

BIG SKY FILM INSTITUTE

NATIVE FILMMAKER INITIATIVE FILM CLUB



FAST HORSE



Directed by Alexandra Lazarowich

FILM SYNOPSIS

FAST HORSE follows the return of the Blackfoot bareback horseracing tradition in a new form: the Indian Relay. Siksika horseman Allison RedCrow struggles to build a team with second-hand races and a new jockey, Cody BigTobacco to take on the best riders in the Blackfoot Confederacy at the Calgary Stampede.

BSFI CURRICULUM

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FAST HORSE

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USING THIS GUIDE

This educator guide is intended to provide context and background to the film *FAST HORSE*, offering a range of Pre-Viewing, Viewing, and Post-Viewing activities that underscore educational benchmarks of Montana Core and National Core Content Standards. The themes of the film are outlined in the context of Montana Office of Public Instruction's Indian Education for All Essential Understandings. This guide aims to provide a framework for teachers to encourage active engagement before, during, and after viewing the film in an effort to engage in a deep dive into the content and craft of the filmmaking process and the stories they bring to life. Please note that this film contains mature content and content that may not be suitable for young viewers. Please follow the BSFI suggested protocol and make sure to pre-screen this film in advance.

FAST HORSE

THE DIRECTOR BEHIND THE FILM



Alexandra Lazarowich
Director

"I was standing with our camera operator in front of 75,000 people and they were cheering so loud for these young Indigenous men riding these horses bareback that my chest was vibrating," she says. "I'd never seen that before in my entire life. I thought, 'Oh my God, I have to make this film.'" Crafting films centered on Indigenous stories is paramount to Lazarowich, who wants to give her nieces and nephews role models like Cody to emulate. I wasn't seeing films that give hope to a generation of kids growing up right now." The need to represent the community was the key factor in Allison and Cody's agreeing to be part of the film in the first place. "Every time we get into a festival, I ask if they want to come. And they always say, 'Alex, we have to train the horses and we're racing that weekend. But I think they understood fundamentally the importance of what they were doing and why it needed to be captured...A lot more young people have become very, very interested and want to learn more about the sport [Indian Relay] and actually want to participate, which I think is so badass."

FILM SUBJECTS/INTERVIEWEES:

- ◇ Allison RedCrow, Old Sun Indian Relay Team Leader
- ◇ Cody Big Tobacco, Old Sun Indian Relay Jockey
- ◇ Mark Big Tobacco, Old Sun Indian Relay Jockey
- ◇ Racey RedCrow, Old Sun Indian Relay Jockey

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Big Sky Film Institute acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. In addition, we honor the twelve Montana tribes that have cared for and honored the distinct and multifarious region we now refer to as Montana. We would also like to pay our respects to the Siksika (Blackfoot) people in the Alberta territory of Canada, the traditional stewards of the territory around the Battle, North Saskatchewan and Red Deer rivers. We honor the path Indigenous peoples all over the world have shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come and hope this guide offers itself as an opportunity to better understand the stories of the land.

FAST HORSE



The Siksika Nation Coat of Arms



The Blackfoot Confederacy Flag

BY THE NUMBERS:

- The current population of the Siksika Nation is nearly 8,000 with approximately half living on the reserve and half living off the reserve. (Wolf Leg, 2020)
- In Canada's 2016 census, 22,490 people identified as having Blackfoot ancestry (Dempsey, 2019).
- The Blackfoot signed Treaty 7 with the Canadian government in 1877. 130 years later, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history was implemented with formulation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to facilitate reconciliation among the students, families and communities both directly and indirectly affected by Canada's Indian Residential Schools system.
- The first European traders did not come into contact with the Blackfoot until the mid-18th century, although horses probably reached them via trade between 1725 and 1731 (Dempsey, 2019).
- The sport of Indian Relay is one of America's oldest known competitions, dating back to more than 400 years.
- FAST HORSE takes place in part, on the Siksika Reserve in Southwestern Alberta, Canada, located approximately 60 miles southeast of the city of Calgary; the Kainaiwa are located on a reserve between Cardston and Lethbridge; the Apatohsi Piikani are located on a reserve west of Fort MacLeod; and the Amskapi Pikunni are located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Northwestern Montana, approximately 200 miles south of Calgary, AB.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of INDIAN RELAY and the history of horse racing among Indigenous peoples in North America.
- Through discussions of culture, history, personal experience, and perspective, students will construct working definitions that will allow them to re-examine and more deeply explore the film FAST HORSE.
- Students will make connections between the past and the present, looking at how certain activities evolve over time and are still relevant today.
- Students will identify various narratives illustrating diversity among groups, as well as make comparisons between words in different Native languages.
- Students will recognize the benefits of CAMARADERIE, RELATIONSHIP, and COMPETITION as a way to overcome obstacles, support identity, and build community.
- Students will identify the importance of telling this story within the context of a documentary film.

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FAST HORSE

GUIDING QUESTIONS



Photographs taken by Alex Lazarowich
FAST HORSE, 2018

- What role does history, tradition, and tribal culture play in FAST HORSE?
- Why is it important to learn about cultural and historical traditions of Indigenous groups such as the Blackfoot Confederacy?
- What role does language play in cultural preservation?
- What role does storytelling play in the transmission of oral history, tradition and indigenous knowledge?
- What is Indian Relay and how long has it been around?
- How does documentary film spotlight stories and histories, and what is its role in underscoring diverse representation on the screen?

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FAST HORSE

Given the complexity of the themes FAST HORSE explores, this film is most suitable for use with high school-aged students (Grades 9-12). Teachers are encouraged to preview the content as it may be too mature for younger audiences. The film's content, themes, and message is most clearly connected to the following areas of National Core and Montana Core Content Standards:

MONTANA COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Informational Text (RI.9-10):

RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia, paying specific attention to cultural nuances), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

Reading Standards for Informational Text (RI.11-12):

RI.11- 12.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.11- 12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, cultures, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
Writing Standards (W.11-12)

W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts, including those by and about American Indians, to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (RI.11-12):

RI.11- 12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing Standards (W.9-10): Text Types and Purposes

W.9-10.3.b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

W.9-10.3.d Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts, including American Indian texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

FAST HORSE

MONTANA COMMON CORE STANDARDS (CONT.)

Speaking and Listening Standards (SL.11-12) Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- SL.11-12.1.**
- a) Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
 - b) Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
 - c) Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
 - d) Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, with specific attention to culture; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

SL.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Language Standards (L.11-12) Comprehension and Collaboration Knowledge of Language

L.11-12.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

L.11-12.4.a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

L.11-12.4.c Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.

L.11-12.4.d Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.11-12.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

MONTANA COMMON CORE STANDARDS (CONT.)

Language Standards (L.11-12) - continued
Comprehension and Collaboration

L.11-12.5.b Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

Readings Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (RH.11-12)
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information. Include texts by and about American Indians.

RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, including American Indian sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Readings Standards for Literacy in Science/Technical Subjects (RST.11-12)
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RST.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia, Montana tribal resources) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (WHST.11-12)

WHST.11-12.2b Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

Production and Distribution of Writing

WHST.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NATIONAL CORE STANDARDS

Media Arts

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
Enduring Understanding: Interpretation and appreciation require consideration of the intent, form, and context of the media and artwork.
Essential Question(s): How do people relate to and interpret media artworks?

MA:Re8.1.6 (6th Grade)
Analyze the intent of a variety of media artworks, using given criteria.

MA:Re8.1.7 (7th Grade)
Analyze the intent and meaning of a variety of media artworks, using self-developed criteria

MA:Re8.1.8 (8th Grade)
Analyze the intent and meanings of a variety of media artworks, focusing on intentions, forms, and various contexts.

MA:Re8.1.I (HS Proficient)
Analyze the intent, meanings, and reception of a variety of media artworks, focusing on personal and cultural contexts.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding
Enduring Understanding: Media artworks and ideas are better understood and produced by relating them to their purposes, values, and various contexts.
Essential Question(s): How does media arts relate to its various contexts, purposes, and values? How does investigating these relationships inform and deepen the media artist's understanding and work?

MA:Cn11.1.6 (6th Grade)
Research and show how media artworks and ideas relate to personal life, and social, community, and cultural situations, such as personal identity, history, and entertainment.

MA:Cn11.1.7 (7th Grade)
Research and demonstrate how media artworks and ideas relate to various situations, purposes and values, such as community, vocations, and social media.

MA:Cn11.1.8 (8th Grade)
Demonstrate and explain how media artworks and ideas relate to various contexts, purposes, and values, such as democracy, environment, and connecting people and places.

MA:Cn11.1.I (HS Proficient)
Demonstrate and explain how media artworks and ideas relate to various contexts, purposes, and values, such as social trends, power, equality, and personal/cultural identity.

FAST HORSE

TYING INTO ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING MONTANA INDIANS

[The Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#), developed and published by Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education For All Division. There are 7 essential understandings (EU's), or guiding principles that have formed the foundation of Montana's Indian Education For All ([link to PDF above](#)). Tribal histories, contemporary tribal members, and tribal governments continue to contribute to the evolving social and political landscape of Montana, so that contemporary Montanans gain basic knowledge regarding Montana's tribal communities, and reach a better understanding of the important issues they face.

The following EU's are highlighted in this guide to illustrate how they align with certain aspects of the film FAST HORSE.

Essential Understanding 1

There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

Key Concepts identified in FAST HORSE:

- *The film takes place on the SIKSIKA Reserve in Southwestern Alberta, Canada, located approximately 60 miles southeast of the city of Calgary and home to over 7,500 enrolled members. The Siksika are part of the Blackfoot Confederacy, the larger group consisting of three main tribes, four smaller groups, and are broken down further into several "bands" or clans.*
- *Siksika are a part of the Blackfoot Confederacy which also consists of the Piikani and Kainaiwa of southern Alberta and the Blackfeet in the state of Montana.*
- *The Siksika Nation is governed by a chief and twelve councillors, all of whom are elected by members for three-year terms. The current chief of the Siksika Nation is Ouray Crowfoot. The Siksika Nation is in the process of developing a framework for self-government which will define and control the Nation's own destiny, and remove it from jurisdiction of The Indian Act which was legislated into force by the Canadian Government in 1876.*
- *The political, demographic, and cultural landscape of the SIKSIKA has rapidly changed in the last two hundred years. First Nations people are still here with distinct and intact governments, languages, and cultures that contribute to modern Canada.*
- *Prior to the 1800's, the Siksika's traditional territorial government was composed of 36 clans and approximately 18,000 people who were collectively responsible for maintaining the boundaries of the larger Blackfoot Confederacy.*

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FAST HORSE

TYING INTO ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING MONTANA INDIANS

Essential Understanding 1 - Continued

There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people in the past and continue to shape who they are today. Many of these policies conflicted with one another. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods:

Key Concepts identified in FAST HORSE:

- *The Blackfoot Confederacy's original territory was later split by the 49th parallel that created the northern border or invisible "medicine line."*
- *In 1876, the first Indian Act was passed by the Canadian Government and other subsequent Provincial governments to exercise control over what they deemed "First Nations" indigenous people in Canada.*
- *In 1877, Treaty 7 was signed at the historic Blackfoot Crossing, a National Historical Park and International site of cultural and archeological significance, recommended today as a World Heritage Site. An educational and entertainment center at Blackfoot Crossing commemorates the Treaty signing and preserves and promotes Siksika Nation's tribal language, culture and traditions.*

Essential Understanding 3

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories predate the "discovery" of North America.

Key Concepts identified in FAST HORSE:

- *The term spirituality within a cultural context can be limiting and misconstrued. Spirituality to Indigenous peoples generally refers to one aspect of their worldview in which all things are connected. Spirituality in this context does not necessarily equate to nor denote religion.*
- *Despite this history, Native people have retained their spiritual beliefs and traditions– tribal languages are still spoken, sacred songs are still sung, and rituals and ceremonies are still performed.*

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FAST HORSE

TYING INTO ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING MONTANA INDIANS

Essential Understanding 3 - *Continued*

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories predate the “discovery” of North America.

Key Concepts identified in FAST HORSE:

- Horse racing was one of the more popular and exciting competitions between traditional men’s societies during summer time recreation. The “smart, expert” riders were usually young, adolescent boys that were often related to the owners of the horses.
- The first races were run across the level prairie and were anywhere from two to four miles in length, with crowds of spectators at the designated finish line, wagering bets on which horse was the fastest.
- The winning society celebrated their win with singing, dancing and rejoicing long into the evening, while the winning horse was entrusted to the care of an elder man and picketed outside its owner’s lodge (tipi).
- It is estimated that there are still several thousand speakers of the Blackfoot language, a member of the Algonquin language family, including many who no longer reside on one of the four reservations. There are, however, slight differences between dialects spoken in Blackfoot communities on both sides of the Canadian border.
- Since no two languages organize meaning in the same way, it is extremely difficult to find words in the Blackfoot language that mean the exact same thing in English.
- The Blackfoot language existed and was passed down orally for thousands of generations. It has been only recently that a standard system for pronunciation, alphabetization, and writing has been formulated and continues to evolve.
- Through years of research, interviews, efforts and support provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Native American Studies Department at the University of Lethbridge, and several elders and students, publication of a Blackfoot Dictionary of Stems, Roots and Affixes

FAST HORSE

TYING INTO ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING MONTANA INDIANS

Essential Understanding 6

History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.

Key Concepts identified in FAST HORSE:

- Much of America’s history has been told from the Euro-American perspective. Only recently have American Indians begun to write about and retell history from an indigenous perspective.
- History is a primary vehicle through which power is distributed and used; thus, the whole notion of political identity and ideology and who Canada is as a nation plays into how the story is told, and who has been privileged to tell the story.
- It is critical that history curricula include the stories and experiences of individual men and women of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups.
- Providing students with textbooks, primary source documents, and surviving oral traditions allows them to gain a more objective view of history and provides them with a historical context in which to situate and understand the experiences and perspectives of these groups in society today.
- By giving students the opportunity to view our past through the eyes of many, they can begin to create their own view of our collective history, understand the present, and become better prepared to engage the problems of the future.
- In “The Story of the First Horses” (Schultz, 147), a Snipe helped a young Blackfeet boy called Long Arrow, bring horses to his people for the first time. In other oral accounts, several alternative origins of horses exist and are part of Blackfoot traditions. In some stories that have been passed down, horses possess supernatural powers, unusual strength and endurance, and are viewed as close friends or relatives.
- Several authors attribute widespread “horse-craft” knowledge across the Great Plains to a number of American Indian tribes that inhabited the entire region (Deloria, 293).

FAST HORSE

Essential Understanding 6 - Continued

History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.

Key Concepts identified in FAST HORSE:

- American Indians domesticated horses and engaged in selective breeding, healing, and training of horses, distinguishing themselves as horse “catchers, healers, trainers, gelders,” and ultimately, Raiders on the Northwest Plains (Ewers, 1958, 158-160).
- The passing down of traditional teachings for attainment of useful knowledge required a reverence for nature, reflection, sacrifice, prayer and good thoughts. Taking this responsibility very seriously, individuals “paid” for their “holy” initiation into ceremony with personal items, such as food, tools, their best horses, or robes.
- Giving was a way of showing appreciation for the “powers” received from others and the more sacrifices made, the better (Calf Robe 1979, 44). Sacrificial offerings insured future blessings. “A Song for the Horse Nation” tells this story in thorough and often beautiful detail, through a range of artifacts, oral histories and multimedia.

FAST HORSE

BEFORE WE BEGIN...A NOTE TO TEACHERS

It is important that all students feel safe and respected when studying the themes of FAST HORSE. The strategies below can help students and teachers support positive learning while studying the film:

- Please be mindful and pre-screen this film in advance of student viewing. This curriculum is meant to spark ideas for discussion and encourage critical thinking skills.
- Use inviting and inclusive language when discussing themes and ideas from the film. This includes respectful reflection on race and privilege, highlighting that contribution to the conversation is an option for students and not a requirement.
- Encourage students to be active listeners, meaning they are creating space for others to share their experiences and perspectives and providing encouraging response
- Underscore that the film they are about to watch is a documentary, meaning this film follows real people and lived experiences. Be respectful of personal differences and keep an open mind.
- Remind students to challenge ideas rather than people, with language such as, “I don’t see it that way...”, or “Your comments bring up questions for me...”
- Take ownership of comments and don’t put blame on others. Reframing input as one’s own (“I think...”), avoiding accusational language such as “You should...”
- Give plenty of time for students to think and reflect on discussion topics. You’re digging into complex and sensitive subject matter!
- Preface conversation with the Land Acknowledgement on Page 2, engaging in respectful language around personal and cultural needs of students, staff or visitors that identify as Indigenous.



FAST HORSE



WHAT IS INDIAN RELAY?

FAST FACTS

- Up to 8 athletes compete in one race, riding 3 different horses bareback with only reins and a whip, around a racetrack at full speed, topping 40 miles per hour when they race to the finish line.
- In addition to competitions across Canada, the All Nations Indian Relay Championships holds 16 races June through September, with representatives from several tribes in at least 6 states: Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, South Dakota, and Minnesota.
- Teams consist of one rider, three horses, two holders, and a mugger. Teams with the fastest times in different heats advance to the final race.
- At the World Championship Indian Relay Race every summer in Sheridan, Wyoming, teams pay a \$500 entry fee and compete for \$50,000, as well as other cash prizes, belt buckles, and jackets for different categories like traditional tribal clothing.
- 14 year-old Tyrell Mc Gilvery, from Goodfish Lake First Nation, northeast of Edmonton, Alberta, won the Chief's buckle, after placing ninth out of 38 teams in the Canadian Indian Relay Racing Association's season Championship race in 2018 – despite practicing with his new team for only two weeks. He started racing horses at age 7.

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FAST HORSE

THE VOICES OF THE OLD SUN INDIAN RELAY TEAM



CODY BIG TOBACCO

- *"I've been around horses my whole life, so it's just in my blood I guess."* (00:00:37)
- *"You have to find the horse's momentum, you have to find the horse's stride and hopefully it all comes together--sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't."* (00:05:52)

ALLISON REDCROW

- "Horses are what make us warriors today. You work hard enough with them and you're willing to work with them, then you feed off of them, you're going to feel that strength" (00:03:22)
- "If you treat them right, feed them right, you nourish them like children they'll do anything for you." (00:03:31)
- "It's an honor working with these young boys: the new warriors of today. It makes me happy to see them, that they're being involved with horses. They're trying to stay out of the negative things of life and the horses are something that keep us out of trouble" (00:05:02)
- "We always call on our grandfolds above, and I'm sure they're smiling down on us, saying 'Those are my grandsons...cross that finish line for the people of Siksika'" (00:07:05)
- "Racing has been amongst us for generations. It's instilled in us..." (00:12:19)

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FAST HORSE

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1) FILM TRAILER - Identifying the Hook

- Before you begin...What IS the role of a film trailer?
 - One main purpose of a film trailer is to give a feel for what the full film is about, without giving away the plot.
- WATCH the trailer for [FAST HORSE](#) and have students identify film themes and ideas addressed in the trailer.
 - Who is being interviewed?
 - What is the conflict/issue presented? In a larger group have students discuss the effectiveness of the trailer as a hook to the story the film presents.
 - What does the title, FAST HORSE, seem to suggest just by viewing the trailer?
- DISCUSS film themes and character qualities introduced in the trailer. How effective was the trailer in hooking you and your students?
- Trailer link here: <https://vimeo.com/293443218>

Introduction (15 minutes)

2) EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF THE HORSE IN BLACKFOOT CULTURE

WATCH the above trailer and then READ the following story about the first horses in Blackfeet culture:

THE FIRST HORSES

As referenced from [Blackfeet Tales of Glacier National Park](#)
by James Willard Schultz

In "The Story of the First Horses" (Schultz, 147), a Snipe helps a young Blackfeet boy called Long Arrow, bring horses to his people for the first time. Long Arrow was adopted by the bandleader Heavy Runner, and was tasked with seeking "medicine," that which would bring the boy "good luck in battle and in all matters of life" (Schultz, 147).

The boy-Snipe who led Long Arrow to the lakes where the horses lived, was one of the soyiitapiksi (under-water beings). In this account, the mountain lakes Long Arrow traveled to were named by Heavy Runner, Two Inside Lakes, and today, refer to either Waterton Lakes in Canada, or St. Mary Lakes in Glacier National Park, Montana.

In order to become a leader, Heavy Runner's advice to the young Long Arrow, was to be brave and fearless when facing an enemy; to be kind of heart and full of pity for the poor, the old, and the sick; "and always anxious to help them" (Schultz, 153).

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PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

For centuries, people mistook the Snipe for a mythical creature and finally discovered in 1907, that air rushing through it's tail feathers when it dives at speeds reaching 60 miles per hour, creates a mysterious-sounding, eerie tune. The noise a Snipe makes is called winnowing, and is said to sound like a horse whinnying in the sky (Horowitz, 2018). The word "sniper," which originated in the late 1700's, comes from Snipe, and referenced soldiers' extraordinary skill in hunting the small birds, whose uncanny ability made for a rapidly zigzagging target.

In other accounts, alternative origins of horses are "embodied" in Blackfoot oral history and tradition. Horses possess supernatural powers and unusual strength and endurance (Ewers, 1955, 290-298). In one explanation, Thunder is attributed to gifting the Piikani with horses, "dangerous animals" that will not hurt people.

In another description, horses come out of Lake Pakowki, northeast of the Sweet Grass Hills. After a "poor boy" was told by a mallard duck, how to make the first rope out of braided marsh grasses to lead them by, a herd of horses emerged from the edge of the water and followed him home to his encampment.

They were called "elk dogs" and were especially agile in water and crossing streams, for the boy had gotten them "from the water" (Ewers, 1955, 295). In yet another account, one of the spomitapiksi (above beings), Morning Star, made the horse, giving rise to "power of the horse-mounted peoples of the Great Plains" (Deloria, 2002, 293).

Several authors attribute widespread "horse-craft" knowledge across the Great Plains to a number of American Indian tribes that inhabited the entire region (Deloria, 293). American Indians domesticated horses and engaged in selective breeding, healing, and training of horses, distinguishing themselves as horse "catchers, healers, trainers, gelders," and ultimately, *Raiders on the Northwest Plains* (Ewers, 1958, 158-160).

Eyewitness accounts document the Blackfoot attaining horses in the early to mid-18th century (Ewers, 1955, 16-18). They quickly adopted horse racing as a popular sport, gambling on young, breech cloth wearing jockeys riding bareback on a two-to-four mile stretch of level plains, challenging rival men's society leaders during their summer encampments (Ewers, 1958, 158-160).

ACTIVITY:

- ASK students to think about the above story and reflect on the oral language traditions of the Blackfoot Confederacy, thinking about the people's relationship with nature, with horses, animals and each other.
 - Have students REFLECT on any lessons learned from horses and other animals.
- CONSIDER, what do the stories teach about animals and about the people and animals' relationships, or the people's relationships with nature? How might the people's culture, language and lifestyles change after attainment of the horse?

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★ LESSON EXTENSION

- WRITE an essay exploring human to animal relationships, while reflecting on the “give and take” that comes with relationship building over time and the evolving trust that is required between the two parties. (Think about RECIPROCITY and RESPECT)

WATCH THE FILM!

After engaging with some of the themes explored in the pre-viewing activities, your class should now be ready to watch the film. If you’ve registered through Big Sky Film Institute’s NFI Film Club you should have a provided link!

VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1) EXPLORING CAMARADERIE, COMMUNITY, FAMILY & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

★ ACTIVITY - Exploring Community

Think about the words FAMILY, CAMARADERIE, TEAMWORK & RELATIONSHIP in context with the quotes from the film found in the QUOTE BANK (p. 20), as well as with some of the images and sounds from the film:

- The clothing the relay teams wear to the race (feather warbonnet, bison headdress, ribbons, etc.)
- The way riders and horses are decorated, some with paint and/or matching team colors
 - The drumming, singing, and praying done before the race
- The honor song sung in Blackfoot at the film’s end, previously sung for warriors going into battle

● ASSIGNMENT

- 1) WATCH *Fast Horse*
- 2) Have students CREATE a word map or cluster, first using the word “horse” in the center.
- 3) CLUSTER for ten minutes, using synonyms, sensory nouns and verbs to group the words around this common theme.
- 4) Using images from their personal experiences, students will then WRITE either an extended, descriptive definition, or write a poem around the word cluster for “horse.” The words and images conveyed in the poems will differ among students.
- 5) REPEAT for the words above, CAMARADERIE, FAMILY, and RELATIONSHIP.
- 6) SHARE student definitions and/or poems with the class.

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VIEWING ACTIVITIES - Continued

QUOTE BANK:

- “We know he can run, but it’s getting him to run the way we run, eh?” - Allison (00:01:07)
- “Anywhere we go, you know, we’re representing for our hometown in Siksika... and everyone is rooting for us to do good.” - Cody (00:06:33)
- “Relay racing is a family tradition. It’s good to have your family by your side, you know?” - Cody (00:06:57)
- “Show up, that’s the main thing, and cross that finish line for the people back home at Siksika.” - Cody (00:07:15)
 - “You were just rolling bro, don’t worry about a thing, it’s all good.” - Cody (00:11:30)
 - “It’s an honor to have that ability to ride like that.” - Cody (00:11:59)

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Photograph taken by Alex Lazarowich
FAST HORSE, 2018

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

CONNECTION TO CULTURE THROUGH LANGUAGE - Why the Horse?

According to Bull Child (1985, 58), the Creator made animals with “split feet” to be used by the people as food. The first animals made after bison were elk, and its name refers to the way elk run through the heavy growth of forests, fields and mountains, he explains, as if their feet and legs “are magic or mystic.”

1) CONSIDER one of the Blackfoot words for horse:

- ➡ poo noo kah = elk
- ➡ ee mee dah = dog
- ➡ poo noo kah mee dah = horse (elk dog)

2) THEN, look at this list of words from the Blackfoot Dictionary (Frantz and Russell, 1989, 343) in reference to HORSES.

BLACFOOT WORDS FOR HORSE

- áápaokomi = horse with white neck markings
 - óta's = horse of, mount
- aapsskí = horse with white facial marking, whiteface
 - iitáóhkipistao'p = team horse, work horse
- iki'tayissksimmaa = pack a horse (by tying on a load)
 - ikkisstaa = bronc-ride, break, or tame a horse
 - iponóóhki = lose one's horse
 - máóhkowa'si = roan horse
- makainnokaomitaa = horse of stunted growth, Shetland pony
 - ota'si = own a horse
 - otahkóissksisi = brown (nosed) horse
 - otahkoiimi = buckskin horse
 - ponokáómitaa = horse (elk dog)
 - siká'saokkoyi = dark bay horse
- sikimiota'si = member of Black Horse Society

2) DISCUSS how the Blackfoot language differs from English.

3) PLAY A GAME! FIRST, make a large deck of index cards with other animal names (or random nouns) written on each card. THEN, have the students get into smaller teams of four or five. NEXT, place the cards face down in the center of the table and have students take turns describing the animal (or noun) for their teammates to guess. The teammate who guesses correctly keeps the card and whoever ends up with the most cards wins. For another variation, use pictures instead of words and partners of two students. The students can then describe a picture for their partners to draw.

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES - Continued

ASSIGNMENT

Have students RESEARCH one of these two topics and write a report on what they find:

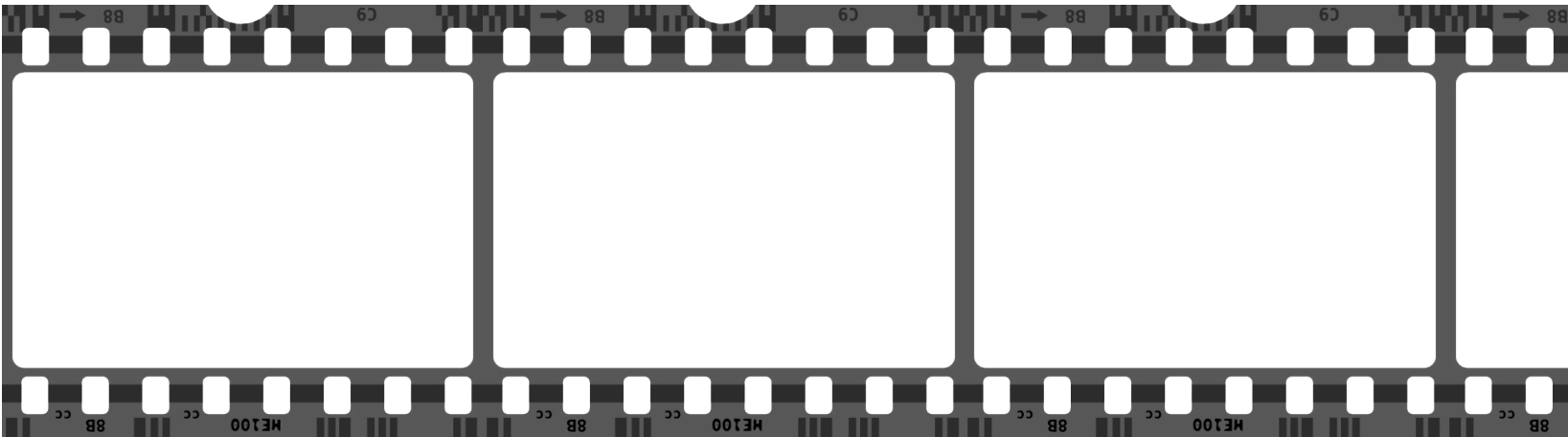
- 1) A TRADITIONAL NATIVE GAME, beginning with this site, or
- 2) INVENTION from the book *Encyclopedia of American Indian Contributions to the World: 15,000 Years of Inventions and Innovations* (Keoke & Porterfield, 2003).

DID YOU KNOW?

- “Neo-traditionalists” of Blackfoot culture today recognize the importance of Native language revival for cultural preservation, for it is through the language we learn about our place in the universe and establish deeply-rooted relationships with all the forces of the world (BULL CHILD W/KIPP, 1985, viii-ix).

FILM TRIVIA

- FAST HORSE is a nationally acclaimed documentary! Before screening at Big Sky Doc Film Festival, the film won Best Documentary at the ImagineNATIVE Film Festival and was later awarded the Special Jury Award for Best Directin at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival
- FAST HORSE has screened at almost 20 film festivals around the world!



FAST HORSE

DOUBLE ENTRY CHART + DISCUSSION (CAN BE APPLIED TO ANY OF THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES)

**Worksheet attached (Page 24)*

As students watch the film have them take notes in the attached Double/Entry Chart provided to have students remember specific moments in the film. After watching, ask students what they wrote down:

- What moments stood out to them?
- Was there anything in the film that changed what they knew or what they thought they knew?
- Many documentaries are also narrative, meaning they tell stories! How do we articulate certain histories through a good story?
 - Bring this back to the film. From which perspective is the film's story told? Do they narrate? How much time are watching versus listening? Make a list!

SUPPORTING AN EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION:

To most effectively track learning throughout viewing and discussion, have students reflect on what they know about the issues being presented in the film. With their Double Entry Viewing Chart they will have written down observations and inquiries. The following is a short list of key terms and vocabulary to help students articulate their analysis:

KEY TERMS (to sound like a professional):

EXPOSITION: *the information that grounds you in a story (Who, What, Where When, and Why). Exposition gives us the tools to follow the story as it unfolds.*

- Questions to ask students:
 - What information is given away?
 - What still don't we know?
 - Who are we hearing from/who is interviewed (who is not?)?
- Examples of Expository Information:
 - Shot of a place/location and its landmarks
 - Headlines/printed materials
 - Voice over
 - People getting upset over something

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THEME: *A recurring idea that illuminates an aspect of the human condition. The theme is the most basic lifeblood of a film, it tells you what the film is about. This differs from the subject, which is the topic of the film. A theme gives a story/subject focus and depth and brings out universals from the subject of a complex/simple film subject. A good theme should have multiple layers: personal level, political level, or spiritual level*

- Questions to ask students:
 - What are the universal ideas behind the film?
 - **Ex:** FAST HORSE highlights the story of the Old Sun Relay Team and Cody Big Tobacco, a first-time jockey. A modern incarnation of the ancient Blackfoot tradition of horsemanship competition, the film highlights more than just the extremeness of the sport, it highlights the importance of spotlighting the sport to underscore deep historical traditions and the power of camaraderie and healing that can take place when connecting to one's roots.

SUBJECT: the topic/focal point of the film

- Questions to ask students:
 - What is the general subject of this film?
 - **Ex:** FAST HORSE follows the Old Sun Relay Team through the eyes of its founder Allison Red Crow and Cody Big Tobacco.

ARC: *the ways the events of the story transform the subject/character. Story arcs can be hard to find in documentary film, there is not always an obvious beginning, middle, and an end (as in life!)*

- Questions to ask students:
 1. What does the protagonist/subject learn about themselves as they pursue a goal?
 2. How has the film challenged your assumption about the film's subject? Did you have preconceived notions of who the characters were/where they came from? Did this film change your opinion on this subject matter?

PLOT + CHARACTER:

- **CHARACTER-DRIVEN:** *a film where the action of the film emerges from wants and needs of the characters*
- **PLOT-DRIVEN:** *characters are secondary to the events that make up the plot*
 - Question to ask students:
 1. Who is this film about? Is it about a person or an event?

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Double Entry Viewing Sheet

NOTICE	WONDER
Write down details, or quotes from the film that stand out to you. Who's being interviewed? Are there animations? Is this happening now or is it recounting something in the past?	What does this make you think? Write down observations, questions, or comments you might have related to what you wrote down in the NOTICE column.

Additional Resources:

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Additional Resources

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URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/tyrell-mcgilvery-indian-horse-relay-1.4848082>.
- Schultz, James Willard. (1916). [Blackfeet Tales of Glacier National Park](#). Helena, MT: Riverbend Publishing in cooperation with the Montana Historical Society.
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— [Crow Tipi of Isabel and Henry Bear Medicine](#) (Jessie Wilber tipi designs serigraphs at MSU).
URL: <https://arc.lib.montana.edu/indian-great-plains/wilber-legend8.php>

Above is the story of how a Blackfeet tipi design was gifted to a "brave man" who shared his fresh bison meat with some crows. Later that night, the man dreamed that a crow disguised as a man came to him and thanked him. The crows expressed their gratitude and "RECIPROCATED" the gift. They gave the Blackfeet man "power to become leader of your tribe," as well as giving him horses to bring back to his people, and the instructions and songs for future ownership of the Crow Tipi painted design. When the man awoke, he found the horses, drove them home, and later became chief of the Buffalo Dung band.

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