

## Course Content - Native American Traditional Music

### Introduction

- Indigenous people are the first people who live in a particular place.
- Native American Tribes (or Nations) are all unique –this includes their music and instruments. There are twelve basic regions of Native American tribes in the area of the United States. If you would like to see what tribes lived where you are, please see the website [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca).
- Music is used in Native American culture for ceremonies, storytelling, healing, and more. •Modern Native American music uses all kinds of instruments –guitars, pianos, (etc) *AND* traditional instruments.
- A Pow Wow is a celebration that is a social gathering for Native American people to talk, dance, sing and honor their cultures. At a Pow Wow you would be able to learn about many aspects of Native American cultures –dancing, singing, clothing (regalia), crafts and food. Some of the food featured are corn soup, tacos and fry bread.

### Percussion

- The sound of the drumbeat is often considered to be the “Heartbeat of Mother Earth”.
- Drumming and singing are so closely connected that drummers are often called “singers”.
- We got to see a drum maker making a drum in this course. He began by preparing himself in a smudging ceremony. Then, he prepared the animal skin and stretched it over a wood frame. The skin was then tightened using water and heat. The drum making process uses the four elements of the Earth –Animal (skins), Water (to shape), Heat (to shape) and Plant (the frame).We saw an Inuit drum called a Qilaut played with a beater and a Pueblo Log Drum.
- Rattles are typically filled with seeds, beads or stones and are made from gourds, turtle shells, animal horns or hooves.
- A rasp is a small wooden stick with notches or bumps that are scraped across with a stick. They are often made to sound like frog or bear calls.

### Music in Life Lesson

The Music in Life lesson is a moment to engage in active listening. The Music in Life lesson song for this course is “Sky World” written by Bear Fox, performed by Telo Swathe. Students are invited to think about how the music makes them feel, think and move. Music is an individual experience; active listening encourages students to choose their own musical path.

### Flutes

- The flute is considered the oldest instrument in the world. In Native American cultures they are used for entertainment, religious ceremonies and healing.
- Flutes are often made of bones, bamboo, clay or wood.
- We learned about an interesting instrument called the Double Flute, or Drone Flute.
- The Nammys are the Native American Music Awards.

### Chordophones and Vocals

- A chordophone is a stringed instrument with a box that serves as a resonator. They are played many ways including, bow, pluck, rub and hit.
- In Native American culture singing is very important and sometimes serves to pass down traditions and history.
- Some of the notable attributes of traditional Native American singing are emotions, unique tones and unique rhythms.
- We learned about a unique form of singing called throat singing. Throat singing is sometimes used as part of a game.