

Fine Arts 5 Es Lesson

Lesson: *Šhuŋka Wakáŋ*—Beautiful Pure Innocence With-Energy

Objective: To honor the Horse Nation in Lakota Society through creative art-making.

Lakhóta communities have yielded different words and even different meanings for the word, horse. *Šhuŋka Wakáŋ*, is the most common contemporary way to say the word in the Lakota language. “Holy Dog,” is an interpretation, but *Lakhóta* elders say that in the traditional sense the word *shunka* means “pitiful,” not in the western mindset of downtrodden but as “beautiful, innocent and pure.” Part of the *Lakhóta* word for horse, *wakáŋ*, reaches back to creation. When *Iŋyáŋ*, stone, let his blood flow, his blood which ran blue became the waters of the world. His blood was *Kaŋ*, full of energy with power to destroy and to give life. When the *Lakhóta* say *Wakáŋ*, it means something with energy, energy with good and negative potential. Taken altogether, *Šhuŋka Wakáŋ* means “Beautiful Pure Innocence With Energy.”

Thefirstschout.blogspot.co/2013/05/traditional-lakot-horsemanship-lives.html

Lakhóta people...look at the horse as having its own nation...everything out there is a nation unto itself...everything has a spirit. Thefirstschout.blogspot.co/2013/05/traditional-lakot-horsemanship-lives.html

Essential Question(s):

Why it is that Lakota origin stories of the horse differ but are the same in other ways?

Why was the Horse Nation honored as “spiritual kin” as much as the Buffalo *Oyate* was in Lakota life?

How can communities retain cultural significance of horses in the future—*onipikteca* (that we shall live)?

Materials/Resources

Teacher:

- Elements of Art
- Principles of Art
- Attachments:
 - Origin Stories
 - Jigsaw method for readings, preparation

Student:

Art Supplies

Essential Vocabulary

- *šun̄kawakħaŋ* (“holy dog”)
- Origin
- *Oyate*
- Ledger
- Exploits
- *Wakan*
- Coup

Learning Experience

Standards and Practice:

OSEU 3: Culture and Language
The origin, thought and philosophy of the Oceti Sakowin continues in the contemporary lifestyles of tribal members. Tribal cultures, traditions

Anchor Standard 2: K-12.Cr.2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
6-8.VA.Cr. 2.1
6-8.VA.Cr.2.3
Anchor Standard 7: K-12.Re.7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
6-8.VA.Re.7.1

and languages are incorporated and observed by many tribal members both on and off the reservations.

Cultural Integration:



Walter Bone Shirt, Lakota (Sioux), Brule Ledger—Mansfield Library

Lakota relationship with the horse: “Siya’ka said that once, when hard-pressed on the warpath, he dismounted, and standing in front of his horse spoke to him, saying: ‘We are in danger. Obey me promptly so that we may conquer. If you have to run for your life and mine, do your best, and if we reach home I will give you the best eagle feather I can get and the finest red cloth, and you shall be painted with the best paint’” (Densmore, 1992)

Our ancestors weren’t just good horsemen, they were good relatives to sunkawakan oyate ki, the horse nation. From “Bring Back the Horse, the Buffalo Nation Will Rise Again” www.nativedailynetwork.com/2017/02/horse-bison/

I Can Statement(s):



- I can appreciate the *wakan* (spiritual and sacred) relationship between horse and Lakota from text and concepts in art work.
- I can create art work that conveys my understanding of *Shunka Wakan* and Lakota people.
- I can be creative and take risks to pursue ideas in art-making.

At left: **Oglala Lakota Beaded Horse Mask** ca. 1904.
Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota.
Seed beads, hide, and sinew. (National Museum of the American Indian)

Engage: Activating Strategy/Hook:

Which of the two drawings capture your interest the most? Why?

The inscription, at right, describes the artist as an “untutored son of the prairie”. What does that mean? How can you explain it?

How are the principles of art (balance, harmony, unity, proportion, scale, repetition, variety) and particularly movement and rhythm, created in the drawings?

How do the elements of art (ex. color, lines, texture, space, shape, form) add to the aesthetics of the drawings?

Students will view the video <https://www.pbs.org/video/dakota-life-lakota-horse-symbols/>
After viewing the video respond: What symbols do you see in Scares the Enemy’s two drawings below?



“Losing War Horse” By Scares the Enemy. Lakota (Sioux) Brule Leatherwood/Scares the Enemy Ledger, 1882-1883

How do the elements and principles of art add meaning to the Horse Culture of the Lakota?

Inscription on Title Page: *Some of the chief exploits of "Scares the Enemy", an untutored son of the prairie, as drawn by himself...* Plains Indian Ledger Art | Home <https://plainsledgerart.org/>



“Chasing Crow Warrior”

Explore: Learning Experiences



“Riding with War Horse and Spare”

Scares the Enemy, Lakota (Sioux)-Brule

*Leatherwood/Scares the Enemy
Ledger 1882-1883*

The “big idea” is for students to begin to understand how the *Horse Oyate* and the gift they bring was and continues to be essential to Lakota and all people.

Activity: “A Post It Parade” (to get students thinking about the significance of horses in Lakota society and related topics)

1. Students are provided with a question or prompt to generate ideas, questions, concerns, etc. **Prompt Example:** *Why did the Lakota establish relationships with their horses?*
2. Give each student post-its. Have them write one idea per post-it.
3. Students then post the post-its on the chalkboard or wall. It may be useful to have them place the post-its in areas to group them by topic, question, chronologically, etc. This activity also can generate a take-away (the list of questions, ideas, or concerns posted by the students) to provide direction for the teacher.

In a small group (3-4) respond to the following questions to add insight to the “big idea”, at left:

- a. What do you notice in the drawing? (“I notice...”)
- b. What questions does this art work raise for you? (“I wonder...”)
- c. What meaning or understanding is conveyed in this work?
- d. What more do you want to know about the horse in Lakota culture?

Explain: Learning Experiences



Stealing Horses (1870)

Black Road.

Oglala Holy Man, Lakota (Sioux)

One of the most dangerous exploits and the more honorable was stealing horses from an enemy camp. Select

Activity: Students will engage in art-making that reflects the highly cherished horse in Lakota life. They will use any content or question responses in this lesson to unleash their creativity: *How was stealing horses honorable?* They will focus attention on elements and principles of art and the *Creativity Rubric*, below. Students use a medium of their choice, depending on teacher discretion and availability of materials: painting—acrylics, tempera, watercolors; sketching or drawing—chalk, charcoal, conte crayon, pastel, pen and ink, pencil or colored pencil.

More information to think about: The horse was used in everyday life, horse hair was used to strengthen rope and to decorate objects. Horses could carry a heavy load, and provided transportation that in offered a sense of freedom. Horses were used in ceremonies, games, hunting, horse racing and war. In traditions—counting coup and horse stealing from the enemy—

horses were staked out near the owner's lodge, rather than being herded away from the village. The hovering insects are intended as mosquitos (*capunka*), part of the occupational hazard. The artist shows that he stole four fine animals on one dangerous occasion. A rattlesnake's rattle is tied under the throat of the blue horse. From Ethnographic Notes <https://plainsledgerart.org/plates/view/1794>

Student are to:

- Watch video
- Look carefully at the drawing
- Talk about what they observe
- Back up ideas with evidence
- Listen to and consider the views of others
- Discuss many possible interpretations

“Sun Dance Ceremony”

Twenty standing figures in a circle wear war paraphernalia, and their horses are painted for battle. “Because to take part in the sun dance takes great courage, the same kind of courage you need to go to war—Janet Berlo, a professor of art history at the University of Rochester speaking at Bowdoin College. Larger image at: <http://community.bowdoin.edu/news/201...>

Counting Coup

The *Baptiste Good Winter Count* (*Sičhánǵu*; aka *Brulé*) 1714-1715—a warrior astride a horse, carrying a pine lance came to attack but killed nothing. According to Dr. Corbusier's notes, this mounted attack was the first of its kind experienced by the *Sičhánǵu*. The rider certainly didn't come to joust. He came to collect war honor, not to kill.

horses were a symbol of strength, pride and courage. The people believe that they had the horse long before the Spanish arrived (See Attachment.)



Pair of Lakota Racing Horses

Jaw-Amidon Ledger, Lakota (Sioux) Hunkpapa

The earliest record of horse-stealing on the Northern Plains is that recorded in the *Brown Hat Wintercount*. According to this wintercount, in 1706, the *Dahkotah* stole horses from the *Hewaktokah*, (old *Dahkotah* word for the Hidatsa). They lived along Knife River near present-day Stanton, ND.



Exploring “Sun Dance Ceremony” Bowdoin College

Watch video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=189RA-BjoGU>

Counting Coup

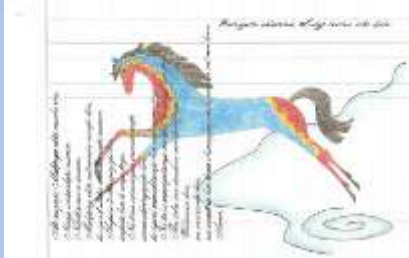
Coup was counted to establish position in the tribal honor system. Status mattered, and competition to count the greatest coup was intense. The ultimate act of bravery was to count coup - *meaning to get close enough to touch an enemy with a coup stick without causing him harm.*

<http://aktalakota.stjo.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=8666>



Baptiste Good Winter Count (*Sičhánǵu*; aka *Brulé*) 1714-1715

Elaborate: Extending & Defining



Origin of the Horse

The horse came out of a swirl where the James River converges with the Missouri River.

Origin of the Horse Stories—use Jigsaw Activity (See Attachment 1)

- Why are there so many versions of the origin of the horse story?
- What you connections do you see between what you’ve learned from discussions/observations and the origin of the horse stories?
- What vocabulary words interest you that you want defined?
- What is the underlying message of the Mary Louise Defender version of the story? To what extent is it relayed in your art piece?

How is what you have learned in this lesson applied in our daily lives? Learning about the Horse Nation has the capacity to renew and strengthen tribal and cultural identity. This knowledge is also an alternative source of healing energy for all who choose to apply it in their daily lives.

Evaluate: Summarizing Strategy



Critical Response: Students will pay close attention to the art created by their peers. The guidance of the teacher and the class responses will demonstrate that students have achieved the lesson objective based on questions such as these.

1. What do you notice? (Describe without judgment: "I notice...")
2. What do these art pieces remind you of? (What memory, experience, story, music, other work does this trigger? There are no wrong answers or associations.)
3. What emotions do you feel as you respond to these art pieces?
4. What questions do they raise for you? ("I wonder...")
5. What meaning or understanding is intended or conveyed in these works of art?

Student reaction is collective— about all art pieces—however the teacher will ensure that each art piece receives proper critical responses.

Differentiation Strategies

Extension

- Produce art pieces that show other concepts such as *wealth* and “*giving away.*” In Lakota tradition, wealth was given away to honor someone who had done a great deed, or to honor someone who had died. Horses often changed hands in giveaway ceremonies. (See Attachment 3)
- Horse in *Hunka* Ceremony. (Attachment 2)

Intervention

Use other making-art ideas: scrap book, crossword puzzle, poster, brochure, or other hands-on-activity to demonstrate learning

For more information about the horse from a contemporary perspective go to thefirstscout.blogspot.com/2013/05/traditional-lakota-horsemanship-lives.html

Assessment(s)

Formative

Checklist—a peer critique of preparatory sketching for revising art-making activity:

- Uses idea-generating techniques to develop original ideas.
- Evaluates quality of ideas for best ones to shape into an art piece.
- Asks questions, for new perspective to improve on selected idea.
- Seeks out & uses feedback/critique to revise to concept.
- Uses ingenuity/imagination outside of conventional boundaries.

Summative

This is a good Creativity Rubric for assessing originality, knowledge, tools, and reflection. Print it out at: <http://ihsnyc.org/portfolio/creativerubric.pdf>

Teacher Reflection: (Next steps?)

Attachment 1

Missouri River Mythos By: Dakotah Goodhouse

The arrival of the horse on the Missouri River.

The Dakota-Lakota people have many story variations of the horse and its arrival on the Northern Plains. All of the stories relate the respect for the mystery of creation and all its unrevealed sacred gifts for humanity. That respect for the horse and the connection that the Lakota felt for it is reflected in the names for this first encounter, such as: Elk-Dog, Holy Dog, Spirit Dog, or Mysterious Dog. In Dakota or Lakota, the word for dog is simply Sunka (to be a dog; pronounced shoon-KAH).

Previously, the Dakota-Lakota had no word for horse, and at first sight, probably said something like *Le anpetu kin sunka wan lila wakan ca wawayanke welo*, meaning: this day, a dog was very powerful and I saw it.” The dog was domesticated and commonplace, the horse wasn’t just big but powerful- and it could help them.

Jigsaw Activity can be used with origin stories that follow.

- Divide students into small jigsaw groups (3-6) choosing one student as the leader.
- Divide the day’s lesson into 3-6 segments, depending on the size of the groups and the amount of material that needs to be covered.
- Assign each student to learn one segment, making sure students have direct access only to their segment.
- Give students time to read their segment at least twice and become familiar with it.
- Form temporary “expert groups” by having one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same segment to share their information learned.
- Bring the students back to their original jigsaw group, and have each student share his/her segment with the rest of the group. • At the end of the session, have some form of assessment (e.g., quiz, discussion questions, written paper, graphic organizer, etc.) available to check for understanding.

This shows students that individual accountability for learning all the information, although presented as a group, is the objective of the activity

Origin Story. Mary Louise Defender-Wilson, Wagmuhawin (Gourd Woman), a traditional storyteller of the Ihanktowana Dakota (Yanktonai), and enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe shares the story of the horse and its arrival... According to Defender-Wilson, a long time ago, there were two men who went out hunting along the Mnisose (Missouri River). They called the river Mnisose, pronounced Mih-NEE shoh-shay; Mni meaning Water, sose meaning Roiling, A-stir, or Swirling. Think of stirring a cup of coffee after you’ve added cream or sugar.

These two hunters followed the course of Mnisose and noticed that a great swirl began to appear in the river. As they stood transfixed watching the swirl grow, a violent thunderstorm suddenly manifested itself about them. The two hunters kept as much out of the way of the storm as anyone caught in the rain could, but they trained their eyes on the swirl in the river. As they stood watching the churning water, a bolt of lightning came out of the sky and struck it.

From the middle of the swirl appeared what looked like a head with a long face. As this head with a long face followed the swirl about in circles, a long neck was revealed as the head and face were lifted out of the water, then [there was] a great body, like that of an elk. This creature fought the current of the swirl, broke free, and swam for the shore where the hunters stood watching.

The creature ascended the bank of the Mnisose, shook itself, and walked into the grasses where it began to graze. The hunters knew then it was similar to the bison, elk, and deer. Curious about the creature, the hunters watched it for a while and then decided to approach it, but as they neared it, it ran away. As close as hunters were able to get to the creature, they noticed that it had a little one with it, which was just as skittish as the mother. The hunters thought that the creature and its little one were somewhat like the other four-leggeds, wild and wary of people, but also unlike deer, elk, moose, and bison. The hunters and the creatures knew there was a connection between the other.

The hunters went back to their people and told them of the grace and strength of this new creature and its awareness of the connection to them. They talked amongst themselves about the nature of the creatures seeming domesticated nature and its purpose in the natural world. The people eventually came to the conclusion that the creature was sent to help the people in hunting, travelling, and moving.

The people met amongst themselves some more about how best to approach and appropriate this new creature in village life. They finally involved the village singers to compose a song of invitation to the creature and its little one, because they didn't want to capture them and force them into a new life.

The people believed this new creature was sent to them to ease their burdens, like the *sunka*. In those long ago days, the "dog days" as the elders call them, dogs helped the women haul things like firewood or personal belongings on a *sunonk unpa* (a dog-drag, or dog travois; pronounced shoon OHNK oon-PAH) alongside the men or women as they also hauled their belongings on *wanjiksila* (a one-person travois; pronounced wahn-ZEEK-shee-LAH). The dogs served as guard dogs, especially as watchdogs over children, for in those days enemy tribes used to steal children, even as the Teton used to take children from the enemy.

The singers composed and sang the first horse songs, to tame them, and brought them into village life. As the horse adjusted to life among the people, it came to help them. The people learned to fashion saddles, bridles, and *sununkonpa* (a pony-drag, or travois; pronounced shoon-OON-k-ohn-pah).

The "dog days" ended. The days of the Plains Indian horse culture began. Defender-Wilson tells the story with the lesson of respect for all of the gifts of the creator.

The ***John K. Bear Wintercount, an Ihanktowana (Yanktonai)*** pictographic record of the history of that tribe, **tells us when the horse arrived.** *Waniyetu ehani, Sung noni ota kin*, translated to mean, there were many wild horses this year. Counting back from key entries which are correlated to major events like smallpox, war, or astronomical events, this particular reference to horses is the earliest date at 1692.

In 1692, the *Ihanktowana* Dakota were living in earthlodge villages, not unlike the Arikara, Hidatsa, and Mandan Indians, along the *Cansansan Wakpa* (Whitewood River; pronounced chahn-SAHn-sahn wahk-PAH), known today as the James River. Where the *Cansansan Wakpa* and *Mnisose* converge was a favorite wintering site of the *Ihanktowana*. It is this author's conjecture that the *Ihanktowana* were

arriving to this site in the fall, camping there over the winter, or leaving there in the spring, when they encountered the horse.

It may be that as some hunters crested a hill along the banks of the Missouri River, as a thunderstorm was approaching, horses were coming out of the river from the swirls they created themselves as they swam.

Of course, the horse was here in North America thousands of years ago, up until the last ice age.

It may be that as the environment changed they were unable to adapt or that the Paleo-Indians hunted them to extinction. The essence of the American mustang had already run these grounds, the free spirit of the horse in North America was only to be rediscovered when the Spanish brought horses with them.

All these first encounters with the horse and these earliest native records relate to it all originating along the Missouri River. For many of the First Nations living today in North Dakota, the Missouri River is where the American Indian horse culture began. The arrival of the horse changed everything from trade and travel to warfare. For natives living along the river on the Upper Missouri, their sense of place embraced a larger view of the Northern Plains. They and the horses they rode belong here.

Greg Holy Bull, in Red Scaffold on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation... story of the Lakḥóta **story of the horse**. thefirstscout.blogspot.com/2013/05/traditional-lakota-horsemanship-lives.html

A long time ago, the people traveled west to some mountains, then turned south where they encountered a camp of people whom they had never before met. In that camp, they noticed too, that there was an animal that they had never before seen. Unfortunately, enthusiasm of first contact swiftly broke down and violence broke out. During the conflict, the horses broke free and scattered. Warriors went into the new enemies' camp during the fight and stole women thinking to make wives of them. The people, the Lakḥóta, made a run north with the enemy in hot pursuit. Gradually, it happened that the enemy lost heart and turned back. The people slowed their flight in response the enemy retreat and to their wonder, encountered the *harras*. Warriors wanted these horses and tried taking them without success. In the evening, after camp was established, the enemy women went out in the field and sang to the horses which drew them in. With the horses drawn closer to the familiarity and soothing tone of the women, warriors would attempt to capture them to no avail. All the while the *tiyošpaye* kept moving. A day came when they came to a river, there they made an abrupt turn east, back to their ancestral territory, and lo, the *harras* followed. Gradually the horses and warriors came to an understanding and so that's how this one band of Lakḥóta came to have the horse.

Note: According to the story, the enemy whom the *Lakḥóta* took women and horses from were the Spanish.

A story... from Mr. Albert Foote Sr. who heard from his *Lala* (grandfather) **the origin of the horse** thefirstscout.blogspot.com/2013/05/traditional-lakota-horsemanship-lives.html

A long time ago, *Thuṅkáshila* [Grandfather, in reference to a higher power] had an *omničiye* [a gathering] of all the nations in one place. There, *Thuṅkáshila* told them there would one day appear a two-legged, that's coming. "They're going to be *uṅšika* [pitiful]. They're not going to be able to see as good as you. They're not going to be able to hear as good as you. They're not going to be as strong as you. And they're not going to be as fast as you are. So, who amongst you is willing to help them?" said *Thuṅkáshila*. After this question was posed, one of the *šung wakan* took off

running. *Thunḡkáshila* then sent *Wanjli* [the Eagle] after, “Talk to him. And ask him if he’ll help the two-legged.” The eagle caught up to the horse, “Why are you running?” The horse replied, “They’re going to be a burden to me. They’re going to ride me and they’re going to want me to carry their things.” The eagle alighted on the horse’s rump and said, “This is how much of a burden they’re going to be.” But the horse kicked that eagle off of him. Eagle went back to the gathering and told *Thunḡkáshila* what transpired. *Thunḡkáshila* said, “No. You must go back and convince him.” Eagle returned to the horse, but by then it had started to rain and horse had been running for a long time and was sweating profusely. Again, eagle said, “Let me show you how much of a burden they’re going to be,” and again alighted onto horse’s back, and shook himself, and as eagle shook himself, his center plume came out and came to rest on horse’s back. Horse began to protest with wild bucks back and forth, but because he was sweaty from running and wet from the rainfall, horse could not dislodge the feather. Eventually, horse relented and said, “I’ll be the one. I’ll be the one to carry their burden.”

THE HUNKA CEREMONY.

[There is] a practice of assuming the *Hunka* relationship has existed among the Lakota since ancient times. It is probable that at first there was little ceremony other than an agreement between two persons; but that when the practice became more common the Shamans assumed control, adding rites until the ceremony assumed its present form. The most common designation of the ceremony is, "**They Waved Horse-tails over Each Other.**" This appears to fix the time when the ceremony was given its present form, for it alludes to a prominent rite of the ceremony. According to the Oglala calendar a certain year is designated as "When They Waved Horse-tails over Each Other."

The Lakota custom was to name each year according to some event that was peculiar to, or first noticeable, during that year. Therefore, it is probable that the year "*When They Waved Horse-tails over Each Other*" was the year when the *Hunka* ceremony was first performed with the rite of waving horse-tails over each other, or, at least, the year when this rite was first noticeable. This year corresponds to A.D. 1805. Perhaps at that time the horse was a rare animal to the Lakota and as its tail was the most noticeable feature, the Lakota considered it sacred, with the potency of sacred things, in the same manner as they considered sacred the tail of a buffalo. The old Lakota still so consider horse-tails and wave them over others to cause an amicable influence. ¹ Oglala Sun Dance: The Hunka Ceremony: The Hunka Ceremony www.sacred-texts.com/nam/pla/sdo/sdo34.htm

Attachment 3



In a conversation with Charles Deland, Sitting Bull was asked, "Are you a chief by inheritance and if not, what deeds of bravery gave you the title?" "My father's name was Jumping Bull," He replied. "My father was a very rich man and owned many ponies in four colors: roans, white, and gray."

Return of the Nokota to the Hunkpapa Oyate

“...In the Lakota tradition, wealth was to be given away to honor someone else who had done a great deed, or to honor someone who had died. Horses often changed hands in giveaway ceremonies.”
At the time of marriage, horses were given as a way to show respect to a woman of his family or clan by **offering her horses**. When a young man went on his first horse raiding expedition, he gave the horses he captured to his eldest sister. This was a way of honoring his sister. If his sister was already married, she extended that honor by offering the new horse to her husband. If a young man struck his enemy while capturing horses, he would be given a new name by an elderly woman of his father’s clan. The young man paid the woman for this honor by **giving her horses**.