

# Activity Idea

## NATIVE REPRESENTATION SELF-REPRESENTATION IN ACTION

*Recommended for Adults*

Native American self-representation in popular media has a long history of being limited and controlled by other people outside of Native cultural groups. Late Oglala Lakota activist Russell Means believed Hollywood was “the most racist, anti-Indian institution in the world.” This often led to the misrepresentation in languages, narratives and histories, regalia, food, and beliefs. By looking at histories, stories, photography and films created by Native peoples, we can get a better understanding of their viewpoints and support Native self-representation.

Visit the links below to learn more about Native Americans. You can clearly see the homogeneous society Hollywood and media has portrayed Native Americans to be are in fact highly diverse. One commonality we see among all these resources is the statement that Native Americans have not vanished but are still thriving with their traditions and values. A passage from Ojibwe author David Truer’s book *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* captures this beautifully:

“This book is written out of the simple, fierce conviction that our cultures are not dead and our civilizations have not been destroyed. It is written with the understanding that our present tense is evolving as rapidly and creatively as everyone else’s. In a sense, it is a selfish project. I want—I need—to see Indian life as more than a legacy of loss and pain, because I want to pass on to my beautiful children a rich heritage and an embracing vision of who we were and who we are.”

### **Films:**

*In Whose Honor?: American Indian Mascots in Sports* (Kanopy)

<https://tinyurl.com/y3r9x9bd>

*More Than a Word: Native American-Based Sports Mascots* (Kanopy)

<https://tinyurl.com/y69xv9po>

*Reel Injun: On the Trail of the Hollywood “Indian”* (Kanopy)

<https://tinyurl.com/wbb7z5a>



**Books:**

*"All the Real Indians Died Off": And 20 Other Myths About Native Americans* (OverDrive)

<https://tinyurl.com/tvyfp4l>

*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (OverDrive)

<https://tinyurl.com/w4uqpm>

*The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* (OverDrive)

<https://tinyurl.com/tqvbyws>

*Dreaming in Indian* (OverDrive)

<https://tinyurl.com/tzuh6h9>

**Other Resources:**

Project 562

<http://www.project562.com/>

American Indian Airwaves

<https://tinyurl.com/y4hfnj5l>

**Spark an Idea!**

Visit Project 562's gallery and read all about the featured individuals across the United States. Each story is a unique representation of a Native perspective, adding to the rich diversity of Native American cultures.

Listen to a session with American Indian Airwaves to hear about current Native issues along with some music.