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**Study Guide**

for

**High Elk's  
Treasure**

by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve



New York, New York   Columbus, Ohio   Woodland Hills, California   Peoria, Illinois

# Meet Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve



*I strive to be honest and accurate about the Native American experience portrayed in my work. In so doing, I hope to dispel stereotypes and to show my reading audience that Native Americans have a proud past, a viable present, and a hopeful future.*

—Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (her last name rhymes with “navy”) was born in 1933, during the Great Depression, and was raised on the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota. She remembers her childhood as being happy, even though her parents had to struggle to make ends meet. Sneve’s parents often traveled off the reservation to find seasonal work to support the family. As a result, Sneve and her brother spent summers in the care of their two grandmothers. Sneve describes them as strong, dignified, and loving. She especially enjoyed the stories they told her. “Storytelling was part of my American Indian culture,” Sneve says, “and it was an easy step to begin writing the stories I heard as a child.”

Sneve attended school on the reservation and graduated from St. Mary’s High School for Indian Girls. She continued her education

at South Dakota State University and received degrees in English and history in 1954. A year later, Sneve married a teacher from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

After college, Sneve held a number of different jobs before becoming a professional writer. She taught English and music in both public and Native American schools. She worked as a producer and writer for a public television channel and as an editor for a newspaper. Sneve’s experiences with her own children, who were raised off the reservation, prompted her to write books about Native American history and culture.

She embarked on her writing career in 1971 when she wrote the manuscript for *Jimmy Yellow Hawk*. The manuscript won a contest sponsored by the Interracial Council of Minority Books for Children and was published in 1972. *High Elk’s Treasure*, Sneve’s second book for young adults, was also published in 1972. Since that time, Sneve has written other novels for young people as well as numerous nonfiction books about Native American history and culture.

Sneve is known for her ability to write believable, factually accurate descriptions of the attitudes and activities of contemporary Native Americans living on reservations. In the 1990s, Sneve produced a series of nonfiction works about Native American peoples that includes books about the Sioux, the Navajo, and the Nez Percé. She has also edited a collection of traditional and contemporary poems called *Dancing Teepees: Poems of American Indian Youth* (1989).

# Introducing the Novel

[This] *fast-paced, well-constructed story provides an authentic picture of contemporary Indian life.*

—Mary I. Purucker, from her review of *High Elk's Treasure*, in *School Library Journal*

When her daughter was in elementary school, author Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve began to realize how little her children knew about their heritage. She read the books that had been assigned to her children in school and found that the children had been exposed to common stereotypes about Native Americans. She recalls, with humor as well as dismay, how her son bragged to his friends that his uncle on the Pine Ridge Reservation was a fierce warrior who hunted buffalo. In reality, the uncle drove an air-conditioned car and held a regular job. As a result of this experience and others, Sneve resolved to write accurate and informative accounts of Native American life, past and present. In *High Elk's Treasure*, Sneve presents a realistic description of a thirteen-year-old boy's day-to-day life on a reservation.

*High Elk's Treasure* is also an action story that is filled with suspense, or a feeling of curiosity or uncertainty about what is going to happen next. Sneve creates suspense by raising questions in the minds of her readers and by using descriptive details that produce feelings of fear, excitement, and tension.

## THE TIME AND PLACE

The novel takes place around 1970 on a Sioux reservation in South Dakota. The Sioux have lived in the northern plains area—which includes most of the Dakotas, northern Nebraska, eastern Wyoming, and southeastern Montana—for generations. These Native Americans played an important role in the history of the Plains Indians. As settlers from the East advanced westward in the mid-1800s, the Sioux boldly resisted. Of all the Plains Indians, the Sioux fought most fiercely against claims to their lands.

The Sioux originally lived near Lake Superior in what is now Minnesota, where they were hunter-gatherers and farmers. In the mid-1600s, some Sioux groups moved westward into the Great Plains. One of these groups was the Lakota, or Teton Sioux. The main character in *High Elk's Treasure*, Joe High Elk, is a Lakota.

In their new home on the plains, the lifestyle of the Lakota changed dramatically. On the plains, the Sioux encountered horses that had been brought to North America by the Spanish. The Sioux captured and tamed these creatures. With horses, they could more easily follow and hunt the abundant herds of buffalo on the plains. They also became expert warriors on horseback who were respected for their courage and daring.

The Gold Rush of 1849 brought more and more outsiders into Sioux territory. Soon after, the U.S. government attempted to build a road across the favorite hunting grounds of the Sioux. Outraged, the Sioux led attacks against the U.S. Army from 1865 to 1867, forcing the government to abandon the project. A treaty signed in 1868 guaranteed the Sioux possession of a huge reservation west of the Missouri River, which included the Black Hills, a site sacred to the Lakota.

In the 1870s, however, miners swarmed into the Black Hills after gold was discovered there. This violation of the treaty led to another round of war in 1876. The U.S. government sent in troops to move the Sioux to designated reservations. Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer abandoned the plan and attacked a large group of Sioux. At the Battle of Little Big Horn, near a small river in Montana, a large force of Sioux wiped out a band of 200 soldiers led by Custer. This stunning victory, however, could not turn the tide in the Great Sioux War. By 1890 the famous Sioux leaders Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse had been killed. With the massacre of Sioux men, women, and children at

Wounded Knee at the end of that year, Sioux resistance came to an end. Today, the majority

of Sioux live on reservations in North and South Dakota, Montana, and Nebraska.

### Did You Know?

Reservations are parcels of land that the United States government reserved in the 1800s for the use of Native Americans. Reservations were given to Native Americans in exchange for their ancient homelands. The federal government provided reservations with schools, medical care, and other services. These services were managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), created by the U.S. Congress in 1824. The BIA still runs schools and carries out programs to improve social and economic conditions on the reservations, as well as law enforcement, road upkeep, and housing.

The BIA is also the link between tribal governments and the federal government. Native American groups have the right to choose their own form of government and to regulate many reservation activities, such as civil disputes and local taxes. The leader of each group, who is elected by other Native Americans, is usually called the chairman or president.

While many of today's Native Americans choose to leave their reservations, some choose to remain. For those who remain on the reservation, employment opportunities are scarce. In the past, many Native Americans had to rely on the U.S. government to create work programs on reservations. After the federal government cut back on these programs in the 1980s, Native Americans developed their own businesses on reservations. Some have developed commercial buffalo herds, lumber mills, and industrial factories.

Today, some Native Americans farm and raise livestock on reservation lands. However, the plots of land owned by individuals are relatively small. Thus, few individuals have enough land to farm or ranch successfully. In some cases, individuals have combined these smaller parcels to create profitable large-scale farms.

# Before You Read

## *High Elk's Treasure*

### Otokahe, The Beginning *through* High Elk's Cave

#### FOCUS ACTIVITY

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What do you know about your grandparents' childhoods?

##### Quickwrite

In one or two paragraphs, write about something that has happened in your life that you would like your grandchildren to know about. Think of an important historical event you have witnessed, a goal you have achieved, or an activity in which you have excelled.

##### Setting a Purpose

Read to find out about a young boy who makes a discovery about his great-grandfather.

#### BACKGROUND

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##### Time and Place

In the late 1800s, the U.S. government created a system of boarding schools for Native American children. The schools were created to separate children from their Native American culture. Starting at the age of six or seven, children lived in and attended classes at boarding schools. The youngsters came home to the reservation only in summer.

It was not until the mid-1960s that Native American parents and teachers began to take control of their children's education. Today, most children on reservations attend public schools. The others go to Native American-run schools, private schools, or day schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At these schools, Native American children study the same subjects as children in public schools, but they also receive instruction in Native American culture and history.

##### Did You Know?

*High Elk's Treasure* begins with a **prologue**, or introduction. The term *prologue* comes from the Greek language and means "to speak before." In plays written and performed in ancient Greece and Rome, a speaker presented a short speech to the audience before the main characters came on stage. This speech provided some background to help the audience understand the action of the play. The prologue of *High Elk's Treasure* takes the reader back in time and provides important information about Joe High Elk's family. You might want to make brief notes about the characters and events described in the prologue so that you can refresh your memory as you read the novel.

#### VOCABULARY PREVIEW

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**continuously** [kən tin' ū əs lē] *adv.* without interruption

**desecrate** [des' ə krāt' ] *v.* to violate a holy place

**despair** [di spār' ] *n.* complete loss of hope

**fury** [fyoor' ə] *n.* extreme or violent anger

**precaution** [pri kō' shən] *n.* safety measure

**silhouetted** [sil ōō et' əd] *adj.* outlined and appearing dark against a light background

**tether** [teth' ər] *v.* to tie to something with a rope

# Active Reading

## *High Elk's Treasure* Otokahe, The Beginning *through* High Elk's Cave

The first section of the novel introduces most of the characters in the novel, including Joe High Elk, the main character. To keep track of the characters, briefly describe each on the chart below.

Character	Description
High Elk	
Howard	
John	
William	
Joe	
Marie	
Mr. Gray Bear	Joe's teacher; sends students home early because of bad storm

# Responding

*High Elk's Treasure*

Otokahe, The Beginning *through* High Elk's Cave

## Personal Response

Was Joe wise not to open the bundle right away? Would you have done the same thing?

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## Analyzing Literature

### Recall and Interpret

1. What happened to High Elk in 1876? How did he begin to develop a herd of fine horses? Why do you suppose High Elk wanted to breed his mare?

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2. What happens as the children ride home from school? What do you think causes Star to act the way she does?

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3. Why does Joe become angry at himself while seeking shelter in the cave? What does he find in the hole in the wall? Who does he think left it there? Why?

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# Responding

## *High Elk's Treasure*

### Otokahe, The Beginning *through* High Elk's Cave

#### Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

##### Evaluate and Connect

4. Do you think Joe's teacher was wise to let Joe go home? Explain.

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5. Do you think the way Joe handled his anger and frustration was appropriate? What advice would you give to someone who is feeling angry and frustrated?

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#### Literature and Writing

##### Analyze Character Traits

On a separate sheet of paper, write about Joe High Elk. In your own words, describe some of the traits you think he exhibits. How do Joe's character traits influence his decision to ride home? His reaction to losing Star? Explain your answer.

##### Extending Your Response

###### Literature Groups

With a small group of classmates, create a pictorial time line that shows how the size of High Elk's herd of horses grew and then shrank to almost nothing. First, review the section titled "Otokahe, The Beginning." List details that describe what the herd was like during each generation of the High Elk family. Then decide on the content of each picture. For example, what setting will you show? Which characters will you include? How large is the herd at each stage? Then make a drawing for each period. Add brief captions that state the general time period shown in each picture.

###### Learning for Life

With a partner, find out more about the work involved in raising horses on a ranch or farm. Gather information from magazine articles, books, and the Internet. To begin your research, make a list of four or five questions you would like to answer. Write each question at the top of a sheet of paper. As you consult your sources, note information that answers each question and the name and author of the source where you found the information. Share your questions, answers, and sources with the rest of your class in a brief oral report.



*Save your work for your portfolio.*



# Before You Read

## *High Elk's Treasure* One Hundred Years *through* The Rescue

### FOCUS ACTIVITY

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What personal possession do you value the most? How would you feel if you lost it? Why?

#### Journal

In your journal, describe the object and explain why you value it.

#### Setting a Purpose

Read to find out what personal possession Joe values and how he manages to reclaim it.

### Background

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#### Horses Come to North America

Mustangs, the first wild horses of the North American plains, are believed to have descended from tame horses owned by Spanish explorers. These tame horses escaped, or were let loose by the Spaniards, and adapted to life in the wild. The Sioux captured and tamed wild horses, using them for transportation, for hauling household goods, for hunting, and for warfare. Eventually, the Sioux became known for their large, excellent herds. Warriors who captured horses in raids were highly respected, and the Sioux people began to measure their wealth in terms of the number of horses they owned.

#### Did You Know?

Language experts estimate that a third of the languages once spoken by Native Americans no longer exist. At the first U.S.-government boarding schools for Native American children, classes were taught in English. Because many of the children spent little time at home, they gradually forgot their native languages, and the languages died out.

In recent decades, interest in native languages has grown among some Native American groups. For example, on the reservations in southern South Dakota, a Lakota-owned radio station broadcasts the news each day in both Lakota and English. In addition, since the 1980s, more and more scholars have been working to create dictionaries of native languages. The Sioux Heritage Web site at <http://www.lakhota.com> offers a 4,000-word Lakota-English dictionary.

### VOCABULARY PREVIEW

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**impede** [im pēd'] *v.* to slow down the progress of

**intact** [in takt'] *adj.* unharmed; whole

**precipice** [pres'ə pis] *n.* edge of a steep cliff

**relics** [rel'iks] *n.* objects or fragments of objects remaining from the past

**reverently** [rev'ər ənt lē] *adv.* with deep respect

**taut** [tôt] *adj.* tight; tense

**thwart** [thwôrt] *v.* to cut short; to prevent

# Active Reading

## *High Elk's Treasure* One Hundred Years *through* The Rescue

In this section, several of the characters respond in different ways to the two main events that have occurred—Star's running away and the discovery of the leather bundle. Use the chart below to take notes about each character's response to the events. Describe the character's actions and his or her feelings or attitude about each event.

<b>Event: Star runs away.</b>		
	Response/Action	Feelings/ Attitude
Joe	tells father about losing Star	
William		
Grandma		
<b>Event: The family discusses whether to open High Elk's bundle.</b>		
	Response/Action	Feelings/ Attitude
William		
Grandma		

# Responding

## *High Elk's Treasure* One Hundred Years *through* The Rescue

### Personal Response

Which of the characters in the story would you most like to meet? Why?

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### Analyzing Literature

#### Recall and Interpret

1. Where does William think Star can be found? Where does Joe go to search for the missing horse? Why is Joe alarmed?

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2. Why is Joe's grandmother fearful of opening the leather bundle? What do you think might happen if the bundle is opened?

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3. How does Joe prove to the horse catchers that Star belongs to him? What do you think the young Native American wants to say to Joe?

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# Responding

## *High Elk's Treasure*

### One Hundred Years *through* The Rescue

#### Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

##### Evaluate and Connect

4. Joe's father and grandmother have different feelings about opening High Elk's bundle. In your opinion, why do they have different feelings?

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5. Who is Sungwiye? How does Joe show concern for her? Why does she matter so much to him?

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#### Literature and Writing

##### Journal Writing

Imagine that you are Joe High Elk. In your journal, write a brief summary of the major events that have taken place over the last few days, starting with the storm. Mention the different emotions that you felt as different events took place.

##### Extending Your Response

##### Literature Groups

In a small group, create a radio play that presents the middle portion of the novel that you have just read. To begin, identify key scenes and draft a script, or dialogue, for each scene. Your script may combine exact statements made by the characters with your own rewordings and additions. Note places where sound effects might be useful, and briefly describe them in the script. Read through your draft and make adjustments as needed. To present your radio play, record it on an audiocassette and play it for the rest of the class, or do a live performance.

##### Listening and Speaking

When Joe climbs Bald Mountain, he recalls the legend of how the peak became bare on top. Read the author's version of the legend. Then do research at the library or on the Internet to find other Native American legends. Select a legend to share with the class. You may wish to read the legend aloud or retell it in your own words.



Save your work for your portfolio.

# Before You Read

*High Elk's Treasure*

Howard High Elk *through* The High Elk Treasure

## FOCUS ACTIVITY

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What family traditions do you value?

### Journal

In your journal, briefly describe a family tradition you would like to pass on to your own children someday.

### Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how the High Elks carry on a family tradition.

## Background

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### Keeping a Culture Alive

In 1930 almost all Native Americans lived on reservations. Today, more than half of the Native American population lives outside reservations. Many reside in large cities in the West and Midwest. Some urban Native Americans try to maintain awareness of their culture by learning about their ancestors' language, observing traditional customs, and taking part in Native American activities. They may return to the reservation several times a year to attend tribal ceremonies or visit relatives. Many stay in touch with their traditions by attending intertribal social events that are held all over the nation. At these get-togethers, which draw thousands of people, participants share traditional dances and songs, watch dance competitions, enjoy Native American foods, and honor members.

### Symbols

Works of literature often contain symbols that are rich with meaning. A **symbol** is something concrete, such as a person, a place, an object, or a situation, that stands for something abstract—a quality or thing that you can't see and touch. A valentine symbolizes your affection for another person. A team mascot symbolizes students' pride in their school. More universally, a dove is a symbol of peace, and a nation's flag symbolizes its history and culture. As you read the conclusion of *High Elk's Treasure*, identify the main symbol in the novel. Does this symbol have significance just for the main character, or would you describe it as a universal symbol having meaning for everyone?

## VOCABULARY PREVIEW

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**authoritative** [ə thôr' ə tã' tiv] *adj.* having significant power or influence

**aversion** [ə vur' zhən] *n.* strong dislike

**canter** [kan' tər] *v.* to ride a horse in a way that is slower than a gallop but faster than a trot

**crudely** [krōod' lē] *adv.* roughly; plainly; without skill

**dialect** [dī' ə lekt] *n.* regional variety of a language

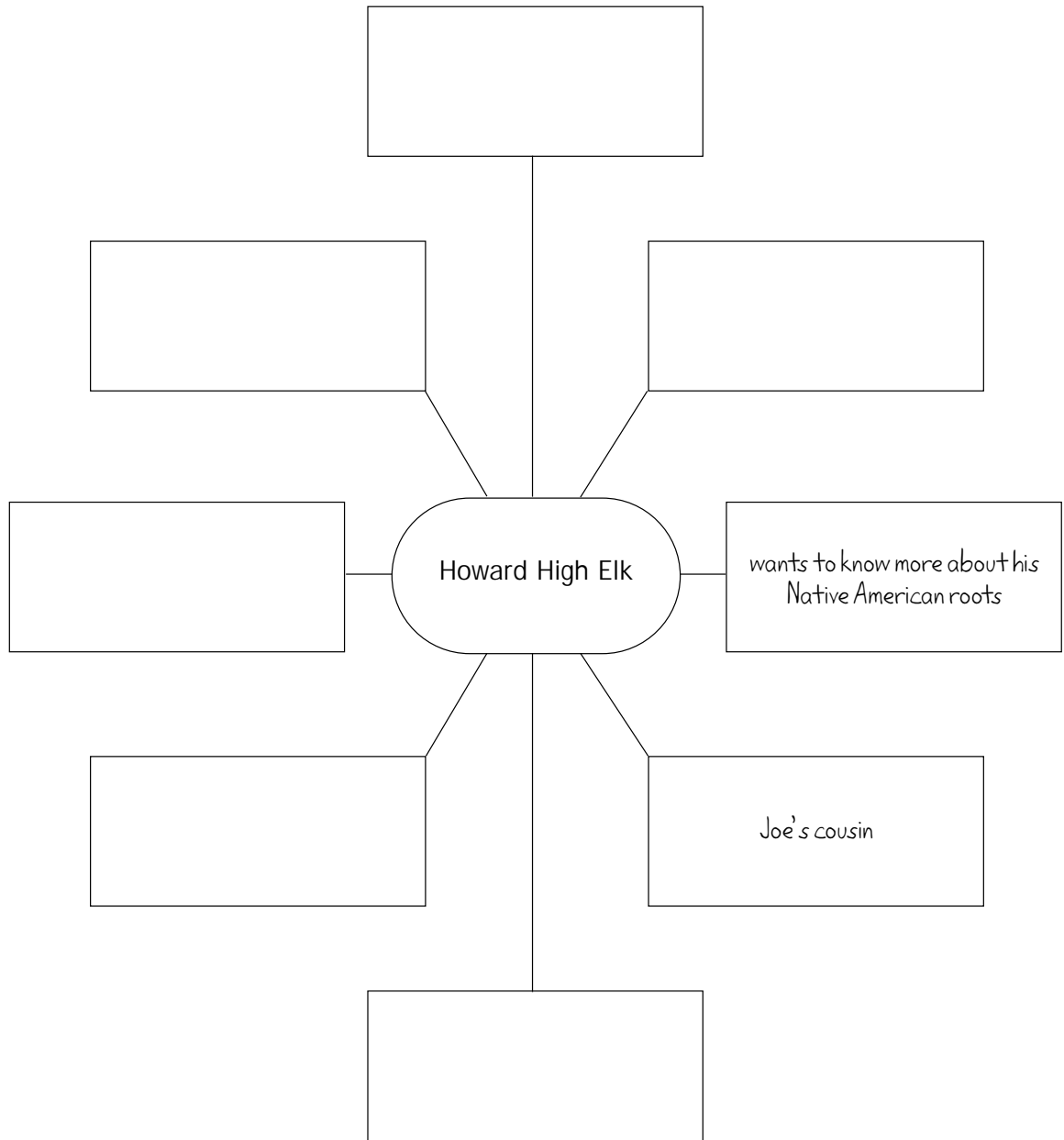
**precious** [presh' əs] *adj.* valuable; cherished

**receipt** [ri sēt'] *n.* written record that is used to prove that an item or money has been received

# Active Reading

## *High Elk's Treasure* Howard High Elk *through* The High Elk Treasure

In this section, you learn more about Howard High Elk, the young Native American who works for the horse catcher. Use this cluster diagram to record traits, actions, and other details about this character.



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# Responding

*High Elk's Treasure*

Howard High Elk *through* The High Elk Treasure

## Personal Response

Did the contents of the leather bundle surprise you? Why or why not?

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## Analyzing Literature

### Recall and Interpret

1. Who arrives at the High Elks' ranch unexpectedly and why? Why does William treat the stranger with kindness?

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2. How did Howard learn about the famous High Elk herd? In your opinion, why does Howard want to learn to speak the Sioux language?

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3. Describe the pictograph contained in High Elk's leather bundle. What important secret does the pictograph seem to reveal?

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4. Why is *treasure* a good word to describe what the bundle contains? In what way is Sungwiye's colt also a treasure? Why is *Otokahe* a good name for the colt?

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# Responding

## *High Elk's Treasure*

### Howard High Elk *through* The High Elk Treasure

#### Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

##### Evaluate and Connect

5. What do you think the High Elk family should do with the pictograph? Explain.

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6. How might Joe answer the question in the **Focus Activity**? How does this answer compare with yours?

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#### Literature and Writing

##### And Then . . .

Continue the story by writing about what happens to Joe and his family after the novel ends. Build on the events from the novel's plot and refer to at least five of the characters.

#### Extending Your Response

##### Literature Groups

The High Elk family and Dr. Scott study the pictograph and discuss whether one of the Sioux warriors shown could be High Elk. With your group, consider the following questions:

- What details suggest that the man might be High Elk? Can observers assume these details are accurate? Explain.
- What knowledge does the High Elk family have about the event? Are the family members reliable sources of information?
- What knowledge does Dr. Scott have about the event? Is his information reliable?
- What other sources might confirm whether the man shown is High Elk?

##### History Connection

Make a list of historical details that the pictograph presents. Then, at the library, look for information that verifies the accuracy of the pictograph. The information might include:

- photographs of American soldiers and Sioux Indians from around 1876
- eyewitness accounts of the Battle of Little Big Horn, such as journals, reports, and drawings
- artifacts in museums such as Native American clothing and U.S. Army weapons

In a short report, describe evidence you find that backs up the details presented in the pictograph. Conclude by stating how accurate you think the pictograph is as a historical record.



*Save your work for your portfolio.*





# from The War for the Black Hills

Dee Brown

## Before You Read

### Focus Question

Think of a public event that you attended or witnessed recently. What did you see, hear, feel, smell, or taste?

### Background

This account of the Battle of Little Bighorn is written from the point of view of the Sioux and Cheyenne. The battle, which followed fighting at the nearby Rosebud River a week earlier, took place in southern Montana on June 24, 1876. At the Little Bighorn River, the Sioux and Cheyenne fought United States troops led by Major Marcus Reno and Lieutenant Colonel George Custer. (The Sioux and Cheyenne referred to Custer as “Long Hair.”)

## Responding to the Reading

1. Why did Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull disobey the order to leave their land?

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2. How did the United States soldiers’ attack on the Sioux and Cheyenne begin? Describe the Sioux and Cheyenne counterattack.

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3. How did Kill Eagle describe the battle scene?

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4. **Making Connections** High Elk’s pictograph suggests that Rain-in-the-Face killed Custer. Does Dee Brown’s account of the battle corroborate the pictograph?

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## Art Connection

Select a portion of Dee Brown’s account of the Battle of Little Bighorn and retell that part of the story in a drawing. You might create a pictograph, a black-and-white pencil sketch, a series of simple drawings, or a detailed and realistic color painting.

# from The Man Who Listens to Horses

Monty Roberts

## Before You Read

### Focus Question

What qualities do you think it would be important to have as a wild animal trainer?

### Background

Monty Roberts is a highly respected horse trainer who developed a new way of working with horses. Instead of “breaking” young or wild horses by fighting and dominating them, he gains the animal’s trust and cooperation. His method, called “gentling,” or “starting” the horse, is based on understanding the body language that horses use to communicate with each other. In this passage, Roberts describes how he learned this language as a teenager by observing wild mustang herds in the Nevada desert.

## Responding to the Reading

1. Why is it difficult to get a close look at the mustangs? How is Roberts able to observe the wild horses’ behavior?  
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2. How does the old mare treat the young colt that is behaving badly? How does the colt respond at first?  
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3. How does Roberts interpret the colt’s response? What surprises Roberts when he observes the mare and colt after dark?  
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4. What general observation does Roberts make about the horse language he calls “Equus”? Explain the key ingredient in the horses’ language. What does the author mean by the “yo-yo effect”?  
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5. **Making Connections** Use Roberts’s concept of “advance and retreat” to explain how Joe High Elk proves to the horse catchers that Star is a tame horse that belongs to him.  
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## Learning for Life

Animals, including humans, use body language as a form of communication. In a small group, create an unspoken form of communication that can be used to convey messages. Create a short dialogue that does not involve speech. Present the unspoken dialogue to the class. After each demonstration, other group members should “translate” the message into words. Come up with a simple sentence that captures the attitude, feeling, or message expressed.

# The Legacy II

## Lineage

Leroy V. Quintana

Margaret Walker

### Before You Read

#### Focus Question

Close your eyes and think of an image of one of your grandparents. If you have never met your grandparents, think of another older relative or older person you know. In your mind's eye, how do you see this person? What is the scene? What is he or she doing or saying?

#### Background

Both Joe and his father, William, have a close relationship with Joe's grandmother, who lives with the family. These two poems focus on relationships between grandchildren and grandparents.

### Responding to the Reading

1. In Quintana's poem, what knowledge has the grandfather passed on to the speaker? Does the speaker feel he is better off than his grandfather? Explain.

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2. In Walker's poem, what kind of life did the speaker's grandmothers lead? The speaker says of her grandmothers, "They have many clean words to say." What do you think this statement means?

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3. **Making Connections** Do you see any similarities between the persons described in the two poems and Joe's grandmother in the novel? Explain.

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### Creative Writing

Write a poem that expresses your feelings about a grandparent or another older person you admire or feel close to. Alternatively, put yourself in Joe High Elk's shoes and write a poem about his grandmother, using what you know about the characters from the novel.

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# A Legend of Devil's Tower

as told by Lame Deer

## Before You Read

### Focus Question

Most of us grow up hearing legends of various kinds. What are some urban legends you have heard or passed along informally?

### Background

When climbing Bald Mountain, Joe High Elk recalls a Native American legend about how the mountaintop became bald after two stallions had a violent fight there. "A Legend of Devil's Tower" is another Sioux legend. The version presented here was told by Lame Deer in 1969 at the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, where it was recorded by folklorist Richard Erdoes.

## Responding to the Reading

1. Where and what is Devil's Tower? Why do most Native American groups call this feature Bear Rock?

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2. What happened to the two Native American boys who became lost? How did the Creator help them?

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3. How were the boys saved at the end of the legend? Why do you think the storyteller inserts the brief story about the mountain climbers who tried to climb Devil's Tower?

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4. **Making Connections** What similarities can you see between the legend of Devil's Tower and the legend that Joe High Elk recalls as he climbs Bald Mountain?

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## Speaking and Listening

With two or three other students, discuss the style and tone of Lame Deer's retelling of the legend of Devil's Tower. What techniques does the storyteller use to engage the listener? What details add color to the story? How does the anecdote about the climbers enrich the story and make it more appealing to readers and listeners? On a separate sheet of paper, list other questions of your own to guide your discussion.

# *from* Homesick: My Own Story

Jean Fritz

## Before You Read

### Focus Question

Imagine that you had been raised from birth in a foreign country by the same parents you have now. Do you think you would be the same person? Explain.

### Background

American author Jean Fritz was born and raised in China, in the city of Hangzhou (then called Hankow). This excerpt from a memoir of her childhood takes place between 1925 and 1927. Fritz's memoir, like Sneve's novel, focuses on the importance of cultural roots.

## Responding to the Reading

1. What problem does Jean run into at school? How does the reader know she is upset about this problem?

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2. What kinds of things make Jean feel like an American "every minute of the day"?

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3. Does Jean seem to respect Chinese culture and the Chinese people? In your opinion, does she give a realistic picture of China? Explain.

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4. How does Jean's father help her solve the problem she has at school?

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5. **Making Connections** Jean Fritz wanted to assert her American identity at a British school in China. What similarities do you find in Howard High Elk's experience?

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## Speaking and Listening

With another student, come up with a list of questions you would like to ask Jean Fritz. Then, based on your reading, create some answers that you think Fritz might give. Act out the interview with your partner.