

Guidelines for reviewing books on Native Americans for cultural appropriateness (Beverly Slapin, 2003):

Culturally Inappropriate	Culturally Appropriate
"E" for Eskimo and "I" for Indian in an ABC Book; in counting books, "Indians" counted, children are shown playing "Indian"? Animals dressed as Indians?	<i>Images of Natives are not only in the past, but also in contemporary settings, with accuracy to individuality and distinctions in types of homes, clothing, food, hairstyles, etc.</i>
Natives are portrayed as savages or simple tribal people, now extinct	<i>Natives are shown as human beings, members of highly defined and complex societies?</i>
Native societies are oversimplified and generalized, ie. all one color.	<i>Native societies presented as separate from each other with unique culture and language. .</i>
The art is a mishmash of "generic Indian" designs.	<i>Attention is paid to accurate, appropriate design and color, with careful attention to detail.</i>
Natives depicted as stereotypically alike.	<i>Native people depicted as genuine individuals.</i>
Native Nations are presented as being responsible for their own "disappearance"	<i>History is in the proper perspective: the Native struggle for self-determination and sovereignty</i>
Children are encouraged to believe that Natives accepted defeat passively.	<i>The story show the ways in which Native peoples actively resisted the invaders.</i>
Native heroes are those who aided in the conquest of their own people.	<i>Natives heroes are admired because of what they have done for their own people.</i>
Native cultures are presented in a condescending manner, with a paternalistic	<i>The focus is on respect for Native peoples and understanding the sophistication and complexities</i>
Native peoples are discussed in the past tense as the "Vanished Indian."	<i>The continuity of cultures is represented, with values rooted in and connected to the past.</i>
Society is portrayed in a limited way— traditions are described as "superstitions", with backward or primitive connotations.	<i>Indian religions and traditions are described accurately, in the context of their civilizations.</i>
Native people speak in the oratorical style of the "stoic noble savage".	<i>Native People use language with the consummate and articulate skills of an oral tradition.</i>
Native people are shown as "relentlessly ecological."	<i>Native societies are described as coexisting with nature in a delicate balance.</i>
In modern times, Natives are portrayed as childlike and helpless, with a white au-	<i>Natives are portrayed as mature individuals who work hard, make sacrifices in order to take care of</i>
Native people and their communities contrast unfavorably with the norm of white middle-class suburbia.	<i>Native people and their communities are seen as their own cultural norm.</i>
"White" standards are followed for Native people to get ahead.	<i>Native values of cooperation, generosity, sharing, honesty and courage are seen as integral to growth and development.</i>
Women are completely subservient to men and do all the work, while the men wait around to be served.	<i>Women are portrayed as the integral and respected part of Native societies that they really are.</i>
Elders are treated as a dispensable burden to be abandoned in times of trouble or famine; querulous, petulant, demanding, nagging, irritating, and boring.	<i>Elders are treated as loved and valued custodians of a People's history, culture, and lifeways.</i>
There are things in the story that would embarrass or hurt a Native child.	<i>There are one or more positive role models with which a Native child can identify.</i>
The background of the author and illustrator is lacking in the qualities that enable them to write about Native peoples in an accurate, respectful manner; there is an ethnocentric bias which leads to distortions or omissions.	<i>There are things in the author or illustrator's background qualifying them to write about Native people and their perspectives strengthen their work.</i> <i>Adapted from Sign of Cultural Appropriateness, "Through Indian Eyes", 2003</i>