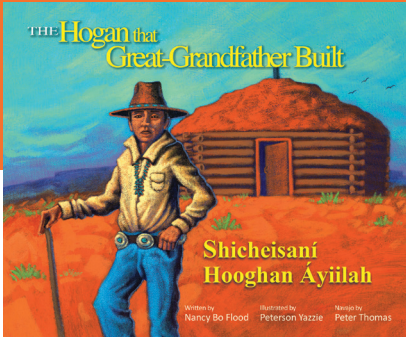


## Teacher's Guide *The Hogan that Great-Grandfather Built* *Shicheisani Hooghan Ayiilah*

Written by Nancy Bo Flood

Illustrated by Peterson Yazzie

Translated by Peter Thomas



**\$14.95**

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### About the Book

The Hogan That Great-Grandfather Built, written by Nancy Bo Flood and illustrated by Peterson Yazzie, centers on a Navajo family living in a traditional home built by Great-Grandfather Jack from earth, water, and trees. Through poetic repetition and detailed illustrations, students are introduced to each family member and their role: Grandmother offers prayers at dawn, Sister greets the sunrise, Mother weaves and sings to her baby, Grandfather teaches star stories, and Father brings home supplies. The hogan stands at the heart of the family's life—a space of warmth, storytelling, work, prayer, and beauty.

In Navajo culture, the hogan (hooghan) represents more than a dwelling—it is a sacred structure connected to the natural world, to the stories of creation, and to the female principle of balance and renewal. The traditional round log or earthen female hogan is associated with Mother Earth and the cycles of life. Its doorway faces east to greet the rising sun, welcoming light, protection, and blessings each morning. Within its walls, family members learn the values of respect, cooperation, and gratitude. The circular shape mirrors the sun, the moon, and the movement of time, teaching that life moves in harmony. When Grandmother sprinkles corn pollen and Sister runs toward the sunrise, these actions reflect ancient prayers for beauty (hózhó) and balance in the family and the world.

The book's illustrations by Peterson Yazzie bring these teachings vividly to life. His soft desert palette—warm earth tones, deep reds, and soft turquoise blues—captures the high desert landscape of the Navajo Nation. The detailed images invite young readers to observe cultural details: the woven rug patterns, the buckskin moccasins, the sheen of a cradleboard, and the texture of juniper logs in the hogan walls. Light and shadow move across the pages like the changing day, echoing the rhythm of the story's repetition. The art mirrors the narrative's cyclical structure, reminding readers that home, like nature, is an ever-renewing circle of care.

For teachers, this story offers an ideal bridge between Social Studies and ELA standards. It supports lessons on family, home, and community while introducing students to the geography, architecture, and values of the Navajo Nation. Reading the story aloud allows students to explore how language and illustration work together to show cultural meaning. The text can prompt discussions about what "home" means to different families, how communities sustain each other, and how observing and respecting the land are part of daily life.

## Readability:

For read-alouds, the teacher can pause to explain cultural terms (hózhó, hooghan, Mother Earth, harmony) and use visuals or photographs to support comprehension.

## 5-Day Grade 2 ELA Unit Plan *The Hogan That Great-Grandfather Built* By Nancy Bo Flood, Illustrated by Peterson Yazzie

### Day 1 – Introduction to the Story and Illustrations

Standards:

- ELA.RL.2.1 – Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding.
- ELA.RL.2.7 – Use information from illustrations and words to understand setting and characters.

SWBAT Objectives:

- SWBAT ask and answer “who, what, where, when, why” questions about the story and illustrations.
- SWBAT identify key details about the hogan and family members using both text and illustrations.

Activities:

1. Teacher read-aloud (showing illustrations).
2. Turn and Talk: Students share what they see in the pictures (hogan, sunrise, cradleboard).
3. Whole group questioning: Who built the hogan? Where does Grandmother stand? What direction does the hogan face?

Assessment: Teacher notes on student oral responses to text/picture-based questions.

## Day 2 – Repetition and Rhythm

### Standards:

- ELA.RL.2.2 – Recount stories, including key details, and determine central message.
- ELA.RL.2.4 – Describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning.

### SWBAT Objectives:

- SWBAT recognize and read aloud the repeated phrase in the story.
- SWBAT explain how repetition helps them understand the story’s message.

### Activities:

1. Reread aloud, pausing at the repeated line.
2. Choral reading: Students read the repeated line together.
3. Discussion: Why does the author repeat this line? What does it remind us of?

Illustration Tie-in: Compare illustrations of the hogan throughout the book to show how art emphasizes the repeated phrase.

Assessment: Exit ticket — Students copy the repeated line and draw a picture of Great-Grandfather building the hogan.

## **Day 3 – Family Roles in the Story**

### Standards:

- ELA.RL.2.3 – Describe how characters respond to events and challenges.
- ELA.RL.2.7 – Use illustrations to demonstrate understanding of characters.

### SWBAT Objectives:

- SWBAT describe the role of at least one family member using text and illustrations.
- SWBAT complete a chart showing how family members contribute to home life.

### Activities:

1. Reread sections about Grandmother, Sister, Mother, Grandfather, Father.
2. Class chart: Family member – Role – Illustration evidence.
3. Partner activity: Students choose one family member and explain their role.

**Assessment:** Students complete one entry in the Family Roles Chart independently.

## **Day 4 – Retelling the Story**

### Standards:

- ELA.RL.2.2 – Recount stories, including key details, and determine central message.
- ELA.RL.2.5 – Describe the overall structure of a story, including beginning, middle, and end.

### SWBAT Objectives:

- SWBAT retell the story in correct sequence (beginning, middle, end).
- SWBAT identify the story’s central message (home is family, tradition, and love).

### Activities:

1. Story map (whole group): Beginning – Middle – End.
  
2. Retelling practice in pairs, pointing to illustrations.
  
3. Group discussion on central message.

Assessment: Students write or dictate a 3-part retell with an illustration.

## **Day 5 – Culminating Activity: Home and Belonging**

### Standards:

- ELA.RL.2.2 – Recount stories, determine central message.
- ELA.RL.2.7 – Demonstrate understanding through illustrations and text.
- ELA.W.2.3 – Write narratives that describe events with details and illustrations.

### SWBAT Objectives:

- SWBAT write 3–4 sentences explaining why their home is special.
- SWBAT create an illustration to support their writing.
- SWBAT present their work to peers.

### Activities:

1. Review illustrations showing the family gathered in the hogan.
  
2. Writing prompt: “My home is special because...”
  
3. Students write and illustrate, then share in a circle.

**Assessment:** Student writing shows a clear connection to the story’s central message and includes a matching illustration.

## Resources for Teachers

### Read-Aloud Books for Grades 1–3: Homes and Families

- Begay, S. (1995). *The mud pony*. Scholastic.  
A Native tale of a boy who finds strength and family through a magical mud pony, showing home as both place and belonging.
- Campbell, N. I. (2005). *Shi-shi-etko*. Groundwood Books.  
A girl gathers memories of her home, family, and land before leaving for residential school. Sensitive, powerful family/home themes.
- Clark, A. N. (1949). *In my mother's house*. University of New Mexico Press.  
A Navajo girl describes daily life, ceremonies, and family inside a hogan.
- Flood, N. B. (2014). *The hogan that great-grandfather built*. Salina Bookshelf.  
A rhythmic story of a Navajo family centered in their hogan, showing tradition, prayer, and family roles.
- Gray Smith, M. (2017). *You hold me up*. Orca Book Publishers.  
A gentle read-aloud celebrating family and community care, written by a Cree-Métis author.
- Harjo, J. (2019). *For a girl becoming*. University of Arizona Press.  
A poetic story of a girl growing up in her family and community, linking identity to land and tradition.
- Say, A. (1993). *Grandfather's journey*. Houghton Mifflin.  
A Japanese-American grandfather builds a life between two homes, exploring belonging and family ties.
- Williams, V. B. (1982). *A chair for my mother*. Greenwillow Books.  
A family saves money together after losing their home in a fire—showing resilience and love.
- Yolen, J. (1988). *Owl moon*. Philomel.  
A story of family bonding and traditions through a child's night walk with her father.

## Scenario Cards: The Hogan That Great-Grandfather Built Grade 2

- Print on cardstock, one scenario per card.
- Use for circle discussions, think-pair-share, or role-play skits.
- Pair each card with illustrations from the book to deepen connections
- AZ Standards Alignment
  - 2.SP1.1: Create questions about a source.
  - 2.SP1.2: Use information from sources to answer questions.
  - 2.C1.1: Describe roles and responsibilities of people in families and communities.
  - 2.G1.1: Explain how human and physical features (like hogans, mesas, canyons) impact how people live.
- Purpose: Encourage students to connect the story of the hogan with Navajo family life, roles, traditions, and the meaning of "home."

### Scenario Card 1 – Building the Hogan

Scenario: Great-Grandfather Jack gathers earth, water, and trees to build the hogan.

Prompt for Students:

- Why do you think he chose these materials?
- What does this tell us about the land and resources around him?
- How would you describe the hogan as a symbol of family?

### Scenario Card 2 – Grandmother at the Door

Scenario: Grandmother stands at the door facing east, sprinkling corn pollen and giving thanks.

Prompt for Students:

- Why does the hogan door face east?
- How does Grandmother show respect for nature and family?
- What traditions or routines does your family follow each day?

### Scenario Card 3 – Sister Runs Toward the Sun

Scenario: The sister runs toward the rising sun each morning.

Prompt for Students:

- What does it mean to welcome the sunrise?
- How does this connect to Navajo beliefs about the Holy Ones?
- What do you do to start your day?

#### Scenario Card 4 – Baby Brother in the Cradleboard

Scenario: The baby sleeps in his cradleboard while Mother sings and weaves.

Prompt for Students:

- How does the cradleboard help care for the baby?
- Why might singing and weaving be important for Mother?
- What roles do family members have in taking care of one another?

#### Scenario Card 5 – Grandfather and the Stars

Scenario: Grandfather stacks wood and teaches the children star names and string games.

Prompt for Students:

- How does Grandfather prepare for winter?
- Why do you think he tells stories about the stars and how life began?
- Who in your family tells you stories or teaches you something special?

#### Scenario Card 6 – Father’s Return

Scenario: Father returns in the pickup truck with food, supplies, and surprises.

Prompt for Students:

- How does Father’s work help the family?
- How do the children react when he comes home?
- What happens in your family when someone comes back from work or a trip?

#### Scenario Card 7 – Family Meal

Scenario: The family gathers for fry bread and mutton stew as the fire burns inside the hogan.

Prompt for Students:

- How does sharing food bring the family together?
- Why is food an important part of culture and tradition?
- What food traditions are important in your family

#### Scenario Card 8 – “Walking in Beauty”

Scenario: The narrator says, “This is my family walking in beauty.”

Prompt for Students:

- What do you think “walking in beauty” means?
- How does the hogan represent home and belonging?
- How do you feel when you are with your family at home?