

## Painting the News

### *Exploring the Five W's with the Charles Washakie Hide Painting*

#### Overview

Students will use the Charles Washakie Hide Painting to focus on the Five W's and how they can be visually determined in the Painting. Students will use the Five W's to write a newspaper-like article about the Sun Dance scene depicted and/or create their own hide painting based on an event or experience from their own lives.

#### Grade

3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### Duration

One 45 – 50 minute lesson

#### Subject

Social Studies  
Language Arts

#### Standards of Learning Met

Social Studies

- SS5.2.2: Identify and describe ways in which expressions of culture influence people (e.g., language, spirituality, stories, folktales, music, art, and dance)
- SS5.2.3: Identify and describe characteristics and contributions of local and state cultural groups in Wyoming
- SS5.2.4: Identify and describe the tensions between cultural groups, social classes and/or individuals in Wyoming and the United States
- SS5.4.5: Identify differences between primary and secondary sources. Find primary and secondary sources about an historical event. Summarize central ideas in primary and secondary resources
- SS8.2.2: Examine and evaluate how human expression (e.g., language, literature, arts, architecture, traditions, beliefs, and spirituality) contributes to the development and transmission of culture
- SS8.4.5: Identify relevant primary and secondary sources for research. Compare and contrast treatment of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources

Language Arts

- RI.4.3: Interprets information presented visually, orally\*, or quantitatively and uses informational text features to support comprehension.
- W.4.5: Uses facts, concrete details, quotations, illustrations, headings, definitions, precise language, and domain - specific vocabulary to introduce and develop a topic.



- W.4.6: Provides an organizational structure to convey ideas and information clearly, including transitional words and phrases and a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented
- SL.4.1: Paraphrases information read aloud or presented in diverse media and formats.
- SL.4.2: Identifies reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.
- SL.4.5: Differentiates between contexts which call for formal or informal discourse.
- W.8.6: Uses precise language, domain - specific vocabulary, and information including facts, concrete details, quotations, and definitions to introduce and develop a topic.
- W.8.7: Provides an organizational structure to convey ideas and information clearly, including varied transitional words and phrases and a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.
- W.8.8: Establishes and maintains a formal style

### Objectives

Students will be able to...

- List at least seven (7) detail elements observed on the hide painting
- Identify the who, what, where, when, why (and sometimes how) of the Sun Dance event depicted
- Combine the observed details and the Five W's to write a newspaper-like article  
AND/OR
- Create a brief story describing a personal event or experience and design a hide painting to visually accompany it.

### Materials

Included

- Reproduction of Charles Washakie's Hide Painting
- Sample Lesson Plan
- *About the Object* Information Sheet
- *Five W's Warm-up* Worksheet
- Master copy of hide color sheets
- Brown paper hide cutouts (if desired)

Needed

- Paint (& paintbrushes), markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Brief story (no more than 5 minutes) to be read aloud

### Key Terms

**Hide Painting** – a mineral-based painting on an animal hide which tells the stories of individuals or bands, and can be found on teepees, buffalo or elk robes, or on garments. *See a more detailed description on the Object Fact Sheet.*

**Five W's** – consist of the five questions to be answered through textual pieces (Who, What, When, Where, Why)



Sample Lesson Plan

1. Read the class a brief story. This can be a newspaper/magazine article or other short story. Have the students fill out the *Five W's Warm-up* while listening to the story.
2. Discuss the Five W's as the essential questions all writers need to answer. Why are these important? Have the students recite the Five W's quickly (*Who, What, When, Where, Why*).
3. Display the Charles Washakie Hide Painting. Ask the students to visually examination the hide painting using the Five W's as a guide. Have students describe what they see in detail using a chart or graph (if you are working on these skills in class). Allow each student to share what they think is happening in the painting. What are the figures doing (i.e. dancing, hunting, running, etc.). When using their imagination, there is no wrong answer.
4. Using the *About the Object* information sheet as a guide, share about the Sun Dance and how it is depicted in the hide painting. With this information, have the students again define the Five W's.
5. (*Depending on time, you may have the students do either or both of the following activities*). Have the students write a brief newspaper article about the Sun Dance as it is depicted in the hide painting making sure to answer all five questions: who is involved; what is happening; when is it happening; where is it happening; and why is it happening.  
AND/OR
6. Have students think of an event or experience from their lives. Have them create a story of the event or experience answering the Five W's. Using the hide painting as guide, allow students the time to make a visual representation of the event or experience using brown, paper hide cutouts or the hide painting color sheets. Allow time for sharing at the end of class.



**About the Object**  
**Charles Washakie Hide Painting**  
*Carbon County Museum*

Hide Painting, Charles Washakie, Shoshoni, ca. 1916

General Information

A hide painting is a mineral-based painting on an animal hide which tells the stories of individuals or bands, and it can be found on teepees, buffalo or elk robes, or on garments.

The American Indians of the Northern Plains wore hides for both practical and ceremonial purposes. They wore hides in winter, with the fur on the inside for warmth. When people were sick, they often wore a hide painted with symbols to hasten healing. Women sometimes wore painted hides to promote childbearing. Political and spiritual leaders wore special hides that might depict a warrior's heroism or record important events in the history of the tribe.

Women often wore hides that they painted with geometric patterns and shapes. Men usually wore hides that told a story in pictures.

Some tribes used hide paintings to record their history. Tribal leaders chose the single most important event of each year, and added one picture representing that event to the hide painting. Members of the tribe often identified the year they were born by referring to the event depicted on these "winter count" hides" (text adapted from the Smithsonian Institution's *Tracking the Buffalo: Stories from a Buffalo Hide Painting*).

Who made it?

This hide painting was done by Charles Washakie (waa-shu-kee) around 1916 and is a copy of a hide painting done by his father, Chief Washakie, an important Shoshoni figure from the Wind River Reservation. Charles was known to often help his father with his hide paintings later in Chief Washakie's life, and this hide painting was made using traditional methods. However, Chief Washakie's original hide painting only has one chief depicted in a headdress, where for an unknown reason, Charles' copy depicts two.



*What inspired it?*

This hide depicts a scene before the Sun Dance. We know this because only the center pole is visible (no brace arches or any of the other twelve poles). A buffalo head is hanging from the pole, but none of the other sacred elements are seen. The hide also depicts a buffalo hunt before the Sun Dance as well as dancers for the ceremony.

The Sun Dance is a religious event originating among the Plains tribes where numerous bands come together in mid-summer, usually in July. Legend places its beginnings with a warrior wandering alone looking for food for his starving tribe. While out in the wilderness, he met a deity, fasted, and was taught a ritual that, when performed, brought the buffalo. As time passed, the Sun Dance grew in importance for calling rain and food, uniting bands together, and renewing chieftain ranks.

The Sun Dance involves a medicine pole (representing the Thunderbird or the Christian God) anchored upright in the ground surrounded by twelve smaller poles (representing the Thunderbird's tail feathers or the twelve disciples) standing in a circle. Rafters meet at the top of the pole, but no roof is erected. Brush or canvas is gathered around the sides for shade. Objects are hung from the center pole to represent specific things: red willow (peace and tranquility), a buffalo head (appreciation for blessings received), a beaver pelt (industry), a long braid of hair (sacrifice), and an eagle's tail feathers. Men fast for three days while women tempt them with food. Each day, the dancers face East as drums and whistles play. Dancers keep their eyes on the sun during the day of dancing. On the fourth morning, all participants give thanks before washing off the ceremonial paint and eating.

*Things to look for...*



**Deerhide** – the medium for the hide painting, it was smoked prior to the painting to make it waterproof and to add color.



**Horses** – eighteen red, green, blue, and brown horses can be found on the hide; some with riders and some without. Artists often painted horses more decoratively using colors not normally ascribed to the animal.



**Buffalo** – seventeen adult buffalo (or American Bison) can be seen covering the hide in various stages of the hunt: both being pursued and embattling the hunters.



**Dancers** – three dancers can be seen toward the center of the painting. These dancers are drawn with arched backs, a stylized component of Shoshoni paintings.



**Painting the News:** *Exploring the Five W's with the Charles Washakie Hide Painting*



**Drummers** – five drummers can be seen toward the center of the hide surrounding the outline of a drum. These drummers would be located outside the Sun Dance shelter for the majority of the ceremony.



**Chiefs** – notice the two figures wearing feathered headdresses and porcupine quill breastplates. The original hide painting done by Chief Washakie only depicted one chief. For an unknown reason, Charles Washakie's version shows two.



**Sun Dance Pole** – the Sun Dance pole can be seen at the center of the painting. It has a bison head hanging from the top. Notice the bison head still has its hide. Bison skulls were a sign of famine for the Shoshoni. For the Sun Dance and its representative blessings, the bison head is depicted with its hide, horns, and eyes.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Five W's Warm-Up Sheet

1. Who was the story about? Were there any other people? Who were they?
2. What is the story about?
3. When did the story happen?
4. Where did the story happen?
5. Why did it happen?



Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Five W's Warm-Up

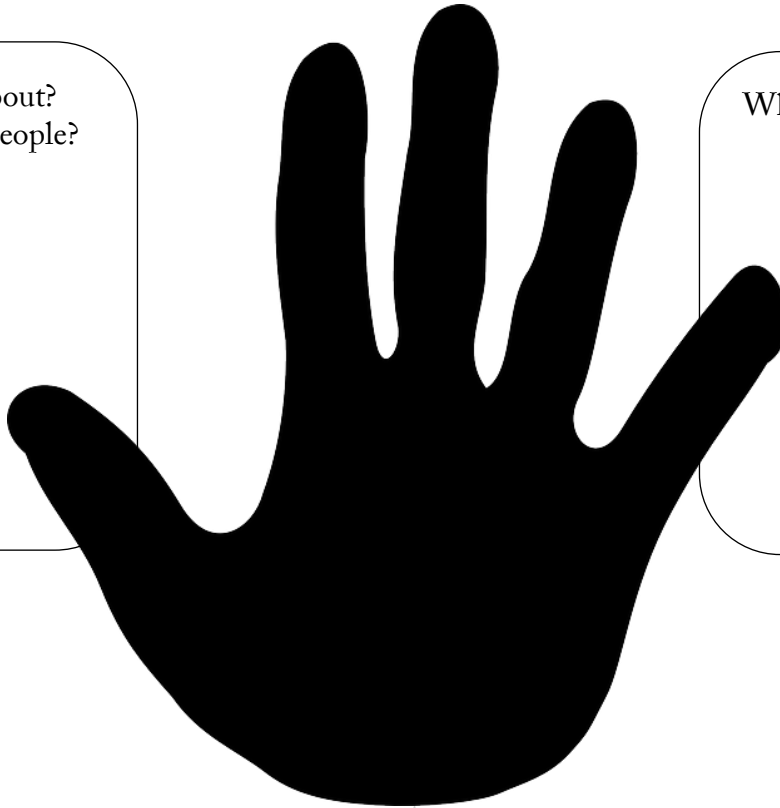
What is the story about?

When did the story happen?

Where did the story happen?

Who was the story about?  
Were there any other people?  
Who were they?

Why did it happen?

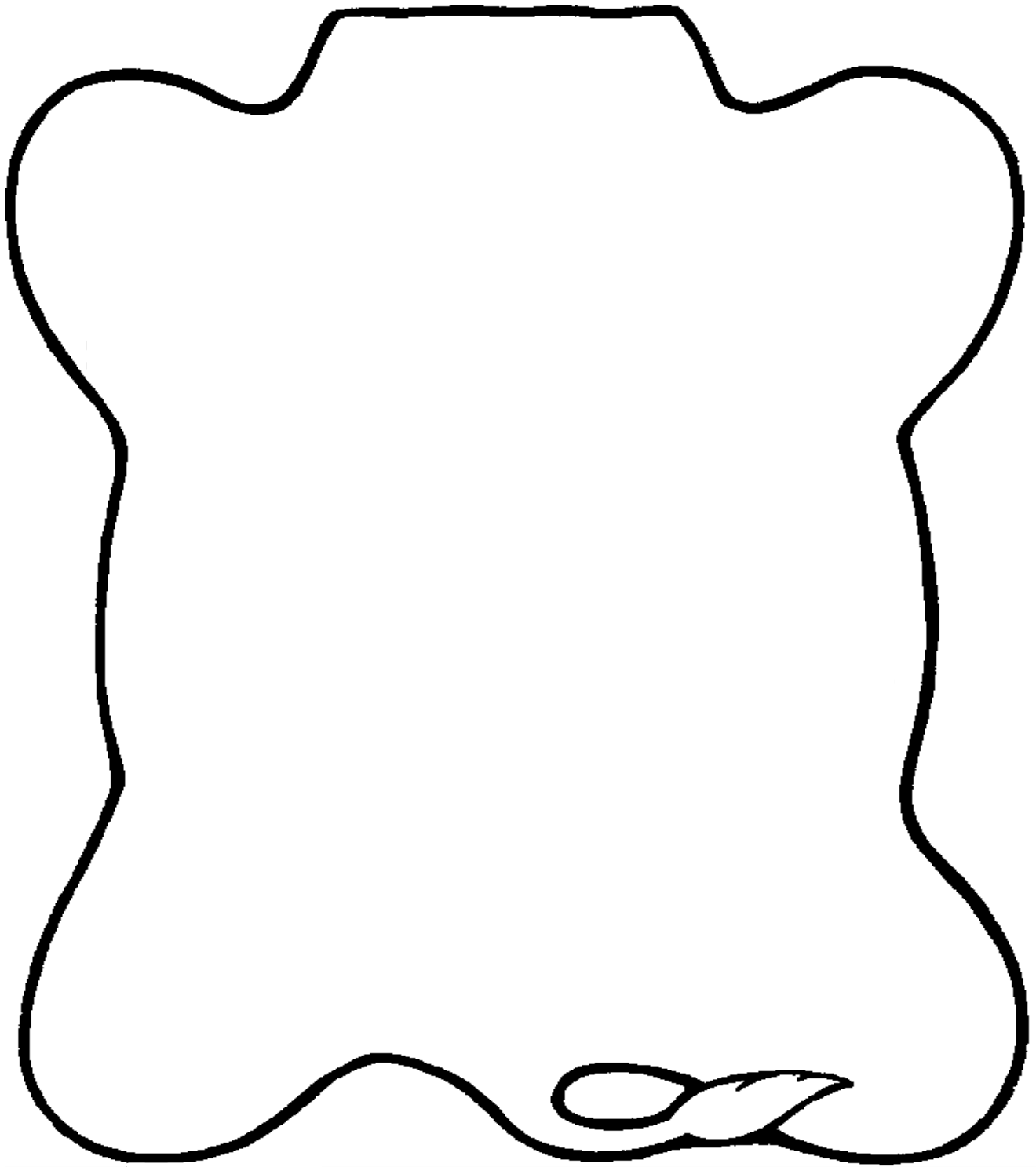


CARBON COUNTY  
MUSEUM



Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

## My Hide Painting



Draw pictures of things that tell about you - pictures of important events in your history or your family's history