



Grade Level: 8  
Subject: ELA

# We Are Not A Costume

## ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- History
- Identity
- Language

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to have discourse with one another about what regalia is and its meaning to Native American cultures and the Grand Ronde tribe.
- Students will be able to write an argumentative paper identifying why using regalia as a costume is harmful to Native American identity.

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

- Connecting to the lives of students
- Higher level thinking: synthesizing
- Preserving and honoring cultural history
- Student talk
- Music

## ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on their participation in classroom discussions and the completion of their Exit Ticket.

## Overview

Students will participate in an activity where they will learn about traditional Grand Ronde regalia, while also discussing how the use of regalia as a costume is harmful to Native American identity. The appropriation of these traditional clothing items can be extremely harmful psychologically to Native Americans.

## MATERIALS

- [We Are Not a Costume by Jessica Deer](#)
- Grand Ronde Regalia [video](#)

## LOGISTICS

- Where does this activity take place?  
**Classroom**
- How are the students organized?

**Whole Class**    Teams: 3-5

**Pairs**                      **Individually**

## TIME REQUIRED

**Two 45 minute periods**

## STANDARDS

### Oregon Common Core State Standards: ELA-Literacy

**8.RL.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**8.RI.3** Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.

**8.W.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

**8.W.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

**8.SL.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### Oregon Social Sciences Academic Content Standards

**Historical Knowledge 8.25** Evaluate the impact of the intersectionality of what constitutes identity including, including but not limited to, gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, physical and mental disability, and class on the living histories and experiences of peoples, groups, and events.

### English Language Proficiency Standards

**6-8.2** An ELL can participate in grade appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions

## Background for Teachers

Teachers should review the CTGR Regalia video and We Are Not a Costume by Jessica Deer prior to the lesson.

*“Our Native American regalia is a tradition for our Native people, and the wearing of it is a distinctly indigenous activity. It is imbued with spiritual meaning and an expression of culture and identity. For Native dancers, not only is the act of dancing that expression, but the wearing of dance regalia is also a visible manifestation of one’s heritage. Often the beadwork contains personal motifs that reflect the dancer’s tribe, and beadwork is frequently created by a family member and given as a gift to the dancer.*

*Feathers receive utmost respect. Regalia is one of the most powerful symbols of Native identity and is considered sacred. This is one reason why it is inappropriate to refer to regalia as a “costume.”* -Trevor, 2020

### Websites:

- <https://matadornetwork.com/life/may-think-harmless-dressing-like-native-american-halloween-here-s-youre-wrong/>
- <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/29/773615928/cultural-appropriation-a-perennial-issue-on-hallowee>  
[n](#)
- <https://cwuobserver.com/16156/opinion/my-culture-is-not-your-halloween-costume/>

## VOCABULARY

- **Regalia**- traditional clothing that is still worn by Native Americans today during ceremonies and celebrations. There are different types of regalia that are meant for different ceremonies or dances. For example, regalia worn for jingle dance is adorned with bells. There are also certain pieces of regalia that are only meant for men to wear or only meant for women to wear.
- **Indigenous**- originating in a particular place; native.
- **Mocked**- to tease or laugh at.
- **Reconciliation**- the restoration of friendly relationships.
- **Dehumanizing**- depriving a person or group of positive human qualities.
- **Objectify**- to degrade a person or group of people.
- **Marginalization**- the treatment of a person or group as insignificant.
- **Colonization**- the process of establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.
- **Cultural appropriation**- the adoption or use of cultural norms from a minority culture by members of the dominant culture

## Opening

Begin the lesson by sharing the Grand Ronde Regalia video.:

<https://youtu.be/9ldNVhivzls?list=PLA33xEMg9mbqQFEHKsyocT3YRdmzzlneX>

Ask students to share their initial thoughts. This can be done as a whole group or in partners.

## Activity

**1. Pass out the short story “We Are Not a Costume” by Jessica Deer to each student and have them read it individually. Have students do a close reading on the text. Some steps to follow for close reading are:**

- Write on the text: what strikes you as surprising or significant, or that raises questions.*
- Note any comments you might have about the words or statements being used.*
- Look at not just what is written, but how it's written.*
- Note any unknown words, references or points of view.*

**2. After students have done a close reading of the text, have students share their comments, thoughts, questions with a partner. Then begin a classroom discussion about the text. Start by having students share their thoughts or comments about the text. If students need some prompting the teacher can ask these questions:**

- What strikes you as interesting or surprising?*
- Did you find anything that confused you?*
- Did you agree or disagree with the text? Why?*
- Was there anything in the text that you found relatable or that you related to?*
- Did you have questions about certain words or phrases that were used in the text?*
- From the text, what have you gathered about the writer? What do you know about her?*
- How is the topic of stereotypes relevant in other areas? (I'm thinking sports teams, books, toys)*
- Would educating others about stereotypes stop this type of behavior?*
- What could you do to help educate others about the use of other cultures for inappropriate purposes?*

**3. To make the lesson more student centered, the teacher could pose these questions and have students answer them to each other in small groups or pairs, rather than a large group.**

**4. Once students have had a chance to discuss the text, show the students the Grand Ronde Regalia video one more time.**

<https://youtu.be/9ldNVhivzls?list=PLA33xEMg9mbqQFEHKsyocT3YRdmzzlneX>

**5. Ask the students if the video gave them more insight as to what regalia is and it's meaning. Ask students if it changed their minds regarding if they agreed or disagreed with the story “We Are Not a Costume”.**

## Closure

Have students write an exit ticket on their reflection of the short story and video.

## Differentiation

- Teachers may copy discussion questions to a presentation/document to display on a projector
- Depending on the students' learning style, a teacher could incorporate different types of media. For example a student may do better creating a powerpoint presentation and presenting to the class instead of writing a paper, or have a student create a comic strip to illustrate the main idea of "We Are Not a Costume".

## Extension

- Have students write an informative/explanatory paper regarding regalia being worn as a costume and how calling it a costume and wearing traditional native clothing during halloween can be harmful to native identity.
- Write an argumentative paper on whether or not calling regalia a costume and wearing it as a costume during halloween contributes to stereotyping Native Americans.
- An additional video to watch can be found here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Xwlix0a2b4>

## Notes/Other

Jan Michael Looking Wolf's or Grand Ronde Canoe Family audio tracks can be played as background music while students are working. These audio tracks can be found on Spotify or Apple Music.

Jan Michael Looking Wolf: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

Grand Ronde Canoe Family: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

## Appendix

"We Are Not a Costume" by Jessica Deer found in #Not Your Princess: Voices of Native American Women (entire book available for checkout via CTGR Curriculum Specialist if desired):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w0yNi49cnoyeHceBrK4RFfmu9ZZ2RoUO/view?usp=sharing>

Grand Ronde Regalia video

<https://youtu.be/9ldNVhivzls?list=PLA33xEMq9mbqQFEHKsyocT3YRdmzzlneX>