

Children of the Earth: Native American Identity, Sacred Places and Ties to the Landscape

Erin Bloom
Wagner Middle School

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Messages for holy places/where thunder warns/
And summer winds whisper/this is Sacred Ground.
(Susan Shown Harjo)

Overview

For centuries, Native Americans have experienced an immediate relationship with the landscape. Connecting both physically and spiritually with their natural world, Native people have shaped and continuously defined their identities, their cultures and their unique histories. As related by Duane Champagne in *Native American Voices*, “Native American history is not just for Indians, it is for all Americans by virtue of our common national identity and our shared connection to our homeland.” Despite this truism, Native American history is given little attention in the current curriculum of our nation’s elementary, middle and high schools. Students are presented with a Eurocentric view of North American history and the history of our true predecessors is oftentimes tainted or completely removed from study. Thus, when students encounter issues of contemporary Native peoples, they are unable to draw on the prior knowledge necessary to develop a deep understanding of what it means to be Native American and the historical intricacies surrounding the marginalized tribes today.

In order to combat this phenomenon, educators must create and implement a study of the Native American history and culture in a manner that provides both historical context and proves meaningful and relevant for students. They must provide students

with a counter-narrative that includes factual events. Through the exploration of relevant texts, from both primary and secondary sources, students develop a better sense of the brevity of the issues surrounding contemporary Native people and their far-reaching implications. Students are encouraged to draw connections between the current state of Native people in the United States and the historical events that shaped their marginalization. As related by Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass*, “Old growth cultures... have not been exterminated. The land holds their memory and the possibility of regeneration.” In exploring issues surrounding the Native American landscape and the intricate ties of the people to the land, students are able to “regenerate” these cultures and work towards “a vision of the world, whole and healed” (Kimmerer 291).

In this respect, “Children of the Earth” will examine the connection between Native Americans and the landscape as it is portrayed in historical texts, literature and through various artifacts found at the Penn Museum. In exploring relevant themes of identity and culture, in both classical and contemporary Native American literature, students will interact meaningfully with the texts and will be prompted to respond to these externalities as a means of personal identity formation with the world around them. In doing so, a connection will be forged between the students and the Native people that they study through the course of the unit.

This unit will also provide a means for teaching about Native American culture, specifically in relation to sacred places, in a meaningful way for students, presenting the lesser-known history of our nation, as well as providing context for many of the contemporary issues surrounding sacred places. In exploring relevant themes of culture, identity, and place in both primary and secondary texts, students will interact meaningfully with the texts and be prompted to respond to these externalities as a means of comparing their own lives and values to those of Native American cultures. Additionally, students will engage with a variety of texts, both fiction and nonfiction, to develop a more well rounded sense of the issue of Native American sacred places and its complexities, as well as its relevance in today’s society.

Rationale

Given the lack of curricular focus on contemporary Native American issues, as well as the textbook Eurocentric-skewed history of Native people that students receive in Social Studies, today’s students tend to know very little about Native American culture and the issues that surround it. Without going beyond the basic knowledge of events such as Thanksgiving and the Trail of Tears, and by presenting much of the history and culture of Native people through myth and farce, educators are doing a great disservice to their students. However, in providing students with real context and true accounts of Native American life, both past and present, educators are better able to reach students and aid them in forging the connection between Native American history, contemporary Native

culture, and the lives of our urban students. In examining past and current government policies, as well as Native American literature and artifacts, students will gain knowledge of and a greater appreciation for the landscape and its place in Native American life.

While there are many texts useful in exploring the themes of Native American culture and sacred places, a few of those examined in this unit include:

“Look at Us,” a poem by John Trudell

Known as the “people’s poet,” John Trudell is an activist and leader of the American Indian Movement. This poem, from his anthology, *Lines from a Mined Mind*, compares Native American values to the values of white America. In the poem, Trudell juxtaposes the Native roots in American to the constant need for continued technology and the search for the “new” in today’s white society.

“Sacred Ground,” a poem by Suzan Shown Harjo

A poet, activist and the founder of The Morning Star Institute, Suzan Shown Harjo is from the Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee Nations. Her poem “Sacred Ground” describes the landscape in terms of its spiritual power and worth. It is well suited for a lesson personification, particularly for Harjo’s depiction of sacred places as having human spirits and characteristics.

“Treaty Oration of 1854,” a speech by Chief Seattle

Although the speech has recently been surrounded in controversy in terms of when and where it was delivered, and if it was in fact delivered by Chief Seattle, its text is a powerful statement on the importance of the land to Native Americans and stands as a lasting testament to conservation and repatriation. The most popular sentiment is that the speech was delivered by Chief Seattle in 1854 in response to the surrendering of Native lands to white settlers.

“Indian Removal Act of 1830,” a law written by President Andrew Jackson

As a fierce proponent of Indian removal, Andrew Jackson drafted the Indian Removal Act which was passed as a law by Congress on May 28, 1830. The act stated that the President was able to negotiate with Indian nations to forcibly or non-forcibly occupy their lands and eventually led to the relocation of many tribes, as well as to the Trail of Tears.

“The Lenape Creation Story,” a creation story as told by Robert Red Hawk

In this Lenape creation story, the Great Spirit dreams the landscape, animals and man into creation. The story also tells about the creation of the peace pipe and of the first fire and flood. Unlike the Christian creation story, animals and the landscape are in the forefront of creation.

Overall, “Children of the Earth” will be differentiated to address multiple learning levels and learning styles. It will align with the National Common Core standards. Through this curriculum unit, students will use a variety of modalities to read, write, respond to, conduct research, and create works related Native American history, culture, and their intricate ties to the landscape.

Background

I intend to teach this unit in all three of my sixth grade Literacy classes at Wagner Middle School. My students are divided into three sections—each section is inclusive and is comprised of Special Education students, Emotional Support students, Gifted Education students, and Regular Education students. The school itself is a comprehensive, neighborhood school in the West Oak Lane section of Northwest Philadelphia. Our school has seven QZAB labs (classrooms with seventeen laptops, a Promethean board and an LCD projector), and I am fortunate to be in a classroom with one of them.

Nearly one hundred percent of the population comes from the immediate vicinity of the school, which is located at 18th Street and Chelton Avenue. The student body is comprised of approximately 600 students whose ethnic makeup is 97.1% African American and >3% Latino or Asian. Over 76% of students qualify for Free Lunch and 36% receive Special Education services.

This unit was written to accommodate all classrooms, regardless of access to technology or demographic variations. All of the lessons in “Children of the Earth” can be modified to meet the needs of educators in various circumstances, as long as a copier and reasonable access to the historical documents are attainable.

Objectives

This unit is intended for use with students in an inclusive sixth grade Literacy (Reading and Writing) classroom in a middle school setting. Students spend 75-90 minutes daily in Literacy class, with an additional 45 minutes allotted for Project-Based Learning, and one day per week reserved for Writing. By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Perform a close reading of a primary source (Chief Seattle’s Speech of 1854)
- Determine the author’s purpose for writing a text (poetry, fiction and nonfiction)
- Differentiate between fact and opinion in a nonfiction text

- Compare and contrast historical fiction and nonfiction with similar topics
- Write an argumentative essay and support claims with logical reasoning
- Read and comprehend fiction and literary nonfiction
- Read and interpret examples of figurative language in poetry (“Look at Us” by John Trudell)
- Analyze an artifact by describing its physical attributes, possible use, cultural significance and ties to the landscape
- Makes connections between Native American culture and identity and students’ own culture and identity

Beyond the technical level and development of foundational standards, students will also be encouraged to continue to read and to utilize the growing list of related texts as a means of exploring the historical implications of Indian removal from their lands, their cultural ties to the landscape, and contemporary issues involving sacred places. In addition to completing class activities related to each of these standards, students will use the research process and expository writing skills develop their own opinion and understanding of history and its impact on present events.

Strategies

Throughout the unit, a variety of strategies will be employed to ensure that students are analyzing, internalizing, and fully comprehending the material presented in each lesson. The strategies are used to support all types of learners in the development of their reading, writing, thinking, and listening skills as they relate in Literacy, Social Studies, and across the curriculum.

Before, During and After (BDA): BDA strategies will be incorporated in each lesson. The BDA strategy is a variation of the “I Do, We Do, You Do” model of classroom instruction. The strategy allows readers to interact with the text on a level that would not be reached if the teacher merely provided students with answers and explanations of the text. In the “Before” segment of the lesson, the instructor briefly introduces new materials and models how to perform activities. In the “During” segment of the lesson, students interact with the text by creating marginalia and asking questions of the text. In the “After” segment, students respond to the text in a variety of ways including analysis of the text in both written response or through the completion of comprehension questions.

Do Now: The “Do Now” functions tri-fold in my classroom. It occurs as part of the “Before” segment of the lesson. The “Do Now” is used to grab the students’ attention at the beginning of class, access prior knowledge about the topic at hand, and prepare them to consider the day’s objectives and material. Each day, the “Do Now” occurs as soon as students enter the classroom. Each “Do Now” lasts five minutes and is awarded

five points for completion and participation. Because it happens as soon as students enter the classroom and is immediately awarded points, it holds students accountable for their class work and participation from the onset of the class period. The “Do Now” will be used throughout the unit in all three ways described above.

Text Rendering: Text rendering occurs during the “During” portion of the lesson. To complete text-rendering tasks, students underline, highlight and create marginalia for a given text. Text rendering is particularly useful for teaching students to interact with a text and to practice meta-cognition. In my class, student highlight key phrases and ideas, underline new vocabulary terms, and circle items that they have a question about. Text rendering is a skill that must be modeled by the educator in order to have students practice it effectively.

Choice Boards: Choice Boards are a differentiation tool that give students options as to which activities they would like to complete during a given class duration. The boards are set up to include skill sets that the students have learned and are currently being assessed in. Each board is set up like a Tic-Tac-Toe board from which students complete three tasks. These three tasks should encompass a variety of learning modalities and skill sets. Each set of three tasks selected by an individual student must complete a Tic-Tac-Toe row.

Tiered Activity Lists: Tiered activity lists are also useful tools for differentiated instruction. In brief, tiered activity lists are lists of lesson activities that are tiered in terms of difficulty level for students who are performing at different achievement levels. They are designed to allow more advanced students to go further in-depth with a concept, as well as to ensure that lower level learners are able to be assessed on the concepts as well without lowering the standard of a performance product.

Mentor Texts: Mentor texts are texts that can be used by educators to model a certain structure or idea. These texts are valuable in aiding students in developing higher-level sentence structures or in using the writing process to create original pieces. Mentor texts can also be used by an educator to create templates for student use for various writing assignments.

Templates: I create templates for use in my classroom to aid students in developing structure in their writing or to emulate a particularly effective or, when applicable, a creative text. They are an invaluable differentiation tool for Writer’s Workshop and can be adapted based on an individual student’s skill level. Oftentimes, I begin a writing piece with students using a template and then gradually as we move through the writing process, I take sections of the template away and ask students to revise to use their own forms inspired by the mentor text.

Close Reading: With the introduction of the Common Core standards, greater emphasis is being placed on analyzing texts to come to a deeper understanding of the material. I use close reading assignments in my classroom as a means of accomplishing this goal. Oftentimes, I create an annotated version of the text with comprehension or thought questions embedded in the text. These questions encourage students to interact with the text and to make connections to historical and current events, other texts, and their own lives. (See Appendix C)

Classroom Activities / Sample Lesson Plans

Sample Lesson #1: “What Is That Thing?: Examining Artifacts to Create Artifact Biographies”

Description: This four-day lesson serves as an introductory activity to the means by which anthropologists examine an artifact to determine its usefulness in daily life, as well as its cultural implications. During each lesson, students will by examine several objects from the Penn Museum’s remarkable Native American collections via the Museum website. Students will first complete sketches of each objects and then act as “anthropologists,” observing, identifying, documenting, researching and analyzing each artifact.

Students will determine the materials that the objects were constructed from, the meaning of any symbolism included in the object and the context in which they may have been used. Students will discover that the objects themselves tell a story about the people, shedding light on cultural values, methods of trade and exchange, means of food production and on religious beliefs and ceremonial practices. In examining each artifact, students will be encouraged to use scientific observation, as well to make inferences based on their prior knowledge and the evidence provided by the object’s shape, symbols and materials. The objects, which will have been collected from sacred sites or from the people themselves, implicitly contain the history of the Native people and their ties to the land.

Learning Goals: Students will examine several artifacts from the Penn Museum’s collection and will analyze their context in terms of their use and historical, cultural and religious significance. They will learn to use artifacts as primary sources and will connect their findings to prior information about Native history and the importance of the landscape in Native culture. After their preliminary observation, students will write an artifact biography using figurative and descriptive language and will incorporate their research on sacred places in their writing. Finally, students will choose an object from their own lives that represents their connection to the landscape in some way and will write a piece of literary nonfiction that compares and contrasts their found object with one from Native American culture.

Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Objectives: By the end of the four-day lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze an artifact by describing its physical attributes, possible use, cultural significance and ties to the landscape
- Perform a close reading of a primary source (artifact)
- Write an artifact biography using descriptive and figurative language
- Makes connections between Native American culture and identity and students' own culture and identity

Materials:

- Four Native American artifacts (or images of the artifacts)
- A document camera and/or LCD projector
- Class set of student laptops
- Copies of Artifact Observation Questions
- Copies of Artifact Biography handout

Learning Plan (Four-Day Lesson):

Day 1

Opening Activity:

For the “Do Now,” students will view an object (either on a document camera or projected two-dimensionally on an LCD projector, depending upon access to technology and artifacts). As they view the object, students will complete a “quick investigation” of the object using adapted observation questions (See Appendix B).

Mini-Lesson:

Using an interactive Promethean presentation, the educator will introduce the idea of interpreting artifacts as primary sources. Students will complete a notes handout that lists the artifact observation questions. Additionally, the educator will model how to use the

questions to complete an artifact observation using the object from the “Do Now” and student questioning.

Independent Activities:

Students will rotate between a series of three stations with three different objects (either firsthand or available on the computer screen for exploration). Spending 15 minutes at each station, students will complete an investigation of each object to interpret its meaning, use and tie to the landscape.

Day 2

Opening Activity:

For this activity, students will view a photograph from Penn Museum’s Shotridge Digital Archive. The photograph depicts people of the Tlingit At’oow Nation using the object from Day One’s “Do Now.” Students will reflect on their responses to previous day’s “Do Now” in terms of accuracy and will determine ways to improve their investigation of artifacts in future observations.

Mini-Lesson:

Using an interactive Promethean presentation, the educator will introduce the idea of artifact biographies. Students will take notes on how to write an artifact biography using figurative language, as well as descriptive writing. The educator will model how to complete an artifact biography using the artifact from the “Do Now.”

Independent Activities:

Students will choose one of the objects from the previous day’s independent activity. Using their object observation, as well as the object itself, students will write an artifact biography. Their biographies will include descriptive writing and figurative language, but will also include factual details about the objects. Homework: Students will choose an object or a photograph of an object from their own lives that represents their connection to the landscape in some way.

Day 3

Opening Activity:

For this activity, students will view a contemporary urban object chosen by the educator in conjunction with the previous night’s homework assignment. (For example, the educator may display a public transportation pass, a Septa TransPass.) Students will examine the artifact as if they had never seen the object before and will compare their investigations to the actual use of the object in a discussion following the “Do Now.”

Mini-Lesson:

Using an interactive Promethean presentation, the educator will model how to write literary nonfiction using the object from the “Do Now.” The model will include an in-depth analysis of the object and its use in contemporary urban society.

Independent Activities:

Students will use their found object to write a piece of literary nonfiction that compares and contrasts their found object with one from Native American culture. They will complete their rough drafts, if incomplete during the lesson, for homework.

Day 4

Opening Activity:

Students will use their artifact observation questions to complete a quick artifact observation of their own found object. In completing this activity, students will be asked to imagine that they are archaeologists encountering the object for the first time.

Mini-Lesson:

Using an interactive Promethean presentation, educator will present the idea of writing to compare two similar texts (or objects). Students will take notes on how to setup their nonfiction writing piece. Using his or her own found object, the educator will model how to write to compare today's urban object to one from Native American culture.

Independent Activities:

Students will complete a final draft of their object comparison literary nonfiction piece. Using PhotoBooth, students will take a photograph with their object, using it in its intended form to accompany the writing piece.

Sample Lesson #2: "From the Bones of Our Ancestors: Native American Removal and the Speech of Chief Seattle"

Description: This four-day lesson introduces students to Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854 and its historical significance, especially in relationship to Indian removal. It involves the demonstrated mastery of the Literacy concepts of figurative language, nonfiction close reading and analysis, as well as the Social Studies topic of Indian removal. Students will perform a close reading of Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854 and will examine its historical context as well its tone and mood.

Although the speech has recently been surrounded in controversy in terms of when and where it was delivered, and if it was in fact delivered by Chief Seattle, its text is a powerful statement on the importance of the land to Native Americans and stands as a lasting testament to conservation and repatriation. The most popular sentiment is that the speech was delivered by Chief Seattle in 1854 in response to the surrendering of Native lands to white settlers. In performing a close reading of the text, students will apply their knowledge of figurative language and context clues to interact with the text and to forge a deeper understanding of the text, its context, and its implications. Using Chief Seattle's speech as inspiration, students will craft a speech of their own related to displacement in

today's cities.

Learning Goals: Students will read and analyze Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854. They will apply their knowledge of figurative language and use of context clues to improve their reading comprehension. Students will demonstrate their understanding of Indian removal, by making connections between Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854 and Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act. Finally, students will create an original speech that demonstrates mastery of figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, and alliteration), an understanding of place and displacement, as well as an understanding of the effective use of tone and mood in speech writing.

Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Objectives: By the end of the four-day lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret examples of figurative language in Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854
- Use context clues to determine the meaning of literacy terms and content area vocabulary
- Explore the historical context of Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854
- Write an original speech that demonstrates mastery of figurative language, an understanding of tone and mood in speech writing and knowledge of the themes of place and displacement

Materials:

- Class Set of Laptops with Word Processing Software (optional)
- "Interpreting Figurative Language" Key Note presentation
- "Analyzing Tone and Mood" Key Note presentation
- "Performing a Close Reading" Key Note presentation
- Do Now Materials

- Close Reading and Analysis Guide (“Chief Seattle’s Speech of 1854”)
- “A House or a Home” Assignment Rubric and Checklist

Learning Plan (Four-Day Lesson):

Day 1

Opening Activity:

For the “Do Now,” students will view a series of images of Native people being displaced from their homeland. They will choose one word to describe the tone of each image from a list of descriptive tone words. Students will then explain their rationale for each choice based on clues they gather from the image.

Mini-Lesson:

Using an interactive Promethean presentation, the educator will introduce the concepts of tone and mood. Students will complete a notes handout to record the definition and an example word list for each term. Additionally, the educator will model how to begin a close reading using tone and mood as a foundation for examination.

Independent Activities:

Students will begin to complete a close reading of Chief Seattle’s speech using the guided reading questions and guide. Throughout the close reading, students will reflect on how the tone and mood affect the language and message of the speech.

Day 2

Opening Activity:

For the “Do Now,” students will read a series of figurative language statements taken from the writing and speeches of Native American leaders. They will identify each type of figurative language and label it on their handouts. Students will then write the meaning of each example of figurative language (when applicable).

Mini-Lesson:

Educator will review figurative language with students using the “Interpreting Figurative Language in Prose” Key Note presentation. As they are presented with definitions, examples, and interpretations of each type of figurative language, students will complete a guided notes handout.

Independent Activities:

Students will complete Part Two of their close reading of Chief Seattle’s speech. They will use the Close Reading and Analysis Guide (provided in Appendix C) to analyze the speech. Additionally, students will interpret examples of figurative language to determine the meaning of the speech.

Day 3

Opening Activity:

Students will view the multimedia presentation on Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854 entitled, "Chief Seattle's Reply." As they watch, students will complete guided questions to examine the tone, mood and figurative language noted in the video interpretation of the speech.

Mini-Lesson:

Educator will model for students how to write a response piece based on a close reading. Educator will base the modeled piece on the video interpretation of the speech and will identify each of the critical components for completing an effective response paragraph: a thesis statement, support from the passage, and a conclusion that sums up the author's argument or opinion.

Independent Activities:

Students will complete Part Three of their close reading of Chief Seattle's speech. They will use the Close Reading and Analysis Guide (provided in Appendix C) to analyze the speech by Chief Seattle. Additionally, students will write a response to their close reading of the speech using the prompt provided in the guide.

Day 4

Opening Activity:

For the "Do Now," students will define the following terms in their own words using impressions garnered from the lessons of the past week and using figurative language where relevant: place, displacement, landscape, forcible removal and sacred. Students will share their responses and educator will record a class definition of each term.

Mini-Lesson:

Educator will model how to write a speech using the brainstorming graphic organizer. Educator will go over each component of the speech and model the thinking process that he or she uses in producing piece of speech writing.

Independent Activities:

Students will complete a brainstorming graphic organizer and write a speech based on the terms defined in the "Do Now." The poem should demonstrate mastery of figurative language, mood and tone and should include the theme of displacement as it was studied during the week of lessons. Homework: Students will finish their speeches and deliver them for the class. Additional time will be provided for writing as necessary.

Annotated Bibliography / Resources

Unit Bibliography

Fowler, Williams L., W. Wierbowshi, and R. Preucel ed. *Native American Voices on Identity, Art and Culture: Objects of Everlasting Esteem*. Philadelphia: Penn Museum Press, 2005.

In this full-color volume published by the University of Pennsylvania, the stories and viewpoints of many contemporary Native Americans are situated amidst images of seventy-eight objects from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's collection. It is useful in the context of this unit not only as background information for students and educators, but as a resource for contemporary Native American objects.

Harjo, Suzan Shown. "Threatened and Damaged: Protecting Sacred Places." *Expedition*: Vol. 55, No. 3, p. 12-17.

A poet, activist and the founder of The Morning Star Institute, Suzan Shown Harjo is from the Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee Nations. Her poem "Sacred Ground," included in part with this article, describes the landscape in terms of its spiritual power and worth. The article offers a background of the importance of sacred places and the contemporary issues surrounding them today.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013.

From the perspective of both a botanist and a Potawatomi woman, Kimmerer describes the relationship that humankind has with the rest of the living world. Framing her scientific analysis with her own experiences and the stories of her people, Kimmerer highlights the unique stories that the landscape offers to us when we take the time to listen.

Treur, Anton. *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask*. Minnesota: Borealis Books, 2012.

Divided into ten distinct sections, *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask*, offers answers to the questions that many of us have regarding Native people. It is an introduction to many of the contemporary issues surrounding Native people in the United States today.

Trudell, John. *Stickman*. New York: Inanout Press, 1994.

In his 1984 collection of poems, lyrics and talks, Trudell delves into contemporary issues of Native American rights. The poem, “Look At Us,” is used in this unit to juxtapose contemporary popular culture in the United States with the beliefs and practices of Native people.

Teacher Resources

“Native American Voices: The People—Here and Now.” *University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*. 2013. Accessed April 2014.
<<http://www.penn.museum/sites/nativeamericanvoices/>>.

The website of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology includes an entire section on the Native American Voices exhibition. One of the most useful sections of the website is the Object Database, which includes 319 objects from the Native American Voices exhibit.

Trudell. Dir. Heather Rae. Documentary. Appaloosa Pictures, 2004.

This eighty-minute documentary chronicles the life of Native American activist and poet, John Trudell. It is useful in understanding contemporary issues of Native American rights and also offers a glimpse into the music and spoken word poetry of Trudell.

Student Resources

“Chief Seattle’s Speech of 1854.” *Halcyon*. 2012. Accessed April 2014.
<<http://www.halcyon.com/arborhts/chiefsea.html>>.

Although the speech has recently been surrounded in controversy in terms of when and where it was delivered, and if it was in fact delivered by Chief Seattle, its text is a powerful statement on the importance of the land to Native Americans and stands as a lasting testament to conservation and repatriation. The most popular sentiment is that the speech was delivered in response to the surrendering of Native lands to white settlers.

Red Hawk, Robert. “The Lenape Creation Story.” Trans. Zack Wiener. *Lenape Nation*. 2005. Accessed April 2014.
<<http://www.lenapenation.org/Lenape%20Lixsewakan%20Achimawakana/The%20Lenape%20Creation%20Story.pdf>>.

In this Lenape creation story, the Great Spirit dreams the landscape, animals and man into creation. The story also tells about the creation of the peace pipe and of the first fire

and flood. Unlike the Christian creation story, animals and the landscape are in the forefront of creation.

Appendices / Standards

Appendix A – Common Core Standards for English Language Arts: History/Social Studies; English Language Arts: Reading, Literature; English Language Arts: Reading, Informational Text; and English Language Arts: Writing

These standards are taken from the Common Core State Standards Initiative website:

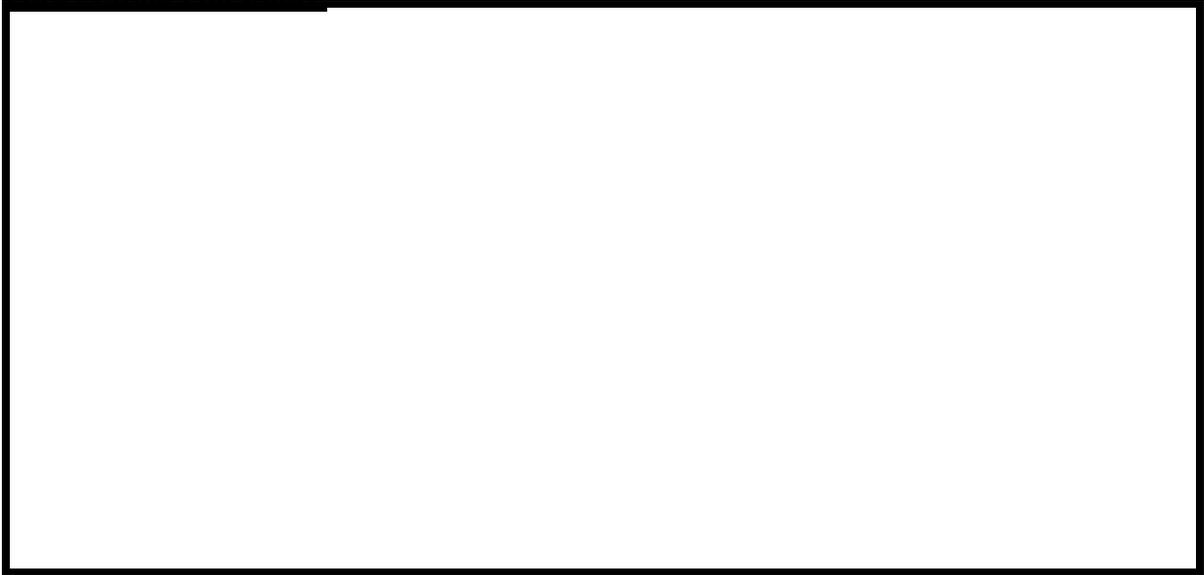
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.9** Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.8** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.3** Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Appendix B – Artifact Observation Questions (adapted from Native American Voices exhibit)

Artifact Observation Guide

Sketch: *Create a sketch of your object below. Include labels to describe the different materials used, as well as, dimensions of your object.*

Observation Questions:



1. What is the object made of?
2. Where did these materials come from? (For example: a tree or an animal)
3. Where is the object from? How are these materials related to the landscape where the object is from?
4. What does your object look like? Describe it here.
5. What kind of designs or symbols are included?
6. When was it made? How was it used?

Appendix C – “Chief Seattle’s Speech of 1854” Close Reading Guide

CLOSE READING & ANALYSIS GUIDE



Chief Seattle’s Speech of 1854, p. 1

TEXT OF THE SPEECH

Yonder sky that has wept tears of compassion upon my people for centuries untold, and which to us appears changeless and eternal, may change.

Today is fair. Tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds. My words are like the stars that never change. Whatever Seattle says, the great chief at Washington can rely upon with as much certainty as he can upon the return of the sun or the seasons.

The white chief says that Big Chief at Washington sends us greetings of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him for we know he has little need of our friendship in return. His people are many. They are like the grass that covers vast prairies. My people are few. They resemble the scattering trees of a storm-swept plain.

The great, and I presume -- good, White Chief sends us word that he wishes to buy our land but is willing to allow us enough to live comfortably. This indeed appears just, even generous, for the Red Man no longer has rights that he need respect, and the offer may be wise, also, as we are no longer in need of an extensive country.

QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

1) What is the meaning of the word, “compassion,” as it is used in paragraph 1?

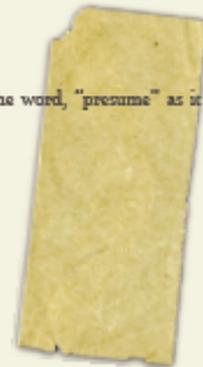
2) What future events does the first paragraph foreshadow?

3) What is the extended metaphor that Chief Seattle uses to describe the state of Native affairs?

4) Who is “the Big Chief at Washington?”

5) What is the meaning of the word, “presume” as it is used in the last paragraph?

6) Who is the “Red Man?”



CLOSE READING & ANALYSIS GUIDE



Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854, p. 2

TEXT OF THE SPEECH

There was a time when our people covered the land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor, but that time long since passed away with the greatness of tribes that are now but a mournful memory. I will not dwell on, nor mourn over, our untimely decay, nor reproach my paleface brothers with hastening it, as we too may have been somewhat to blame.

Youth is impulsive. When our young men grow angry at some real or imaginary wrong, and disfigure their faces with black paint, it denotes that their hearts are black, and that they are often cruel and relentless, and our old men and old women are unable to restrain them. Thus it has ever been. Thus it was when the white man began to push our forefathers ever westward.

But let us hope that the hostilities between us may never return. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain. Revenge by young men is considered gain, even at the cost of their own lives, but old men who stay at home in times of war, and mothers who have sons to lose, know better.

QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

7) What is the meaning of the word, "reproach," as it is used in this paragraph?

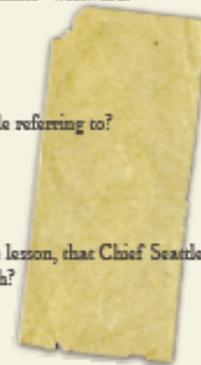
8) What is the simile Chief Seattle uses in this paragraph? What does it mean?

9) Use a dictionary to look up the word, "relentless." What is the meaning of this word as it is used in this paragraph?

10) What does Chief Seattle mean when he says that the "white man" pushed his "forefathers" westward?

11) What "hostilities" is Seattle referring to?

12) What is the theme, or life lesson, that Chief Seattle is trying to relate in this paragraph?



CLOSE READING & ANALYSIS GUIDE



Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854, p. 3

TEXT OF THE SPEECH

Our good father in Washington—for I presume he is now our father as well as yours, since King George has moved his boundaries further north—our great and good father, I say, sends us word that if we do as he desires he will protect us. His brave warriors will be to us a bristling wall of strength, and his wonderful ships of war will fill our harbors, so that our ancient enemies far to the northward — the Haidas and Tsimshians — will cease to frighten our women, children, and old men. Then in reality he will be our father and we his children. But can that ever be? Your God is not our God! Your God loves your people and hates mine! He folds his strong protecting arms lovingly about the paleface and leads him by the hand as a father leads an infant son. But, He has forsaken His Red children, if they really are His. Our God, the Great Spirit, seems also to have forsaken us. Your God makes your people wax stronger every day. Soon they will fill all the land. Our people are ebbing away like a rapidly receding tide that will never return. The white man's God cannot love our people or He would protect them. They seem to be orphans who can look nowhere for help. How then can we be brothers? How can your God become our God and renew our prosperity and awaken in us dreams of returning greatness? If we have a common Heavenly Father He must be partial, for He came

to His pale face children. We never saw Him. He gave you laws but had no word for His red children whose teeming multitudes once filled this vast continent as stars fill the firmament. No; we are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies. There is little in common between us.

QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

13) What metaphor does Seattle use to describe the army?

14) Who are the Haidas and the Tsimshians?

15) What is Chief Seattle's tone in this portion of the speech?

16) Why does Seattle ask so many questions at this part of the speech? What is his purpose in doing so?

CLOSE READING & ANALYSIS GUIDE



Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854, p. 4

TEXT OF THE SPEECH

To us the ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their resting place is hallowed ground. You wander far from the graves of your ancestors and seemingly without regret. Your religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron finger of your God so that you could not forget.

The Red Man could never comprehend or remember it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors -- the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and is written in the hearts of our people.

Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb and wander away beyond the stars. They are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget this beautiful world that gave them being.

They still love its verdant valleys, its murmuring rivers, its magnificent mountains, sequestered vales and verdant lined lakes and bays, and ever yearn in tender fond affection over the lonely hearted living, and often return from the happy hunting ground to visit, guide, console, and comfort them.

QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

- 17) What is the meaning of "hallowed ground?"
- 18) What is the difference, according to Searle, of Christianity and the religion of the Natives?
- 19) What does this portion of the speech tell us about the Native American ties to the land? Why is it so sacred?



CLOSE READING & ANALYSIS GUIDE

Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854, p. 5



TEXT OF THE SPEECH

Day and night cannot dwell together. The Red Man has ever fled the approach of the White Man, as the morning mist flees before the morning sun. However, your proposition seems fair and I think that my people will accept it and will retire to the reservation you offer them. Then we will dwell apart in peace, for the words of the Great White Chief seem to be the words of nature speaking to my people out of dense darkness.

It matters little where we pass the remnant of our days. They will not be many. The Indian's night promises to be dark. Not a single star of hope hovers above his horizon. Sad-voiced winds moan in the distance. Grim fate seems to be on the Red Man's trail, and wherever he will hear the approaching footsteps of his fell destroyer and prepare stolidly to meet his doom, as does the wounded doe that hears the approaching footsteps of the hunter.

A few more moons, a few more winters, and not one of the descendants of the mighty hosts that once moved over this broad land or lived in happy homes, protected by the Great Spirit, will remain to mourn over the graves of a people once more powerful and hopeful than yours. But why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and

regret is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see.

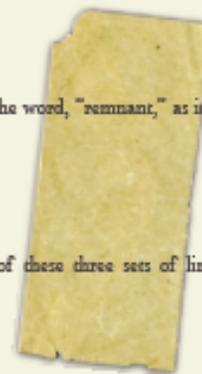
QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

20) What is the "white man's proposition?"

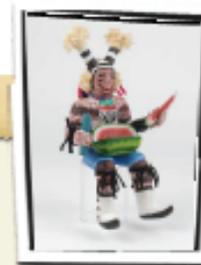
21) Why does Seattle refer to the "words of nature" coming from "dense darkness"?

22) What is the meaning of the word, "remnant," as it is used in this paragraph?

23) What is the main idea of these three sets of lines from the speech?



CLOSE READING & ANALYSIS GUIDE



Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854, p. 6

TEXT OF THE SPEECH

We will ponder your proposition and when we decide we will let you know. But should we accept it, I here and now make this condition that we will not be denied the privilege without molestation of visiting at any time the tombs of our ancestors, friends, and children. Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished.

Even the rocks, which seem to be dumb and dead as the swelter in the sun along the silent shore, thrill with memories of stirring events connected with the lives of my people, and the very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than yours, because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch.

Our departed braves, fond mothers, glad, happy hearted maidens, and even the little children who lived here and rejoiced here for a brief season, will love these somber solitudes and at eventide they greet shadowy returning spirits.

QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

24) What is a "proposition?" What proposition is Chief Seattle referring to?

25) Why does Chief Seattle say that the soil is "sacred?"

26) How does Seattle personify the rocks? Why does he do this?



CLOSE READING & ANALYSIS GUIDE



Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854, p. 7

TEXT OF THE SPEECH

And when the last Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone.

In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone.

Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.

QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

27) In what ways has Seattle's premonition come true today?

28) What does Chief Seattle infer when he says, "the White Man will never be alone?"

29) What does it mean that "there is no death, only a change of worlds?"



