

The background features a stylized illustration of an indigenous figure in the center, holding a long spear. To the right, there is a fire burning in a pit. The scene is set against a light blue and green background with faint, circular patterns. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional indigenous art.

(Re) Appropriating the Story:

Indigenous Graphic Novels  
and Decolonizing the Text

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# Land Acknowledgment



# A question of terms...

American Indian, Native, Aboriginal, Indigenous?

In Canada = Métis, Inuit, First Nations

To avoid confusion and generalization, be specific.  
i.e., Mi'kmaq

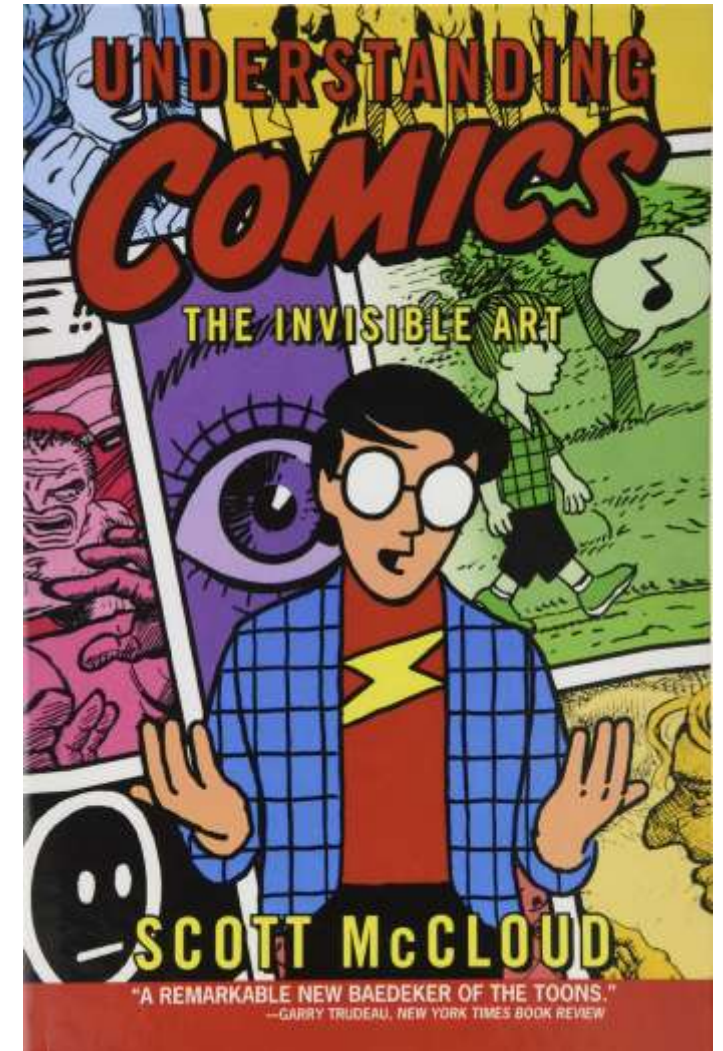
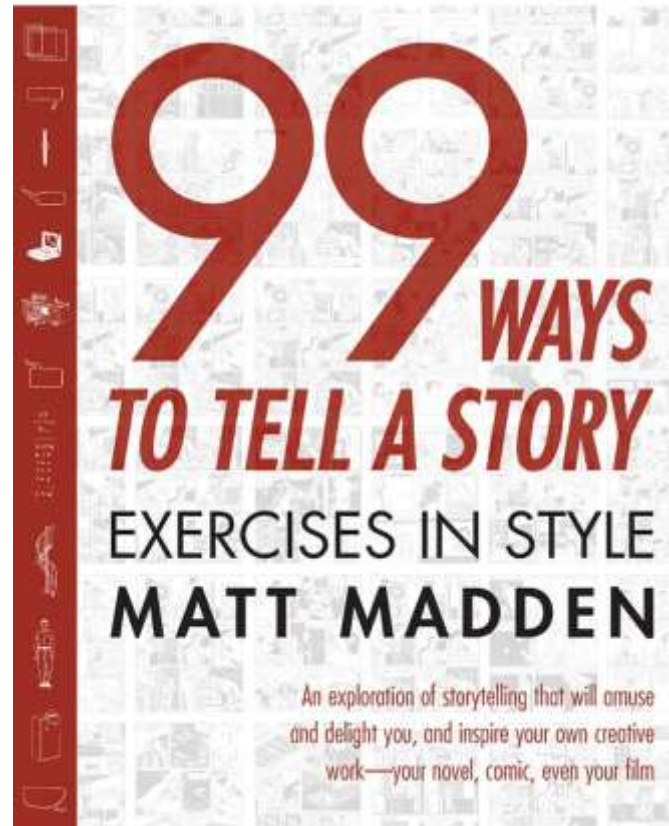
Why?

Fear  
Need

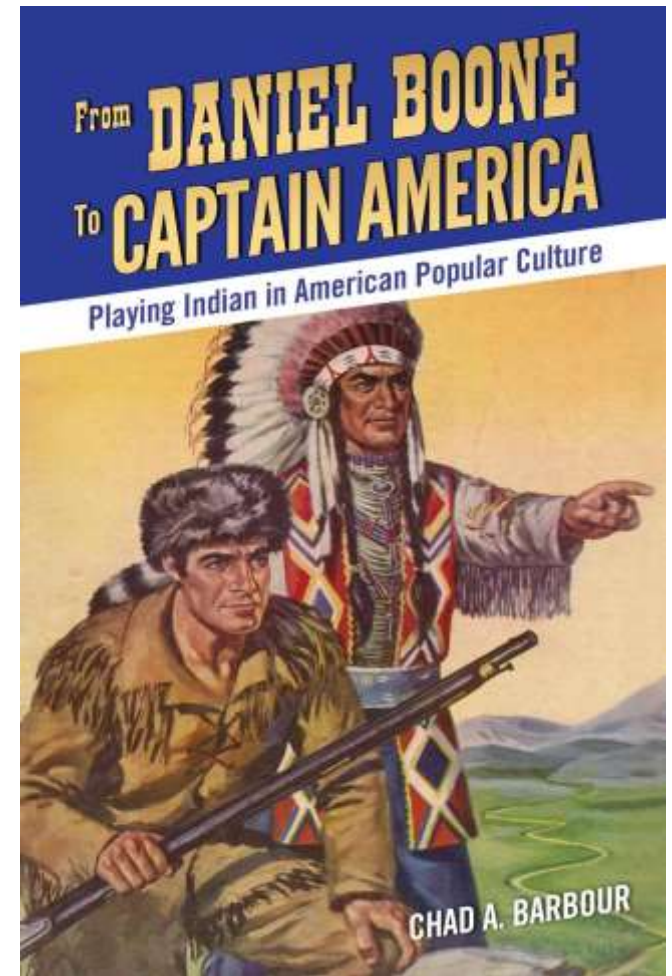
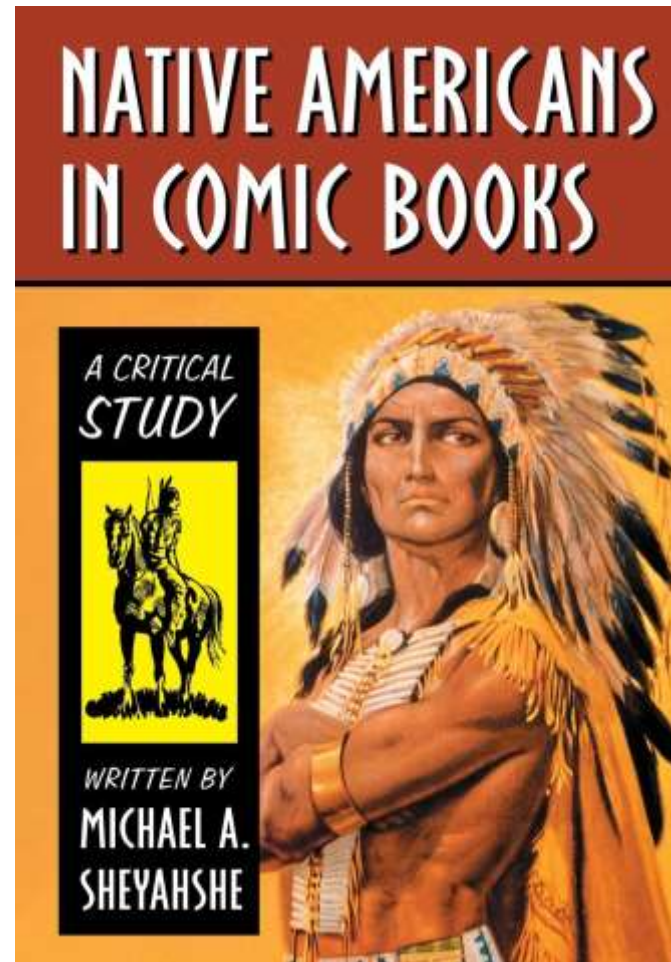




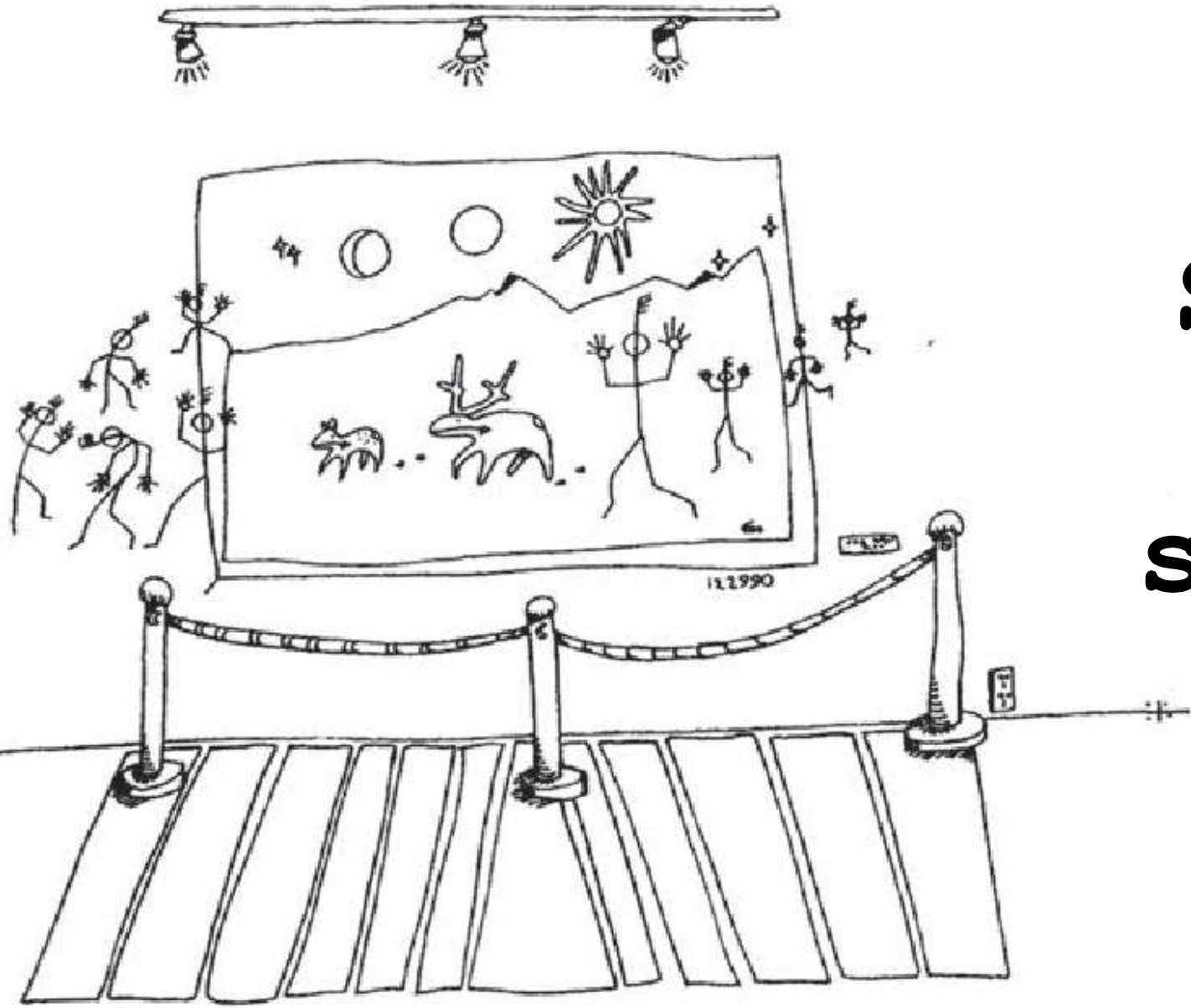
# Preliminaries - Visual Literacy



Getting to  
Know  
Indigenous  
Comics (and  
their  
History)





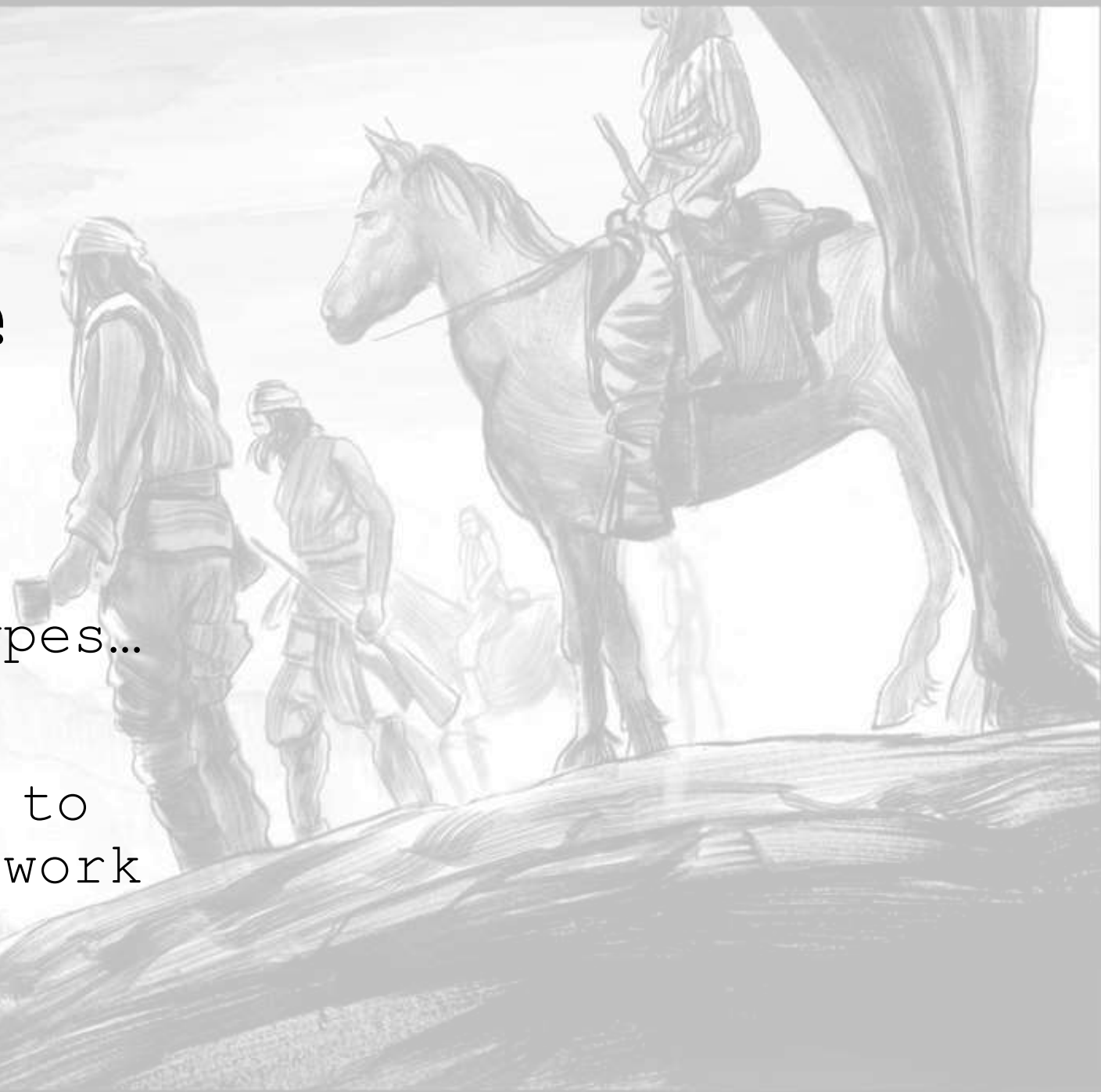


**Step One:  
Create a  
safe space**

# Step Two: Decolonize

Start with the stereotypes...

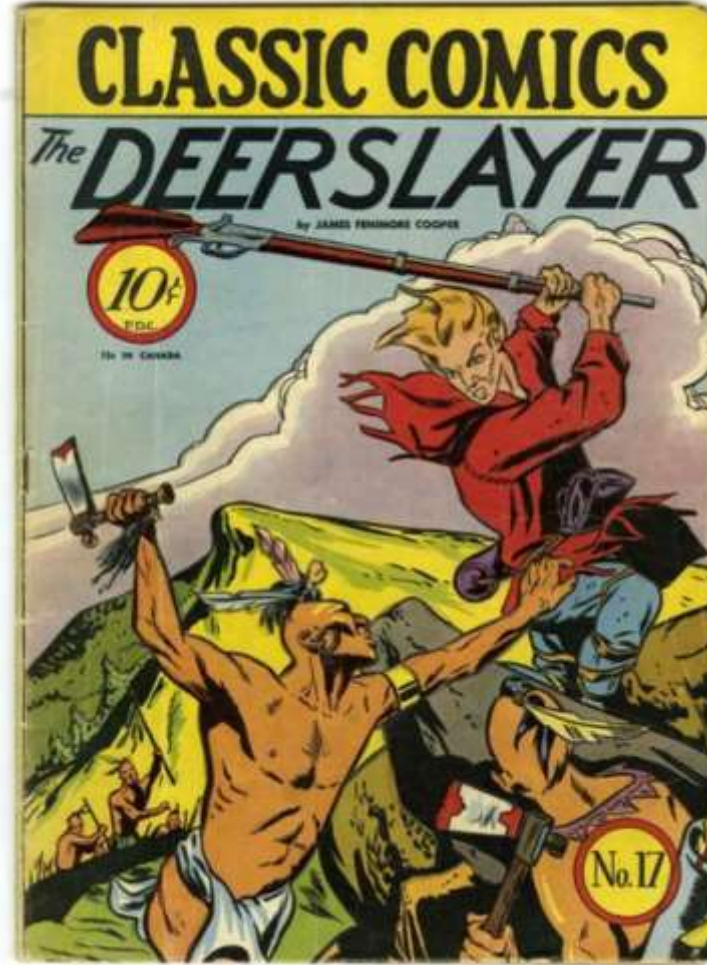
(Thanks and credit go to  
Michael A. Sheyahshe's work  
on these)



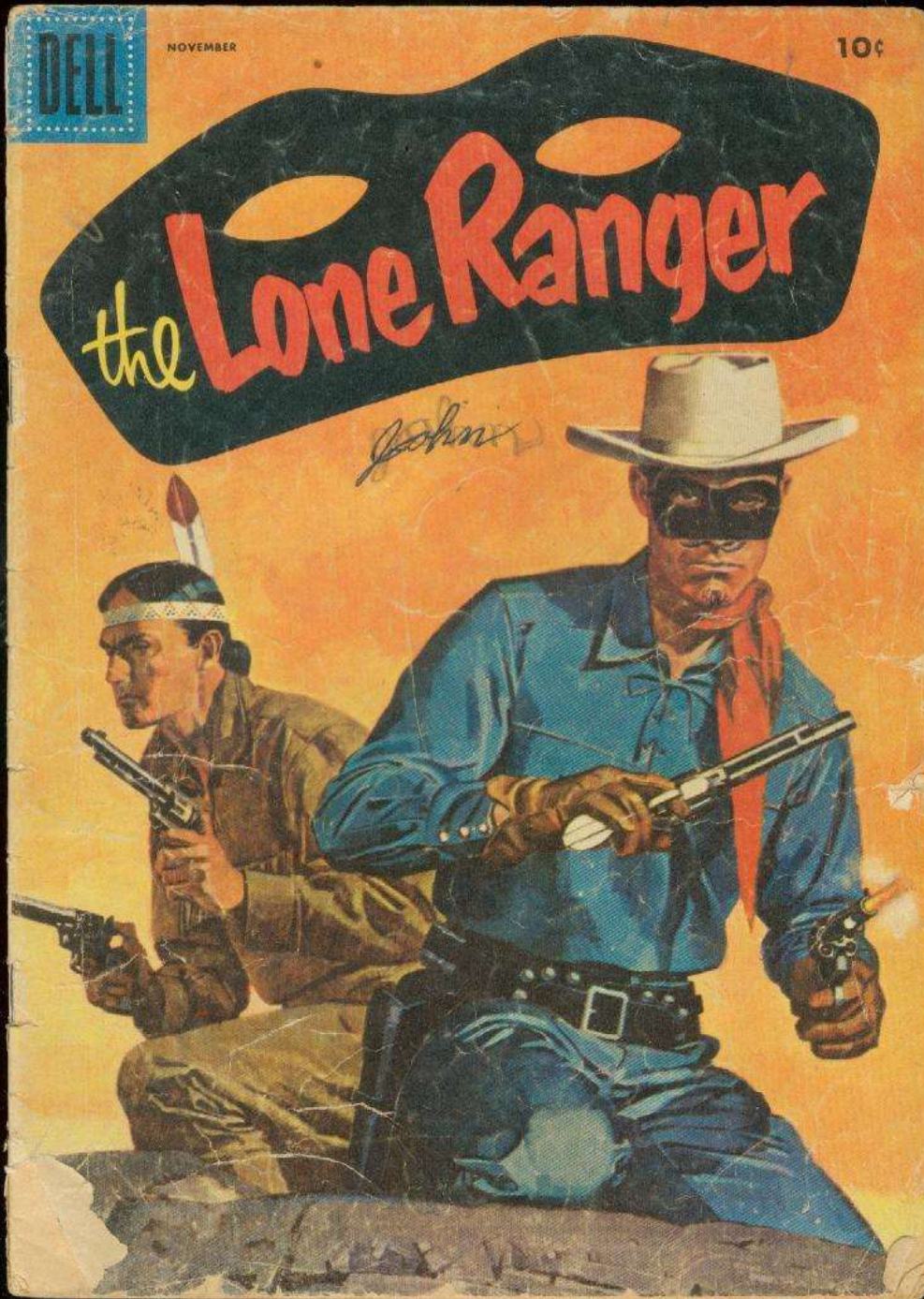


# The Mohican Syndrome

Whites out-Nativizing the Natives







The Indian as  
Sidekick



# Pan-Indian ("fringe and feathers")







# Instant Shaman and Tracker







Evil Savage or Angelic Noble



# Historical Artifacts



# We Are Still Here!

Native American Truths Everyone Should Know



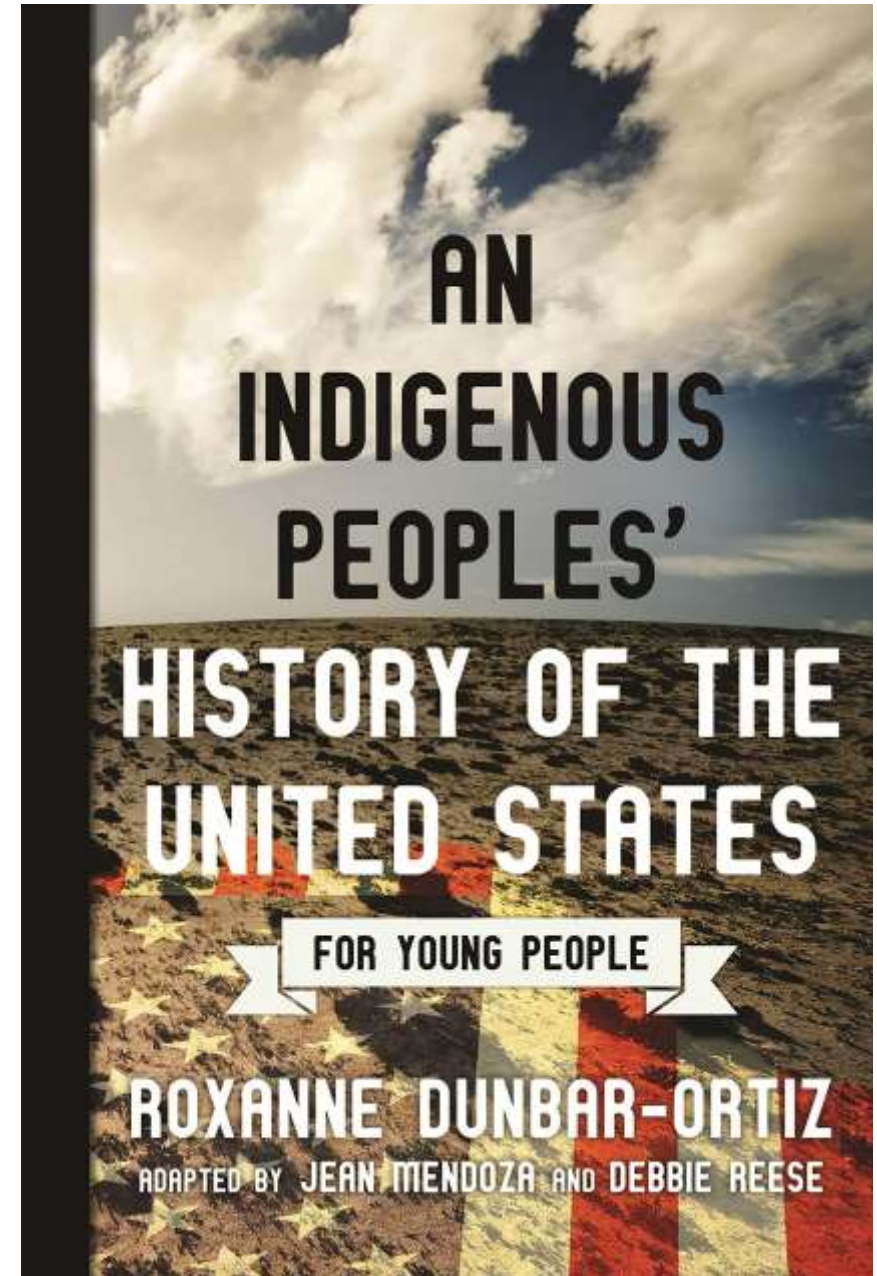
From the creators of *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga*

**TRACI SORELL** Illustrated by **FRANÉ LESSAC**

When you  
cover the  
stereotypes,  
counter with  
the  
realities!



# Step 3: Learn

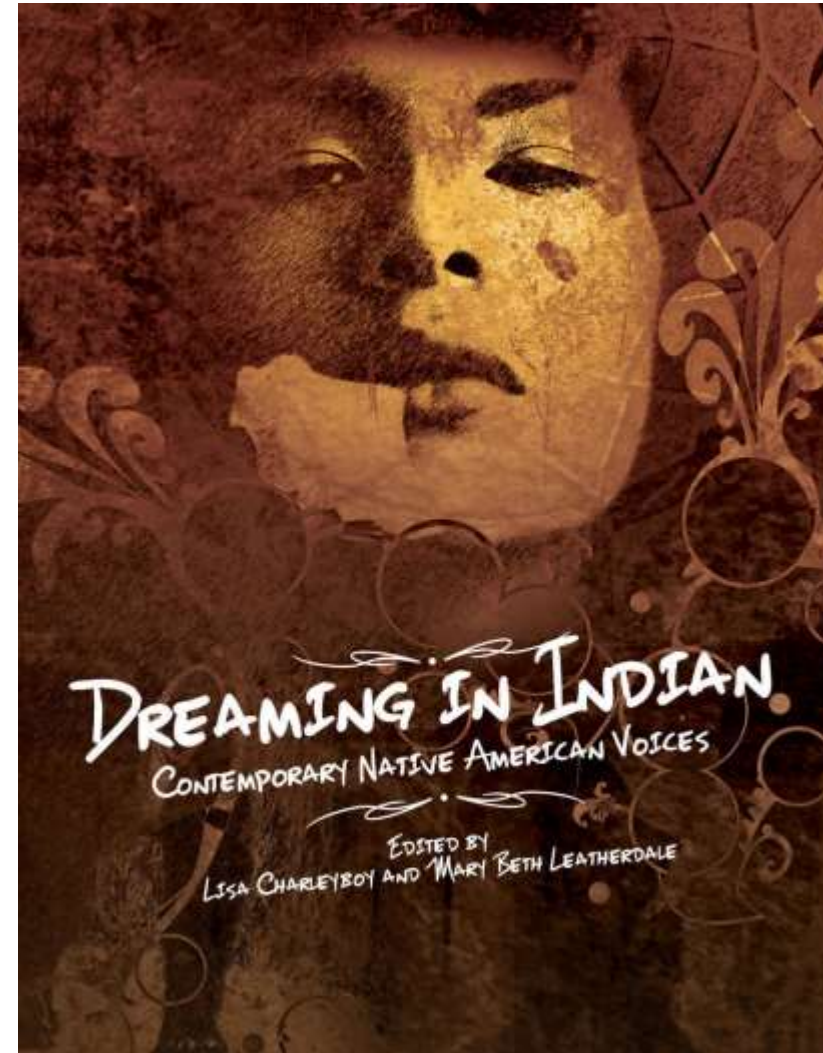
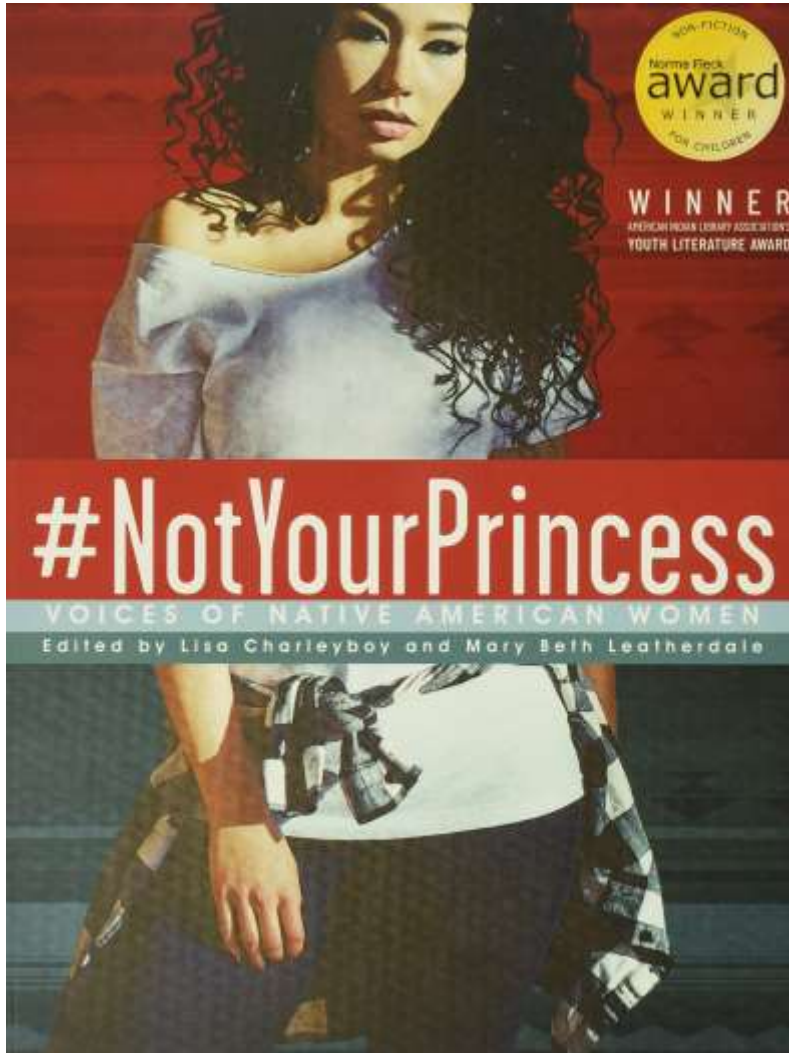




# Step 4: Find resources



# Check authorship



# Critical Reviews

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AMERICAN INDIANS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>



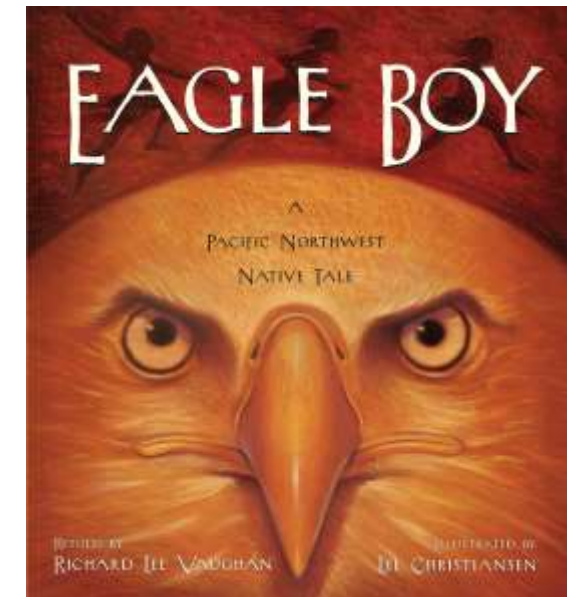
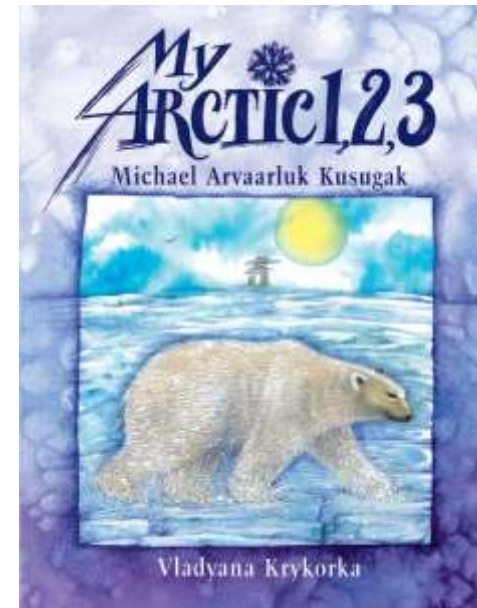
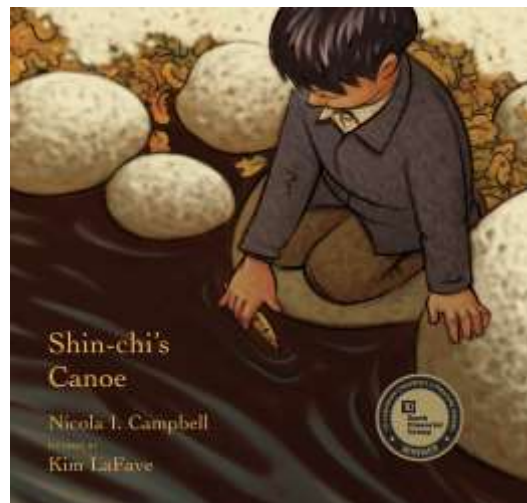
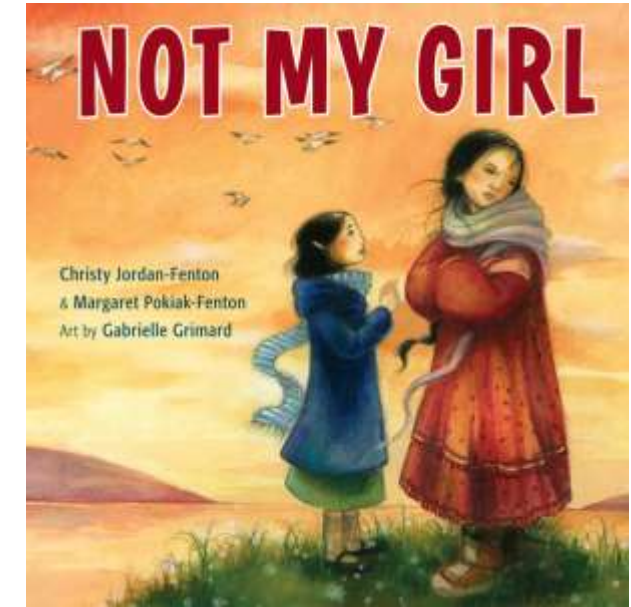
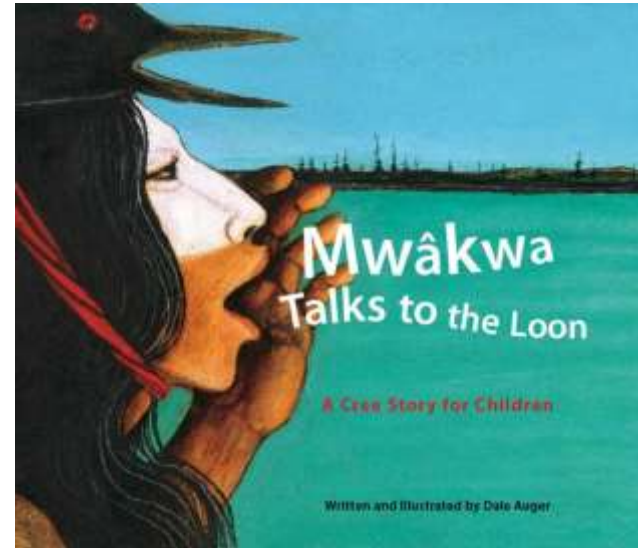
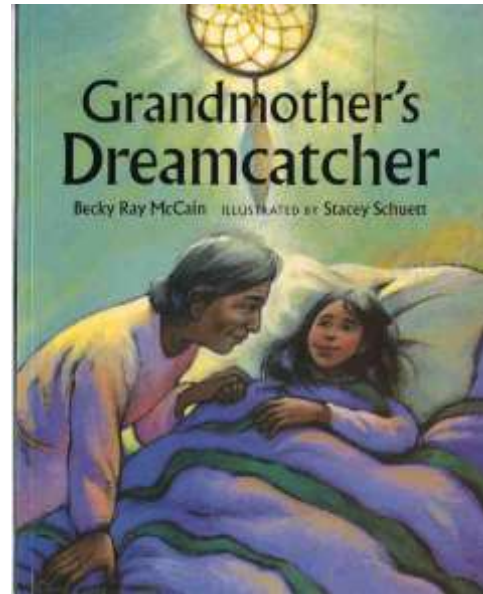
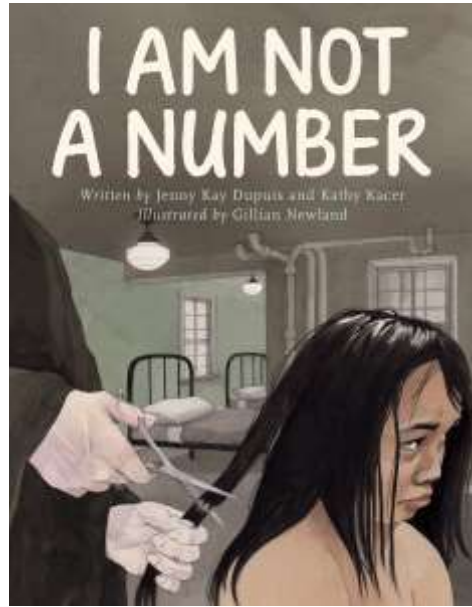
# Step 5: Turn it into something

What I Did...



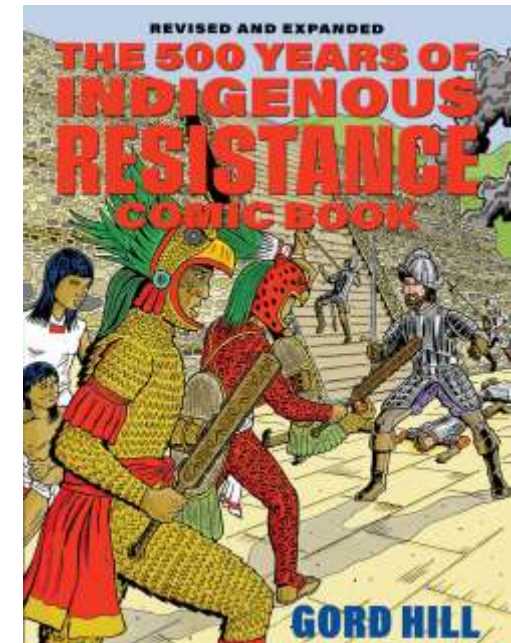
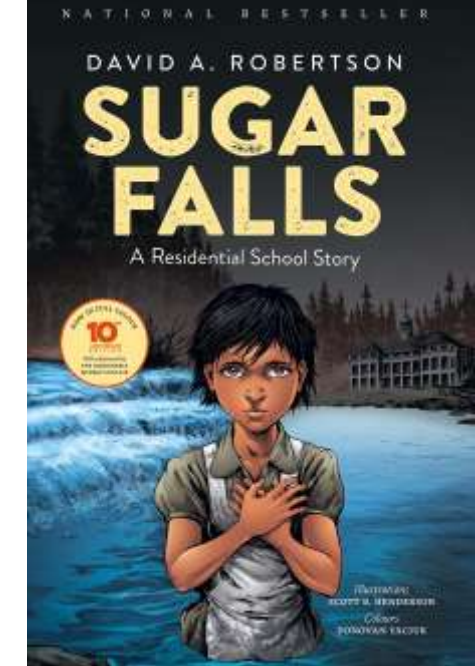
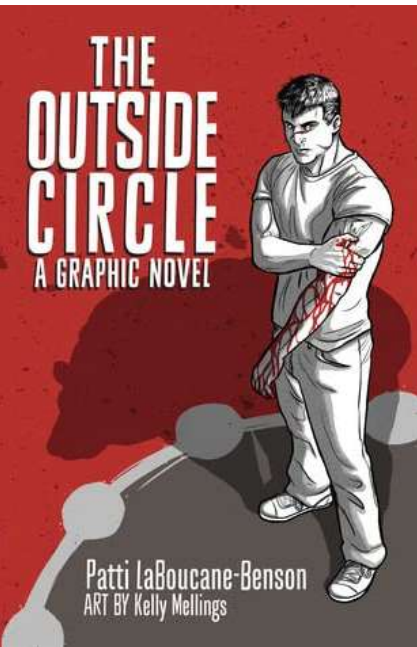


# Illustrated Stories Project



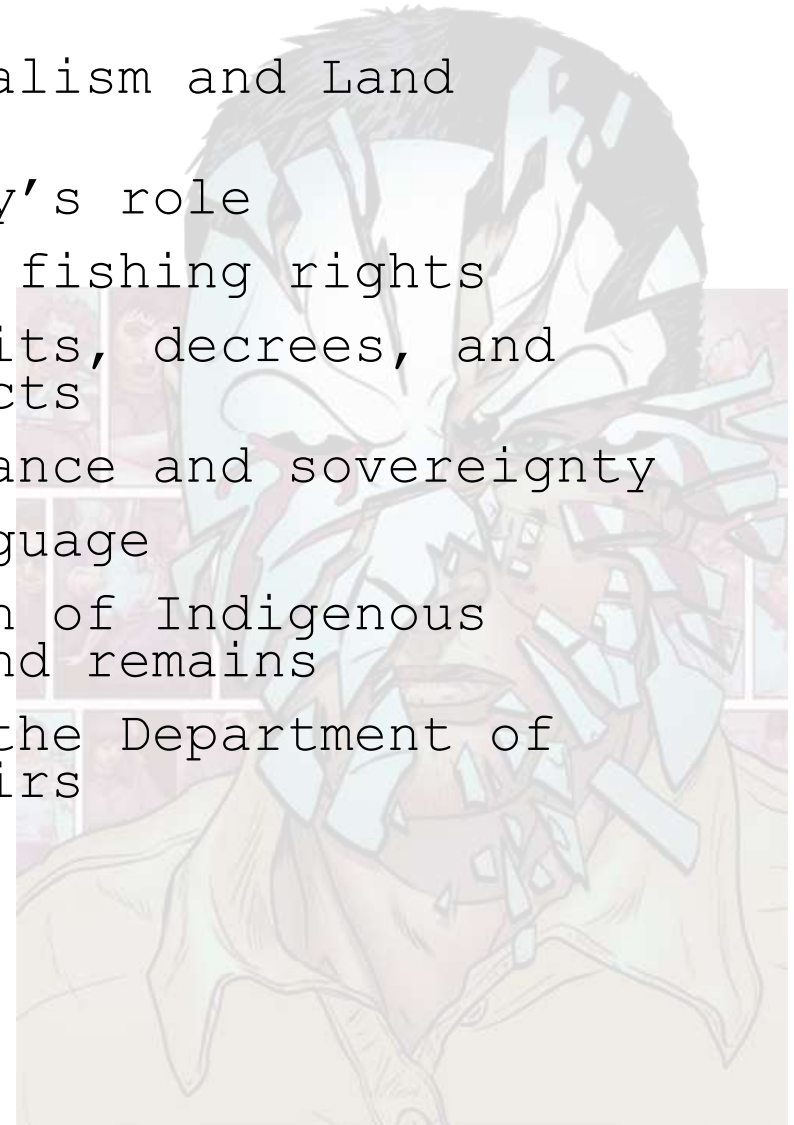


# Issues Based Story Analysis

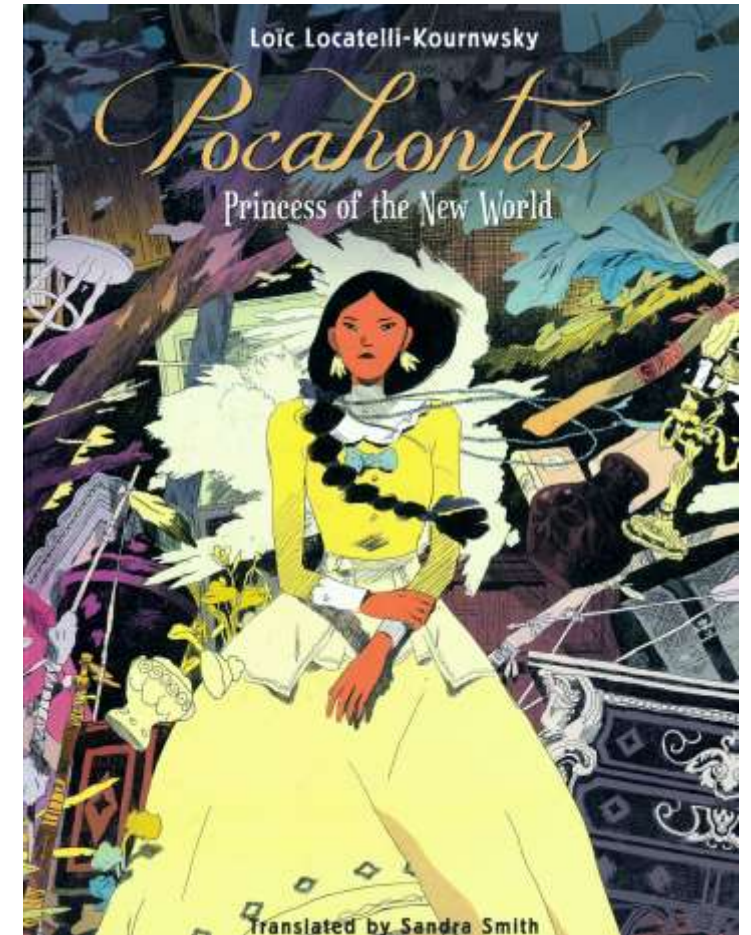
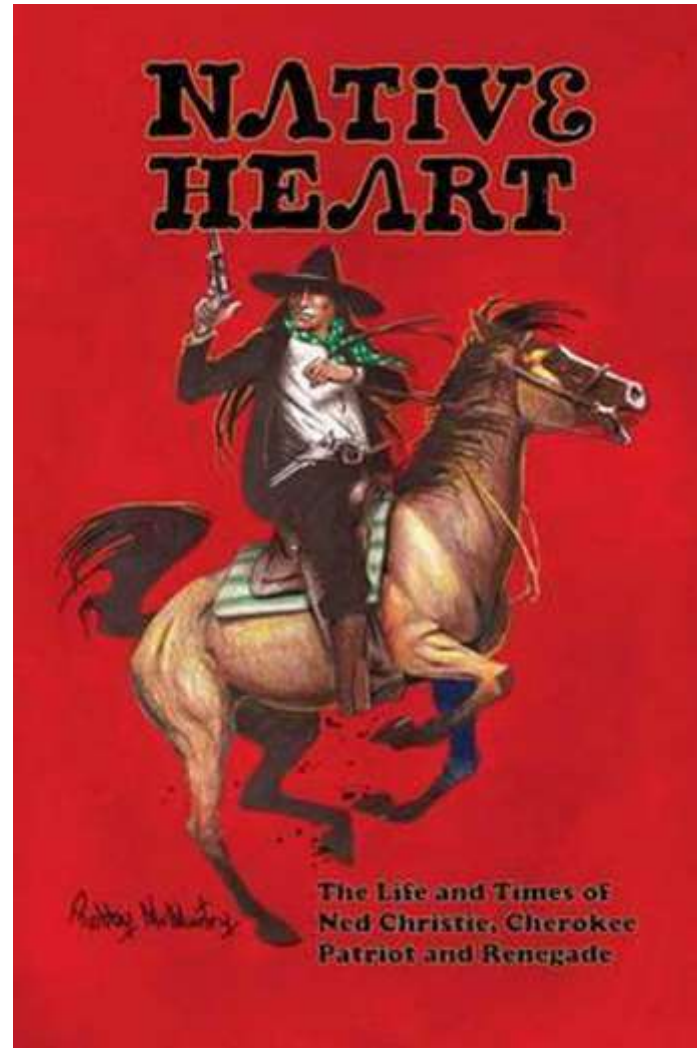


# So many issues to choose from...

- Land treaties and claims
- Nations and confederacies
- MMIWG
- Sixties Scoop
- Residential Schools
- Relocation projects
- Occupations and resistance
- Conflicts, massacres, and crises
- Colonization, assimilation, and amalgamation
- Genocide and ethnocide
- Activism
- Allotment
- Cultural extinction
- Environmentalism and Land Defenders
- Christianity's role
- Hunting and fishing rights
- Laws, lawsuits, decrees, and political acts
- Self-governance and sovereignty
- Loss of language
- Repatriation of Indigenous artifacts and remains
- Status and the Department of Indian Affairs







Compare/Contrast



# “Classic” versus Contemporary



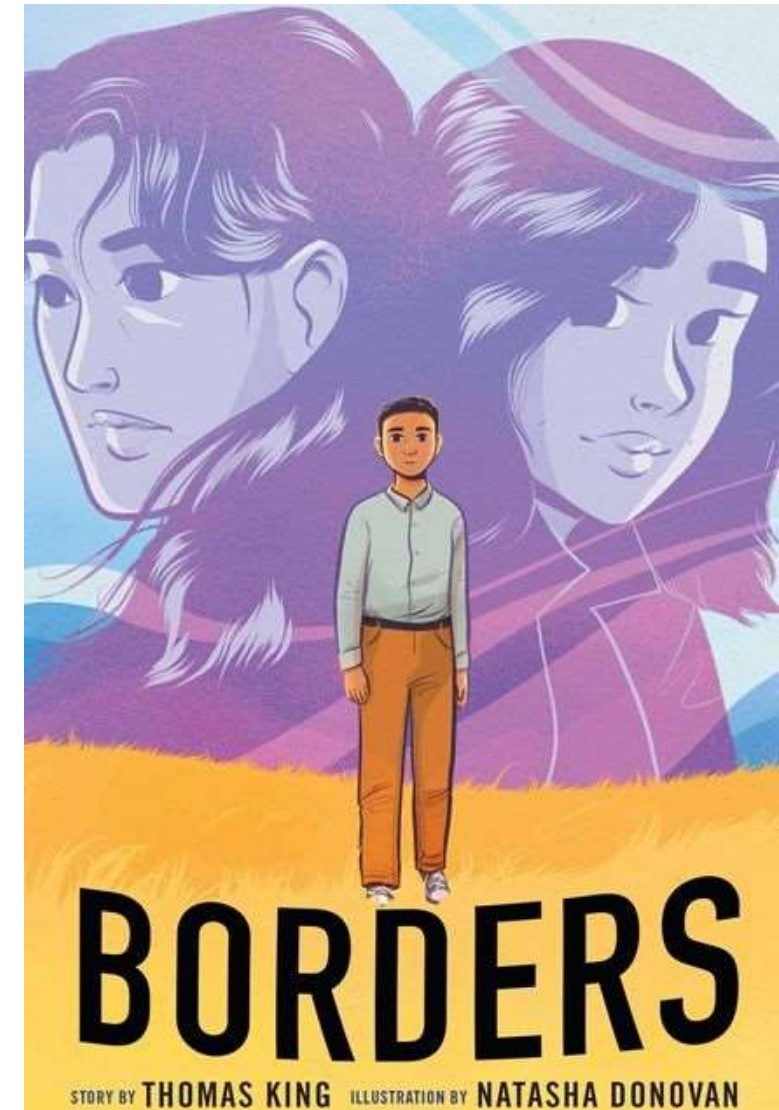
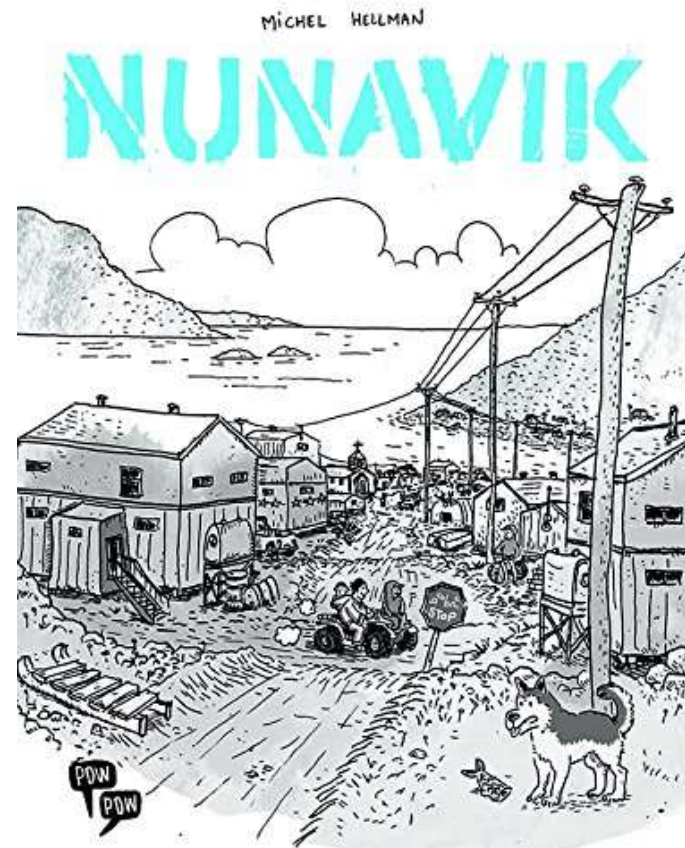
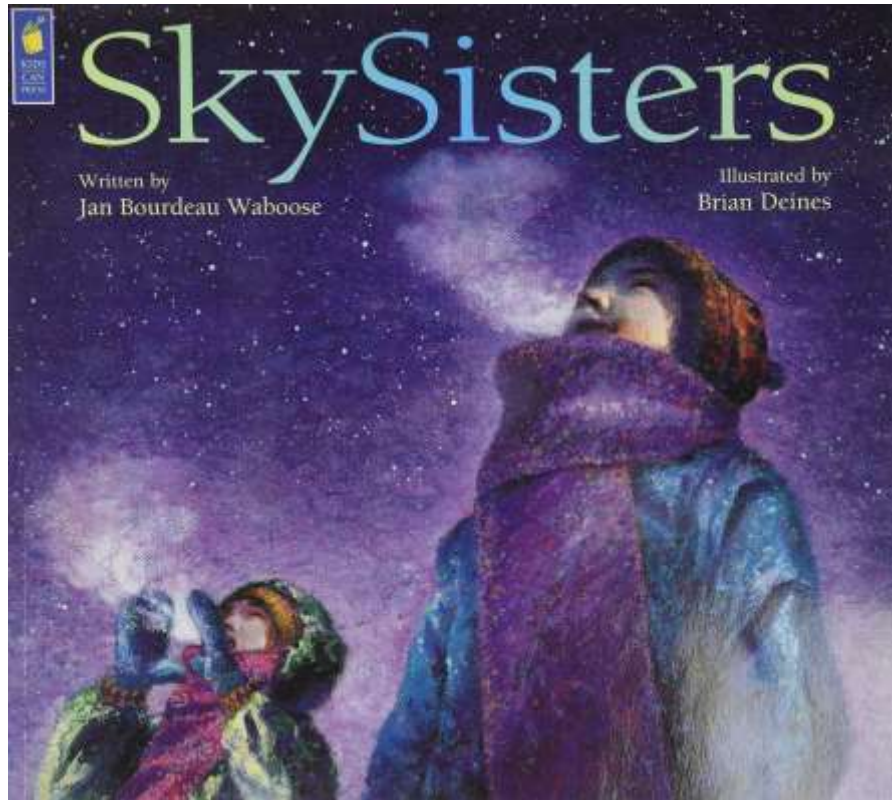
Who tells the story?

What's missing?

What voice isn't being heard?



# Create Your Own (Graphic) Story



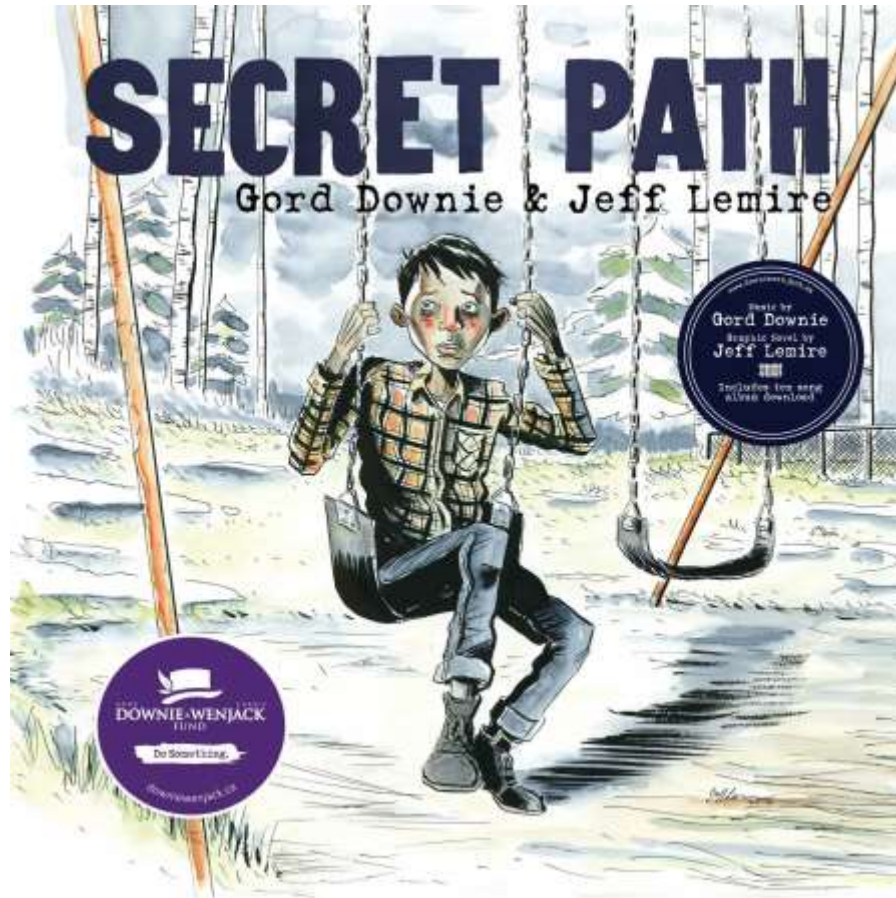
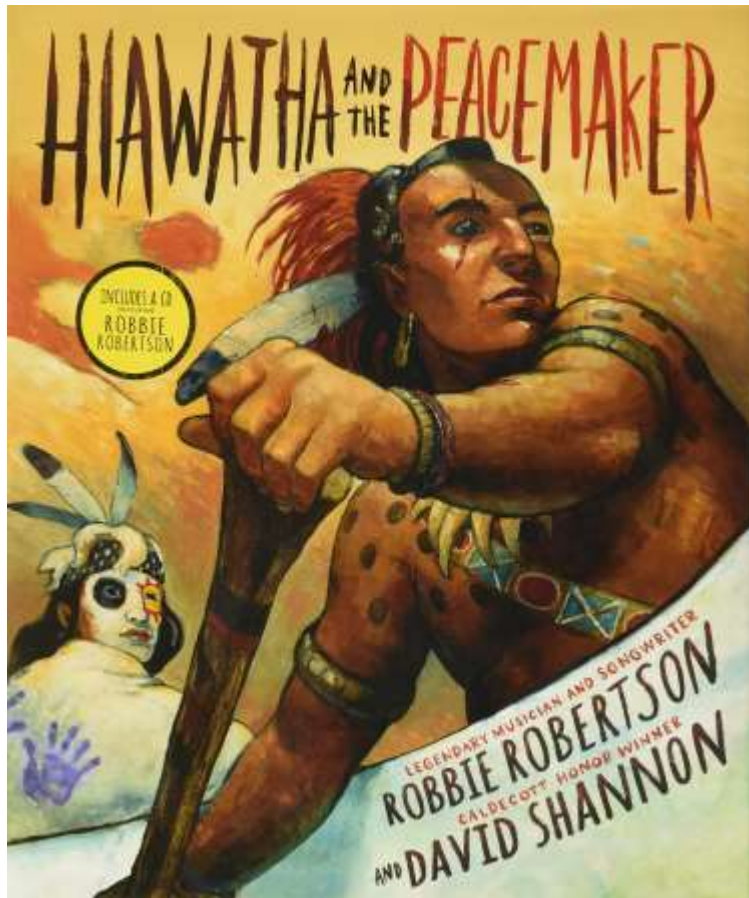


## Other Possibilities:

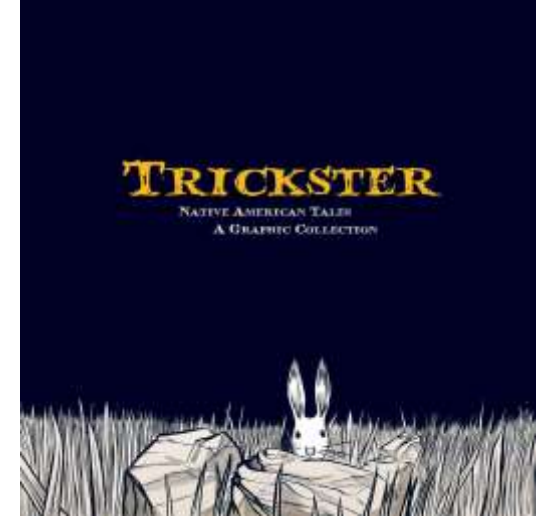
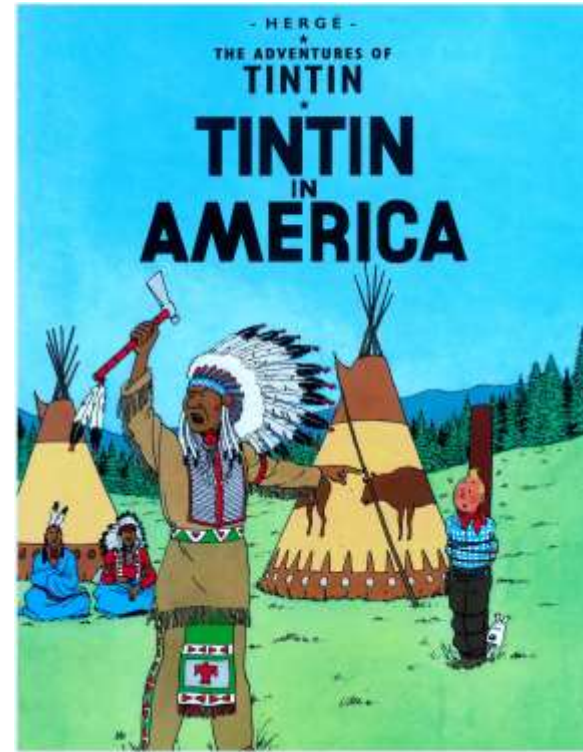
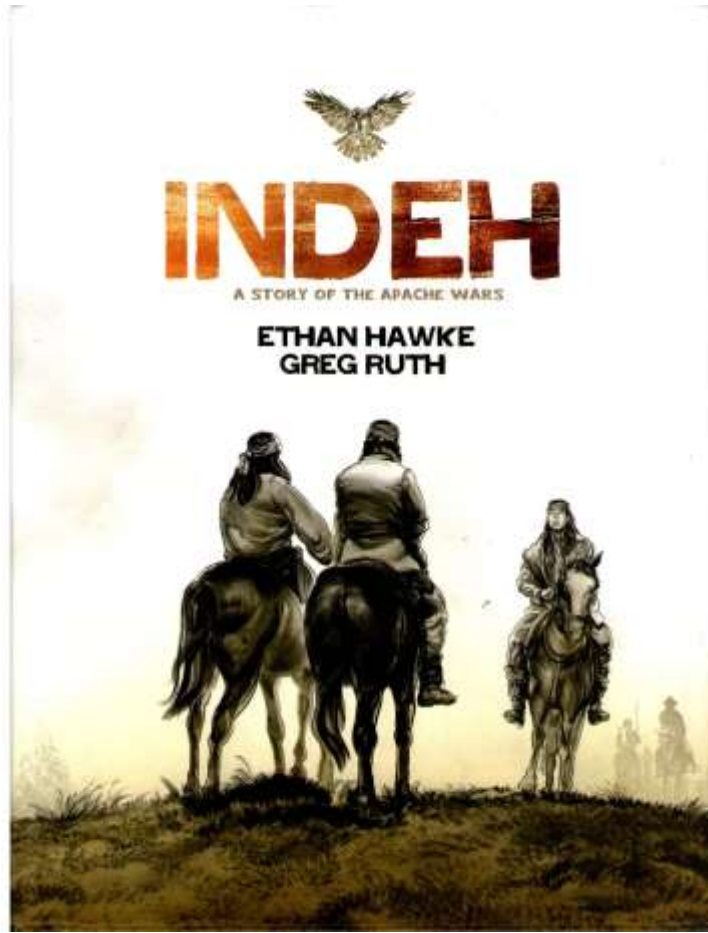
- Jump off point for research
- Debates
- Journalism (op/ed, feature, etc.)
- Genre Fiction exploration
- Autobiography, biography, memoir
- Story/Image/Text analysis
- Reader response
- Formal response to literature
- Position Paper  
(argumentative/persuasive essay)
- Seminar style presentation
- Creative writing



# Step 6: Process This Together as a Class







Evaluate



# Question and Explore all Perspectives/P.O.V.s



Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
is not an Indigenous issue  
— it's a human rights issue.





Why is  
the  
story  
told  
this  
way?







Has it always been told this way?



In summary...

Try.

Don't be afraid.

Accept that your teaching is always a work in progress (and therein lies its strength!)





# Resources

[www.indigenouscomicsresource.com](http://www.indigenouscomicsresource.com)

[mcrowther@bishopscollegeschool.com](mailto:mcrowther@bishopscollegeschool.com)

Thank you so much!

