



## Follow-up activities

### Activity 1:

Die Schüler\*innen entwerfen zu zweit für ein *information center* in einem Lakota-Reservat ein Informationsblatt für Besucher\*innen, das unangemessenes Verhalten und unabsichtliche Respektlosigkeit gegenüber den Traditionen der Lakota verhindern soll. Das Informationsblatt kann beginnen mit:

*Dear visitors,*

*welcome to Lakota territory. We, the Lakota people, would like you to feel at ease on our territory, but we would also like you to respect our beliefs and traditions.*

*Please do not ...*

### Activity 2:

In Vierergruppen konzipieren die Schüler\*innen als Simulationsspiel für eine Ausstellung über *Native American traditions* die Darstellung einer Tradition (Welche Objekte sind erforderlich? Wie sollen sie dargestellt werden? Wie können Handlungen bei einem Ritual dargestellt werden? etc.). Die Schüler\*innen erklären ihr Ausstellungskonzept anhand einer Skizze auf einem Poster.

### Activity 3:

Die Schüler\*innen lassen die Informationen Revue passieren und verfassen einen Text als Antwort auf die Fragen „Which aspects of Native American religion and traditions did you find most surprising? Which ones were most interesting? Why?“.



## A strange incident

Tom McFarlane and Ian Douglas were riding through the prairie on the way back to a little town called Greenriver. They were enjoying the breeze and the sun, and were looking forward to a cool, refreshing drink in the saloon on Main Street. “How much time will it take us to get to Greenriver, what do you think?” Ian asked. “Well, we’ve just left the Indian territory, so in about two hours we should be sitting in the saloon,” Tom said and turned round to his partner, who was riding a little behind him. At that moment he saw a group of riders coming very fast after them. “That’s strange, they look like Lakota Indians,” he said and looked surprised. “I wonder what they want. We haven’t had any problems with the Lakota for many years.” In a short time the group of Indians had reached them. They looked very angry and the two men began to feel uneasy. The leader of the group rode up to Tom and shouted something Tom didn’t understand. Even more angry, the Indian drove his horse up to Tom’s, grabbed Tom’s saddle bag and opened it. He took out a pipe, a knife and a little leather bag, waved these objects in front of Tom’s face and shouted at him – he was very angry. “Why the hell does he make such a fuss (*Wirbel*) about these things? We found them near a rock, that’s all,” Ian said.



### What has happened which made the Indians so furious?

- A. Our hypothesis (write it down on a piece of paper)
- B. Our final answer (write it down on the poster)

### What to do:

1. What could be the answer to the question? Write down your hypothesis before reading the cards.
2. Then divide your set of cards into two halves, one for you and one for your partner. Read your cards carefully and then give your partner your cards, and you take theirs. Each of you must have read all the cards in the end.
2. Arrange the cards in a logical order on the poster, but do not stick them on the poster yet.
3. Get together with another pair – you will need your cards on the poster and your worksheet. Tell your partners the information you read on your cards – don’t read out the information, just summarize it. Then try to get both sets of cards into one logical order. After that, stick your cards on to one poster and use arrows (→), symbols and linking words (e. g. *because, therefore, but, however, so ...*) to explain why the cards belong together.
4. Discuss your first answers to the question (your “hypothesis”). Try to agree on one common answer and then write down your “final answer” on the poster.

Vocabulary that might be helpful:

mourning (*Trauer*) sacred (*heilig*) soul (*Seele*) spirit (*Geist*) scaffold (*Gerüst*)



Dead bodies were normally placed on a scaffold to encourage the spirit's journey into the sky. But sometimes bodies were also placed in trees, so that the dead person's spirit could travel without problems.

Some tribes (*Stämme*) buried (*begruben*) their dead under mounds (*Erdhügel*) or rocks. If bodies were put in a burial chamber (*Grabkammer*), an opening was left so that the dead person's spirit could escape and safely travel to its home in the spirit world.

To help the dead on their journey to the spirit world, the Lakota took bundles (*Bündel*) of the dead person's belongings, e. g. weapons, pipes, tools (*Werkzeuge*), medicine and food, to the scaffold on which the body was placed.

The spirit of the dead had to be given the things it needed for its journey to the afterworld. So sometimes even a dead warrior's (*Krieger*) horse was killed and its tail (*Schwanz*) tied to the dead body.

When someone dies, the Lakota say that they "walk on" – they go to the "spirit world" in the sky where the dead are free of pain (*Schmerz*). The burial (*Begräbnis*) ceremonies and the rituals are meant to help the spirit on their way into the afterlife.

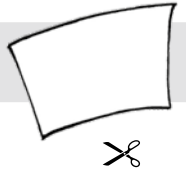
All the funeral (*Begräbnis*) and mourning rituals are meant to show respect for the dead. The Lakota express respect for the dead by singing, dancing, crying, cutting their hair, painting their faces black and covering (*bedecken*) their bodies with ashes. The mourning period may last up to a year.

For the Lakota, people have two souls: one that dies when the body dies and one that wanders on and dies much later. When a person dies, one of his souls travels southward, where it meets with an old woman.

The "keeper of the bundle" kept the bundle (*Bündel*) in a specially built tipi for about one year. During this time he had to live a peaceful (*friedlich*) life without conflicts. After the mourning period the bundle was removed from the tipi and the soul was set free.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century private collectors and museums became interested in Native American traditions and tried to get objects which had been buried (*vergraben*) as part of the burial ceremony, e. g. pipes, weapons, jewellery etc. People often stole things, even parts of the bodies, from the burial sites (*Begräbnisstätten*).

Sweat lodges – which we would call "saunas" – are made of young trees and are covered (*bedeckt*) with the skin of animals. They are round and symbolize the shape (*Form*) of the universe. In sweat lodges water is poured (*gegossen*) on hot stones, which makes the air hot and wet.



To the Lakota everything alive is sacred. A secret (*geheim*) power – the Great Spirit – is in all things: in plants, animals, mountains, clouds etc. There is no clear border (*Grenze*) between the natural world, in which we live, and the world of the spirits which have the power to change the lives of people.

Smoking plays a very important part in many Lakota ceremonies. The sacred pipe and the smoke carries messages to Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit. The Lakota smoke and pray with the pipe for help. Therefore the pipe is also an important object to bury with the dead, going with them into the spirit world.

The Lakota believe that communication with the spirits of the dead is possible, and that spirits can visit the living. Communication with the dead is possible via special ceremonies which often include smoking the sacred pipe, singing and dancing.

Burial grounds (*Gräberfelder*) were the home of powerful spirits and had to be respected. There were often objects there which were powerful and dangerous if they were not treated properly (*angemessen*), sometimes with special ceremonies. These objects should not be removed from their places.

All mourning ceremonies had to be led (*geleitet*) by a medicine man or woman. Only they could guide (*führen*) the mourners properly (*angemessen*), and help the soul of the dead during their journey to the spirit world, where the souls of the dead live in a village with their ancestors (*Vorfahren*).

When a person dies at home, the Lakota wait about a day and a half before they bury (*bestatten*) the dead, as they hope that the dead person might come back to life. Sometimes they set fire to the place where the dead person lived, and forbid members of the tribe (*Stamm*) to use that person's name as they are afraid of the dead.

It was part of the sacred burial ritual (*Bestattungsritual*) to make a "soul bundle". Some of the dead person's hair was first made clean by the smoke of burning (*brennend*) sweetgrass. Then it was wrapped (*eingewickelt*) in a sacred buckskin (*Wildleder*). One person was chosen as the "keeper of the soul".

The bodies of dead Lakota were dressed in their best clothes, wrapped (*eingewickelt*) in animal skin (*Tierhaut*) or blankets (*Decken*), and normally placed on a scaffold so that animals could not get them. If a warrior (*Krieger*) was killed in battle, the body was sometimes placed sitting against a rock or a tree.

This old woman checks the life of the dead Lakota. She then directs (*führen*) the soul either to the spirit world, where the soul lives together with their ancestors (*Vorfahren*), or she sends the soul back to earth to be born again and given another chance to live in harmony with people and nature.

Lakota cemeteries (*Friedhöfe*) often show that the Lakota think of themselves as part of nature. They let grass grow over graves (*Gräber*) as a sign of their respect of nature. They also leave traditional offerings such as tobacco on the graves instead of flowers.