

The Shaman

1 **The Shaman and Native American Indian beliefs**

The Shaman helped and advised the members of the tribe. He was the keeper of myth, tradition and tribal wisdom. The Shaman had spiritual healing powers and could treat sickness caused by evil



5 spirits – the Europeans called him 'Medicine Man'.

The Shaman had the ability to perform various forms of prophecy.

The Shaman possessed the ability to communicate with the spirit world, leave his body and enter the supernatural world to search for answers. Some spirits were good and helped men who pleased them. The bad spirits caused trouble,

10 suffering, sickness and death. If a Shaman had control over the spirits, he became extremely powerful.

Shaman attributes

A shaman was equipped with a number of objects that helped him to communicate with spirits in other worlds.

15 They used dances, gestures and sounds as the symbolic powers of Shaman to enter the spirit world.

A Shaman also wore ceremonial clothes and carried sacred objects such as rattles and drums to incarnate the spirits of nature and amplify their power.

Adapted from <https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-culture/shaman.htm>

Advice : conseiller ; *wisdom* : sagesse ; *Heal* : soigner ; *sickness* : maladie ;
rattle : hochet; *drum* : tambour

Exercise 1 Read the part entitled *The Shaman and Native American Indian beliefs* and answer the questions:

- a. Who did the Shaman help ? **He helped the members of the tribe**
- b. Why is he called the Medicine Man ? **Because he could treat sickness caused by evil spirits.**
- c. What did good spirits do ? **They helped men who pleased them.**
- d. Who caused trouble, suffering, sickness, death and disease ? **The bad spirits caused trouble, suffering, sickness and death. If a Shaman had control over the spirits, he became extremely powerful.**

Exercise 2 : Read the part entitled *Shaman attributes* and tick what a Shaman could do to enter the spirit world :

he could dance / he could use gestures and sounds

he could wear ceremonial clothes

he could carry sacred objects such as rattles and drums

Exercise 3 : What are the Shaman's attributes ?



→rattle



→drum

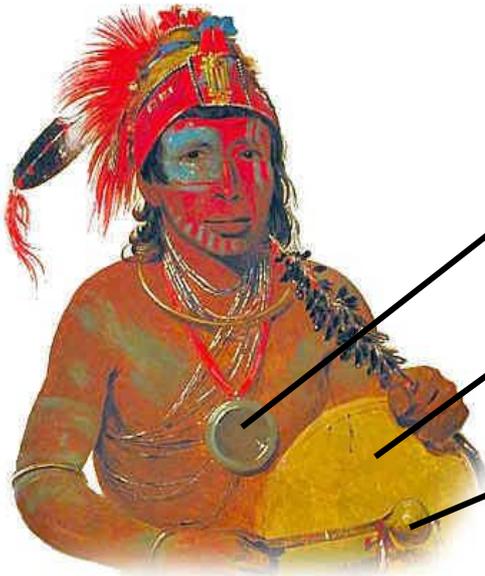


→ceremonial clothes

PART 2 : PAINTING READING : ANALYSIS

Fill the labels :

Painting #1 : Dakota Sioux Shaman or Medicine Man by George Catlin (1796-1872)



a medecine drum of deer-skins

rattle made of antilope's hoofs

looking-glass on his chest

Painting #2 : BlackfootShaman as a 'Skinwalker'



grizzly bear

claws, bones teeth

snake skin

dead animal

PART 3 : What's a Shaman ?

Give your own definition of a shaman :

A Shaman is a spiritual leader who enters supernatural realms particularly when the tribe is facing adversity or need to obtain solutions to problems afflicting the community including sickness.