The Medicine Bag
by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

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The Medicine Bag

by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

Who are the people that help you find out what’s important to you?
The Medicine Bag
Introducing the Story

Click on the title to start the video.
Martin loves to tell his friends exciting stories about his Sioux grandfather, Joe Iron Shell.

Did I ever tell you about the time my grandfather got really mad?
Martin allows his friends to imagine his grandfather is just like the stereotypical Indians in the movies.

When his friends finally meet the real Joe Iron Shell, who will be more of a disappointment: Martin or his grandfather?

[End of Section]
The Medicine Bag
Literary Skills Focus: Plot and Setting

**Setting** is a story’s description of time, place, and social customs.
The Medicine Bag
Literary Skills Focus: Plot and Setting

As you read, consider the importance of setting to this story’s:

- **plot**, or chain of related events
- **mood**, or overall feeling
- **tone**, the writer’s attitude toward characters and events

[End of Section]
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Reading Skills Focus: Comparing and Contrasting

When you **compare**, you look for ways in which things are alike.

When you **contrast**, you look for ways in which things are different.
The Medicine Bag
Reading Skills Focus: Comparing and Contrasting

Read, then listen to, the following text. What does it reveal about Sioux customs? How do these customs compare or contrast with your way of life?

She checked her move to embrace Grandpa, and I remembered that such a display of affection is unseemly to the Sioux and would embarrass him.

“Hau, Marie,” he said as he shook Mom’s hand. She smiled and took his other arm knowing that there is not a big deal of difference between herself and Raymond and that she can’t afford to throw stones.

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The Sioux do not show affection in public.
**The Medicine Bag**
Reading Skills Focus: Comparing and Contrasting

**Into Action:** Complete a chart like the one below to compare and contrast “The Medicine Bag” and “An Hour with Abuelo.”

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**The Medicine Bag**

**An Hour with Abuelo**
The Medicine Bag
Writing Skills Focus: Think as a Reader/Writer

Use It in Your Writing

Grandpa in “The Medicine Bag” describes several items that are important to him.

In other stories, you'll also learn about prized possessions.

In a notebook, record the details that convey the significance of these objects.
The Medicine Bag
Vocabulary

authentic adj.: genuine.

fatigue n.: exhaustion; tiredness.
The Medicine Bag
Vocabulary

If you are an **authentic** person, you are **true** to yourself and those around you.

Which of these people appears to be authentic?
On Tuesday, you stayed home sick from school, but on Wednesday, you brought in an **authentic** medical excuse.

Who signed the note?

a. your brother
b. your best friend
c. your doctor
On Tuesday, you stayed home sick from school, but on Wednesday, you brought in an **authentic** medical excuse.

Who signed the note?

a. your brother  
b. your best friend  
c. your doctor

Why is it illegal to use money that is not **authentic**?
If you are suffering from **fatigue**, you will be very **tired** and will want to sit or lie down.

What are some activities that cause you **fatigue**?
Which of the following items describes someone or something likely to be feeling the effects of fatigue?

a. a waitress at the end of her shift
b. a sleeping baby
c. a tree swaying in the breeze
The Medicine Bag
Vocabulary

Which of the following items describes someone or something likely to be feeling the effects of fatigue?

a. a waitress at the end of her shift
b. a sleeping baby
c. a tree swaying in the breeze
The End
What customs do you know that mark the passage into adulthood?

Why do many cultures celebrate this important time?
Meet the Writer
Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota and is a member of the Rosebud Sioux.

She taught English for many years and discovered inaccurate references to Native Americans in some of the books she was reading.

This discovery motivated her to start writing for children, hoping to inform them about Native American heritage.
Build Background
The Medicine Bag
Build Background

Some cultures and families mark the passage into adulthood by a ritual, such as the Jewish bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah ceremony or the Mexican American quinceañera.

These traditions are known as rites of passage.
In the Sioux tradition, a teenage boy becomes a man by making a vision quest—going off alone to find spiritual power and guidance through a dream. Sometimes he also finds an object believed to provide protection or power. This object—referred to as *medicine*—is considered sacred and is passed down from generation to generation.
In this story a boy named Martin finds a greater appreciation of the traditions of his ancestors when his Sioux grandfather, Joe Iron Shell, comes to visit.