

LESSON 1

from **A Speech to Governor Stevens of Washington Territory (1854)** (speech)
by Chief Seattle

It matters little where we pass the **remnant** of our days. They will not be many. A few more moons; a few more winters—and not one of the **descendants** of the mighty hosts that once moved over this broad land or lived in happy homes, protected by the Great Spirit, will remain to **mourn** over the graves of a people once more powerful and hopeful than yours. But why should I mourn at the **untimely** fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and **regret** is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend with friend, cannot be **exempt** from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see

Every part of this soil is sacred in the **estimation** of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove, has been **hallowed** by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. The very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than to yours,

because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch. Even the little children who lived here and rejoiced here for a brief season will love these somber solitudes and at eventide they greet shadowy returning spirits. And when the last Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a **myth** among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will **throng** with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone.

Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.

• • Exercise 1: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each Master Word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the Master Words.

Master Words

Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don't know.

descendant

exempt

mourn

regret

throng

estimation

hallow

myth

remnant

untimely