



Classroom Connections

Research Project: A source of belonging

“We walk about on the Earth, she supports our feet, and we have been instructed that we will call her our Mother, the Earth. It is good when we come together that we remember her, and we think about what we owe her. We extend greetings and thanksgiving to our Mother, the Earth, so be it our minds” – *John Mohawk*

Part 1: Sacred places

As a class, explore some of the places that have been considered of particular cultural or spiritual importance for the Indigenous Peoples living in your area?

Divide into groups to research each site identified:

1. Identify the traditional names(s) for each site identified. What is the meaning of this name?

2. What are some of the stories associated with this place? Why are they significant?

3. If possible, visit the place you have researched or, if not, try to find pictures or videos of it. What does it feel like to be in this place? Why do think people have found it to be significant or sacred?
Optionally, you may draw or paint something you saw in the place or post photos you took there.

4. Based on your research, create your own land acknowledgement. Take the time to reflect on why it is important for your group to acknowledge the land and what your relationship is with the territory you are on. If you have identified a local ecological issue in your area (see below), include what it is and address the relevance of Indigenous rights in your area.

As a class: Share your land acknowledgments with the others in your class or school if possible.



Part 2: Ecological issues in your area

In groups of 2 to 4, identify a key ecological issue in your area. This could involve water, mining, logging, construction, or other activities that endanger local ecosystems. Below you will find questions to help guide your research:

1. Based on Robin Wall Kimmerer's and Jeannette Armstrong's reflections, how might these issues be seen from a perspective that perceives land as a sacred community of which we are a part (whichh we belong to) rather than a resource to be used (as a mere source of belongings)?

2. Are local Indigenous communities involved in any way in the ecological issue you have considered? Are there opportunities to get involved in this issue (writing letters, meeting with politicians, working with local Indigenous communities)? If so, choose at least one action.

3. How can a greening or sustainability initiative at your school connect with the learning of Armstrong's and Kimmerer's articles? What practical lessons can you apply?

As a class: Along with an Indigenous organization or knowledge keeper, create a garden inspired by native plants and practices that reflect the culture of the Indigenous Peoples whose land you share. Find out about the medical and cultural significance of each plant in your garden. If possible, take what you learn back to your home to begin a garden there or work with local community gardening projects.

Or/and

Plan an excursion to a local Indigenous community or conservation area. If visiting a local Indigenous community, make sure to ask permission before planning your trip and discuss with the local community the intentions of your visit and ask for guidance about how to respect local protocols.