

# NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

**3-5**

Subject

**Art  
Writing**

Lesson Title

**Lone Dog's Winter Count**

**Activity Description:** In this activity, students will learn about the oral culture and history-keeping of the Nakota people, creators of the Long Dog winter count. Students will then have the opportunity to create a pictograph calendar and recreate their personal history, month by month, over the last year.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Wifi access (optional)
- [The Long Dog's Winter Count](#) (printable PDF)
  - Background of the Winter's Count (page 1-2)
  - The Long Dog Winter Count Meaning & Significance (page 2)
- 12 sheets of Paper
- Colored pencils, crayons, and/or markers
- Stapler

## STEPS

This activity is for children to do with a person from the family or community, or by the children themselves.

Read the "[Lone Dog's Winter Count](#)"

1. Read the "The Lone Dog's Winter Count to understand the significance of oral tradition and recorded history in Native communities, and the creative tools they used to document these stories, such as a pictograph.
  - a. A pictograph is a picture that symbolized the event.
2. Native communities recorded their history according to the "winter count", an annual cycle that was measured from the first snowfall to the next snowfall. This entire year was referred to as "winter".
  - a. They talked about all the things that happened since the first snowfall, and picked one particular event to be a historical reminder for that whole year, which they etched into the hide of a buffalo.
3. What does the "Lone Dog" refer to?
  - a. This represents the last known keeper of the winter count in the Yanktonias Nakota community, a tribe located in the eastern parts of North and South Dakota. Consider looking at this area on a map.

Create your "Winters Count"

1. Recreate your "Winter's Count" by picking out a specific event from each month, from December 2018-December 2019, drawing one picture of an event that occurred each month.

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## HELPFUL TIPS

**Parents and caregivers:** As children begin to understand the significance of "The Lone Dog's Winter Count", this is a great opportunity to emphasize the importance of recording stories and events in their life, that they can remember for years to come. Share with your child, that we do this even today by taking photographs and recording videos of important events in our lives. These photos and videos tell stories about events that have occurred in the past, and tell other people a little bit about our family history.

- Consider sharing photographs with your child and ask them to tell you what the photograph reminds them of, or what the event might be in that photo.
  - What story does this photo tell us?

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- This can be a great optional activity for your child to recreate their family history by organizing the photos in order of when they occurred to create a timeline or story.
  - Consider asking your child to share the story in the photos when they have finished.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

**Families and Educators:** As your child is documenting their past family history and events, this may spark their interest to learn how other cultures' document their history.

- [This guide](#) shares different ways in which different cultures recorded their history, such as through painting, writing, etc.

They may also want to continue documenting their family history.

- Encourage to take photos of important moments in their life so they can start a photo album or scrapbook that tells the story of their families' history.
  - Your child may want to draw pictures or write stories that accompany these photos.

### *Activity Resource Links:*

- Adapted by: "The Lone Dog's Winter Count": [https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/poster\\_lone\\_dog\\_final.pdf](https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/poster_lone_dog_final.pdf)
- Ways in Which Different Cultures Record History": <https://www.sutori.com/story/ways-in-which-different-cultures-record-history--Lqar5LbZpLdPc79GtYWcZMHA>