

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Before we listen - Listen and discuss with your partner**

1. What does mean if a language or culture is dying?
2. Have any languages or parts of culture died in your culture? Which ones?
3. Are there any that are dying now? How can we stop cultures and languages from dying?

**While we listen - for discussion and writing**

1. Describe the way the government attempted to get rid of Native American language and culture in the past
2. How did this government policy impact the next generation of Native Americans?
3. Why do the younger native language speakers think it is important that they know their language?
4. What other potential benefits are there to native language immersion programs?
5. Give two reasons that some Montana legislators did not support the bill.

**After we listen, for conversation:**

- Do you think it is the state's responsibility to preserve the native languages they once destroyed?

- Why do you think preserving native languages is important?

Native Americans in [ ] were once [ ] to speak their native language in public schools. Now, Montana public schools will be [ ] Native American language immersion [ ] ,thanks to **new** state funding. Montana Public Radio's Amy Martin [ ] the historic **reversal**.

AMY MARTIN: Many people attending a recent **powwow** in Missoula can remember being [ ] for speaking a tribal language. Up through the 1970s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs ran boardingschools for Native American children. Those schools [ ] children from their homes and [ ] them from their language and culture. One of them was the father of 37-year-old Carrie Iron Shirt.

CARRIE IRON SHIRT: My dad, being in the boarding school, they were [ ] not to talk their language.

MARTIN: Iron Shirt says her father has bad [ ] of the treatment he received for speaking Blackfeet at school.

IRON SHIRT: He didn't want us to go through that, so my generation [ ] [ ] on the language.

MARTIN: After her daughter Jade was born, Iron Shirt tried to [ ] [ ] for that loss. She enrolled her in a private Blackfeet language immersion school. Now 16, Jade can speak [ ] with her grandparents. She says she's grateful she had the [ ] her mother was [ ].

JADE: Well, you learn about your culture more. And that's what's more important, you know? Because our culture is [ ].

MARTIN: (Speaking Salish).

APRIL CHARLO: (Speaking Salish) So you put like a (speaking Salish), and then like an S. But it's like a (speaking Salish). So it's a real fast S. (Speaking Salish).

MARTIN: (Speaking Salish).

CHARLO: There you go. (Speaking Salish).

MARTIN: (Speaking Salish).

CHARLO: There you go.

MARTIN: Making sure another of Montana's indigenous languages doesn't [ ] is April Charlo's [ ]. She was first [ ] to her tribe's Salish language in a seventh-grade class.

CHARLO: And I wanted more, and I couldn't have more until high school. But then it was only, you know, that 50-minute block a day. And we - and to have an **immersion** program in public school would have just been [ ].

MARTIN: Charlo is now the executive director of the Nkwusm Salish Language School on the Flathead Reservation. For her, immersion programs aren't only about [ ] of indigenous languages. She believes they are also an [ ] [ ] in closing the achievement gap. The high school graduation rate for American Indian students is almost 20 percentage points lower than for any other race or ethnicity in Montana.

CHARLO: The language and culture and tradition and ceremonies - they're interlocked, they're [ ]. So when a child is learning their language, it just goes right to that [ ].

MARTIN: And Charlo says that connection is what helps kids succeed.

CHARLO: And it's just a - it's a [ ]. It's a confidence in - I know my language. I know where I come from.

MARTIN: The only other state providing funding for native language immersion in public schools is [REDACTED], but that state has only one native language. In Montana, there are [REDACTED]. Democratic State Sen. Jonathan Windy Boy from the Rocky Boy Reservation **sponsored** the bill.

JONATHAN WINDY BOY: We're investing in a population of this state that has been **neglected** for too long. And I think that by investing in those human resources, I think is really - is going to be the best investment that we can provide for all of Montana to be a better place to live in.

MARTIN: The legislature capped that investment at just [REDACTED] per year. That's half of what Windy Boy originally [REDACTED] and only enough to partially support **a handful** of programs. The bill eventually passed by a wide margin, but did face [REDACTED] along the way.

ROGER WEBB: You know, I would rather see individuals, you know, learn [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

MARTIN: That's Republican State Sen. Roger Webb from Billings, who voted against the bill. He thinks the cost of immersion programs should be borne exclusively by the [REDACTED].

WEBB: If they really believe that that's an issue, it can be **remedied** on a home base.

(SOUNDBITE OF POWWOW)

MARTIN: But back at the powwow, Roy Big Crane says the state has a special responsibility to help [REDACTED] native languages.

ROY BIG CRANE: It was through the [REDACTED] of the government, the states, Christianity, public school systems, that helped almost **eradicate** the languages. So that circle might as well come back and the state might as well put some money into help bring it back.

MARTIN: Montana schools interested in creating these immersion programs must apply to receive funding, which will help  native language instructors. For NPR News, I'm Amy Martin in Missoula.