

Title

Revisiting historical landmarks.

Grade Level

High School, 9th through 12th grade.

Theme

Examining and correcting historical inaccuracies.

Duration

5 or 6 50-minute class periods.

Goal

To illustrate the power language has in recording history. Students will read the historical accounts printed on the National Park service signs describing the events of the Big Foot Trail and the Wounded Knee Massacre sites. Through close examination of the grammatical mechanics, word choice, and use of voice in these written accounts, students will interpret the accuracy or inaccuracies, and determine whether they were written with an unbiased voice.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand the historical context surrounding Chief Big Foot's surrender, and the Wounded Knee Massacre.
2. Students will be able to deconstruct the historical accounts written about these events and displayed on the historical markers. They will examine and edit the text for correct use of sentence mechanics, fluency, and the use of active and passive voice.
3. Students will be able to revise their edited work and create a factual and objective account of these events.

South Dakota Standards**Writing**

9.W.1.2 Students can revise a document for sentence fluency.

9.W.2.1 Students can revise text for the correct use of phrases.

10.W.2.1 Students can edit text for the correct use of active and passive voice.

10.W.2.3 Students can edit text for the correct use of quotation marks and italics for quoted material, titles, emphasized words, and dialogue.

12.W.2.1 Students can edit a document for all conventions.

Cultural Concept

Inaccuracies and cultural biases exist throughout history. Many historical accounts paint a picture of American Indians as being foolish, acting only on savage instinct and unable to think strategically, critically, or philosophically.

Cultural Background

<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/woundedknee/WKmscr.html>

Student Activities

Class One:

1. Hand out copies of the “Chief Big Foot Surrenders” and “Wounded Knee Massacre” accounts taken word for word from the actual historical markers.
2. Have students quietly read through the text.
3. Display pictures, in a slideshow, of present day Wounded Knee. Leave pictures of the two historical markers on the projection screen.
4. Have students read the accounts out loud.
5. Journal: Five-minute writing period for students to gather their thoughts and feelings about the slide show and text. Students must include three questions that they have.
6. Encourage students to share their questions with the class and discuss what they wrote in their journals.

Class Two:

1. Read excerpts from Dee Brown’s *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee* and John G. Neihardt’s *Black Elk speaks*.
2. Have comprehension and critical thinking questions ready to ensure retention and understanding of readings.

Class Three:

1. Open with a recap discussion of the previous day’s readings.
2. Open the floor for any comments or questions.
3. Quick overview of grammar conventions.
4. Hand out a chart of editing symbols.
5. Randomly draw names placing students in groups of three.
6. Explain to students that they will be editing the text from the “Chief Big Foot Surrenders” and “Wounded Knee Massacre” accounts taken word for word from the actual historical markers. Once they have edited the text they will be writing a short outline of their findings/editing corrections to present to the rest of the class. Next, students will individually write their own revised accounts.
7. Hand out a written form of instructions stated above. Include specific questions to answer. Example: What do you notice about the grammar conventions? Sentence fluency? Is this account written in a biased or unbiased voice? What specific language or word choice portrays this?
8. Begin editing group work.

Class Four:

1. Students continue editing and organizing their findings.
2. Last 15 minutes—group reports of findings.

Class Five:

1. Hand out written instructions and rubric for the individual revising/writing.
2. Stress the importance of being factual and unbiased writing in the passive voice.
3. Ask students to orally provide examples of sentences in the passive voice for practice.
4. Students work on their revisions for the rest of class and (if needed) the weekend.

Class Six (if needed):

1. Discussion and sharing.
2. Students discuss the process they used in writing their individual revisions. What did they specifically change? What were their thoughts and feelings as they were revising? What are their thoughts about the text they edited? Do they feel the signs should be revised and re-worded?
3. Journal: Five-minute writing period about the assignment, stating specifically what they learned.

Resources

- Pictures arranged in a sideshow or PowerPoint of Wounded Knee, historical marker, mass grave, monument, community in the present and past.
- Historical marker indicating “Chief Big Foot Surrenders.”
- Lined paper and pencils for journal writing.
- Excerpts from Dee Brown’s “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee” pg. 431-438, 439-445.
- Excerpt from John Neihardt’s *Black Elk Speaks* chapters; “Bad Trouble Coming” and “The Butchering at Wounded Knee.”
- Text from the historical markers (provided below).

Assessment

1. Journal assignment, 3 questions.
2. Critical thinking and comprehension questions.
3. 6+1 writing rubric.
4. Knowledge Journal.

References

Brown, D. (1970). *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC.
Neihardt, J. G. (1961). *Black Elk speaks*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/woundedknee/WKmscr.html>.

Developer

Mabel Picotte
PO Box 85
Chamberlain, SD 57325
mpicotte@hotmail.com

Date

22 July 2010

Massacre of Wounded Knee

Dec. 29, 1890, Chief Big Foot, with his Minneconjou and Hunkpapa Sioux Band of 108 warriors, 250 women and children were encamped on this flat, surrounded by the U.S. 7th Cavalry (470 soldiers) commanded by Col. Forsythe.

The "Messiah Craze" possessed many Indians, who left the vicinity of Ind. Agencies to "Ghost Dance" during the summer and fall of 1890. "Unrest" on the Pine Ridge Reservation was partly due to the reduction of beef rations by Congress, and to the "Ghost Dancing" of Chiefs Sitting Bull, Hump, Big Foot, Kicking Bear, and Short Bull. The Sioux were told by Kicking Bear and Short Bull that by wearing "Ghost Shirts" the ghost dancing warriors would become immune to the whiteman's bullets and could openly defy the soldiers and White settlers, and bring back the old days of the big buffalo herds.

On Nov. 15, 1890, Indian Agent Royer (Lakota Wakakpaj) at Pine Ridge called for troops, and by Dec. 1, 1890, several thousand U.S. Regulars were assembled in this area of Dakota Territory.

On Dec. 15, 1890, Chief Sitting Bull was killed by Lt. Bullhead of the Standing Rock Indian Police. Forty of Sitting Bull's braves escaped from Grand River, and joined Chief Big Foot's band on Deep Creek to camp and "Ghost Dance" on the south fork of the Cheyenne River. Chief Big Foot was under close scrutiny of Lt. Col. Sumner and his troops, and on Dec. 23, 1890, they were ordered to arrest Big Foot as a hostile. However, the Big Foot band had already silently slipped away from the Cheyenne county, into the Badlands, heading for Pine Ridge.

On Dec. 28, 1890, without a struggle, Chief Big Foot surrendered to the U.S. 7th Cavalry (Maj. Whitesides) at the site marked by a sign five miles north of here. The Band was then escorted to Wounded Knee, camping that night under guard.

Reinforcements of the U.S. 7th Cavalry (including one company of Indian Scouts) arrived at Wounded Knee from Pine Ridge Agency the morning of Dec. 29, 1890. Col. Forsythe took command of a force of 470 men. A battery of four Hotchkiss guns was placed on the hill 400 feet west of here, overlooking the Indian encampment. Big Foot's Band was encircled at 9:00 p.m. by a line of foot soldiers and cavalry. Chief Big Foot, sick with pneumonia, lay at a warmed tent provided by Col. Forsythe in the center of the camp. A white flag flew there, placed by the Indians. Directly in the rear of the Indian Camp was a dry draw, running east and west.

The Indians were ordered to surrender their arms before proceeding to Pine Ridge. Capt. Wallace, with an Army detail, began searching the teepees for hidden weapons. During this excitement, Yellow Bird, a medicine man, walked among the braves blowing on an eaglebone whistle, inciting the warriors to action, declaring that the "Ghost Shirt" worn by the warriors would protect them from the soldier's bullets. A shot was fired, and all hell broke loose. The troops fired a deadly volley into the Council warriors, killing nearly half of them. A bloody hand-to-hand struggle followed, all the more desperate since the Indians were armed mostly with clubs, knives and revolvers. The Hotchkiss guns fired 2-pound explosive shells on the groups, indiscriminately killing warriors, women, children and their own disarming soldiers. Soldiers were killed by cross-fire of their comrades in this desperate engagement.

Surviving Indians stampeded in wild disorder for the shelter of the draw 200 feet to the south, escaping west and east in the draw, and north down Wounded Knee Creek. Pursuit by the 7th Cavalry resulted in the killing of more men, women and children, causing the battle to be referred to as the "Wounded Knee Massacre". One hour later, 146 Indian, women and children lay dead in the Wounded Knee Creek valley. The bodies of many were scattered along a distance of two miles from the scene of the encounter. Twenty soldiers were killed on the field, and sixteen later died of wounds. Wounded soldiers and Indians alike were taken to Pine Ridge Agency. A blizzard came up. Four days later, an Army detail gathered up the Indian dead and buried them in a common grave at the top of the hill northwest of here. A monument marks this grave.

"Ghost Dancing" ended with this encounter. The Wounded Knee battlefield is the site of the last armed conflict between the Sioux Indians and the United States Army.

Delineator—Irving P. Pond and Herbert H. Clifford
By—Stanley S. Walker, Sup. Highway Engr.
Reprinted by Stacey and John Stewart, 5-5-95

Chief Big Foot Surrenders

East ½ mile from the point, on the old Cherry Creek—Pine Ridge Trail, Chief Big Foot (Spotted Elk) and his Minneconjou, wagon horse band, with some forty braves of Sitting Bull's Hunkpapa band was intercepted and surrendered on December 28, 1890 to Major Samuel M. Whiteside, 7th U.S. Cavalry. The Band was escorted to Wounded Knee, where they camped for the night under guard. Big Foot who was ill was attended by the army physician that night.

Delineator—Irving R. Pond and Herbert Clifford