# Nicole Aunapu Mann

Wailacki of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, California

In October 2022, NASA astronaut Nicole Aunapu Mann commanded the SpaceX Crew-5 mission to the International Space Station. She spent 157 days in orbit and made two spacewalks. She is the first Native American woman to travel to space.




NASA / Robert Markowitz. Public domain.

QUESTION

**What do you think a mission commander has to be good at that the rest of the crew might not?**

# The Wampanoag Nation

Massachusetts

The Wampanoag language, Wôpanâak, went unspoken for more than 150 years. In 1993, Wampanoag linguist jessie little doe baird and her community started bringing it back, working from letters, deeds, and a Bible written in the language in the 1600s. Today hundreds of people have taken classes, and her daughter became the first child in more than a century to grow up speaking it.

Photos and more from the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project: wlrp.org

QUESTION

**What would it take to bring back a language that no one had spoken in 150 years?**

# Sean Sherman

Oglala Lakota

Chef Sean Sherman cooks Indigenous food from the Americas. His Minneapolis restaurant, Owamni (now Indígena by Owamni), leaves out ingredients that came from Europe, such as wheat flour, dairy, and cane sugar, and cooks with foods like wild rice, bison, corn, and squash. In 2022 it won the James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant in the country.



August Schwerdfeger, CC BY 4.0.

QUESTION

**If you had to cook without wheat flour, dairy, or sugar, what would be the hardest thing to replace?**

# Joy Harjo

Muscogee Nation

In 2019, Joy Harjo became the first Native American to serve as U.S. Poet Laureate, the country's official poet. She held the role for three terms. Her project as Poet Laureate gathered and shared the work of Native poets from across the country.



Shawn Miller, Library of Congress. CC0.

QUESTION

## Why might a country choose one person to be its official poet?

# The Cherokee Nation

Oklahoma

The Cherokee Nation runs a seed bank that saves heirloom seeds Cherokee families have grown for generations, like Cherokee White Eagle Corn. Each year it mails about 10,000 seed packages to Cherokee citizens to plant. In 2020 it became the first U.S. tribe to store seeds in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, a vault in the Arctic built to protect the world's crops.




The Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Cierra Martin for Crop Trust, CC BY-SA 2.0.

QUESTION

**Why would a nation store its seeds in a vault on the other side of the world?**

# Lily Gladstone

Blackfeet and Nimíipuu

Actor Lily Gladstone played Mollie Burkhart, an Osage woman, in the 2023 film *Killers of the Flower Moon*. For that role, Gladstone became the first Native American to win the Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Drama and the first Native American nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress.



Frank Sun, CC BY-SA 4.0.

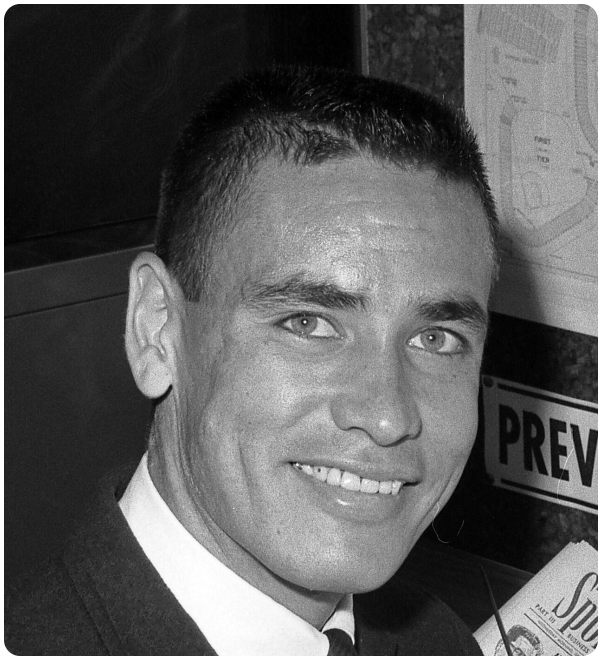
QUESTION

**Why might it matter who is cast to play a person from a specific nation?**

# Billy Mills

Oglala Lakota

At the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, Billy Mills, who grew up on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, came from behind in the last stretch to win the 10,000-meter race. Almost no one expected him to win. He is still the only American ever to win that event. Since 1986 he has helped lead Running Strong for American Indian Youth, which supports young people in Native communities.




Billy Mills, 1964. Los Angeles Times Photographic Collection, UCLA Library. CC BY 4.0.

QUESTION

**What do you think it takes to win a race no one expects you to win?**

# Deb Haaland

Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico

In 2021, Deb Haaland became the first Native American to serve in a president's cabinet. As Secretary of the Interior until 2025, she led the department that runs the national parks and works with tribal nations.



U.S. Department of the Interior. Public domain.

QUESTION

**Why might it matter that the person leading this department came from a tribal nation?**