

# Finding Navajo

A beloved movie helps keep a language alive.

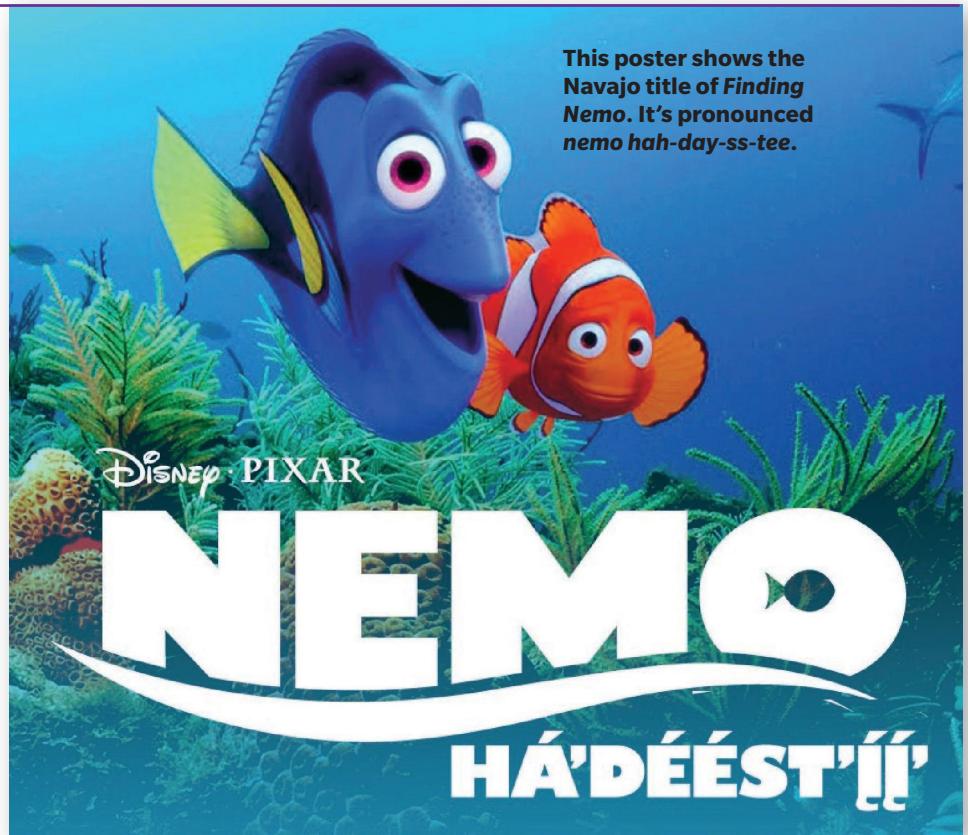
In March, a crowd packed into a theater in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to watch the movie *Finding Nemo*. But it wasn't the *Nemo* you've probably seen. In this version, the spoken lines were dubbed, or recorded over, in Navajo. That's the language spoken by the Navajo, one of the biggest Native American tribes.

Members of the Navajo community even performed the voices of Nemo, Dory, and other characters. This movie wasn't made just for entertainment, though. It was part of a serious effort to save a dying language.

## Losing a Language

The number of people who speak Navajo is dropping. In 2014, only about 164,000 people spoke it at home, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That was down from about 173,000 in 2005.

Like many other Native American languages, Navajo has been in trouble for a long time. In the 1800s, the U.S. government forced thousands of



This poster shows the Navajo title of *Finding Nemo*. It's pronounced *nemo hah-day-ss-tee*.

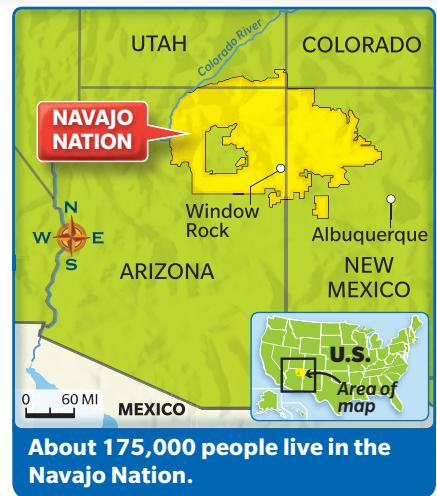
Native American kids to attend boarding schools, where they were allowed to speak only English. Over the years, fewer people learned their native languages. Some of these languages have been lost forever.

## Staying Afloat

Today, many Navajo kids aren't **fluent** in the language. Some people worry that if this generation doesn't learn Navajo and pass it down to their kids, the language could disappear.

*Finding Nemo* is only the second major movie that has been dubbed in Navajo. The first was *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, in 2013.

**Quinton Kien, 12, is the voice of Nemo in the Navajo version of the movie.**



## Word to Know

**fluent** (FLOO-ehnt) *adjective*. able to speak a language easily and accurately