

Native American Heritage Month: Read Native Challenge

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This November, in celebration of Native American Heritage Month, the IU Bloomington Education Library hosted the Read Native Challenge. This program, developed by the American Indian Library Association in 2021, was designed to “support and recognize our Indigenous authors, scientists, legislators, storytellers, and creators throughout the year” (American Indian Library Association, 2025). Beginning that year, Head of the Education Library, Christina Jones and her team of student workers, created a bingo card filled with genre books written by Indigenous authors with [corresponding booklists](#). Intended as a passive program in the beginning, the Education Library team observed that participants were highly engaged with the books. Many expressed that they were surprised there were so many children’s books written by Indigenous authors and artists.

Building on the sustained interest in the program over the years and combined with the efforts of our new Outreach & Engagement Librarian, Micaela Deogracias, the Read Native program expanded into a campus-wide event in 2025 - including pop-up libraries at the Indiana Memorial Union during Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies. The bingo categories were also expanded to include [curated titles by Librarian for Media Studies, Gender Studies, & Philosophy Associate Librarian, nicolae cline](#), and [curated streaming media by Head of Media Services Monique Threatt](#). As in years past, participants were invited to complete a bingo card by reading from a variety of genres and engaging with different kinds of media in the Libraries collections. Once they finished the program, they received a special bookmark, button, and a book of their choosing from a small assortment of titles that focus on Indigenous identity or are written by Indigenous authors. Over 30 programs were



The Read Native Challenge allows the Education Library to highlight the Indigenous voices throughout their and other IU Libraries' departments' collections.

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distributed thanks to the support of other Libraries service points across campus. We continue to receive many appreciative comments from students and faculty, alike - including this note from a visiting scholar:

I wanted to let you know that I really liked the Borders by Thomas King (a graphic novel version...) Which I would probably never picked up if it had not been for your Read Native American project. I thank you for that and would like to comment that it was a great idea!

Next year, we hope to expand the timeframe of the program to allow more time for participants to complete the challenge.

References

American Indian Library Association. (2025). *Read Native 2021*. <https://ailanet.org/readnative21/>