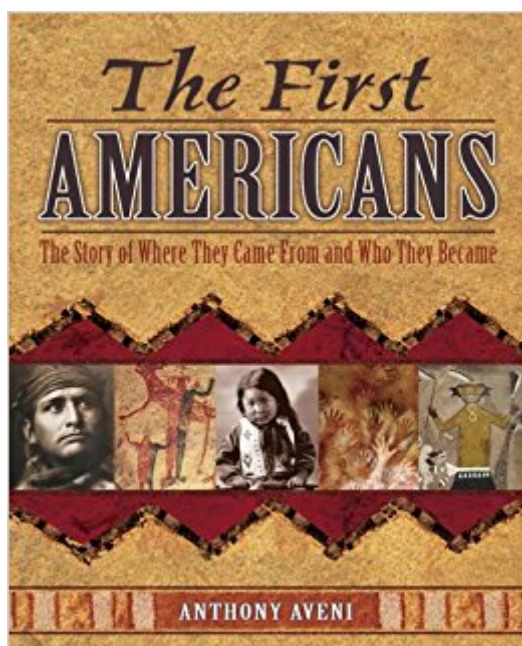


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# The First Americans: The Story Of Where They Came From And Who They Became



## Synopsis

The absorbing story of the first people to set foot in North America and the many cultures of their descendants. For thousands of years nomadic people from east Asia followed caribou walking east. Sometime around 20,000 BCE, they crossed the land bridge into North America. These waves of people are the ancestors to every culture on the continent. Tony Aveni, whose expertise is the scientific, mathematical, and cultural accomplishments of the first Americans, celebrates the disparate cultures by highlighting one or two from each region of the country: the Taino, the Iroquois, the Adena, the Anasazi, the Kwakiutl, and the Timucua.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1080L (What's this?)

Series: The First Americans

Hardcover: 128 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Nonfiction; English Language edition (October 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0439551447

ISBN-13: 978-0439551441

Product Dimensions: 11.4 x 9.1 x 0.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,509,693 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #109 in [Books > Children's](#)

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grade 4-6-Aveni mixes anthropology and archaeology to describe seven early cultures. The book opens some 20,000 years ago in Beringia (the now-submerged land between Siberia and Alaska) and attempts to assemble evidence that all points to one basic conclusion: The native tribes of North and South America—all descended from those who crossed the land bridge from Asia to discover America. This is by no means a universally accepted thesis, and is made in the face of the author's own passing acknowledgement of the possibility of a sea route. Succeeding chapters,

liberally illustrated with full-color paintings and photos, cover the food, dress, social organization, and religion of the Taíno; League of the Iroquois; the Ohio Moundbuilders; the Anasazi; the Kwakiutl, Tlingit, and Haida; the Timucua; and the Mississippian pyramid city of Cahokia. A final chapter details the branches of science involved in putting the puzzle pieces of origins together and explains the methods used to determine age. The layout is attractive, but the photos are not always clear. Also, the organization can be problematic, with special-topic pages inserted in the middle of continuing text and inconsistent phonetic pronunciations. The strength of the book is the author's style and enthusiasm. This is an intriguing account, but the author's insistence on a single route of migration seems a misleading representation of current thought. Patricia Lauber's *Who Came First?* (National Geographic, 2003) questions the limited-to-the-land-bridge idea, but does not go into detailed cultural descriptions. Buy if interest warrants and if you have other titles to balance the approach.-Nancy Palmer, The Little School, Bellevue, WA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

My daughter needed to read several books for 6th grade summer homework. This was one of them on her reading list. This book is very well written and also has some great pictures. She really liked it.

A useful reference book for the children who visit our small museum - nice compliment to our dugout and arrowheads.

I was very pleased with my copy of *The First Americans*. It was exactly as described and it arrived early! It doesn't get better than that. Thank you very much.

As I often do with literature geared towards our youth about Native Americans, I read the Navajo section of the book to see how we are being represented by someone who is not Navajo or even Native American. And once again we were represented in a condescending way and to be having a Night Way ceremony in a teepee? As I was displeased with that section, I wondered how the rest of the cultures were being wrongly interpreted in the book. Overall I think the book, like many others, exoticized indigenous people and made their ways seem "strange" or "weird" in the way it is written. That only promotes that perspective to young people who turn to literature to learn about other cultures. So if you are interested in this book, especially for teaching purposes, be sure to watch for the sections that seem opinionated. Often, when kids read these books they take the information as

it is. Supplemental information and questioning could make this book useful especially when talking about the indigenous peoples who are still living today such as the Navajo. They are not only history subjects, but are contemporary people who have their own issues to be discussed. Though it was a very small section of the book (1 page) it can do a LOT of damage. So as you consider using this book, be careful.

Anthony Aveni's *The First Americans: The Story Of Where They Came From And Who They Became* will reach grades 3-5 with its survey of the very first settlers in this country, long before Columbus. More than just another history, *The First Americans* reads at times like fiction in its effort to re-create the drama and activity of daily life - a hunt, games, initiation ceremonies and more. Bright color drawings throughout pack pages which recreate lives and achievements, and which brings detail to the cultural and social insights.

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