



## Lessons from the Animal Peoples

with Dovie Thomason

Recommended for ages 4 to 8

PreK-Grade 3

### A Reproducible Learning Guide for Educators

This guide is designed to help educators prepare for, enjoy, and discuss *Lessons from the Animal Peoples*. It contains background, discussion questions and activities appropriate for ages 4 to 8.

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## ABOUT DOVIE

**DOVIE THOMASON** (Lakota/Kiowa) is an award-winning storyteller and recording artist, recognized internationally for her ability to share a glimpse into Native cultures through the traditional stories she first heard as a child. The product of a “mixed” background that is Lakota *and* Kiowa Apache, urban Chicago *and* rural Texas, Internet *and* ancient teachings, Dovie has shared stories with NASA and the National Storytelling Festival, Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London and rural libraries, conflict resolution projects in Northern Ireland and Headstart programs on Indian reservations. Her stories are windows into her Native culture and mirrors for her listeners to see themselves,

while she gently dispels stereotypes and false media images of the First Nations People of North America. Calling upon her years in classrooms as a teacher and professor, and nearly two decades of sharing stories professionally, Dovie establishes a rapport and bond with audiences of all ages, creating a climate where laughter, learning and respect come together. Her commitment to cultural arts and education has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts and many state arts organizations across the United States. Winner of the *Parents’ Choice Gold Award* and the *ALA/Booklist Editors’ Choice Award*, she’s recently turned her energy towards writing books for children and adults on stories, storytelling and cultural values.



## AFTER THE SHOW...

### 1. DISCUSSION

- Stories are magical. What did you notice about Dovie’s stories? The voices, colorful descriptions, movements, and gestures?
- What did you know about Native Americans and their history before the show? Where did you learn these things?
- What did you learn about Native people and their history from Dovie’s performance? How did this change your previous perceptions?

### 2. MAKE A STORYBOARD

What is a storyboard?

A **storyboard** is a sketch of how to organize a story and its contents. You can draw a storyboard for one of the stories you heard at the show or come up with your own!

In the template on the next page, write the story title at the top of the page. In each of the boxes, draw a picture of an event from the story, making sure to follow the order in which they happened. In the dotted area underneath, describe what is happening.

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## VOCABULARY

**Algonquian:** (sometimes spelled Algonkian) A language group which is the group of many distinct Native cultures.

**American Indian:** (see **Indigenous**)

**Culture:** customs, spiritual beliefs and ceremonies, history, stories, values which a people share in common and which makes up their group identity.

**First Nations People:** (see **Indigenous**)

**Iktomi:** (sometimes spelled Inktomi or Unktomi) He is the Spider Trickster of many Plains cultures, though he appears like a man. He is often called a hero/clown, as the tricks he plays on others backfire, entrapping him; yet he is still seen as sacred, with powers to teach and help humans.

**Indian:** (see **Indigenous**)

**Indigenous:** The original, or Native/natural, people of a continent or geographic area.

**Iroquois:** The name given by the French to the People of the Longhouse (or Haudenosaunee) of Canada and New York, of the Woodlands region. Called The Five Nations by the British.

**Iya:** (sometimes spelled Eya) The Swallower, or Camp Eater, who teaches important lessons about greed and imbalance in Lakota stories.

**Kiowa Apache:** (pronounced like Iowa) also called the **Plains Apache**, culturally more like Plains, rather than desert Apache culture.

**Native American:** More accurately, **Native North American**, as the Native cultures of Canada and Mexico predate the international boundaries and are related to cultures within the geographic boundaries of the United States.

**Oral Tradition:** Using the spoken word to pass on stories, values, correct behavior, customs, history, language and memory from generation to generation.

**Storyteller:** In our modern world, this usually describes someone who “performs” publicly, using the “art” of telling stories. For thousands of years, in many ancient cultures, including Native American, this was a respected person in the family or tribal community who could remember and share the knowledge, history and wisdom of past generations through retelling, passing the culture on to future generations.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

Recommendations from the National Museum of the American Indian's guide for teachers. For more ideas, visit [americanindian.si.edu](http://americanindian.si.edu).

*Talk about it!* Discuss these statements with your students:

### **NATIVE COMMUNITIES ARE DIVERSE.**

Just as each student in the class has a family that is special and distinct, each American Indian community is unique.

The places we're from and the resources we have access to play a role in what makes groups of people different from each other. Why, for example, would Yup'ik people from Alaska have worn clothing made from skins of birds, fish, and marine and land animals, while Kiowa people from Oklahoma used buffalo and elk hides? Discuss differences in climate and animal populations in different parts of the country. Remember that the connections Native people feel for their homelands goes beyond their using the resources available there. This is evident in artistic traditions.

### **NATIVE PEOPLE ARE STILL HERE.**

Even though Dovie shares some stories that have been told for centuries, Native people have practices both old and new. Many Native people today practice traditional arts such as beading and woodcarving, often with a modern twist. Talk with your students about Native people in the past, present, and future.

Most Native kids are a lot like the students in your classroom—they go to school, wear sneakers and jeans, listen to music on their iPods, and hang out with friends on the weekend. You can check out the National Museum of the American Indian's My World series, which focuses on contemporary Native kids, to illustrate this point. Information about the series is available at [www.nmai.si.edu/bookshop](http://www.nmai.si.edu/bookshop).

## RESOURCES

- **YELLOW MOON PRESS** (for Dovie's tapes and others)
  - 800.497.4385 [www.yellowmoon.com](http://www.yellowmoon.com)
- **NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK/NATIONAL STORYTELLER DIRECTORY**
  - 800.525.4514 [www.storynet.org](http://www.storynet.org)
- **OYATE** (Exceptional educational and teachers' materials, plus reading/listening resources by Native people for all ages/grades)
  - 510.848.6700 [www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org)
- **STORYARTS, INC.** (Extraordinary website designed by storyteller Heather Forest, with lesson plans, curriculum idea exchange, story library and much more!)
  - [www.storyarts.org](http://www.storyarts.org)
- **NORTH AMERICAN NATIVE AUTHORS CATALOG** (Comprehensive listing of Native resources)
  - [www.nativeauthors.com](http://www.nativeauthors.com)
- **CRADLEBOARD TEACHING PROJECT** (Founded by singer-activist Buffy Saint-Marie, they provide curriculum for all grades K-12 from Native perspective and have created the Interactive CD-ROM, "Science Through Native American Eyes", gr. 5-adult)
  - [www.cradleboard.org](http://www.cradleboard.org)

Discovery Theater • P.O. Box 23293, Washington, DC • [www.discoverytheater.org](http://www.discoverytheater.org)

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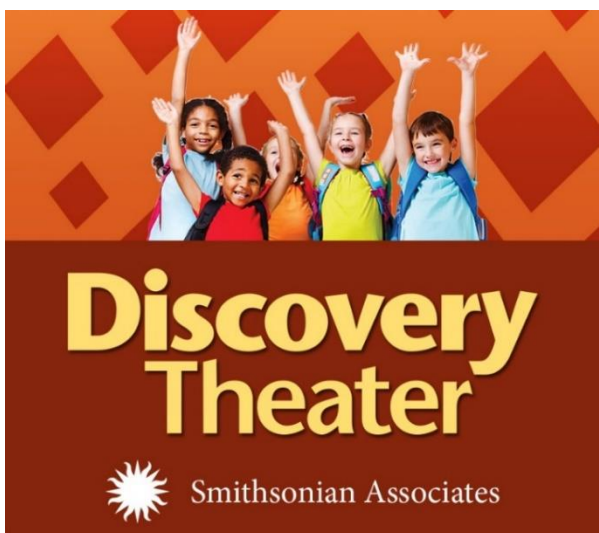


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### OUR MISSION: "THE INCREASE AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE"

Smithsonian Associates advances the Institution's mission through life-enriching educational and cultural experiences inspired by the Smithsonian's research and collections for DC-region students, families, and adults, and for learning communities nationwide.

Discovery Theater has been presenting DC-area children with live educational performances for almost 40 years. With programs that enrich the Smithsonian experience for nearly 50,000 children annually, Discovery Theater is a gateway to the exhibits, collections, and themes contained in the museums and galleries on the National Mall and beyond. We explore American history and cultures, folk tales from around the world, and exciting, accessible science and math programs in the company of puppeteers, storytellers, dancers, actors, and musicians. Discovery Theater performances unite ideologies, enact themes that reflect the diversity of its audiences, open avenues of self-reflection, and offer an enjoyable means for parents and teachers to demonstrate life's lessons. There's so much to do and explore at the Smithsonian—and Discovery Theater is the ideal place to begin!



#### **Our Location**

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