

Lesson Plans

Many Snows Have Fallen. . .

Charles M. Russell
c. 1909 - 1910

Pen, ink, watercolor on paper, 8 x 10"

CONCEPT

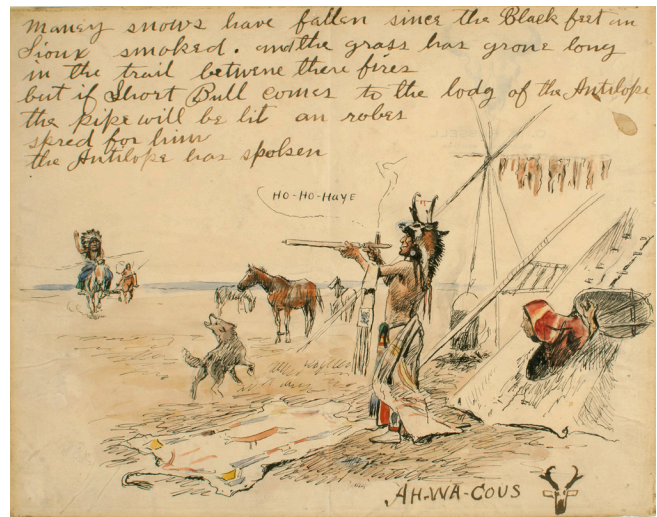
Students will view, analyze and interpret the work of art. Students will learn that an artist can tell a story using words and illustrations.

TEKS

The SRM Educator Guide lessons support inquiry-based discussion and align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for art, history and English language arts. To select correlations for your grade level visit the [Texas Education Agency TEKS website](#).

VOCABULARY

- **Foreground** - the part of a scene or picture that appears to be nearest to the viewer.
- **Idiom** - an expression that is not understood from the meanings of its separate words but must be learned as a whole. The phrase "falling out," meaning "have a disagreement," is an idiom.



DESCRIBE

Look at the picture first, before reading the words.

Describe the setting. What objects are at the Indian camp? What colors are used in the illustration? Describe the figures you see in the image. How many figures are there? What are they doing? What are they wearing? Compare the headdresses of the people. What is the man in the foreground holding? What is the mood of the image?

Now read the words. Does this change what you think about the image? What clues does the language provide about the illustration? Which figure do you think is "Short Bull"? Why? Describe the style and type of writing. How does the artist imply humor and knowledge of Indians in the letter and the image?

INQUIRE

"Maney snows have fallen..." and "...the grass has grone long..." are *idioms*. Based on Russell's use of these idioms, how long might it have been since the two groups have



Additional Lessons
Sid Richardson Museum

Lesson designed for use with *First Americans: An Educator's Guide*, written by Bridget Green SRM research volunteer 2011



met? Months? Years? Why is the pipe offered? What is "...the lodg of the Antelope..."? Where do you find other references to the antelope? How does Russell use words to give additional meaning to his letter?

SUPPOSE

Suppose you are the recipient of this letter. What would be your reaction to Russell's words? Would you accept his invitation? Would the amount of time that has past since your last meeting make a difference in your reaction? What would you expect to do if you met?

INFORM

Russell is well-known for his illustrated letters, often filled with humor, that he wrote to many of his friends. In this particular letter, Russell depicts himself and his wife, Nancy, as Blackfeet Indians. In 1887-1888, Russell spent time in Canada living among the Blood Indians, a subgroup of the Blackfeet. Russell signs the letter using his Blood name, "Ah-Wa-Cous," the Antelope.

The Sioux and Blackfeet were traditional enemies on the American frontier. (See Russell's painting *When Blackfeet and Sioux Meet*). Smoking the peace pipe, a sacred tradition for Plains Indians like the Blackfeet and Sioux, was used to confirm treaties and agreements.

Jim Gabriel is believed to be the recipient of this letter and Russell may have portrayed him as a Sioux in this letter. Gabriel spent time during the Sioux wars as a courier for General Nelson Miles. In the 1890s, Gabriel participated in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.



When Blackfeet and Sioux Meet, 1908, C. Russell

EXTEND See pg. 58, 61

Imagine you are living in Montana during the 1890s. Write an illustrated letter to a friend or family member inviting them to visit you. Include an idiom or metaphor in your writing.

Now look at Russell's painting *When Blackfeet and Sioux Meet*. Compare and contrast this to the letter with a Venn diagram. How does Russell portray a different relationship between the two tribes? Write at least two paragraphs explaining your answer.

Write a response to the letter. You may choose to illustrate it. Perhaps, describe the ceremony of smoking the peace pipe.

For reference, see pg. 5 at the following link: <http://www.blackfeetnation.com/about-the-blackfeet/our-history>

