

Heroes

Rap Lyrics

Written by Wab Kinew

Wab Kinew has won an Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Award for his hip-hop music and an imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival award and New York Festivals Finalist certificate for his journalism at the CBC. He was also nominated for a Future Leaders of Manitoba award in 2010. He has a BA in economics and has training in the traditional medicine ways of his Anishnabe people.

Before

Reflect on the title of the rap and look at the photo on the opposite page. What connections do you make between the two?

During

As you read, make a list of all the heroes the writer mentions. Highlight the heroes you have not heard of before.

Tips

sun dance: a spiritual ceremony practised among First Nations peoples, marked by several days of fasting and group dancing

I hear a lot of people say the Native community needs heroes ... well, we already have our heroes so let's just take a minute to remember them.

How did Louis Riel become a buffalo soldier?
Stood up to Canada, the father of Manitoba.
How did Fontaine get the apology?
He told his story then he said come on follow me.
That's the gift. I guess I'll pass it on,
like the teachings passed at the sun dance before dawn.
How did Waneek take a knife to the ribs,
then represent this country? Damn, she forgives.
And how does Leonard Peltier get out of bed each day?
Finding hope in the hopeless it's the Indian way.
And why did Tommy Prince fight for all Canadian people,
when right here at home he wasn't considered an equal?
Overseas he fought with the heart of a warrior
then came back home to be treated like a foreigner.
So yeah, I'm a live real lavish
for all the times you called my people savage.

How did Kateri know that she should keep up the faith?
Time to put the first Native saint in her proper place.

How did Peguis know he should help that white man?
Did he understand others would take his land?
But damn, the worst is over now.
The bro Adam Beach is on movie posters now.
This is big Wab, still reppin' the Rez.
Though I'm in the city no I won't soon forget
what the elders taught me: Always to share.
My people don't want the pride? Well, I don't care.
How did K'naan know the world need this song?
Well, I'll never know the answer so I just sing along like ...

Yeahhhhhhhhh, some true Native heroes right there.

If you haven't heard about them, learn about them.

I'd tell you to go read a book about them but they don't write about our heroes in the history books.

So go ask an elder, go ask Grandma, go ask Kookum.

Better yet ask Wab Kinew.

I've got opinions for days.

Gladly talk your ear off.

And this is just the beginning.

This could be a 500 bar song.

One bar for every year of oppression, one bar for every rhyme I got to make an impression ... on today's youth.

