

# ZITKALA-SA



# BIOGRAPHY

# ZITKALA-SA

Zitkala-Sa was born on the Yankton Indian Reservation in South Dakota on February 22, 1876. Her mother was a Sioux Native American, while her father was a European-American who left when Zitkala-Sa was still young.

Zitkala-Sa went to a Quaker school in Indiana, and then taught at a school in Pennsylvania. Native American children attended the school, but its curriculum focused on European history and traditions, and the culture of settlers. Zitkala-Sa thought that Native American history and cultural identity were being ignored.

And so, Zitkala-Sa started writing about her own life, and how she was struggling to keep her Native American identity. She thought that Native Americans were having white American culture imposed on them. In 1901, Zitkala-Sa also wrote down and published versions of traditional stories from the Dakota Native Americans.

After she got married in 1902, Zitkala-Sa moved to Utah. There she worked for the Society of the American Indians. It was an organization that aimed to preserve Native American culture and identity.

In 1926, she founded another organization, the National Council of American Indians, to build on this work. As its president, Zitkala-Sa pushed for better education for Native American people, as well as citizenship rights, and wider awareness of their cultural identity. She was also a government advisor on these issues before her death in 1938.

# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'identity'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'identity' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'identity'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'identity'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'identity' means.

# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: imposed	forced



# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

In the early 1900s, Zitkala-Sa worked for an organization that wanted to preserve Native American identity.

Zitkala-Sa was active in speaking out for Native American cultural identity until she died in 1938.

And so, Zitkala-Sa wrote about her experience and identity to draw attention to the issue.

Zitkala-Sa was born on the Yankton Indian Reservation in 1876.

But the school's curriculum focused on the culture and history of settlers, rather than Native American traditions.

Later on, Zitkala-Sa founded her own organization to bring about social reforms.

Zitkala-Sa taught at a Native American school in Indiana.

# Get to the facts

1 Where was Zitkala-Sa born?

2 What did Zitkala-Sa publish in 1901?

3 Which organization did Zitkala-Sa join in Utah?

4 Which organization did Zitkala-Sa found in 1926?

5 What did the organization push for?

# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

## National Council of American Indians

Write an advertisement for the National Council of American Indians. The ad should say what the organization does, and why it is important.

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**

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- b From that sentence, suggest what 'identity' means.
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## Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – imposed                      Synonym – forced

## Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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