

My Life



Don Heiny for Weekly Reader

Nantai wears special Native American clothes at the powwow.

First you hear the beat of the drum. Then the voices of the Quabbin Lake Singers all join in chorus. They sing in a language you probably have not heard before. It is a Native American language called Nipmuc.

The Quabbin Lake Singers are members of the Mann family. The group is made up of three brothers and their parents. They are Native Americans from the historical Nipmuc tribe in Massachusetts.

Weekly Reader saw the family perform at a **powwow** in Connecticut. A powwow is a Native American celebration.

Culture Through Song

Eight-year-old Nantai (NAN-tigh) and his brothers, ages 7 and 9, are typical boys. They go to public school, play video games, and skateboard.

Every Saturday, the family practices drumming and singing. "The boys look forward to it," said their dad. "They love their drum."

Some of the songs they perform are very old. They also write their own songs.

During the summer and other school vacations, the family travels around the United States and Canada. They perform their songs and share their **culture**. A person's culture is his or her way of life, ideas, and traditions.

Reading Passage

"Not only are we having fun," said Nantai's father, "but we're keeping our culture alive."

Women Rule!

Native Americans were the first people living in North America and South America. They have lived there for thousands of years. Women play a very important role in Native American culture.

Native American men and boys grow their hair long to honor women.

In Native American culture, Earth is treated with respect. It is called Mother Earth.

In many of the tribes, women have the final say on many important decisions.

Think About It

Why is learning about other cultures important?

Question Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

“My Life” Questions

- _____ 1. Nantai likes to
 - a. play the drums.
 - b. play video games.
 - c. skateboard.
 - d. all of the above.

- _____ 2. Nantai’s dad probably wants him to learn to sing and play traditional Nipmuc music because
 - a. the music is very hard to play.
 - b. he wants his sons to know about their family’s culture.
 - c. the family earns a lot of money at the concerts.
 - d. he does not like modern music.

- _____ 3. Native American boys and men grow their hair long
 - a. for warmth.
 - b. because they did not have scissors.
 - c. to show respect for women.
 - d. to hide easily in forests.

- _____ 4. (NAN-tigh) is in parenthesis because it
 - a. is giving a definition.
 - b. is another language.
 - c. shows the reader how to pronounce the word.
 - d. should be read with a loud voice.

- _____ 5. What is similar and what is different between you and Nantai?

Name: _____

Date: _____

“My Life” Answer Sheet

- C 1. Nantai likes to
 a. play the drums.
 b. play video games.
 c. skateboard.
d. all of the above.
- C 2. Nantai’s dad probably wants him to learn to sing and play traditional Nipmuc music because
 a. the music is very hard to play.
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- TF 4. (NAN-tigh) is in parenthesis because it
 a. is giving a definition.
 b. is another language.
c. shows the reader how to pronounce the word.
 d. should be read with a loud voice.
- Co/Co 5. What is similar and what is different between you and Nantai?

Answers will vary, but should compare similarities and differences between Nantai and the student.

Additional Suggested Vocabulary: tribe, typical, traditions, perform