



## Newsletter for English Teachers About the USA – Virtual Classroom

### In this issue:

[Food Security](#) | [Looking Back: Fall of the Wall & Oral History Project](#) | [National American Indian & Alaska Native Heritage Month](#) | [Literature: Indigenous Story Telling](#) | [In Focus: Thanksgiving](#) | [November 16-20: International Education Week](#)

### Food Security

Food security is one of the top issues worldwide and a “very top priority” for the Obama administration. “There is no reason why we should have the kind of hunger in the world that we have today,” Tony Hall, the executive director of the Washington-based Alliance to End Hunger, said, with “well over 1 billion people who are chronically hungry, many to the point of starving.” The United States, Hall said, still ranks as the world’s largest contributor to the World Food Programme and donates food assistance on a bilateral basis as well. U.S. nonprofit groups and nongovernmental organizations also provide food assistance in addition to the government funding. Hall said the U.S.’ contribution to the cause of eliminating hunger worldwide is equal to about 40 % of total worldwide contributions. In 2008 alone, the [U.S. Agency for Int. Development](#) provided 2.6 million metric tons of food, valued at more than \$2.6 billion, which benefited approximately 56 million people in 49 countries on four continents. Hall praised the Obama administration’s [Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative](#), which he said addresses the issue of hunger comprehensively, and called it “the best piece I have ever read” on hunger under five presidents.



© [State.gov: Global Hunger and Food Security](#)

#### Links

- [World Food Summit 2009 Site](#)
- [Sec. Clinton's Statement on World Food Day 2009](#)
- [Global Hunger and Food Security](#)
- [America.gov: Food Security](#)

**Background:** In 1996, 180 nations met at [FAO](#) (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN) for the World Food Summit. They pledged to eradicate hunger and committed themselves to a basic target: reducing the number of undernourished people by half by 2015.

### Looking Back

**The Berlin Wall: 20 Years Later:** The Berlin Wall — symbol of a divided city within a divided nation within a divided continent — marked the geopolitical and ideological cleavage of Cold War Europe. Its demise marked the triumph of western models of personal autonomy and economic entrepreneurialism, and of the desire to live in freedom. Among the voices gathered here are those of leading scholars, a dissident from a time when dissent required real bravery, and a journalist who was there when the walls came down all through Eastern Europe. [More](#)

[NEWSEUM: The Berlin Wall](#) includes sections on the use and role of media in both East and West and the history of the Wall.

[Deutsche Welle World: The Path to German Unity.](#) The site contains wonderful features including popular culture in the East & West, media contributions to the fall of the Wall, a discussion of the clichés about East & West that are still common, articles on East German success stories, etc.

### Ongoing Program of the U.S. Mission Germany

#### Oral History Project: Undivided – Encounters with America:

The project highlights the American connections to the GDR by an interactive online oral history collection designed to record the reciprocal impressions of GDR citizens and Americans who lived through this period of history. To document this unique relationship, interviews will be posted on a YouTube page, with appropriate links from the Mission website. In addition to video clips, text comments and photographs, the site will feature a timeline. [USA-GDR](#)

#### Teaching Material: [What is History? Timelines and Oral Histories](#)

This lesson plan addresses the ways people learn about events from the past and discusses how historical accounts are influenced by the perspective of the person giving the account. To understand that history is made up of many people’s stories of the past, students interview family members about the same event and compare the different versions, construct a personal history timeline and connect it to larger historical events, and synthesize eyewitness testimony from different sources to create their own “official” account. (EdSitement)



©America.gov/ The journal contains thought-provoking articles, excellent pictures and a number of commentaries.



**German History in Documents and Images (GHI)** is a comprehensive collection of primary source materials documenting Germany’s political, social, and cultural history from 1500 to the present. It comprises original German texts, accompanied by new English translations, and a wide range of visual imagery. All of the materials can be downloaded free of charge for teaching, research, and related purposes. An initiative of the [German Historical Institute, Wash., DC](#)



Curley, 2006. Acrylic on canvas. An Indian brave gazes toward the distant horizon, his hair adorned with eagle feathers -- traditional symbols of courage in battle. © Photo courtesy of John Nieto/America.gov

John Nieto paints striking, symbolic portraits representing icons of the American West. His focus on American Indian culture and North American wildlife reflects his family's centuries-old roots in New Mexico. Nieto is descended from Apaches and early Hispanic settlers, and his artistic education embraced the traditions of both America and Europe. [Photo Gallery](#)

**Did you know?** There are nearly 5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in the U.S. - or 1.6 percent of the total population. The U.S. government recognizes 564 different tribes.

**Encyclopedia Smithsonian:** Native American History and Culture features a wealth of information about Native Americans, incl. a list of links, exhibitions, and recommended readings.



### A Five Part PBS Series [We Shall Remain](#)

"We Shall Remain, a provocative multi-media project that establishes Native history as an essential part of American history." This series spans four centuries and shows Native Americans' history as part of the national experience from the Mayflower to the Wounded Knee occupation of 1973. Each episode is viewable online and accompanied by a full transcript and teacher's guide. The series shows how Native peoples valiantly resisted expulsion from their lands and fought the extinction of their culture -- from the Wampanoags of New England in the 1600s who used their alliance with the English to weaken rival tribes, to the bold new leaders of the 1970s who harnessed the momentum of the civil rights movement to forge a pan-Indian identity. It represents an unprecedented collaboration between Native and non-Native filmmakers and involves Native advisors and scholars at all levels of the project. [TEACH AND LEARN:](#) The Teacher's Guide offers resources to integrate Native American history into school curricula. The guide includes five film-specific sections with post-viewing questions, plus activities designed to foster student understanding of the important themes and issues that make Native history an essential part of American history.

### [Five 90-minute documentaries](#)

**Watch full episodes online – For Free**

## National American Indian & Alaska Native Heritage Month

National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month is celebrated every November to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of the American Indian and Alaska Native people.

National American Indian Heritage Month was first designated in 1990 under a joint congressional resolution approved by President George H. W. Bush. Each year, the sitting president issues a [proclamation](#), as did President Obama this year. On November 5, Obama hosted the first-ever White House Tribal Nations Conference, calling it "the largest and most widely attended gathering of tribal leaders in our history." (See [President Obama's opening remarks](#).) Read more: [America.gov](#)

### Presidential Proclamation on Native American Heritage Month 2009

*"The indigenous peoples of North America -- the First Americans -- have woven rich and diverse threads into the tapestry of our Nation's heritage. Throughout their long history on this great land, they have faced moments of profound triumph and tragedy alike. During National Native American Heritage Month, we recognize their many accomplishments, contributions, and sacrifices, and we pay tribute to their participation in all aspects of American society. This month, we celebrate the ancestry and time-honored traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives in North America. They have guided our land stewardship policies, added immeasurably to our cultural heritage, and demonstrated courage in the face of adversity. [...] Native Americans have distinguished themselves as inventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and scholars. Our debt to our First Americans is immense, as is our responsibility to ensure their fair, equal treatment and honor the commitments we made to their forebears."* [Presidential Proclamation on Native American Heritage Month 2009](#)

### Links

- America.gov: [People & Places](#); [American Indian History, Culture](#)
- America.gov: [American Indian Heritage Month Links](#)
- eJournalUSA: [Indigenous People](#)
- About the USA: [Native Americans](#)
- Department of Interior's [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#)
- Library of Congress: [American Indian Heritage Month](#)
- National Park Service: [American Indian Heritage Month](#)
- Smithsonian Education: [American Indian Heritage Month](#)
- Smithsonian Education: [American Indian Heritage Teaching Resources](#)
- Teacher Resources - TeacherVision: [American Indians/Native Americans](#)
- U.S. Census Bureau: [Fact Sheet](#) and [Data](#) on the population

### Lesson Plans [EdSitement/ National Endowment for the Humanities](#)

- [Anishinabe - Ojibwe - Chippewa: Culture of an Indian Nation](#) - This lesson focuses on one American Indian Nation, the Anishinabe, also known as the Ojibwe, Ojibway, or Chippewa Indians. Students will learn how to conduct a research project on different historical, geographical, and cultural aspects of this Native American group.
- [Native American Cultures Across the U.S.](#) - This lesson discusses the differences between common representations of Native Americans within the U.S. and a more differentiated view of historical and contemporary cultures of five American Indian tribes living in different geographical areas. Students will learn about customs and traditions such as housing, agriculture, and ceremonial dress for the Tlingit, Diné, Lakota, Muscogee, and Iroquois peoples.
- [Not 'Indians,' Many Tribes: Native American Diversity](#) - Students study the interaction between environment and culture as they learn about three vastly different Native groups in a game-like activity that uses vintage photographs, traditional stories, photos of artifacts, and recipes.
- [Traditions and Languages of Three Native Cultures: Tlingit, Lakota, & Cherokee](#) - This lesson compares the cultures and languages of the Tlingit, Lakota, and Cherokee American Indian tribes, and helps students learn the importance of preserving a group's traditions.



## Literature: Indigenous Storytelling

Storytelling is an effective technique to capture the imaginations of young minds and improve students' language skills. Storytelling also can appeal to different senses and learning styles, and can be a wonderful way to connect cultures.

"The indigenous peoples that first inhabited the Americas held their literature in memory to be transmitted orally, and members of surviving indigenous nations still do. Before there was writing, there were stories. Over millennia, stories descended through generations, in families and communities -- stories that captured the values and legends of diverse societies. Gifted storytellers committed hundreds of tales and verses to memory, and they were highly honored as entertainers and teachers who inspired, instilled values, and guided behavior.

Writing was invented, and many stories transmitted orally were written down, but storytellers continued to enthrall traditional communities around the world. Even the 20th-century technological revolution, which brought radio, television, the Internet, and digital media, did not silence storytellers.

Indigenous Americans have a rich oral tradition among their many distinct tribes, or nations, who inhabited North and South America well before the first European explorer appeared. Today these stories, preserved within their communities, reach broader audiences thanks to storytellers like Sunny Dooley and Dovie Thomason."

[Article](#) by Lea Terhune: **Teaching the Art of Being Human - Ancient Indigenous Storytelling Thrives.** (eJournalUSA: [Indigenous People](#))

### The Legend of Eagleman

It was on a summer morning in the days before Se-eh-ha lost the love of the River People. Just as the sun came over the eastern hills, the Chief of Cactus Village stood on his brush arbor and shouted, "My people! The gods have favored us. We have stored enough food to last all winter. Our families are well fed. Tomorrow at dawn the warriors will go on a rabbit drive. Each man must have four arrows. Get busy and repair your weapons." [Full text - A Story by Anna Moore Shaw](#) Pima Indian legends have been verbally passed from generation to generation. Coyote, Eagleman, quail, bear, and other characters relate their adventures in two dozen delightful tales Anna Shaw heard her father tell when she was young. The author, a Pima herself, unfolds tales as passed down from generation to generation. [Pima Indian Legends](#) (University of Arizona Press)

**Quote** *Storytelling. At base that is what American Indian authors and poets are doing — storytelling.* -- [Jace Weaver](#)

### Teaching Material

- **Smithonian:** [Indigenous Geography](#) welcomes visitors to explore universal themes from the perspectives of Native communities throughout the Western Hemisphere. Indigenous Geography presents a multi-layered view of indigenous ways of life, and of issues affecting contemporary indigenous peoples. View the site in either English or Spanish. Includes lesson plans on teaching cultural diversity.
- **Smithonian:** [Catlin Classroom](#). Take a virtual journey to meet American Indians of the 1830s with artist, ethnologist, and showman George Catlin. This site compiles paintings, historical documents, and commentary from contemporary experts so you can explore the intersections of two cultures, both in Catlin's time and today.
- **PBS Classroom:** [Circle of Stories](#) uses documentary film, photography, artwork and music to honor and explore Native American storytelling. "Speaking is our primary way to communicate a powerful narrative. However, communication does not stop with the spoken word. All cultures have told stories enhancing them with body language, food, dance, art, music, storytelling, drama, crafts, literature and religious rites. Storytelling reflects our rich cultural and religious heritage of the generations before us, and it leads us to understand how our past has influenced our present."
- **University of Virginia:** [Old Indian Legends](#) by Zitkala-Sa. [A Biography of Zitkala-Sa](#): Zitkala-Sa, which means Red Bird, was raised in a tipi on the Missouri River until she was 12 when she went to a Quaker missionary school for Indians in Wabash, Indiana.



©AP Images/Coeur d'Alene Press, Jason Hunt (America.gov)  
A Navajo dancer performs at an Idaho powwow. Pow wows celebrate American Indian culture and preserve tribal traditions.

### On Language

**Two Languages in Mind, but Just One in the Heart** - Author of more than a dozen novels, a memoir, poetry and children's books, **Louise Erdrich**, writes about the inspiration she derives from Ojibwemowin, the Chippewa (Ojibwe) language:

*"For years now I have been in love with a language other than the English in which I write, and it is a rough affair. Every day I try to learn a little more Ojibwe. I have taken to carrying verb conjugation charts in my purse, along with the tiny notebook I've always kept for jotting down book ideas, overheard conversations, language detritus, phrases that pop into my head. Now that little notebook includes an increasing volume of Ojibwe words. My English is jealous, my Ojibwe elusive. Like a besieged unfaithful lover, I'm trying to appease them both."*

**Did you know?** Navajo is the most widely spoken American Indian language, and almost one-fourth of Navajos speak a language other than English at home — the highest percentage of all tribes. Unfortunately, only one-half of the 300 or so native languages once spoken in North America still have any living speakers. [America.gov](#)



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## In Focus: Thanksgiving Day – November 26

### Short Story by O. Henry: Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen

"There is one day that is ours. There is one day when all we Americans who are not self-made go back to the old home to eat saleratus biscuits and marvel how much nearer to the porch the old pump looks than it used to. Bless the day. President Roosevelt gives it to us. We hear some talk of the Puritans, but don't just remember who they were. Bet we can lick 'em, anyhow, if they try to land again. Plymouth Rocks? Well, that sounds more familiar. Lots of us have had to come down to hens since the Turkey Trust got its work in. But somebody in Washington is leaking out advance information to 'em about these Thanksgiving proclamations." [Read the short story](#)

### Mark Twain on Thanksgiving

"Thanksgiving Day, a function which originated in New England two or three centuries ago when those people recognized that they really had something to be thankful for - annually, not oftener - if they had succeeded in exterminating their neighbors, the Indians, during the previous twelve months instead of getting exterminated by their neighbors, the Indians. Thanksgiving Day became a habit, for the reason that in the course of time, as the years drifted on, it was perceived that the exterminating had ceased to be mutual and was all on the white man's side, consequently on the Lord's side; hence it was proper to thank the Lord for it and extend the usual annual compliments." [More](#)

### Links

- America.gov: [Thanksgiving Day a Time for Reflection, Gratitude, Sharing](#)
- Scholastic: [The First Thanksgiving](#)
- USA.gov: [Thanksgiving page: Turkey Basics](#)
- LoC: A Poem a day for High School Student: [Thanksgiving](#) by Mac Hammond
- U.S. Census Bureau, Facts for Features: [Thanksgiving Day 2009](#)

### Thanksgiving Comes But Once a Year

by Thornton W. Burgess

Thanksgiving comes but once a year,  
 But when it comes it brings good cheer.  
 For in my storehouse on this day  
 Are piles of good things hid away.  
 Each day I've worked from early morn  
 To gather acorns, nuts, and corn,  
 Till now I've plenty and to spare  
 Without a worry or a care.  
 So light of heart the whole day long,  
 I'll sing a glad Thanksgiving song."

### Welcome to U.S. Embassy Berlin's official Facebook page

#### for Exchanges and Study in the U.S.

Here you can find information on U.S Embassy endorsed exchange and study programs for high school and university students and professionals, as well as updates on information sessions, scholarship and grant opportunities, and links to educational resources. We hope you find this information helpful and encourage you to actively participate by posting exchange-related comments and questions on our wall and discussion board!



### November 16-20: International Education Week

International Education Week is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education is part of our efforts to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States.

### Links

- State.gov: [EducationUSA](#)
- State.gov: [Educational & Cultural Affairs](#)
- America.gov: [Education & Youth](#)
- Twitter: [Twitter.com/educationusa\\_de](#)



### usa.usembassy.de

About the USA is a digital collection of background resources on American society, culture, and political processes. In addition to featuring selected websites, it provides access to documents in full text format (E-Texts) on topics ranging from the history of German-American relations, government and politics to travel, holidays and sports.

This newsletter is produced by the Information Resource Centers/U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany.

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