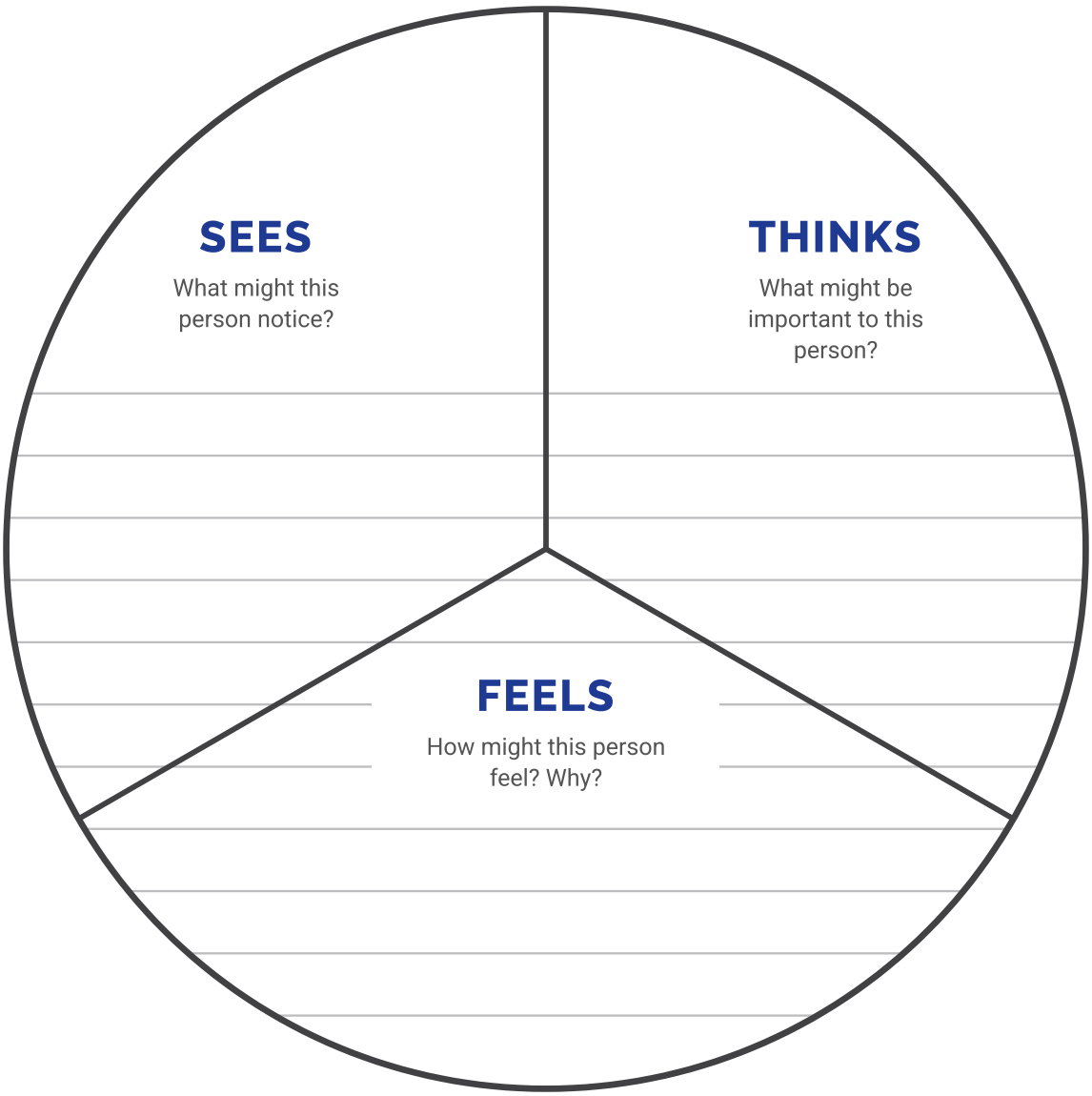
Student Name: _____

# More Than One Story: The Black Hills

Circle of Viewpoints

## My person

- [ ] A tourist visiting for the first time
- [ ] A park ranger who works at the memorial
- [ ] A stone carver working on the mountain in the 1930s
- [ ] A Lakota teenager whose family has lived near the Black Hills for generations




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# The Black Hills: Background to Read Aloud

TEACHER PAGE

Before it was carved, the Lakota called this mountain Tȟuŋkášila Šákpe, the Six Grandfathers. It stands in the Black Hills, which the Lakota call Ȟe Sápa. The Black Hills are sacred to the Lakota and to other nations, including the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

In 1868, the United States signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie with the Lakota and other nations of the Great Sioux Nation. The treaty set the Black Hills apart for their "absolute and undisturbed use." Any sale of the land needed the agreement of three-fourths of the adult men.

In 1874, an Army expedition led by George Custer found gold in the Black Hills, and miners rushed in. In 1877, Congress took the Black Hills. Only about one in ten adult men had signed an agreement, far short of the three-fourths the treaty required.

From 1927 to 1941, about 400 workers carved four presidents into the Six Grandfathers.

In 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the United States owed the Sioux nations payment for taking the land, plus interest going back to 1877: about $100 million. The Sioux nations refused it. They said the Black Hills were not for sale. The money has stayed in a government account ever since and is now worth more than $1 billion. It still has not been accepted. In 2026, all nine tribes in South Dakota backed a proposal to return federal land in the Black Hills.

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