Grade Level: 9-10 (can be adjusted for other grades)

Time: Approximately 50 minutes or 1-2 day lesson plan

Standards/Objectives


Diversity 10 DI.6-8.10 I can explain how the way groups of people are treated today, and the way they have been treated in the past, shapes their group identity and culture.

Objective: Students will explore the way cultural biases, stereotypes, and prejudices had social, political, and economic consequences for Native Americans and the way these consequences have shaped their collective and personal identities and cultures through the lens of Deb Haaland’s life and political career.

Hook (or Pre-Activity):

The teacher will lead a discussion by talking about and defining words like “cultural bias,” “stereotypes,” and “prejudice.” What are these things? How might they affect people’s lives?

Students will read the article https://www.history.com/news/deb-haaland-native-american-history (either as a series of excerpts or the whole article)

FYI: These excerpts are especially relevant to the lesson:

In early 2021, Deb Haaland was sworn in as the secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, making her the first Native American cabinet secretary in the history of the United States. A tribal member of the Laguna Pueblo, she was raised in New Mexico, a state that has been home to 35 generations of her family. After becoming the first woman elected to the board of directors for the Laguna nation's development corporation, she
managed the state's second largest tribal gaming enterprise. In 2018, she became one of the first two Indigenous women elected to serve in the U.S. Congress.

What ways does history influence your decision making in your current role?

We never want to repeat the bad parts of history, right? In fact, it makes sense for the Interior Department to correct bad history where we can and move our agency and country forward. For example, our Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative seeks to bring closure to generations of Indigenous people whose family members were victims of that awful policy era in our country: “Kill the Indian, save the man.”

We are in a new era now, and we must do all we can to live up to [the agency's] mission of managing and conserving America’s public lands, natural resources and cultural heritage; and honor the trust and treaty obligations to the nation’s 574 federally recognized Indian tribes. My hope is that future generations will look back on THIS history and say that we did some things right.

Could you elaborate on those treaty obligations?

When Europeans first came to this continent in the late 1400s, there were thousands of Indian tribes who had lived here for millennia. Once it became apparent that this was a continent the Europeans wanted to essentially take over, they commenced to take land away from tribes. In that process, many treaties, executive orders, acts of Congress were made—between various tribes and the United States—that work to displace Native Americans from their ancestral homelands. Today, the U.S. federal government still has an obligation to live up to all of those treaties, those executive orders, those acts of Congress, to ensure that tribal nations can thrive, that their children can be educated, that they have housing to live in and that we are working to help them with their economic development.

After, students will watch this brief interview with Haaland: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/deb-haaland-interior-department-goals/

Activity:
Students will go to the Big Read Traveling Stanzas Website. Students will select the “Emerge” tab at the bottom of the webpage. Students will use the arrows to scroll through the tabs until they find, “Deb Haaland, a Living Testament.”

The teacher (or students independently) will read the document. The teacher will then model the Emerge Poetry activity, by selecting a portion of the text to clip. The teacher will then select words that are interesting, important, or standout. These words will become highlighted as the new, original poem from the text.

Students will work independently, to clip a section of the document and will select words to make their original poems.

**Post-Activity:**

Reflect: As a whole class, in small groups, through large group writing like using Jamboard, or individual writing have students answer the following questions:

- What kinds of stereotypes, cultural biases, or prejudices are seen in Deb Haaland’s life?
- How might they have affected her beliefs, values, circumstances, or experiences?
- In general, how might the stereotypes, cultural biases, or prejudices seen in Haaland’s story affect Native Americans? Give specific examples.