

# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

Essential Question for this lesson:

## **How do Lakota origin stories & *The Sculpture Project* invite us to consider natural forces in new ways?**

*The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water* at Main Street Square deals with the natural forces of wind and water. The design of the project invites visitors to think about how these forces have shaped the earth. Many people have also noticed that the design reminds them of how wind and water interact with the sky and the air. All of these forces and elements of nature are parts of our daily lives in the world.

People have always wondered how the world began. Because of this deep wondering, all human cultures preserve origin stories that explain how the world was created. These stories are passed down through generations because of their value.

Readers who think about origin stories from many different cultures gain three important benefits. First, these readers come to understand their own cultures better through comparing familiar stories with unfamiliar ones from other cultures. Next, these readers become more accepting of different viewpoints; acceptance helps relationships between people. Finally, these readers expand their imaginations with every new text they read and think about!

In this short excerpt from The Sons of the Wind: The Sacred Stories of the Lakota, readers learn something about the way Lakota origin stories explain the creation of the world. Here, the earth, the water, the sky, and the sun come into existence.

In the beginning was Inyan, who had no beginning, for he was there when there was no other, only Hanhepi, the Darkness. Inyan was soft and shapeless, but he was everywhere and he had all the powers. These powers were in his blood, and his blood was blue. His spirit was Wakan Tanka.

# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

Inyan desired that there be others so that he might exercise his powers. But there could be no others unless he created them from himself. To do so he would have to give part of his spirit and part of his blood, and the powers that were in the blood. So he decided to create another but only as part of himself, so that he could keep control over the powers. He took part of himself and spread it over and around himself in the shape of a great disk. He named the disk Maka, the Earth, and he gave Maka a spirit, Maka-akan, Earth Spirit, and she is part of Inyan. But in creating her, he took so much from himself that his veins opened and all his blood flowed from him, and he shrank and became hard and powerless.

As Inyan's blood flowed, it became the blue waters which are on the Earth. Because powers cannot live in water, they separated themselves and became a great blue dome whose edge is near the edge of Maka. This blue dome of the powers of the blood of Inyan is now the sky and is not material but is the spirit of Taku Skan-skan, the Great Spirit. When these powers assumed one shape, they said a voice spoke, saying: "I am the source of energy, I am Skan." This was the beginning of the third of the sacred beings who is the highest of all because he is spirit. Inyan and Maka are material, and the world of matter has no powers except what are given by Skan....

Then Skan took from Inyan, from Maka, from the waters, and from himself something from which he created a great shining disk. He named the disk Wi, the Sun, and gave him a spirit, Wi-akan, the Sun Power. This was the beginning of the fourth Sacred Being, but he was created by Skan, so he is a

# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

creature. Skan placed Wi above the blue dome of himself and commanded him to shine and give heat.<sup>1</sup>

This passage showing how the earth, the water, the sky, and the sun came into existence gives readers a new way of thinking about natural forces and elements. *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water* does that same thing for visitors! Every person who views the sculptures can experience a fresh way of thinking about the earth and its natural forces.

When people choose to consider natural forces and elements in new ways, they expand their thinking. Wind, water, earth and sky are parts of our daily lives; they are aspects of the world we all share in common. As you think about this article and work with it, consider the ways in which you are connected with these forces and elements of nature.

## Pronouncing Names in this Text

Inyan: (EE-yan) Stone

Hanhepi: (han-HAY-bee) Darkness, night

Wakan Tanka: (wah-KAN TAN-kah) The Great Mysterious

Maka: (mah-KAH) Earth

Maka-akan: (mah-KAH ah-KAN) Earth spirit

Skan: (shkan) The active, moving principle; energy

---

<sup>1</sup> Dooling, D. M., ed. *The Sons of the Wind: The Sacred Stories of the Lakota*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. 3-4.

# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

## 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. What did you notice about this Lakota story of the creation of the earth, water, sky, and sun that seemed new and fresh to you?
2. Readers often notice that the natural forces and elements in this text have been personified, or given human qualities. Why do you think this personification makes the story memorable?
3. The sky, Skan, is described as “the source of energy” in the text. How do you think the sky could be considered a source of energy? Think about examples of animals, plants, and people gaining energy from the sky.
4. Write about the ways in which you feel connected with wind and water.
5. When people visit *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water*, they often notice that this outdoor art makes them want to be outdoors more. Why do you think this happens?

# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

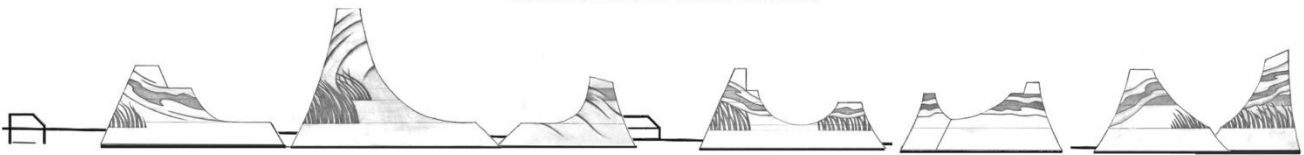
## PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

6. Look at these drawings of the plans for part of the project. Label and draw arrows to parts that you think remind you of wind and water.

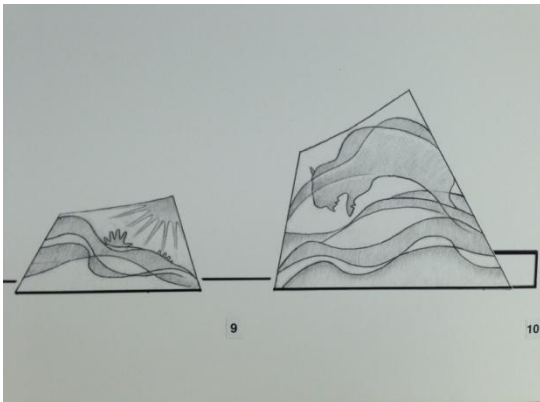
Black Hills Garden Exterior Elevation



Badlands Garden Exterior Elevation



7. How do you think visual art and literary art can expand people's thinking about nature?
8. Project sculptor Masayuki Nagase works with images from nature and then abstracts them in his work, allowing viewers to explore and discover their own meanings and connections. What do you notice about the design below that could relate to Lakota culture?



# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

## 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.

- natural forces
- interacts
- origin stories
- existence
- aspects
- personified
- personification
- qualities
- visual art
- literary art

- memorable
- energy

## 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 texts independently and proficiently.
- W9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, & 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 & persuasively.
- L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown & multiple-meaning words & phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, & consulting reference materials as appropriate.
- L6: Acquire & use accurately a range of general academic & domain-specific words & phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, & listening at the college & career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge.

## South Dakota Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings & Standards Addressed:

- EU 1.2: Analyze interrelationships of Oceti Sakowin people, places, and environments.
- EU 3.2: Analyze the connectedness of Oceti Sakowin sacred sites, creation stories, & star knowledge.
- EU 5.1: Analyze Oceti Sakowin culture through oral tradition and unbiased information.

Note: The text excerpted here is considered to be unbiased information. D. M. Dooling's text is based on Dr. James R. Walker's transcriptions of Lakota oral literature drawn directly from his late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> Century work with highly knowledgeable Lakota people. The scholarly text that presents the exact

# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

transcriptions of Dr. Walker's work is Elaine Jahner's Lakota Myth, which Dooling uses as her source. The Sons of the Wind: The Sacred Stories of the Lakota is a truly outstanding text for students and adults alike.

## **More about the standards & 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>*

*This text and the accompanying critical thinking questions are considered informational texts. They are real-world texts about a current local project. 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.*

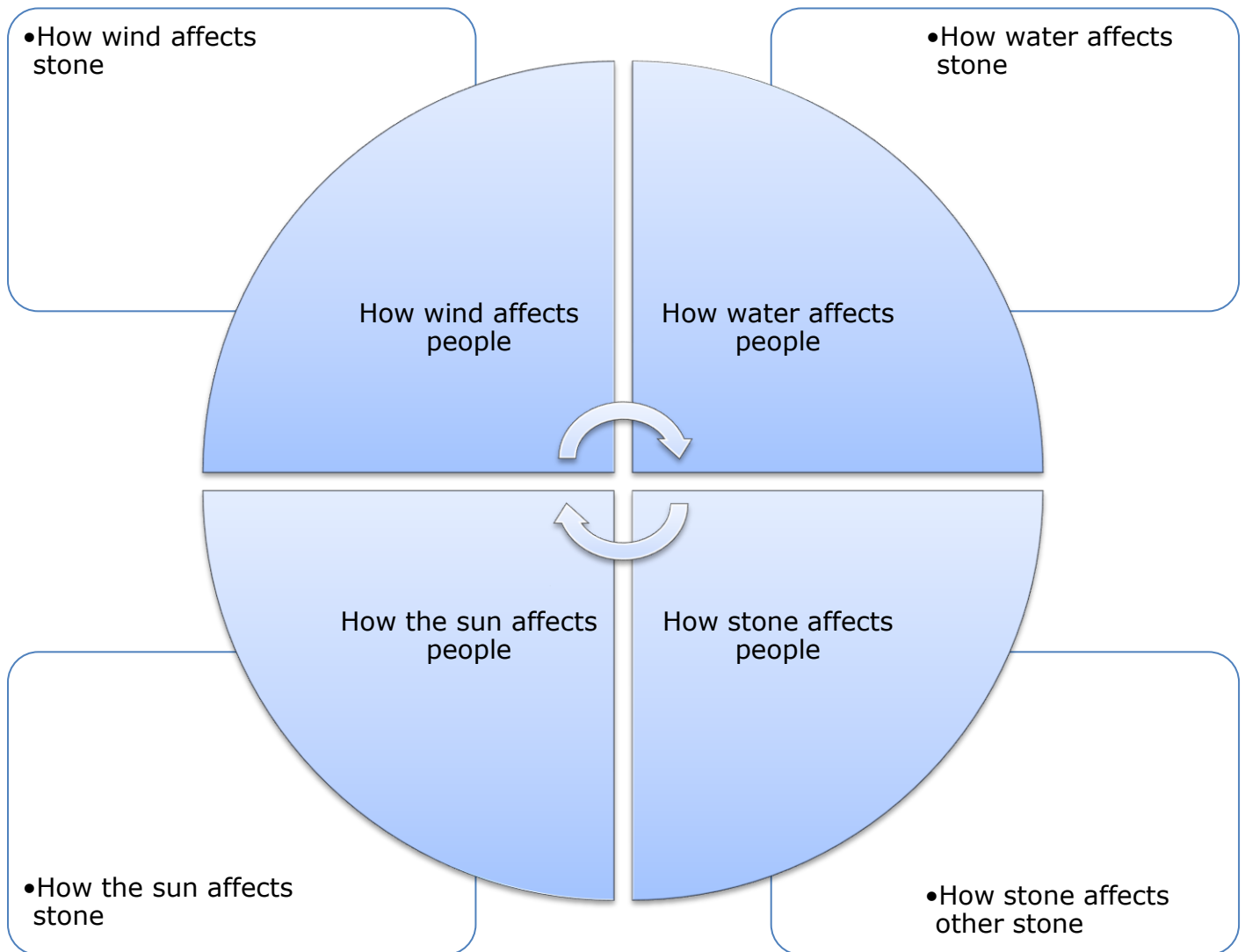
*Teachers will have success when they encourage students to show and explain their thinking. Great student discussions can follow! The next page contains a graphic organizer that can help thinkers prepare for their discussions. This process of preparing for & engaging in peer discussions addresses the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

**South Dakota Arts Council support is provided with funds from the State of South Dakota, through the Department of Tourism, and the National Endowment for the Arts.**

# THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

## Discussion: Human Connections to Natural Forces



Name:

Date of discussion: