

## ***We Are Water Protectors***

Written by Carole Lindstrom; Illustrated by Michaela Goade

Lindstrom wrote this book after she became aware of the many tribal nations that are fighting to keep oil pipelines from crossing their tribal lands and waterways—specifically the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and its battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline. After reading this book, readers will feel empowered to join the movement to protect planet Earth.

### **Strategy Instruction Possibilities**

#### **Comprehension**

- **Set purpose for reading**
  - This book highlights the continuing Indigenous-led movement to safeguard Earth’s natural resources.
  - Native American Day varies by state. For example, in California, it will be observed on September 23, 2022.
  - Indigenous People’s Day is observed on the second Monday of October.
  - November is Native American Heritage Month, also referred to as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.
  - Native American Heritage Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, celebrates the vibrant cultures, traditions, and heritage of Native Americans while recognizing the many contributions they have made. In 2021, Native American Heritage Day is November 26.
  - March 22, World Water Day, celebrates water and raises awareness of the need to tackle the problem of people living without access to safe water. A core focus of the observance is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.
  - April 22, Earth Day, marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970.
  
- **Use main ideas and supporting details to determine importance**
  - Ensure students are familiar with the academic vocabulary related to this strategy: *topic, main idea, theme, and supporting details*.
  - Ask students to demonstrate their understanding of this text’s main idea with supporting details by using their own creative expression. Some ideas might include
    - a campaign to be an ally alongside Indigenous youth committed to protecting the environment; and
    - creating a song or skit to share the story of the Water Protectors.
  
- **Analyze how visual elements integrate and contribute to the meaning of text**
  - The illustrations in this book are rich and vibrant, making it the perfect book to use with the Ready Reference Guide from the Interactive Menu.

- Begin with reading the text without sharing the illustrations, and reflect on its meaning. Then give students an opportunity to predict what they think the illustrations will look like for this text. Next, share the illustrations and text under a document camera, analyzing how the illustrator’s drawings work with the author’s text to tell the full story.

### Expand Vocabulary

- **Tune in to interesting words:** *medicine, nourish, sacred, veins, destroy, spoil, poison, wreck, foretold, venom, unfit, courage, rally, spirit, ancestors, stewards*
- **Use pictures, illustrations, and diagrams**
  - When you come across an unfamiliar word, use the illustrations to gain context or background knowledge about what you are reading.
    - Example: During your minilesson, you could highlight that the text says, “We come from water. It **nourished** us inside our mother’s body.” The illustration on the following page shows an expectant mother with a visible umbilical cord connecting her to the baby. She is also surrounded by growing flowers. Both are consuming water to grow, thus being nourished by water. *Nourish* likely means to provide someone (the baby) or something (the plant) with things that are needed to live.

### Writing

- Many organizations are participating in land acknowledgments in their day-to-day practice. A land acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous peoples as the land’s traditional stewards, and the enduring relationship between Indigenous peoples and their traditional lands. The acknowledgment alone brings exposure and opportunities for communities to learn more about the tribes that continue to live on and learn from the land on which we all reside. As we move beyond acknowledgment, and more into allyship and reciprocity, we can research local contributions in our communities. Support students in brainstorming ways to show gratitude for the continued efforts to protect and preserve the traditional lands of Indigenous tribes.

Additional resource: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/plains-treaties/dapl>