

***From the Inside Out***  
A film by April Chabris (2003)

Study Guide written by Jennifer Lacroix  
Documentary Educational Resources

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*Our way of life is our religion, and our teaching. If we are relocated by force, we will die slowly. The people would not be in balance with Mother Earth and Sky Father and the spiritual people. In every way, here we are connected to the land. We belong here.'*  
-Mary T Begay, Navajo Elder

**SYNOPSIS**

This 27-minute documentary investigates the evolution of weaving baskets in Native American culture. The filmmaker, April Chabris, listens and records the stories as told by a group of Navajos in the Utah desert, which relate to the creation of the baskets. Viewers see the complex process of the construction of baskets while listening to participants as they share their oral histories.

American history students can explore the deeper representations within the artistic designs of the baskets and draw connections to various aspects to the human story such as issues of exploration; conquest; land rights and uses; and environmental sustainability.

All in all, the film is very informative and attractive to many audiences and ages as it serves as "a story board of information." It is a well-paced film that moves quickly from one participant to the next without becoming chaotic. Its vibrant colors add to its artistic quality, and the content of the film makes it easily accessible to all.

**SUGGESTED USES**

Grades 3-6; and 9-12: Geography, Social Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, US History; or, eight to nineteen year olds.

**SUBJECTS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)**

Joann Johnson  
Florence Norton  
Mary Holiday Black  
Lorraine Black  
Elsie Holiday  
Kayla Black  
Charlie Todachinnie (Medicine Man)  
John Norton (Medicine Man)  
Steven P. Simpson (Owner, Twin Rocks Trading Post)  
Agnes Black Grey's baskets  
Sally Black's baskets  
Mary & Lorraine Black's baskets  
Eddie Black

Damian Jim (Designer, Twin Rocks Trading Post)  
Peggy Rock Black  
Florence Norton  
Barry W. Simpson

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. The student will examine what role tradition plays in societies.
2. The student will explore issues of representation - - particularly of Native Americans.
3. The student will reflect on the value of oral history and storytelling.
4. The student will analyze the role of the arts as a form of communication and response to tradition and change.
5. The student will explore issues of identity and land rights within minority groups.
6. The student will evaluate documentary film for its insider/outsider viewpoints, events (visual, sound, editing), and/or anthropological uses.

### **STANDARDS**

#### ***The College Board Advanced Placement***

1. In a short essay, analyze the cultural and economic responses of TWO of the following groups to the Indians of North America before 1750.  
British  
French  
Spanish
  2. Respond to the Discovery and Settlement of the New World, 1492-1650 through the following examples:
    - A. Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century
    - B. Spanish, English, and French exploration
    - C. First English Settlements
      1. Jamestown
      2. Plymouth
    - D. Spanish and French settlements and long-term influence
    - E. American Indians
- Human Geography
- III. Cultural patterns and processes

#### IV. Political organization of space

***Massachusetts Department of Education 2004  
History and Social Studies Curriculum Framework***

#### **US History**

##### **Grade Three**

Drawing on information from local historic sites, historical societies, and museums, third graders learn about the history of Massachusetts from the time of the arrival of the Pilgrims. They also learn the history of their own cities and towns and about famous people and events in Massachusetts' history.

##### **Grade Four**

In grade 4, students study the geography and people of the United States today. Students learn geography by addressing standards that emphasize political and physical geography and embed five major concepts: location, place, human interaction with the environment, movement, and regions. In addition, they learn about the geography and people of contemporary Mexico and Canada.

##### **Grade Five**

Students study the major pre-Columbian civilizations in the New World; the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century European explorations around the world, in the western hemisphere, and in North America in particular; the earliest settlements in North America; and the political, economic, and social development of the English colonies in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They also study the early development of democratic institutions and ideas, including the ideas and events that led to the independence of the original 13 colonies and the formation of a national government under the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of the grade 5 curriculum is to give students their first concentrated study of the formative years of U.S. history.

##### **Grade Six**

Sixth graders systematically study the world outside of the United States and North America by addressing standards that emphasize political and physical geography and embed five major concepts: location, place, human interaction with the environment, movement, and regions. Students systematically learn geography around the world continent by continent, similar to the way in which atlases are organized.

##### **U.S. History I and II: 1763-2001**

In U.S. History I, students examine the historical and intellectual origins of the United States during the Revolutionary and Constitutional eras. Students study the basic framework of American democracy and the basic concepts of America government, as well as America's westward expansion, the establishment of political parties, economic and social change, sectional conflict, the Civil War, and Reconstruction.

In U.S. History II, students analyze the causes and consequences of the Industrial Revolution and America’s growing role in international relations. Students study the goals and accomplishments of the Progressive movement and the New Deal. Students also learn about the various factors that led to America’s entry into World War I and World War II as well as the consequences of World War II for American life. Finally, students study the causes and course of the Cold War, important economic and political changes during the Cold War, such as the Civil Rights movement, and recent events and trends that have shaped modern-day America.

**Electives in Economics and Government**

The grade 12 economics elective examines the allocation of scarce resources and the economic reasoning used by government agencies and by people as consumers, producers, savers, investors, workers, and voters. Key elements include the study of scarcity, supply and demand, market structures, the role of government, national income determination, money and the role of financial institutions, economic stabilization, and trade.

The grade 12 U.S. government elective provides a framework for understanding the purposes, principles, and practices of American government as established by the United States Constitution. Students are expected to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens and how to exercise these rights and responsibilities in local, state, and national government.

**MCAS History and Social Science Test Content**

<b>Tested Grade</b>	<b>Basis</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
Grade 5	History, geography, economics, and civics standards, concepts, and skills for grades 4 and 5	U.S. history and geography, early settlements through the War of 1812
Grade 7	History, geography, economics, and civics standards, concepts, and skills for grades 6 and 7	World geography and history of ancient and classical civilizations
Grade 10 or 11	Standards, concepts, and skills contained in U.S. History I and II	U.S. history, Constitutional Period through 2001

## **BEFORE THE FILM**

These questions can be discussed with a partner, small group, or the entire class.

1. What do you know or believe to be true about the Navajos and how they live? What are some similarities and differences between their lives and yours?
2. Jot down five to ten questions you have about the Navajo people specifically or American Indians in general. What are some of the ways in which you could discover the answers to these questions?
3. What kinds of “rituals” or significant experiences do workers go through as they move from novice to expert in their field?
4. If you could pick a craft for yourself, what would you pick and why? What would this artform represent to you and/or others?
5. How would you describe America to someone who has never been here? What material items or objects represent your cultural experience of America?
6. In order to consider yourself successful, what must you have, do, or achieve?

## **DURING THE FILM**

Students should keep notes during the film and jot down questions as they arise. A graphic organizer, like the one below, is recommended to record students’ insights:

	About the basket weavers	About Navajo culture
Values		
Discoveries		

While the teacher might choose to stop the tape to discuss some of the following issues, many are not developed or answered until the end of the film. The following questions focus on application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, rather than recall.

1. We first see and hear the older Navajo generation of basket weavers in the film, whose words must be translated for an English speaking audience. Then, the film quickly turns to Lorraine Black, a younger member of the Navajo tribe, who speaks English fluently to describe the ancient Navajo way of basketweaving. Discuss this cultural transformation from older to young generation, especially as it pertains to the concept of “cultural change.”

What do surface indicators such as dress, jewelry, or long hair tell you about Lorraine, her identity, her lifestyle, and/or her history? What are your expectations for the rest of the film based on this first scene? The teacher may choose to stop the tape when Charlie Todachinnie, the Medicine Man, appears to discuss this first question. After watching the rest of the film, address the following questions: How do you look at Lorraine when she first explains the process of basket making versus when you hear all of the various stories about Navajo life by the end of the film? What messages are these Navajos trying to convey to a larger audience?

2. Based on the basketmaker's description and the images you see while they speak, what is your impression of Navajo life? What is your impression of Native Americans in the US in general? What do you know about folk tales? Compare your first impression with the following quote:

"This is our way of life. That's why we don't disrespect the basket." –John Norton

After studying this quote, what value do you see in studying small, indigenous, ethnic groups like the Navajo? Do such studies tell you anything about other people, like Native Americans, Americans, or humans in general? What would students from outside the U.S. learn about Americans if they only studied the Navajo?

### **AFTER THE FILM**

These activities can be done with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Applying the questions to particular subjects in the film will encourage the class to be more specific. The teacher may want to put each character subject's name on a card, distribute the cards to small groups, and then share their conclusions with the class.

1. By thinking in terms of US history and geography, discuss the physical location of the Navajos of Utah on a map. Use acquired globe skills to determine absolute locations (latitude and longitude) of places studied. What can additional information from a map's title, compass rose, scale, and legend also tell us about land use? Observe and describe national historic sites and describe their function and significance. How does this relate to the distribution of American Indian land reservations?

For more information see, Williams, Jeanne (1992). *Trails of tears: American Indians driven from their land*. Dallas, TX. : Hendrick-Long Pub. Co.

2. Civics and Government: Give examples of the major rights that immigrants have acquired as citizens of the United States (e.g., the right to vote, and freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and petition). With this mind, think about John Norton's quote in the film, "This is our way of life. That's why we don't disrespect the basket." How do you think the Native's way of life is maintained under US citizenship? In what sense is it marginalized? Give at least three examples. Or, based on what you know about the different ways immigrants can become citizens of the United States, compare and contrast this to

rights and roles of the indigenous population.

3. Economics: Define and give examples of natural resources in the United States. What natural resources do we see the Navajo basket weavers using in this film? What are the strengths and weaknesses to the practice? Is there added value to something that is hand-made rather than machine-made? Do the participants in this film discuss their values? Does money seem to be a major value? Why or why not? Discuss your ideas.

4. Give examples of limited and unlimited resources and explain how scarcity compels people and communities to make choices about goods and services, giving up some things to get other things. Think of the beginning of the film when they collect the grass that will eventually become the straw that the Navajos weave the baskets with. Do you think this is a creative use of natural resources? Would you want to make a basket this way? Why or why not?

5. Give examples of how the interaction of buyers and sellers influences the prices of goods and services in markets. Now think of the Navajos who sell their baskets for profit by using the example in the film. Look specifically to the example in the Twin Rocks Trading Post. How does the owner, Steven Simpson, greet the basket weaver when she presents him with her latest creation? How does she present the basket to him? What does this say about their lifestyles and attitudes?

6. What examples can the student give of the ways people save their money by explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each? What is the definition of an entrepreneur (a person who has started a business seeking a profit)? What are some examples from colonial history of an entrepreneur (e.g., Peter Faneuil and Benjamin Franklin)? Compare and contrast these with the entrepreneurial skills of the Navajos as depicted in the film. Then, ask the student to define profit and describe how profit is an incentive for entrepreneurs. Finally, the student will give examples of how changes in supply and demand affected prices in colonial history (e.g., fur, lumber, fish, and meat): they will contrast this with today's economy.

7. After researching and exploring why trade routes to Asia in the 15<sup>th</sup> century closed, the students will trace the voyages of at least four of the explorers listed below. Describe what each explorer sought when he began his journey, what he found, and how his discoveries changed the image of the world. Critically analyze the role Native Americans played during this time. What would you have done differently, if you were one of these explorers?

- A. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa
- B. John and Sebastian Cabot
- C. Jacques Cartier
- D. Samuel de Champlain
- E. Christopher Columbus
- F. Henry Hudson
- G. Ferdinand Magellan
- H. Juan Ponce de Leon

## I. Amerigo Vespucci

8. Explain why the Aztec and Inca civilizations declined in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- A. The encounters between Cortez and Montezuma
  - B. The encounters between Pizarro and the Incas
  - C. The goals of the Spanish conquistadors
  - D. The effects of European diseases, particularly smallpox, throughout the Western hemisphere

Then, have students describe the goals and extent of the Dutch settlement in New York, the French settlements in Canada, and the Spanish settlements in Florida, the Southwest, and California.

9. The student will explain the early relationship of the English settlers to the indigenous peoples, or Indians, in North America, including the differing views on ownership or use of land and the conflicts between them (e.g., the Pequot and King Philip's Wars in New England). How does this relate to issues of identity, culture, and the politics of difference? How do the Navajos in this film represent how cultures transform over time? What are some of the specific scenes in the film that depict this change? Can you identify any similarities between the Navajos of today with the Navajos of the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries?

10. Choose one of the major leaders responsible for the founding of the original colonies in North America, e.g. Lord Baltimore in Maryland, William Penn in Pennsylvania, John Smith in Virginia, Roger Williams in Rhode Island, or John Winthrop in Massachusetts. Now, contrast this leader's role with that of a leader from an indigenous group, e.g. the Navajos, Iroquois, Abanaki, and Hiawatha.

11. Explore the reasons that the language, political institutions, and political principles of what became the United States of America were largely shaped by English colonists even though other major European nations also explored the New World. Use the following examples to guide you:

- A. The relatively small number of colonists who came from other nations besides England
- B. Long experience with self-government
- C. The high rates of literacy and education among the English colonial leaders
- D. England's strong economic, intellectual, and military position

How do you think these contributed to the colonists' encounter, reaction, and treatment of the Natives? Does this continue to happen today? Can you think of other groups this happens to? Can you think of a time when you felt you were dominated by someone else or misunderstood? How did this make you feel?

## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

The following activities were designed for different types of intelligences. The categories, based on the research of Howard Gardner, are next to each assignment. While the categories of interpersonal and intrapersonal are not included, many of the activities also appeal to those intelligences.

While many of the activities may require Internet research, additional inquiries can be made at your school and public libraries, state facilities, nonprofit cultural groups, and tourist agencies.

The teacher may choose to assign these activities to individual students or small groups. Some of these activities are more appropriate for grades 9-12 than for grades 3-6.

***Spatial*** – Create a timeline for a Navajo person and yourself. Include major life changes for each, e.g. becoming a basket weaver or craftsman, marrying, becoming a parent, and becoming an elder. Include the age at which each transition occurs. Add personal details to your own timeline. Use this timeline to brainstorm future writing topics.

***Spatial*** – Using magazines, newspapers, and web resources, collect 10-15 pictures of people from US Indian Reservations. Write a short caption for each, answering the following questions about how each picture does or does not accurately depict contemporary American Indians. Describe the picture. Why was it made? Who made it? For what purpose? Does the purpose of the periodical or website affect what pictures are made and published? How do these images either uphold or break down the idea of the “Indian as savage”? Present your findings to the class. The teacher may require that the student produce a poster, booklet, or PowerPoint presentation to accompany his or her presentation.

***Naturalistic*** – A large percentage of US land is used as pasture, yet many areas are arid and suffer from desertification. What places in the world are similar geographically to these arid lands and how do they raise crops with such little precipitation? (See the website [HYPERLINK "http://www.ceptualinstitute.com/genre/benking/borderland.htm"](http://www.ceptualinstitute.com/genre/benking/borderland.htm) <http://www.ceptualinstitute.com/genre/benking/borderland.htm> for an example of Borderland Groups). Construct a how-to guide about raising crops in arid lands based on your research. Include how many acres a crop requires, grass banking during times of drought, and using fire to preserve the health of the watershed. Include a map detailing the geography of the area that you pick.

***Spatial*** – The Navajos are known for their brightly colored and intricate basketry and tapestry. They often use color to communicate meanings or ideas, e.g. blue for the sky, green for the grass (we see this in the film when Lorraine Black explains one of her baskets). Construct your own piece of apparel, jewelry, basket, or tapestry, using colors that are significant to you. What can you communicate through your craftwork? Can you communicate your age, to whom you are related, what town you live in, or how many weddings you have celebrated?

***Verballinguistic*** – Investigate the Navajo language on the Internet. Construct an English/

Navajo dictionary with at least 25 words. Include a few phrases that would be useful to English-speaking filmmakers or anthropologists. The teacher may require the student to produce a poster, booklet, or PowerPoint presentation.

***Logical/mathematical*** – How much does a typical Navajo basket weaver make in a year? Look up the cost of living in the US and make a comparison chart. After determining how much a typical Navajo makes in a year and how s/he budgets daily expenses, compare this figure to the typical income and yearly expenses of someone in your town/city/state. What is the disparity of wealth between the median Navajo family and the median Massachusetts family? The student's work may take the form of a spreadsheet with accompanying written explanations.

***Musical/rhythmic*** – Write a song about a significant event in your life. Include at least five stanzas and a repeating chorus that the class can repeat back to you after each stanza. The teacher may require the student to perform the song for the class. If so, the student should hand out copies of the refrain or enable everyone to see it so they may sing along. Use the Navajo songs from the film as an example. Special attention may be given to flute or chant songs.

***Verbal/linguistic*** – Write an illustrated children's book about a young Navajo boy or girl and his or her feelings about an upcoming ceremony. How does s/he prepare for the ceremony? How does s/he feel afterwards? How does the community regard your main character afterwards? What does your main character learn about herself and her community? Include at least ten different illustrations. The teacher may require the student to read his or her book to the class or to an audience for whom the book is written.

### **RESEARCH TOPICS**

Research traditional Navajo medicinal ceremonies, focusing on the history, practice, and contemporary forms. You could also include the preparations, which are involved, as well as the role of the family, community, and elders. How is this ceremony similar to or different from ceremonies in your own culture? What does each represent? Who gets to make choices and why? The teacher may require a variety of products for this assignment: a poster and presentation, a PowerPoint presentation, a written text, or perhaps a hand-made diorama of the two ceremonies.

Research a sustainable development project in the western US. Who is in charge of the project? What type of project is it? Who will benefit from such a project? How could it help with available resources on the Navajo reservations? Build a model of your project to share with the class. The teacher may suggest that students work in pairs or small groups for this activity.

### **RESOURCES AND LINKS**

## *Navajo History, Culture, & Contemporary Life*

HYPERLINK "http://inkido.indiana.edu/w310work/romac/navajo.htm" <http://inkido.indiana.edu/w310work/romac/navajo.htm>

**INCLUDEPICTURE "http://www.americanwest.com/images/S\_nav2.jpg" \\***  
**MERGEFORMATINET A Navajo elder, HYPERLINK "http://www.americanwest.com/images/S\_nav2.jpg" *Thelma Nez, in traditional dress is preparing to tend to her daily livestock chores.***

HYPERLINK "http://www.ausbcomp.com/redman/navajo.htm" <http://www.ausbcomp.com/redman/navajo.htm>

//lis.ab.ca/walton/peoples/navajo/culture...

HYPERLINK "http://www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/NativeAmericans/Navajo.html" <http://www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/NativeAmericans/Navajo.html>

HYPERLINK "http://jamaica.u.arizona.edu/ic/mcbride/ws200/weavwome.htm" <http://jamaica.u.arizona.edu/ic/mcbride/ws200/weavwome.htm>

HYPERLINK "http://nwmail.washtenaw.cc.mi.us/~cerdly/gdt200/FinalProject/history.html" <http://nwmail.washtenaw.cc.mi.us/~cerdly/gdt200/FinalProject/history.html>

HYPERLINK "http://www.napv.org/index.html" <http://www.napv.org/index.html>

## *Geography*

HYPERLINK "http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions" [www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions)

HYPERLINK "http://www.FFFBI.org" [www.FFFBI.org](http://www.FFFBI.org)

## *History*

HYPERLINK "http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu" <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>

HYPERLINK "http://www.worldhistorynetwork.org" [www.worldhistorynetwork.org](http://www.worldhistorynetwork.org)

Bailey, G. & Glenn Bailey, R. (1986). *A History of the Navajos*. Sante Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press.

## *Arts*

HYPERLINK "http://smithsonianeducaiton.org/educators" [http://](http://smithsonianeducaiton.org/educators)

[smithsonianeducation.org/educators](http://smithsonianeducation.org/educators)

*Social Studies*

HYPERLINK "http://www.globaled.org" [www.globaled.org](http://www.globaled.org)

HYPERLINK "http://www.choices.edu" [www.choices.edu](http://www.choices.edu)

Newcomb, F. J. (1990). Navaho Folk Tales. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

**ADDITIONAL FILMS AT DER**

*Box of Treasures*  
by Chuck Olin

<http://www.der.org/films/box-of-treasures.html>

*The Drums of Winter*  
by Sarah Elder and Leonard Kamerling

<http://www.der.org/films/drums-of-winter.html>

*Imagining Indians*  
by Victor Masayesva Jr.

<http://www.der.org/films/imagining-indians.html>

*Indian Self-Rule: A Problem of History*  
by Selma Thomas

<http://www.der.org/films/indian-self-rule.html>

*Natives of the Narrowland*  
by Nancy Barr and Chris Seufert

<http://www.der.org/films/natives-of-the-narrowland.html>

*Our Lives in Our Hands*

by Harald Prins and Karen Carter

<http://www.der.org/films/our-lives-in-our-hands.html>