



Worksheet for Selecting Native American Children’s Literature

Please use the American Indian Library Association’s guidelines before using this criteria.

Title _____ Author _____ Illustrator _____

YES NO

Authority	Was the book written by a Native American author?		
	Was it written in consultation with a Native American community?		
	Does the author have in-depth expertise in the tribal community referenced in the book?		
	Does the author cite consultants with expertise in the tribal community referenced in the book?		
	Is the author's work recommended by scholars and organizations with expertise in Native literature?		

Accuracy	Is the text historically and culturally accurate?		
	Are the illustrations historically and culturally accurate?		
	Are the references primary-source documents or from tribal community members?		

Tribally Specific	Is the book tribally specific and does it avoid generic terms such as “The Native Americans”?		
	Does the book avoid stereotypes and generalizations in its language and illustrations?		
	Are retellings or interpretations of traditional stories that specify tribal origin referenced and included in the notes?		
	Does the book contain notes and/or glossaries that verify or otherwise support the accuracy of tribal languages when used?		

Language	Is the dialogue realistic and free of Hollywood romanticism such as “My Son” or broken English such as “Me go help”?		
	If the dialogue uses a word that is often misunderstood (such as “squaw”), are clear explanations of the word given in the notes or glossary?		
	Does the dialogue misuse words such as “papoose” (the Narragansett word for “baby”) that cannot be universally applied across tribes?		

“We are still here”	Does the book show continuity of culture, convey indigenous knowledge, values, spirituality, religions, and morals rooted in the past and connected to the present?		
	Does the book present accurate portrayals of contemporary life among American Indians in various geographical settings: on or near reservations, villages, and communities, and in urban or rural areas?		

If you have more checkmarks in the no boxes do not use the book in the classroom but consider using this worksheet as a tool with your students to develop their critical thinking skills instead.