

STANDING ON SACRED GROUND

Teacher's Guide



Sacred Land Film Project

StandingOnSacredGround.org



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Teacher's Guide

Pilgrims and Tourists

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About the Project

Standing on Sacred Ground is a four-part documentary film series about indigenous people around the world facing threats to land they consider sacred. Each episode is 55 minutes long and each contains stories of two native cultures. The Winnemem segment is the second half of Episode 1, *Pilgrims and Tourists*.

Director's Statement

Thirty years ago, listening to Hopi elders, I first heard the message: The environmental crisis is a spiritual crisis. The absence of a conscious connection to land and water inevitably leads to violence toward the Earth, and threatens all life. It is a message I have heard since from a chorus of indigenous voices around the world, as diverse native cultures defend against attacks on their resources and on our common future. My films explore this environmental-spiritual crisis, and reveal the clash between proponents of a utilitarian view of land as property and traditional communities that view land stewardship as a sacred responsibility. *Standing on Sacred Ground* sparks dialogue about western culture's relationship to nature and the growing global yearning to reconcile with aboriginal people. Internationally, efforts are already transforming public awareness of sacred natural sites and how revered landscapes strengthen biological and cultural diversity. The people in these documentaries have profoundly changed my life and worldview. Please join me in discussing the values, themes, lessons and issues they raise in the films. I look forward to hearing from you—and I hope you find the films to be inspiring teaching tools. —CHRISTOPHER (TOBY) MCLEOD



How to Use This Guide

The Teacher's Guide for *Standing on Sacred Ground* is designed for high school classrooms and can be used in many subject areas, particularly social sciences and environmental studies. You will find many of the sections also appropriate for use in middle school and university settings. This guide contains discussion questions and activities to help you use the film productively before or after students watch clips from it.

Many of the questions, activities and writing assignments in this guide encourage viewers of *Standing on Sacred Ground* to reflect on complex situations, not to reach definitive answers. Previewing the film will help you decide which issues and themes you want to raise in your classroom.

How This Guide is Organized

- ☉ Questions and activities for the film are organized by theme. Select the topics that you want to focus on in your classroom rather than moving through each topic in sequence.
- ☉ You will find suggested activities and film clips alongside discussion prompts that can be used to enhance or supplement your in-class discussions of the film's content.

Note to Teachers: The Run4Salmon

From September 9 to 23, 2017, the Winnemem Wintu Tribe of northern California will follow the traditional upstream migration course of native Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon. From the shores of San Francisco Bay up the Sacramento River valley to the waters of the McCloud River south of Mt. Shasta, participants will walk, boat, bicycle, run and ride horses along 300 miles of waterways where the endangered salmon historically have returned to spawn after years at sea.

[View the Winnemem segment](#) from *Standing on Sacred Ground* (29 minutes).

SUBJECT AREAS

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- Activism
- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Climate Change/Global Warming
- Environment
- Environmental Ethics
- Environmental Justice
- Geography
- Global Issues
- Health
- Human Rights
- Humanities
- Indigenous Peoples
- Leadership
- Native Americans
- Recreation
- Religion
- Science
- Technology
- Society
- Sociology
- Water



INITIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

You may choose to engage students with these discussion prompts before viewing the film.

Learning Objectives: Before Viewing the Film

- ☉ Understand what is meant by *sacred* and *sacred ground*.
- ☉ Reflect on your own attitudes about places that have been significant in your life.
- ☉ Explain why places have different meanings for different people.
- ☉ Describe what might make a place have special or spiritual value for someone.
- ☉ Identify influences on your own personal value set.

What is Sacred?

The following prompts and activities can help guide students' exploration of the concept of *sacred*.

- ☉ Has a place or experience ever changed you? Ask students to discuss their own experiences, and guide the class to draw parallels and distinctions between each other's experiences.
- ☉ Provide definitions of the word *sacred* (see box).

sacred

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
1: dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity; devoted exclusively to one service or use (as of a person or purpose) **2:** worthy of religious veneration; entitled to reverence and respect. **3:** of or relating to religion: not secular or profane. **4:** highly valued and important.

Oxford English Dictionary
1: connected with God (or the gods) or dedicated to a religious purpose and so deserving veneration. **2:** (of writing or text) embodying the laws or doctrines of a religion. **3:** regarded with great respect and reverence by a particular religion, group, or individual.

What is Sacred Ground?

The following prompts and activities can help guide students' exploration of the concept of *sacred ground*.

- ☉ Has a place or experience ever changed you? Ask students to discuss their own experiences, and guide the class to draw parallels and distinctions between each other's experiences.
- ☉ What makes a place sacred? Encourage students to consider places they themselves might consider to be sacred: What do these places have in common? After watching segments of the film revisit this question and ask students what the sacred places depicted in the films have in common.

Extension questions to go deeper:

- ☉ Are there places that you would be sad to see changed or destroyed? What does it feel like to be in these places?
- ☉ Are there places in nature that are special to you? How were you introduced to these places? How do you experience these places?
- ☉ Other possible words to explore as a class include *Holy Land*, *hallowed ground*, *consecrate*.
- ☉ What is the cultural purpose or function of a sacred place? What is its value?
- ☉ Places considered sacred could include a cemetery, a battlefield (consecrated or hallowed ground) or a place where a historic or legendary event took place. Examples include Gettysburg and 9/11 Ground Zero in Manhattan. (See box at right.) Why might people view these places as sacred? How is that different from a place in nature where one goes to pray or receive instruction—from nature, God or the spirit world? What is the difference between a place made sacred by human events that happened there as compared to a “place of power” respected because of human perceptions of what is divine?

You can read more about how to define sacred sites at [What Is a Sacred Site?](#) on the Sacred Land Film Project's website.



Sacred natural site:

Areas of land or water having special spiritual significance to peoples and communities. Many traditional indigenous communities throughout the world have given a special status to natural sites such as mountains, volcanoes, rivers, lakes, springs, caves, forest groves, ponds, coastal waters and entire islands. Many of these have been set aside as sacred places. The reasons for their sacredness are diverse. They may be perceived as abodes of deities and ancestral spirits; as sources of healing water and medicinal plants; places of contact with the spiritual realm, or communication with a “more-than-human” reality; and sites of revelation and transformation. They are sometimes the burial grounds of ancestors, places of pilgrimage, the locale of a temple, shrine or church, or sites associated with special events, saints and spiritual leaders. (from *Sacred Natural Sites: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers*, Robert Wild and Christopher McLeod, Editors, 2008)

Exploring Values

Values are the basis for ethical action and they inform and guide us. Values vary across cultures and individuals and are usually aligned with belief systems including ethical or moral values, doctrinal/ideological (religious/political) values, social values and aesthetic values. Qualities or things we value might include spirituality, respect, honor, relationships, family, security, wealth, status, safety, experience, wisdom, language, humility, reciprocity, sharing and more. It is important for students to recognize that they all enter the classroom with different value sets, and none is more valid than another.

- ☉ How do you think your language, religion, gender, socioeconomic status and geographic location have influenced your values?
- ☉ What do you value most deeply?
- ☉ Indigenous values are often taught through story. The Onondaga people of New York were instructed long ago by a visitor called The Peacemaker to base all decisions on their effect seven generations in the future. Is this an effective way to teach a value—in this case: “always consider the future”?

ACTIVITY

Creating a values chart can help students better understand various belief systems and provides a basis for understanding and discussing conflicting values. When discussing value sets, it is critical not to suggest that some values are better than others.

Have students list and discuss:

- Some of their personal values
- The values of capitalism
- Judeo-Christian values
- Add values of indigenous peoples as you watch the films.

Ask students: Where are there overlaps, similarities or differences? Do you see any values in direct conflict with each other?



Property ownership and religious freedom are two core American values. The films show multiple examples of these two values coming into conflict.

- ☉ What is the value of property ownership? What is the value of religious freedom? Ask students to create arguments in support of each value.
- ☉ Ask students to imagine a situation in which someone's private property has religious significance to someone else. How would they weigh each value to help them make a decision about who gets access?

Extension questions to go deeper:

- ☉ Do you think sacred sites should be protected regardless of where they are located and what their non-sacred (or material) value might be? Why or why not?
- ☉ Who owns the rights to sacred places—or is “ownership” the wrong question?
- ☉ Does residence in a place give somebody ownership or rights to that place?
- ☉ How long does someone need to live somewhere before his or her voice becomes important in advocating for the place?
- ☉ Is there somewhere you would fight for? Why might people pay attention to you or ignore your concerns?

Exploring the Meaning of Indigenous

- ☉ Have students write what they think are the definitions of “indigenous peoples,” “traditional peoples” and “native.”
- ☉ Provide various definitions and discuss the similarities and differences (see box).
- ☉ Do you think that being indigenous gives someone the right to make decisions regarding their land? What about an indigenous person who no longer lives on his or her traditional land?



indigenous

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
indigenous: produced, living, or existing naturally in a particular region or environment.

Oxford English Dictionary
indigenous: originating or occurring naturally in a particular place.

Although the United Nations has not adopted an official definition of “indigenous peoples,” the U.N. working definition, as cited in the 2004 document “The Definition of Indigenous Peoples” is:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.

Learning Objectives: After Viewing the Film

- ☼ Describe the history of environmental, economic and political challenges faced by the Winnemem Wintu Tribe in California.
- ☼ Explain the role of leaders in times of social stability and in times of crisis.
- ☼ Explore the positive and negative impacts of industrial development on culture and on sacred places.
- ☼ Identify sources of competition for resources such as land and water.
- ☼ Evaluate the pros and cons of government megaprojects, including their impact on indigenous communities and the broader society.
- ☼ Research how large development projects affect animal species and biodiversity.
- ☼ Explain how mapping can be used to protect traditional native land and culture, sacred places and sensitive cultural information. Explore how mapping information might also cause harm.
- ☼ Assess the effectiveness of various resistance strategies.



Viewing Guide

This one-page viewing guide can be helpful in focusing students' viewing of the film. You can print copies of page 10 and ask students to fill it out during the film or use it for comprehension prompts after they have watched the film. You might also want to allow students time to write their initial reflections or their own discussion prompts after viewing the film.





WINNEMEM WINTU, CALIFORNIA, USA

1. What does the word Winnemem mean?
2. How does their tribal identity connect the Winnemen to the spring on Mt. Shasta and to the McCloud River?
3. What happened to the Winnemem during the Gold Rush?
4. Why was Shasta Dam built in the late 1930s and early 1940s?
5. When Shasta Dam was built, what happened to the McCloud River salmon? What happened to the homes of Winnemem people?
6. Caleen Sisk is the chief and spiritual leader of the Winnemem Wintu nation of 125 people. What are the losses she talks about?
7. What is the “paradox of water supply and demand” described by Brian Person from the Bureau of Reclamation?
8. What legal actions have the Winnemem employed against the federal government? Why does State Assemblyman Jared Huffman say they are an “inconvenient tribe”?
9. How do the Winnemem conduct “spiritual warfare” at Shasta Dam?
10. What is the purpose of the puberty ceremony? What will happen to Puberty Rock if Shasta Dam is raised and how will this affect the Winnemem?



INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Caleen Sisk

Caleen Sisk is the Spiritual Leader and Chief of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, which practices traditional culture and ceremonies in their territory along the McCloud River in northern California. Since assuming leadership responsibilities in 2000, Sisk has focused on maintaining the cultural and religious traditions of the tribe as well as advocating for California salmon restoration, the human right to water and the protection of indigenous sacred sites. She is also leading her tribe's efforts to work with Maori of New Zealand and federal fish biologists to return native Chinook salmon to the McCloud River.

Sisk is an internationally known speaker and a leading voice in raising awareness of the poor human rights conditions suffered by federally unrecognized tribes and unrepresented indigenous peoples around the world. She is a regular speaker at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, where she has campaigned for the U.N. to study the plight of federally unrecognized tribes in the United States. She is also the Spiritual and Environmental Commissioner for ENLACE Continental, an international network of indigenous women.

For more than 30 years, Sisk was mentored and taught in traditional healing and Winnemem culture by her late great-aunt, Florence Jones (shown below), who was the tribe's spiritual leader for 68 years. Sisk's traditional teachings and training come from an unbroken line of leadership of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe.



Discussion questions regarding the indigenous leadership of Caleen Sisk:

- ☼ What role do indigenous spiritual leaders play in the fight to preserve sacred lands? In cultural preservation?
- ☼ How does Caleen Sisk work to save their sacred places and cultural practices?
- ☼ What was meaningful about the meeting of Altaians from Central Asia and Winnemem in California?
- ☼ Is there a spiritual leader in your life? What kind of guidance does that person provide? Can you identify a leader of your own culture?
- ☼ Name other community leaders (spiritual or not) and explain their roles during times of crisis.

SERVICE LEARNING

Oral History

Identify a leader in your family or community. Conduct an interview with that person to learn about decisions that person has made while in a position of leadership. What conflicts, changes or challenges has your family or community faced that this leader played a role in? Create a book, exhibition, scrapbook, video or essay to share with your school or to give to the person you interviewed.

Reflection questions:

- What new insights did you gain about your family and community?
- How would you modify the interview process in the future?
- What role can oral history play in cultural preservation or revival?

Suggested resource to assist with this activity: [The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide](#).



HISTORY AND LAWS

- ☉ What are the similarities between the stories of the indigenous Winnemem and other tribes in California?
- ☉ How have the historical experiences of the Winnemem and other Native Californians people been similar in terms of:
 - outside settlers arriving?
 - far-off federal governments affecting their cultures?
 - languages and spiritual practices being repressed?
 - the impact of major government-sponsored projects on their cultural landscapes?

FILM CLIP

Watch 5:49–9:47 to engage students in the Winnemem plight to protect their land and gain federal recognition.

- What are the most pivotal moments for the Winnemem people and their lands?
- What strategies have the Winnemem and others used to fight for their land? Which have been successful? Which have not?

The Winnemem were considered a tribe in the 1940s, but in the 1980s the government left them off a new list of federally recognized tribes.

- ☉ What rights and benefits are the Winnemem unable to take advantage of today?
- ☉ Do you think it is fair that the Winnemem are not a federally recognized tribe?
- ☉ What important U.S. laws affect Native American rights and protection of their sacred sites? (For more information, visit [U.S. Laws and Court Cases Involving Sacred Lands](#) on the Resources Page of the Sacred Land Film Project website).
- ☉ Do you think the Winnemem will win the lawsuit against the government for not protecting Winnemem sacred sites?

ACTIVITY

The Winnemem and Their Land

Develop an historical timeline of the Winnemem people. Encourage students to pinpoint pivotal moments of change for the people and the land. You may want to break the class into groups to focus on different sections of the timeline. Use the [Winnemem Wintu timeline](#) on the Sacred Land Film Project website and the [site report on the McCloud River Watershed](#) found on the SOSG website:



ACTIVITY

Take-home assignment: Ask family members and friends to reflect on sacred places or experiences in their own lives. Add these reflections to the class's understanding of what a sacred place is, its purpose and its value—and how sacred places can be protected by law. Consider these questions:

- Have you ever walked past a site of cultural or religious significance and not been allowed to enter because you were not a member of the culture or religion? How did that make you feel? To what extent do you think someone, or a group, has the right to determine which sites are off limits to other people?
- What laws exist to protect sacred places?

ACTIVITY

Write a letter to one of your government representatives presenting the case for federal recognition of the Winnemem.

Additional Resources on Winnemem Legal History

- ☉ [Winnemem Wintu: Journey to Justice](#), the official website of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe.
- ☉ Text of the [Cottonwood Treaty](#), the 1851 agreement that would have established a 35-mile by 35-mile Winnemem reservation. It was never ratified by the U.S. Senate.
- ☉ [Norelputis letter](#), a 1889 letter known as the Wintu-Yana Petition, written by Winnemem headman Norelputis to U.S. President Benjamin Harrison.
- ☉ “[The Role of Critical Cartography in Environmental Justice: Land-Use Conflict at Shasta Dam, California](#),” a 2010 Master’s thesis by cartographer Anne McTavish that contains maps and historical documents that pertain to the Winnemem fight for their land.

ACTIVITY

Winnemem History

Compare key events in the [Winnemem history timeline](#) to other indigenous peoples’ struggles around the world—such as boarding schools, language ban, revival of culture. Research and discuss the historical factors that triggered cultural revivals around the world starting in the 1960s.



Pilgrims and Tourists

COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES

The global population has passed 7 billion and is heading toward 8 billion. There are an estimated 400 million indigenous people, and their lands are being pressured from all sides.

- How is growing population linked to, or a cause of, the two key conflicts in the film?
- What are the benefits of indigenous cultures asserting their human rights and managing their land as they see fit?
- What are the benefits of supporting urban growth, food production and energy extraction? Ask students to think about how they would weigh the needs of indigenous communities against those of the broader society.

Water

FILM CLIP

Ceremonial Water

Watch 22:51–26:40 on the puberty ceremony for Winnemem girls.

- Describe the ceremony.
- What rituals or ceremonies in your own or other cultures involve water?
- Why is water frequently part of ritual and ceremony?
- What other coming-of-age ceremonies or rituals do you know of? Are they connected to a specific place?

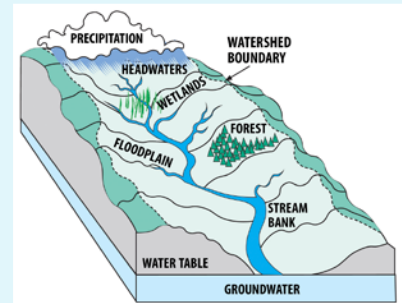
Additional Resource

For more information about water in today's world, including usage and politics, particularly in the developing world, see [The World Savvy Monitor's issue on Water](#).

What Is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet such as the outflow of a reservoir, mouth of a bay, or any point along a stream channel. The word watershed is used interchangeably with drainage basin or catchment.

—U.S. Geological Survey



Courtesy of Allegheny County Conservation District

ACTIVITY

Map Your Watershed

- What watershed are you a part of? Make a map of your local watershed. Locate historic maps of your community at your local library or online at your city government's webpage.
- Print out a map of your community. Have students use different colored markers to draw in historic and present-day streams, rivers and reservoirs. What did the watershed look like 100 years ago? How is the presence of water different today than in the past?
- What industries in your town depend on (or exist) because of their proximity to water?
- Are there threats to your community's water supply? (Guide students to note possible contaminants such as agricultural fields, factories, highways in relation to local water sources.)
- How do drought and global warming affect local water supply?

Dams

There are more than 75,000 dams in the United States, 8,100 of which are higher than 50 feet. Come up with a list of dams within 10, 50 or 100 miles of your school.

- ☉ What size are they?
- ☉ Is a dammed reservoir where your drinking water comes from?
- ☉ Do dams seem like a good way to guarantee water to large populations?

WHY WAS SHASTA DAM BUILT?

Shasta Dam was built for many reasons, including water storage, hydroelectric generation, flood control and to create jobs for out-of-work men during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Its main purpose was to provide water for agriculture in desert regions of California's Central Valley.

CONTROVERSY OVER SHASTA DAM

In 2015 the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BoR), which manages Shasta Dam, released the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the enlargement of Shasta Dam by 18.5 feet. The proposed project, which requires Congressional approval, would enable the BoR to store more water during wet years, primarily for the benefit of Southern California agriculture. The need for dam enlargement has been questioned based on the small number of

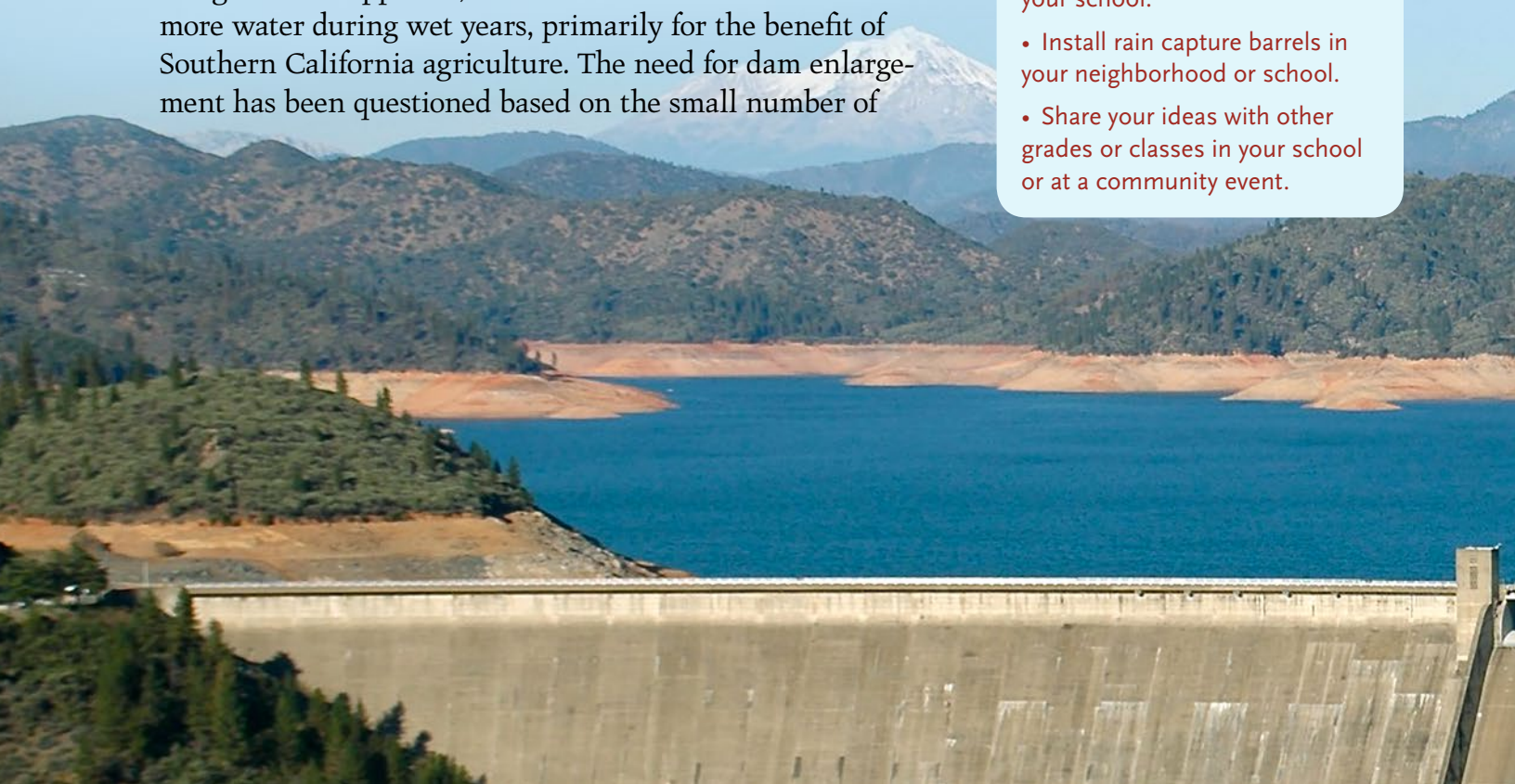
SERVICE LEARNING

Meet with representatives from your city government to learn how city planners think about and plan for water consumption.

- How does a municipal government prioritize issues around water?
- What are the strains on the water supply in your community?
- How is wastewater dealt with?
- Are there water conservation guidelines in place where you live?

Project Ideas:

- Write a proposal for an improved municipal water usage plan that incorporates what you have learned.
- Write a pamphlet to educate homeowners about the local watershed and water usage. What do you think is important for homeowners and other community members to know? How can water be better conserved?
- As a class, create a mural on the importance of water for display in your school.
- Install rain capture barrels in your neighborhood or school.
- Share your ideas with other grades or classes in your school or at a community event.



years when the reservoir reaches capacity and the fact that California water use has been declining, thanks to increased efficiency and conservation. The proposed project also claims to benefit endangered salmon. Reviewing the draft EIS as required under the Endangered Species Act, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists concluded the proposed project would negatively affect salmon. For the project to proceed, a permit from the USFWS is required. Environmental opponents of the dam raise are concerned that the USFWS will issue a permit in defiance of the findings of its own scientists.

Costs of the project, estimated in 2015 at \$1.3 billion, would be borne by American taxpayers—supplemented by contributions from cities and large agricultural landholders in the Central Valley who already receive subsidized water from Shasta Dam. The State of California will likely not contribute to the cost of the project, as the McCloud River is protected under the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and a larger Shasta Dam would flood the lower McCloud. A water bond passed by state voters in 2014 included \$2.7 billion for water storage projects, but language in the ballot proposition exempts projects that affect protected rivers.

- If the height of Shasta Dam is raised, a small number of people may be affected by the destruction of sacred sites, while a larger number of people may benefit from increased water supply. If the Winnemem prevail, the federal government will not raise Shasta Dam. Do you think it is fair to protect such a small group?

ACTIVITY

Create a T-chart outlining the pros and cons of expanding Shasta Dam. Use this as the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. Encourage students to explore ecological, economic and cultural impacts of enlarging the dam.

ACTIVITY

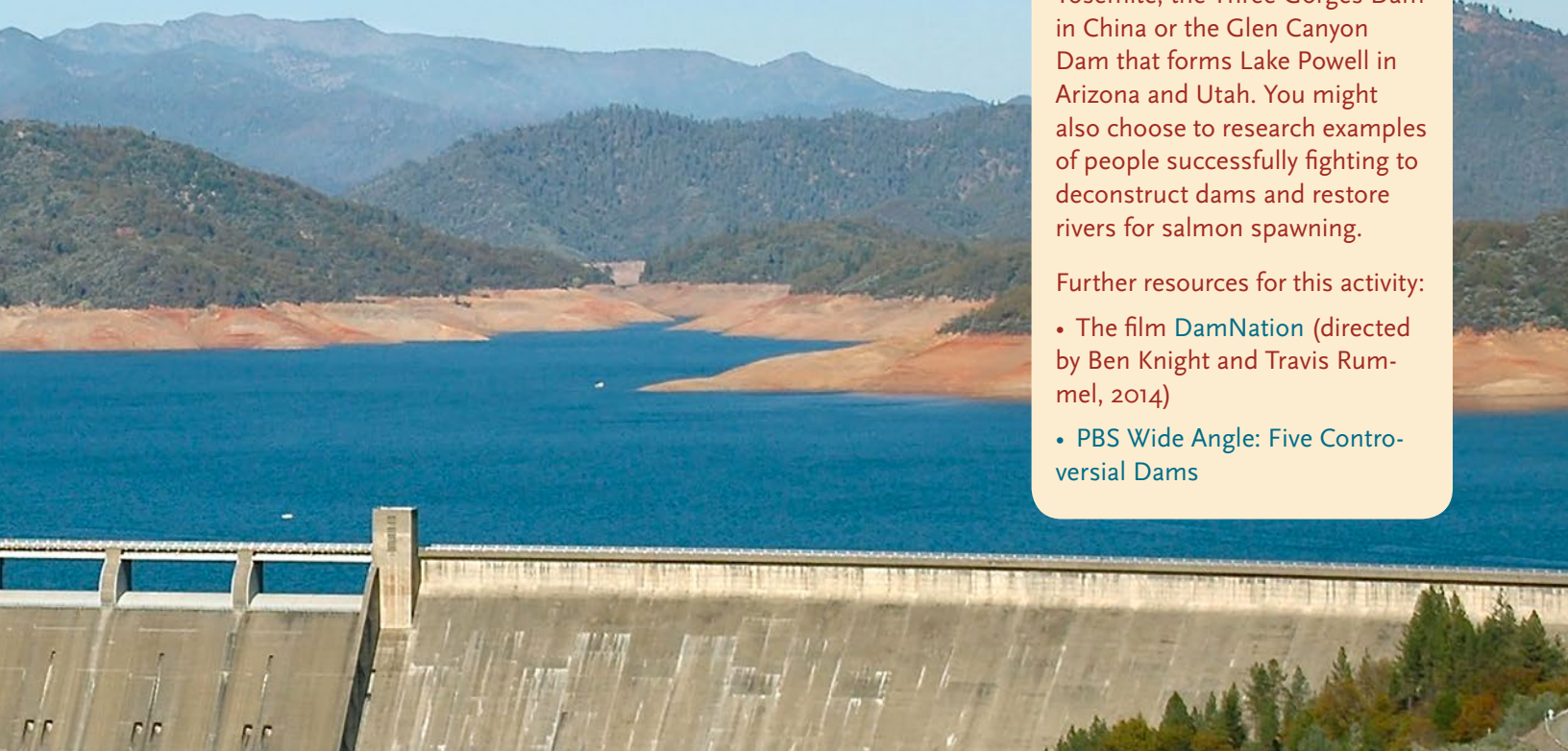
Write a pamphlet that informs local residents about the Shasta Dam expansion. What information and perspectives do you think are important for the public to understand? How similar would it be to the information presented by the Shasta Dam tour guide?

ACTIVITY

Research other well-known dam projects and explore the movements to fight against or support their construction. Examples might include Hetch Hetchy in Yosemite, the Three Gorges Dam in China or the Glen Canyon Dam that forms Lake Powell in Arizona and Utah. You might also choose to research examples of people successfully fighting to deconstruct dams and restore rivers for salmon spawning.

Further resources for this activity:

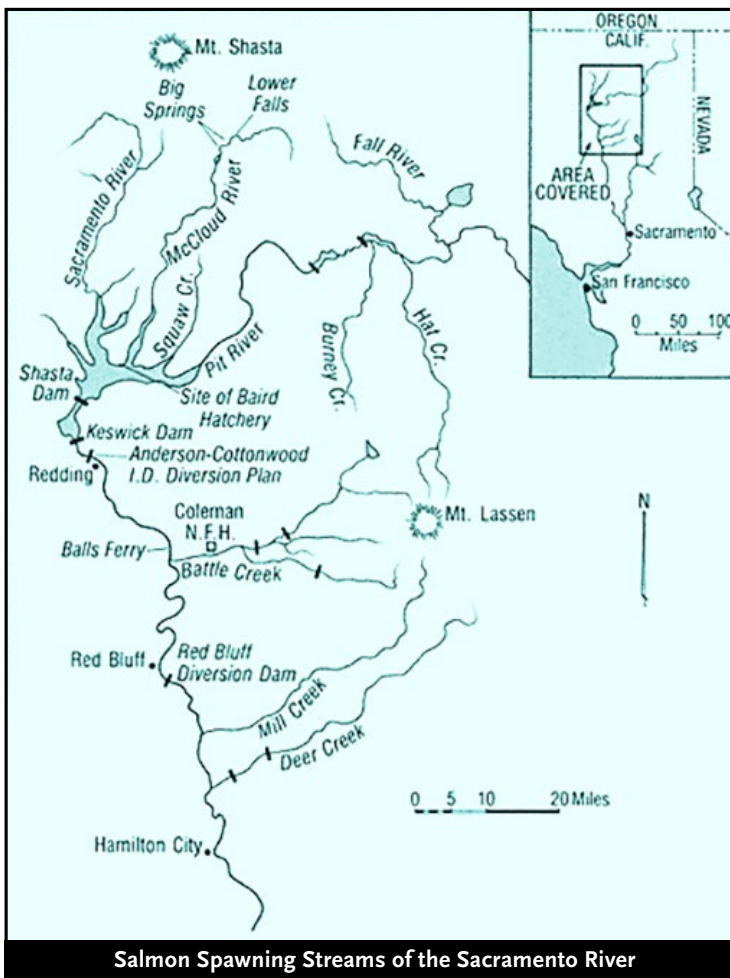
- The film [DamNation](#) (directed by Ben Knight and Travis Rummel, 2014)
- [PBS Wide Angle: Five Controversial Dams](#)



SALMON: AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

Salmon eggs from the McCloud River were exported around the world in the late 1800s from the Baird Hatchery (see map above). The Winnemem recently learned that their salmon are thriving in the Rakaia River in New Zealand, and in 2010 they traveled to New Zealand to sing and dance for the salmon, in hopes of one day bringing them back to the McCloud River.

- ☉ What is your reaction to these efforts?
- ☉ What does it mean to have a spiritual covenant with the salmon?
- ☉ Do you think it is important that the salmon are returned to the McCloud River?



Salmon Spawning Streams of the Sacramento River

ACTIVITY

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that the best strategy to help endangered salmon species recover is to restore high altitude ecosystems where salmon spawn.

Have students:

- chart seasonal salmon runs and reproductive cycles
- research impacts to waterways and spawning grounds
- investigate where the removal of dams has helped salmon recovery.

ACTIVITY

Research the life cycle of the Chinook salmon. How has Shasta Dam affected the fish's ability to reach their spawning grounds?

ACTIVITY

Read "Tribe travels across Pacific to recover lost salmon species," from *California Watch*, August 31, 2011.

Salmon are “anadromous,” meaning they are born as freshwater fish, but must transition into saltwater fish to reach maturity in the ocean. After their years at sea, salmon return to the river where they were hatched, and in the process they must adapt back to become freshwater fish again.

Today, the Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon are classified as endangered under the Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act. Under these laws, the government has the responsibility to act to protect a species in danger of extinction. In order to reach the cold waters of the upper McCloud River, a swimway would have to be constructed around massive Shasta Dam to allow the relocated fish from New Zealand to once again spawn in the river where they originally thrived.

In addition to the obstacles from dams, threats to California salmon runs include habitat degradation, water diversions, giant pumps in the Delta, pollution, overfishing and warmer river temperatures due to climate change.

RESISTANCE STRATEGIES

The film shows many resistance strategies used today by the Winnemem people. These include lawsuits, creating nature parks, petitions, testifying for legislators, ceremonies, protests, mapping and choosing to participate in a film project to tell their stories.

- ☉ What has been the impact of each strategy?
- ☉ What strategies seem to be most effective?
- ☉ What are other strategies that indigenous people employ to counteract destructive land practices like resource extraction, dam and pipeline construction, or irresponsible tourism?

The film shows the Winnemem protesting projects that endanger their sacred land.

- ☉ Compare and contrast the different approaches to protest.
- ☉ What action or events galvanized each community?
- ☉ The Winnemem “War Dance” is actually a nonviolent protest. What did this “spiritual warfare” accomplish?

ACTIVITY

Research animal habitat and aquatic life for both Mt. Shasta’s McCloud River. List the endangered species that inhabit the area. What factors have led to their endangerment? What restoration strategies are the Winnemem using to bring back the populations of snow leopards and Chinook salmon?



- ☉ What is the value of networking and sharing information?
- ☉ How would you oppose a serious threat to something that is sacred to you?

FILM CLIP

Watch 19:33–20:33 on GPS mapping near the McCloud River.

Mapping sacred lands can “minimize damage from the growing presence of outsiders” as well as educate the public about the history and traditions of a native culture.

- How do both the Winnemem use mapping as a strategy to protect their lands?
- Do you think mapping is a good strategy or not?
- How could mapping “backfire” and lead to the opposite of the desired effect?

ACTIVITY

Make a map of places in your community of historic and/or cultural significance. How or why might one student’s map differ from another’s? Are there any places in danger of being destroyed? How might a map be of use in preserving historically and culturally significant sites?

ACTIVITY

Simulate a public forum on whether to expand Shasta Dam

Break your students into five groups to represent the main stakeholders: the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, Central Valley agriculture, the Bureau of Reclamation, a wildlife biologist who studies salmon, and California Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein. In groups, students should conduct research and prepare a presentation to defend their argument in favor of or against the expansion of Shasta Dam. Students should be prepared to explain their position with evidence and anticipate how they might respond to counterarguments. You may want to have some students serve as journalists or members of the public who are prepared with questions to ask or comments to make.

Allow time after the simulation for students to explore their own opinions about expanding Shasta Dam. What decision would they make and why? Did their opinions change after all arguments were heard?

Follow up activities could include writing a journalist’s report or an opinion piece for a local newspaper.



About the Sacred Land Film Project

Standing on Sacred Ground was produced by the Sacred Land Film Project, a project of Earth Island Institute since 1984. To deepen public understanding of sacred places, indigenous cultures and environmental justice, the Film Project produces a variety of media and educational materials—films, videos, DVDs, articles, photographs, school curricula and other materials. The Sacred Land Film Project uses journalism, networking and education to rekindle reverence for land, increase respect for cultural diversity, stimulate dialogue about connections between nature and culture, and protect sacred lands and diverse spiritual practices. Our last film, *In the Light of Reverence*, continues to be widely screened, and used in schools and universities.

We have two websites, one for the [Standing on Sacred Ground](#) series, and the other for the [Sacred Land Film Project](#).

CHRISTOPHER (TOBY) MCLEOD
Producer/Director

Founder and Project Director of Earth Island Institute's Sacred Land Film Project since 1984. He produced and directed *In the Light of Reverence* (2001) and has made three other award-winning, hour-long documentary films that were broadcast on national television: *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?* (1983), *Downwind/Downstream* (1988), and *NOVA: Poison in the Rockies* (1990). After 10 years of work, he completed *In the Light of Reverence*, which was broadcast in August 2001 on the acclaimed PBS documentary series P.O.V. (Point of View) and won a number of awards, including the Council on Foundation's prestigious Henry Hampton Award (2005). His first film was the nine-minute short, *The Cracking of Glen Canyon Dam—with Edward Abbey and Earth First!* McLeod has a master's degree in journalism from U.C. Berkeley and a B.A. in American History from Yale. He is a journalist who works in film, video, print and still photography. In 1985, McLeod received a Guggenheim Fellowship for filmmaking, and his U.C. Berkeley masters thesis film *Four Corners* won a Student Academy Award in 1983. Toby has been working with indigenous communities as a filmmaker, journalist and photographer for more than 35 years.



JESSICA ABBE

Writer (*Pilgrims and Tourists, Islands of Sanctuary*) and Co-Producer

Co-produced *Angle of Inspiration*, a 2004 PBS documentary about the effect on the small town of Redding, California, of a new bridge by world-renowned architect Santiago Calatrava. Writing credits include *Power Paths* (2008) about the Native American movement toward renewable energy development and *In the Light of Reverence*. Helped start KRON-TV's *Bay Area Backroads*, the highest-rated local program during her tenure as producer, and produced *San Francisco in the 1970s*. Jessica holds a B.F.A. in dramatic arts from New York University, and a master's degree in journalism from U.C. Berkeley.



JENNIFER HUANG

Writer (*Profit and Loss, Fire and Ice*) and Co-Producer

Documentary filmmaker in San Francisco for 15 years. At Lucasfilm, wrote and produced *Harlem's Hellfighters: Black Soldiers of World War I*, and contributed to nine other documentary films, with topics ranging from Gertrude Bell to Dracula, from Tin Pan Alley to the Congo. Worked as a writer, field producer and associate producer on productions for PBS, Travel Channel, HGTV, TNT and AZN TV, and co-founded *Hyphen*, an Asian American news and culture magazine. Jennifer holds a B.A. in Social Welfare and Ethnography through Cinema from U.C. Berkeley.



PRODUCTION TEAM

Editors – Quinn Costello, Marta Wohl

Cinematographers – Andrew Black, Will Parrinello, Vicente Franco

Sound – David Wendlinger

Associate Producers – Erin Lee, Marlo McKenzie, Ashley Tindall

Narrators – Graham Greene, Tantoo Cardinal, Q'orianka Kilcher, Rhoda Roberts, Luana Busby-Neff

Additional Resources

Sacred Land Film Project [Bibliography](#)

Sacred Land Film Project:

- ☉ [U.S. Laws and Court Cases Involving Sacred Lands](#)
- ☉ [International Efforts to Protect Sacred Lands](#)
- ☉ [Select from more than 100 individual sacred site reports](#)
- ☉ [Sacred Land Reader](#) (6 essays, 92 pages)
- ☉ [Ethics for Visiting a Sacred Place](#)



Books

Deloria, Vine, Jr., *God is Red* and *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America*

Feld, Steven and Basso, Keith, *Senses of Place* (especially the essay “Wisdom Sits in Places”)

Nabokov, Peter, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places*

World Wide Fund For Nature and Alliance of Religions and Conservation, *Beyond Belief—Linking Faiths and Protected Areas For Biodiversity Conservation*

Articles

Sponsel, Leslie E., 2007, “Religion, Nature and Environmentalism,” *Encyclopedia of Earth*

Sponsel, Leslie E., 2008, “Sacred Places and Biodiversity Conservation,” *Encyclopedia of Earth*

Websites

[Challenging Christian Hegemony](#) (by Paul Kivel, author)

[Intercontinental Cry Magazine](#) – essential news on the world’s indigenous peoples

[Sacred Sites: Places of Peace and Power](#) (by Martin Gray, author/photographer)

[The Cultural Conservancy](#)

Film

In the Light of Reverence – (2001) directed by Christopher McLeod, Sacred Land Film Project, on three sacred site struggle in the U.S.

Curricula

Lessons of our Land – from Indian Land Tenure Association

Project Wet – Water Education for Teachers

Face to Faith – curriculum for teaching about religion in schools

In the Light of Reverence Teacher's Guide



Relevant Common Core Standards

Reading – Informational Texts; Grades 9-10; 3 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3)

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Writing; Grades 9-10; 1.B (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1.B)

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

Writing; Grades 9-10; 7; Grades 11-12; 7 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7, 11-12.7)

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 1.A (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.A)

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 1.D (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.D)

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 3 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3)

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 4 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4)

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and task.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 11-12; 1.C (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.C)

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 11-12; 1.D (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.D)

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims and evidence made on all

sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

History/Social Studies; Grades 9-10; 6 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6)

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 2 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 6 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6)

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning and evidence.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 8 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8)

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 9 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9)

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.