Native American Round Dance

Lesson Summary

• Explore the cultural, historical and aesthetic value of the traditional Native American Round Dance.
• Learn the proper steps to a Round Dance by inviting a Native American to share the round dance and their feelings about their heritage.
• Identify the stressed and unstressed beats to a Round Dance song.

Lesson Key Facts

Grade(s): 3-5
Subject(s): Social Studies, Music, Dance
Duration of Lesson: 45 minutes
Author: Chris Roberts and Brenda Beyal

Lesson Plan and Procedure

Preparation
Reach out to Native Americans within your community for assistance in teaching the Round Dance. Contacting families within your school community would be ideal. If other avenues are needed, contact your district Title VI coordinator or Indian Education department within your state education system. See materials and resources for links to websites.

It is important that you take the time to ask for help with this activity. Many Tribal members are happy to come into schools and share their culture. Keeping the Round Dance as authentic and accurate as possible is just a way of being respectful and culturally sensitive; showing your understanding and awareness of cultural ways.

If at all possible, attend an event such as a Pow Wow or celebration where you can experience first-hand the Round Dance is its most authentic way. You will come away with an experience that will only enhance your teaching.

Background
The Native American Round Dance also known as the Circle or Friendship dance is universal to Native American tribes on the North American Continent. Though songs are unique to each tribe, the beat is the same. It is often described as the heartbeat. It is a social dance that all are invited to participate in. It is a time to renew friendships, make new friends, accept difference and celebrate the human connection.

**Introduction**

Give background information to students about the Round dance. Have students listen to several different Round dance songs. Instruct them to listen for the common beat of each song. Point out the HARD BEAT (stressed) and the SOFT BEAT (unstressed).

The Shoshone called the Round Dance a Circle dance. This is sung by Bryan Hudson. In his own words, “This is a traditional Shoshone circle dance song that references the way the night stars look. I learned this song from the late Liz Brady of Elko, NV.”

[https://soundcloud.com/newe-hupia/night-star-a-shoshone-circle-dance-song](https://soundcloud.com/newe-hupia/night-star-a-shoshone-circle-dance-song)

The Paiute like the Shoshone sing Circle dance songs. This song is sung by Mark Rogers, a member of the Shivwits Band of the Paiute tribe of Utah.

[https://www.pbs.org/video/kued-documentaries-we-shall-remain/](https://www.pbs.org/video/kued-documentaries-we-shall-remain/)

The Navajo welcome all present who would like to participate in the Round dance. Two circles are formed with the men in the outside circle and the women in the inside circle. Arms are locked and the dancers move first in a clockwise direction and then in an opposite direction when a new song is started. The dance can also be danced in universal circle with all participating. Play 4. Navajo Love Song.


This song is a Plains Indian Round Dance song. It is part of any Pow Wow and all are invited to participate. It promotes cultural unity and provides a break in between contest dancing.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgqWy_CZ_5U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgqWy_CZ_5U)

**Round Dance**

Introduce and thank the guest for coming to your classroom. Give them the opportunity to share their name, tribe and background. Hold a Question and Answer time. Invite your guest to teach the Round Dance.

Have the students stand in a circle. Round dances go in a clockwise direction. Instruct students to get into the ready position by bending their knees slightly and relaxing.

Allow your guest to use their own music or begin the music for the Plains Indian Round Dance song shared previously.

Following are the steps that are generally used in the Round Dance:
Teacher: On the HARD (stressed) BEAT, push off with your right foot and take one step left with the left foot on the hard up beat and as you put your foot down, step. On the SOFT (unstressed) BEAT bring the right foot next to the left on the soft down beat (touch).

When students are able to do this step with the music, have them hold hands and go in a clockwise direction and do the step.

Teacher: The next step would be to incorporate arm movement. Swing your arms in a forward position as you step left on the stressed beat. On the soft beat swing your arms in a backward position as you touch your right foot to your left.

Continue the pattern. Hold hands when the group is able to the step and move their arms.

Variations

- Have one person break off from the circle and lead the group around the room.
- Have one person break off and coil the group up like a snake and then uncoil.
- As students pass in front of one another, they look at each other and give a greeting to enjoy the camaraderie of the Round Dance.
- Do the step using songs from different tribes.

Standards Summary

- Explore the Round Dance, its movements and variations.
- Contrast various Round Dance songs from different tribes.
- Learn the Round Dance from a guest invited to share their Native American culture.

Utah State Board of Education Standards

Grade 4 Dance
- Standard 4.D.CO.4: Select and describe movements in a specific genre or style, and explain how the movements relate to the culture, society, historical period, or community from which the dance originated.

Grade 4 Music
- Standard 4.M.R.1: Listen to and interact with a variety of contrasting music.
- Standard 4.M.CO.3: Experience and explore music which connects us to history, culture, heritage, and community, and identify connections between a music genre and cultural or historical contexts.

Grade 4 Social Studies
- Standard 2: Students will understand how Utah’s history has been shaped by many diverse people, events, and ideas.
o **Objective 1. Indicator b**: Explore points of view about life in Utah from a variety of cultural groups using primary source documents.

o **Objective 1. Indicator c**: Explore cultural influences from various groups found in Utah today (e.g. food, music, religion, dress, festivals).

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**Equipment and Materials Needed**

- Drum
- Computer to play music selections

**Additional Resources (links, articles, books, related lessons, and so on)**

- Native American Round Dance Music [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txFWJbHgcMM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txFWJbHgcMM)
- Video of a variation step of the round dance [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrOxSLeodDbA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrOxSLeodDbA)

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**References**

Image 1: Round Dance by Maynard Dixon, 1931.jpg, Wikimedia Commons
Coyote Steals the Blanket 2018
A Ute Tale
(adapted by Tim Mendenhall from a retelling by Janet Stevens)

Cast
4 storytellers  Snake People 2  Frog People 2
People 1,2,3,4 Insect People 2  Coyote
Deer People 2  Hummingbird  Rock person
Great Bear People 2  Mule Deer  Big Horn Sheep

Scene One
(People-4, Coyote, Snow, Flames)

Storyteller 1: Imagine icy winter
All Actors: (hugging themselves) Brrrr Brrrr
Storyteller 2: Snow swirls outside [wind chimes]
Storyteller 3: We are huddled in our tipi (actors hug themselves)
Storyteller 4: People pile up wood. (four people pile up wood, sit facing audience)
Storyteller 1: Someone lights the fire
Storyteller 2: The flames dance [tambourine]
Storyteller 3: Winter is…
ALL: “STORYTIME”
Storyteller 4: But first, if we tell the story, what will you give us?
People 1: Acorns?
All actors: No. [drum]
People 2: Pine nuts?
All actors: No. [drum]
People 3: Beef jerky and huckleberries?
All actors: Hmmmm. Okay. [bell]
Storyteller 1: We will tell you a Coyote Tale.
People 4: Is this story true?
Storyteller 2: Well, I don’t know if it happened exactly this way.
Storyteller 3: But if you listen long enough.
Storyteller 4: You will hear its truth.

Scene Two
(Coyote 1, Hummingbird)

Storyteller 1: [Xylophone Up] Now, long ago…. [Triangle]
Storyteller 2: …and I mean LONG ago… [Hit triangle twice]
Storyteller 3: …in the days before the coming of the human beings…
Storyteller 4: …there were only animal people.
Storyteller 1: They were the four legged…
Storyteller 2: …the deer people… (deer prance across stage) [bells]
Storyteller 3: … the great bear people … (bears lumber across) [bass drums]
Storyteller 4: There were also the snake people… (snakes slither) [sandpaper blocks]
Storyteller 1: ...the frog people… (frogs leap across) [ribbetor]
Storyteller 2: …and the insect people. (insects skitter across) [kazoo]
Storyteller 3: And Coyote! (Coyote walks in)
Storyteller 4: He is always out and about making his tracks
ALL: Tracks, tracks, tracks [shakers]
Coyote: I go where I want. I do what I want, and I take what I want.
Storyteller 3: Coyote was being coyote
Coyote: In fact, I should be crowned King of the Dessert.
Storyteller 4: Just then, Hummingbird zoomed by. [chimes!]
Coyote: There’s that pesky bird again.
Hummingbird: You’re going the wrong way. You should take the high road.
Storyteller 1: Coyote was irritated
Coyote: Leave me alone! I go where I want, I do what I want and I take what I want! I’m COYOTE!
Hummingbird: There is danger ahead!
Storyteller 2: Coyote was unperturbed!
Coyote: Danger? I’m not afraid of anything. I should be king of the dessert!
Storyteller 3: Coyote turned and ran off.
Storyteller 4: Hummingbird called after him.
Hummingbird: Up ahead there are some beautiful blankets. Whatever you do, don’t touch them.
Storyteller 1:  Hmmm. Coyote’s interest was peaked!
Coyote:     Why not?
Hummingbird: Because they don’t belong to you.
Storyteller 2:  And with that warning…
Storyteller 3:  …hummingbird flew away. [chimes]

Scene Three
(Coyote 2, Rocks, Hummingbird 2)

Storyteller 4:  [Xylophone Up] Soon Coyote came to a valley with many beautiful blankets draped over rocks out in the middle of nowhere.
Coyote:     That crazy bird was right!
Storyteller 1:  Coyote ran over and sniffed one of the blankets.
Coyote:     I would look mighty fine dressed up in this. [howl]
Storyteller 2:  Coyote was always forgetting things.
Coyote:     Now what was it that Hummingbird said?
Hummingbird:[chimes] Whatever you do, don’t touch the blankets!
Coyote:     What does she know?
Storyteller 3:  Coyote put on his fine new coat and dashed away.
Storyteller 4:  He felt great as he made his tracks.
ALL:        Tracks, tracks, tracks [shakers]
Storyteller 1:  He sure wished someone was around to see him in his new coat.
Rocks:     Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]
Coyote:     Oh, maybe that’s someone now!
Storyteller 2:  The ground started to shake.
Rocks:     Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]
Storyteller 3:  That was not someone…
Storyteller 4:  …it was that rock!
Coyote:     And it’s after me! [symbols!]

Scene Four
(Coyote, Rocks, Mule Deer)
Storyteller 1: Coyote ran faster. He was really making tracks now!

ALL: Tracks, tracks, tracks [shakers]

Storyteller 2: The rock picked up speed!

Rocks: Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]

Storyteller 3: Each time Coyote stopped and glanced back…

Storyteller 4: …the rock was getting closer.

Storyteller 1: Mule deer was grazing nearby.

Coyote: Hey, Mule deer. Can you help me?

Storyteller 2: Coyote explained his problem.

Coyote: A killer rock is trying to crush me. You’re so strong, you could stop that rock with your powerful antlers!

Mule Deer: I am strong!

Storyteller 3: Mule deer had to agree with coyote.

Mule Deer: I will help you.

Rock: Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]

Storyteller 4: Mule deer lowered his giant antlers just as the rock came crashing toward him.

All Actors: CRACK [blocks]

Storyteller 1: went the antlers

All Actors: BOOM [bass drum]

Storyteller 2: went mule deer

Rock: Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]

Storyteller 3: went the rock.

Storyteller 4: It headed straight for Coyote.

Storyteller 1: Coyote howled and darted away [howl]

**Scene Five**
*(Coyote, Rock, Big Horn Sheep)*

Coyote: Who does this rock think he is. I’m Coyote. Go AWAY.

Storyteller 1: But the rock rolled closer.

Rock: Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]

Storyteller 2: Coyote saw Big Horn Sheep.
Coyote: Hey, Sheep. Can you help me? A killer rock is trying to crush me. You could stop that rock with your powerful legs!

Storyteller 3: Of course, Big Horn Sheep had to agree with Coyote. He puffed out his mighty chest.

Sheep: I am strong, Coyote. I will help you!

Storyteller 4: Big Horn Sheep lowered his head and kicked his back legs as the rock came crashing toward him.

All Actors: CRUNCH [blocks]

Storyteller 1: went his hooves

All Actors: BOOM [bass drum]

Storyteller 2: went Big Horn Sheep.

Rock: Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]

Storyteller 3: went the rock.

Storyteller 4: It headed straight for Coyote.

Coyote: Not again!

Storyteller 1: …yelped Coyote as he darted away.

Scene Six
(Coyote, Rock, Hummingbird, Wind)

Storyteller 2: It wasn’t long before Coyote could go not further.

Coyote: HELP! Someone, save me from the killer rock.

Hummingbird: Give back the blanket.

Storyteller 3: Said a tiny voice.

Storyteller 4: Coyote looked up and saw hummingbird. [chimes]

Coyote: Go away! This is my blanket. I will never give it back.

Hummingbird: You must or you will be running forever.

Coyote: No!

Hummingbird: Yes!

Coyote: No!

Hummingbird: Yes!

Rock: Rumble, Rumble, Rumble [drum]

Coyote: All right! Here’s your old blanket.

Storyteller 1: She whirred her wings with all her might. [xylophone up scale]

Storyteller 2: She created such a tornado that the dust flew…[tambourine]
Storyteller 3: …the wind roared…[shakers]
Storyteller 4: and the rock rolled to a stop. [all stop]
Storyteller 1: She whirred and whirred.
ALL actors: CRACK [blocks]
Storyteller 2: The rock fell apart
Coyote: This place is full of killer rocks and crazy birds. I’m leaving.
Storyteller 4: Coyote dashed off to make his tracks
Storyteller 1: Coyote ran faster. He was really making tracks now!
ALL: Tracks, tracks, tracks [shakers]
Storyteller 1: Hummingbird shook her head.
Hummingbird: That Coyote, will he ever learn? (Coyote appears carrying many blankets this time, runs across the stage as all the actors “rumble, rumble, rumble”)
NOPE! [chimes]
Storyteller 2: As we now end our tale of Coyote,
Storyteller 3: …we all hope that we may learn to be wiser than Coyote.
Storyteller 4: Until next time we hear of Coyote making his tracks [tracks, tracks, tracks]
Storyteller 1: …since you just can’t get rid of old man Coyote!
All storytellers: A-dah-neh
All actors: and that’s the way it was!

**Sound effects:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wind chimes</th>
<th>Tambourine</th>
<th>Drum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>Two triangle rings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass drum</td>
<td>Sandpaper blocks</td>
<td>Ribbetor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kazoo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cymbals</td>
<td>Xylophone</td>
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</table>

**Materials**

Mini blankets
Why the Moon Paints Her Face Black

Lesson Summary
- Listen and respond to a Paiute story.
- Explore art making using chalk or crayons.
- Create a project depicting one of the scenes in the book.

Lesson Key Facts
- Grade(s): 2-4
- Subject(s): Visual Arts, Social Studies, English Language Arts
- Duration of Lesson: 45 minutes
- Author: Brenda Beyal and Chris Roberts

Lesson Plan and Procedure

Background
Storytelling has been and continues to be a powerful tool used by Native American tribes to pass down cultural values, beliefs and traditions. The winter season for many tribes is the time to gather and tell stories. The stories are passed down from one generation to the next and bind the members of the tribe together. Most stories teach a lesson or explain how things came to be. Entertaining your audience also is a key element to this oral tradition.

Introduction
Hand out a blank piece of black construction paper. Put crayons and chalk pastels out for students to share.

Introduce the book, Why the Moon Paints Her Face Black to the students.

Teacher: We are going to read a Paiute tale transcribed by an author. Transcribe means to write in printed form thoughts, stories and speech. The author, Chloe Valentine Brent listened to Eleanor Tom a Paiute elder tell a story her grandmothers used to tell her. Ms. Brent wrote the story down working hard to write with all the imagery that the story generates when told aloud.

Teacher: As I read the story, close your eyes and listen carefully. Pay attention to the images that come to your mind as I read. You will be given an opportunity to put the images down on paper after our reading.

Create
Read the story while the students listen with their eyes closed. After the reading, instruct the students to recreate the images that came to their mind. They can concentrate on one particular image or share several images on the paper. Give students time to work on their art. Listen to the story on CD told in Paiute by Eleanor Tom.

Encourage the students to explore ways to enhance their art.

**Crayon**
- Layering your crayons on top of one another creates more depth to your art. Begin with a lighter undertone and layer darker colors on top.
- Crayons will resist one another if too many layers are put down.
- Because of the wax content, crayons are an excellent medium for scratching and etching out lines and details.
- Using a white crayon to outline lightly can help you organize and compose your art making.

**Chalk pastel**
- Blend chalk pastels by laying down colors next to each other. Use your finger, a tissue or a Q tip to blend.
- Use the side of the chalk to cover large areas and use the point for details.
- Put down dark pastels first will give rich dark values. Light first, then dark can muddy your art.
- Use hairspray as a fixative to keep the chalk from smearing.

**Present**
When students have completed their artwork, reread the story. As you read each page, ask the students to share their art at the point it relates to the story. If a page is not represented by anyone in the class, show the illustration in the book. Have students hang their art up in the same sequence of the story.

**Respond**
Hold an impromptu *silent art walk* where student silently view the art presented. Encourage students to analyze components of the art, interpret meaning and reflect on their response to the art. Hold a short discussion about the art.

**Connect**
Use this activity to start or continue your classroom dialogue about how the arts contribute to the bridge building between diverse cultures. This story is told in Paiute homes. Ask students to relate what stories are handed down in their families.

**Standards Summary**
- Create and present art that conveys meaning of a Paiute tale.
- Listen to a story and make connections using visual presentations.
- Explore the cultural traditions of storytelling.

**Utah State Board of Education Standards**
Grade 4 Visual Arts

- **CREATE (4.V.CR.):** Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation.
- **PRESENT (4.V.P.):** Students will analyze, interpret, refine, and select artistic work for presentation. They will convey meaning in the manner in which the art is presented.
- **Standard 4.V.R.2:** Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.
- **Standard 4.V.CO.1:** Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions.

Grade 4 English Language Arts

- **Reading: Literature Standard 7**
  Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.
- **Speaking and Listening Standard 2**
  Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- **Speaking and Listening Standard 5**
  Add audio recordings and visual displays to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Grade 4 Social Studies

- **Standard 2. Objective 1.b:** Explore points of view about life in Utah from a variety of cultural groups using primary source documents.
- **Standard 2. Objective 1.c:** Explore cultural influences from various groups found in Utah today (e.g. food, music, religion, dress, festivals).

Equipment and Materials Needed

- Black construction paper (9x12)
- Crayons for each student
- Chalk pastels for students to share
- Book, *Why the Moon Paints Her Face Black*

Additional Resources (links, articles, books, related lessons, and so on)

- [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jul/29/lasting-power-oral-tradition](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jul/29/lasting-power-oral-tradition) This is a powerful opinion piece written by Joseph Bruchac on the relevancy of oral storytelling in indigenous cultures.
Readers’ Theatre
Helping students to create their own readers’ theatre scripts to perform.

Written by Tim Mendenhall- 6th Grade Teacher

What is readers’ theatre?
Readers’ theatre is a dramatic presentation of written work in script form. Props are not required but are fun. Presentations can be easily done in a classroom. Scripts are held by the readers. Lines are not memorized. The focus is on reading the text with expressive voices and gestures. Kids love it and you will too.

How to create a script
1. Collect numerous short legends that will be of high interest to your students and on their reading level. Use the following checklist to help you select legends:
   - Two or more characters interact
   - Lots of dialogue or indirect speech to turn into direct speech
   - Many events occur in a short space of time
   - The personality of the character(s) is develop in the story
   - Short (kids’ hands quickly get tired of writing)
   - The story makes sense and will lend itself naturally to creating a script

2. Students read and re-read the legend several times to ensure that they understand the essential story element in the legend.

3. Experiment with the first part of the legend into a script. Use the following guide as an aid for your: (see sample scripts from resource websites)
   - Character’s name goes on the left-hand side in bold print.
   - Short dialogue is used to keep the story moving quickly.
   - Narrator ties the story together or explains reasons or events. Do not overuse this character.
   - Narrator 1 and Narrator 2 may be better if there are lots of descriptions, details.
   - Sound effects, simple props or music enhance a Readers’ Theatre.
   - A chorus of several voices gives dramatic effect.
   - The use of rhyme, repetitive structure, internal rhyme, dramatic excitement, and heaps of action also enhance a script.

4. Certain words or phrases can be manipulated in order to bring about a special effect. For instance, students should be creative when it comes to turning indirect speech into direct speech.

Sample of turning indirect speech into direct speech
- Indirect speech: The pig keeper was feeling really tired and hungry.
- Direct speech: “I feel really tired and hungry.”
- Even more dramatic dialogue can be created: “I feel tired and hungry. In fact, I’m starving. I could eat a horse if I had some tomato sauce.”

5. After a bit of practice, continue with the rest of the legend. When you are finished, edit and re-write as necessary.

6. Fine tune your script (here are some helpful hints for editing various problems)
o Too much narration slows the pace: try splitting the narration among 2-3 narrators (split according to different qualities like descriptions vs. action.)
o Too many characters that are hard to keep track of: get rid of all the superfluous characters (if you need lots of parts, try making some parts into choral reading parts instead of adding too many characters)
o Too confusing – can’t follow the plot: get rid of any subplots that are not important to the main theme/author’s intent (if you are working with young writers, only choose very simple stories to start with)
o Doesn’t flow: tag on needed characters or scene descriptions so your story has shape! (a beginning, a middle, and an end).

7. Add finishing touches (polishing that will make you readers' theatre awesome!)
o Insert “stage directions” (how to perform the readers’ theatre)
o Add presentation suggestions: advice to make the story better, follow the author’s intent or theme of the story.
o Suggest sound effects or simple facial //body movements that would enhance the telling.
o Make a list of simple props that might be used to add a splash of color.

Great Books
*And It Is Still That Way: Tales told by Arizona Indian Children* collected by Byrd Baylor
*Tales From Native American: Coyote Stories for Children* by Susan Strauss

Great Readers’ Theatre
[www.aaronshep.com](http://www.aaronshep.com) (various Readers’ Theatre scripts)
[www.lisablau.com](http://www.lisablau.com) (archive of scripts)