



THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

PALEY EDUCATION @Home
presented by **citi**
What We're Watching



Greetings from The Paley Center for Media's Education Department!

Welcome to the latest installment of "What We're Watching," a weekly Paley Education@Home guide. During this unprecedented time, we are continuing to reach out to our community with tips and ideas for consuming media with kids! We know that screen time has increased and so we're here to help. Each week we are highlighting a different theme that connects to selected programs for younger and older viewers, with related activities and resources.

Consuming media with your kids is a perfect jumping-off point to making media literacy a part of your everyday lives. Familiarizing yourself with the basics is a great first step. In case you missed it, you can view [our first edition about media literacy best practices](#). We also recommend the National Association for Media Literacy Education's Parents Guide—it's a terrific introduction!

What We're Watching: American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage

This week we are spotlighting American Indian and Alaska Native heritage with our viewing recommendations. The portrayal of indigenous people in film and television has a past riddled with negative stereotypes and a lack of representation altogether. In an effort to celebrate programs with positive representation, both of our recommendations this week put indigenous voices front and center and include stories created and collaborated on by American Indian and Alaska Native people.

This Week's Recommendations for Younger Viewers

Molly of Denali: "Culture Clash/Party Moose"

Recommended for Grades K+

[Available to stream on YouTube](#)

This enjoyable PBS Kids series follows the adventures of ten-year-old Molly Mabray, an Alaskan Native vlogger from the fictional village of Qyah, along with her family, friends, townspeople, and her malamute Suki. The series is the first nationally distributed children's show to feature an Alaska Native as the main character. In this episode, Molly retells the story of the summer Trini moved to Qyah from Texas, and how she and Tooley attempted to make Trini feel at home. In the second segment, Molly flies north to surprise Nina with a hand-delivered party box of treats for her birthday.

Viewing Questions

- How did Molly and Tooley make Trini feel when they first met? What did they do to try and make her feel more welcome?
- What assumptions and misunderstandings did they make about Trini's culture and vice versa? What did they all learn about each other's cultures as a result?
- Where did Molly and her Mom travel in the second half of the show?
- What problem did Molly and her Mom encounter in this episode?
- Why did they have so much trouble getting the Moose to move?
- How did they eventually get the moose to move? How did the party box help?

Extension Activity

[Visit the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge online.](#)

Additional Resources

Read

Background on [Alaska Native Culture](#)

Sled Dog Racing and [Iditarod National Historic Trail - History](#)

Watch

The Legend of Sarila (2013)
Basketball or Nothing (2019)

Listen

[The Molly of Denali Podcast](#)



This Week's Recommendations for Older Viewers

Smoke Signals (1998)

Recommended for Grades 8+

Available to rent from Amazon/YouTube/iTunes/Google Play

This film, directed by Chris Eyre, was based on the Sherman Alexie short story "This is What it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona" from his book *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. The coming-of-age tale follows Victor and Thomas, two young Coeur d'Alene men, who confront issues of identity and family while on a journey to collect the remains of Victor's father. The film is filled with humor, sadness, loveable characters, and fry bread power.

Viewing Questions

- What role does storytelling play in the film? What do you think the filmmaker is saying about the difference between stories and "truth"?
- What significance does the past have in the story? How is it integrated into the narrative?
- The film often addresses stereotypes of the stoic and "real" Native American. What attributes are tied into this stereotype, and how do the characters in the film reinforce or challenge this?
- How are traditional symbols of mainstream America (e.g. basketball, John Wayne) repurposed by Native Americans in the film? What is the effect?
- Why do you think the director changed the title of the story to Smoke Signals from the original? What do you think he is saying about the significance of smoke signals in this film? What about communication in general?

Additional Resources

Read

Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko
Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film by Peter C. Rollins
Flight by Sherman Alexie
Love Medicine by Louise Erdrich
There There by Tommy Orange

Watch

Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner (2001)
[Fast Horse](#) (2018)
Little Big Man (1970)
More than Frybread (2012)
Powwow Highway (1989)
Reel Injun (2009)
[Shimasani](#) (2009)

Listen

[Electronic DJ Collective A Tribe Called Red](#)

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to us at eduny@paleycenter.org.

Happy viewing,

Rebekah Fisk, Director of Education

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Photos—*Molly of Denali*: PBS Kids; *Smoke Signals*: Miramax

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We hope this inspires you to watch and learn together in a new way at home! The Paley Center is here for you and, now more than ever before, we would deeply appreciate your support. Please consider making a donation:



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