



Social Studies Exemplary Text

Student Handout

Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull.

In English this name sounds a little absurd, and to whites of the nineteenth century it was still more so; they alluded to him as Slightly Recumbent Gentleman Cow.

Exact Translation from the Sioux is impossible, but his name may be better understood if one realizes how plains Indians respected and honored the bull buffalo. Whites considered this animal to be exceptionally stupid. Col. Dodge states without equivocation that the buffalo is the dullest creature of which he has any knowledge. A herd of buffalo would graze complacently while every member was shot down. He himself shot two cows and thirteen calves while the survivors grazed and watched. He and others in his party had to shout and wave their hats to drive the herd away so the dead animals could be butchered.

Indians, however, regarded buffalo as the wisest and most powerful of creatures, nearest to the omnipresent Spirit. Furthermore if one says in English that somebody is sitting it means he is seated, balanced on the haunches; but the Sioux expression has an additional sense, not equivalent to but approximating the English words situate and locate and reside.

Thus from an Indian point of view, the name Sitting Bull signified a wise and powerful being who had taken up residence among them.

As a boy, he was called Slow, Hunkesni, because of his deliberate manner, and it has been alleged that his parents thought him ordinary, perhaps even a bit slow in the head. Most biographies state that he was known also as Jumping Badger; but Stanley Vestal, after talking to many Indians who knew his, said that none of them nor any member of Sitting Bull's family could remember his being called Jumping Badger. In any event, Slow he was called, and Slow would suffice until he distinguished himself.

Connell, E. S. (1984) *Son of the Morning Star: Custer and the Little Bighorn*. New York: Harper Perennial

This is an example of exemplary text found in *Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix B Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf



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Social Studies Exemplary Text Teacher Resource

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Teacher introduces the text with minimal commentary and students read it independently. Teacher then reads passage aloud. Give a brief definition to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in text). Teacher guides the students through a series of text-dependent questions. Complete the performance task as a cumulative evaluation of the close-reading.

Text-Dependent Questions

1. What is the exact translation of Sitting Bull from Sioux to English?
2. What are two differences in regard for the buffalo between the American and Sioux points of view?
3. What did the name Sitting Bull signify in the Native American point of view?
4. What name sufficed for Sitting Bull, until he distinguished himself?
5. What parallels can be drawn about the lifestyles of the Americans and the Sioux based on the differences in the way each viewed the buffalo? Do you think aspects of these views carried over to other subjects?

Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

Students compare the similarities and differences in point of view in works by Dee Brown and Evan Connell regarding the Battle of Little Bighorn, analyzing how the authors treat the same event and which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts. [RH.9–10.6]

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