

Activity

Students read and annotate historical reports about two reservations during 1890, considering how this information may change their perspective on the Wounded Knee Massacre or Sitting Bull's assassination.

Grades

7-12

Content Areas

Social Studies

English Language Arts

Skills

- Close reading strategies
- Analysis of a primary source
- Reading aloud
- Evaluating historical records to draw conclusions

Understandings

1. Historical events are not isolated in time.
2. Primary sources can be used to better understand living conditions of people in the past.
3. The conditions in reservations during 1889 and 1890 provide more context for Sitting Bull's assassination and the entire *Takuwe* exhibit.

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, annotating the text, to look for patterns in the things you've noticed about the text—repetitions, contradictions, similarities, and finally, to ask questions about the patterns you've noticed—especially how and why. 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. Group students depending on age and size of the class. Students' reading abilities should be carefully considered for this assignment and the activity adapted by size of group and/or amount of text provided. Sections of the readings can be assigned to individual students, pairs, groups, or the class can read together.
3. Provide students with copies of *Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, Vol. 2, 1890, Pages 41-46 and Pages 48-62. You can find a copy of this text at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015011917930;view=1up;seq=235>. Remind students to annotate their texts as they read.
4. These readings offer students a glimpse into reservation status during 1889 and 1890. Before reading, make sure students take note that the reports are dated August 25, 1890 (Cheyenne River Reservation) and August 28, 1890 (Pine Ridge Reservation). It is of utmost importance to read the excerpts knowing that four months after these documents were written, Sitting Bull was assassinated. If this leader was such a threat, why is he never mentioned in the Agents' reports to the Secretary of the Interior? Another section to take particular note of is found on Page 49; the document specifically speaks about the Ghost Dance and its influence on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

5. This assignment lends itself to evaluation of reading skills. If reading as a class, the teacher may want to assess this with a rubric. A general model for evaluating reading fluency can be found at <https://www.scribd.com/doc/72202234/Reading-Fluency-Rubric>. This rubric assesses pace, expression, punctuation and phrasing. A more detailed example can be found at <https://image.slidesharecdn.com/readingaloudrubricevaluation-130326204517-phpapp02/95/reading-aloud-rubric-evaluation-1-638.jpg?cb=1364330753>. This sample assesses volume, fluency, presentation skills, and expression. If students are reading in small groups or pairs, you may want to provide them with a partner assessment. A general model that assesses smoothness, accuracy, and expression can be found at https://www.k12reader.com/rubrics/partner_reading_rubric.pdf.