

Student 4: High Achieved

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The Dakota Access pipeline, funded by the Energy Transfer Partners corporation, was to be built from the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota through South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois. It is meant to transport up to 570,000 tons of crude oil per day along a 1,172-mile route. If completed, its path would cut through grounds sacred to the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. It would travel twice underneath the Missouri River, which the Lakota and Dakota people of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation depend on for drinking water, along with 17 million other people throughout the country.

Pipeline protests were reported as early as October 2014, when Iowa community and environmental activists presented 2,300 petitions to Iowa Governor Terry Branstad asking him to sign a state executive order to stop it. The Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa also objected to the route and formally lodged their opposition in early 2015. In a letter to the Iowa Utilities Board, Tribal chairwoman Judith Bender wrote: "As a people that have lived in North America for thousands of years, we have environmental concerns about the land and drinking water...Our main concern is Iowa's aquifers might be significantly damaged. And it will only take one mistake and life in Iowa will change for the next thousands of years. We think that should be protected, because it is the water that gives Iowa the best way of life."

On April 1st 2016, a group of people erected tepees and tents near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation to try and stop the gas pipeline operator from bulldozing what they say are sacred sites to construct the pipeline. The tribes also want to protect the Missouri River, the primary water source for the Standing Rock Reservation, from a potential pipeline leak.

In July 2016, a group of youth from Standing Rock Indian Reservation created a group called ReZpect our Water and organized a cross-country spiritual run from North Dakota to Washington, D.C., to present a petition in protest of the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Upon their arrival they delivered a petition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

By August, the social justice and human rights action had grown. There was now a "spirit" camp, Rosebud, near Sacred Stone, and many camps within camps, to accommodate a population that had swelled to at least 3,000. Another large camp, Oceti Sakowin, or Seven Council Fires, was set up across the Cannonball River, most of them from Native American tribes across the country.

The pipeline has united a number of different interest groups with a variety of objections, but Native Americans have been at the center of the opposition, particularly the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. Environmental activists are involved as they say the pipeline would contribute man-made climate change by building up the country's oil infrastructure. Celebrities and public figures like actor Shailene Woodley, actor Mark Ruffalo and civil rights activist Jesse Jackson have also travelled to North Dakota in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux.

LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, the Standing Rock Sioux historian, who had allowed the first tepees to stand on her land believes that that they have to stand up and protest so as to protect the land for the future. She said "We are expendable people. We always have been. But we have the answers on how to save the world. We have the

answers on how to live with this earth. We have to stand up and share that knowledge.”

Another person involved in the social action was [REDACTED] who has a point of view about the protests [REDACTED], referring to himself a water protector, believes that the sacrifices his relatives made for the land need to be fought for now. He said “Today we stand in solidarity with our relatives who have made a sacrifice on behalf of the land and water. We’re here to protect our treaty land.”

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