

**UNIT 4 Unification and Growth**  
**Expanding Frontiers 1865–1910**

A STEIN SCHOOL  
**FROEBEL**  
BILINGUAL SCHOOL  
Home of the Space Generation



*from* **BLACK ELK**  
**SPEAKS**

**WITH**  
**JIM SOTO**

# **SPEAK YOUR MIND**

Life is usually a mixed bag. We experience both good and times.

Are people more likely to remember life's sorrows and disappointments or its triumphs and joys? Why?

Take a minute to consider and answer the question.

# PLIGHT OF THE LAKOTA

The pace of westward expansion in the late 1800s meant that Native Americans and whites engaged in increasing competition and conflict. Settlers encroached on the land designated in 1834 as the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) as they extended the Overland Trail to Utah, California, and Oregon.



In 1854, the U.S. government abolished the northern half of the Indian Territory so the transcontinental railroad could be built. The Native American tribes in the area signed treaties, accepting reduced reservations or small individual pieces of land. Many ended up selling their lands to whites (usually under pressure), losing both their identities and control over their lives.



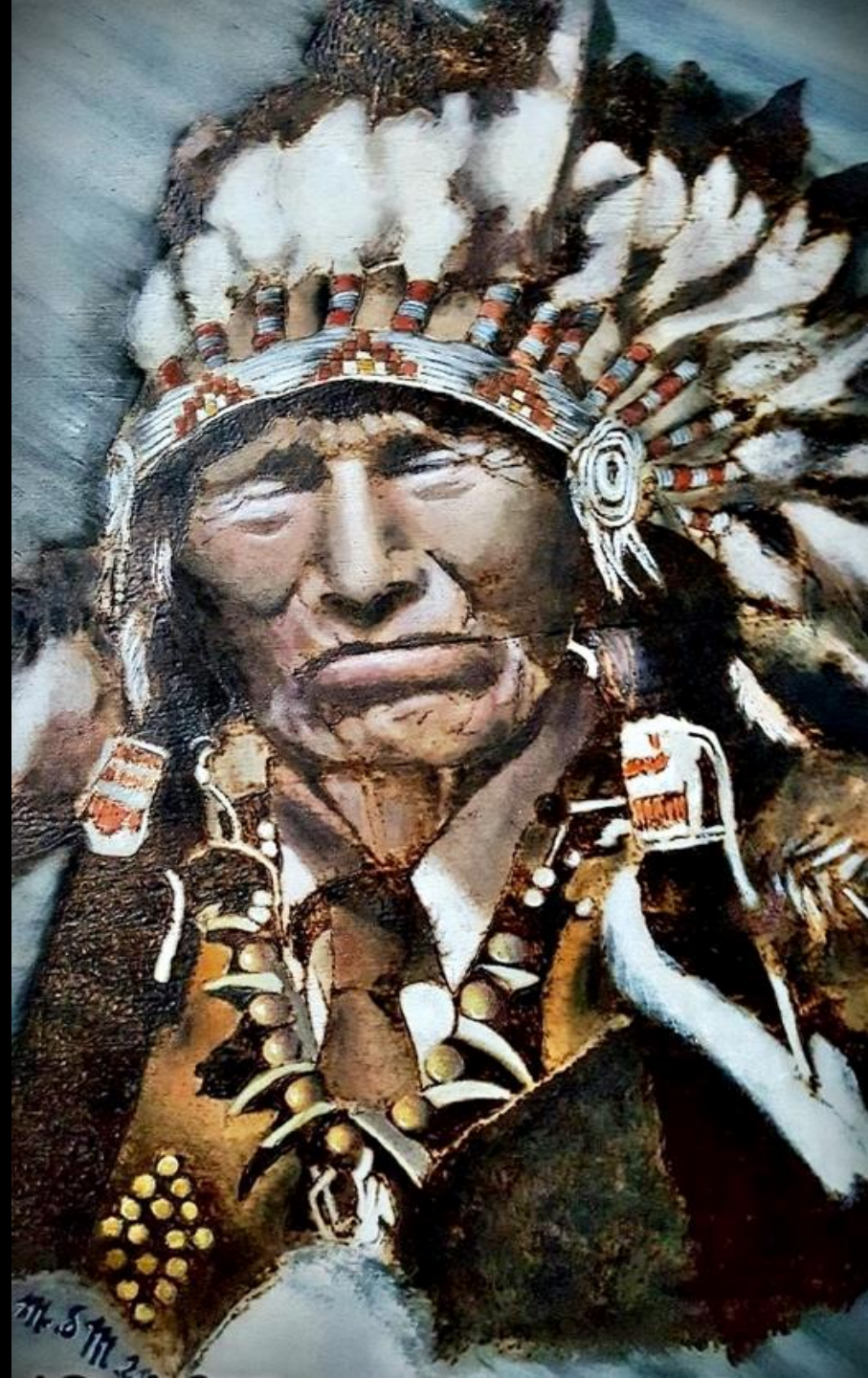


In this excerpt from *Black Elk Speaks*, a warrior and shaman (medicine man) of the Oglala Lakota tells of his youth. Black Elk describes his first spiritual vision of the role of shaman, which would establish him as a spiritual leader to his people. The excerpt also focuses on the difficulties faced by the Lakota, one of the tribes of the Great Sioux Nation, as white settlers moved in and claimed ownership of the Great Plains.

## MIXING FANTASY & REALITY

Visions of spirits and the spirit world are a recurring theme in *Black Elk Speaks*. Black Elk experiences several visions throughout his life, but the first—at the age of nine—is the most significant. He believes that this vision contains the key to helping save his people from the Wasichus (white people).

*Black Elk Speaks* offers testimony to the price in human suffering that the Sioux paid for the westward expansion of the U. S. As an elegy, it mourns the passing of an age of innocence and freedom for the American Indian and his current cultural displacement.





# LITERARY ELEMENTS

## Narrative

Is a story told in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama. The events of a narrative are usually told in chronological order, or the order in which they occurred.

## Magical Realism

Refers form of fiction in which elements of fantasy appear within a primarily realistic narrative.

# ASSESSMENT

After reading pages 291-300 in your book, complete the following activities:

1. REFER TO TEXT &
2. REASON WITH TEXT
3. & ANALYZE LITERATURE
  - **Narrative and Magical Realism** - How do the recollections and views Black Elk presents in his narrative differ from those of Fire Thunder and Standing Bear? Does having three people describe the same events give you get a better understanding of them? Why or why not?
  - Which passages in the narrative are realistic, and which ones qualify as Magical Realism, representing Black Elk's visions? Why might Neihardt have included these elements of fantasy within a nonfiction narrative? What do these passages contribute to the narrative?





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