

## NEWS BREAK

Article: **Is Indigenous visibility in movies and TV having a watershed moment?**

Section: **THE MIX, E3**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, March 10, 2024** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

***\*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

### Standards:

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1**

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2**

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

### Objectives:

***Students will discuss why representation matters in media and how Native Americans are seeing a rise in TV and movie opportunities. Students will talk about seeing characters that reflect their identity or background-and how that impacts them. Why is inclusion and diversity important in the media? Why is it important for Native youth to see themselves reflected in modern-day media?***

### Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using these pictures?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

### Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“There is a lot of **double erasure** of two-spirit identities, Native American identities and Native American women,” McEver said. “But if you look at ‘Night Country,’ if you look at ‘Fancy Dance,’ we’re starting to see the tide shift a little when it comes to inclusion of Native American women. And I think a lot of that

can be attributed to Lily and the power that she brings to ‘Killers of the Flower Moon.’”

***Double erasure Guess:***

***Double erasure Definition:***

**Comprehension Questions:**

1. Mountlake Terrace High School graduate \_\_\_\_\_ (of Blackfeet and Nimíipuu heritage) appears poised to become the first Native American to win the best actress Oscar at Sunday’s 96th Academy Award ceremony, for her work in “Killers of the Flower Moon.”
2. But Gladstone is only the most visible tip of a wave of Indigenous people gaining visibility and giving others a voice in the \_\_\_\_\_ world.
3. The flowering of \_\_\_\_\_ in the media in recent years is partly because of the opportunities presented by new platforms like streaming and the internet.
4. When “\_\_\_\_\_,” an action movie with a young Comanche woman as its protagonist, premiered in 2022, the streaming service Hulu said it was its most-watched movie or TV series premiere ever.
5. Network and streaming series with Native actors, crew members and stories, including FX’s “Reservation Dogs” and AMC’s “Dark Winds,” have gained what?
6. The Disney+ series “\_\_\_\_\_,” whose central character is a member of the Choctaw Nation and whose cast and crew are a mix of Native and non-Native talent, was the No. 1 series on Disney+ when it debuted earlier this year.
7. What is IllumiNative?
8. Two Feathers says this collaborative way of working embodies the idea, long held in many Indigenous communities, that wealth is not just how much you have but how much you \_\_\_\_\_. “It provides a great framework, and not just for Indigenous people,” he said.
9. Stories Native people talk about themselves often have a much different flavor from the stories others have long told about them. While non-Native content creators have often portrayed Native people as everything from violent enemies to downtrodden relics of the past, Indigenous creators tend to tell contemporary stories filled with what?
10. The backdrop of \_\_\_\_\_ is still there, but it’s often just that — a backdrop. “It is this weird stereotype that Native people exist as stoic medicine people who look into the distance and say prophetic stuff while solemn music plays,” Clift said. In reality, “you’d be hard-pressed to hang out with a group of Native people and not hear them cracking jokes all the time.”

11. Since many non-Native people get much of their exposure to Native communities through the media, film and TV can shine more light on issues important to Indigenous people. HBO's "True Detective: Night Country" recently explored the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People movement. Indigenous people want to see their communities portrayed in all their complexity. "We don't want to be the \_\_\_\_\_ anymore."
12. The 2018 Reclaiming Native Truth research project found that \_\_\_\_\_% of Americans surveyed agreed that "it is important to feature more stories about Native Americans on TV, in movies and in other entertainment."

### **Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:**

#### **Class Discussion Questions:**

- *What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?*
- *At first, I thought \_\_\_\_\_, but now I think \_\_\_\_\_?*
- *What things did you already know from prior experience?*
- *Why does representation matter in media? Why is it important? How does seeing characters who reflect your identity or background impact you?*
- *Share examples of movies or TV shows they've seen that feature characters from diverse backgrounds.*
- *How can seeing positive portrayals of Indigenous people empower Indigenous youth?*
- *How can increased Indigenous representation educate non-Indigenous audiences?*
- *How does this connect to the broader concept of diversity and inclusion in media?*

#### **Diving Deeper-Journal Prompts/Essay Questions:**

1. What are some of the difficulties faced by Indigenous people trying to break into the entertainment industry?
2. How has the rise of streaming services impacted opportunities for Indigenous creators?
3. Describe the ways in which Indigenous creators are changing the types of stories being told about Native communities.
4. Why is it important for Indigenous people to see themselves reflected in media?
5. What is the significance of the statistic that 78% of Americans believe there should be more Indigenous stories in entertainment?
6. What is the significance of the quote by Joey Clift: "We're inspiring Native kids in real time, and that's what gets me crying"?

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.  
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