

## ig Reading

### n Objectives

the theme of a story  
old, new, and combined ways  
ings in a story  
and prefixes  
ze and rewrite sentences in  
orm

3 Resource Book  
ly Guide, p. 2

### .ink

if "Keeping Traditions" is  
y showing how Native  
aditions are accepted or ques-  
ferent generations.

### ig Other Themes

is in "Thunder Butte" include:

Ip  
f Age

### lary Preview

ward slope  
tick out  
ce due to striking of one thing  
ther  
wipe out, remove all traces  
ery; courage  
can add the words and defini-  
ir Writer's Notebook.

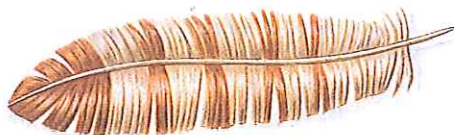
### rary Focus

me

What conflict is likely to be  
o the theme of this story?  
esponse: the conflicting views of  
arents on the subject of Native  
traditions)

# THUNDER BUTTE

Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve



**T**he sun was just beginning to rise when John woke Norman the next morning.

"You must get an early start if you are going to go to the west side of the butte and return by supper," John said to the sleepy boy. "If you are not home by the time I get back from work, I'll come looking for you."

Norman reluctantly rose. Last night he had accepted his grandfather's command to go to the Thunder Butte without too many doubts. Yet now in the morning's chill light the boy wondered if his grandfather's dreams were the meaningless meanderings<sup>1</sup> of an old mind, or if his grandfather was really worthy of the tribe's respect as one of the few remaining wise elders who understood the ancient ways.

Norman dressed in his oldest clothes and pulled on worn and scuffed boots to protect his feet from the rocks and snakes of the

butte. He heard his parents talking in the other room and knew his father was telling his mother where Norman was going.

As the boy entered the room, which was kitchen and living room as well as his parents' bedroom, he heard his mother say, "What if there is a rock slide and Norman is hurt or buried on the butte? We won't know anything until you get home from work, John. I don't want Norman to go."

"The boy is old enough to have learned to be careful on the butte. He'll be all right," John answered as he tried to reassure Sarah. "Besides," he added, "my father dreamed of this happening."

Sarah grunted scornfully. "No one believes in dreams or in any of those old superstitious ways anymore."

"I'll be okay, Mom," Norman said as he sat

1. meandering (mē an'dər ing), *n.* aimless wandering.

222 UNIT THREE: RELATIONSHIPS

## SELECTION SUMMARY

### Thunder Butte

Norman, a young Native American who lives on the plains, climbs Thunder Butte because his grandfather has dreamed that Norman will find something holy there. A fall during the difficult climb causes Norman to uncover a leather-covered stick that has been buried in the ground. Norman brings the stick to his grandfather, who explains that it is a "coup stick," used in battle by the family's ancestors. When Norman takes the

stick home, his mother refuses to have it in the house because she sees it as "heathenish." His father, however, insists on hanging it up as a reminder of the days "when it was a good thing to be an Indian."



For summaries in other languages, see the *Building English Proficiency* book.





**A** *Magic Mesa* was painted by Maynard Dixon in 1936. Would you have accepted the challenge to climb a butte? Why or why not?

down at the table. "I should be able to find lots of agates on the west side where there is all that loose rock. Maybe I can talk the trader into giving me money for them after all." He spoke bravely despite his own inner misgivings about going to the butte.

Sarah protested no more. Norman looked at her, but she lowered her head as she set a plate of pancakes in front of him. He knew she was hiding the worry she felt for him.

John put on his hat and went to the door. "Don't forget to take the willow branch with you," he said to Norman, "and be careful."

Norman nodded and ate his breakfast. When he was finished he stood up. "Guess I'll go," he said to his mother, who was pouring hot water from the tea kettle into her dish pan. When she didn't speak Norman took the willow cane from where he had propped it by the door and his hat from the nail above it.

"Wait," Sarah called and handed him a paper bag. "Here is a lunch for you. You'll need something to eat since you'll be gone all day." She gave him an affectionate shove. "Oh, go on. I know you'll be all right. Like your dad said, you're old enough to be careful."

Thunder Butte 223

## Art Studio

**Possible responses to question**  
Some students may feel that it is too high to climb; others may feel that there appears to be a path that leads to it on the right side of the butte.

Maynard Dixon taught how to paint. He did both illustrations and murals. His specialty was painting the people of the American West. *Magic Mesa* shows a combination of remembered landscapes, in a particular place.

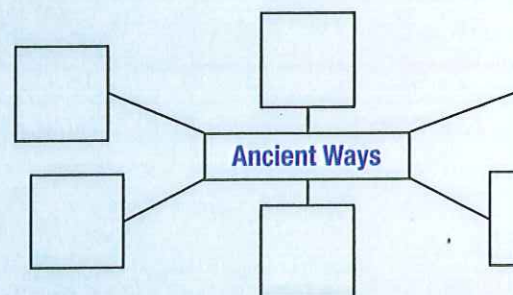
**Question** Judging from the painting, what did Dixon think the elements (materials and substances) of a mesa are made of? *Responses: open land, low elevation [sage], towering rock formations, blue sky*

## BUILDING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

### Exploring Key Concepts

Read aloud the third paragraph on page 222. Point out that the end of this paragraph presents some ideas that are important to the story.

1. Discuss the meaning of the term *ancient ways*. Ask how staying with ancient ways can be valuable or dangerous.
2. Have each student develop a concept web based on the expression "ancient ways." In outer sections, students can identify ancient ways that exist in their family, culture, and religion. Have them draw circles around ancient ways that they still observe and draw squares around ones that they no longer follow.





## Literary Element

### Setting

What details in the second paragraph on this page give information about the setting of the story, or where it takes place? (Possible responses: meadowlarks, willow cane, bushy sage, pear cactus, cool morning followed by hot

## Historical Note

### Vision Quests

Members of Native American groups, especially the Plains tribes, encouraged young men to seek visions as part of a vision quest. The young men went for several days without food and water and sometimes tortured themselves to attract a guardian spirit to come to them and provide a vision to guide their

Norman smiled at his mother. "Thanks," he said as he tucked the lunch into his shirt. He checked his back pocket to see if he'd remembered the salt bag to put the agates in.

He walked briskly across the open prairie and turned to wave at his mother, who had come outside to watch him leave. She waved back and Norman quickened his pace. He whistled, trying to echo the meadowlarks who were greeting the day with their happy song. He swiped the willow cane at the bushy sage<sup>2</sup> and practiced spearing the pear cactus<sup>3</sup> that dotted his path. The early morning air was cool, but the sun soon warmed the back of his neck and he knew it would be a hot day.

He crossed the creek south of where Matt Two Bull's tent was pitched and then he was climbing the gentle beginning slope of the butte. He stopped and studied the way before him and wondered if it wouldn't be easier to reach the west side by walking around the base of the butte even though it would be longer. Then Norman smiled as he remembered his grandfather's command to climb the south trail that wound to the top. He decided to do what the old man wanted.

The ascent<sup>4</sup> sharply steepened and the sun rose with him as Norman climbed. What looked like a smooth path from the prairie floor was rough rocky terrain.<sup>5</sup> The trail spiraled<sup>6</sup> up a sharp incline and Norman had to detour around fallen rocks. He paused to rest about half way up and then saw how sharply the overhanging ledge of the butte protruded.<sup>7</sup> Getting to the top of it was going to be a difficult struggle. He climbed on. His foot slipped and his ankle twisted painfully. Small pebbles bounced down the slope and he saw a rattlesnake slither out of the way. He tightly clutched the willow branch and leaned panting against the butte. He sighed with relief as the snake crawled out of sight. He wiggled his foot until the pain left his ankle. Then he started to trudge up the incline again.

At last only the ledge of the butte loomed over him. There appeared to be no way up. Disgusted that his laborious climb seemed dead-ended he stubbornly tried to reach the top. Remembering the courage of the ancient young men who had struggled in this same place to gain the summit and seek their visions, he was determined not to go back. His fingers found tiny cracks to hold on to. The cane was cumbersome and in the way. He was tempted to drop it, but he thought of the snake he'd seen and struggled on with it awkwardly under his arm.

Finally Norman spied a narrow opening in the ledge which tapered down to only a few feet from where he clung. He inched his way up until he reached the base of the opening and then he found a use for the cane. He jammed the stout branch high into the boulders above him. Cautiously he pulled to see if it would hold his weight. It held. Using the cane as a lever he pulled himself to the top.

This final exertion winded the boy and he lay exhausted on the summit, boots hanging over the edge. Cautiously he pulled his feet under him, stood and looked around.

He gazed at a new world. The sun bathed the eastern valley in pale yellow which was spotted with dark clumps of sage. The creek was a green and silver serpent winding its way to the southeast. His grandfather's tent was a white shoe box in its clearing, and beside it stood a diminutive form waving a red flag. It was Matt

2. **bushy sage**, sagebrush; a bush with gray-green, aromatic leaves that grows on the dry plains of North America.
3. **pear cactus**, the edible fruit of the prickly pear cactus or other American cactus.
4. **ascent** (ə sent'), *n.* upward slope.
5. **terrain** (te rān'), *n.* tract of land, especially considered with respect to its natural features and extent.
6. **spiral** (spī'rəl), *v.* form a winding path.
7. **protrude** (prō trūd'), *v.* stick out.

## UNIT LESSON: LITERARY LANGUAGE

### Setting

The **setting** is where and when a story occurs. Writers establish setting by providing details, such as the plants and animals mentioned in the second paragraph on this page. The time is early morning as mentioned in the fourth paragraph. Setting can influence the action of a story, as when the loose rocks on the butte make Norman fall. Setting also influence the feeling or mood of the story.

### Activity Ideas

Students look for details that establish setting in this and other stories.

- Students discuss the effect that setting has on the feeling, or mood, of a story.
- Students point out effects that the setting has on the action of a story.
- Students discuss how a story might have been different if it had taken place in a different setting.



Unit 3 Resource Book  
Literary Language, p. 5



Two Bull signaling with his shirt, and Norman knew that his grandfather had been watching him climb. He waved his hat in reply and then walked to the outer edge of the butte.

The summit was not as smoothly flat as it looked from below. Norman stepped warily over the many cracks and holes that pitted the surface. He was elated that he had successfully made the difficult ascent, but now as he surveyed the butte top he had a sense of discomfort.

There were burn scars on the rough summit, and Norman wondered if these spots were where the lightning had struck, or were they evidence of ancient man-made fires? He remembered that this was a sacred place to the old ones and his uneasiness increased. He longed to be back on the secure level of the plains.

On the west edge he saw that the butte cast a sharp shadow below because the rim protruded as sharply as it had on the slope he'd climbed. Two flat rocks jutted up on either side of a narrow opening, and Norman saw shallow steps hewn into the space between. This must be the trail of which his grandfather had spoken.

Norman stepped down and then quickly turned to hug the butte face as the steps ended abruptly in space. The rest of the rocky staircase lay broken and crumbled below. The only way down was to jump.

He cautiously let go of the willow branch and watched how it landed and bounced against the rocks. He took a deep breath as if to draw courage from the air. He lowered himself so that he was hanging by his fingertips to the last rough step, closed his eyes and dropped.

The impact<sup>8</sup> of his landing stung the soles of his feet. He stumbled and felt the cut of the sharp rocks against one knee as he struggled to retain his balance. He did not fall and finally stood upright breathing deeply until

the wild pounding of his heart slowed. "Wow," he said softly as he looked back up at the ledge, "that must have been at least a twenty foot drop."

He picked up the willow branch and started walking slowly down the steep slope. The trail Matt Two Bull had told him about

## He took a deep breath as if to draw courage from the air.

had been obliterated<sup>9</sup> by years of falling rock. Loose shale and gravel shifted under Norman's feet, and he probed cautiously ahead with the cane to test the firmness of each step.

He soon found stones which he thought were agates. He identified them by spitting on each rock and rubbing the wet spot with his finger. The dull rock seemed to come alive! Variegated hues of brown and gray glowed as if polished. They were agates all right. Quickly he had his salt bag half full.

It was almost noon and his stomach growled. He stopped to rest against a large boulder and pulled out his lunch from his shirt. But his mouth was too dry to chew the cheese sandwich. He couldn't swallow without water.

Thirsty and hungry, Norman decided to go straight down the butte and head for home.

Walking more confidently as the slope leveled out he thrust the pointed cane carelessly into the ground. He suddenly fell as the cane went deep into the soft shale.<sup>10</sup>

Norman slid several feet. Loose rocks rolled around him as he came to rest against

8. **impact** (im/pakt), *n.* force due to the striking of one thing against another.

9. **obliterate** (ə blit'ə rāt'), *v.* wipe out, remove all traces.

10. **shale** (shāl), *n.* rock formed from hardened clay or mud in thin layers which split easily.

## BUILDING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

### Visualizing Details

Students who have not visited or lived in the Southwest may have trouble picturing the scene that presents Norman with such a physical challenge.

#### Activity Ideas

- Display pictures from books, magazines, encyclopedias, and so on, that show Southwestern scenery.
- After carefully reading the description of the prairie and the butte, invite students to draw their vision of the landscape.
- Assign student groups some sites to research. Have gro pictures to share with the class. Sites might include the Canyon, the Painted Desert, the Petrified Forest, the Carl Caverns, the Enchanted Mesa, and the Rio Grande.

ESL

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## Leader's Response

### Making Personal Connections

If you were Norman, would you open the stick or leave it where it was?

Sample responses: Students who would open the stick might say there was no harm in not to, since it may not have been the tip of a grave; those who would not open it might say that leaving the stick where it was would show respect for the dead (intent object.) **Writer's Notebook**

### Cultural Note

Think about the story tells how the Plains Indians described courage or valor.

What ways do you know of showing courage in other cultures?

Sample responses: killing a powerful animal without complaint, meeting violence with nonviolence

a boulder. He lay still for a long time fearing that his tumble might cause a rock fall. But no thundering slide came, so he cautiously climbed back to where the tip of the willow branch protruded from the ground.

## Norman shivered at the thought that he may have disturbed a grave, . . .

He was afraid that the cane may have plunged into a rattlesnake den. Carefully he pulled at the stout branch, wiggling it this way and that with one hand while he dug with the other. It came loose, sending a shower of rocks down the hill, and Norman saw that something else was sticking up in the hole he had uncovered.

Curious, and seeing no sign of snakes, he kept digging and soon found the tip of a leather-covered stick. Bits of leather and wood fell off in his hand as he gently pulled. The stick, almost as long as he was tall and curved on one end, emerged as he tugged. Holding it before him, his heart pounding with excitement, he realized that he had found a thing that once belonged to the old ones.

Norman shivered at the thought that he may have disturbed a grave, which was *tehinda*,<sup>11</sup> forbidden. He cleared more dirt away but saw no bones nor other sign that this was a burial place. Quickly he picked up the stick and his willow cane and hurried down the hill. When he reached the bottom he discovered that in his fall the salt bag of agates had pulled loose from his belt. But he did not return to search for it. It would take most of the afternoon to travel around the base of the butte to the east side.

The creek was in the deep shade of the butte when he reached it and thirstily flopped

down and drank. He crossed the shallow stream and walked to his grandfather's tent.

"You have been gone a long time," Matt Two Bull greeted as Norman walked into the clearing where the old man was seated.

"I have come from the west side of the butte, Grandpa," Norman said wearily. He sat down on the ground and examined a tear in his jeans and the bruise on his knee.

"Was it difficult?" the old man asked.

"Yes," Norman nodded. He told of the rough climb up the south slope, the jump down and finally of his fall which led him to discover the long leather-covered stick. He held the stick out to his grandfather who took it and examined it carefully.

"Are you sure there was no body in the place where you found this?"

Norman shook his head. "No, I found nothing else but the stick. Do you know what it is, Grandpa?"

"You have found a *coup*<sup>12</sup> stick which belonged to the old ones."

"I know that it is old because the wood is brittle and the leather is peeling, but what is—was a *coup* stick?" Norman asked.

"In the days when the old ones roamed all of the plains," the old man swept his hand in a circle, "a courageous act of valor<sup>13</sup> was thought to be more important than killing an enemy. When a warrior rode or ran up to his enemy, close enough to touch the man with a stick, without killing or being killed, the action was called *coup*."

"The French, the first white men in this part of the land, named the brave deed *coup*. In their language the word meant 'hit' or

11. *tehinda* (tā hin' dā).

12. *coup* (kü).

13. *valor* (val'ər), *n.* bravery; courage.

## NI-LESSON: VOCABULARY

### Using Affixes

**Prefixes**, or word parts that are added to the beginnings of words, usually change the meaning of the root words to which they are added. The prefix *pro-*, for example, usually means "in front of, or project-". When this prefix is added to the root *-trude*, the result is *protrude*, which means "stick out." The addition of a different prefix, *in-*, to *-trude* results in a word with a different meaning—*intrude*, or "push in."

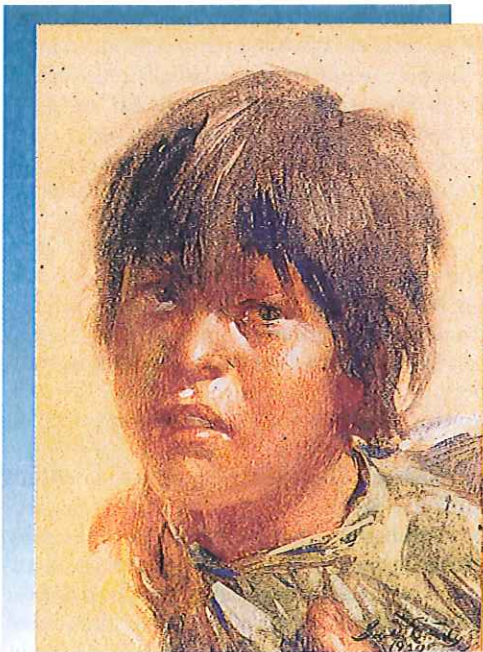
### Activity Ideas

- Students look for words in the story or in other writing with the prefixes in the box.
- Students use a dictionary to find out the meanings of the prefixes, roots, and whole words.
- Students discuss how the meaning of each whole word relates to the meaning of the prefix and the root.
- Students try to think of other words with these prefixes.

#### Prefix List

pro-  
un-  
ob-  
re-  
dis-





**A** *Pueblo Boy* was painted in 1920 by Gerald Cassidy. How does this boy's expression reinforce the struggle of the climb?

'strike.' The special stick which was used to strike with came to be known as a *coup* stick.

"Some sticks were long like this one," Matt Two Bull held the stick upright. "Some were straight, and others had a curve on the end like the sheep herder's crook," he pointed to the curving end of the stick.

"The sticks were decorated with fur or painted leather strips. A warrior kept count of his *coups* by tying an eagle feather to the crook for each brave deed. See," he pointed to the staff end, "here is a remnant of a tie thong which must have once held a feather."

The old man and boy closely examined the *coup* stick. Matt Two Bull traced with his finger the faint zig zag design painted on the stick. "See," he said, "it is the thunderbolt."

"What does that mean?" Norman asked.

"The Thunders favored a certain few of

the young men who sought their vision on the butte. The thunderbolt may have been part of a sacred dream sent as a token of the Thunders' favor. If this was so, the young man could use the thunderbolt symbol on his possessions."

"How do you suppose the stick came to be on the butte?" Norman asked.

His grandfather shook his head. "No one can say. Usually such a thing was buried with a dead warrior as were his weapons and other prized belongings."

"Is the *coup* stick what you dreamed about, Grandpa?"

"No. In my dream I only knew that you were to find a *Wakan*,<sup>14</sup> a holy thing. But I did not know what it would be."

Norman laughed nervously. "What do you mean, *Wakan*? Is this stick haunted?"

Matt Two Bull smiled. "No, not like you mean in a fearful way. But in a sacred manner because it once had great meaning to the old ones."

"But why should I have been the one to find it?" Norman questioned.

His grandfather shrugged. "Perhaps to help you understand the ways—the values of the old ones."

"But nobody believes in that kind of thing anymore," Norman scoffed. "And even if people did, I couldn't run out and hit my enemy with the stick and get away with it." He smiled thinking of Mr. Brannon. "No one would think I was brave. I'd probably just get thrown in jail."

Suddenly Norman felt compelled to stop talking. In the distance he heard a gentle rumble which seemed to come from the butte. He glanced up at the hill looming high above and saw that it was capped with dark, low-hanging clouds.

Matt Two Bull looked too and smiled. "The Thunders are displeased with your

14. *Wakan* (wā' kán).

## Art Study

Possible response to quest boy's expression looks intense, confused, and perhaps tired.

### 5 Historical Note Burial with Posses

Cultures around the world have people, especially those of high status, with their prized belongings. Examples of famous burials that include possessions are Sutton Hoo (England), Tutankhamun's tomb (ancient Egypt), and ancient tombs in China and in the Americas (homeland in Mexico and Central America).

### 6 Reading Tip Old and New Ways

Students might want to add the information to their charts as a Native American way of dealing with enemies and, perhaps, a modern way of dealing with enemies as filing a police complaint or law suit.

## BUILDING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

### Making Personal Connections

The story emphasizes that we have much to learn from previous generations. Help students relate to that message.

1. Arrange to have senior citizens from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (perhaps from students' families) speak to the class. Ask the speakers to discuss their life experiences and the influences of traditions.

2. Have students prepare questions for the speakers. Provide examples of appropriate questions, such as the following:

- What traditions have changed during your lifetime?
- What traditions do you consider most valuable?

- In what ways are you different from your parents? How are children and grandchildren different from you?
- What one aspect of your life would you like your grandchild to experience? Why?

ESL

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## Art Study

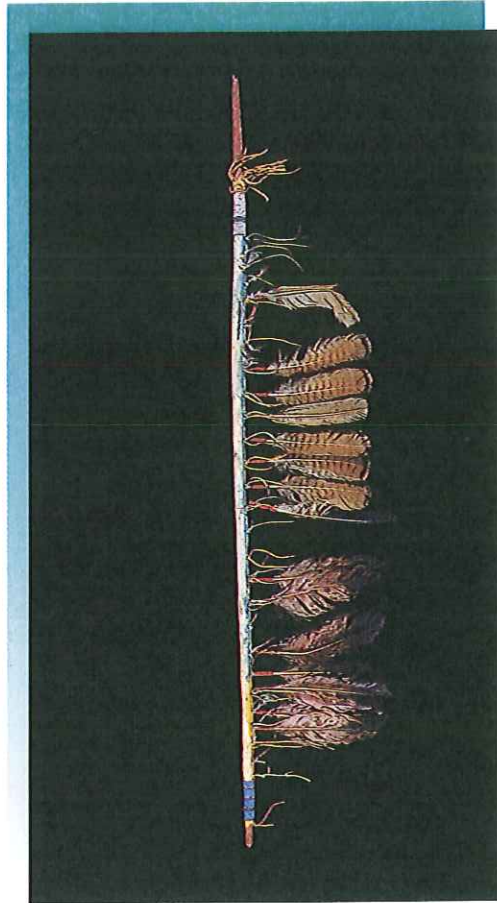
He has given his responses to question 1. He says he would have been a brave man; he has given a “coup” at least sixteen times.

**Question 1:** Why do you think eagle feathers, rather than the feathers of another bird, were chosen to decorate the coup stick? (Possible answer: because the Native Americans thought the eagle was a brave bird)

## Literary Focus

### Theme

What might Matt Two Bull's actions tell Norman that the old ways that Norman keep the stick have to do with the story's theme? (Possible answer: The theme probably has to do with the old man having to face the conflict between old and new beliefs, and keeping the stick will force him to keep this conflict alive.)



**Question 2:** What does the number of feathers tell you about the owner of this coup stick?

“Listen to their thoughts,” he said to Norman. “Listen to their message.”

A sharp streak of lightning split the clouds and the thunder cracked and echoed over the plains.

Norman was frightened but he answered with bravado. “The message I get is that a storm is coming,” but his voice betrayed him by quavering. “Maybe you’d better come home with me, Grandpa. Your tent will get soaked through if it rains hard.”

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“No,” murmured Matt Two Bull, “no rain will come. It is just the Thunders speaking.” There was another spark of lightning and an explosive reverberation sounded as if in agreement with the old man.

Norman jumped to his feet. “Well, I’m going home. Mom will be worried because I’m late now.” He turned to leave.

“Wait!” Matt Two Bull commanded. “Take the coup stick with you.”

Norman backed away. “No, I don’t want it. You can have it.”

The old man rose swiftly despite the stiffness of his years and sternly held out the stick to the boy. “You found it. It belongs to you. Take it!”

Norman slowly reached out his hands and took the stick.

“Even if you think the old ways are only superstition and the stick no longer has meaning, it is all that remains of an old life and must be treated with respect.” Matt Two Bull smiled at the boy. “Take it,” he repeated gently, “and hang it in the house where it will not be handled.”

Norman hurried home as fast as he could carrying the long stick in one hand and the willow cane in the other. He felt vaguely uneasy and somehow a little frightened. It was only when he reached the security of his home that he realized the thunder had stopped and there had been no storm.

“Mom,” he called as he went into the house. “I’m home.”

His mother was standing at the stove. “Oh, Norman,” she greeted him smiling. “I’m glad you’re back. I was beginning to worry.” Her welcoming smile turned to a frown as she saw the coup stick in Norman’s hand. “What is that?”

“Grandpa says it’s a coup stick. Here,” Norman handed it to her “take a look at it. It’s interesting the way it is made and decor—”

“No,” Sarah interrupted and backed away

## Mini-Lesson: Grammar


### Inverted Order

In most sentences, the subject appears before the verb. Sometimes, however, writers invert the order of a sentence and place the verb first. For example, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve does this in the sentence, “No,” murmured Matt Two Bull.” Inverting sentence order provides variety in writing.

### Activity Ideas

Students look for inverted sentences in this or other selections. Students rewrite inverted sentences in normal order or rewrite normal sentences in inverted order.

- Students write sentences in either normal or inverted order and trade papers with a partner. Each student then rewrites the partner’s sentences in the opposite order.
- Students add occasional inverted sentences to their own writing to provide variety.

 **Unit 3 Resource Book**  
Grammar, p. 4



from him. "I won't touch that heathen thing no matter what it is! Get it out of the house!"

"What?" Norman asked, surprised and puzzled. "There is nothing wrong with it. It's just an old stick I found up on the butte."

"I don't care," Sarah insisted. "I won't have such a thing in the house!"

"But, Mom," Norman protested, "it's not like we believe in those old ways the way Grandpa does."

But Sarah was adamant. "Take it out of the house!" she ordered, pointing to the door. "We'll talk about it when your dad gets home."

**R**eluctantly Norman took the *coup* stick outside and gently propped it against the house and sat on the steps to wait for his father. He was confused. First by his grandfather's reverent treatment of the *coup* stick as if it were a sacred object and then by Sarah's rejection of it as a heathen symbol.

He looked at the stick where it leaned against the wall and shook his head. So much fuss over a brittle, rotten length of wood. Even though he had gone through a lot of hard, even dangerous, effort to get it he was now tempted to heave it out on the trash pile.

Norman wearily leaned his head against the house. He suddenly felt tired and his knee ached. As he sat wearily rubbing the bruise John Two Bull rode the old mare into the yard. Norman got up and walked back to the shed to help unsaddle the horse.

John climbed stiffly out of the saddle. His faded blue work shirt and jeans were stained with perspiration and dirt. His boots were worn and scuffed.

"Hard day, Dad?" Norman asked.

"Yeah," John answered, slipping the bridle over the mare's head. "Rustlers got away with twenty steers last night. I spent the day counting head and mending fences. Whoever the

thief was cut the fence, drove a truck right onto the range and loaded the cattle without being seen." He began rubbing the mare down as she munched the hay in her manger.

"How did your day on the butte go?" John asked.

"Rough." Norman answered. "I'm beat too. The climb up the butte was tough and coming down was bad too." He told his father all that had happened on the butte, winding up with the climax of his falling and finding the old *coup* stick.

John listened attentively and did not interrupt until Norman told of Matt Two Bull's reaction to the stick. "I think Grandpa's mind has gotten weak," Norman said. "He really believes that the *coup* stick has some sort of mysterious power and that the Thunders were talking."

"Don't make fun of your grandfather," John reprimanded, "or of the old ways he believes in."

**"I won't touch that heathen thing no matter what it is! Get it out of the house!"**

"Okay, okay," Norman said quickly, not wanting another scolding. "But Mom is just the opposite from Grandpa," he went on. "She doesn't want the *coup* stick in the house. Says it's heathen."

He walked to the house and handed the stick to his father. John examined it and then carried it into the house.

"John!" Sarah exclaimed as she saw her husband bring the stick into the room. "I told Norman, and I tell you, that I won't have that heathenish thing in the house!"

But John ignored her and propped the stick against the door while he pulled his tool

## 8 Critical Thinking

### Recognizing Cause and Effect

**Question** What elements in Sarah's background might make her react that way? (Possible response: She may have been raised a Christian and doesn't stand or believe in the Native American traditions; she may not be a Native American.)

## BUILDING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

### Analyzing Conflict

Review this conflict of the story: While Norman's mother wants nothing to do with the *coup* stick and the old ways it represents, Norman's grandfather considers it extremely important.

1. Ask students to find a paragraph on page 228 that expresses this conflict. (If they need help, it begins, "'No,' Sarah interrupted . . .")
2. Students can analyze the two sides of the conflict by completing a Pros and Cons chart. Ask them to try to come up with reasons in support of both sides or the issue.

#### Should Norman respect the "ancient ways"?

Pro/Yes

Con/No

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

ESL

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SAE

LD



## Skills

### Developing a Relationship with Yourself

What question is Norman trying to settle within himself?  
Response: He is going to have to change his own attitude toward his own traditions is.)

### Test

Does Norman climb Thunder Mountain because his grandfather had a coup stick Norman would find it holy there)

Does Norman find the coup stick on the butte? (Heather-covered stick)

Does Norman's grandfather say anything about the coup stick? (a coup stick, used by warriors to touch enemies without killing)

Does Norman's mother tell him anything about the coup stick when he brings it home? (She tells him to take it out of the house)

Does Norman's father react to the coup stick? (He insists on keeping the coup stick in the place of honor as a sign of respect for Native American tradition.)

Unit 3 Resource Book  
Alternate Check Test, p. 6

box out from under the washstand to look for a hammer and nails.

"John," Sarah persisted, "did you hear me?"

"I heard," John answered quietly, but Norman knew his father was angry. "And I don't want to hear anymore."

Norman was surprised to hear his father speak in such a fashion. John was slow to anger, usually spoke quietly and tried to avoid conflict of any kind, but now he went on.

"This," he said holding the coup stick upright, "is a relic of our people's past glory when it was a good thing to be an Indian. It is a symbol of something that shall never be again."

Sarah gasped and stepped in front of her husband as he started to climb a chair to pound the nails in the wall above the window. "But that's what I mean," she said. "Those old ways were just superstition. They don't mean anything now—they can't because such a way of life can't be anymore. We don't need to have those old symbols of heathen ways hanging in the house!" She grabbed at the coup stick, but John jerked it out of her reach.

"Don't touch it!" he shouted and Sarah fell back against the table in shocked surprise. Norman took a step forward as if to protect

his mother. The boy had never seen his father so angry.

John shook his head as if to clear it. "Sarah, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to yell. It's just that the old ones would not permit a woman to touch such a thing as this." He handed Norman the stick to hold while he hammered the nails in the wall. Then he hung the stick above the window.

"Sarah," he said as he put the tools away, "think of the stick as an object that could be in a museum, a part of history. It's not like we were going to fall down on our knees and pray to it." His voice was light and teasing as he tried to make peace.

But Sarah stood stiffly at the stove preparing supper and would not answer. Norman felt sick. His appetite was gone. When his mother set a plate of food before him he excused himself saying, "I guess I'm too tired to eat," and went to his room.

But after he had undressed and crawled into bed he couldn't sleep. His mind whirled with the angry words his parents had spoken. They had never argued in such a way before. "I wish I had never brought that old stick home," he whispered and then pulled the pillow over his head to shut out the sound of the low rumble of thunder that came from the west.



## Another Voice

# Gifts

Michelle Whatoname

My grandma gave  
me her little  
dress that she used

to wear when she was  
5 little. My grandpa  
gave me the part

of land that he  
owned. My father  
gave me his best horse

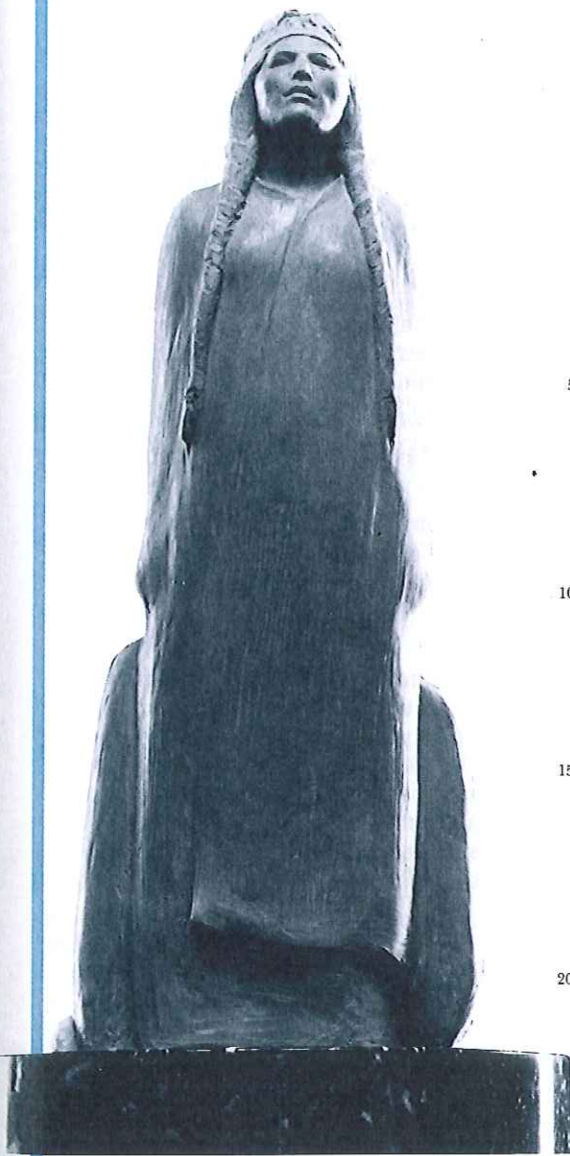
10 before he passed away.  
Now I still have the  
horse. Whenever I feed

or ride the horse, I think  
of my father. When I  
15 wear the dress my grandma

gave to me I think of  
her. My grandpa gave me  
part of his land. I always

clean and plant on it.  
20 These things were blessed first.

◀ *Earth Song* was cast in bronze by Edward J. Fraughton in 1993. How does this sculpture reflect the poet's feelings about keeping traditions?



## Art Study

Possible responses to question: The girl has her hair done in traditional style, and she wears traditional clothing.

**Question** Edward J. Fraughton sculptor of this bronze sculpture *Earth Song*. What might this title have to do with the girl in the sculpture? (Possible responses: The girl may represent the earth; the rock behind the girl shows her closeness to the earth.)

## Another Voice

### Gifts

**Question** What links the poem's speaker with her older relatives? (Possible responses: their possessions, which she has inherited; her memories of the past)

**Question** How is Norman's attitude toward his grandfather both similar and different from the speaker's attitude toward her relatives? (Possible responses: The speaker shows only respect for her relatives; Norman respects Matt T. but has doubts about some of his relatives)

Thunder Butte 231

## BUILDING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

### Exploring a Topic

The speaker remembers people by the gifts they left. Encourage students to consider what gifts reveal about the giver.

#### Activity Ideas

- Have the class create a time capsule. Ask each student to bring one gift that he or she would leave for a future generation—an item that he or she considers special and that reveals something about young people of this generation. Let students share their items and discuss why they selected them.

- Have students write or dictate paragraphs describing the best gift that they ever received. Encourage them to explain what was special about this gift. They might expand the activity by creating a second paragraph about the best gift they ever gave.

ESL

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**CONNECTIONS**

Students may try to comfort Norman by reassuring him that conflicts between old and new traditions are not new and he did nothing wrong. Some students may think old traditions should be rejected, as Grandpa does. Others may think old traditions should be respected even if they are different. Others may share their own views.

Responses: The author may be suggesting that the author is displeased by what is happening to Norman's family.

Responses: The willow stick Norman uses on his climb is probably traditional, while riding a horse instead of a stick is more practical. John keeps the stick. Accept other details.

Students might keep it to honor traditional Native American ways. Others might suggest the butte or persuade Matt Two to change his mind.

Students may say that she would tell Norman about Native American objects and traditions.

Students may vote for one or the other view, but many may say that they would both keep their individual traditions and adopt some ways that they

**LITERARY FOCUS: THEME**

Response that students can

3 Resource Book  
Thematic Organizer, p. 1

# After Reading

**Making Connections**

1. If you could talk to Norman at the end of the story, what would you say to him?
2. Of all the characters in this story, whose views of traditions are closest to your own? Explain.
3. What do you think was the **author's purpose** in ending the story with the rumble of thunder?
4. What evidence does the author provide that tells you Norman's family is keeping some traditional Native American ways of life and changing or dropping others? Refer to the chart that you made while you were reading the story.
5. If the choice were yours, what would you do with the coup stick?
6. The author of the poem "Gifts" is also a Native American. What kind of advice do you think she would give Norman?
7. 🗳️ Do you think different **groups** in the United States should keep their own tradition and ways of communicating or should they adopt American ways? Explain.

**Literary Focus: Theme**

Did you find yourself wondering why Norman had to climb the butte and why the discovery of a coup stick was so important? Then you were thinking about the theme of the story. The **theme** is the meaning behind the things that happen in a selection. You usually won't find a sentence that actually states the theme. You have to discover what it is from the events in the story. A story can even have several themes. A theme can be a comment on life—a description of how people act and the effect of their actions on themselves and others.

Read the statements below. Choose the one that best tells the theme of the story. You may want to write your own statement. Use specific events from the story to support the theme you choose.

1. Traditions are important because they help to establish who you are.
2. Traditions are not important in the modern world.
3. Old and new traditions are often in conflict.

**CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS**

**Social Studies** The characters' personal conflicts in feelings about Native American traditions grew out of more violent conflicts between Native Americans and European Americans as the latter moved into the natives' territory. Have students research some of these conflicts, perhaps focusing on some particular native group or area of the West. Suggest they find out about leaders of both sides, key battles, and feelings of both sides.

**Science** To the Native Americans, the thunder was a spiritual being. Encourage students to find out what really causes thunder and lightning. They might draw diagrams to show the movement of electric charges between clouds and earth.