

Knowledge Organiser Year 4/5 Art: Native American Art

Who? What? Where?

Native American Art is all art created by the people who originally lived in North America and their descendants. This art is by people from tribes with different cultures, native languages and tribal styles.

Tier 3 vocabulary

Indigenous	Native, having always lived in a place
Motif	Pattern or design
Ritual	A way of doing something in which the same actions are done in the same way every time
Symbol	A sign, shape or object that is used to represent something else, such as a quality or an idea
Totem pole	Tall wooden sculpture

Examples of Native American art



Tlingit totem pole and community house, Alaska.

Native American Haida Raven by Bill Reid, 1972

Native American woven basket

Key facts

Native American art is the art of the *indigenous* people of North America, often called American Indians.

Many **Native American** art objects are meant to be practical as well as beautiful, for example utensils, bowls, baskets or blankets.

Native American artists focus on the process rather than the product, giving a lot of attention to interacting with the materials, which often involves certain *rituals*.

Native American cultures create art that reflects their environment, working with the natural materials of their homeland, such as wood, stone, grasses, feathers and animal hide.

Techniques used to create **Native American** art are: carving, weaving, painting, pottery, basketry and metal craft.

Symbols are important in **Native American** culture; they are used to tell stories about life, the human spirit and nature. Native American artists use *symbols* to reflect their culture and their connection to the natural world.

Totem poles are created by **Native American** tribes in the north and northwest. They are carved from cedar wood and represent generations of family members or a spiritual story. The word totem comes from a Native American word meaning 'kinship group'.

Related (prior) knowledge: Aboriginal art (Y1/2)

Related future learning: Understand the historical and cultural development of art forms (KS3)