"Kevin Kicking Woman - Sharing Blackfeet Songs"

Lesson Guide & Discussion Questions

Grades: 6-12

In the video, Kevin Kicking Woman—a Blackfeet cultural teacher and the 2024 Montana Teacher of the Year—explains the deep meaning and importance of Blackfeet songs. He emphasizes that these songs are more than music; they are living expressions of culture, tradition, and identity. Kevin also describes how songs carry stories and values across generations and how he teaches and shares them to help preserve Blackfeet heritage.

This video and discussion guide supports instruction related to **Essential Understanding #3** - The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Special thanks to the Music Teachers from East Helena Schools for creating the discussion guide and questions: Cole Bass, Jon Cantrell, Mathew Krantz, Traci Mazanec, and Tamika Schoppe**.**

1. **Cultural Significance of Song**
    - Blackfeet songs are more than entertainment - they carry history, meaning, and values.
    - They are often linked to ceremonies, community events, and personal identity.
2. **Role of Teachers/Elders**
    - Kevin Kicking Woman's work as an educator shows that teaching traditions helps keep culture alive.
    - Blackfeet songs are taught with respect and are often shared in the presence of elders and community members because they are sacred and passed on with care.
3. **Preservation & Identity**
    - In the video, Kevin explains that language and songs are important for keeping culture strong and losing them can weaken identity.
    - Teaching songs helps younger generations feel pride and connection to their culture.

Blackfeet Songs Worksheet

Video: Kevin Kicking Woman – Sharing Blackfeet Songs

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Watch the video and fill in the blanks using what you learned.

In the video, Kevin explains that _____ **songs** are only sung at certain times and places, while _____ **songs** can be sung almost anywhere. In Blackfeet culture, there is a song for almost _____.

_____ **songs**, also called _____ or _____ **songs**, are used during important ceremonies. Some songs represent _____, such as "Holy Smokes," which is connected to the first sound of _____.

Other songs, like the _____ **Nation song**, are used to praise **or** _____ someone and can be sung whenever someone deserves respect. The _____ **Pole song** is sung during the Sundance when everyone comes together as the center pole is raised.

These songs help bring Blackfeet traditions and _____ to life.

Reflection Questions

Who is Kevin Kicking Woman?

Why do you think songs are important to Blackfeet culture?

Answer Key: Sharing Blackfeet Songs Worksheet
Video: Kevin Kicking Woman – Sharing Blackfeet Songs

Directions: Watch the video and fill in the blanks using what you learned.

In the video, Kevin explains that **primary songs** are only sung at certain times and places, while **secondary songs** can be sung almost anywhere. In Blackfeet culture, there is a song for almost **everything**.

Okan songs, also called **Sundance or Medicine Lodge songs**, are used during important ceremonies. Some songs represent **nature**, such as "Holy Smokes," which is connected to the first sound of **thunder**.

Other songs, like the **Horse Nation song**, are used to praise **or honor** someone and can be sung whenever someone deserves respect. The **Center Pole song** is sung during the Sundance when everyone comes together as the center pole is raised.

These songs help bring Blackfeet traditions and **ceremonies** to life.

Reflection Questions

- Who is Kevin Kicking Woman?
  - Blackfeet Nation member and cultural educator.
  - 2024 Montana Teacher of the Year.
  - Teaches Blackfeet language & culture at Browning High School.
- Why do you think songs are important to Blackfeet culture?
  - They preserve tribal knowledge and worldview.
  - They connect individuals to history, community, and spirituality.
  - They are part of language and tradition continuity.
  - Passed from elders to teachers to learners often taught with ceremony and community.