

## 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

## PART 1 : TEXT READING : COMPREHENSION

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

a. Who did the Shaman help ?

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b. Why is he called the Medicine Man ?

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c. What did good spirits do ?

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d. Who caused trouble, suffering, sickness, death and disease ?

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**Exercise 3** : Read the part entitled *Shaman attributes* and say what could a shaman do to enter the spirit world?

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- .....
- .....

**Exercise 4** : What are the Shaman's attributes ?

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- .....
- .....



*Dakota Sioux Shaman or Medicine Man*



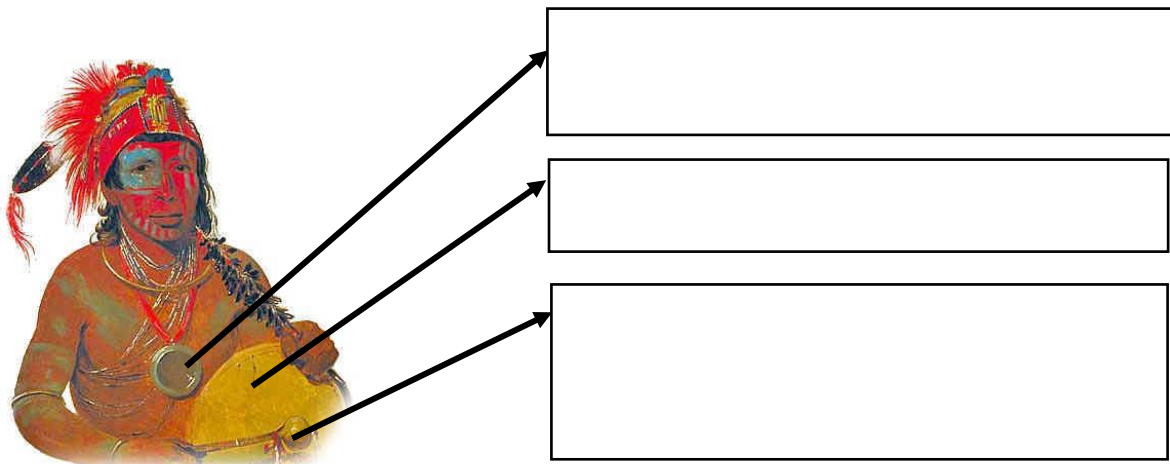
*Blackfoot Shaman as a 'Skinwalker'*

## PART 2 : PAINTING READING : ANALYSIS

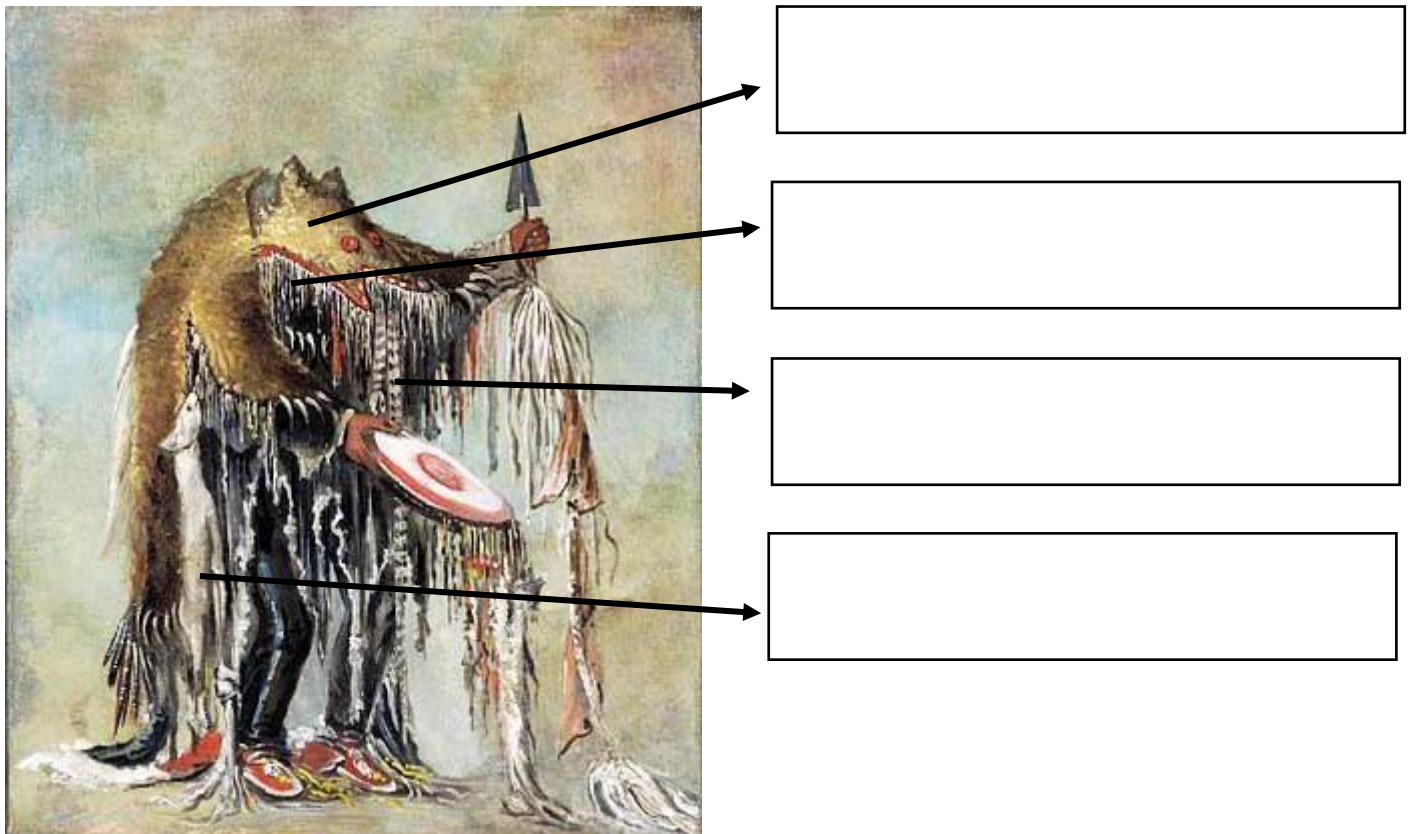
Fill the paintings' labels with these expressions :

*a medicine drum of deer-skins / grizzly bear / rattle made of antelope's hoofs / claws, bones teeth / looking-glass on his chest / snake skin / dead animal*

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



### Painting #2 : Blackfoot Shaman as a 'Skinwalker'



**PART 3 : What's a Shaman ?**

**Write your own definition of a shaman :**

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