NATIVE HERITAGE CELEBRATION

Supaman

MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

2025/26 MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

STUDENT MATINEE SERIES

Study Guide

ABOUT SUPAMAN

As a member of the Apsáalooke Nation, Supaman makes his home on Apsáalooke lands in Montana. “Supaman” is Christian Takes Gun Parrish, a Native American dancer and innovative hip hop artist who has dedicated his life to empowering others and spreading messages of hope, pride, and resilience through his original art form.

He is the recipient of the 2017 MTV VMA Award for “Best Fight Against the System” and is also a Native American Music Award (NAMMY) winner, North American Indigenous Image Award winner, and seven-time Tunney Award winner. He received the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Award in Canada for Best Video, as well as awards for Best Hip Hop Album and Best Producer for the Indigenous Music Awards.

Supaman’s videos have received millions of views on YouTube and Facebook, leading to extensive tours throughout the U.S. and internationally. He is currently on tour across the country, sharing the good medicine of resiliency, love, laughter, and inclusion.

His one-of-a-kind presentation blends Native culture, comedy, and urban hip hop in a way that dazzles audiences and captivates listeners. For this, he has earned the respect of his community and his generation. With communicative talent and compassion flowing through his music, Supaman connects with people from all walks of life. His ability to motivate, encourage, and inspire through dance and hip hop keeps him at the forefront of his field and provides a powerful platform to educate on Indigenous issues.

INDIGENOUS ORIGINS

Indigenous Origins

Too often, Indigenous history is only told through written records or Western ways of understanding. For our Nations, however, oral traditions are true and authentic records of who we are. These stories carry our teachings about the world, our history, and how our tribal, social, and ceremonial life has grown over time. They come from the land itself, from our relationships with plants and animals, from the stars and the cosmos, and from dreams and visions. These teachings are not just stories passed down for the sake of remembering—they are living lessons. We return to them, reinterpret them, and use them to guide us as we respond to changes in the world around us.

Struggles of Colonization

For centuries, the cultural identity of Indigenous peoples has been the victim of a constant onslaught of attacks, from disease of epidemic proportions, to suppressive missionary activities, and government policies of forced removal and language destruction. Nations suffered greatly due to the rigors of assimilation and unimaginable physical, spiritual, and cultural annihilation. Yet they survived.

INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE

Indigenous Resilience

We continue to survive and thrive in the present day. Despite efforts to erase our cultures, languages, and ways of life, our Nations have held fast to ancestral teachings, carrying them forward with resilience and determination. Today, we are reclaiming our languages, revitalizing ceremonies, defending our lands and waters, and restoring traditional foodways and governance systems. Our artists, educators, leaders, and youth are shaping the future while staying rooted in who we are. This survival is not just endurance; it is a powerful act of thriving, proving that our cultures, our sovereignty, and our identities remain strong.

Below you will find a few examples of how our resilience continues to show up in the modern-day world.

- Jessie Little Doe Baird and her community, through the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project in Massachusetts, have revived the Wampanoag language after more than 100 years, and today children are being raised as first-language speakers.
- Communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Ontario have partnered with tech platforms like Rosetta Stone and other apps to make learning the Ojibwe language more accessible.
- In 2020, the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County successfully acquired approximately 1,200 acres of their ancestral land near Big Sur. This acquisition was part of a $4.5 million deal involving the state and an Oregon-based environmental group. The land had been taken from them nearly 250 years ago during Spanish colonial settlement. The tribe plans to use the land for educational and cultural purposes, including conservation of old-growth redwoods and endangered wildlife
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North and South Dakota led the 2016–2017 NoDAPL movement, a campaign to protect land and water that asserted their treaty rights and Indigenous sovereignty.
- *Reservation Dogs* (FX/Hulu) is a groundbreaking series, created entirely by Indigenous writers, directors, and actors, that tells the authentic stories of Native youth in Oklahoma.
- Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto (IFWTO) showcases Indigenous designers who are reclaiming traditional art forms and bringing them into contemporary fashion.

ACT 31

Did you know?

In Wisconsin, **Act 31** refers to a set of state laws passed in 1989 that require public schools to provide instruction on the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized tribes and bands of American Indians in the state. It was enacted in response to widespread racism and violence toward Native people in the 1980s, particularly around treaty rights and fishing in northern Wisconsin.

The goal of Act 31 is to ensure that all students in Wisconsin gain an accurate understanding of Native nations—past and present—while also recognizing the sovereignty and living cultures of the eleven federally recognized tribes in the state.

Key Requirements

- All Wisconsin students must receive instruction in Native American history, culture, and tribal sovereignty at both the elementary and secondary levels.
- Teachers are required to have training and preparation in Native studies in order to fulfill this mandate.
- Instruction must include information about the **11 federally recognized tribes of Wisconsin** (Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee, Forest County Potawatomi, Bad River Ojibwe, Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe, Red Cliff Ojibwe, Mole Lake Ojibwe, and St. Croix Ojibwe).
- Act 31 is not just about compliance—it is about transforming education so that Native nations are recognized as sovereign, living, and essential to the fabric of Wisconsin's past, present, and future. True implementation requires partnership with tribal nations, investment in teachers, and a commitment to telling the full truth of history.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction provides several resources on how to incorporate Native American Studies content in Wisconsin Public Schools.

The following information was sourced from: The Wisconsin State Tribal Relations Initiative and the Tribes of Wisconsin Reference Book, Native American Tourism of Wisconsin, Running Strong for American Indian Youth, Indigenous Corporate Training and Supamanhiphop.net. Visit these external sites to learn more.

WISCONSIN TRIBES

The tribes of Wisconsin have an ancient history in the region, stretching back hundreds of thousands of years. In fact, tribes in the state have roots in some of the world's oldest Copper Cultures, with some copper objects dating back to the end of the last Ice Age, representing the tribes' deep relationship and cultural connection to their lands. A series of 19th century treaties between the tribes and the U.S. Government established the 11 Tribal Reservations as they are known and recognized today. Wisconsin has the largest concentration of tribes in one state east of the Mississippi River.

Their reservation lands occupy over one half million acres of prime forest and marsh lands, lakes, and rivers. Each tribe has its own language, art forms, traditional practices, and oral histories. Diverse yet alike in many ways, each of the reservations feature pristine lakes, rivers and streams, towering forests, and ancient wild rice beds-ecosystems teeming with an abundance of wildlife. Their natural resources have been protected by the same treaties that established the reservations and are still in force today.

There are 11 federally-recognized Indigenous Tribes in Wisconsin:

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Forest County Potawatomi

Ho-Chunk Nation

Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin

Oneida Nation

Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Sokaogon Chippewa Community (Mole Lake Band)

St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin

Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians

FAQS

Why are Native people referred to as Indians?

Indigenous people in the United States were first referred to as Indians because Columbus believed he had reached the East Indies when he touched the shores of North America. Today, many people prefer to call themselves American Indian, Indigenous, or First Nations people to avoid the inaccurate label of “Indian.”

What is smudging?

Smudging is a cultural ceremony practiced by a wide variety of Indigenous people in Canada and other parts of the world. Smudging is the practice of burning various medicinal plants to cleanse ourselves and connect us with our spirit and with the Creator.

It may also be used to cleanse, purify, and bless the part of our mother earth. For example, we may smudge around the sweat lodge or powwow and our homes to purify or bless special objects like ceremonial objects or totems, such as jewelry, rattles, or clothing.

Of the four sacred medicines* given to us by the Creator, sage is most often used in most smudging ceremonies. However, traditional teachers and knowledge keepers from various Indigenous Nations will have more specific teachings that go with each medicine. Non-Indigenous people should consult with these Indigenous experts about how to properly acquire, use, give, or ceremonially include the medicines in any cultural practice.

Four sacred medicines: Cedar, sage, sweetgrass, tobacco.

Source: Lynn Lush (whose Indigenous name is Blue Thunderbird woman - ozhaawashko binesi ikwe), Indigenous Land Based Learning Navigator at TELUS World of Science Edmond

FAQS

What is a powwow?

For us as Indigenous people, a **powwow** is more than just a gathering—it is a living expression of who we are. At powwows, our men, women, and children come together in song and dance, carrying forward the traditions our ancestors passed down. These gatherings are also times to reconnect with family, friends, and relatives, to renew old ties, and to welcome new ones.

Our skilled artists and craftspeople travel from near and far to share the beauty of their work—jewelry, pottery, moccasins, ribbon shirts, shawls, dream catchers, paintings, and more. Each piece reflects our teachings, our creativity, and our connection to culture. Above all, powwows are sacred. They are a time to honor our ways, to sing to the Creator, and to dance to the heartbeat of the drum—the heartbeat of our people.

What is the significance of the drum?

For us as Indigenous people, the **drum** is sacred. Its steady beat represents the heartbeat of our Mother Earth, reminding us of our connection to all life. When we sing with the drum, it is not simply for music—it is prayer, ceremony, and healing.

At powwows and other gatherings, the big drum is usually carried by a group of men who sit together, drumming and singing in unison. Women often stand just outside the circle, adding their harmonies that lift and strengthen the songs. This balance of voices reflects the roles we each carry within our communities.

The drum also serves an important purpose in guiding the dancers. Its beat provides the rhythm for each step, as dancers move in gratitude to the Creator and to Mother Earth. Through the drum, we honor our traditions, our teachings, and the sacred connection between our people and the land.

FAQS

What is Indigenous Art?

Tribal art, traditions and culture are significant parts of Native communities in the state, making Wisconsin a unique destination to explore the history of Native American people in the Great Lakes Region. Indigenous communities have developed unique and regionally specific forms of art that serve ceremonial, spiritual, and everyday purposes.

Some of the most widely recognized include:

- **Beadwork:** Often used to decorate clothing, regalia, and ceremonial items.
- **Quillwork:** A pre-contact decorative art using dyed porcupine quills.
- **Basketry:** Woven with local plant materials and often used for food gathering or storage.
- **Pottery:** Including the intricate geometric designs of Pueblo pottery.
- **Carvings and effigies:** Such as Zuni fetishes or Hopi kachinas.
- **Weaving and textiles:** Including Navajo weaving and finger-woven sashes.

Mariah Grace Art & Design

Photo courtesy of Mackinac State Historic Parks

INDIGENOUS VALUE SYSTEM

Seven Values Framework

Although these are from the Bad River Tribe's website, these are widely known and practiced teachings across First Nations Peoples.

The Seven Values of the Anishinaabe are the teachings of our ancestors. These foundational values were given to the people to guide the way we live our life; as such, the Seven Values provide the philosophical framework for this strategic plan.

- **Nibwaakaawin – Wisdom:** To cherish knowledge is to know Wisdom. Wisdom is given by the Creator to be used for the good of the people.
- **Zaagi'idiwin—Love:** To know peace is to know Love. Love must be unconditional. When people are challenged emotionally and financially they become fearful of their situation. Anishinaabeg is reminded to love the people; the children; and the environment.
- **Minaadendamowin—Respect:** To honor all creation is to have Respect. All of creation should be treated with respect. You must give respect if you wish to be respected.
- **Aakode'ewin—Bravery:** Bravery is to face the foe with integrity. In the Anishinaabe language, this word literally means "state of having a fearless heart." To do what is right even when the consequences are unpleasant.
- **Gwayakwaadiziwin—Honesty:** Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave. Always be honest in word and action. Be honest first with yourself, and you will more easily be able to be honest with others.
- **Dabaadendiziwin—Humility:** Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation. In the Anishinaabe language, this word can also mean "compassion." You are equal to others, but you are not better.
- **Debwewin—Truth:** Truth is to know all of these things. Speak the truth. Do not deceive yourself or others.

Source: Bad River Tribe Website (https://www.badriver-nsn.gov/)

WISCONSIN TRIBES

BAD RIVER BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

- population within state: 6,945
- population on tribal lands: 932
- reservation size: 124,655 acres
- seat of government: Odanah

In 2003, they bought back almost 24,000 acres of their original reservation. The tribe did so to preserve the land and protect it from being developed.

BROTHERTOWN NATION

- population within state: 1,200
- population on tribal lands: not applicable
- reservation size: landless
- seat of government: Fond du Lac

The Eeyamquittoowauconnuck is the only First Nation of Wisconsin without federal or state recognition. The seven feathers on their flag represent the six tribes from seven communities who banded together to become the Brothertown.

FOREST COUNTY POTAWATOMI

- population within state: 1,400
- population on tribal lands: 584
- trust lands size: 12,000 acres
- seat of government: Stone Lake

This tribe calls themselves "Keepers of the Fire." The Potawatomi care for the environment: they were the first American Indian nation to use wind power to create all of their nation's electricity.

HO-CHUNK NATION

- population within state: 6,563
- population on tribal lands: 1,411
- trust lands size: 8,863 acres
- seat of government: Black River Falls

This nation calls itself Hochungra, which means "People of the Big Voice." To help protect their language, the nation created a special program in 2006 to teach others how to speak Ho-Chunk.

LAC COURTE OREILLES BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

- population within state: 7,275
- population on tribal lands: 2,247
- reservation size: 76,465 acres
- seat of government: Hayward

The band lived in a settlement called Pahquahwong. The French called the settlement Lac Courte Oreilles, or "Lake of Short Ears," as their ears were not stretched like other Ojibwe who wore heavy earrings.

LAC DU FLAMBEAU BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

- population within state: 3,415
- population on tribal lands: 1,761
- reservation size: 86,600 acres
- seat of government: Lac du Flambeau

This Ojibwe nation is known for spearing fish at night by the light of birchbark torches. French fur traders who watched this ritual called the village Lac du Flambeau, or "Lake of the Torches."

MENOMINEE INDIAN TRIBE OF WISCONSIN

- population within state: 8,720
- population on tribal lands: 3,401
- reservation size: 235,524 acres
- seat of government: Keshena

The forest is very important to the Menominee. They work hard to preserve it. The Menominee Forest can be seen from space.

ONEIDA NATION

- population within state: 12,101
- population on tribal lands: 4,473
- reservation size: 65,400 acres
- seat of government: Oneida

The Oneida Tribal School was built in the shape of a turtle representing Sky Woman and the Oneida creation story. In the story, Sky Woman placed dirt on a turtle's back and things began to grow, creating Earth.

RED CLIFF BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

- population within state: 5,312
- population on tribal lands: 2,513
- reservation size: 14,541 acres
- seat of government: Red Cliff

In 2012, the band created Frog Bay Tribal National Park, the first tribal national park in the U.S. This park is a 90-acre forest along the Lake Superior shoreline.

SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA COMMUNITY (MOLE LAKE BAND)

- population within state: 1,026
- population on tribal lands: 452
- reservation size: 5,356 acres
- seat of government: Mole Lake

The nation was known as the "Lost Band" when the maps showing where their reservation would be were lost in the mid-1800s. Land was finally purchased for the tribe's reservation in 1934.

ST. CROIX CHIPPEWA INDIANS OF WISCONSIN

- population within state: 825
- population on tribal lands: 591
- reservation size: 4,689 acres
- seat of government: Webster

The band moved south from Madeline Island and discovered that the St. Croix River area offered many valuable resources like wild rice. During the 1700s, they started making this area their home.

STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE COMMUNITY BAND OF MOHICAN INDIANS

- population within state: 1,126
- population on tribal lands: 438
- reservation size: 24,773 acres
- seat of government: Bowler

The "Many Trails" graphic in the seal's center signifies the tribe's many moves west to Wisconsin that left numerous trails to retrace for the band's history. It symbolizes endurance, strength, and hope.

Sources: Wisconsin State Tribal Relations Initiative. *Tribes of Wisconsin Reference Book*. Retrieved April 2018, from witribes.wi.gov and Loew, Patty. (2015). *Native People of Wisconsin*. Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

CURRENT TRIBAL LANDS MAP

[Click here for an interactive past and current land map]

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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ABOUT MPAC'S STUDENT MATINEE SERIES

Student matinees are a series of special abbreviated daytime performances for K-12 students featuring internationally-renowned artists. A student matinee is the perfect way to bring the arts to life in a fun and memorable way. To learn more and view this season's matinee schedule, please visit **MarcusCenter.org**

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