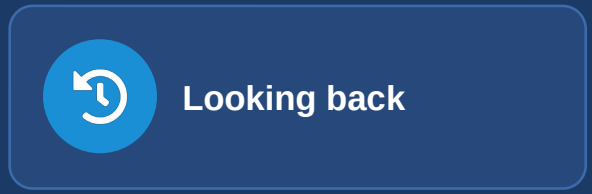
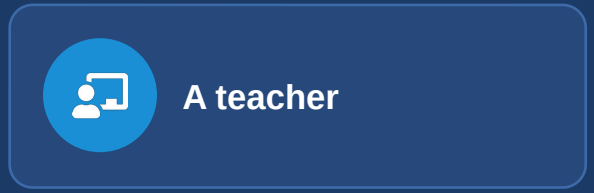
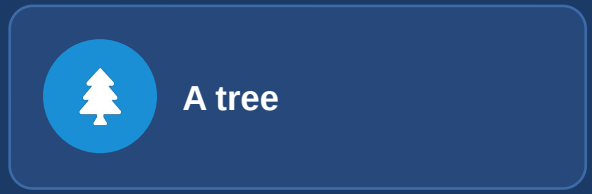
NBE3U Writing Back, Lesson 9

Retrospection

A teacher looks back at the school









Today's goals

We are learning…

- To analyse how an essay builds its ideas through metaphor and example.
- To write a reflective piece in our own voice.

I can…

- Explain what the visitors see and what they miss.
- Trace the tree metaphor and explain its meaning.
- Explain why publishing this essay in 1900 mattered.
- Write a short retrospection in my own voice.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–8 min	**Hook**	Discuss
8–25 min	**Read**	Read
25–40 min	**Sample work**	Analyse
40–55 min	**The tree**	Trace
55–75 min	**Write**	Write

Warm-up



Think of a place you once saw from the inside and the outside: a team, a job, a school event. What did outsiders see that wasn't the whole truth?

Sentence starters

“From outside it looked like…”

“From inside it was…”

“The difference matters because…”

How it works

- Pairs: 3 minutes.



Big idea

In the last of her 1900 essays, Zitkála-Šá is no longer a pupil but a teacher at an Indian school, and she sees how the system performs for its visitors. Publishing this in a national magazine, read by the people who paid for such schools, was a risk. The essay's metaphors build to a question readers could not easily forget.

From pupil to teacher

After college, Zitkála-Šá taught for about two years at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. In 1900, she published what she saw there in the Atlantic Monthly.

Who read the Atlantic Monthly in 1900? Who funded and supported Indian schools? Why was this essay a risk?

What the inspector saw

Though I burned with indignation upon discovering on every side instances no less shameful than those I have mentioned, there was no present help. Even the few rare ones who have worked nobly for my race were powerless to choose workmen like themselves. To be sure, a man was sent from the Great Father to inspect Indian schools, but what he saw was usually the students' sample work made for exhibition. I was nettled by this sly cunning of the workmen who hookwinked the Indian's pale Father at Washington.

Zitkála-Šá (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" (Atlantic Monthly, 1900), American Indian Stories (1921). Public domain.

Think about it

What is "sample work made for exhibition"?

Who is fooled?

Why does she call it "sly cunning"?

The satisfied visitors

As answers to their shallow inquiries they received the students' sample work to look upon. Examining the neatly figured pages, and gazing upon the Indian girls and boys bending over their books, the white visitors walked out of the schoolhouse well satisfied: they were educating the children of the red man! They were paying a liberal fee to the government employees in whose able hands lay the small forest of Indian timber.

Zitkála-Šá (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" (Atlantic Monthly, 1900), American Indian Stories (1921). Public domain.

Think about it

What do visitors look at?

What is the tone of the exclamation?

What is "the small forest of Indian timber"?

Uprooted

For the white man’s papers I had given up my faith in the Great Spirit. For these same papers I had forgotten the healing in trees and brooks. On account of my mother’s simple view of life, and my lack of any, I gave her up, also. I made no friends among the race of people I loathed. Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature, and God. […]

Zitkála-Šá (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), “An Indian Teacher Among Indians” (Atlantic Monthly, 1900), American Indian Stories (1921). Public domain.

Think about it

What did she give up “for the white man's papers”?

What is the tree uprooted from?

Why a tree?

A cold bare pole

Now a cold bare pole I seemed to be, planted in a strange earth. Still, I seemed to hope a day would come when my mute aching head, reared upward to the sky, would flash a zigzag lightning across the heavens. With this dream of vent for a long-pent consciousness, I walked again amid the crowds.

Zitkála-Šá (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), “An Indian Teacher Among Indians” (Atlantic Monthly, 1900), American Indian Stories (1921). Public domain.

Think about it

How has the tree changed?

What is the lightning?

Is this hope or anger?

Climb the metaphor ladder

On page 1, in pairs:

1. Find the quotation for each rung.
2. Explain what each means for her.
3. Name the moment the metaphor turns toward hope.
4. Explain how the ladder builds the essay's idea.

The last question

In this fashion many have passed idly through the Indian schools during the last decade, afterward to boast of their charity to the North American Indian. But few there are who have paused to question whether real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization.

Zitkála-Šá (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), “An Indian Teacher Among Indians” (Atlantic Monthly, 1900), American Indian Stories (1921). Public domain.

Think about it

Who boasts of “charity”?

What two possibilities does she name?

Why end on a question?

The risk of writing back



Zitkála-Šá published this in a magazine read by the schools' supporters. What did she risk? What did she gain? Was it worth it?

Sentence starters

“She risked… because…”

“She gained a platform that…”

“Writing for these readers meant…”

How it works

- Groups: 4 minutes.

Your retrospection

On page 2:

1. Choose something to look back at.
2. Choose one metaphor and let it change.
3. Write 150 to 200 words in your own voice.
4. End with a question.

Exit ticket

1. What the visitors saw, and missed.

2. The tree metaphor in one sentence.

3. One risk she took by publishing.

Next class: Hakadah.

Teacher reveal

Retrospection: key points

Sample work: Inspectors and visitors saw “students' sample work made for exhibition” and left satisfied.

What they missed: Unqualified staff, neglect, and the children's loss of language and family.

The tree: “Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature, and God”; then “a cold bare pole … planted in a strange earth.”

The lightning: She hopes her “mute aching head” will one day “flash a zigzag lightning across the heavens”: the essay itself is that flash.

The risk: She published a critique of the schools in a magazine read by their supporters, while still young and dependent on that world.

The final question: Whether “real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization.”