

THE SOUTH AND WEST TRANSFORMED

Enrichment: Write a Review***A Century of Dishonor***

When Helen Hunt Jackson wrote *A Century of Dishonor*, she wanted to identify the injustices suffered by American Indians at the hands of the United States government. Her book caused the U.S. Congress to appoint a commission to study the issue. The result was the Dawes Act of 1887, a piece of legislation that, however well-intentioned, added to the inequities and worsened the situation of American Indians.

Your assignment: Working with a partner, write two book reviews. One partner should review Hunt's book, *A Century of Dishonor*, and the other partner should review a more recent book, written within the last 25 years, that also discusses American Indian rights. As you and your partner read portions of the books, discuss the similarities and differences between the books, and create a table or Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the key issues for American Indians; then and now.

Suggested materials: *A Century of Dishonor*, by Helen Hunt Jackson; a modern book on American Indian rights; online and library research; paper

Suggested procedures:

1. Work with your partner at your school or public library to find a recent book that examines American Indian rights over the past century, and request a copy of Hunt's book. Decide who will review each book. For the purposes of this activity, you do not have to read the entire book.
2. Read the foreword and/or introduction to the books, along with the first and last chapters. Review the table of contents and skim any chapters or sections that you think will help you with your review. Use charts like those on the next page to guide your discussions.
3. Research each of the authors and the impact their books had on public policy.
4. Write the first drafts of your book reviews, using the following tips:
 - Think of an engaging hook to grab the interest of your reader in the first paragraph.
 - Give readers background information on the book, including the author's credentials and the book's impact on society.
 - Tell what you like and dislike about the book, and give your opinion about the book's value.
 - Be sure to compare and contrast points in your book with those in your partner's book, telling how treatment of American Indians and federal policies have changed or remained the same over time.
 - Exchange first drafts with your partner, read it, and make editing suggestions. Revise your reviews as needed.
 - When you have completed your reviews, format them in two or three columns complete with headlines and bylines (as they would appear if published in a newspaper or magazine) and post them on a bulletin board in your classroom.

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A Century of Dishonor

Create tables like those below to help you organize your thoughts about the books. If you prefer, you can format this information in a Venn diagram.

Books on American Indian Rights, Main Points

Key points in Hunt's <i>A Century of Dishonor</i>	Key points that both books make	Key points in the other book on Indian rights

Research for Writing Book Reviews

Author information	Impact of the book