

Activity

Students critically consider multimedia sources related to issues of healing, reconciliation and commemoration, and develop their own memorial for the Wounded Knee Massacre site.

Grades

7-12

Content Areas

Social Studies

Skills

- Persuasive writing
- Researching historical events
- Planning a memorial

Understandings

1. A memorial can be used to protect land, commemorate people, embody perspectives or important ideas, and record history.
2. All members of a community, including young people, have a voice that they can use for change.

Procedure

1. Students will be completing the “Stations” activity from Facing History at <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/stations-interacting-multiple-texts>. Suggested station materials and questions will be detailed here, but for more information on the activity, please see the link. At each station, students will read, watch and interpret a different resource that discusses issues of justice and reconciliation. Small groups will spend an allotted amount of time at each station interacting with the material. Suggested discussion questions for the group will be provided, but it may also make sense to have students record three of the most important ideas from the station, two supporting details for each of these ideas, and one question they have about each of these ideas. See <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/3-2-1> for more ideas about having students write reflectively in response to the resources.

Station One

Resource: *Takuwe* Proposal panel text

Suggested Discussion Questions: What different efforts to memorialize the Wounded Knee Massacre have taken place? What has been successful? What hasn't? What responsibilities, if any, do tribes and Native Americans have to commemorate the Wounded Knee site? Who else should be responsible? What do those roles look like? What does commemoration look like and how might that be accomplished?

Station Two

Resource: This is a brief chapter from the publication “Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools” that details the official apology issued by the Canadian government to First Nations peoples in regards to the residential school program. Go to <https://www.facinghistory.org/stolen-lives->

[indigenous-peoples-canada-and-indian-residential-schools/chapter-5/government-apologizes](https://www.facinghistory.org/stolen-lives-indigenous-peoples-canada-and-indian-residential-schools/chapter-5/government-apologizes) for the text.

Suggested Discussion Questions: This article cites a report that stated that the relationship between First Nations People and the Canadian government should be based on “mutual recognition and respect, sharing and responsibility”. Has this been the case in the United States? In regards to Wounded Knee? What does a relationship based on “mutual recognition and respect, sharing and responsibility” look like? How would it shape the national memory around events like the Wounded Knee Massacre?

Station Three

Resource: The following chapter from the publication “Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools asks the question, “Are apologies enough?” Go to <https://www.facinghistory.org/stolen-lives-indigenous-peoples-canada-and-indian-residential-schools/chapter-5/are-apologies-enough>.

Suggested Discussion Questions: What can an apology accomplish as a means of moving toward justice and reconciliation? What else needs to happen? The “Connecting Questions” found at the bottom of the linked page ask students to consider the meaning of apologies, and are quite useful in unpacking the themes of this article.

Station Four

Resource: This is the text of the 1990 Senate Resolution 153m that “conveys the support of the Congress for the establishment of a suitable Memorial to those slain at Wounded Knee.” <https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/senate-concurrent-resolution/153/text>

Suggested Discussion Questions: What are the goals outlined in this Resolution? Have they been met? Why or why not? What does the “establishment of suitable Memorial” look like? What is the difference between reparation and reconciliation? Are those different than justice?

Station Five

Resource: This an interview with Trevor Noah on *The Breakfast Club*. Trevor Noah is a South African comedian and host of *The Daily Show*. The video focuses on racism in America and references Noah’s experiences with South African reparation. Although the whole video is quite long, the time segment between 20:33 and 22:33 is sufficient for the purposes of this activity. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zM5Ljm87V3U>. Key lines to take note of in this section of the video are: “We had an acknowledgement.” Meaning that South African apartheid was acknowledged. Citizens of South Africa along with the world universally acknowledged that apartheid was real while untold millions of people suffered. White South Africans “owned” their apartheid history. Noah goes on to say: “This shit is real. This shit happened.” The appropriateness of this language is a teacher consideration. Most importantly for the purposes of this activity, Noah states: “... in America it feels like that has not happened.” Noah is saying that acknowledgement of racism and the associate acts perpetrated and continuing to be perpetrated have never been and still aren’t acknowledged by collective white

America. Within the context of the program and interview, Noah is referring to the Black experience in America, but this perspective is also applicable to many Lakotas' and other American Indians' experiences. Another statement that warrants consideration in conversations about the "aftermath" of Wounded Knee is, "As a person of color, you were not crazy." As a Lakota person, you are not crazy when you find yourself overwhelmed about the atrocity associated with the Wounded Knee Massacre and with the question "Why?"/"Takuwe"?

Suggested Discussion Questions: Do the concepts of healing, reparation, justice, apologies, and reconciliation have a role in moving forward toward positivity with regard to the Wounded Knee Massacre experience? Why or why not? In what context should conversations about healing and reconciliation take place? How are they facilitated? What are the expected results?

Station Six

Resource: *Takuwe* poem, "The Proposal" by Autumn D. White Eyes

Suggested Discussion Questions: What does White Eyes mean when she says, "do you know what it's like to feel your ancestors under your skin?" How could a public memorial provide a space for private grief? What is she referring to in the line "do you see the shine of their guns in the 20 medals the 7th Calvary were awarded?" (If you haven't discussed the Medals of Honor awarded to U.S. soldiers for their actions at Wounded Knee previously, it may be worthwhile to include excerpts from an article explaining this. This article: <http://werehistory.org/medal-of-honor-wounded-knee/> goes into detail about the massacre, but the first and last two paragraphs explain a little about the history of rescinding these medals, and raise the question of why these 20 haven't been revoked.) What does "a place to heal, to mourn, to make sense of it all, and to honor them" look like? How can that be accomplished?

2. After students have completed the station activity, they should be able to take what they've learned and transform it into a plan of action. In class or as a take home assignment, students should develop their own Proposal for a Wounded Knee Memorial. Although this may take the form of physical structures, students may also want to think about concrete actions that different people could take as steps towards justice, reconciliation, or healing. Provide students with this worksheet: https://www.facinghistory.org/sites/default/files/Creating_a_Memorial_0.pdf from Facing History that guides them through the considerations of designing a memorial. This worksheet is designed for a Holocaust lesson plan, but is easily applicable to Wounded Knee. Key considerations as they do this work should include: How should we remember the past? What impact do memorials and monuments have on the way we think about history? What parts of this history are most important for us to remember today? How can we ensure that this history is not forgotten?
3. After students have completed their worksheets, have them share their plans with the class. You may want to consider combining aspects from different proposals and creating a grand class proposal that can be shared more broadly in the community, state, sent to members of Congress, or leaders in tribal nations.