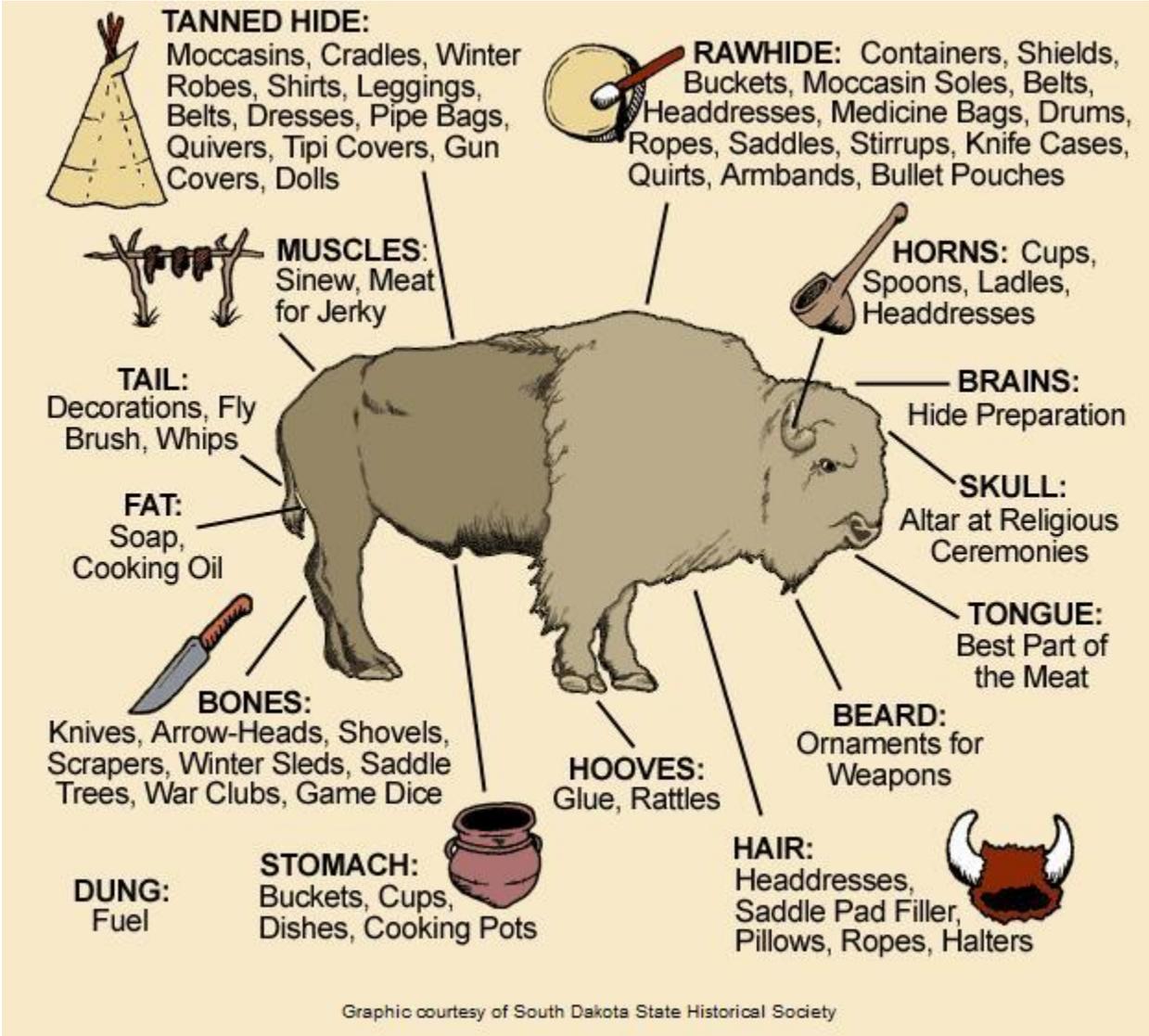








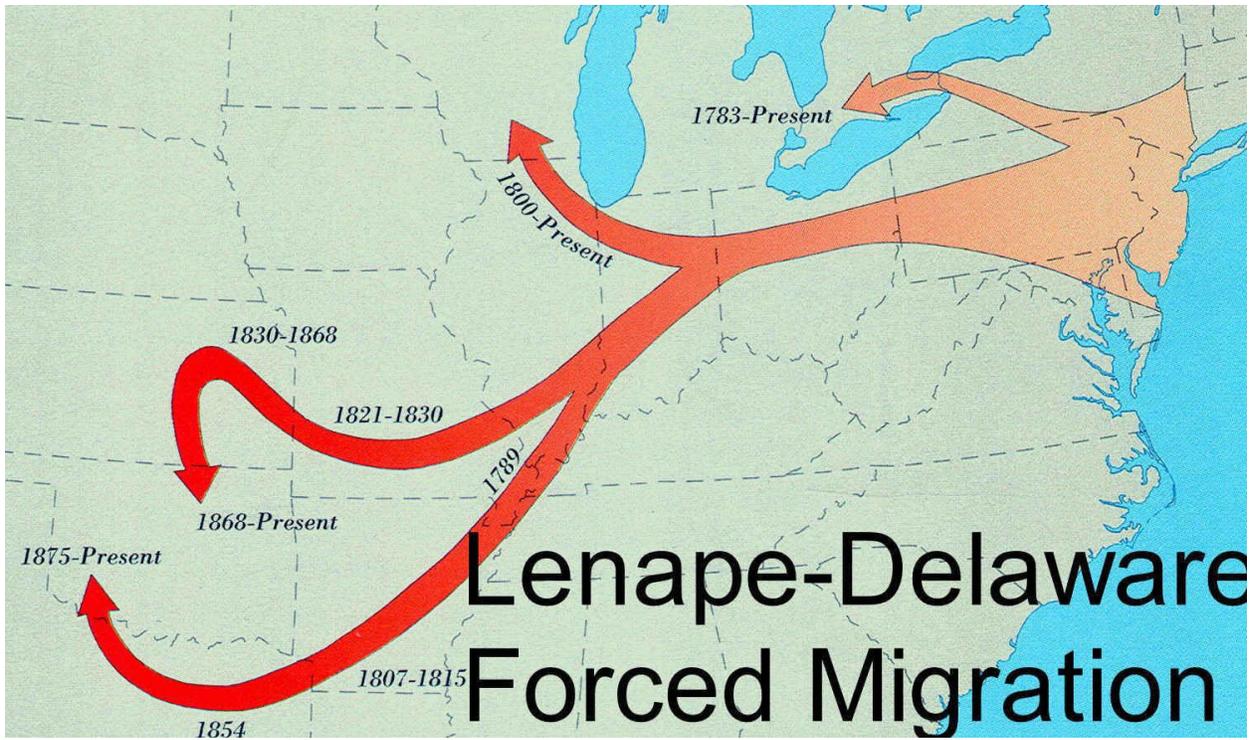




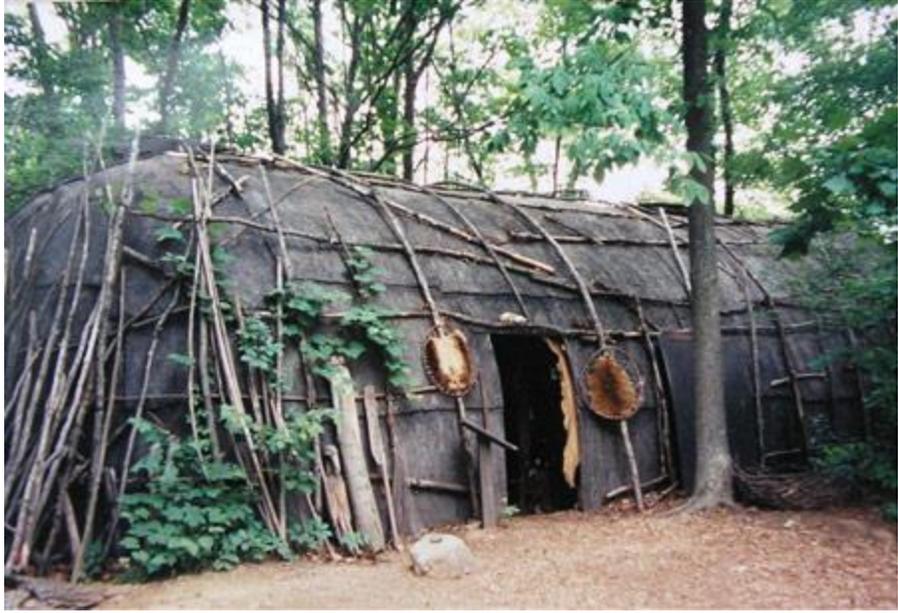
Tanned Hide	Stomach Contents	Hair	Rawhide	Bones
Backrests	Medicines	Bracelets	"Par fleche"	Arrowheads
Bags	Paints	Braided Ropes	Masks	Awls
Beads	Stomach Liner	Doll Stuffing	Cinches	Eating Utensils
Belts	Cooking Vessels	Hair Pieces	Ornaments	Fleshing Tools
Blankets	Water Container	Headdresses	Rattles	Game Dice
Bridles	Bladder	Horse Halters	Sheaths	Jewelry
Caps	Food Pouches	Medicine Balls	Snowshoes	Knives
Cradles	Medicine Bags	Moccasin Lining	Trunks	Painting Tools
Doll Mittens	Water Container	Ornaments	Horse-water Trough	Pipes
Dresses	Dew Claws	Pad Fillers	Moccasin Soles	Quirts
Leggings	Glue	Pillow Fillers	Containers	Saddle Trees
Moccasin Tops	Rattles	Tendons & Muscles	Quivers	Scrapers
Pillows	Wind Chimes	Arrow Tips	Ropes	Shovels
Pouches	Scrotum	Bowstrings	Shields	Sleds
Ropes	Containers	Cinches	Splints	Splints
Shirts	Rattles	Sinew	Lariats	Toys
Sweat Lodge Cover	Gall	Skull	Buckets	War Clubs
Tapestries	Yellow Paint	Alter	Caps	Horns
Tipi Liners	Liver	Dehairing Tool	Drums	Arrow Points
Tipi Covers	Food	Sun Dance	Rafts	Cups
Winter Robes	Tanning Agent	Meat	Saddles	Fire Carrier
Brains	Fat	Immediate use	Shrouds	Headdresses
Food	Soups	Dried	Straps	Ladles
Hide Preparation	Tallow	Meat / Jerky	Tail	Medication
Blood	Tanning	Pemmican	Decorations	Ornaments
Paints	Hair Grease	Sausages	Fly Swatter	Powder Horn
Puddings	Filled Pipe Sealer	Hoof Sheath	Knife Sheathes	Signals
Soups	Cosmetic Aids	Containers	Medicine	Spoons
Teeth	Tongue	Glue	Switch	Toys
Ornaments	Choice Meat	Rattles	Whips	Dung
Foot Bones	Comb (Rough side)	Spoons	Beard	Diaper Powder
Teething Toys		Wind Chimes	Ornaments	Fuel
Toy Buffalo or Horse				













Tipi on School Grounds



Indoor Tipi-Raising



Good Night, Sweet Tipi Dreams...