



VISION MAKER
M E D I A

Educational Guide

Across THE Creek

A film by Jonny Cournoyer.



Program Synopsis

The Lakota are the most numerous of the Sioux divisions and are also the “quintessential” American Indian that popular culture identifies as the American Indian. This recognition has roots in the buffalo and horse culture that the Lakota adapted once they moved west to the Great Plains. The Indian Reservations of Rosebud and Pine Ridge are the focus of this film.

Grade Appropriateness

- 9-12 (also suitable for 6-9)

Subject/Topic Curricula

- Social Studies
- U.S. History
- Geography

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

The appropriate common core standards are listed using the nationally accepted labels and include three parts: the first letter(s) refer(s) to the strand (e.g. RL – Reading standard for literature; RI – Reading standard for informational text; W – Writing, etc.); the first number(s) refer(s) to the grade level and the last number(s) refer(s) to the number of the specific standard.

For more information, consult:
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>



Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

Background

The Great Sioux Nation is a confederation of bands and tribes based in the north central United States. The Seven Council Fires (Oceti Sakowin) refers to the entire Great Plains tribal system, which contains into three major sub-divisions by language—the Lakota, the Dakota (Santee) and the Nakota (Yankton). *Across the Creek* focuses on the Lakota, a group comprised of seven bands who are the most populous and furthest west of the Sioux tribes. The specific tribes shown in *Across the Creek* are the Lakota people of the Rosebud Sioux and Pine Ridge Reservations in the southwestern part of South Dakota.

The term “Sioux” is derived from an Ojibwe word to describe enemies, a name given to the Europeans by the Ojibwe. In recent years, the Sioux Nation has made a conscious effort to return to the terminology they use for themselves, based on their band name, language dialect, and in the 20th century by the names of the reservations of origin. Examples from this film are Lakota (language), Santee (band), and Rosebud Sioux (reservation of origin).

Before the seventeenth century, the Lakota mostly lived in what is now central Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin. During the mid-17th century they were pushed west by the Ojibwe tribes and displaced the tribes previously living west of the Missouri River. During that period, the Lakota tribes became master horsemen and became involved in large trading groups with Sioux tribes further to the east working as middlemen. Eventually, the Lakota grew to outnumber all of the other Sioux tribes combined, and were a massive political and military force in the Central and Northern Plains.

By the late 1800s, the bison herds were nearly extinct and the U.S. government had begun an aggressive military policy against the Lakotas. The loss of their livelihoods, and the continued pressure from the military was devastating on the Sioux. The Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868 created the Great Sioux Reservation, and after the wars of the 1880s and 1890s many Lakota were living on reservations.

As a part of the government control of the Lakota, the Sun Dance and other Lakota rituals were banned, although they remained a secret part of the Lakota culture. By 1890, the Ghost Dance had been introduced to the Lakota by Paiute visionary Wovoka who traveled to reservations where American Indians were living in harsh conditions. While this movement offered hope to a people who were suffering, the U.S. Calvary interpreted it as a threat to national security. On December 29, 1890, the U.S. Army surrounded a group of ghost dancers near Wounded Knee Creek, and massacred more than 150 Sioux, many of them women and children. The massacre was the final major conflict of the war between the Sioux and the U.S. government.

Beyond military conflicts, U.S. government policies also had wide-ranging social implications. In 1879, Lt. Richard Pratt lobbied the government and convinced officials to allow him to convert an old army barracks in Carlisle, Penn., into Carlisle Indian School. This was the first of the large off-reservation Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools that would shape the character of American Indian education for the next century.

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Lakota children were rounded up from reservations in the west and taken to schools like this for several years at a time. The boarding school experience removed children from their families and cultures. At the schools, children were not allowed to dress in native clothing, retain native hairstyles, or speak their languages. They were forced into a system of rigid discipline, and forced to adopt the English language, style of dress and strict Christianity.

Tensions between tribal communities and the U.S. government continued into the twentieth century, and broad social problems in many Native communities led to issues that persist today. This prompted a group of young American Indians to form an organization they named the American Indian Movement (AIM). They wanted to raise awareness about the poor living conditions on reservations, as well as in the urban areas, all stemming from broken treaty promises and boarding school trauma. In 1973, members of the American Indian Movement took over a church in the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The 71-day occupation brought American Indian issues forward to a country that generally accepted that the American Indian was a phenomenon of the past.

In 1975, Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act that gave tribal nations and communities the authority to receive federal funding to administer programs as each saw fit for their people. During the 20th century, Native communities faced social problems associated with poverty such as high rates of obesity, diabetes, drugs, and sexual and alcohol abuse.

Across the Creek shows the Rosebud Sioux community reclaiming culture and traditions as a way to address these social problems. Families are working to become more engaged in education and recreational endeavors of their children. Healthy eating trends are being embraced, along with daily exercise.



Prayer Flag on the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

Sources:

Carter, John. "Wounded Knee Massacre," *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2011.
<http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.war.056#egp.war.056>

Gibbon, Guy. "Sioux," *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2011.
<http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.na.107.xml>

Hirschfelder, Arlene and Martha Kreipe de Montano. *The Native American Almanac*, New York: MacMillan, 1993.

Lesson 1: Lakota Boy is Brave

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Key Concept:

Lakota people are suffering from the problems associated with poverty, and their lifestyles have changed radically since the early 20th century.

Estimated Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the history of the Lakota.
- To examine and learn the ways of the Lakota.
- To identify the problems contemporary Lakota face.



Discussion Questions:

1. In the film, Lakota elder Albert White Hat talks about children not being as strong now as they used to be. Discuss possible situations that might have contributed to his observation.

- The boarding school experience left the kids void of spirit and connection to family. This has resulted in a generation that does not know how to parent and how to be strong.

2. At the beginning of the film, a young Lakota man expresses that there is not much to do on his reservation. What does he do to cope with his boredom?

- Drugs and alcohol

Sam Wounded Head (Rosebud Sioux, 1923-2011) on the Rosebud Reservation. Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

3. In the film, several of the elders refer to “the old days, in the past.” What types of changes did they describe that has occurred over the years? Discuss.

- Kids used to be outside all day, riding horses, doing chores, and playing. Families worked together, cooked together, and ate together. Now, everyone is inside and not active. This was an important time for families to share history and culture.

Learning/Media Activity Suggestions:

1. Discussing Cause and Effect

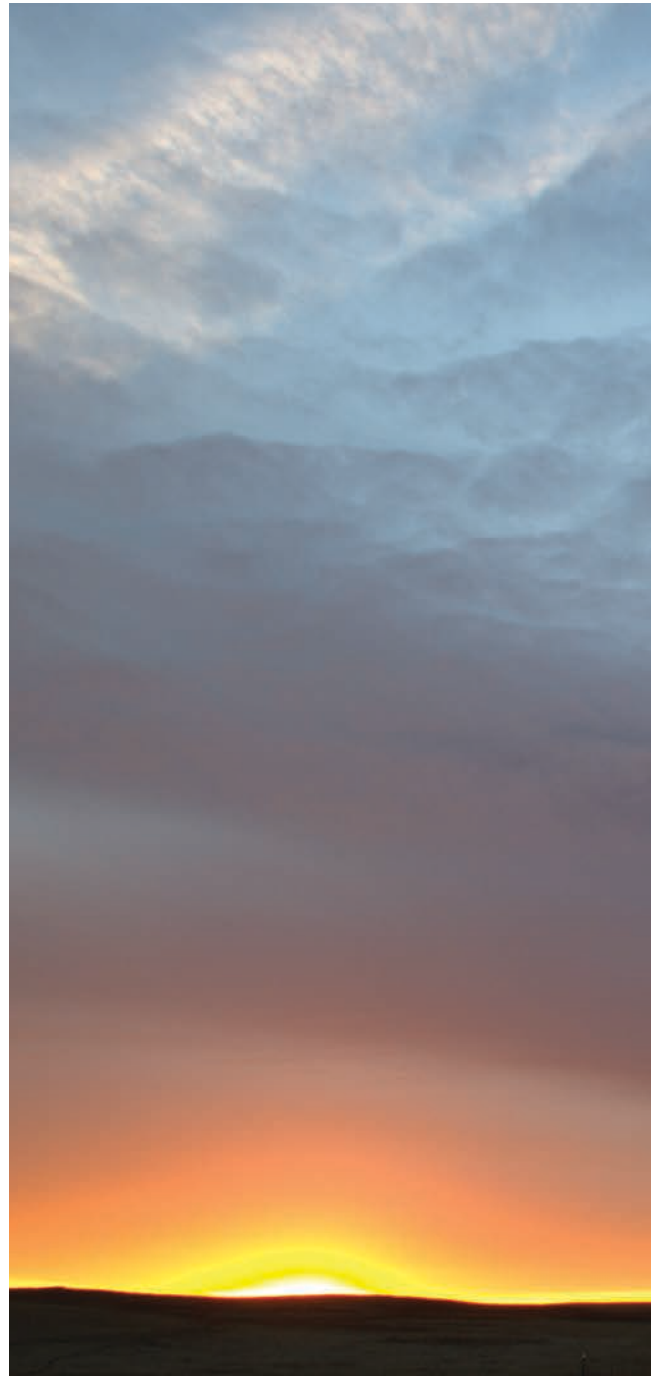
Research the following periods in American Indian history and how each of these acts or policies contributed to the loss of culture, language and identity.

- Colonization Period, pre-1850
- Treaty Period, 1851-1865
- Boarding School Period, 1879-1968
- Allotment Act (Dawes Act), 1887
- Indian Removal Act, 1930

2. Research and discuss the Acts below and provide a short description of the outcome of each Act. Do you believe this helped Native people take back their culture and inspired them to work to preserve it?

- The Citizenship Act of 1924
- Native American Civil Rights Act, 1938
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1970
- Indian Self-Determination Act & Education Assistance Act, 1975
- Indian Child Welfare Act, 1978
- NAGPRA, 1990

3. There is a section of the film where ways to keep families together are shared. Have a discussion about the traditions that keep your family together.



Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

Lesson 2: LAKĤÓTIYA - TO SPEAK LAKOTA

View Video Clip 2: 00:09:24-00:14:13

Key Concept:

Lakota people realize their culture, language, and way of life is being lost, and some community leaders are taking steps to preserve Lakota language and culture.

Estimated Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the importance of language.
- To examine and learn about ways to keep language alive.
- To identify Lakota words and their meanings.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the Lakota language being lost?

- Many people lost the language in boarding schools. Today, only 14% speak the language fluently.

2. Who is Sage Fast Dog and what is an important accomplishment of his?

- He relearned his Native language and now teaches it to students at Todd County Middle School.

3. According to Lakota traditional teachings, what do songs teach about?

- They teach us who we are, where we are from, and where we are going. They also help to learn the language, how the language is used, and pronunciations of words and vocabulary.

4. What is an Immersion School?

- A school where most of the teaching is done in the Lakota language. The students talk Lakota all-day in school.



Sage Fast Dog (Rosebud Sioux), Lakota Language Instructor on the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

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Albert White Hat (Rosebud Sioux), renowned Lakota studies teacher on the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

Learning/Media Activity Suggestions:

1. **Using books and the Internet, create your own map of the Great Plains region and depict the nine federally recognized American Indian reservations in South Dakota.**

Provide information about each such as population, industries (where people work), what types of schools are on the reservation (public, private, mission, boarding). Be prepared to participate in a discussion in your class about what you learned.

2. **Have students develop a set of vocabulary cards.**

Divide the class into teams and have each compete to see who has the largest amount of vocabulary cards and when they are presented in a gaming format, give each team a point for definitions that they can recall.

3. **Language programs.**

Many tribes have language programs where American Indians can study their tribal language. Using the Internet, have students identify American Indian Tribes that have language programs. Have students write a short description of five tribes with language programs, the language, and an interesting fact about each program.

Lesson 3: WIČHÓĤ'AN: CULTURE & TRADITION

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Key Concept:

Belonging to family, to community, and to culture is vital for a person to thrive. There are four main components of the Lakota worldview:

- Lak Ho' Hya – To speak Lakota (language)
- Wicho' H'an – Culture and tradition (family)
- Makhoche – Land, country, and place (land)
- Wichichaga – They all grow, thrive, and prosper, the next generation (youth)

Estimated Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the concept of family for Lakota.
- To examine and learn about Lakota ceremonies.
- To identify similarities and differences between traditions of the Lakota and the students' families.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the role of medicine men in Lakota culture?

- They interpret for the spirit, and help people get back in balance.

2. Discuss the Sweat Lodge and the significance of the Sweat Lodge ceremony to the Lakota people.

The Sweat Lodge, also called Inipi, is a purification and balance of body, mind, spirit, and emotions. It is a place of prayer and healing. The actual lodge is a round domed structure. A fire is built outside of the dwelling and rocks are heated in the fire.

After participants enter the Sweat Lodge, the hot rocks are placed in the middle of the dwelling and water is poured over the rocks creating the cleansing steam. Prayers are offered.

- Does your culture have a similar type of ceremony that is comparable to the Sweat Lodge?
- What do people do to cleanse and sweat? Discuss how this is similar and how it is different. (Modern facilities are steam rooms. While this is not regarded as a religious ceremony in popular culture, it is used as a time for meditation and cleansing. Discuss modern ways of creating steam compared with fire and rocks.)



Learning/Media Activity Suggestions:

Bear Butte, South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

1. Short Discussion & Paper

Have a short discussion on the importance of family and tradition. Pose the following, “Does your family have a tradition that it celebrates? Write a short paper describing this tradition.

- Where did your family tradition come from?
- How long has it been a tradition?
- Why is it important to your family?

2. Write a Story

Using the main concepts of the Lakota worldview, have students write a story describing home. Share stories in discussion groups.

3. Short Discussion, Interview, & Paper

Have a short discussion with students about family heirlooms. Have each student write a short paper describing their own family’s heirloom.

- How is it used?
- When is it used?
- Explain the history of the particular object.

Students will have to conduct one-on-one personal interviews with family members to obtain this information.

Lesson 4: MAKĤÓČHE: LAND, COUNTRY, & PLACE

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Key Concept:

The Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation in Porcupine, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Reservation is committed to providing resources for Lakota youth and families to improve the health, culture, and environment through strengthening cultural identity.

Collectively, families and staff established a community garden, as well as hiking and biking paths to create an environment where modern communities can learn about how to live in harmony with their environment and hold on to the traditional way of life.

Estimated Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the importance of bison (buffalo) to the Lakota.
- To examine and learn about community development organizations.
- To identify sacred sites in the Black Hills.

Discussion Questions:

1. **What was an important part of Lakota tradition and everyday life?**
 - The buffalo.
2. **What job did Edward Iron Cloud III have before he became a buffalo rancher?**
 - He was a South Dakota state representative.
3. **What is the name of the organization that is working to improve the quality of life on the Pine Ridge Reservation?**

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (TVCDC) is a place where Lakota people, young and old, can reconnect to Native identity and culture as well as have a mechanism to nurture positive change for the future generations.



Edward Iron Cloud III (Oglala Sioux), U.S. State Representative & Knife Chief Buffalo Nation Organization leader on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

Learning/Media Activity Suggestions:

1. Oral Histories

The Lakota oral histories describe the Black Hills as the sacred Holy Lands of the Lakota people.

- Why do you believe this is so?
- Discuss other places around the world that are considered Holy Land. What does the term “Holy Land” actually mean to groups of people who have identified places that are Holy to them?
- Why is it important to the continuation of culture?

Use media references and the Internet to gather information to support findings.

2. American Bison Timeline

Research the history of the American bison. Create a timeline of the extinction of the bison herd across the continent, and put their extinction in the context of Sioux history. Have a class discussion about the relationship between the bison and the Sioux.

3. Online Research

Visit the webpage of the Intertribal Buffalo Council. Look at the various initiatives that they have taken on related to bison restoration, and write two, one-paragraph summaries of the projects you think are most interesting or important.



Buffalo on the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

Lesson 5: WIČHIČHAĞA: THEY ALL GROW, THRIVE, & PROSPER

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Key Concept:

Teaching children about Lakota customs and traditions are done through song and dance. The eagle feather is important to Native people as it represents the physical and intellectual attributes of the eagle. Children learn the significance of the feather from teachings that are shared when they are learning about dance. Dancing and signing brings family together and aids in learning language and cultural traditions.

Through music and dance, you can learn the structure of the language and increase your vocabulary. Songs talk about who the Lakota people are and offer celebration of land, language, and family. Some songs are sacred and used only in ceremonies. Other songs celebrate significant, historic events and some are just for fun.

Estimated Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Learning Objectives:

- To understand Lakota customs and traditions.
- To examine and learn about Lakota song and dance.
- To identify ways that the Lakota keep their traditions strong.



Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota.

Photo by Christian Glawe.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What type of cultural activities are youth of the Sioux communities doing to celebrate their culture?**
 - Dancing in pow wows, community groups, taking part in Sweat Lodge ceremonies, and speaking the language.
- 2. According to Lakota traditional teachings, what do songs teach about?**
 - They teach us who we are, where we are from, where we are going, they help teach the language, how it is used, and pronunciations of words and vocabulary.
- 3. What are eagle feathers used for?**
 - Prayers, ceremonies, smudging, taking prayers of the people to the Creator, part of dance regalia.
- 4. What issues of poverty does dance address?**
 - Obesity, after-school activities, cultural awareness, healthy lifestyle, and parent-child connection.



Horse in South Dakota.
Photo by Jonny Cournoyer (Rosebud Sioux).

Learning/Media Activity Suggestions:

1. Your Local Community

Think about American Indian communities and the fact that American Indians live in towns and cities across America.

Research your community and see if there are any American Indian elders that live in your community. Invite them to come give a short presentation to your class about their tribe, language, customs, and tribal philosophy.

2. Pow Wows

Find three to five online videos of pow wows and share as a class. Discuss what you saw, and your impressions. If you can, find a pow wow in your local community to attend as a group.

**English Language Arts Standards:
Literacy in History/Social Studies
Grades 9-12**

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationship among the key details and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social or economic aspects of history/social science.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.5 Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.5 Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing point of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claim, reasoning and evidence.

**English Language Arts Standards:
Literacy in History/Social Studies
Grades 9-12**

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g. charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g. visual, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.10 By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.