

LET'S TRAIN

Choose a Native American case study and build an argument

Your mission

In hour one, the shared PBS report examined the place of African American history in public accounts of the nation. Now investigate one Native American case study, then use both examples to answer the same argumentative question.

Choose ONE case below and consult BOTH of its sources. Compare the celebratory narrative with the historical context and criticism. Assess the evidence before accepting an accusation of erasure or rewriting.

Suggested use of the hour: 25 minutes for your chosen case, 10 minutes to connect it to the video, 20 minutes to write your paragraph and 5 minutes to revise it.

Case study 1 Mount Rushmore and the Black Hills

Mount Rushmore presents four presidents as symbols of national achievement. The Black Hills are also sacred to the Lakota and were guaranteed to them by the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie before being seized by the United States.

Investigate: How does using Mount Rushmore for a national celebration affect the meaning of this contested place? Can it embody a shared national story?



The Guardian • The anniversary event NPS • Native peoples and the Black Hills

Case study 2 Westward expansion as a national epic

Freedom 250's Washington Monument projection and New Year's Eve show presented successive eras: Discovery, Independence, Westward Expansion, Industrial Revolution and Innovation. Indigenous perspectives bring conquest, displacement, broken treaties, resistance and survival into this story.

Investigate: What changes when westward expansion is presented as a stage of progress? How might Indigenous history challenge or qualify this narrative?



Freedom 250 • The official projection ICT • America 250 through an Indigenous lens

1/ Investigate your chosen example

My chosen case: _____

Complete the card in keywords. Distinguish what a source shows from what it allows you to infer. If no justification is given, write “not stated” rather than inventing one.

Element	Your notes and source
The public narrative	What achievement, person or national value is foregrounded?
The history at stake	Which Native people, events or contradictions complicate that narrative?
The treatment of that history	What is included, omitted, softened or reframed? Is there evidence of an actual removal, or of an omission?
The justification and criticism	What rationale is stated? What do critics object to, and why?
Your qualified assessment	Which term below best fits your evidence? What complicates your assessment?

Choose your analytical term carefully

- **Selection:** some material is chosen; omission does not necessarily deny it.
- **Simplification:** complexity is reduced to make a story easier to communicate.
- **Sanitisation:** uncomfortable facts are softened to protect a positive image.
- **Historical rewriting:** facts, emphasis or causal relationships are altered to support a preferred narrative.

2 Connect the two examples

Choose ONE concrete example from the PBS report: Abraham Brian at Gettysburg, or the removed and judicially ordered reinstatement of the Philadelphia exhibit about people enslaved by Washington.

My video example and what it reveals:

What common issue links this African American example to my Native American case?

What relevant difference prevents me from treating the two histories or situations as identical?

3/ Write an argued paragraph

Answer the following question in ONE paragraph of 120 words:

To what extent can national commemorations build a shared American identity while acknowledging histories of exclusion and dispossession?

Plan your reasoning before writing

- My answer or main claim
- Example 1 from the video → what it demonstrates
- My chosen Native American example → what it adds to the reasoning
- A qualification or counterargument → my response
- A concluding sentence answering the question

My paragraph: