Deb Haaland's Victory for Native Americans: A Voice for the Voiceless

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

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

Standards/Objectives

**RL.9-10.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning, mood, and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place or an emotion; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

**W.9-10.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

**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.


Hook (or Pre-Activity)

Students will be asked to log onto the journaling app Penzu for their daily Writing into the Day exercises. Students will be given 6-8 minutes to write a reflective response to the following prompt:

*Think about what you know, have heard about, or any conceptions/notions you have about and/or toward Native Americans. What have you learned about Native American tribes that lived on U.S. soil prior to the arrival of European explorers? What do you know now? Are there any stereotypes of Native Americans you may have heard of? Do you have any assumptions about modern Native Americans?*

The teacher will allow around 5 minutes for students to share responses out loud as a class. Students will be asked to consider what they might have heard and/or learned about Native Americans, as the activity will center around it.

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.” Using this document, the teacher will provide background on who Deb Haaland is and why she is notable. In addition to this background text, several poems focusing around a theme of representation and voice will be utilized. The poetry used will be work done by Native
American poets. Poems such as “Housing Conditions of One Hundred Fifty Chippewa Families” by Kimberly Blaeser, “Relic” by Jennifer Foerster, and “The Reservation” by Adrian C. Louis will be included.

The teacher will use the poems as model texts to showcase different aspects of poetry such as structure, rhyme, theme, and the like. The teacher will read at least one of the model texts out loud. The teacher will then model the Emerge Poetry activity, but 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. This will give students the opportunity to see how poetry can be created, using words from any kind of text, be it an informational article or other poems. The teacher will provide a rationale for choices made in the construction of his own poem.

Students will use the “clip text” tool to break apart sections of the model texts and create their own poems. The poems they make should have a specific theme, which will be up to them to determine. Students will be given roughly 10 minutes to work. Once the 10 minutes are up, students will be asked to break out into small groups (of 3-4) and share their poems. They will be given the opportunity to write response poems to one another and discuss how they made their pieces. Specifically, they will be provided with an opportunity to discuss how poetry can be used to amplify one’s voice, and identify the implications of such for Native Americans.

Post-Activity

Students will return for the remaining minutes of class to debrief. They will be asked to complete an exit slip in which they will provide an example of one thing they learned about Native Americans and poetry, specifically how poetry can be used to shine light on one’s own voice. They will also be asked to speak to how this lesson changed and/or countered their perception of Native Americans, specifically Native Americans in the 21st century.