

TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

SIoux WINTER

In 1876, the year that *Sioux Winter* is set, a war raged between the Sioux and the American Army, “the bluecoats” as they are called. In this dangerous time Black Eagle, Jamie and Kate travel into Sioux territory to rescue Black Eagle’s mother. Impossible? perhaps, but the culture of the plains Indians proscribed that young men were to prove their manhood by acts of daring, and Black Eagle was an Assiniboine, one of the largest of the tribes of native people living on the plains. This is a story of adventure, and survival, compassion and understanding by people on both sides of the cultural divide. No doubt the quest was foolish, but one that deserves our admiration.

These are some ideas for stimulating classroom discussion and student projects based on the novel.

THE NOVEL

- When Black Eagle proposes to go into Sioux territory to rescue his mother Jamie and Kate think it is an impossible mission. Why did they agree to go with him?
- Why do the Assiniboine at Cypress Hills refuse to go into Sioux territory, but do not stop Black Eagle and the others from going?
- Black Eagle explains that if they stay to the high country they can approach the Sioux camp where he thinks his mother is held captive without being caught. Explain why this strategy works.
- When the group returns to the Cypress Hills the Assiniboine treat Black Eagle as a leader. What has changed his stature among the members of the tribe?

CANADIAN HISTORY

- Who were the Assiniboine people? Who were their allies and their enemies?
- In the 1870s the buffalo, that once roamed the prairies in huge herds, disappeared. What happened to them?
- The “redcoats” are the North West Mounted Police. Why were the Mounties sent into the west by the Canadian government, and why was their approach to native people more successful than the policy of the United States government?
- In *Sioux Winter* there is discussion about the Sioux coming north over the medicine line for protection. What does this mean?

GEOGRAPHY

- Draw a map of the three Canadian Prairie Provinces and the American States adjacent to the Canadian boarder. Show the major rivers, mountains and lakes on the map.
- Why was the Cypress Hills a favourite wintering spot for many of the native people of the plains?
- What are river fords and why were they so important?
- Why were the prairies a perfect environment for the buffalo?

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Draw a map of the prairies showing the traditional territories of different groups of native people.

- The Sioux described themselves as the buffalo people. Why was the buffalo so important to them?
- Explain why the 1870s was a time of crisis for all of the native people on the plains.
- After the Indian wars the native people on the plains were settled on reservations. There continues to be controversy about reservations. In your own words explain why some native people continue to complain about the reservation system.