

\* **SPARK**

# Four Corners

GRADES 9–12

**TYPE**  
**NARRATIVE**

This activity prompts students to use words related to community and identity to reframe ancestral stories of resistance, growth, and survival.

## **WHAT YOUR STUDENTS WILL LEARN**

Your students will reframe an ancestral and/or family story using words related to identity and community.

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED**

- 4 pieces of butcher paper or poster board
- Markers
- A way for your students to write—lined paper, computers, tablets, etc.

## **WHAT YOU WILL DO**

### **BEFORE YOU START**

Set up four pieces of butcher paper or poster boards around the classroom with markers easily accessible at each station. Every paper should be labeled with one of the following themes: identity, culture, family, and community.

### **STEP 1: Four Corners (15 Minutes)**

Divide the class into four groups, with each group starting at one of the four themes identified on the pieces of butcher

paper. Encourage students to write down any words that they associate with their starting theme; these topics should hopefully evoke strong responses from students. Allow them to self-identify as much as possible, rather than supplying ideas. There are no wrong answers, but there should be honest answers.

After 3-4 minutes at a station, have the groups rotate. Repeat the process until all groups have visited all the theme stations. The lists they have now made will likely reveal their values, beliefs, and loves. Many classmates might find similarities that had been previously unknown or unspoken—this is a simple, energizing way to revitalize the classroom community and prepare your students for the rest of the session.

**STEP 2: Writing Activity (20 minutes)**

As your class reflects on the word association activity, give them the following prompt.

- What is the dominant narrative about your ancestors? How has their story been most commonly told over time?
- How is that narrative different from what you have been taught by your family? Imagine a moment from their (a family member's) perspective.

As students begin writing, and if they're ever stuck or lacking inspiration, they should utilize some of the words from the word banks to help them find their footing.

If you have time, have your students share their writing with a partner or the class!