

Activity

Students read closely about the Ghost Dance and work together to write a poem using “found language”.

Grades

9-12

Content Areas

Social Studies

English Language Arts

Skills

- Close reading strategies
- Collaborative writing of Found Poetry
- Evaluation of one’s own work

Understandings

1. The Ghost Dance was an American Indian religious movement.
2. The Ghost Dance was modified by Lakotas to focus on relatives.

Procedure

1. Review close reading strategies with students. A guide from the Harvard College Writing Center suggests three key points of close reading: to read with a pencil in hand to annotate the text; to look for patterns in the text—repetitions, contradictions, similarities; and finally, to ask questions about the patterns noticed—especially how and why those patterns are present and significant. For more information on this model, go to <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>. Reviewing this with students will help them with the activities that follow.
2. Provide students with a copy of the *Takuwe* Belief panel text. Individually, students read and annotate the quotations and text. In addition to recording their questions and observations, students should be, either by highlighting or transcribing, recording specific words and phrases that speak to them or pull them into the material. Students should also pay attention to which people are quoted or mentioned on the panel. Who were the primary “players” in bringing the Ghost Dance to Lakotas?
3. Break students into small groups to discuss the reading. Students should share and compare the patterns, questions and powerful phrases they identified with their annotations. Provide students with the following suggested discussion points:
 - a. What do the quotes have in common?
 - b. Are there differences between the quotes?
 - c. What is the main theme expressed?
 - d. What questions do you have after reading this?
 - e. Who was Wovoka? Why did a delegation of Lakotas travel to see him?
 - f. Based on this reading, what were the primary beliefs or intentions of the Ghost Dance?
 - g. Why would the Ghost Dance have been important to Lakotas?

- h. Is there anything more your group can find that you didn't notice in your first reading?
- 4. Students can now begin work on a communal "Found Poem" in their groups. "A 'found poem' is one that is created using only words, phrases, or quotations that have been selected and rearranged from another text." A summary description is provided here, but for more detailed instructions and information about found poems, go to <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/found-poems>.
 - a. In their groups students create a communal list of the words and phrases they found powerful in their readings. They should aim for 15-20 phrases at a minimum so they have plenty of material to work with.
 - b. Students identify a main theme of the quotes they've selected.
 - c. At this point students may want to do some additional research on Wovoka or the Ghost Dance to find more language for their poem that fits under the theme they've identified. Additional research is optional but may provide a richer context in which to understand the Belief panel. A good starting point can be found at http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/wovoka.htm.
 - d. Students compose their poem. They cannot add any words of their own but can rearrange and repeat the quotes and words they've previously selected.
 - e. Once they are satisfied with their work, students present their group's poem to the class.
- 5. Have students evaluate how their group worked together. The Peer Assessment Collaborative Rubric developed by Intel Corporation is a general model for assessing group work. It assesses six collaboration skills: participation, leadership, listening, feedback, cooperation and time management. For more information and a handout for students, go to <https://www.intel.com/content/dam/www/program/education/us/en/documents/project-design/density/density-peer-rubric.pdf>.