

THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

Essential Question for this lesson:

How are Oceti Sakowin values taught and preserved through storytelling?

The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water brings people in our community together. People come together to watch the sculptures being carved; in another way, the project brings our community together around shared values. **Values** are ideas or behaviors that people believe are good and important. For example, many people believe that generosity, courage, and respect for others are good and important. Each person must decide what values he or she will uphold. People from different cultures often find that they share similar values!

In South Dakota and beyond, *Oceti Sakowin* (Oh-chay-tea Shaw-ko-ween) culture is significant and enriching. Oceti Sakowin means “the people of the Seven Council Fires.” This includes Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people. In Oceti Sakowin culture, knowledge about shared values has been preserved and passed down for thousands of years through storytelling, or oral tradition; some written accounts preserve oral tradition in an unbiased way.¹

The work of Ella Cara Deloria is an excellent source of unbiased information about Oceti Sakowin shared values. Deloria was a brilliant ethnologist—a scientist who studies human cultures—who mainly wrote scholarly texts about her own Oceti Sakowin culture. She was born to a Dakota family, and she was raised among Lakota people on the Standing Rock Reservation where her father worked.

Deloria recorded traditional Oceti Sakowin stories through listening to knowledgeable elders, preserving the original language and verifying her information through several unbiased sources. She compiled many of these stories in a scientific book called Dakota Texts, which was published in 1932. One of the stories in Dakota Texts is called “The Gift of the Horse.” This story, which appears on the next two pages, illustrates some of the shared values of Oceti Sakowin culture.

¹ South Dakota Office of Indian Education. "Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards." 2013. <http://indianeducation.sd.gov/documents/OcetiSakowinEUS.pdf>. 23.

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The Gift of the Horse

One winter the people lived without want, on the Powder River where buffaloes were abundant, and everyone was happy; and then, now that spring was here, about the time of the Sore Eyes Moon (March), the cry went forth from the council tipi that the people were to move about, visiting other parts. So everyone broke camp, and soon they were gone.

Only one man and his wife were left behind. The reason was that they owned one horse, a mare that was not much good, and with it they could not hope to keep up to the pace of the tribe, and hence they stayed behind.

They went from camp-site to camp-site, picking up what they found, of discarded bone, or bits of meat; and to the south, there was a lake, so they walked around it, gathering wood. And then the man ascended a hill, and sat down to rest and view the surrounding country, when he saw something come up over the horizon, in the spot where the sun rises, and advance toward his direction.

When it was near enough to be observed, it proved to be a beautiful black-spotted horse which was coming for a drink in the lake. After drinking, he stopped under a tree, and stood rubbing against it, and then he lay down and rolled, and then he rose and went back the way he came.

And then, a tiny grey bird flew to the man and sitting down near him he said to him, "I bring you a horse. Go home and make a braided rawhide rope, and apply this medicine to it. And hang it, in the form of a noose, from that tree where he always rubs himself. And when his head becomes caught in the rope, chew this root, and apply it on yourself, and catch him. And rub some of this medicine on the mare which you already have."

So the man went home and carried out the orders in detail. Now the black-spotted horse was again coming, so he caught him and blew some of the medicine on his nose, which made the horse stand still and permit himself to be held. He stared at the man every second and yet he did not try to get away, so the man stroked him and took him home.

Again the little grey bird talked to him. "The days of your hardship in the tribe are now over. By and by this black-spotted horse is going to sire many horses; he will thus multiply himself, but on both sides," he told him.

So he allowed the horse to stay with the mare he already owned, and the following summer, there was a colt, as beautiful as, and marked exactly like, the black-spotted horse. It was a male.

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Another year and then a female colt was born. Again the following summer a male was born. So from that horse which the bird had brought him, the man owned three horses, exactly alike, possessing inconceivable speed.

In the tribe they became famous, and the man who owned them was now far different from that poor man he used to be; now his name was held high in the tribe.

During the night he used to picket these horses in front of his door; and one night, someone crept up to them, planning evil against them; but that first black-spotted horse spoke, "Wake up, and come out. Someone approaches with the intention of causing our death." He said this while neighing and his master heard it and came outside.

And this is what he said: "I do not keep these horses in order that you shall insult me through them. I keep them for the sole purpose of bringing good to the tribe, and in that spirit, I lend them to you to hunt meat for your children, as you know; you have also used them freely in war and, as a result, have achieved glory. These horses stand here to serve.

"Yet when I tied them for the night and then came in to rest, someone sneaked up on them, causing them to run home. You see then it is useless to do anything to them secretly." That man understood the speech of his horses, they say.

And then the first horse spoke this way; so his master announced it: "In order that this tribe might be fortunate in all things, I and my young have multiplied; and from that, you have benefited in the past; yet now, because an evil thing has entered the tribe, this source of good shall stop. You must go back to your former state when things were hard for you, all because that one who tried to kill us has by his act brought it upon the entire tribe."

In that way he spoke, so his owner told the people. The horses lost their power to run as of old, and no more colts were born, until at last that entire breed became extinct. In that way, this tribe which was so fortunate, took a backward step to their former state of hardships.

That man who owned them and permitted the tribe to rely on them was named "*Taya'-ma'ni-u*" (He always walks guardedly, or free of pitfalls). He was pitied and caused to have good fortune himself; had he so wished, he might have enjoyed it alone; but that was not what he wanted. He caused all the tribe to share in it; and then, regretful fact, one, through jealousy perhaps, brought ill-fortune on them all.²

² Deloria, Ella. *Dakota Texts*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. 256-260.

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Thinking About the Project

Please write your thoughts about the questions below. We are looking for your **original thinking**: what actually comes into your mind as you carefully read the questions. Your answers may be clear bullet points or clear, complete sentences.

1. Generosity is an important Oceti Sakowin value. The grey bird shows generosity when it helps the poor man. How do you notice the man showing generosity after he receives the gift of the horse?

2. What benefits do you notice the tribe receiving from the use of the man's wonderful horses? Please use examples from the text in your answer.

3. What bad event in this story do you think causes the horses to lose their ability to run so fast and to have colts?

4. What are some ways you can imagine people in your community coming together to show generosity?

5. What is one example of you showing generosity?

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Notes for Teachers

The lessons connected with *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water* are designed to be used with students in many grade levels. You may need to provide scaffolding in order to help your students access the text. To help with this, we have included this vocabulary bank. This bank can be easily used with the existing word study procedures you use with students.

- values
- generosity
- similar
- *Oceti Sakowin*
- significant
- enriching
- ethnologist
- scholarly texts
- knowledgeable
- verifying
- unbiased
- scientific
- illustrates
- "lived without want"
- abundant
- hence
- discarded
- ascended
- horizon
- advance
- observed

- rawhide
- apply
- permit
- hardship
- sire
- thus
- inconceivable
- picket
- intention
- achieved
- benefited
- entire
- extinct
- guardedly
- pitied
- regretful
- jealousy
- ability
- discussion
- brainstorm

CCSS Language Arts Anchor Standards Addressed:

- R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- R10: Read and comprehend complex informational and literary texts independently and proficiently.
- W9: Draw evidence from informational and literary texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting reference materials as appropriate.

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L6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge.

South Dakota Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards Addressed:

EU 4.2: Analyze Oceti Sakowin social etiquette, proper behavior, and values.

EU 5.1: Analyze Oceti Sakowin culture through oral tradition and unbiased information.

EU 7.2: Analyze actions taken by people in an effort to bring about positive social change.

Note: Deloria's scholarly work and her stature in the American scientific community underpin Dakota Texts and lend to it the highest credibility. Both her extensive fieldwork and her personal cultural experience show that this volume contains unbiased information; it is a well-researched and highly respected scientific text.

More Notes on the Standards and Student Work

The South Dakota Department of Education adopted the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards in 2011. The document is available on the SD DOE website under "Oceti Sakowin Project." All South Dakota teachers should be employing these standards across the curriculum. These standards represent essential learning for all South Dakotans.

We have included here the reference numbers and a basic description of each Oceti Sakowin Essential Understanding and Standard that this lesson addresses. For full articulations of all of these cultural standards, please consult the official state document:

<http://indianeducation.sd.gov/documents/OcetiSakowinEUS.pdf>

While this lesson was built for students in grades 3-5, many teachers will use it with students in lower or higher grades. K-2 students could use the version built for them (called "We Share With Others"), which uses an adapted version of this story, or they can listen to a fluent reader read "The Gift of the Horse" from this text aloud while following the text with their eyes.

Students in grades 6-12 can also engage with this lesson; we would rightly expect their thinking to be deeper and their examples from the text to be more specific. This lesson has been field-tested with students in grades 6-12 as a springboard for writing arguments about values and as a catalyst for student-created public service projects that illuminate shared values.

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The text of this article and the accompanying critical thinking questions are considered informational texts. The first part of the reading is a real-world text about a current local project and an Oceti Sakowin author; the excerpt from Dakota Texts is an ethnographic text. The questions are designed to elicit high-level thinking and need no answer key. If students are showing their original thinking, engaging with the topic and the ways in which they perceive the project, then they are doing good work.

Teachers will have success when they encourage students to show and explain their thinking. Great student discussions can follow! The next page contains a graphic organizer that can help thinkers prepare for their discussions. This process of preparing for and engaging in peer discussions addresses the CCSS Speaking and Listening Standard SL.1!

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Discussion: How do we show our values?

(Brainstorm for five minutes, filling each shape with your ideas, then discuss!)

How can we show **courage**?

How can we show **kindness**?

How can we show **respect for others**?

How can we show **teamwork**?

How can we show **creativity**?

Name:

Date of discussion: