

Your Library Today



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Subject Heading Searches: Native Americans

The United States government recognizes 562 tribal governments. These tribes possess the right to form their own government, to enforce laws (both civil and criminal), to tax, to establish requirements for membership, to license and regulate activities, to zone and to exclude persons from tribal territories.

Limitations on tribal powers of self-government include the same limitations that apply to states; for example, neither tribes nor states have the power to make war, engage in foreign relations, or coin money (including paper currency).

The term *Native Americans* refers to the first people to inhabit the Americas. Before Europeans arrived, this land was inhabited by rich and diverse cultures. The term is also used to represent the descendants of the original inhabitants of America, who continue to enrich American society with their cultural heritage and traditions.

Native Americans are more commonly known as Indians or American Indians, and have also been referred to as Aboriginal Americans, Amerindians, First Americans, Native Indians, and Original Americans.

The term *Native American* was created by researchers concerned about stereotypes that maybe be associated with the term Indian.

Library Subject Headings

Understanding the difference between keyword and subject heading searches is important. Keywords represent text that appears in a document.

Subject headings are assigned by information specialists to help researchers identify resources that cover similar topics. A powerful tool, subject headings create connections between sources and allow a user to benefit from someone else's work classifying information.

Computerize library catalogs can be searched with keywords, just like most Internet search engines. Many useful resources, however, do not share

Think Like A Librarian - Subject Headings

Want to find information on *Native Americans*? Want to make it easy? Then learn to search library catalogs by the same terms librarians use. Subject headings are assigned by librarians and information specialists to identify resources that contain information about similar topics even when those documents do not share keywords and terms. Here is a listing of common subject headings (*Sears*), typically used in public and school libraries to identify books about *Native Americans*:

- Indians
- Indians of North American Indians
- Names of individual tribes, such as Cherokee or Makah
- Names of cultural regions, such as Eastern Woodlands

Combine any of the above terms with the headings below to find topic-specific resources. For example: Indians -- Attitudes; Indians of North America -- Businesspeople; Cherokee -- children; Indians-- Scholarships, fellowships, etc

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| -- Attitudes | -- History |
| -- Biography | -- Bibliography |
| -- Biography -- Juvenile literature | -- Juvenile fiction |
| -- Businesspeople | -- Juvenile literature -- Bibliography |
| -- Children | -- Politics and government |
| -- Education | -- Race identity |
| -- Civil rights | -- Scholarships, fellowships, etc. |
| -- Scholarships, fellowships, etc. | -- United States -- Directories |
| -- Cultural assimilation | -- Social conditions |
| -- Drama | -- Social life and customs |
| -- Employment | -- Social life and customs |
| -- Ethnic identity | -- students |
| -- Fiction | -- Wisconsin |
| -- Genealogy -- Handbooks, manuals, etc. | -- Women |
| -- Health and hygiene -- Wisconsin -- Statistics | |

keywords -- this means they will not be located by keyword searches.

Subject headings, however, identify documents that contain information about similar topics even when those documents do not share keywords.

Browsing Decimal Numbers

Classification of *Native American* topics by *Dewey Decimal Numbers* is complex because the term does not actually refer to a specific ethnic or cultural group.

While some Dewey Numbers are suggested below, be sure to search the on-line catalog using the subject headings identified above to see how a specific library has used the *Dewey Decimal System* to organize its collection on its shelves.

If you need more help, please ask your local librarian - they will be more than happy to assist you.

270.089	Religions
299	Religion
305.23	Children
305.4	Women
323.1	Claims, Government Relations
398	Folklore
419	Sign Language
497	Languages
728	Dwellings
790.1	Games
793.3	Dances
812	Drama
897	Literature
970.004	History, North America
970.1	Indians of North America
973	History, United States