

Activity

Students silently reflect on the facts of the Interment panel.

Grades

9-12

Content Areas

Social Studies

Skills

- Reflective writing

Understandings

1. Treatment of the dead is a reflection of reverence and respect (or lack thereof) for life.

Procedure

1. The Interment panel describes how and where the bodies were buried. Why was this method of interment used? Informally discuss students' knowledge of burial or other approaches to dealing with the dead. Ask students how respect is shown to the dead. Would they want their relatives to be buried in such a way? How were the dead treated in Lakota traditions? Was there more than one funerary tradition?
2. Select from the above questions, statistics from the panel, lines from the Dewey Beard quote (depending on the size of the class, this could be kept whole, or divided into smaller sections. "Into it they tossed dozens of corpses...", "The contractor got two dollars a body...", "The soldiers jumped in to tramp down the dead," etc.) or one of the images or poems from the Interment section of the exhibit. Each of these quotes or images will now serve as a "stimulus" in the Silent Conversation activity that follows. Basic instructions are included here, but for more details, please go to <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/big-paper-silent-conversation>.
3. Each stimulus should be attached to a large poster-sized piece of paper with plenty of space to write around it.
4. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group to one of the silent conversation papers. Use these as the starting point for the activity detailed at the Facing History link in #2 above.
5. After the class has completed the activity, you may want to give students the opportunity to journal or write reflectively on their own, recording their thoughts after having the opportunity to read other people's responses.