

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## Writing Prompts

### Part 4: Broken Words

#### MISSION 3: "A Cheyenne Odyssey"

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##### **A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR:**

*You will need to decide how best to share these writing prompts with your students. You might share them all and ask students to choose one to respond to. You may assign one or more to the entire group. You might make one or more of the topics the basis for in-class discussions. Make your decisions according to the needs of your group.*

*You may notice that many of the topics contain some version of the phrase, "Write about a time in your life..." The intention of these prompts is twofold: first, since students remember the content of their own lives, they can more easily respond to the questions and they are more likely to want to express themselves if they feel competent to do so; second, these questions can form a meaningful bridge between what happens in the lives of ordinary people today and the lives of people in history or in historical events. For these reasons, you might decide to use some of the prompts before students encounter the history, because thinking about them sets the students up to understand and relate to it better.*

*Since students vary in their degree of comfort and skill in writing, you should decide when and how much students should write. We suggest that since students need to share their writing with each other to make personal and historical connections, you should encourage them to focus on content rather than mechanical skills. Pieces can be revised and edited later if you decide they should be shared formally, such as on a bulletin board or in a newsletter.*



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Read through all the topics first, and then choose one of them to write about. Write the title of the piece at the top of your page. Write in complete sentences. After you are finished, proofread your work for correctness.

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- 1. Decisions.** In Part 4, you are asked to make many decisions for your band of Northern Cheyenne. What factors did you consider when making your choices? Were you successful in acquiring enough food to keep your people healthy? Why or why not? Write a list of "do's and don'ts" for a new Little Chief, explaining the steps necessary to ensure that his band survives.
- 2. Agencies and Annuities.** After the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 was signed, Plains tribes including the Northern Cheyenne had the option of settling on agency lands, such as those at the Red Cloud Agency. They were given annual payments in the form of supplies (**annuities**), and could collect food rations as long as they remained at the agency. Why would the US government agree to give annuities and rations? What were the advantages and disadvantages for the Northern Cheyenne of accepting US government annuities and of settling on agency lands? Prepare a brief speech to be given by Little Fox to the great chiefs, arguing whether or not the Northern Cheyenne should settle on agency lands and/or accept government rations.
- 3. Buffalo Hunters.** During this time period, products made from buffalo became more popular among white Americans and Europeans, and white buffalo hunters began to roam the Plains. What role did the further intrusion of white settlers on traditional Indian lands play in making it more difficult for you to find enough food to feed your band in the game? Why do these changes make Little Fox fear that his traditional way of life is disappearing? Write a letter from Little Fox to one of these settlers in which you explain how the Northern Cheyenne feel about these changes.
- 4. Genocide.** While the near-extinction of the buffalo herds was, in part, the result of increased demand for buffalo products in the eastern United States and Europe, it was also a deliberate policy on the part of some US government officials. Some historians argue that this policy was a form of **genocide** (murder of an ethnic group), since Indians such as the Northern Cheyenne were so dependent on the buffalo for survival. What do *you* think? Is the deliberate destruction of a people's food supply a form of murder?
- 5. What's in a name?** The title of Part 4 is "Broken Words." What does this title mean? Which words were broken, by who, and why? What title might Agent Saville at the Red Cloud Agency give to Part 4? Why would his title be different? Which title do *you* think is most appropriate?



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6. **Questions of Survival.** At the end of Part 4, Little Fox wonders if his way of life is disappearing because of the decline of the buffalo herds. Today, because of the rapid pace of change and the emergence of so much new technology, many people feel the same way. Do you know people who feel as if their way of life is disappearing? Do you think it is important to maintain the traditional, old ways or better to adapt to new ones? Why?