Two Old Women

An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival

by Velma Wallis

Model Teaching Unit
English Language Arts, Middle and Secondary Level with Montana Common Core Standards

Written by Dorothea M. Susag

Published by the Montana Office of Public Instruction 2010
Revised 2014

Indian Education
Montana Office of Public Instruction
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Anchor Text

Wallis, Velma. *Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival*. Seattle, WA: Epicenter Press, 1993.

Optional Teacher Companion Text
Wallis, Velma. *Raising Ourselves: A Gwitch'in Coming of Age Story from the Yukon River*. Kenmore, WA: Epicenter Press, 2003.

Fast Facts

Genre	Novel
Suggested Grade Level	Grades 6-12
Tribe (s)	Athabascan/Gwich'in
Place	Interior Alaska, near present-day Fort Yukon and Chalkyitsik
Time	Pre-contact with Europeans , possibly 600 years ago

Overview

Length of Time:
Two Old Women and supplementary materials may be taught over two to five weeks. Because the unit includes a wide variety of activities and levels of questions, it may be used with students from grade levels 6-12. However, some schools have used it as a read-aloud with children in early elementary grades. Teachers will

need to select the questions and activities most appropriate for their grade level. They will also select activities that meet a balance of standards, making choices about the activities that will take more time and additional resources.

Teaching and Learning Objectives:

Through reading *Two Old Women,* and participating in this unit, students can develop lasting understandings regarding:

- The conflict between the individual and the common good involves pain and struggle with strong possibilities for reconciliation.
- With just the most basic tools, individuals can survive in nature when they possess imagination, persistence, and ingenuity.
- Athabascan and other Alaskan tribal cultures, their landscape, and history, strongly impact the story and characters in *Two Old Women* and additional resources recommended in this unit. They have a "long history of survival." (Wallis in *Raising Ourselves*)
- Understanding, respect and insight into the beliefs, actions, and experiences of others are gained when we listen to them tell their own stories.
- Even aging individuals can overcome seemingly insurmountable physical and emotional issues to survive and prevail.
- Stories such as those in this unit reinforce the diversity of tribes and individual American Indians, contradicting many popular stereotypes.
- Memories of home and skills learned when young can help individuals overcome even the most terrible challenges.
- Practicing critical thinking skills, reading and writing skills, and speaking skills can help develop proficiencies that can last a lifetime.

About the Author and Illustrator

The following is excerpted from the biography of Velma Wallis on her website http://www.velmawallis.com:

> *"Velma Wallis' career as a bestselling author may have been destined from the start, but it most likely would have seemed improbable—if not fantastical—to her as a young girl growing up in a remote Alaskan village. [Her] personal odyssey began in Fort Yukon, Alaska, a location accessible only by riverboat, airplane, snowmobile or dogsled. Having dropped out of school at the age of 13 in order to care for her siblings in the wake of their father's death, Wallis passed her high school equivalency test—earning her GED—and then surprised friends and relatives by choosing to move into an old trapping cabin twelve miles from Fort Yukon.*
>
> *"… she survived on what she gathered from hunting, fishing and trapping—a daring and strikingly independent lifestyle during which she struggled to define her personal identity.*
>
> *"In fact, it seems difficult to separate Velma Wallis from the imagery of hardship and the mere pursuit of survival itself. . . .*
>
> *"…it seems possible to read Two Old Women as a kind of metaphor for Wallis' own childhood and role as a once emerging—but now accomplished—writer whose legendary tale has sold 1.5 million copies and has been translated into 17 languages worldwide.*
>
> *"…a group of University of Alaska students taught by Lael Morgan—co-founder of Epicenter Press along with Kent Sturgis—started a grass roots effort intended to raise enough money to publish the manuscript. Since that time, Wallis has written two additional books—Bird Girl and the Man Who Followed the Sun and also Raising Ourselves.*

"The now middle-aged author currently divides her time between Fort Yukon and Fairbanks along with her three daughters. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including both the 1993 Western States Book Award and the 1994 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award for Two Old Women as well as the 2003 Before Columbus Foundation Award for Raising Ourselves."

See "Editor's Afterword" by Lael Morgan (141-145) for more about how *Two Old Women* was finally published. The illustrator, James Grant Sr., was born in 1946 in Tanana, an Athabascan village. Raised in California, he lived in Fairbanks, Alaska until his death in 2010. While serving in the U.S. Army, he traveled around Europe, paying attention to masters of art. "His art includes mask making, wood and ivory carving, bronze casting, oil painting, and pen and ink (146)."

Text Summary

Out of her Athabascan heritage, through mothers and daughters, passed down through generations of many more mothers and daughters, Velma Wallis tells this Athabascan legend of two seemingly frail and complaining women. They are members of a Gwich'in hunter-gatherer band that "roamed the area around what is now Fort Yukon and Chalkyitsik, one of eleven distinct Athabascan groups in Alaska (Wallis 137)."

During one particularly bitter winter, the tribe faces certain starvation. Out of concern for all his people, the chief reluctantly decides they must leave the two elderly women, Sa' and Ch'idzigyaak, behind. It is the most practical decision because the women are crippling the tribe's need to continue moving, their only chance for survival.

They are left with their personal belongings, fur to cover their shelter, and gifts discreetly left by Ch'idzigyaak's daughter and grandson to help them survive. However, the women face certain death if they do not help themselves, and so they decide they might as well "die trying." Using memories and skills learned long ago, they not only survive, but they reach a position to aid their tribe. In Wallis' own words in her memoir, *Raising Ourselves*, she explains how the story of the two old women dramatically changed the way she saw herself and her people. "I almost believed that drinking and drugs were all we as native people had ever been about until that day when my mother first told me the story about the two old women. Then I saw clearly that we were once strong and grounded, with a long history of survival. I saw hope that we could still be the people we once were, not in the literal sense, but possessing the same pride that our ancestors had before the epidemics and cultural changes (211)."

Rationale for Two Old Women and the Unit

- *Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival* addresses problems of aging, care for the elderly, survival in nature, ingenuity, commitment to relatives and community, the strength of interdependence, the age-old conflict between the rights of the individual and the common good, conflict and cooperation, and most important, the power of reconciliation to heal individuals and communities.
- The book and the unit meet all of the *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians*.
- This unit provides an extensive bibliography of reliable resources for teachers, utilizing primary sources and documents whenever possible. These resources provide opportunities for students to go beyond the anchor text to build their understanding of Athabascan/Gwich'in history and culture, to better understand the histories and culture(s) of Montana Indians, to make literary connections between a variety of texts, to develop their own skills in reading and writing, to practice discussion and collaboration, and to help them better understand themselves and others while appreciating our common humanity.

- The unit provides a variety of options for reading and writing arguments, informational/explanatory texts, and narratives, and for developing speaking and listening skills.
- Because the unit includes a wide variety of activities and levels of questions, it might be used with students from grade levels 6 – 12. Teachers will need to select the questions and activities most appropriate for their grade levels.
- The depth of the unit also provides opportunities for teachers to choose between activities that take more or less time and/or resources.
- The unit incorporates specific activities that meet Montana Common Core Standards for Reading and Writing, as well as Literacy Standards for Social Studies, Media Literacy, and Speaking and Listening.
- Although the unit easily meets many more than the standards named, the identified standards within the text of the unit represent critical shifts from previous standards requirements.

Critical Shifts to the Common Core Standards (also see Appendix A)

Teacher Tip: While specific activities are aligned to standards, teachers will find evidence throughout *Two Old Women* and the unit to assist students' development of skills to meet the Anchor Standards for Speaking/Listening, and Reading and Writing identified below.

CCRA.SL.1: Each day in the unit provides opportunities for students to participate in a range of conversations or collaborations so students might build on others' ideas.

CCRA.SL.4: As students prepare presentations or respond to their reading, they will follow lines of reasoning and organization and style that best meet the needs of their audience and purpose.

CCRA.SL.6: Throughout the unit, students will experience opportunities to engage in a variety of speaking contexts and communicative tasks, using language appropriate to audience and task.

CCRA.R.1: Every day in this unit, students are asked to read and respond in writing or speaking and will cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support their interpretation or analysis.

CCRA.R.2: *Two Old Women* communicates themes of cultural and personal loss and survival, justice/injustice, promise/disillusionment/betrayal, self in society and trickery. As students read the novel, they might trace a selected theme and show how it is developed throughout the text, citing specific details that support their analysis.

CCRA.R.3: The entire *Two Old Women* unit provides opportunities for students to analyze various elements in the story. The "Text Summary" and "The Rationale for Teaching *Two Old Women* and the Unit" introduce readers to the sources, events, and issues addressed in the story. Students might trace major and minor conflicts, internal and external, as they read *Two Old Women*. When students consider the *impact* of the author's choices, they might take one element, such as the setting, time or character, and change it to discuss how the story might unfold differently. For example, students could consider how the story would change if it were set in the Southwest, or if the author had used a flashback time sequence beginning with the end and then looking back.

CCRA.R.4: In each section of the *Two Old Women* unit, students will determine meaning and analyze word choices. As students respond to questions, and ask their own questions throughout the unit, they will determine the meaning and impact of words. They will read and respond to poems published in *Birthright: Born to Poetry--A Collection of Montana Indian Poetry* (see link in Appendix B). In *Birthright,* teachers might use the discussion questions and "Denotation and Connotation" suggestions to determine how the poets use figurative language to communicate meaning.

CCRA.R.6: While some of the activities ask students to determine the opinion or perspective of authors, *Two Old Women* in its entirety demonstrates the perspective of a native author, writing from the perspective of her people. It is her story, not the story of an outsider.

CCRA.R.9: The *Two Old Women* unit provides many opportunities for students to compare and contrast texts from a variety of genres. In some of their daily activities, they might read poetry and watch films that extend their experience with the themes and central ideas in *Two Old Women.* The "Options for

Reading and Writing Arguments and Reading and Writing Informational Texts" section offers opportunities for such comparisons.

CCRA.R.10 Using *Two Old Women* itself, and any of the supplementary informational texts, the unit provides opportunities for students to read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. Velma Wallis' memoir, *Raising Ourselves,* is one such text.

CCRA.W.7: Throughout the unit, students are directed to ask and sometimes to research "I wonder" questions about topics or activities addressed in the story, such as how to make snowshoes, or how to snare a rabbit, or the problems with aging. They might wonder about the climate and landscape of the Athabascan people, and they might conduct research about them from multiple sources to develop a deeper understanding of the story's background.

CCRA.W.8: In the "Options for Reading and Writing Arguments" section, students will remain open to contradictions in sources they read. For example, sources differ regarding oil drilling in Alaska and the origin of the Athabascan people. They may use any of the resources identified in this unit, as well as additional online or available print resources. For each resource, students will evaluate the usefulness of the source for answering the question. As they write, they will integrate the research in appropriate ways to avoid plagiarism and to create cohesion in their own text.

CCRA.W.9: The entire unit encourages students to draw evidence from the literary and informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCRA.W.10: Every day, students will write in short or extended time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Resources/Materials, Strategies and Assessment

Appendices:

Appendix A: Grades 9-12 College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

Appendix B: List of Additional Resources Used in this Unit
This unit references a number of additional resources that you may want to include. Check with your librarian to see if the resources are already in your school's collection of Indian Education for All materials. If not, they may be ordered through interlibrary loan, and they are also available through the publishers or Amazon.com. Schools may use Indian Education for All funds to support such purchases.

Appendix C: Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

Appendix D: Athabascan Background

Appendix E: Literary Terms Study Guide

Appendix F: Oral Histories and Interviewing

Appendix G: *Raising Ourselves: A Gwitch'in Coming of Age Story from the Yukon River*

Appendix H: "Hunting" reprinted with permission from Jennifer Greene
"Alive" reprinted with permission from Minerva Allen
"Good Grease" reprinted with permission from the TallMountain Circle
"The Women in Old Parkas" reprinted with permission from the TallMountain Circle
"There is No Word for Goodbye" reprinted with permission from the TallMountain Circle
"Ggaal Comes Upriver" reprinted with permission from the TallMountain Circle

Appendix I: Chapter 6 Activity Sheet – Debate Instructions

Appendix J: Conventions Activity

Appendix K: Picture books by and about Inuit People

Reading and Writing Strategies: CCRA.R.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10; CCRA.W. 1, 2, 4, 9, 10

For each chapter studied in this unit, students are asked to read closely and draw inferences from the text. As they respond in speaking and writing, they will cite evidence for their conclusions about explicit statements, inferences or where the text leaves matters uncertain. Teachers can use any of the following reading/writing strategies as they address this standard and their students' needs:

1. Reading/Writing Strategy: Students will read the entire paragraph or essay or document and respond to the following questions:

a. What is the **subject or topic**? What specific evidence in the text leads to your conclusion?
b. What is the **author's opinion** about the topic? What specific evidence in the text leads to your conclusion?
c. Identify the author's **claim** or **thesis statement**. Is it consistent with your conclusion about the author's opinion?

2. Reading/Writing Strategy: After reading the document or essay or chapter, students will respond to the **D.I.C.E. prompt** and write about what. . .

a. **D**isturbs
b. **I**nterests
c. **C**onfuses (This is a place where students might identify words or phrases in the text that they don't understand. Discuss the denotative and possible connotative meanings of challenging vocabulary.)
d. **E**nlightens them about a topic, text, or issue?

3. Reading/Writing Strategy: Students will respond to specific phrases or sentences that leave matters uncertain or ambiguous.

a. **What does it say?** (What's the literal or explicit meaning?)
b. **What might it mean?** (What is the author suggesting without directly stating it? What might readers infer or read between the lines? Conclusions might go beyond the text to larger contextual knowledge basis.)
c. **Why does it matter?** (How does the meaning any particular audience might attribute to the statement result in actions or policy or consequences to other relevant groups? How does the inferential meaning as opposed to or consistent with the explicit meaning affect a goal of authentic and accurate information and our understanding of the ways perspective influences meaning and understanding?)

4. Reading/Writing Strategy:

a. What's the **problem**? What evidence in the text leads to this conclusion?
b. What are possible **solutions**? What evidence within or outside the text leads to these conclusions?
c. Do I have enough **information** to support or verify a conclusion?

5. Reading/Writing Strategy:

a. What is the **situation**? What evidence in the text leads to this conclusion?
b. What are the **causes** of a situation? What evidence within or outside the text leads to these conclusions?
c. What are the **effects** of a situation? What evidence within or outside the text leads to these conclusions?
d. Do I have enough **information** to support or verify a conclusion?

6. Reading/Writing Strategy:

a. What's changed? What evidence in the text(s) leads to this conclusion?
b. What's stayed the same? What evidence in the text(s) leads to this conclusion?
c. Why? What evidence within or without the text leads to this conclusion?

7. **R.A.F.T.S readwritethink Strategy:**
   R.A.F.T.S. information created by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English is available online at http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/using-raft-writing-strategy-30625.html.

   Role: helps the writer decide on point of view and voice
   Audience: reminds the writer that he/she must communicate ideas to someone else; helps writer determine content and style
   Format: helps the writer organize ideas and employ the conventions of format, such as letters, informal explanations, interviews, or speeches
   Topic: helps the writer focus on main ideas
   Strong Verb: directs the writer to the writing purpose, e.g. to persuade, analyze, create, predict, compare, defend, evaluate, describe, inform, etc.

8. **Reading/Writing Strategy:**
   After each reading, students might ask **"I wonder how?"** or **"I wonder why?"** to clarify any ambiguities and to promote their active reading as they consider possible implications of words and phrases. The questions might also prompt further research.

Vocabulary:

accessible (2)
silhouetted (19)
pulsated (54)
futile (98)
balefully (113)
nostalgia (212 in *Raising Ourselves*)
In each chapter, students may choose other words that will require definition.

Assessment:

1. **Student groups will be evaluated on group participation.** An example of a form the groups can fill out is found on this site: http://www.pbs.org/now/classroom/peer2.pdf.

2. **Each student will keep a portfolio** of all work noted throughout the unit as **Portfolio.**
   A. The portfolio will be assessed on completeness (all assignments given) and presentation (how does this best represent *me* and my work during this unit?).
   B. It will include a table of contents or a list of all assignments made and completed, in order.
   C. It will conclude with a *self-evaluation* of the student's participation in the unit that will include the following:
      a. the student's self-assessment of his/her writing,
      b. the student's personal response to reading *Two Old Women*,
      c. a short essay about where the student found him/herself in this novel. Students might ask themselves, how am I changed?
   D. Some individual assignments will have been evaluated for grades separate from the portfolio.
   E. The portfolio folder will always stay in the classroom for the teacher to check occasionally. To make the accounting easier, you may use numbers for each assignment.

3. Teachers might create **quizzes, daily reading checks, and a final test** from some of the questions for each chapter**.**

Day by Day Plan – Steps – Four Week Unit

With permission, portions of this unit are excerpted from units created by Libby Kuntz, Harlem Schools; and Janet Sprague, Cut Bank Schools.

Although the unit is divided into numbered days, teachers may use their own discretion about how much time each activity or reading assignment might take. The activities and writing assignments are merely suggestions to help students engage with the text and to build their understanding.

Chapter summaries are provided to help teachers look ahead. But teachers may also use them to help struggling readers. Each chapter summary is followed by three levels of questions. Depending on the ability of the students, teachers may select questions from any or all levels. The questions may also be used as quizzes to check reading and comprehension. However, between the levels, there is some content repetition in questions, so teachers may choose to disregard some. Of course, the evaluative-level questions will require the highest level of thinking and will provide students the greatest opportunity to think critically about what they read.

For any of the questions, students will provide evidence to support their conclusions.

Teacher Tip:

- The first days of the unit should foster students' curiosity and engagement while they build background knowledge that moves from general to the specific.
- For each chapter studied in this unit, students are asked to read closely, drawing inferences from the text. As they respond in speaking and writing to the anchor text or to supplementary non-fiction texts, they will cite evidence for their conclusions about explicit statements, inferences or where the text leaves matters uncertain. Teachers might use any of the eight **Reading/Writing Strategies** as they address standards and their students' needs.

Day One

CCRA.R.1, 4, 6, 8; CCRA.W.7, 9

Activity: Pre-reading Research: Using inquiry and the Internet, introduce students to the historical, geographical, and cultural contexts of *Two Old Women.*

Procedure:

a. Ask students—without collaboration—to write one known fact about Alaska, its culture groups, geography and history on a 3x5 card. Grouping like facts together, post the cards vertically on a sheet of butcher paper, leaving enough room for additional facts to be posted to the right of each. On another 3x5 card, each student will write one "I wonder" question from **Reading/Writing Strategy #8** about Alaska and its Native people. Similarly, post the question cards on another sheet of butcher paper.

b. Divide the class into three internet research groups, with each group searching one of the three websites below. To help students become aware of the diversity of indigeneous people, they will search for facts about culture groups, geography, and history and for answers to at least one of their "I wonder" questions. Using 3x5 cards, they will write additional facts (evidence) or an answer to one of their questions. Post cards on the butcher paper sheets to the right of their original cards.
   - Alaska Native Heritage Center Museum -- www.alaskanative.net
     Click on "Education and Programs," then "Cultures of Alaska," then "Athabascan" and other cultures.
   - Alaska Native Knowledge Network -- http://ankn.uaf.edu/index.html
   - Anchorage Museum -- http://www.anchoragemuseum.org
     Click on the "Exhibits" tab and then "Permanent Exhibits"

Portfolio #1: Each student will write a paragraph response to this activity using the following prompt: Considering the facts and questions you first wrote and the information you gained during your internet search, what did you find Disturbing, Interesting, Confusing, or Enlightening (**Reading/Writing Strategy #2).** Write for fifteen minutes and write one more "I Wonder" question that your research made you think about.

Day Two and Three

CCRA.R.1, 4, 6, 8; CCRA.W.2, 7, 8, 9; CCRA.SL.1, 6

Activity: Groups will share the results of their internet search and ask their "I Wonder" questions, providing feedback to the questions from others.

Activity: Pre-reading questions:

1. What is a culture group?
2. Who are *indigenous* people? Athabascans? Gwich'ins? Tlingits?
3. Where are Fort Yukon and the Yukon River located?
4. What do you think *Two Old Women* will be about?
5. What are ways people trick nature or trick others to make their lives better? (i.e. irrigate in arid climates)

Portfolio #2: Using any or all of the resources below, have students research and write an **Informative/Explanatory** paragraph or short essay: Identify four areas of activity or behavior that you can compare or contrast regarding a Gwich'in woman's role with women's roles today.

Begin with a statement similar to this: The roles of women in my family differ from (or compare with) the Gwich'in in four ways. Follow the lead sentence with eight sentences: one about each of four areas and from each culture. For example, you may begin with "In my family, women . . . .," and follow that with "But in the Gwich'in society, women . . . ." Write a one-sentence conclusion statement.

Student Resources with Extension Activities:

- Maps from *Two Old Women* and http://alaska2012.genclik.ca/en/main-nav/education-and-programs/cultures-of-alaska/. When you click on Cultures of Alaska, each tribal link reveals some facts and a map.
- "Athabascan Spiritual Beliefs About Hunting, Fishing and Gathering"
  Apply **Reading/Writing Strategy #1** as you read this article about the Athabascan Spiritual Beliefs.
  http://ayatlin.wordpress.com/2012/04/24/athabascan-spiritual-beliefs-about-hunting-fishing-and-gathering/
- "About the Gwich'in People," *Two Old Women* (137-140) Using the notes in Appendix D of this unit, as students read this section, guide them in the creation of more "fact" cards that they may want to add to the butcher-paper sheets. If some of their first cards are proven false or vague, they may want to remove them and replace them with new information. What is the author's perspective or point of view about the Gwich'in People? How do you know? Cite evidence. Apply **Reading/Writing Strategy #1.**
- "Just Wrinkles" (48) in *Birthright: Born to Poetry – A Collection of Montana Indian Poetry* by Salish poet, Jennifer (Greene) Finley, who lives on the Flathead Reservation. (See Appendix B for a link to this document.) The old woman's wrinkles "remember things she can't." Students might use this poem to imagine what the main characters in *Two Old Women* might have looked like. How does this poem use personification to draw a positive picture of old age?
- *How Raven Stole the Sun* by Maria Williams (Tlingit). Although this particular story is not Athabascan, the story-line is similar to *Two Old Women*. "The Tlingits say Raven became a pine needle in the cup of the Chief's daughter, and the Athabascans believe Raven turned into a small fish. In the Inuit version, Raven transforms into a piece of moss (26)." This children's book is relevant here because it typifies the traditional stories that Velma Wallis would have heard. It also provides a way of understanding *Two Old*

Women because the women trick nature, trick themselves, and they trick the rest of their people. They survive when no one thought they could.

Summary: This is the Tlingit version of the trickster, pure white Raven, who wants to save his people from total darkness. So he sets out to steal the stars, moon, and sun from a greedy Chief who keeps them in boxes. He begins by transforming himself into a pine needle that the chief's daughter eats. Nine months later, she gives birth to a baby boy who plays with the chief's boxes, and he releases them. When the chief discovers the trickery, he traps Raven inside a house. Raven escapes through the very small smoke hole, and his feathers turn completely black. There is also a Glossary of Tlingit Words, photos of artifacts, background and photographs of the Tlingit People, and information about the author and illustrator.

- *Raising Ourselves* (26, 3 paragraphs). Read aloud from Wallis' memoir. Here she describes her grandmother as an example of an ordinary Gwich'in woman. "But according to my mother . . . everyone knew his or her role in the cause of group survival."

Day Four

CCRA.R.1, 2, 4, 6, 9; CCRA.W.2, 7, 8, 9; CCRA.SL.1, 4, 6

Reading Assignment: Introduction (xi-xiii)

Chapter Summary: Velma Wallis writes how she came to know the story of the two old women as her mother told it to her. Wallis explains the importance of oral stories and the tragedy that occurs when "someone from another way of life" misinterprets the story, often resulting in the stories as written being "accepted as history, yet they may not be truthful." The introduction closes with a theme and lesson in the *Two Old Women* story:

> *There is no limit to one's ability—certainly not age—to accomplish in life what one must. Within each individual on this large and complicated world lives an astounding potential of greatness. Yet it is rare that these hidden gifts are brought to life unless by the chance of fate.* (xiii)

Teacher Tip:

- To facilitate student's cooperative skills and interaction with the text through class discussions, as well as respect for each other, you may create discussion groups of 3-4 students selected at random.
- Tell students they will be obligated to this same group for the duration of the unit. They must have the assignment read before the discussion group meets.

Workshopping Guidelines for Students

1. Follow directions for grouping and for each assignment.
2. Respect the rights of other groups (i.e. only interact with members of your group).
3. Respect each person's right to speak during each discussion period.
4. Select a scribe and speaker from your group for each day's assignment.
5. Cooperate with others in your group by taking responsibility for yourself and respecting the right of all to learn.

Activity: Teacher leads students in a discussion of the differences between the following terms: conversation, discussion, debate, socializing, small talk, argument, and storytelling to help students respond to what they read.

After reading the introduction, they will discuss the following themes or patterns of events that they might trace throughout the novel:

survival in nature,
self in society,
culture/tradition,

hard times,
hunting/wildlife,
place and heroism. For background of hero in American Indian Literature, refer to *Roots and Branches: A Resource of Native American Literature Themes, Lessons, and Bibliographies* by Dorothea M. Susag (42-43).

Cooperative Group Activity: Unless otherwise suggested, students will discuss the following questions in their small groups and select the most controversial or interesting response to share with the rest of the class. As they make their responses, they will cite specific evidence from the text to support their answers**.**

Recall-level Questions

1. Why does the author want to be like her mother when she becomes an elder?
2. What does this author believe the story of *Two Old Women* taught her?

Interpretive-level Questions

3. The author says, "Stories are like gifts given by an elder to a younger person." How can stories be gifts?
4. What does this introduction reveal about Velma Wallis' point of view or perspective about her ancestral people and what she herself believes is important? Consider applying **Reading/Writing Strategy #1** to address this question.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 1 "Hunger and cold take their toll" (1-16)
Students should be prepared to answer questions about this chapter in their groups.

Chapter Summary: During one particularly bitter winter, a nomadic band of arctic Alaska Gwich'in people faces certain starvation. For some time, they have cared for two elderly women, Sa' and Ch'idzigyaak. But now, out of concern for the rest of his people, the chief and council reluctantly decide they must leave the two women behind. It is the most practical decision because the women are crippling the tribe's need to continue moving, their only chance for survival. The women are left with their personal belongings and fur to cover their shelter. Discreetly, Ch'idzigyaak's daughter gives her mother a bundle of *babiche*, and her grandson leaves his hatchet in a tree to help the women survive. Devastated with the seeming betrayal, the women face certain death if they do not help themselves. However, they don't want to give up, so they decide to prove they have "the right to live."

Day Five and Six

CCRA.R.1, 2, 4; CCRA.W.1, 2, 5; CCRA.SL.1, 4, 6

Cooperative Group Activity:

Recall-level Questions

1. What are two reasons The People face starvation?
2. Why do the hunters eat first?
3. What do the two women's names mean?
4. How have the women helped The People?
5. What shared character flaw do Ch'idigyaak and Sa' have?
6. What is the decision of the council and chief regarding the women?
7. Who are Ozhii Nelii and Shruh Zhuu?
8. What do they leave behind for the old ones?
9. What is babiche? Caribou?

Interpretive-level Questions

10. Why do band members agree with the decision?
11. Why don't Ozhii Nelii and Shruh Zhuu protest the decision to leave the old ones behind?
12. How is Shruh Zhuu different from other boys?

13. Why did Sa' believe they were being treated unfairly?
14. What does Sa's comment that they should "die trying, not sitting" say about her character?
15. Explain the irony in her statement "let us die trying, not sitting."

Writing Activity: Students will revise **Portfolio #2—Informative/Explanatory** paragraph or short essay, for the traits of organization, sentence fluency, and word choice imitating examples from *Two Old Women.*

Page 4 in *Two Old Women* demonstrates the following traits:
Organization: Effective use of transitions to establish a logical pattern
Sentence Fluency: Variety of sentence beginnings
Word Choice: Poetic language and skillful use of repeated sounds (i.e. alliteration)

Portfolio #3: Write in response to the following Evaluative-level Questions

a. If this were happening to you, which of the women would you be more like? Explain your answer in a complete **Informative/Explanatory** paragraph. Begin with a topic sentence such as the following: "My personality most resembles the personality of (name one of the characters) in three ways." Provide specific evidence from the chapter dealing with the character you have selected and specific evidence from your own life to support your response.
b. Did Shruh Zhuu's action take courage? Explain your answer in an **Argument** paragraph or short essay. Begin your paragraph with a topic sentence such as the following: "Shruh Zhuu's action did/did not take courage for three significant reasons." Provide a definition of *courage* and then support your topic sentence with specific evidence to support your response.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 2 "Let us die trying" (17-29) Students should be prepared for group discussion following their reading.

Chapter Summary: The women gather embers from remaining fires, make nooses out of babiche strips to snare rabbits, and Sa' throws the hatchet and kills a squirrel for dinner. Appreciating that no one took their caribou-skin tent and robes, the women begin to realize how The People have cared for them. The younger woman, Sa', finally convinces Ch'idzigyaak , the more bitter and complaining one, that it's better they die trying to survive rather than just giving up.

Day Seven and Eight

CCRA.R.1, 2, 4, 6, 9; CCRA.W.1, 2, 3, 4, 5; CCRA.SL.1, 3, 4, 6

Activity: Introduce two poets to compare/contrast themes and details with *Two Old Women*:

a. **Koyukon Athabascan poet, Mary TallMountain,** and the poem "Good Grease" (Appendix H)

Teacher Tip:

- In her "Foreword" to *The Light on the Tent Wall,* Mary TallMountain's mentor, Paula Gunn Allen, writes about the poet and her poem "Good Grease": "Mary TallMountain is Coyote, and, like the quintessential old survivor, she knows that if you're going to face death, and if you're going to engage the sacred, you'd better have your sense of humor intact (3)."
- You may use the poem to talk about hunting, but you can also make connections to irony in *Two Old Women* where humor exists midst suffering. Humor in the form of irony is one of the most important ways humans survive. Refer to Appendix E, "Literary Terms Study Guide" for a definition and examples of irony.

b. **Assiniboine poet, Minerva Allen,** and the poem "Encampment of Power"
Birthright: Born to Poetry--A Collection of Montana Indian Poetry
http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/IndianEd/Search/Language%20Arts/Secondary_BirthrightPoetry.pdf

This poem deals with the following themes similar to those found in *Two Old Women*: cultural and personal loss and survival, justice and injustice, promise and disillusionment/betrayal.

Cooperative Group Activity:

Recall-level Questions

1. How do migrating bands keep fire alive from camp to camp?
2. How did the women first use babiche?
3. What two animals do the old women kill first?
4. What did the old women use for shelter?

Interpretive-level Questions

5. Ch'idigyaak says, "What a pampered pair we have been." How has she changed?
6. How are the women responsible for their being left behind?
7. Why did the women decide to leave the place where The People left them?
8. Why did they cover their faces?

Writing Process Activity: To reinforce the **6 Traits of Writing,** students will revise **Portfolio #3 (A** or **B)** for ideas and sensory images that add details as demonstrated by Velma Wallis in *Two Old Women* (21, 23).

Portfolio #4: This chapter describes in detail a series of survival **activities** of the women—building a fire, salvaging embers, making rabbit snares, killing a squirrel, building a shelter, catching a rabbit.

Reading/Writing Strategy #7 — R.A.F.T.S:

a. You are the illustrator of a *Two Old Women* **picture book**. For an audience of children, ages 8-12**,** draw (create) pictures of the steps in one of the activities to go along with the description.

   Role: an illustrator
   Audience: children ages 8-12
   Format: drawn pictures of steps of activity
   Topic: one of activities
   Strong Verb: explain

b. For **a wilderness-living manual,** specifically for an audience of boy/girl scouts, **write** an **Informative/Explanatory** numbered list of the steps for doing one of the activities.

   Role: a contributor to a wilderness-living manual
   Audience: boy/girl scouts
   Format: numbered steps
   Topic: one of activities
   Strong Verb: explain

Speaking/Listening Option: Using PowerPoint, props, or posters, students might teach the activity to their peers.

Portfolio #5: **Written** response to Evaluative-level Questions using **Reading/Writing Strategy #7—R.A.F.T.S.**

a. Sa' says that they can do "little more than they expect of themselves." What does she mean? Consider **Reading/Writing Strategy #2:** What does it say? What might it mean? Why does it matter? Can people really do this? In an **Argument** paragraph or short essay for an audience of your group members, defend your response using specific evidence both from outside and inside the text.

   Role: yourself
   Audience: your group members
   Format: argument paragraph
   Topic: response to the question
   Strong Verb: argue

Speaking/Listening Option: Students might read/speak this paragraph to initiate a discussion/debate within the group or the class. Students will evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric to meet the purpose, task, and audience.

b. The poem **"Good Grease"** by Mary TallMountain (Appendix H) puts the tragedy of near starvation in the same context as playing with dripping grease. In *Two Old Women*, Velma Wallis also uses humor when times are most difficult. For your (possible) future grandchildren, write about a time when you or someone you've seen has laughed or joked around when something bad was happening. Did the humor help or hinder you, or the other person's ability to survive the situation? Tell the story (write a **Narrative**) of your experience and provide a conclusion that reveals what you learned.
   Role: yourself
   Audience: future grandchildren
   Format: narrative in a journal entry
   Topic: a time when you or someone you've seen has laughed when something bad was happening
   Strong Verb: tell or narrate the story

Activity: Using sheets of butcher paper, each group will begin **two Character Maps**, one for each woman (http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/CharacterMap.pdf). This is a reproducible printout, and students can draw an enlargement of the three-column graphic to fit the butcher paper.

In each day's group meeting, students will add one detail from their reading in response to each of the following questions for each character:

- What does the character look like?
- How does the character act? What does she do or say?
- How do the other characters react to her or feel about her?
- Add one more column: What decisions does she make, and what are the consequences?

(Students write on the paper directly or use sticky notes, attach slips of paper or 3x5 cards to the sheet)

If time permits, students might learn how to do, and practice doing, one of the activities described in Chapter 2 and 3.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 3 "Recalling Old Skills" (31-44)

Chapter Summary: The women make snowshoes and snare a rabbit. They move on to avoid bad memories and possible enemies, traveling to a place where they remember there are many fish. Using the caribou skins as sleds, they pack up their belongings, and walk until they reach exhaustion. Making camp, they dig pits in the snow and build fires. The next morning—despite their aching joints and freezing lungs, their fatigue and swollen feet, and the short daylight hours—they continue on to the middle of a frozen lake. The next day the same, with Sa' helping the elder Ch'idzigyaak get up and move despite her misery until they finish crossing the lake. They both know if one gives up, both will die. After four days, they come to a slough that reminds Sa' that they are on the right trail. At times, their conversation makes them both smile.

Day Nine, Ten and Eleven

CCRA.R.1, 2, 4; CCRA.W.2, 4, 5, 7; CCRA.SL.1, 6

Cooperative Group Activity:

Recall-level Questions

1. What do the old women use for shelter?
2. Identify what they see and the places they cross in the first four days.
3. Because of their age and the cold, what physical difficulties do the women experience?

Interpretive-level Questions

4. Why do the women decide to leave the place where The People have abandoned them?
5. Why does Sa' smile when she thinks about what they have accidentally left behind?
6. What are "taboo stories" and why are they called that?
7. Why do they worry about crossing the river that's frozen over?

Evaluative Questions

8. Is it believable that the women remember the skills for survival that they themselves haven't used for so long? Explain using specific evidence from the text.
9. What is the most serious danger the women face? Why?

Activity: Read Mary TallMountain's poem, **"The Women in Old Parkas"** (Appendix H)

Poem Summary: With clipped words and phrases, punctuated with breaths in the terrible winter cold, the speaker describes old women who trap muskrat, make soup, preserve what little kerosene they have left, and continue to sew. They survive on memories of stick dances, people singing, and then laughter at "little lines of rain" bringing the promise of spring.

Ask students to imagine they've gotten their vehicle stuck in the snow in -25° temperature and the motor has quit working. What do they feel in their limbs and face? How do they try to keep warm? What would they think about? What would it feel like to try to talk? Have students perform a **choral reading of the poem**. They will pay attention to the sounds and spaces in the poem and what they might communicate. Consonants and pauses between words, as well as short phrases and incomplete sentences, reinforce the feeling of cold. As they prepare for the reading, students will determine the theme, analyzing how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. They will pay attention and talk about the sensory details in *Two Old Women* that show how the women are suffering from the cold and from their individual condition of old age.

Activity: Continue the **Character Map** of each woman.

Writing Process Activity: To reinforce the **6 Traits of Writing,** students will revise **Portfolio #5 (A** or **B)** for figurative (sensory) language, ideas and effective word choice as demonstrated in *Two Old Women* (36-38).

Portfolio #6: Technical Writing Activity--Reading/Writing Strategy #7—R.A.F.T.S.

Procedure:

The women make snowshoes, pack possessions in caribou skins, make camp, and dig pits in snow. Students will **write** another "how to" **informative/explanatory** numbered list of steps for doing one of the activities for a wilderness-living manual, specifically for an audience of boy/girl scouts.

Role: a contributor to a wilderness-living manual
Audience: boy/girl scouts
Format: numbered steps
Topic: one of activities
Strong Verb: explain

Research Activities: Consider suggesting students review possible question topics.

a. **Research** snowshoes and materials various people might use to make them, and if time permits, students may want to make snowshoes.
b. **Research** the physical problems of people as they age: arthritis, bone loss, vulnerability to cold, macular degeneration, etc.

As they read the information, they will accurately cite—and credit—specific evidence or details from their sources.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 4 "A Painful Journey" (45-73)

Summary: Again, the women have pushed themselves beyond what their bodies can stand, and both consider letting themselves freeze to death. But Sa' is hungry and Ch'idzigyaak's bladder is full, so they rise to a new day. After eating the rabbit head and broth, they move on to follow the river, pulling their belongings with ropes around their waists. The sixth day, Sa' sees an opening to the creek they are looking for. After crossing the river, they see remains of the fish racks they and their band had hung so long before, and they feel like they have "come home." However, they experience conflicting emotions about having finally arrived while they remember their abandonment. The next day, they prepare for the colder weather ahead. Never having been close to each other before they were abandoned, and now that they are settled, they begin to share memories of their family and childhoods. Ch'idzigyaak remembers the time the family left her grandmother behind. Sa' remembers how she grew up more interested in what boys did than girls and how her family accepted her. She tells Ch'idzigyaak about the time she stood up to the chief on behalf of an old woman he wanted to leave behind. The event changed her life. Preoccupied with keeping warm in the increasing cold, the women spend their idle hours telling stories and weaving rabbit fur blankets and clothing. They survive the winter and snare a willow grouse, the first change of meat from rabbit, squirrel, and beaver since they began their journey.

Teacher Tip: With the extended number of questions for Chapter 4, you might want to divide the questions, with each group taking a portion and reporting their evidence-based responses to the rest of the class.

Day Twelve

CCRA.R.1, 3; CCRA.W.2, 9; CCRA.SL.1, 6

Cooperative Group Activity:

Recall-level Questions

1. How long did it take the women to reach their destination?
2. What do they find when they get there?
3. How do they prepare for the cold weather coming?
4. What do they talk about?
5. What are evidences of the colder temperatures?
6. What good fortune comes with the warming temperatures?
7. Ch'idzigyaak tells Sa' of the time her grandmother was left behind.
   - What was the grandmother's condition at the beginning of the story?
   - What was the little girl afraid her people might do?
   - How did the little girl feel about the decision to leave her grandmother?
   - How did the grandmother's life end?
8. Sa' tells Ch'idzigyaak stories about growing up.
   - What did she like to do?
   - How did she react to the chief's decision to leave an old woman behind for the sake of the group?
   - After the old woman died, what did Sa' realize was important?
   - How did Sa's man die?
9. Over the winter, what habit did the women lose?

Interpretive-level Questions

10. What might Sa' mean when she says, "My mind has power over my body . . ."?
11. Why did Sa feel like she had "come home" when they arrived at their destination?
12. How is the relationship changing between the women?
13. How do they overcome their loneliness?
14. How do they encourage each other?
15. In what way is their communication different from the past when they were with The People?

16. What do the women have in common?
17. Where is the humor or irony in this chapter?
18. How has their attitude towards their situation changed by the end of the chapter?

Evaluative Questions

19. The day they arrive, they have traveled longer than the previous day when they almost gave up. How does hope affect people and what they are able to accomplish? Give examples.
20. Why does Ch'idzigyaak remember the "unhappy" story about her grandmother? How does that story help the readers understand Ch'idzigyaak and the situation?
21. How have Sa's youth and the way she grew up helped her in their present situation?

Activity: Continue the Character Map of each woman.

Day Thirteen

CCRA.R.1, 2; CCRA.W.1, 2; CCRA.SL.1, 4, 6

Role Play Activity: Ask for volunteers to act out the scene where Ch'idzigyaak and Sa' each tells her childhood story. In preparation for their presentation, students should read the section carefully, focusing on specific details from the story, and they should consider what they will emphasize, the tone of their voices, gestures they might add to enhance their telling.

Venn Diagram Activity: With the class as a whole, compare and contrast the three stories of old women being left behind: Sa' and Ch'idzigyaak, Ch'idzigyaak's grandmother, and the old woman in Sa's story. After the group discussion, each student will respond to the following prompt:

a. Complete the following sentence: "As I look at the Venn Diagram and the comparison/contrast between three women and their stories, I realize that [name(s)] demonstrated the most sensitivity to the women in each situation."
b. Support your claim with three reasons for your conclusion and develop each reason with text-based evidence you view in the Venn Diagram.
c. Identify one counter claim that will view another individual naming one reason and supporting evidence.

Portfolio #7: In a paragraph, respond to one of the two following **Informative/Explanatory** prompts, and end your paragraph with a conclusion that demonstrates what you have learned about yourself by writing this paragraph.

a. What would you do with your extra time if you were in the situation of the two women? Begin this way, "If I were in the same situation as the old women, I would spend my extra time . . . . ."
b. What two possessions—that wouldn't be affected by the cold and wouldn't require electricity—would you keep? Why? Begin with "I can think of two things I would keep with me. . . . . "

Days Fourteen and Fifteen

CCRA.R.1, 2, 4, 9; CCRA.W.3, 7, 8, 9

Reading Assignment: Chapter 5 "Saving a Cache of Fish" (77-91)

Summary: With the coming of spring, the two women catch muskrats and beaver, and they freeze and dry the meat. Because Ch'idzigyaak and Sa' believe they can't trust the "younger generation," the women decide to move to a safe place where no one will want to go because of the mosquitoes. They spend their spring and short Arctic summer fishing and hunting. After drying the meat, they use their ingenuity to store and protect their supply from predators. One day, with the summer hunting finished, Sa' decides to explore a hill near their camp, and she finds "vast patches of cranberries." With little fear, she chases and follows a rutting bull moose, but finally gives up. The women collect cranberries and stack wood for the coming winter. Their days fall into a "routine of collecting wood, checking rabbit snares, and melting snow for

water," and they spend their evenings "keeping each other company" while they try not to think about those who abandoned them.

Activity: Read **Mary TallMountain's poem, "*Ggaal* Comes Upriver"** (Appendix H) to help students understand what the salmon mean to the Gwich'in Athabascans and to these women. Ask students to think about how the salmon's struggle and fight for life compares with the two women and their survival. Analyze how these two texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches and analogies the authors take.

Poem Summary: *Ggaal* is Athabascan for King Salmon. In early May, King Salmon begins her journey from the Bering Sea to the Yukon River—"the place of the Midnight Sun"—to spawn. Along the way, hidden nets try to catch her and the others, but she "jackknifes free" and "sweeps on upriver." This is a poem of survival against mighty odds.

Activity: Introduce **Jennifer (Greene) Finley's poem "Hunting"** (Appendix H). A member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and also Chippewa/Cree. Jennifer was raised on the Flathead Reservation where she now lives. Talk about the themes, images, and ideas in this poem and how they might compare with what the women in *Two Old Women* might see and feel as they hunt. With respect to the activity of hunting, in what way might age really matter?

Poem Summary: The speaker observes an eleven-year-old boy, "surrounded by the sound of pine needles/bumping each other in the wind." Waiting, he thinks of bubble gum he can't afford and how his mother will admire him if he brings home a deer.

Portfolio #8: Using Finley's poem as a model, think of a time you hunted or did something you hoped your parents would admire. Begin your poem with an image of the place where that happened and include a strong verb. Write a **Narrative,** free-verse poem that makes the reader see and feel the experience (use your five senses to create strong images).

Cooperative Discussion Activity:

Recall-level Questions

1. What were the steps involved in catching muskrat?
2. How did they protect themselves from mosquitoes?
3. How did the women catch and preserve fish?
4. How did they protect their cache from the bear and ravens?
5. What does Sa' find when she leaves the camp one day?

Interpretive-level Question

6. Why did the women want to find a safe place?
7. Why had they torn birch bark from trees, and why did they feel it was a mistake?
8. What can you infer about how this episode may foreshadow future events?
9. Contrast the encounters with the bear and the moose? Why did the women succeed with one and not the other?

Activity: Continue the Character Map of each woman.

Day Sixteen

CCRA.R.1; CCRA.W.1, 2, 4; CCRA.SL.1, 2, 4, 5, 6

1. Portfolio #9: **Response to Evaluative-level Questions** with **R.A.F.T.S.** prompts
   a. Ch'idzigyaak and Sa' have changed. Have they found happiness? Begin by defining happiness and then, in an instructive letter to students in one grade level below yours, write an **Argument** persuading the students to adopt and act on your definition, following the example provided in *Two Old Women*. Provide reasons and evidence from the text to support your answer.
      Role: a student
      Audience: students in one grade level below yours
      Format: argument in an instructive letter
      Topic: definition of happiness using examples from *Two Old Women*
      Strong Verb: explain and argue that they should adopt your definition
   b. Every day throughout the story so far, the women make choices. Identify one choice that you think is important. Write an **Explanatory or informational** short essay, in the form of a letter to the women. Use evidence from the text that shows the effect of the choice—the consequences—on their lives. Conclude with your belief about the right or the wrong of the choice.
      Role: yourself
      Audience: Ch'idzigyaak and Sa'
      Format: explanatory or informational short essay – letter
      Topic: a choice Ch'idzigyaak and Sa' have made and its consequences
      Strong Verb: explain

Group Presentation Activity using the following **R.A.F.T.S.** prompt**:**

In this chapter, the women catch muskrats and beavers in nets and traps; they fish, store food, keep off mosquitoes, use the insides of fish, and prepare for winter. Using very specific ideas and words, poster illustrations and props, each group will select and explain one of these activities to an audience of third-grade students.

Role: experts from the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks on one of the activities
Audience: students in a third-grade class
Format: presentation
Topic: one of the activities from this chapter
Strong Verb: explain and show

Day Seventeen

CCRA.R.1, 2, 9; CCRA.W.2, 9

Activity (this activity is dependent on having access to the book *Raising Ourselves*):
Read aloud from pages 151-165 in Wallis' *Raising Ourselves*, Chapter 14. This is the author's introduction to life at *Neegoogwandah* and her realization that she would have to "face the wilderness" on her own. Citing evidence from *Two Old Women* and evidence from *Raising Ourselves,* students will analyze how the texts (one a memoir and another the novel) might differ or compare with each other. Students might also compare/contrast *Two Old Women* or *Raising Ourselves* with biographies of Wallis from the following sites:

http://voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/wallisVelma.php
http://velmawallis.com/index.php?page_id=22

Reading Assignment: Chapter 6 "Sadness among The People" (93-105)

Summary: A year later, the band again suffers from extreme hunger and fatigue. Recalling his inner turmoil at having left the women, the chief believes it was the right thing to do. When the band returns to the same site, they find no trace of anyone having died there. The chief instructs one of the elders, a guide named Daagoo, and three hunters to find out what has happened to the women. While it has taken the

women days to travel to their first camp, it takes these expert runners just one day. But at each campsite, the hunters realize no one has been there in a long time. Just when they are most discouraged and fear they'll never find the women, the hunters see the places where bark has been torn from birch trees. Daagoo sends his men in opposite directions, and he decides to follow the most unlikely path. Discouraged again, Daagoo suddenly smells smoke from a campfire. After calling his men back, he tells them he believes the women are alive and near. The chapter ends with his calling out the women's names as he waits in silence for their reply.

Day Eighteen

CCRA.R.1; CCRA.W.1; CCRA.SL.1, 4, 6

Cooperative Discussion Activity:

Recall-level Questions

1. What has happened to the band in the last year since they left the old women behind?
2. What do they find when they return to the place where they left the women?
3. Who does the chief send to find the women?
4. What two signs tell the old scout that he is traveling in the right direction?

Interpretive-level Questions

5. Why had the chief resisted the urge to go back and get the old ones?
6. What evidence indicates the chief's decision has disturbed his people?
7. Why does the chief select Daagoo?
8. What does Daagoo understand about the chief?
9. What does Daagoo hope to accomplish as he sets out to look for the women?
10. How does Wallis build suspense in the search for the women?
11. How does Daagoo differ from the three other men in his party?
12. How can you explain the silence that follows Daagoo's call to the women?

Evaluative-level Questions

13. Is the chief's self-hatred justified? Defend your answer, making a claim that you support with evidence and logic.
14. Daagoo is hopeful of finding the women alive. How could his finding the women help the rest of the band?
15. Why is the most "unlikely path" the most reasonable for Daagoo to follow? What other situations do you know about where the most "unlikely" is the most "reasonable?"

Teacher Tip: This first evaluative-level question requires a yes/no answer. Students will make a claim and support it with specific evidence from the text or from the students' understanding—and experience—of human nature. The question and response might be turned into a debate or brief oral presentation with students explaining their claim. See Debate Instructions in Appendix I.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 7 "The Stillness is Broken" (107-121)

Summary: "Loneliness and time" have healed Ch'idzigyaak and Sa's bitter memories. Their hate has "numbed," and they can talk about how much they miss The People. At first when they hear Daagoo's call, they are afraid, but they respond with "We are here!" However, as Daagoo approaches, he finds the women with spears, prepared to defend themselves and their cache. Promising them no harm, Daagoo tells them he must tell the chief. Still cautious, Sa' and Ch'idzigyaak invite the four hunters into their tent and feed them dried fish and rabbit broth. The men are shocked with the health of the two women, especially in contrast with their own hunger. After listening to Daagoo's pleas and promises, and after discussing the situation between themselves, Ch'idzigyaak and Sa' decide to help the band. That evening they trade stories:

Daagoo tells them the story of the band's struggles during the last year, and Sa' tells how the women have survived.

Day Nineteen and Twenty

CCRA.R.1, 10; CCRA.W.1; CCRA.SL.1, 4, 6

Cooperative Discussion Activity:

Recall-level Questions

1. What had healed the women's bitter memories?
2. How do the women react when they first hear their names called?
3. What lesson has Daagoo learned since The People left the women behind?
4. What makes the women's "hearts soften"?
5. What are Sa's terms of their agreement to help The People?

Interpretive-level Questions

6. In what ways did "loneliness and time" heal their bitter memories?
7. What can you infer about what crossed the women's minds when "their eyes met"?
8. Why are the women reluctant to respond to Daagoo?
9. What kept the reunion from being entirely joyful?
10. How have the women changed, and what does Daagoo admire about the two women?
11. How did the women's strength impact the way Daagoo felt about himself?
12. Why do the women decide to help the band? How do they feel about losing some of their precious food?
13. What have the women learned about themselves?
14. What have the women gained from this reunion?

Evaluative-level Questions

15. Should the women be afraid? Explain your answer.

Teacher Tip: This first evaluative-level question requires a yes/no answer. Students will make a claim and support it with specific evidence from the text or from the students' experiences with similar conflicts. The question and response might be turned into a debate, using Appendix I format, or brief oral presentation with students explaining their claim.

16. What is trust? What does it look like in actions and words? What is betrayal? What does it look like in actions and words?
17. In what "obvious" way(s) did the women show Daagoo they did not trust him or the other men?
18. How could they know that they could trust Daagoo and his men and the chief?
19. What was the most important skill or attitude that the women possessed that helped them survive? Explain your answer.
20. What might The People learn from the survival of the women?
21. What is pride? Who has the most pride in this story? Is it a good characteristic or not? Why?

Role Play Activity:

Have students volunteer for role play assignments. In preparation for their presentation, they should read the section carefully, focusing on specific details from the story, and they should consider what they will emphasize, the tone of their voices, gestures they might add to enhance their telling.

a. **Two** students will role play the discussion between the two old women as they try to decide whether to trust and help the men and possibly the rest of The People. What plans might the women have in mind *for all their provisions* when they say, "We will share with The People, but they must not become greedy and try to take our food, for we will fight to our deaths for what is ours (120)."

b. **Six** students will role play the meeting between the women and Daagoo's men as they eat and talk.
c. **Four** students will role play the discussion between Daagoo and his men as they go to tell the chief they have found the women.

Teacher Tip: Following the reading and discussion of Chapter 7, allow one class period for students to prepare for and practice the role play activities. Students will decide if they will stand or sit or face each other, and most important, how each will feel about him/herself and what each wants out of this exchange. A discussion of non-verbal communication behaviors can preface the exercise.

Activity: Continue the **Character Map** of each woman.

Portfolio #10: Without naming any names, write about a time when you felt betrayed, or when you betrayed someone else. What did you do? Did the friendship or relationship survive the betrayal? Write a journal entry for yourself.

Teacher Tip: Remind students that you are not a counselor, that you don't intend to invade their space or their lives, and that they have the right to follow this prompt or anything else they might want to write about. However, if they decide to follow the prompt, remind them that the topic they choose shouldn't be anything their teacher shouldn't read. Make sure they have a safe place to write about such a topic.

Reading Assignment: Chapter 8 "A New Beginning" (123-136)

Summary: When Daagoo and his men return to the chief, they tell them the women's wishes: that they don't trust them, and they don't want to see them. In their meeting after Daagoo's return, the council men confess their error in leaving the women behind and say they will "pay them back with respect." Still, their excitement over a possible reuniting gives the men energy as they pack up to move to the outskirts of the women's camp. The chief and Daagoo go into the camp and face the women. These are the concessions the women make: "We will give you enough food for The People, and when it becomes low, we will give you more food. We will give you small portions at a time (125)." For many cold days, The People share and "ration" the food the women give them, but they are "forbidden" to go near the camp. Finally, out of curiosity and a desire to see family, Ch'idzigyaak and Sa' agree to have visitors. So the relationships improve. However, Ch'idzigyaak's daughter and grandson never come, until one day Shruh Zhuu approaches her as she goes to gather wood. This reunion is followed by her reconciliation with Ozhii Nelii. The women are given honorary positions within the band, and The People promise to never again abandon an elder.

Day Twenty-One

CCRA.R.1, 9; CCRA.W.2; CCRA.SL.1, 6

Cooperative Discussion Activity:

Recall-level Questions:

1. What were the conditions of the agreement with the old women?
2. What lesson had hardship taught the people, not only about the old women, but about themselves as well?
3. How does it happen that Ch'idzigyaak finally sees her grandson and daughter?
4. What do the people learn about how they will treat any elder in the future?

Interpretive-level Questions:

5. Why were the old women reluctant to give too much to The People?
6. How do The People show their respect for the elderly women?
7. How was Ch'idzigyaak's heart healed?

8. Where is the *irony* on page 128?
9. What does the well-trodden path between the two camps suggest?
10. Why does it take Ozhii Nelii so long to see her mother?
11. Where is evidence of forgiveness in this chapter?
12. Identify situations in the entire book where individuals apologize or admit they are wrong. In each case, what motivates the apology? What are the consequences of apology?

Evaluative-level Questions:

13. Problems in this story occur because of misunderstandings. Explain one of the misunderstandings and how it was cleared up. How could the problem have been avoided?
14. Why were the women able to succeed at surviving when the tribe could not?
15. What did the women gain and lose by being abandoned?
16. How would the story change if these were two old men instead of two old women?
17. Name three lessons the two old women learned through the experience of being separated from The People. Which was the most important? Explain your answer.
18. What are the ways people demonstrate respect in this story? Explain how each situation defines respect.
19. In what ways do *Two Old Women* and the poems included in the unit support the "Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians"?

Activity: Read **three poems** that may reflect the feelings of the women by the end of this story, and may represent the kind of death these women will look forward to, one that comes at the end of a life well lived. Look at "Ways to Experience Poetry" in *Birthright – Born to Poetry: a Collection of Montana Indian Poetry* (http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/IndianEd/Search/Language%20Arts/Secondary_BirthrightPoetry.pdf) and select from a variety of activities you and your students might use with the following poems.

- **"Alive"** by Minerva Allen **(Assiniboine)** from *Spirits Rest* (Appendix H). The speaker feels alone and wonders about life, whether it's steered by destiny or choice. Like the two women, the speaker realizes that she is most alive when she chooses her own destiny.
- **"There is No Word for Goodbye"** by Mary TallMountain (Appendix H). The speaker wants to say something to her mother's sister, *Sokoya*, as her aunt leaves. But the aunt tells her, "we just say, *Ttaa*. That means,/ See you./ We never leave each other." While it is never explicitly stated, readers can imagine the many ways memory keeps us close to those we love, where "we'll see you someplace else." Could the women have said the words in this poem at the beginning of the story? How have they changed?
- **"Beautiful Existence"** by Minerva Allen (Assiniboine) in *Birthright: Born to Poetry – A collection of Montana Indian Poetry* (see link above). The speaker is an elder with "aching knee joints." Centered in ceremony and spiritually complete, the speaker is able to regard Death as friend. Perhaps Sa' and Ch'idzigyaak can look forward to this good death, the kind that comes at the end of a full life.

Day Twenty-Two

CCRA.R.1, 6; CCRA.W.1; CCRA.SL.1, 6

Activity: Students will complete the **Character Map** of each woman.

Activity: Students will revisit the original butcher paper sheets with cards of facts and questions.

a. In Cooperative Discussion groups, they will create at least 10 more fact cards that come from what they've learned.
b. Depending on the kinds of facts and the areas of information, teachers may want to divide the "fact card" assignment according to topics.
c. Looking at the questions they asked at the beginning, they will discuss which ones have been answered and which have not.
d. Although time may not permit, they can also talk about how they might answer those questions.

Writing Activity:

Procedure:

a. Provide each group with a copy of the biography of one of the women in *Honoring Native Women's Voices: A Collection of Stories*. Pablo, MT: Salish Kootenai College, 2006. Norma Bixby (Northern Cheyenne), Elouise Cobell (Blackfeet), Carol Juneau (Mandan Hidatsa), Carmen Taylor (Salish/Oneida), Opal Swaney Cajune (Salish), Brown Owl Woman (Nakoda), Dorothy Felsman (Salish), Oshanee Kenmille (Salish), Adeline Mathia (Kootenai), Clara Rides the White Hipped Horse Nomee (Crow), Frances Vanderburg (Salish), and a speech by Opal Cajune.

b. Considering each woman's point of view, students will create a definition of a "strong" woman based on the information in their biography and what they've learned from reading *Two Old Women.* Each will complete the following sentence: "When I finished reading the biographies and *Two Old Women,* I understood that strong women share these three characteristics: _____, _____, _____."

c. Following the claim or thesis (what begins with "I understand"), each will create an **Argument** to defend this claim, and they will cite specific evidence from all relevant texts. The length of this essay will depend on the time available.

Day Twenty-Three

CCRA.W.2, 10

Students will complete their portfolios, concluding with the following:

1. a self-evaluation of their writing,
2. their willingness to learn,
3. their participation in class,
4. their daily responsibility for reading and writing, and
5. one paragraph of the most important idea they've learned in this unit.

Day Twenty-Four through Twenty-Nine

Extending the Reading, Writing, Speaking/Listening, and Research Experience

Teacher Tip: The questions or prompts under **Arguments, Informational Writing, and Narrative Writing** provide opportunities for students to extend their reading and writing experience to meet the Montana Common Core Standards for Literacy as identified at the end of this unit. However, they are just that—suggestions and possible models for other units and texts.

- Any reading/writing suggestions may convert to **R.A.F.T.S**.prompts
- Students might select any of their writing pieces to revise and edit.
- Students will cite strong and thorough textual **evidence** to support their opinions or claims.
- Several of the suggestions make use of the same resources with a different emphasis or purpose, and recommendations for approaches to reading/writing may be applied to other resources as well.

A. <u>Options for Making Connections to Self</u> **CCRA.W.2, 4, 10**

1. **Writing Activity:** Select what you view as an interesting, wise, **vivid sentence** from *Two Old Women.* Share and defend your choice, providing three reasons with specific textual evidence to support it.

2. **Writing Activity:** Finish the sentence **"When I am lonely, I overcome it by...."** and then finish your paragraph by explaining how it works. **Apply Reading/Writing Strategy #3:** What's the problem? What's the solution? Use specific details.

3. **Writing Activity:** With thirteen siblings, Velma rarely spent time alone with either parent. But she begins her memoir *Raising Ourselves* with details and images of an early morning event—a time she "savored" with

her father when he took her with him as he checked his fishing wheel (16-17). Using Wallis' writing as a model of sensory images, **describe** for a future daughter or son **a "savored" time** you spent alone with one parent.

4. **Writing Activity:** Choose a **character** in the story, or imagine a person we never get to meet—the leader's wife, a young warrior, another elderly woman or man. Imagine you are that person in place and time, and **write a journal** from one day**.** What would you see, hear, smell, touch? What would you wish? What would you learn?

5. **Writing/Art Activity: Create a family life map** following Velma Wallis' example at the beginning of *Raising Ourselves*.
   - Begin at the bottom with yourself, your siblings.
   - Include a head-shot photo of each if you can, with a one-sentence detail that defines that person.
   - Build up to your maternal and paternal grandparents. If you have more than one set of parents or grandparents, you may need more space.

6. **Reading/Writing Activity:** Remember and possibly research a hard time in the life of **your community** (flood, blizzard, fire, and drought) or in your family (disease, death, loss of job, injury). Show what happened (who, what, when, where, how, and why) and then how did you get past it. **Write a narrative** about the event.

B. <u>Options for Reading and Writing Arguments</u> **CCRA.R.6, 8, 9; CCRA.W.1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10**

CCRA.W.1: Write **arguments** to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, including culturally diverse topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

1. **Reading/Writing Activity:** Students will analyze the following documents about contemporary Alaskan or Athabascan issues and reviews of *Two Old Women, c*onsidering the authors' points of view, how they are conveyed, and how they distinguish or acknowledge how their point of view differs from others. With any of these, students can trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims supported by reasons, and evidence from claims that are not, or they might compare/contrast articles looking at texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic. They might apply an appropriate **Reading/Writing Strategy**.

   a. "ANCSA: The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Teacher's Guide," http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/ANCSA/ane.html.
      A teaching website about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

b. "Pros and Cons of Oil Drilling,"
http://www.buzzle.com/articles/pros-and-cons-of-oil-drilling.html.
Oil drilling in Alaska is a controversial issue, and this article discusses the pros and cons that students can analyze for ways the author distinguishes the different positions.

c. "Relatives Halfway Round the World: Southern Athabascans and Southern Tarim Fugitives,"
http://www.archive.limina.arts.uwa.edu.au/__data/page/186585/wilson.pdf.
Students who are up to a challenge might read this professional journal article that addresses the conflicting arguments about where the Athabascan people originated. This article makes a linguistic connection between the Navajo and the Athabascans.

d. Barnes and Noble website about *Two Old Women,*
http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/two-old-women-velma-wallis/1002606504.
Students may read various reviews. They will analyze how the author of a review acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints, and they can trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

2. **Writing Activity:** Students will read reviews on websites such as Barnes and Noble,
http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/two-old-women-velma-wallis/1002606504.
They will write their own review of the book, formulating an argument by making a claim/position supported by reasons and credible evidence. They may include comments from their peers, but the majority of the evidence will come directly from the novel. Students will focus on word choice and transitions that clarify the relationships among these claims.

3. **Reading/Writing Activity:** Students may read two or more of the documents included in this teaching website about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971,
http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/ANCSA/ane.html.
They will respond in writing to one of the arguments posed in these documents. They will formulate an argument by acknowledging and distinguishing claims, supporting those claims with logical and accurate reasoning and evidence, using effective and specific word choice.

C. Options for Reading Texts and for Writing Informational Essays CCRA.R.1, 9; CCRA.W.2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10

CCRA.W.2: Write **informative/explanatory** texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

1. **Reading/Writing Activity:** If students have read *Julie of the Wolves,* a popular young-adult novel by Jean Craighead George, they can compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character with a

historical (creative non-fiction) account, such as *Two Old Women.* Both works feature individuals facing hunger and cold, but the contrasts between the two are significant. Teachers may use *Roots and Branches: A Resource of Native American Literature Themes, Lessons, and Bibliographies* (222) by Dorothea M. Susag for more information about George's novel. They might incorporate this comparison/contrast in a letter to Velma Wallis or Jean Craighead George regarding the approach the authors' take to the subject matter and how their perspectives might differ.

2. **Reading/Writing Activity:** After watching selections from these films, students will create a list of additional details about the author's geographical, historical, or cultural background—from a contemporary perspective—that either support or contradict what they have learned so far.

   a. *American Indian Homelands: Matters of Truth, Honor and Dignity Immemorial.* Directed by Barry ZeVan. 2006. Little Canada, MN: Indian Land Tenure Foundation. DVD.
   A clip from this video is available at http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/IEFAVideo.html#gpm1_8.

   Summary: "Hosted and narrated by ABC-TV's Sam Donaldson, and featuring Senator John McCain R-Ariz., former Senator Tom Daschle D-S.D., and the late Elouise Cobell, lead plaintiff in the Supreme Court case *Cobell v. Salazar***,** the film has been described as the most compelling and powerful documentary ever produced about the degree to which American Indians have been unjustly treated in respect to their lands and resources, how those injustices occurred, and the devastating consequences of these actions that Indian people still experience today."(Indian Land Tenure Foundation, www.itlf.org)

   The film is available for $10.00 on this website. The segment on the former Gwich'in chief and tribe of Arctic Village and their efforts to curb the drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is particularly relevant.

   b. *The Snow Walker.* Directed by Charles Martin Smith. Los Angeles, CA: First Look Media and Infinity Media. 2004. DVD. Based on *The Snow Walker* by Farley Mowat. Charles Martin Smith, director. 2004.

   Summary: The story takes place in northernmost Canada. A pilot who brings supplies to local tribes is bringing a young Inuit woman with tuberculosis to a hospital for treatment. When the plane crashes, the pilot must depend on the girl's expertise in living on the tundra, and they both find ways to overcome the cultural and language barriers that would separate them.

3. **Writing Activity:** Remember someone you know who is in his/her 70's or 80's. What does he/she say (include quotes), do (daily activities or interesting behaviors), look like? What difficulties does he/she face every day? **Write** an **Informative Essay or Description** of this person and communicate as many details as you can to make the person real to a reader. It should be typed and spell checked, put in a folder with the person's photo on the front, and presented to the individual.
   Role: yourself
   Audience: a person in their 70's or 80's that you know well
   Format: an informational or descriptive essay
   Topic: the character, looks, and personality traits of the individual
   Strong Verb: describe and explain the personality or character of the individual in a way that shows how you admire him/her.

4. In *Raising Ourselves*, Velma Wallis closes with this comment: "I teach myself to look into the future and not yearn for the past and its people: to honor them through their stories but not to fall into nostalgia which caused so many people to sink into depression (212)." How might Wallis' writing of *Two Old Women* fulfill her goal to honor and to not fall into nostalgia? Students might apply **Reading/Writing Strategy #3:** What's the problem? What are possible solutions? Why are so many depressed? How does Wallis keep herself from depression? With help from peers and teachers, students will revise, edit, and rewrite this letter for Wallis.
   Role: yourself
   Audience: the author, Velma Wallis
   Format: a letter that is a response to your participation in the unit. Use portions of the above quote in your letter and write about what you have learned about yourself and your own heritage, and what you have learned about your personal responsibilities to present and future generations.
   Topic: your participation in the unit and what you have learned about yourself
   Strong Verb: Inform and explain to the author what you have learned.

5. **Reading Activity:** Read the following and determine the points of view and purposes in writing while showing how they are conveyed. Consider how they acknowledge and respond to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. Apply **Reading/Writing Strategy #2** regarding sentences and phrases to help determine point of view and purpose**:** What does it say? What might it mean? Why does it matter?
   a. Wallis' Introduction to *Two Old Women*
   b. "About the Gwich'in People" (137-140)
   c. Biographies in *Honoring Native Women's Voices: A Collection of Stories* to determine the author's point of view or purpose in each
   d. "Athabascan Spiritual Beliefs About Hunting, Fishing and Gathering" http://ayatlin.wordpress.com/2012/04/24/Athabascan-spiritual-beliefs-about-hunting-fishing-and-gathering/

6. **Reading Activity:** Students will **read** information on the following website, http://voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/wallisVelma.php, as well as an excerpt from *Raising Ourselves: A Gwitch'in Coming of Age Story from the Yukon River* by Velma Wallis (151-165). This is Wallis' memoir, and students might compare/contrast excerpts with *Two Old Women* or biographies. They might analyze the texts and consider how they might provide conflicting information or where they might disagree on matters of fact.

7. **Reading Activity:** Students will ask what it was like at the time of *Two Old Women* in comparison with what it is like for Athabascans now. The questions might relate to geography, population, industry, fishing, hunting, immigration, etc. Drawing on several available sources, they might focus on additional questions that move the investigation further. Students will consider **Reading Strategy #6:** What's changed? What's stayed the same? Why?

8. **Reading/Writing Activity:** Using excerpts from *Raising Ourselves* (Appendix G), **compare/contrast** the impacts of and Gwich'in reactions to the "outside world**"** (religion, disease, alcoholism, changes in the landscape and climate, death and loss of children) to the **experience of a Montana tribe**.

9. **Reading/Writing Activity: Compare like details in *Two Old Women*** with the details from "Velma Wallis' life experiences in *Raising Ourselves."* Provide each student with a copy of one of the referenced sections. Have them respond to the following questions: How may the details in your reading have informed Wallis' writing of *Two Old Women?* Consider the landscape, the climate, how Velma Wallis would have known how to survive in the wilderness, how the women might feel, how to resolve conflicts, and what to value the most.

D. Options for Reading and Writing Narratives CCRA.W.3, 7; CCRA.SL.1, 2

CCRA.W.3: Write **narratives** to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

1. **Writing Summaries, a Technical/Narrative Writing Activity:** *Two Old Women* may be read aloud in three hours, so this writing activity may easily be accomplished in 15 minutes a day over a three-week period of time, with students doing the cooperative discussion and portfolio activities as well. When students write a summary each day, while providing feedback to each other, they see how they can improve their ability to listen for the kind of information necessary for focused and clear summary writing. This approach to a text helps develop strong and focused listening skills while they develop their ability to think and write clearly about what they've heard. These summaries may be added to the Portfolios of writing.

   Students might also create an audio book, so students with difficulty reading might listen to their peers reading.

   Teacher Tip: Writing a Summary of a Narrative:
   - Identify and choose the most important conflict in this chapter.
   - Name the character(s) in your statement about the conflict.
   - Provide one relevant detail that applies to the character.
   - If a conflict is resolved in this chapter, explain the resolution.
   - Always write in the present tense, with the tone and perspective remaining the same as the original.
   - Write enough to include the most important story elements while writing less than the story itself.

   Procedure:
   a. Briefly discuss the tips (mentioned above) or perhaps list them on the board. Read aloud a chapter a day to students, and ask them to keep their desks free from any distractions, including pens and paper.
   b. After the reading, ask students to take only 5 minutes to **write a summary** of the chapter they have just heard.
   c. When finished, have a few students read their summaries aloud and ask for other students to comment about what is missing and what may have been included that is not necessary in a summary.
   d. **Necessary—**Who? What? When? Where? Names of characters, setting, situation, and problem(s).
   e. **Not necessary —**Most images and minor details.

2. **Writing Activity: Interview an elder.** Students may collaborate in their discussion groups to draft a list of questions. They will select one question about a story that the elder thinks the students should remember to tell their children. The Guide for Oral Interviews in Appendix F might help with the planning for this activity.

3. **Writing Activity: Create a short story** that takes a different turn. Consider what might have happened had the daughter and grandson spoken up in the beginning. What problem and resolution might occur?

4. **Conventions Activity** (Appendix J): In the Editor's Afterword, Lael Morgan writes:
"Did I tell you about the commas?" The author had asked as she grew more comfortable in dealing with her editor. "Although I got my GED, I've always had trouble with commas. I knew most sentences have them but I didn't know where to put them, so I'd write up the story and just sprinkle them in." Finally, my brother Barry said, 'Velma, why don't you take them out entirely until you figure it out – maybe someone will help you." (145)

   Procedure:
   a. Students will punctuate the paragraph and then compare it to the final edited version in Wallis' published text, looking at how punctuation differences can affect meaning.
   b. At the beginning of the workshop, review rules of quotation marks and commas, especially after introductory phrases and clauses, around interrupters, and between items in a series.
   c. Distribute a copy of the selection to groups of two so they can help each other, as Barry suggested. Students will provide only end punctuation – no commas or quotation marks.
   d. After five minutes, depending on the ability of the students, read the published punctuated text on an overhead – with only end punctuation inserted. Have groups discuss similarities and differences.
   e. Students will next provide quotation marks and commas. Follow the same procedure, with overhead copy of original published text.
   f. Discuss the ways punctuation choices can confuse or affect meaning.

Cross-Curricular Activities

1. **Research** the nutritious value of the foods the women eat and how those foods might sustain them. What important food groups are they missing?

2. As the story progresses, students can create a **Map** of their **Journey**, with rivers and landscape, and significant events.

3. Students can respond to the following questions: What have you learned about the Athabascan culture from reading this story? Remember culture includes education, government, marriage practices, parenting practices, food, lodging, vocations, values, religion. What more would you like to know and how would you find the information?

4. Students will Illustrate with a visual image (drawing, painting, collage, etc.) or a poem, one of the following passages that exemplify Wallis' strong descriptive skill.
   - The two old women sitting at the camp while the tribe walks away
   - One of the camps where the women find plentiful food and stay for a while
   - Sa's unusual hunt for the moose
   - The reunion between Ch'idzigyaak and her grandson or daughter
   - A passage of your own choosing

Appendix A: Grades 6-12 College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

This unit addresses the Montana Common Core Literacy Standards. It offers levels of thinking and response to meet the needs of students from a variety of grade levels and abilities. The entire unit, with the standards identified and referenced, provides a model for language and activities that teachers can apply to other resources or texts. However, all activities easily meet a variety of MCCS even though the standard isn't specifically named.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (CCRA.SL)

Comprehension and Collaboration

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (CCRA.R)

Key Ideas and Details

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text, including works by and about American Indians.

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas, including works by and about American Indians.

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. Include text by and about American Indians.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. Include texts by and about American Indians.

CCRA.R.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. Include texts by and about American Indians.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
CCRA.R.10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (CCRA.W)

Text Types and Purposes
CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing
CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCRA.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
CCRA.W.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
CCRA.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. Include texts by and about American Indians.
CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing
CCRA.W.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

For the sake of space, this document provides Anchor Standards (CCRA) without grade-level differentiation. However teachers at each grade level, may access specific descriptions for their students' grade level at the following sites:

Reading Informational Texts: http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/CCSSO/MCCS-ELA/Strands/MCCS-Reading-Informational-Standards-K-12-5-11-12.pdf

Reading Literature: http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/CCSSO/MCCS-ELA/Strands/MCCS-Reading-Literature-Standards-K-12-5-11-12.pdf

Writing: http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/CCSSO/MCCS-ELA/Strands/MCCS-Writing-Standards-K-12-4-26-12.pdf

Speaking and Listening: http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/CCSSO/MCCS-ELA/Strands/MCCS-Speaking-Listening-Standards-K-12-5-11-12.pdf

Appendix B: Additional Resources used or referenced in this unit

Check with your librarian to see if the following resources are already in your school's collection of Indian Education for All materials. If not, they may be ordered through interlibrary loan, but they are also available through the publishers or Amazon.com. Schools may use Indian Education for All funds to support such purchases.

- Alaska Native Heritage Center, www.alaskanative.net.

- Alaska Native Knowledge Network, http://ankn.uaf.edu/index.html.

- *American Indian Homeland: Matters of truth, honor and dignity immemorial.* Directed by Barry ZeVan. Indian Land Tenure Foundation. DVD.

- Cajune, Julie, ed. *Honoring Native Women's Voices: A Collection of Stories*. Pablo, MT: Salish Kootenai College. 2006.

- Greene (Finley), Jennifer K. (Salish). *What I Keep.* Greenfield Review Press: Greenfield Center, New York. 1999.

- Montana Office of Public Instruction. *Birthright: Born to Poetry--A Collection of Montana Indian Poetry.* 2013. http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/IndianEd/Search/Language%20Arts/Secondary_BirthrightPoetry.pdf. (This collection was sent to all high school libraries and is available online.)

  Poets reading their poetry is available at:
  http://opi.mt.gov/streamer/IndianEd/Birthright/_deploy/Index.html#/playlist1/local1.

- Susag, Dorothea M. *Roots and Branches: A Resource of Native American Literature Themes, Lessons, and Bibliographies.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. 1998.

- *The Snow Walker.* Directed by Charles Martin Smith. Millenium, 2005. DVD.
  (Based on *The Snow Walker* by Farley Mowat)

- TallMountain, Mary (Athabascan). *The Light on the Tent Wall: A Bridging.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California American Indian Studies. (12) 1990.
  (The collection may be ordered on this site: http://freedomvoices.org/tent.htm.)

- Wallis, Velma (Athabascan/Gwich'in). *Raising Ourselves: A Gwitch'in Coming of Age Story from the Yukon River*. Kenmore, WA: Epicenter Press. 2003.
  (In addition to reading *Two Old Women*, more advanced students might read this memoir that deals with some very harsh realities, particularly the issue of growing up a child of an alcoholic.)

- Wallis, Velma (Athabascan/Gwich'in). *Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival*. Seattle, WA: Epicenter Press. 1993.

- Williams, Maria (Tlingit). *How Raven Stole the Sun.* New York: Abbeville Press and National Museum of American Indians. 2001.

Appendix C: Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

Essential Understanding 1
There is great diversity among the twelve tribal nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

Essential Understanding 2
There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by entities, organizations and people. A continuum of Indian identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional. There is no generic American Indian.

Essential Understanding 3
The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the "discovery" of North America.

Essential Understanding 4
Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not "given" to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:

I. Both parties to treaties were sovereign powers.
II. Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land.
III. Acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.

Essential Understanding 5
There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people and still shape who they are today. Many of these policies conflicted with one another. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods:

Colonization Period 1492 - 1800s
Treaty Period 1789 - 1871
Allotment Period 1887 - 1934 - Allotment and Boarding School Period 1879 -1934
Tribal Reorganization Period 1934 - 1958
Termination and Relocation Period 1953 - 1971
Self-determination 1968 – Present

Essential Understanding 6
History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.

Essential Understanding 7
Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers, separate and independent from the federal and state governments. However, the extent and breadth of tribal sovereignty is not the same for each tribe.

Appendix D: Athabascan Background

From "About the Gwich'in People," *Two Old Women* (137-140)

- Larger Tribe or Language Group: The Athabascan who live between the Brooks Range and the Alaska Range. Carl Waldman and Facts on File, Inc. (2003) regards Athabascan as a Subarctic Culture Area that covers most of present-day Canada and Alaska. The Inuit, not Athabascan, live farther north.
- Band: Gwich'in People, one of eleven Athabascan groups.
- Place: Western interior of Alaska, Fort Yukon and Chalkyitsik area, a boreal forest.
- Rivers: Yukon, Porcupine and Tanana.
- Language: a dialect of the common Athabascan roots--Navajo and Apache also.
- Source: A reference to one belief that these tribes are descended from Asians who crossed from Siberia during the Ice Age (138).
- Subsistence: Living off the land, they followed large game (moose, caribou) and small animals (rabbits and squirrels). Starvation was always a threat, and life was hard.
- Territory: Bands usually limited themselves to a traditional hunting area, with the understanding that intrusion into another's territory would invite violence. However, such encroachment was "rare."(139)
- Changes: Permanent camps and villages by 1900 due to "population declines brought on by disease, fur trade, access to trading posts, enforced school attendance." However, many Alaskan Athabascan continued to live off the land (140).

For much more about Athabascan and other Alaska Natives, see the Alaska Native Knowledge Network website, www.ankn.uaf.edu. This site features Publications, Curriculum Resources, Native Educator Resources, Cultural Atlases and Talking Maps, and Cultural Resources.

Appendix E: Literary Terms Study Guide

1. **Plot –** The events that take place in a story.
2. **Characters –** The people in the story (Sa' and Ch'idzigyaak are the main characters in this story).
3. **Mood –** The emotion of a story (The mood of this story moves from gloomy and hopeless to determined and triumphant.)
4. **Setting –** The time and place of a story (The setting of *Two Old Women* is Interior Alaska, and the time is pre-contact, before the coming of Europeans and Americans.)
5. **Legend –** A folk story about something that took place in the past.
6. **Supporting Details –** Facts in the story that support the main idea or plot (Details about the cold, the difficult travel, the way the women get food, the relationship between the women, the critical events).
7. **Point of view, third person –** A story that is told as if the author is outside looking in. This narrative mode might use the objective perspective (not focusing on any single character's thoughts), or omniscient, (revealing more than one character's thoughts) or limited omniscient (revealing the thoughts of only one character).
8. **Conflict –** The opposing forces in a story (In this story, the characters experience internal conflicts, conflicts between themselves and the outside environment, conflicts between each other, and between themselves and the main Gwich'in band.)
9. **Irony—**

   Verbal Irony: words express the opposite of the literal meaning. For example: "let us die trying."

   Situational Irony: the opposite of what is expected occurs. For example:

   - The women survive when all odds are against them.
   - The band ends up depending on the old women rather than the women depending on the band.
   - In TallMountain's poem, "Good Grease," even though they are near starving, the people relish and play while eating the caribou grease.

Appendix F: Oral Histories and Interviewing

Before the Interview:

- **Know** the cultural protocol of asking for information.
- **Know** the first language of the person to be interviewed and enlist an interpreter if needed (not everyone's first language is English).
- **Know** the purpose of the interview (to honor an elder, to learn about what he or she values, to begin to build a relationship, to receive stories the individual chooses to share, etc.).
- **Construct** basic questions (of who, what, when--birthplace, school, marriage, children, vocations, etc.) that will be answered at the beginning of the interview/tape.
- **Construct** open-ended questions (of how and why, of causes and consequences, of what's changed and what's stayed the same) and avoid any that begin with "did you" or "were you" which result in "yes/no" answers.
- **Prepare** the permission paperwork, and audio equipment, and know how it works.
- **Make** phone calls to make clear the time and date of the interview.
- **Give** the interviewee a copy of possible questions beforehand.
- **Arrange** for an adult (mentor) to accompany you to the interviewee's home.

During the Interview:

- **Take an adult (mentor)** with you who to help with follow-up questions and keep you all at ease.
- **Eliminate background noise** - TV, other voices, furnace (if possible), telephone, or refrigerator. If you are videotaping, be sure the interviewee is not sitting in front of a light or a window.
- **Keep the lighting in front** of the subject and dark background.
- **Be sure the elder is comfortable** and tell how you will respect his or her right to not answer any questions.
- **Speak clearly and loudly** enough so the elder can hear.
- **Assign one person** in the **interview group** to record the numbers on the recorder and the topics of discussion in a log.
- **Assign one person** to be the **lead interviewer**.
- **Bring a small gift in thanks -** jar of jam, cookies, bread, etc., or an acceptable tribal gift (example: not all tribes allow women to receive sweet grass).
- **Ask permission to take photographs of special objects in the home**, special room, favorite treasure, etc.
- **Plan your return** with your draft of transcription for the interviewee's inspection.
- **Understand** that stories are told from individual perspectives, with individual language usage (not everyone speaks Standard English).
- **Tell the Interviewee** how you would like to use his/her gifts of story and ensure that they have approved of all of the recorded/taped/written information. Some may decide certain events or names should not be used when they see or hear the information played back to them.

After the Interview:

- **Send (or deliver) a Thank You** within the next day or two, making specific and positive comments about the interview and the person.
- **Transcribe the interview,** either word for word, or summarize with direct quotes included in the summary. If it's word for word, do not include all the "you know's", the "uh's" and "um's." Cut out some of the "and's" if the person uses them to connect all ideas. Create your own ends to sentences with periods or semi-colon. However, respect the oral tradition with which the information may have been retold.
- **Return your edited draft to the interviewee** for spelling of names and correct facts. (To avoid embarrassment for yourself, be sure you've done your best to have the spelling correct). Ensure that the interviewee has approved all of the recorded/taped/written information. Some may decide certain events or names should not be used when they see or hear the information played back to them. Have another person attend the meeting who knows the interviewee and/or the interviewee's primary language, in case clarifications for language nuances are necessary.
- **Kindly let the interviewee know you have a deadline for** the assignment. Sometimes they aren't aware of the school's expectations.
- **Make another visit** to the homes to pick up their corrected version.
- **Transform** your interview into a product: possible published transcriptions, vignettes with quotes, scrap books with photos of the house and stories to accompany them that came from the interview or life map for display in the home.
- **Give the interviewee a copy of all materials you collected and created.**

Appendix G: *Raising Ourselves: A Gwitch'in Coming of Age Story from the Yukon River*

Impact of "outside world" on the Gwich'in and on Velma Wallis' family

(28-29) Two belief systems existed in Fort Yukon (Christianity – Episcopal and Assembly—and traditional Gwich'in beliefs and shamanism)

(36-37) Impact of Christianity and disease on Gwich'in and reference to Harold Napoleon (Yupik) and his book *Yuuyarag: The Way of the Human Being.* http://akmhcweb.org/ncarticles/ncarticles.htm

(44-45) Loss of children and subsequent coddling of children who live, "fine tuning of prejudices," alcoholism, reactions

(46) Father's cynicism—"I sensed my father held emotions in like a layer of earth holds back molten lava."

(76) Fear of "Indians" as seen on TV and confusion of their own identities

(84-94) School, bullying, racism (90)

(106-112) Introduction of alcohol and accompanying abuse into family life and the lives of the children

(119-121) Allotment of Fort Yukon in 1970, with unallotted lands being run by a Fairbanks located Native Corporation of individuals owning "shares"

(124-130) Father's diabetes and alcoholism and death—he gave up on life and drank himself to death

(135) Mother's return to alcohol after her husband's death

(136) Liquor store opening – "The liquor itself contributed more graves than anyone wants to count."

(146) Velma assuming her mother's role in caring for her siblings

(173) Mother's strength to overcome alcoholism

(205) "We Gwich'in were straying from our tradition of caring and knowing one another. . . . Each time we freely gave ourselves over to our addictions, we were less Gwich'in."

(179) What it means to not drink or do drugs

(186-192) Job Corps in Oregon—a kind of relocation experience

(198) Impact of alcoholism on children

(211-212) What holds the Gwich'in back from being "healed and healthy"

- Belief that it is not good to be who we are—better to be cowboy than Indian
- "Reluctance to move into the future with a healthy balance of the old while we live in the new"
- "An unhealthy sense of nostalgia"—importance of living in the present

Velma Wallis' life experiences in *Raising Ourselves*

(50) Description of her mother: "a resilient soul who would always be the strength behind those who were loud, boisterous, and weak in nature"

(51) A grandmother's "stories and biscuits sheltered" them from "the harsh reality that awaited them at home"

(76) Mother's stories about their ancestors

(68) Description of Wallis' parents' nomadic movement between Fort Yukon and Neegoogwandah until 1959 when they settled in Fort Yukon. "Trapping was the only way a man could support his family then, and hunting helped him to feed his children. Many times my grandmother followed them up to Neegoogwandah, where she set up camp nearby and trapped for herself."

(100-105) Trapping in the 60s, mother's sewing, hauling water and wood, catching and drying salmon

(73) Impact of climate: flooding of Yukon River before a dam was built in the 1960s

(74) Impact of long days and long nights depending on time of year

(116-119) Impact of Gwich'in belief on Grandmother *Itchoo*'s attitude about her life and its end

(151) Velma at age 16: "I wanted to learn to live and trap off the land

(168) Self questioning: "I had embarked on a quest not realizing that there would be consequence. If I was not prepared to deal with the harshness of this lifestyle, maybe I needed to bail out . . . . "

(169) "Strange beauty of Neegoogwandah" that draws her to stay

(171, 177) Her mother's teaching of life-saving skills, how to trap muskrats, to hunt, to fish

(204-209) Impact of her brother Barry on Velma

(210) ". . . our stories, the memories of our people, are the things left to hold us together."

(211) "I almost believed that drinking and drugs were all we as native people had ever been about until that day when my mother first told me the story about the two old women. Then I saw clearly that we were once strong and grounded, with a long history of survival. I saw hope that we could still be the people we once were, not in the literal sense, but possessing the same pride that our ancestors had before the epidemics and cultural changes."

Appendix H: Poems reprinted with permission from Jennifer Greene and Minerva Allen

Hunting
By Jennifer Greene

A faded cabin sits in a green field
with green grass thick as a young boy's hair.
The gray gravel road, arrow straight, shoots
past the house daring weeds and slow chewing red
and white faced cows on the other side to step
over the line.

And beyond, beyond where the road can reach
where green trees hug the base of rock mountains,
making shade where soft moss grows, making shade
where an old doe grazes on dusty leaves, a young boy
with a face as smooth as water, and skin
brown as deer fur waits alone, away from human
sounds and is surrounded by the sound of pine needles
bumping each other in the wind.

He is eleven and is thinking about pink bubble
gum that he has no money to buy, when he hears
the black hoof of a deer touch dry yellowed
grass, he feels it, like a ripple on the water.
He thinks of his mother with thick black hair
who can slice meat thin as the width of a fingernail
who will notice him, and speak of him and treat him
like her son, when he drags home a gutless deer,
hollowed out like a canoe.

He lifts the gun. With the butt to his shoulder,
his bones prepared to kill, he waits for the deer.

Alive
By Minerva Allen

I feel quite alone
My memories are dreams of yesterday.
Floating with thoughts of what might
have been.
As in a dream I wonder. Is life
what we make it or destiny?
Is life taken for granted and
steered by fate?
I am the controller of my destiny.
I feel and live.

Good Grease
By Mary TallMountain

The hunters went out with guns
at dawn.
We had no meat in the village,
no food for tribe and dogs.
No caribou in the caches.

All day we waited.
At last!
When darkness hung at the river
we children saw them far away.
Yes! They were carrying caribou!
We jumped and shouted!

By the fires that night
we feasted
The Old Ones clucked,
sucking and smacking,
sopping the juices with sourdough bread.
The grease would warm us
when hungry winter howled.

Grease was beautiful—
oozing,
dripping and running down our chins,
brown hands shining with grease.
We talk of it
when we see each other
far from home.

Remember the marrow
sweet in the bones?
We grabbed for them like candy.
Good.
Goooooood.

Good grease.

The Women in Old Parkas
By Mary TallMountain

snapping gunshot cold
blue stubborn lips clapped shut
the women in the old parkas
loosen snares intent and slow

they handle muskrat Yukon way
appease his spirit *yeega'*
bare purple hands
stiffen must set lines again
* * *
night drops quick black
in winterhouse round shadows
cook fresh meat soup steam floats
skinny bellies grumble

they pick up skinwork squint
turn lamp-wick down kerosene
almost gone sew anyway

oh! This winter is the worst
everything running out not
much furs
they make soft woman hum . . .

but hey! How about those new parkas
we hung up for Stick Dance!
how the people sing!
how crazy shadows dip and stomp
on dance house walls! Their
remembering arms rise like birdwings
* * *
at morning they look into the sky
laugh at little lines of rain
finger their old parkas
think: spring is coming soon

Ggaal Comes Upriver
By Mary TallMountain

Deep in the Bering Sea
Ggaal flicks her heavy tail.
Majestic with her mates,
Enters the Yukon tides
Swimming steady north
To the place of Midnight Sun.

Strong in the brown river
She cleaves the miles.
Her fearless eyes
Know swoop and nip of gulls,
Menace of rolling logs,
Black waiting shapes of Bear.

With one compulsion
She will not feed again
On the ancient pilgrimage
To the tiny creek of spawning
Only her genes remember.

In the immense ponder of noon
She rests with the others,
Crimson shadows lying still
Behind the overhang
Of a bank far from the
Icy sea, their home.

Out they stream.
Hidden nets rise to catch.
Ggaal flashes wild,
Rosy silver, she arrows
Above hunched backs,
Falls into the circle.

The net tautens.
She hangs to it, thrashes,
Shoots to the surface,
Lunges, arches, flutters
Away from the churning mass,
Above dismay and gaping jaws.

Ggaal jackknifes free,
Sweeps on upriver.

There Is No Word for Goodbye
By Mary TallMountain

Sokoya, I said, looking through
the net of wrinkles into
wise black pools
of her eyes.

What do you say in Athabascan
when you leave each other?
What is the word
for goodbye?

A shad of feeling rippled
the wind-tanned skin.
Ah, nothing, she said,
watching the river flash.

She looked at me close.
We just say, *Ttaa*. That means,
See you.
We never leave each other.
When does your mouth
say goodbye to your heart?

She touched me light
as a bluebell.
You forget when you leave us;
you're so small then.
We don't use that word.

We always think you're coming back,
but if you don't,
we'll see you someplace else.
You understand.
There is no word for goodbye.

Debate the following statement: ***The chief's self-hatred is not justified.***

1. Divide the class into two groups.
2. Give the #1 group the Affirmative (must prove with evidence that the statement is true).
3. Give the #2 group the Negative (must prove with evidence that the chief's self-hatred *is* justified.
4. Give them 15 minutes to build their cases - the chapter alone should provide enough evidence for each side.
5. Each group will select a speaker who will present the case to the audience.

Never does more than one person ever speak at a time!

Format for debate:

Affirmative - **3 minutes maximum** - tell them they should begin with this statement: "As the affirmative speaker in today's debate, I stand firmly resolved that ***The chief's self-hatred is not justified.*** To prove our case we will provide the following evidence or reasons…

Questions of Affirmative speaker from Negative team - 2 minutes maximum
(You can decide if the group members can ask questions or if only the speaker can ask questions.)

Negative Speaker – 3-minute maximum -- tell them they should begin with this statement: "As the negative speaker in today's debate, I intend to show the weakness in the affirmative's claim and arguments, and I will argue that the ***chief's self-hatred is justified.***

Questions of Negative speaker from Affirmative team - 2 minutes maximum

Affirmative Rebuttal - **2 minutes** (The purpose is to recover lost ground that the affirmative gained and to conclude with the argument.)

Negative Rebuttal - 2 minutes (The purpose is to show one aspect of the affirmative case that isn't secure – that's all the negative needs to win.)

The debate should be managed to foster respectful speaking and listening. Students should see where they might be arguing illogically or stating broad generalizations to win their case. Include more rebuttals if there is time**. This particular question should lead to a debate of values: What's more important, the rights of the individual or the common good?**

Appendix J: Conventions Activity

(Paragraph excerpts from Velma Wallis' *Two Old Women* are used with the permission (2009) of Epicenter Press, Inc.)

From *Two Old Women* by Velma Wallis, pages 42-43, **with all punctuation removed**

On the fourth night the women almost stumbled onto the slough everything around them stood shrouded under silvery moonlight shadows stretched beneath the many trees and over the slough the women stood on the bank for a few moments resting as their eyes took in the beauty of that special night Sa' marveled at the power the land held over people like herself over the animals and even over the trees they all depended on the land and if its rules were not obeyed quick and unjudgmental death could fall upon the careless and unworthy Ch'idzigyaak looked at her friend as Sa' sighed deeply what's the matter she asked.

Sa's face creased in a sad smile nothing is wrong my friend we are on the right trail after all I was thinking about how it used to be that the land was easy for me to live on and now it seems not to want me perhaps it is just my aching joints that are making me complain.

Ch'idzigyaak laughed perhaps it is because our bodies are just too old or maybe we are out of shape maybe the time will come when we will spring across this land again Sa' joined in the joke.

With only end punctuation:

On the fourth night the women almost stumbled onto the slough. Everything around them stood shrouded under silvery moonlight. Shadows stretched beneath the many trees and over the slough the women stood on the bank for a few moments resting as their eyes took in the beauty of that special night. Sa' marveled at the power the land held over people like herself over the animals and even over the trees. They all depended on the land and if its rules were not obeyed quick and unjudgmental death could fall upon the careless and unworthy. Ch'idzigyaak looked at her friend as Sa' sighed deeply. What's the matter? she asked.

Sa's face creased in a sad smile. Nothing is wrong my friend. We are on the right trail after all. I was thinking about how it used to be that the land was easy for me to live on and now it seems not to want me. Perhaps it is just my aching joints that are making me complain.

Ch'idzigyaak laughed. Perhaps it is because our bodies are just too old or maybe we are out of shape. Maybe the time will come when we will spring across this land again. Sa' joined in the joke.

With punctuation as it appears in published text:

On the fourth night, the women almost stumbled onto the slough. Everything around them stood shrouded under silvery moonlight. Shadows stretched beneath the many trees and over the slough the women stood on the bank for a few moments, resting as their eyes took in the beauty of that special night. Sa' marveled at the power the land held over people like herself, over the animals, and even over the trees. They all depended on the land, and if its rules were not obeyed, quick and unjudgmental death could fall upon the careless and unworthy. Ch'idzigyaak looked at her friend as Sa' sighed deeply. "What's the matter?" she asked.

Sa's face creased in a sad smile. "Nothing is wrong, my friend. We are on the right trail after all. I was thinking about how it used to be that the land was easy for me to live on and now it seems not to want me. Perhaps it is just my aching joints that are making me complain.

Ch'idzigyaak laughed. "Perhaps it is because our bodies are just too old, or maybe we are out of shape. Maybe the time will come when we will spring across this land again." Sa' joined in the joke."

Appendix K: Picture Books by and about Inuit People

Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Margaret (Inuit). *When I Was Eight.* New York, NY: Annick Press, 2013.

Summary: In first person, Jordan-Fenton tells her own story about her first year at boarding school in Aklavik, Alaska. At home near the Arctic Ocean, she begs her father to let her go to school because Olemaun wants to learn to read. After she [wears away] at her father all winter, he finally lets her go. But when she arrives, they cut her hair, change her name to Margaret, and she scrubs floors, day after day. Still she persists, despite conflicts with a teacher/nun and with other students, and she learns to read.

Margaret (Olemaun) is a great model for reluctant readers. At the end she writes: "I felt a great happiness inside that I dared not show . . . . I was Olemaun, conqueror of evil, reader of books . . . I was brave, clever, and as unyielding as the strong stone that sharpens an ulu. I finally knew this, like I knew many things, because now I could read."

Kusugak, Michael Arvaarluk (Inuit). *Baseball Bats for Christmas*. New York: Annick Press Ltd, 1990.

Summary: Arvaarluk is a little boy with asthma, and he loves Christmas, the time when "you give your most favorite thing to your best friend." Every Christmas, Rocky Parsons would bring supplies in his Norseman aeroplane to Repulse Bay, at the top of Hudson's Bay in the Arctic Circle. In 1955 he brings something new, something the people have never seen except in Father Didier's books—six "standing ups" or Christmas trees. The children and their father know just what to do with them—make baseball bats, and Arvaarluk plays all spring and summer until all the bats break and it's time for Rocky to bring more trees. The story demonstrates the power of ingenuity to create happiness and the way a boy can prevail over a chronic condition such as asthma.

Kusugak, Michael Arvaarluk (Inuit). *Northern Lights: The Soccer Trails*. New York: Annick Press Ltd, 1993.

Summary: Beautifully illustrated, this is the sad but wonderful story of a child's loss and the comfort she receives when her grandmother tells her a story about what happens to people when they die. As a baby Kataujaq was as "pretty as a rainbow," her mother tells her, and that's why they gave her that name. In the springtime, Kataujaq goes fishing with her family. In summer, she collects rocks and picks flowers for her mother who saves them until long after they had dried up. In late summer, when the grass would turn brown and the nights would grow longer, Kataujaq and her mother would pick berries until her hands and face turned purple from the juice. But one day her mother becomes ill with the "big sickness," is taken by airplane to the south, and never returns. Kataujaq misses her mother. Feeling very lonely, she cries in bed at night.

In the winter, the people of their village like to play the traditional game of soccer on the sea ice with a ball made of caribou fur. Because it is night all day long, they play in the light of the stars and the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis). The people on Baffin Island call them Aqsarniit, or "Soccer Trails." One day Kataujaq's grandmother tells her a story about what happens to people when they die and how they go up into the sky and play soccer, the game they all loved when they lived on earth. Kataujaq is comforted when she thinks of her mother being close to her every time she sees the Northern Lights. "It is a most wonderful thing."

Rivera, Raquel. *Arctic Adventures: Tales From the Lives of Inuit Artists*. Berkeley, CA: Groundwood Books, 2007.

Summary: "Based on stories told by the artists, this collection includes a feature on each artist with a portrait, a brief biography and a reproduction of a print, painting or sculpture. A glossary, map, and list of further reading are also included." (Jacket information)

Two Old Women

An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival

by Velma Wallis

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