



Worksheet for Selecting Native American Children’s Literature

Title _____ Author _____ Illustrator _____

Authority	YES	NO
Is the book written by a Native American author?		
If the book has illustrations, were they done by a Native American illustrator?		
Do the author and illustrator (Native or non-Native) provide evidence that they consulted with knowledgeable people within the tribal nation or community depicted in the book?		
Is the author's work recommended by scholars and organizations with expertise in Native literature?		

Accurate Representation	YES	NO
Is the text historically accurate? (Are specific dates and timeframes provided for historical events?)		
Do the illustrations represent Native history and culture accurately?		
Does the book include references that have a variety of sources, such as primary-source documents or links to tribal websites?		

Tribal Specificity	YES	NO
Are the characters and content tribally specific?		
Do the book’s illustrations avoid stereotypes and generalizations and show tribally specific clothing, arts, homes, and geographic regions?		
When characters are shown in regalia, is the depiction appropriate to the tribal nation and context? (Today, regalia is worn for specific reasons and not as everyday attire, and Plains-style headdresses should not be used to depict Native people outside of the Plains.)		
Do retellings or interpretations of traditional stories treat them with respect as sacred stories (not myths, legends, or folktales), specify tribal origin, and include notes about the source of the story and time of the year when it is appropriate to read it?		

Language	YES	NO
Is the dialogue realistic and free of Hollywood romanticisms (for example, phrases like “many moons ago” or broken English such as “me go help”)?		
Does the author use appropriate and respectful words when referring to Native people?		
Is the dialogue free of incorrectly used tribally specific words like “papoose” (the Narragansett word for “baby”), which cannot be universally applied across tribes?		
Does the book contain notes and/or glossaries that verify or otherwise support the accuracy of tribal languages when used?		

Contemporary Life	YES	NO
Are Native characters shown as individuals who engage in the same kinds of everyday activities that other kids do (going to camp, playing basketball, or spending time with family and friends)?		
Does the book present realistic portrayals of contemporary life among American Indians in various geographical settings: on or near reservations, villages, and communities, and in urban or rural areas?		