

## Hopi Traditional Knowledge

As with all Native American cultures, traditional knowledge is central to Hopi culture. There is no more rewarding method of learning than the original "interactive method," speaking and listening. For the Hopi, traditional knowledge explains not only the origin of all peoples but provides lessons for how to live today.

### **Multi-level learning**

Most of us know at least one children's fairy tale that has a moral lesson in it. Although the story is meant to be entertaining, it is also supposed to be educational. Hopi traditional knowledge is encoded in this way and contains messages on many different levels. In this way, listeners learn new and important lessons as their own understanding deepens. The strength of traditional knowledge lies in its ability to convey a deeper truth. Seen in this light, traditional knowledge is more than just the retelling of events, names, and dates. In this way, traditional knowledge differs from written historical accounts in style and purpose.

### **The Emergence Story**

Hopi traditional knowledge begins with the emergence story. The world we live in now is the fourth way of life that the Hopi have lived. Different [Hopi clans](#) and animals emerged from the third into this fourth way of life. Hopis tell how the people of the world were offered ears of corn by *Ma'saw*. Many jumped in ahead of the Hopi and picked large ears of corn and left Hopis the smallest ear. This symbolizes the difficult but enduring life the Hopi live in the arid Southwest. Along with each ear of corn, the various peoples of the world inherited homelands, cultures, and responsibilities from the rest of creation. The Hopi fulfill their responsibilities through their daily life and ceremonies. Hopi life revolves around [agriculture](#), in particular, corn. The Hopi way of life is the corn -- humility, cooperation, respect, and universal earth stewardship.

### **Privacy**

Because each story contains information meant specifically for one group of Hopi people, the Hopi learn only the story of their clan. The oral tradition entrusted to each Hopi is more than enough to consider and meditate upon during a lifetime. By pursuing their own understanding, it is natural that the Hopi respect the privacy and sacred nature of the traditions entrusted to other Hopi, as well as other cultures. For more about privacy and other issues affecting the Hopi today, visit our [Current Issues](#) page.