

# Native American Dwellings

## Teacher Background



Many, many years ago the Native American people lived a very simple life. During the winter months they would have a large camp area with their supplies of food, medicines, and wood for all the people. In this camp would be the chief, hunters, gatherers, medicine keepers, story tellers, and elders. The elders were the ones who gave directions and teaching on how to keep the traditions going.

The principle types of dwellings of the Anishinabe people were the wigwam, peaked lodge, bark house, and later, the teepee.

The word “wigwam” is derived from the Ojibwe term for “home” or “house.” The term “wigamig” does not necessarily refer to the dome like structure that is commonly associated with it, as some were oblong or conical, but early records describe them as crude circular shelters with little design.

A strong part of western American culture is the Plains Indian Tipi (TeePee). This structure could be as simple as a 3 pole structure (a tetrahedron shape) but usually was much more elaborate, with 12 or more poles giving the structures a cone shaped appearance.