

EDUCATOR GUIDE FOR
CLASSROOM USE OF

*VOICES FROM
PEJUHUTAZIZI:
DAKOTA STORIES
AND STORYTELLERS*

No audio book of *Voices from Pejuhutazizi* currently exists, but the Minnesota Department of Education's Braille and Talking Book Library has created a talking book that can be downloaded after making an account with its service. [Access the system here.](#)



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Teresa Peterson's and Walter "Super" LaBatte's *Voices from Pejuhutazizi: Dakota Stories and Storytellers* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2021) is a wonderful book suitable for middle school and high school students, sharing family anecdotes to lessons about Dakota culture to Indian Country history, all through the form of traditional storytelling.

This guide is intended to help K-12 educators determine how they can use *Voices from Pejuhutazizi* in classrooms and in relation to Minnesota's English Language Arts (ELA) state academic standards. It was created with the permission of the book's authors and publisher.

This guide was commissioned by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) as a project of its Understand Native Minnesota campaign to improve the Native American narrative in Minnesota K-12 schools. The SMSC is providing 20,000 free copies of this book to educators across Minnesota to promote its use in a one-read program during Native American Heritage Month in 2023.

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FAST FACTS

GENRE: Narrative nonfiction.

SUGGESTED READING LEVEL: 6th through 12th grades. Mature content has been noted in the discussion questions.

TRIBES: The book is a compilation of stories created by a Dakota family. While the stories center on Dakota life, there is mention of other tribal groups such as the “Chippeway” (Ojibwe or Anishinaabeg) and Métis.

PLACE: The stories center on life around Pejuhutazizi K’api, the Place They Dig for Yellow Medicine, now known as the Upper Sioux Indian Community in southwestern Minnesota. After the Dakota War and the resulting exile, the family escapes to Canada and eventually settles near Flandreau, South Dakota.

TIME: The book includes stories from five generations of a Dakota family whose authors are a niece-and-uncle duo. The narratives discuss their way of life before Minnesota became a state through modern times.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

To best support teachers in discussing the themes and issues included in the book, a series of questions has been compiled for use in the classroom, all of which have been reviewed by *Voices from Pejuhutazizi* author, Teresa Peterson. These questions begin on page 13 and follow the same order as the stories in the book.

In addition to the questions, links to resources and topics have been provided when applicable. They can be accessed by teachers to build their background knowledge about a specific topic or used to enrich the details of particular stories.

The final questions are related to media analysis. Since Understand Native Minnesota is a narrative change campaign, it was important to have readers reflect on why they were reading the book, feelings that arose, and why it is important to learn about and consider perspectives of people who have a different way of seeing and being in the world. You can find these questions on page 26.

HOW THE BOOK IS LAID OUT

This book is divided into four sections, with the introductory section, “Returning Through Story,” describing Teresa’s journey to reconnecting to her past to help discover her future. While the sections can be read in any order, starting at the beginning helps connect readers more deeply with Teresa’s story.

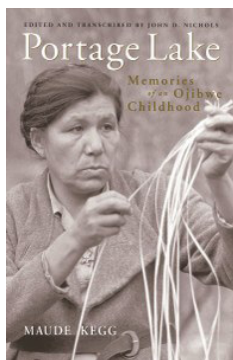
The second section, “The Voices,” introduces readers to Teresa’s family members whose stories are included in the rest of the book. Readers meet Super, Deksi Walter LaBatte Jr., whose stories comprise much of the third section of the book.

The content in section three, “The Stories,” has seven overarching themes – to impart values, transmit traditions, deliver heroes, reconcile, entertain, tell of place, and provide belonging. Readers can pick and choose stories from this section as they see fit – it is not necessary to read this section in its entirety or even from front to back. For educators looking to pair Voices from Pejuhutazizi with Anishinaabeg stories, please note the three resources suggested in the inset.

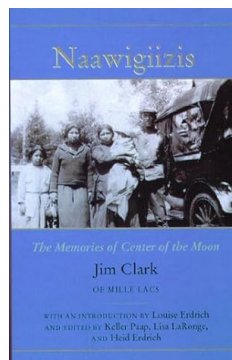
The final section of the resource is a reflection by the author about how creating this book reconnected her with her culture, built identity, and allowed her to find her sense of place.

The book also includes reference pieces at the end of the book – notes on Dakota language, the author’s family tree, sidebar notes, and a glossary. For additional support on Dakota language, Twin Cities nonprofit [Dakhóta lápi Okhódakičhiye](#) has created an Apple-based dictionary app called Dakhód lápi Wičhóie Wówapi. The application allows users to input words in English or Dakota for translation, pulling from its over 28,000 stored words to impart meaning. Since the gender of the speaker impacts how the Dakota language is spoken, users can choose to listen to recordings of men or women pronouncing the words.

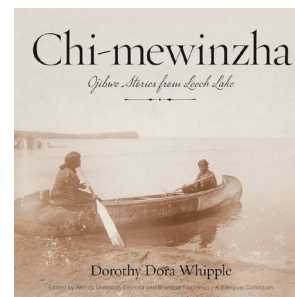
IF YOU’RE LOOKING TO PAIR THE STORIES IN VOICES FROM PEJUHUTAZIZI WITH AN ANISHINAABE PERSPECTIVE, THESE BOOKS COULD BE USEFUL:



PORTAGE LAKE: MEMORIES OF AN OJIBWE CHILDHOOD, MAUDE KEGG, 1993.



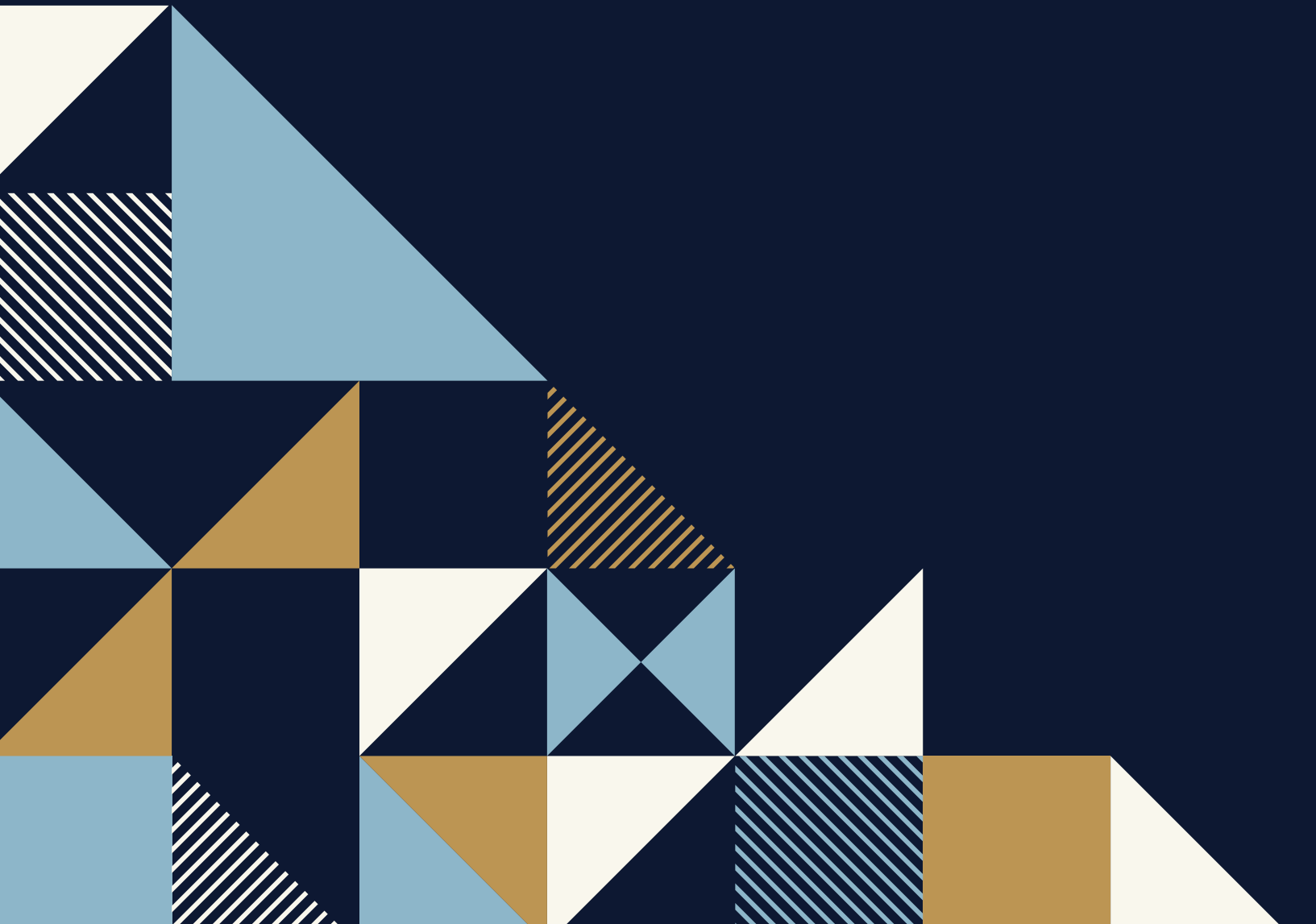
NAAWIGIIZIS: THE MEMORIES OF CENTER OF THE MOON, JIM CLARK, 2002.



CHI-MEWINZHA: OJIBWE STORIES FROM LEECH LAKE DOROTHY DORA WHIPPLE, 2015.

MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) (2020)

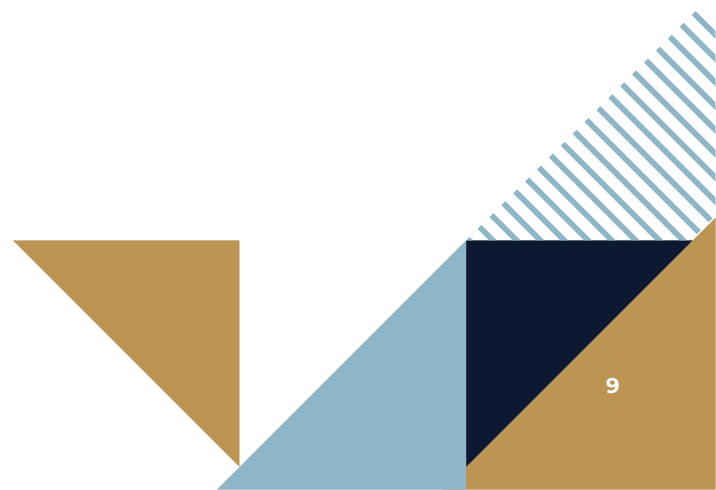
The following are the state ELA standards from grades 6 to 12
for which *Voices from Pejuhutazizi* is relevant.



ANCHOR STANDARD	BENCHMARK
<p>R2:</p> <p>READ AND COMPREHEND INDEPENDENTLY A) BOTH SELF-SELECTED AND TEACHER-DIRECTED TEXTS, B) COMPLEX LITERARY AND INFORMATIONAL TEXTS, AND C) FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES REPRESENTING PERSPECTIVES AND IDENTITIES LIKE AND UNLIKE THEIR OWN FROM DOMINANT, NON-DOMINANT AND MARGINALIZED SOCIAL GROUPS.</p>	<p>6.1.2.3: Locate, select and read texts representing various perspectives and identities from dominant, non-dominant and marginalized social groups, using various methods of searching for text (e.g., literary award lists, curated book lists, book reviews).</p>
	<p>6.1.3.1: Choose and read texts that address the purpose (e.g., personal interest, enjoyment, academic tasks), representing perspectives and identities of historical and contemporary Dakota and Anishinaabe people.</p>
	<p>7.1.2.3: Locate, select and read texts representing multiple perspectives and identities like and unlike their own, demonstrating skill in identifying perspective of text and searching for alternate perspectives on the subject of the text.</p>
	<p>7.1.3.1: Choose and read texts that address the purpose (e.g., personal interest, enjoyment, academic tasks), representing perspectives and identities of historical and contemporary Dakota and Anishinaabe people.</p>
	<p>8.1.3.1: Choose and read texts that address the purpose (e.g., personal interest, enjoyment, academic tasks), representing perspectives and identities of historical and contemporary Dakota and Anishinaabe people. (Connects to mastery of skills in grade-level text in standard R2)</p>
	<p>9.1.2.1: Read independently and self-monitor understanding of grade-level text; independently annotate learning, applying strategies when meaning breaks down, including, but not limited to, consulting resources for more information.</p>
	<p>9.1.3.1: Choose and read texts that address the purpose (e.g., personal interest, enjoyment, academic tasks), representing perspectives and identities of historical and contemporary Dakota and Anishinaabe people, to examine concepts, issues or histories.</p>
	<p>10.1.3.1: Choose and read texts that address the purpose (e.g., personal interest, enjoyment, academic tasks), representing perspectives and identities of historical and contemporary Dakota and Anishinaabe people, to examine concepts, issues or histories.</p>
	<p>11.1.2.3: Read widely, locating, selecting and reading texts to examine concepts or issues from multiple viewpoints or perspectives like and unlike their own from dominant, non-dominant and marginalized social groups.</p>
<p>11.1.3.1: Choose and read texts that address the purpose (e.g., personal interest, enjoyment, academic tasks), representing perspectives and identities of Dakota and Anishinaabe people, to examine concepts, issues or histories.</p>	

ANCHOR STANDARD	BENCHMARK
<p>R4:</p> <p>READ CRITICALLY TO COMPREHEND, INTERPRET AND ANALYZE THEMES AND CENTRAL IDEAS IN COMPLEX LITERARY AND INFORMATIONAL TEXTS.</p>	6.1.4.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly and inferences drawn from the text; summarize the text.
	6.1.4.2: Distinguish between stated and inferred central ideas; determine the themes and central ideas and support determination with evidence and inferences drawn from the text.
	7.1.4.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support conclusions of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text; objectively summarize the text.
	7.1.4.2: Analyze how the themes or central ideas develop over the course of a single text.
	8.1.4.2: Determine multiple themes or central ideas of a single text and analyze its development over the course of the text.
	8.1.4.4: Analyze how a text makes connections between individuals, events or concepts in informational text.
	9.1.4.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support conclusions of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including making connections to other texts; objectively summarize the text.
	9.1.4.2: Analyze the themes or central ideas, including how they emerge and are shaped by specific details, of multiple texts, considering author perspective, identity and bias.
	10.1.4.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support conclusions of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including analysis of how and when author introduces concepts, ideas or characters; objectively summarize the text.
	10.1.4.2: Analyze and compare/contrast the themes or central ideas of multiple texts, researching and interpreting possible impact of author perspective, identity and bias.
	10.1.4.4: Compare and contrast how two authors unfold an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them, in informational text.
	11.1.4.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support conclusions of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from literature and informational text, including determining where the text leaves matter uncertain; objectively summarize the text.
	11.1.4.2: Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and synthesize their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex synthesis.
11.1.4.4: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, concepts or events interact and develop in informational text.	

ANCHOR STANDARD	BENCHMARK
<p>R6:</p> <p>ANALYZE INFLUENCES ON CONTENT, MEANING AND STYLE OF TEXT INCLUDING FACT AND FICTION, TIME PERIOD, AND AUTHOR PERSPECTIVE AND IDENTITY, INCLUDING DAKOTA AND ANISHINAABE PERSPECTIVE, IN COMPLEX LITERARY AND INFORMATIONAL TEXTS.</p>	6.1.6.1: Analyze multiple accounts by various cultures, including Dakota and Anishinaabe, of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
	7.1.6.1: Analyze how an author, including Dakota and Anishinaabe authors, uses his, her or their stated identity to establish credibility with the reader on an issue or topic.
	7.1.6.3: Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic, including topics about Dakota and Anishinaabe people, shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.
	8.1.6.1: Analyze how an author, including Dakota and Anishinaabe authors, develops the point of view and identity of the character to enrich a text.
	8.1.6.3: Analyze a case in which two or more texts, including one text by or about Dakota and Anishinaabe people or other diverse cultures, provide conflicting information on the same topic, and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
	9.1.6.1: Examine how the author's, including Dakota and Anishinaabe authors, purpose, stated identities, biases and perspective shape the content and style of a text.
	10.1.6.1: Analyze how the author's, including Dakota and Anishinaabe authors, purpose, stated identities, biases and perspective shape the content and style of a text.
	11.1.6.1: Evaluate how the author's, including Dakota and Anishinaabe authors, purpose, stated identities, biases and perspective shape the content and style of a text.

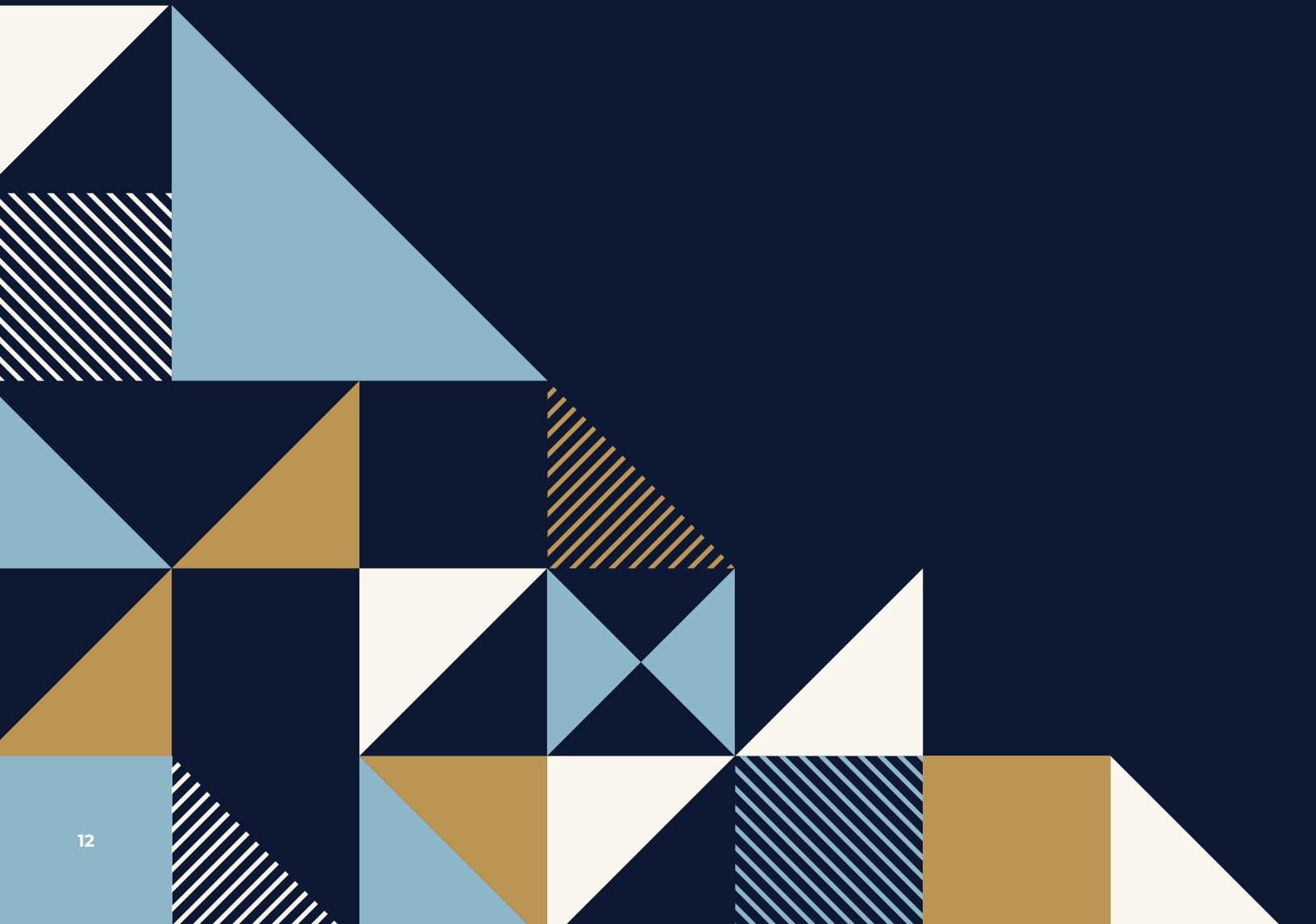


ANCHOR STANDARD	BENCHMARK
<p>LSVE11:</p> <p>EXCHANGE IDEAS IN DISCUSSION AND COLLABORATION, AS LISTENER, SPEAKER AND PARTICIPANT, A) INCLUDING THE VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES OF DAKOTA AND ANISHINAABE PEOPLE AS WELL AS OTHER PERSPECTIVES, IDENTITIES AND CULTURES LIKE AND UNLIKE THEIR OWN, AND B) EXPRESSING ONE'S OWN IDEAS, STORIES AND EXPERIENCES.</p>	<p>6.3.1.1: Exchange ideas through storytelling, discussion and collaboration, intentionally considering the Dakota and Anishinaabe people as well as other perspectives like and unlike their own.</p> <p>a. Use tools to collaborate with others synchronously and asynchronously.</p> <p>b. Cooperate, mediate and problem solve to make decisions as appropriate for productive group discussion.</p>
	<p>7.3.1.1: Exchange ideas through storytelling, discussion and collaboration, intentionally considering the perspectives of Dakota and Anishinaabe people as well as other perspectives.</p> <p>a. Acknowledge and elaborate on others' ideas.</p> <p>b. Use tools to collaborate with others both synchronously and asynchronously.</p> <p>c. Cooperate, mediate and problem solve to make decisions as appropriate for productive group discussion.</p>
	<p>8.3.1.1: Exchange ideas through storytelling, discussion and collaboration, expressing ideas, intentionally considering the perspectives of Dakota and Anishinaabe people as well as other perspectives.</p> <p>a. Elaborate on others' ideas, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views based on the evidence presented.</p> <p>b. Use tools to collaborate with others both synchronously and asynchronously.</p> <p>c. Work toward a shared goal.</p>
	<p>9.3.1.1: Exchange ideas through storytelling, discussion and collaboration, both as facilitator and participant, expressing ideas, intentionally considering the perspectives of Dakota and Anishinaabe people and other perspectives.</p> <p>a. Exchange ideas on grade 9 topics, texts and issues from social studies and science.</p> <p>b. Elaborating on others' ideas and summarizing points of agreement and disagreement.</p> <p>c. Work toward a shared goal by building consensus and integrating divergent views.</p> <p>d. Use teacher-provided models of conflict resolution.</p>
	<p>10.3.1.1: Exchange ideas through storytelling, discussion and collaboration, both as facilitator and participant, expressing ideas, intentionally considering the perspectives of Dakota and Anishinaabe people as well as other perspectives.</p> <p>a. Exchange ideas on grade 10 topics, texts and issues from social studies and science.</p> <p>b. Acknowledge and elaborate on others' ideas, and promote a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.</p> <p>c. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.</p> <p>d. Develop conflict resolution strategies.</p>
<p>10.3.1.2: Extend conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify or challenge ideas and conclusions, demonstrating preparation for the discussion.</p>	

ANCHOR STANDARD	BENCHMARK
<p>LSVEI1: CONTINUED</p> <p>EXCHANGE IDEAS IN DISCUSSION AND COLLABORATION, AS LISTENER, SPEAKER AND PARTICIPANT, A) INCLUDING THE VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES OF DAKOTA AND ANISHINAABE PEOPLE AS WELL AS OTHER PERSPECTIVES, IDENTITIES AND CULTURES LIKE AND UNLIKE THEIR OWN, AND B) EXPRESSING ONE'S OWN IDEAS, STORIES AND EXPERIENCES.</p>	<p>10.3.1.3: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives and constructive feedback, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own ideas in revising work.</p>
	<p>11.3.1.1: Exchange ideas through storytelling, discussion and collaboration, both as facilitator and participant, expressing ideas, intentionally considering the perspectives of Dakota and Anishinaabe people as well as other perspectives.</p> <p>a. Exchange ideas on grade 11–12 topics, texts and issues from social studies and science.</p> <p>b. Seek the perspectives of groups not represented to promote a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.</p> <p>c. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.</p> <p>d. Develop a shared vision and goal in seeking diverse perspectives from the wider world (e.g., experts from the local community or students from other schools, towns, states or countries).</p> <p>e. Employ conflict resolution strategies.</p>
	<p>11.3.1.2: Extend conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure exploration of a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives, demonstrating preparation for the discussion.</p>
	<p>11.3.1.3: Give and respond thoughtfully to constructive feedback, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement, and solicit relevant feedback for use in revising work.</p>

ANCHOR STANDARD	BENCHMARK
<p>LSVEI2:</p> <p>COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS, APPLYING KNOWLEDGE OF VOCABULARY, LANGUAGE, STRUCTURE AND FEATURES OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE, CONSIDERING AUDIENCE AND CONTEXT.</p>	<p>6.3.2.1: Use vocabulary, language, structure and features of spoken language to communicate ideas precisely in a variety of forms, including digital and face-to-face interactions, considering audience and context.</p>
	<p>7.3.2.1: Use vocabulary, language, structure and features of spoken language to establish personal voice, style and tone in communicating with others, considering audience and context.</p>
	<p>8.3.2.1: Use vocabulary, language, structure and features of spoken language to establish personal voice, style and tone, and identify impact in communicating with others, considering audience and context.</p>
	<p>10.3.2.1: Make effective choices regarding vocabulary, language, structure and advanced application of features of spoken language (e.g., rhetorical questioning) in a variety of forms, including digital and face-to-face interactions, considering audience and context.</p>
	<p>11.3.2.1: Make effective choices regarding vocabulary, language, structure and advanced application of features of spoken language in a variety of forms, including digital and face-to-face interactions, considering audience and context.</p>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BY BOOK SECTION



PART 1: RETURNING THROUGH STORY

(PP. 7-18)

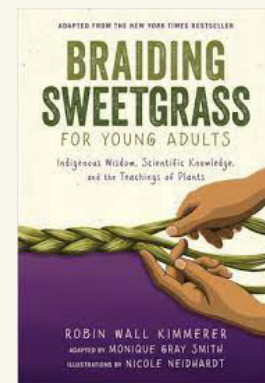
1. How did being on the land help Teresa to reconnect to her Dakota identity?
2. In what ways did mainstream/non-Native culture influence and/or become part of Dakota life?
3. What values are evident in *Returning through Story*? What, if any, could you best relate to?
4. Teresa was bullied in school for being Native. How does this behavior show up in modern-day representation of Indigenous peoples (media, mascots, personal interactions, etc.)?
5. Teresa shares that going to college allowed her space to “find her bicultural self.” In what ways do you honor the cultures that make you who you are?
6. Teresa’s family references White culture in this story in what could be perceived as negative ways – “marry Indian” (p. 8) or “lost to the white world forever” (p. 15). Why do you think staying true to her ancestral roots was important for Teresa’s family?
7. One of the Dakota values relates to service. How does Teresa center service in her life? Give examples.
8. What was Teresa’s language journey like? How did her thinking change as she progressed?

PART 2: THE VOICES (PP. 19-30)

1. Walter, Deksi Super, asked Teresa “Where are you going to college?” She said that one question changed her life. Who in your network is your main supporter?
2. What does it mean to be a “straight shooter” (p. 20)? What else do we learn about Deksi Super?
3. What does it mean to practice *titokan*, visiting? What does visiting look like in your community?
4. How does Deksi Super describe his role as storyteller of the family? Based on what you learned about storytelling in Part 1, why is this role important?
5. Describe Wihake’s, whose English name was Genevieve Pearsall LaBatte, educational experience. How did she feel about attending boarding school? How was she able to retain her Dakota language?
6. When Teresa received her grandmother’s journals, what types of information was documented? How does this align with the practice of *titokan*? What would a reader find in your journal? What do you deem important enough to document?
7. At the bottom of p. 23, Teresa thanks her grandma for her “good medicine”. What do you think “good medicine” is? Who is “good medicine” to you?
8. Each time Teresa introduces a new family member, she provides a genealogy of sorts. What does this practice teach us about kinship in Dakota communities?
9. *Tiwakanhokisina*, Walter LaBatte Sr., is described as “the glue for our LaBatte *tiospaye*” (family). How did he fulfill that role?
10. *Wakanjtiomaniwiŋ*, Eunice Amos, died from food poisoning shortly after the birth of one of her children. What is her legacy?
11. *Wanjbdiska*, Fred Pearsall, led an interesting life. What is most significant as you read about him?
12. Teresa refers to her Grandpa Fred as a “community historian” (p. 28). What types of information did he document?
13. There is a photo of *Tasinasusbecawiŋ* or “Susbe”, Her Dragonfly Shawl Woman (p. 30). They say a picture is worth a thousand words. What does this picture say to you?

Dakota *Wiçohaŋ* works to revitalize Dakota language and culture. Learn more about their work at dakotawicohan.org.

Indian boarding schools were located all over North America, not just in Minnesota. Learn more about these institutions and where they were located at boardingschoolhealing.org/digitalmap.



Learn more about “good medicine” in *Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, Monique Gray Smith - adapter, et al, 2022. [Access the educator guide here.](#)

PART 3: THE STORIES

(PP. 31-170)

STORIES IMPART VALUES

“Stories impart the values of a community, reminding us how to live and be with each other. The Dakota, and perhaps other Native communities, espouse seven core values: woonšida (compassion), woohoda (respect), woksape (wisdom), woohitika (courage or bravery), wowaŋtaŋka (patience), ohaŋwašte (generosity), and waihakta (humility). Yet there are any others that guide how we live in the world and with each other.”

– *Voices from Pejuhutazizi*, p. 31.

The stories in this section of the book contain three voices – Grandpa Fred’s which are highlighted in gray, Deksi Super’s that have no highlight, and a narrator whose text is outlined in a row or dots. The narrator’s words help provide additional context to the story being shared. How do the three voices complement one another? Which voice do you prefer to read and why?

Learn what generosity looks like in modern times in [this video about the SMSC’s history of giving](#).

WOOHITIKA – COURAGE, BRAVERY (P. 32)

- What are examples of bravery in this story? How might you have responded in similar situations?

WOOKIYA – HELPING OTHERS, BEING HELPFUL (P. 35)

- Super writes about the times he was asked to help, but chose not to speak out, and his resulting regret for not doing so. When was a time you acted similarly? Is it in your nature to volunteer when others need help?

MINIHECA – WORKING HARD, BEING ACTIVE (P. 36)

- How does Super describe his childhood living on the farm? What does he teach us about working hard?
- How does Super respond when told that he “can’t hold a candle to your dad”? Do you think the person who said it intended it to be an insult? Discuss.
- Being humble is a Dakota value. What skills did Super’s dad have that he only shared when prompted? What skills do you or your family members have that you could share with others?
- How does Super pass along his dad’s work ethic to the next generations?

OHAŊWAŠTE – GENEROSITY (P. 41)

- Being generous is a Dakota value. Super introduces readers to the Dakota word for stingy – ohaŋsica – a word you never want said about you. Who shows generosity in your community? Have you been on the receiving end of ohaŋsica/stingy behavior? If so, how did it make you feel?



Learn about Dakota values
in [this video by the SMSC](#).

WOOHODA – RESPECT (P. 41)

- Respect is an important value for Dakota peoples (and Indigenous peoples worldwide). You can see respect playing out at powwows when the color guard is honored – former and active military members carrying flags – or during community meals when elders are invited to the front of the line. Who is shown respect in your communities? Who might be deserving of more respect?

WOWADITAKE – FORTITUDE (P. 42)

- Super shares a story about when his dad had to live in a tipi over the winter months. When was a time you needed fortitude – strength and mental conviction – to stick something out that was difficult? Did you succeed? If so, how did completing that task set you up for success the next time you needed to do something challenging?

WAIHAKATA – HUMILITY (P. 42)

***MATURE CONTENT: PLEASE NOTE, THIS STORY REFERENCES ALCOHOLISM AND INCLUDES THE WORDS “SHIT” AND “HELL”.**

- Super shares that to be an Ikce Wicašta, a Common Man, you need to live a good way, rather than just talk about it. Being humble also requires you to understand when you can't do something alone. How did this knowledge help Super overcome his addiction?
- Who do you know who lives humbly, leading by example? Do you know someone who talks a good game, but never gets anything done? How does it feel to be around them?

WAPIDAPI – GRATITUDE (P. 43)

- Super shares the struggles he had growing up and the responsibility he felt to take care of his parents once he was an adult. In what ways do you have it easier than your parents did when they were your age? Discuss.
- Once Super became an adult, he realized how much his parents gave up for him. Who cares for you? How do you show your gratitude to them for that care?
- Super goes on six-mile walks to reflect on his gratitude. How do you reflect on the gifts you have been given? What are you most grateful for?

MITAKUYE OWASIN – ALL MY RELATIONS (P. 44)

- Super provides three stories about his connection to everything around him. How does this way of living determine how he treats people and all living things around him? How might your actions change if you were related, or in relationship, with everything you see?

STORIES TRANSMIT TRADITIONS

“Stories pass on ways of being and doing things. They can be as simple as teaching the origin of a tradition, bringing clarity and purpose to one’s purpose. They can also be complex and labor intensive delivering time-honored, beautiful results. Deksi Super’s writing, in particular, addresses the traditional practices that he has learned and carries on. Some of his stories teach about our language. Stories of traditions also shape identities and remind us of what makes people into family and community. Dakota traditions, while they are ever changing, continue to be passed down through each generation and are shared through story. We have many traditions – thus, many stories are shared here.”

– *Voices from Pejuhutazizi*, pp. 45 and 46.

Stories help us remember who we are and give us guidance about how things should be done in a good way. There are many lessons hidden within the words of these stories. What values and traditions are important in your community and what stories can be shared about them?

THE BUFFALO HUNT (P. 46)

- Why might it be important to share this story with others? What information would be beneficial to know? What traditions are transmitted through the sharing of this story?

WAMNAHEZA AND PAŠDAYAPI (P. 50)

- What is the difference between the two types of corn? Do you think pašdayapi is a tradition unto itself or is it a way to transmit traditions? Discuss.
- Who is Wašicuŋ and why is his story significant?
- Super is worried that sharing pašdayapi would encourage others to appropriate the practice and use it for profit? What other items (practices, foods, handiwork) from Indigenous peoples have been taken by non-Native peoples for profit?
- Super finds it ironic that the University of Minnesota Morris sends students to learn from him. Why is this so funny?
- Describe the relationship Super has with his corn.
- What traditions exist in your family or community that are being revitalized? How does it feel to see these traditions being reclaimed?

WASKUYA, WAĤPE, AND CAŊPA (P. 58)

- Food often carries the traditions of communities. In this story, Super talks about corn harvesting and tea that are important to him and his relatives. What food traditions does your community have?

PEJUTA (P. 59)

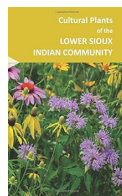
- What medicines and healing practices did Super share in his stories? Do you think these practices are used today by Dakota people? How might you find out?
- What medicines have been developed through Indigenous knowledge?



For a modern take on an Uŋktomi story, look at *Grasshopper Girl*, Teresa Peterson, 2019.

STORYTELLING (P. 61)

- When Super explains Uŋktomi stories (p. 61), he talks about the language used. How are stories connected to place?



An excellent resource for learning about traditional uses of plants: *Cultural Plants of the Lower Sioux Indian Community*, 2016.

DAKOTA CAŽE (P. 62)

- Are you named after anyone? What is the story behind your name?
- In this story, Super explains how he received his English name, nickname, and spirit name. Where did all three of Super's names come from?
- Super says that his grandpa Wanbdiska used up all the female birth order names (p. 64). What are the names and what do they mean? How might you learn what the male birth names are?

DAKOTA IAPI (P. 64)

- Super shares how he remembers the Dakota language being widely shared – in sermons, letters, and a newspaper. What does he attribute to why people say it is an oral language only?
- What responsibility do Dakota peoples have in making sure the full meaning of words (and names) gets passed on? How does learning the original meanings of words/sayings help in passing along traditions?
- How is Dakota culture embedded in the language?
- What languages are part of your family or community? How has knowing another language impacted your perspective on the world?

TRADITIONAL BRAIN TANNING (P. 71)

- Why did Super want to learn how to make buckskin? How does this align with his values? Who taught him how to work hides?
- What is the process for preparing and “braining” hides?
- Super mentions “the culture police” (p. 75). Who is he referring to and why are they worth noting?

[Learn more about Oceti Sakowin](#) through this resource created by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian's NK360 initiative.

BEADING AND MOCCASIN MAKING (P. 77)

- What traditions helped lead Super toward beading and moccasin making?
- How are beading and moccasin making more than sewing projects? How are these skills keeping traditions alive?
- What is regalia? Why is the word “costume” problematic?

[Learn more about Plains style beadwork](#) through this resource created by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian's NK360 initiative.

DRUM MAKING (P. 84)

- How are the designs Super paints on his drums linked to traditions? What does he teach us about camp circles in this story?
- The narrator provides an idea of what pejuhutazizi, yellow medicine, might be. What is it and where does it grow?
- There are differing opinions about what “yellow medicine” is; can there only be one correct answer? Discuss.

WACIPI (P. 86)

- How are contemporary powwows different from the ones Super learned about (or participated in) as a boy?
- Have you attended a powwow? If not, would you? Discuss.

The SMSC hosts an annual Wacipi and invites everyone to attend. [Watch the 2023 video to learn more.](#)

DAKOTA PRESBYTERY (P. 88)

***MATURE CONTENT: PLEASE NOTE, THIS STORY MENTIONS DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI) ON P. 92 AND SUICIDE ON P. 95.**

- What role did the church play in Super's community? What impact does he think the Dakota Odowan played in retention of church members?
- The church was a gathering place for Super and his family. Where in your community do you gather?
- Which one of Super's memories of attending church resonates with you? How does your family honor holidays?

FUNERALS (P. 95)

***MATURE CONTENT: PLEASE NOTE, THESE STORIES INCLUDE MENTION OF GRAVES AND HUMAN REMAINS ON P. 96, ALONG WITH ALCOHOLISM AND ANIMAL ABUSE ON P. 97. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR DAKOTA PEOPLE TO CONTINUE TO HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH RELATIVES WHO HAVE LEFT THE PHYSICAL WORLD.**

- Super says that we will greet those who have passed before us, “especially those who we might have called our tormentors, for they give us the opportunity to rise above pettiness, anger, and hate and instead show love and forgiveness.” (p. 99). How are the people who challenge you helping you to grow as a person?

STORIES DELIVER HEROES (P. 100)

"The admiration of family and community heroes, the honor of ancestry, and the dedication to one's people are all gained through story. Through story, heroes are kept alive in the minds of the people."

– *Voices from Pejuhutazizi*, p. 100



NASUNA TANJA (P. 100)

- How does Grandpa Fred's story differ from the white historian's account? Why would historians share something that wasn't true? How are false narratives used to support opinion?

MATURE CONTENT: THESE TALES INCLUDE SEVERAL ACCOUNTS OF VIOLENCE AND DEATH AND SHOULD BE USED WITH UPPER GRADE LEVELS. IN WHAT WAYS ARE THESE RECOLLECTIONS SIMILAR OR DISSIMILAR TO EVENTS HAPPENING IN MODERN DAY? CONSIDER WHO "GETS" TO TELL THE NEWS AND HOW THAT IMPACTS THE STORY TOLD.

- Many Feathers/Ornaments (p. 105)
- Mato (p. 108)
- The Warrior Who Lost His Brother (p. 111)
- Story of a Young Brave (p. 112)
- The Bear Story (p. 114)

ITESANYAPI (P. 116)

- How did the root medicine man, Dr. Quinn, ensure he always had plenty to eat?
- Why do you think this story is part of the Heroes section of the book? Discuss.

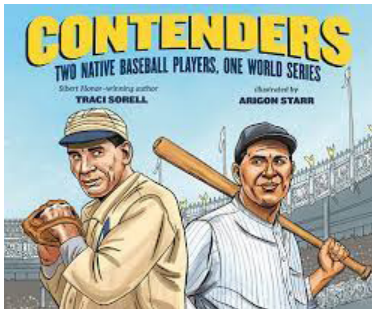
INDIAN BALL PLAYERS (P. 116)

- How did ball keep communities connected?
- What do you think "kittenball" is?

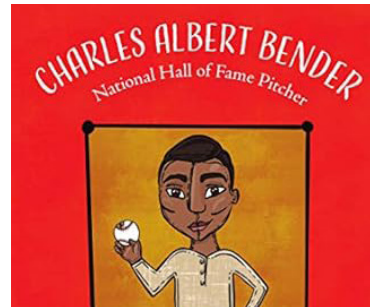
WEASEL (P. 116)

- Vernon, known as Weasel, was Super's relative in "the Indian way". What do you think that means?
- In the story Mitakuye Owasiŋ, we learned that Super considers himself related to everything around him. How can we apply this teaching in our own life? In living this way, how might our actions toward others reflect this concept of "All My Relations"?

TWO BOOKS ABOUT NATIVE AMERICAN BASEBALL PLAYERS:



CONTENDERS: TWO NATIVE BASEBALL PLAYERS, ONE WORLD SERIES, TRACI SORELL, 2023.



CHARLES ALBERT BENDER: NATIONAL HALL OF FAME PITCHER, KADE FERRIS, 2020.

STORIES RECONCILE

"Sometimes stories have the ability to reconcile painful events, perhaps of loved ones long gone, ushering in much-needed compassion. Stories also have the power to reclaim and reconnect a shared past to a collective future."

[Learn more about the trials and hanging of the Dakota 38.](#)

- *Voices from Pejuhutazizi*, p. 117

WAŚICUŃ (P. 117)

- On pages 117-119, we learn more about WaśicuŃ. How was his arrival dangerous to the Dakota? Why were they worried that the boy would be discovered? What previous incidents made them anxious about potential retaliation?
- What was WaśicuŃ's fate after the Dakota War?
- What does this story teach us about taking care of others?

AFTEREFFECTS (P. 121)

- What aftereffects followed the Dakota War?
- Super mentions that he felt tension growing up. What was the cause of that tension?
- What was the significance of a Tiyotipi? How did it play into the events leading to the Dakota War?
- Did you know that there is still a Minnesota law that makes it illegal for Dakota people to live in the state? Learn about the Dakota Removal Act of 1863.

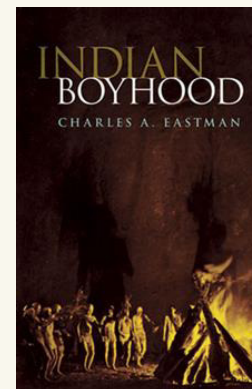
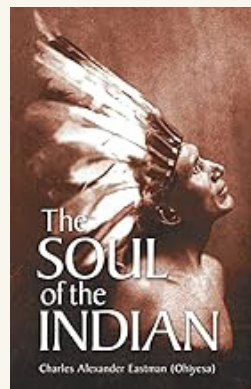
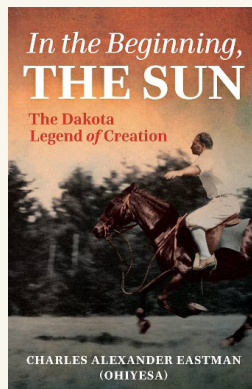
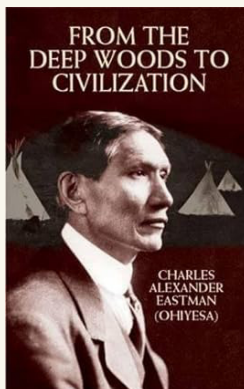
THE BATTLE OF LITTLE BIG HORN, 1876 (P. 123)

- What were the three recollections shared about the Battle of Little Big Horn? How do these narratives differ from what the history books say?

NAME CHANGING (P. 125)

- What role did Charles Eastman – Ohiyesa – play in "correcting the names" for the Indian Bureau? What was the purpose behind reworking peoples' names?
- Who was Charles Eastman?

THERE ARE SEVERAL RESOURCES ABOUT OR CREATED BY CHARLES OHIYESA EASTMAN:



[Watch the trailer for Ohiyesa: The Soul of the Indian.](#)

TRIBAL GOVERNANCE (P. 126)

- What was “Indian termination”? What was the government’s endgame?
- Super writes that the U.S. government referred to Natives as “the Indian problem,” which led to termination and relocation. How would you feel to be labeled a “problem” by the government?
- What would termination have done to the Dakota reservations? In the end, why did the State of Minnesota decide not to follow through?
- Where were Native people moving to because of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956?
- What do you think some of the impacts of relocation were? (See how Teresa’s mother’s experience impacted her life on the bottom of p. 13).

LAND CLAIM SETTLEMENTS (P. 127)

- What was the purpose of the Indian Claims Commission?
- The tribe was offered six cents per acre – the same amount offered in the original terms of the treaties (\$6 million dollars). It had been 100 years since the original terms were offered, but no interest was added to the amount. Would you have accepted the terms? Why or why not?

ŚICECA (P. 128)

- How was Super impacted by bullying in grade school? Does the way his mother responded surprise you? Why or why not?
- Teresa was also a victim of bullying in school (pp. 12 and 13). What do you think the impacts of that bullying had on her?

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM (P. 129)

- Based on this story, what do you think institutional racism is?
- What examples of institutional racism did Super provide that shows reservations were treated differently than non-reserve land? Where in your communities do you see people being given less for no reason other than racism?
- Despite often being the target of layoffs, how and why did Super reframe it into a positive light and why might it be different today?
- If you were in Super’s position, how would you have processed the rejection of continual layoffs? Discuss.

OWAŃGWAŚTE WOKAĀ – MAKING BEAUTY (P. 130)

- How did Super make peace with himself to tackle his addiction? Super shares that being Dakota never gave him feelings of shame but acknowledged that others may have felt differently than him. How can we support others to be their authentic selves?
- What can you do to be your authentic self?

[Learn about the Indian Termination Act](#) and what that meant for Native peoples in America.

Learn how the United States government intended to eliminate Indian Country by [relocating Native Americans off reservations and into urban centers](#).

STORIES ENTERTAIN

"Stories provide a way to socialize and provide entertainment. Amusement and humor, reverence and awe, tragedy and fortune are ways to overcome wounded egos, blunders, boredom, and long winters."

- *Voices from Pejuhutazizi*, p. 131.

THE TAME TATAŃKA (P. 131)

- Why was the buffalo acting so strangely?
- Who are the Métis? What relationship did they share with the Dakota?

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (P. 133)

- What dangers did the Dakota people of long ago have to contend with? How were their actions and travels impacted by other tribes?

TAWAPAHĀHOTA (P. 134)

- How did Tawapahāhota cleverly refuse the old man's offer? What do you think may have happened if he had insulted the old man (instead of only his daughters)?
- How does this reflect the thinking of the time? (And would a story like this happen today?)

LEARNING OJIBWE (P. 135)

- How does humor show up in traditional stories?

THE CELLAR (P. 136)

- Grandpa Waḡbdiska preferred to use fear over allowing his grandchildren the choice to do what was right. Which method would best motivate you to make good choices?

REVERAND TANG (P. 137), LONESOME (P. 137) AND EXHIBITION DANCING (P. 138)

- In these three stories, the author makes fun of himself. What values are being represented here? Why do you think Super chose to include these stories?

TATAŃKA OYATE (P. 138)

- How does Super rely on his connection to everything around him?
- How does intuition play a part in your life?

WAMDÓSA (P. 139)

- How can animals help us "predict" the weather? In this story, who was responsible for sending Waziya back to the north?

THE HOST (P. 139)

- What does this story teach us about caring for one another? Do you think this story could have happened? Why or why not?

BONE BROTH SOUP (P. 140)

- Hidden within this story is another one. Why would the people in the story be going to the "dump grounds" to collect carcasses? What does this teach us about some of the struggles of the time?
- Do you think people are having the same struggles with food insecurity today? Why or why not?

THE CROW (P. 140)

- How does humor play a part in storytelling amongst Dakota peoples (and many Indigenous peoples)? How can it also be used to connect to others and build relationships?

THE ROOSTER (P. 141)

- Stories are intended to build relationships between the teller and the listener(s). What lessons can the reader learn from this story?
- Why do we tell stories simply for entertainment?

SYNCHRONICITY (P. 141)

- Super shares a story about a time when he had a problem that ended up working out. What skills did he rely on to solve his problem? When was a time you were in a similar situation?
- How is this story similar to Tatan̄ka Oyate (p. 138)?

PANDEMIC TRAVELS (P. 142)

- Super shares how having a sense of humor is a good trait to have in a crisis. What skills do you count on when things don't go according to plan?

STORIES TELL OF PLACE

“We remember who we are and where we come from through stories of place. Land and place hold stories of origin, history, and knowledge and of our relationship with Ina Maka – Mother Earth.”

- *Voices from Pejuhutazizi*, p. 142.

THE EASTERN DAKOTA BANDS (P. 142)

- What hints are we given about the timeframe of this story? When might it have taken place?
- What do we learn about the relationship between Dakota and Anishinaabe (Chippeway) peoples? What factors could be influencing their relationship?

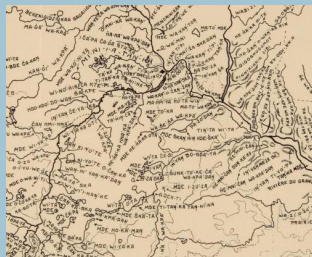


IMAGE FROM PAUL DURAND'S WHERE THE RIVERS MEET AND THE WATERS GATHER. LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS MAP.

PLACE NAMES (P. 143)

- Which of the place names included are near where you live? What do you notice about the Dakota place names? Which name is more fitting for the place – the Dakota or English one?
- How do the Dakota place names reflect their relationship with the land?
- What name was used for the first Americans who interacted with the Dakota? How is this name appropriate based on how Dakota people chose place names?

Learn about Minnesota place names from these two videos created by the SMSC:

[Dakota Place Names in Minnesota: Part 1](#)

<https://hocokatati.org/learn/photos-videos/?video=25085>

KNOW YOUR PEOPLE (P. 147)

- Why is it important to Super that people know where he's from? How is his identity connected to place?
- Where are you from? Does the place you call home impact who you are? Why or why not?
- If you could rename the place you live, what would you call it and why?

The Minnesota Humanities Center has created a teacher resource to help with Indigenous place names. [Access the Bdote Memory Map.](#)

MAYA BDEĠA (P. 147)

- How has our relationship with land changed over time?
- Do you think it is important to maintain original place names? Why or why not?

[Watch the animated short about Maya Bdeġa](#) and download the accompanying lesson.

OWOBOPTE WAKPA (P. 149), RICE CREEK (P. 149) AND CAŃŠAŠA WAKPADANĠ (P. 149)

- How are Owobopte Wakpa and Pomme de Terre River similar?
- Super shares a story about Indian tobacco. In contemporary times, many Native Americans use commercial tobacco for ceremony and smoking, but caŃšaša is something different completely. What is caŃšaša and how is it harvested and prepared?

[Learn about the movement to reclaim traditional tobacco](#) for spiritual and medicinal purposes.

UPPER SIOUX AGENCY (P. 150) AND ĤEKU AND KAĤMIŠ (P. 151)

- Super shares some history about the place he lives. In what ways does the land hold stories or memories? What are some ways we can learn about the stories from the places we call home?

PEJUHUTAZIZI (P. 152)

- How is the way Super described bringing in the new year similar or dissimilar to the traditions in your community?
- Super says that “wanting to go home seemed to be especially strong with us Dakota” (p. 153). How is this complicated by the aftereffects of the Dakota War?
- On pages 8 and 9, Teresa shares the pull she felt to go back to the reservation. Her mother's story is on page 14. How did both of these women reconnect with the place they now call home?
- Where is home for you? Is home a place? People? Memories? Traditions? Discuss.

STORIES PROVIDE BELONGING

“When you know your story, no matter where you go, you belong. Stories have roots to the past that lead all the way back to the source of things. Stories connect the past to the present, thus shape future realities. Stories are a bridge between generations past and grandchildren yet to come. Dakota stories remind us to think about the consequences of our actions seven generations forward, reflecting upon the legacy of seven generations before. Stories bring us home.”

- *Voices from Pejuhutazizi*, (p. 154).

SUSBE (P. 155)

- What are your stories? To where and to whom do you belong?
- What happened to Susbe and her people after 1862? Why did they have to move around so much?

REFUGEES (P. 155)

- In an earlier story, Synchronicity, Super talks about everything coming together as it should. Imagine if Susbe and her family weren't digging pipestone at the quarry in 1862; how would their lives have been different?
- How do you think it felt to be homeless in your homelands?

THE RETURN (P. 159)

- If you were in Susbe's shoes, would you have returned to the United States from Canada? On one hand, it was home and where her ancestors had lived for thousands of years, but it was also where Dakota people faced genocide. What would be your reasoning to go or to stay?

FLANDREAU SETTLEMENT (P. 160)

- Why did Susbe and Mahpiya Waštedaŋ settle in Flandreau, South Dakota? What challenges did they face there?
- What is a homestead? How was this a different way of living than they were used to?
- How were these government homesteads different than the original plots granted to new settlers through the Homestead Act?
- Why were the settlers given “free” land and the Dakota were allowed only to live on government land?

[Learn how the Homestead Act impacted Native Americans.](#)

VISITING FAMILY (P. 161)

- What happened during Susbe's trip to Wabasha, Minnesota, to visit her sister? What impact would these events have? What choices did she make afterward?

STARTING OVER (P. 162)

- What factors increased child mortality at this time?
- The storyteller, Grandpa Fred, says that the “white people were glad of that, as they wished to see them exterminated” (p. 162). Do you think this assessment was true?
- If so, how do you think it would feel to be unwelcome in your homelands and wished for dead?
- Despite all the ways Dakota people were left to struggle, they remain part of our communities today. How are Dakota perspectives contributing to build a better Minnesota?

BROWN EARTH, SISSETON (P. 165)

- What is an allotment and why did each family member get a parcel?
- How are each of the parcels connected to build community? Do you think this was intentional or a by product?
- What is the Dawes Act and how did it impact Sisseton?

[Learn more about the Dawes Act.](#)

HOTOŃTOŃNA (P. 163), COMING HOME (P. 166), HOTOŃTOŃNA'S DEATH (P. 167), WICAŤE (P. 168) AND LEGACY (P. 169)

- How do the final few stories create a sense of belonging? How might knowing where your ancestors are from build your sense of belonging?
- While stories of hardship can be difficult to read, how has this family persevered despite all their challenges?

PART 4: A STORY OF BELONGING (PP. 171-176)

- How is Teresa's new tree different than the one she created at the beginning of the book?
- Teresa says, "For much of my life, I felt that I did not quite belong in the white world and was missing so much of the Dakota way of life" (p. 171). When was a time you felt like you didn't belong? What do you do to build belonging for yourself and others?
- The author wonders if it's worse to be made invisible or reminded that you don't belong. Which is worse in your mind? Discuss.
- At 2% of the population in the United States, many Native Americans feel invisible. What responsibility might you have to elevate their stories, issues, and projects?
- Many non-Native people are intrigued by traditional names given to Native people, sometimes called "spirit names". What did Teresa learn about her spirit name and how does this knowledge help guide her?
- How can stories heal? How do they connect us to our ancestors?
- Why do you think Teresa had to work so hard to learn her stories?
- How can students, teachers, and schools work to include more perspectives in the classroom?



MEDIA ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

The following questions were adapted from the National Association for Media Literacy Education:

- Who might benefit from reading this book?
- What do you think the storytellers want you to remember?
- What feelings did you have while reading the book? How might those feelings influence your interpretation of the book?
- How has reading this book changed what you thought you knew about Dakota people?
- What themes and topics stood out for you?
- How might different people have a different understanding of this book?
- What is your interpretation of this book and what do you learn about yourself from that interpretation (or reaction)?

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Teresa Peterson (Dakota), Ed D is a writer, educator, and program manager at NDN Collective. Teresa's passion is digging in her garden that overlooks the Mni Sota River valley and feeding friends and family. She is a member of the Upper Sioux Community.

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