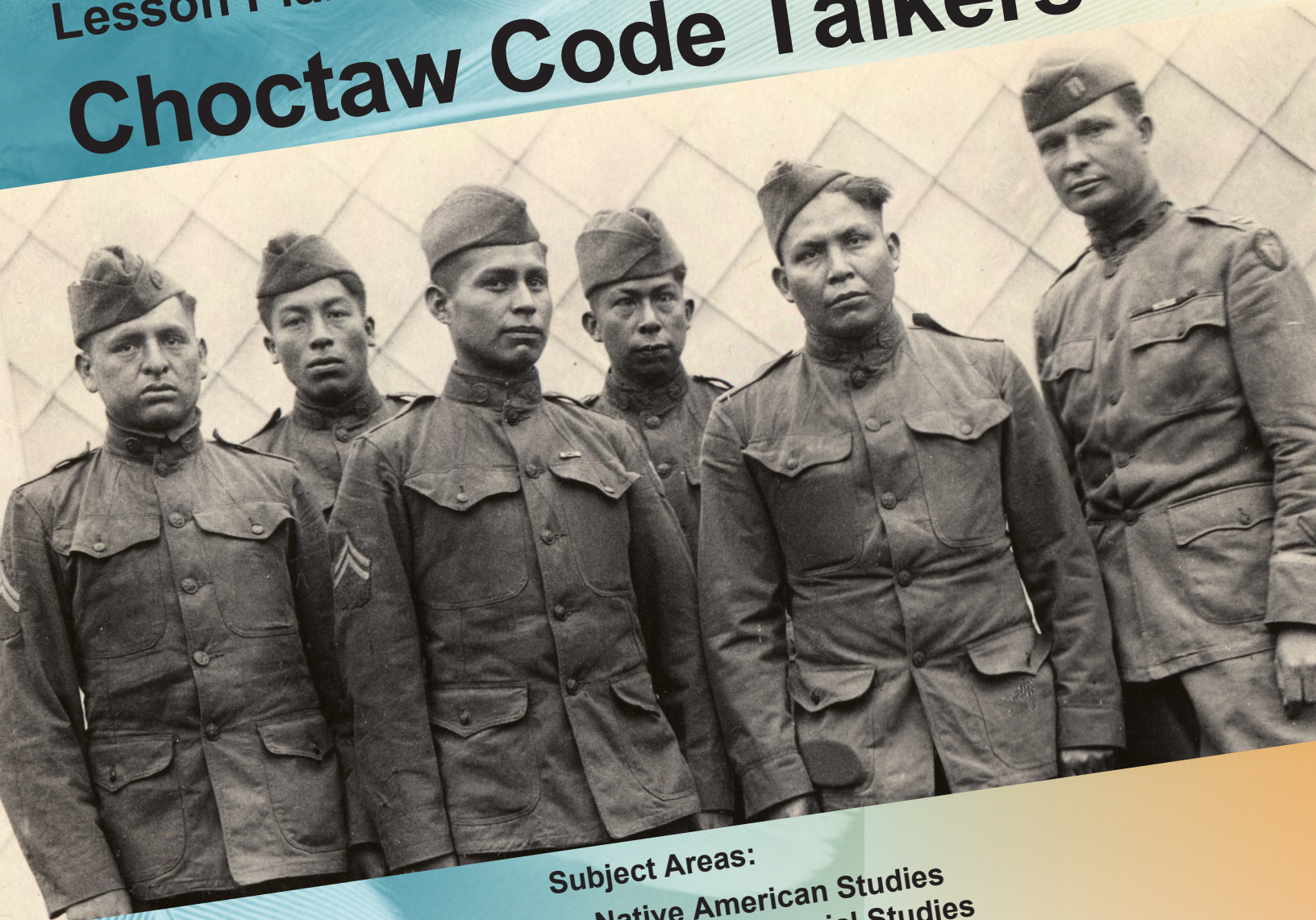


Lesson Plans - Grades 7-Higher Education
Choctaw Code Talkers



Subject Areas:
Ethnic Studies • Native American Studies
Reading and Language Arts • Social Studies

Procedural Notes for Educators

Film Synopsis

In 1918, not yet citizens of the United States, Choctaw men of the American Expeditionary Forces were asked to use their Native language as a powerful tool against the German Forces in World War I, setting a precedent for code talking as an effective military weapon and establishing them as America's original Code Talkers.

A Note to Educators

These lesson plans are created for students in grades 7 through higher education. Each lesson can be adapted to meet your needs.



**Robert S. Frazier,
grandfather of Code Talker
Tobias Frazier, and sheriff
of Jack's Fork and Cedar
Counties**

*Image courtesy of "Choctaw Code
Talkers"*

Objectives and Curriculum Standards

Objectives

These activities are designed to give participants learning experiences that will help them understand and consider the history of the sovereign Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and its unique relationship to the United States of America; specifically how that relates to the documentary, *Choctaw Code Talkers*.

Students will:

1. **Learn** about the cultural background, struggles, moral character, and triumphs of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Choctaw Code Talkers.
2. **Gain** appreciation and acceptance for differences in cultures, traditions, languages, and customs.
3. **Be active** questioners and critical readers while analyzing primary source documents and websites.
4. **Develop** an understanding of issues related to the forced removal and acculturation of American Indians into mainstream culture, especially targeting their native languages to further the assimilation policies of the era.
5. **Examine** multiple perspectives of the so-called “Indian Problem” and the harsh actions and procedures related to the education of American Indian children throughout U.S. History.
6. **Recognize** through active learning, that language and culture cannot be separated. Language is the expression of a culture, and must be protected, promoted, and preserved.

Curriculum Standards

From: Common Core State Standards produced by The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), June 2, 2010.

Language Standards 6-12 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech.
- c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of words, a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
- d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary.

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge, when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

English Language Arts Reading Standards

Key Ideas and Details:

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure:

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more primary source documents address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare

the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes:

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claims, establish the significance of the claims, distinguish the claims from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- b. Develop claims and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claims and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claims and counterclaims.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

- a. Introduce a topic and organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- c. Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic; convey a knowledgeable stance in a style that responds to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information

Historical Thinking Standards

Chronological Thinking:

1. Distinguish between past, present, and future time.
2. Identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story.
3. Establish historical temporal order in constructing historical narratives of their own.
4. Measure and calculate calendar time.
5. Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines.
6. Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration; explain historical continuity and change.

Historical Comprehension:

1. Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.
2. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
3. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses.
4. Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.
5. Read historical narratives imaginatively.
6. Appreciate historical perspectives.
7. Draw upon data in historical maps.
8. Utilize visual, mathematical, and quantitative data.

Historical Analysis and Interpretation:

1. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
2. Consider multiple perspectives.
3. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causes, including the importance of the individual, and the influence of ideas.
4. Draw comparisons across eras and regions in order to define enduring issues.
5. Distinguish between unsupported expressions of opinion and informed hypotheses grounded in historical evidence.
6. Compare competing historical narratives.
7. Challenge arguments of historical inevitability.
8. Hold interpretations of history as tentative.
9. Evaluate major debates among historians.
10. Hypothesize the influence of the past.

Historical Research Capabilities:

1. Formulate historical questions.
2. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources.
3. Interrogate historical data.
4. Identify the gaps in the available records, marshal contextual knowledge and perspectives of the time and place.
5. Employ quantitative analysis.
6. Support interpretations with historical evidence.

Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making:

1. Identify issues and problems in the past.
2. Marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances.
3. Identify relevant historical antecedents.
4. Evaluate alternative courses of action.
5. Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.
6. Evaluate the implementation of a decision.

Procedures & Materials/ Resources Needed by Activity

VisionMaker



1 Did You Know?

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 1 handout. Ask students to read over the facts and timeline.

Objectives: To better understand the Choctaw's history and culture.

Materials/Resources Needed: Copies of Activity 1 handout.

2 Vocabulary

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 2 handout.

Objectives: To increase student understanding of the Choctaw language, thus increasing cultural competency, and to key them in to the themes of *Choctaw Code Talkers*.

Materials/Resources Needed: Activity 2 handout.

3 Ideas for Action

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 3 handout. Ask students to choose one activity from the list and complete alone, or with a partner or group.

Objectives: Encourage students to be active and creative in making a difference.

Materials/Resources Needed: Activity 3 handout, paper, pencil/pen.

4 Writing Exercise

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 4 handout. Ask students to write openly about their feelings on the topics given.

Objectives: To get students to practice their writing skills,



The Great Seal of the Choctaw Nation.

"Our seal represents a smoking peace pipe-hatchet in one. And that really represents we're at peace, but we can go to war at a moment's notice."

— Choctaw Chief Gregory Pyle
(1997 - Present)

and to enhance students' critical thinking.

Materials/Resources Needed: Activity 4 handout, paper, pencil/pen.

5 What Would You Do?

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 5 handout. Lead a discussion using the questions on the handout.

Objectives: To get students thinking from the point of view of others, and to foster measured discourse.

Materials/Resources Needed: Activity 5 handout, pencil/pen, paper.

6 Art Exercise

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 6 handout.

Objectives: To get students to engage in creative ways with the concepts the film introduces.

Materials/Resources Needed: Activity 6 handout, pens, pencils, paints, colored pencils, any art supplies available.

7 Digital Exploration

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 7 handout. Assist students with the technology required to complete the activities.

Objectives: To encourage students to familiarize themselves with the Choctaw language, and to explore communication using modern technology.

Materials/Resources Needed: Microphones, tape recorders, video cameras, computers.



Picture of the Oklahombi Family; Joseph in his Army uniform sits on his front porch with his parents.

Image courtesy of Choctaw Code Talkers

8 Physical Education Exercise

Procedural Steps: Encourage students to engage in any of the activities from Activity 8.

Objectives: The goal of these activities is to reenact and recreate the physical endurance actions and skills that native Choctaws grew up with traditionally.

Materials/Resources Needed: A field, lacrosse equipment, archery equipment, various tools for creating makeshift stickball equipment, and blowguns and darts.

9 In Review

Procedural Steps: Distribute Activity 9 handout.

Objectives: To get students to reflect and understand the purpose of the activities they have engaged in.

Materials/Resources Needed: Activity 9 handout.

Educator Assessment

Student Assessment

- Please use a variety of assessments to determine the impact of these activities.

We'd Love to Hear From You

- Please take a moment to complete our Educational Survey online at www.visionmaker.org/edusurvey.

Additional Resources to Consider

- <http://www.choctawnation.com> – Oklahoma's Choctaw Nation
- <http://www.native-languages.org/choctaw.htm> – Choctaw Language Resources
- <http://www.choctaw.org/> – Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians



Randy Jacob pays his respects to Joseph Oklahombi's grave, with the documentary crew of Choctaw Code Talkers.

Image courtesy of Curt Mohl.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 1: Did You Know?

Facts About the Choctaw Indians

- The Choctaws comprise two present-day American Indian nations with common origins: the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. At the turn of the 21st Century, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma had over 127,000 members throughout the United States, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, descendants of those who resisted removal, numbered over 8,300. The Choctaw's original homeland was in what is now Mississippi, but having been forced from that land during the period of the Trail of Tears, they now inhabit Oklahoma, formerly known as Indian Territory prior to achieving statehood.
- The name for the Choctaws' adopted state of Oklahoma is actually from the Choctaw language. Okla is what they call themselves, meaning "the people", and homma means "red" in Choctaw. Thus, Oklahoma means Land of the Red People, named by Choctaw Chief Allen Wright, in 1866. There remains today a multitude of Choctaw words naming cities, towns, rivers, and other landmarks all through the original lands populated by the Choctaw people.
- The Choctaws were known to be peaceful people who lived simply and humbly as farmers, raising corn, beans, squash, melons, pumpkins and sunflowers. They gathered berries, seeds, nuts and fruits. They hunted for birds and small game with bows and arrows, and blowguns with darts. They also fished with arrows, nets, and spears.
- Their religious beliefs are a matter of private dreams or visions. They believe that the Sacred Spirit lives in the sky, far above our worldly existence, and keeps watch over his children.
- Choctaws were and are matrilineal, with the blood line going through the mother's family. Maternal uncles take care of educating their boys in traditional knowledge, skills, and other important matters.
- Choctaws settled conflicts between neighboring towns or tribes, on the stickball field, in a very aggressive game where each team tried to hit a deerskin ball beyond the other team's goal. Even with the violence, the outcome of the games kept peace within the nation.
- After the Treaty of Doak's Stand in 1820, revered Choctaw chief Pushmataha prophesied that the Choctaw "War Cry" would be heard in many foreign lands. This has since come to pass, as Choctaw tribesmen volunteered for service in the Spanish-American War in 1898, World War I in 1917, and World War II in 1941, and in wars around the world since 1945. The Choctaw soldiers were distinguished in them all.

Historical Choctaw Timeline of Major Events

1540	Spanish Explorers led by Hernando DeSoto are the first Europeans to make contact with the Choctaw.
1803	Under the Louisiana Purchase, the U.S. government agrees to buy the Louisiana Territory from France. The U.S. claims all lands between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.
1830	Under President Andrew Jackson, the U.S. Congress passes the Indian Removal Act. This act gave the president power to negotiate removal treaties with Indian tribes living east of the Mississippi. Under these treaties, the Indians were to give up their lands east of the Mississippi in exchange for lands to the west.
1831-1833	The Choctaw are the first of the southeastern tribes to be removed to Indian Territory during what came to be known as “The Trail of Tears”. Of the 12,000 Choctaws who migrate west, 2,000-4,000 die of disease or cold during the trip or soon after arrival. About 7,000 Choctaw stay behind, hiding in the swampy areas. Choctaw removal will last for over 70 years. Alexis de Tocqueville, a French philosopher, witnessed the removals in Memphis. He would later write, ‘In the whole scene there was an air of ruin and destruction, something which betrayed a final and irrevocable adieu; one couldn’t watch without feeling one’s heart wrung. The Indians were tranquil, but somber and taciturn. There was one who could speak English and of whom I asked why the Choctaws were leaving their country. “To be free,” he answered, could never get any other reason out of him. We ... watch the expulsion ... of one of the most celebrated and ancient American peoples.’
1832	Twenty-two year old George W. Harkins, who will later serve as Chief, wrote the “Farewell Letter to the American People” which denounced the removal of the Choctaw Nation to Indian Territory. This letter is still considered one of the most important documents in Native American History, saying “It is with considerable diffidence that I attempt to address the American people, knowing and feeling sensibly my incompetency; and believing that your highly and well improved minds would not be well entertained by the address of a Choctaw ... We as Choctaws rather chose to suffer and be free, than live under the degrading influence of laws, which our voice could not be heard in their formation ... We go forth sorrowful, knowing that wrong has been done.”
1863	Eahtonteube (a.k.a. Jack Amos), and other 1st Battalion of Choctaw soldiers of the Confederacy, whom the Choctaws sided with during the Civil War, rescue drowning Confederate soldiers after a train rushing to the Battle of Vicksburg derails into the Chunky Creek.

Historical Choctaw Timeline of Major Events (Continued)

- 1898** Congress passes the Curtis Act, which results in the loss of more Choctaw lands in Indian Territory. Another congressional law, enacted June 28, 1898, was sponsored by Charles Curtis, a mixed-blood Kansa Indian and senator from Kansas. With the passage of the Curtis Act, Congress took final control over affairs in Indian Territory.
- The Curtis Act helped weaken and dissolve Indian Territory tribal governments by abolishing tribal courts and subjecting all persons in the territory to federal law. This meant that there could be no enforcement of tribal laws and that any tribal legislation passed after 1898 had to be approved by the president of the United States.
- 1907** Oklahoma, formerly called Indian Territory, becomes a state.
- 1918** Choctaw Code Talkers used their native language to create a code within a code, thereby deceiving the Germans, and keeping America's battleground communications secret and secure—a key factor in shortening the war, and turning the tide for victory.
- 1924** American Indians became citizens of the United States of America.
- 1934** Indian Reorganization Act enacted. This legislation was an attempt to secure new rights for Native Americans on reservations. Its main provisions were to restore to Native Americans management of their assets (mostly land); to prevent further depletion of reservation resources; to build a sound economic foundation for the people of the reservations; and to return to the Native Americans local self-government on a tribal basis.
- 1972** The 1972 Indian Education Act was the landmark legislation establishing a comprehensive approach to meeting the unique needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students.
- The Indian Education legislation is unique in the following ways:
1. It recognizes that American Indians have unique, educational and culturally related academic needs and distinct language and cultural needs;
 2. It is the only comprehensive Federal Indian Education legislation that deals with American government involvement in Indian education;
 3. It focuses national attention on the educational needs of American Indian learners, reaffirming the Federal government's special responsibility related to the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives; and
 4. It provides services to American Indians and Alaska Natives that are not provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- 1975** Congress passes PL #93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, allowing tribes to develop their own systems of government

Historical Choctaw Timeline of Major Events (Continued)

- 1986** During the Choctaw Labor Day Festival, Chief Hollis Roberts presented posthumous Choctaw Nation Medals of Valor to the families of the Code Talkers, making it the first official recognition of the Choctaw Code Talkers of World War One.
- 1989** French Government presented Chief Roberts with the “Chevalier de L’Ordre National du Merite” (The Knight of the National Order of Merit), the highest honor France can bestow. This ceremony took place on the steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol, to recognize and honor the important, pivotal role the Choctaw Code Talkers played during World War I.
- 1988-Present** Revitalization of the Choctaw Language in Oklahoma is happening! Thanks to The School of Choctaw Language public school teachers are certified by the state of Oklahoma and have their tribal certification from the Choctaw Nation, making them highly qualified. They instruct up to 500 students on a daily basis during the school term. The classes are brought to the schools using the One-Net communication system, which allows the students to hear the spoken language in daily lessons given by the Choctaw language teachers. These courses also carry foreign language credit to count towards state graduation and college entrance requirement. Currently, the classes Choctaw 1 and 2 are offered. These classes are accredited by the State Department of Education.
- Though the teaching staff is limited, it is growing quickly. In the year of 2009-2010, the number of certified Choctaw Language teachers increased from 5 to 11. The week of May 16, the Choctaw Language became the first tribal language to be added to teaching certificates, once reading "Native Language," now reading "Choctaw."

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 2: Vocabulary

After viewing the film Choctaw Code Talkers, please take time to read the definition for each of the vocabulary words and phrases listed below.

Sovereignty: An internationally recognized power of a nation to govern itself; freedom from external control.

Treaties: Agreements between sovereign nations that granted special peace, alliance, trade, and land rights to the newcomers. Indian governments used treaties to confirm and retain rights such as the sovereign right of self-government, fishing and hunting rights, and jurisdictional rights over their lands. Treaties did not, as is commonly assumed, grant rights to Indians from the United States. Tribes ceded certain rights to the U.S. government and reserved the rights they never gave away.

Code: A system of symbols (as letters or numbers) used to represent assigned and often secret meanings.

Trench Warfare: Warfare in which opposing forces attack and counterattack from a relatively permanent system of trenches protected by barbed-wire entanglements.

Cryptography: Secret writing; the enciphering and deciphering of messages in secret code or cipher; also the computerized encoding and decoding of information.

Platoon: A subdivision of a company-sized military unit normally consisting of two or more squads or sections.

Battalion: A military unit composed of a headquarters and two or more companies, batteries, or similar units.

Regiment: A military unit consisting usually of a number of battalions.

Relinquish: To withdraw or retreat from; leave behind; to give over possession or control of; yield.

Cultural Transformation: The act, process, or operation of changing, or converting into another way of living.

Decipher: Decode; to make out the meaning of, despite indistinctness or obscurity.

Honor: A good name or public esteem; a showing of usually merited respect; recognition; a person of superior standing; one whose worth brings respect or fame.

Humility: The quality or state of being humble.

Valor: Strength of mind or spirit that enables a person to encounter danger with firmness; personal bravery.

Diplomacy: The art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations; skill in handling affairs without arousing hostility.

Dialect: a regional variety of language distinguished by features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation from other regional varieties and constituting together with them a single language.

Syntax: The way in which linguistic elements (as words) are put together to form constituents (as phrases or clauses).

Encode: To convert (as a body of information) from one system of communication into another; especially to convert a message into code.

Decode: To convert (as a coded message) into intelligible form; to recognize and interpret.

Transmission: The passage of radio waves in the space between transmitting and receiving stations.

Communications: A system (as of telephones) for transmitting or exchanging information; a system of routes for moving troops, supplies, and vehicles; personnel engaged in transmitting or exchanging information

Autonomy: The quality or state of being self-governing; especially the right of self-government; self-directing freedom and especially moral independence.

Assimilate: To absorb into the culture, moral attitudes, and habits of a population or group.

Choctaw Language Vocabulary and Code Terms

Shared with permission by Lillie Roberts

School of Choctaw Language, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

English Word	Code Word	Choctaw Word	Pronunciation
Regiment	tribe	okla	ok-la
1st Battalion	one grain of corn	tanch nihi achäffa	tanch ni-hi a-chäf-fa
2nd Battalion	two grains of corn	tanch nihi tuklo	tanch ni-hi tuk-lo
3rd Battalion	three grains of corn	tanch nihi tuchina	tanch ni-hi tu-chi-na
Company	bow	iti tanampo	i-ti ta-nam-po
Platoon	thong	hlibata	hli-ba-ta
Machine gun	little gun shoot fast	tanampushi tushpat tokahli	ta-nam-pu-shi tush-pat to-kah-li
Artillery	big gun	tanampo chito	ta-nam-po chi-to
Ammunition	arrow	uski naki	us-ki na-ki
Grenade	stone	täli	tä-li
Ration	food	ilhpa	ilh-pa
Attack	fight	ittibbi	it-tib-bi
Patrol	many scouts	tikba pisa lawa	tik-ba pi-sa la-wa
Casualty	scouts	tikba pisa	tik-ba pi-sa
Gas	bad air	mahli okpulo	mah-li ok-pu-lo
Army	army	täshka chipota	täsh-ka chi-po-ta
Soldier	warriors	täshka chipota	täsh-ka chi-po-ta
Code talker	signal speaker	chito anumpuli	chi-to a-num-pu-li

- The 'hl' and 'lh' combination of letters is called the 'aspirated L' sound. Speakers who do not use the aspirated sound use the sound of 'th' as pronounced in English.
- In the word for 'air', the h and l are pronounced separately.
- All the A's are pronounced as a in 'father'.
- O's are pronounced as o in 'for'. U's are short O's.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 3: Ideas for Action

Read through the following creative activities. Choose one that appeals to you to complete alone or with a partner or group. Prepare to share with classmates as audience.

1. How can we ensure that our country and our world values peace and harmony? Make a list of ways that we can encourage tolerance, mutual respect, personal responsibility, justice, and peace.

2. The Indian concept of leadership is a “servant-leader” who always puts the good of the people first, and acts more as a servant than a “boss”. Compare and contrast this concept with European views of leadership and current American state of affairs. Make a list of Pros & Cons, or create a Venn diagram to express your views of the similarities and differences.

3. After viewing the family members in *Choctaw Code Talkers* and their personal reflections, reveal the parts of your own family’s history that is worth remembering. Create something that will visually illustrate your reflections and considerations for the class.

- 4. Create a scenario in which you demonstrate the values of preserving and revitalizing Native Languages today? What action steps could you take?

- 5. Create a Codebook with a friend, and send communications back and forth. You may construct symbols, sounds, or some other creative form of communication.

- 6. The accounts of biological warfare are excruciating to even hear about. With a partner, debate the historical use of these weapons, and connect your debate to here and now. What should we do today to keep these agonizing biological weapons from destroying our people and our world?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 4: Writing Exercise

Read through the choices of writing exercises, and select a topic which excites your interest. You may choose from the following formats to create your written reflections of Choctaw Code Talkers:

- Accordion Book
- Biography of a Choctaw Code Talker
- Editorial
- Essay
- Letter to the Editor
- Newspaper or magazine article
- Interview of Code Talker, family member, president, a French citizen
- Play
- Poem
- Powerpoint
- Simulation/Role-play
- Speech
- Song

Potential Topics:

1. Who is a hero to you? Why? What makes a hero? Elaborate.
2. Write a letter as a citizen of France to a Choctaw Code Talker's family today.
3. Poison gas, mustard gas/biological and other weapons of today
4. "The blind leading the blind".
5. Reflect and respond in a similar style to Otis Leader's poem that was featured in *Choctaw Code Talkers*, or in another poetic form, story or song.
6. Write journal entries based on any events seen in the *Choctaw Code Talkers*. Your journal could be one that the Code Talkers kept in secret. Or you could be a child/adult in France, torn by the destruction of war. Choose a perspective with which you can identify.
7. After viewing *Choctaw Code Talkers*, articulate your own thoughts in a letter to the editor which professes your views on what was done, what was not done, and what you think ought to be done today, even though it is ninety years later.

A Poem of World War I

by Otis Leader

(Featured in Choctaw Code Talkers)

It was at Bethmont,
A cool November morn,
I met a chap all down and out,
Desolate and forlorn.

He didn't know a word of ours,
Nor I a word of French,
So there we sat, both he and I,
Each smiling from the trench.

I looked at him a moment.
He grinned from ear to ear.
He says, 'Bonjour, Sammy'
And I say 'Souvenir'.

He took my only cigarette.
I took his cheap cigar.
And then the fireworks started
And lasted for an hour.

I showed him next my kiddies,
And then he showed me his.
The funny little Frenchies
With hair all in a frizz,

'Annette and petite Louise', he says,
And the tears begin to fall.
We were comrades then, we knew,
Though we hardly spoke at all.

Soon after we were parted,
Each to follow his own star,
And have never seen each other,
But that's the way of war.

Since the World War closed,
I often wondered if
God has spared him long enough
To see Annette and Louise.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 5: What Would You Do?

As you read the following situations and circumstances, try to put yourself in the other person's/persons' shoes/moccasins. Using all the knowledge you have acquired in this study, reveal what your innermost thoughts, feelings, reactions, and responses would be/would have been in the same or similar circumstance.

1. If you had been a hero in WWI, with this tremendous feeling of victory and pride, particularly for your Native language and culture, could you have kept this information secret all your life? What are the reasons you believe the Choctaws were asked to keep the secrecy about using their native tongue to help win the war?
2. You cannot even vote because you are not a citizen of the United States. Why have you nevertheless volunteered to serve in WWI?
3. How does the history of your ancestors give you fortitude and optimism?
4. What qualities of Choctaw people will you try to emulate? Try to describe your plan, and how you will work to achieve its success?
5. What would you have done as a student, parent, grandparent, or teacher in the government boarding school situations when your language, hair, clothing, homes were replaced with European clothing, haircuts, English only, and dorm life with military drills and marching daily?
6. Write a letter to the editor of your paper, your legislators, and the president about the language policies that prevailed in government boarding schools, and the reason we outsmarted the Germans with our Native language encoded during WWI, and also World War II. Persuade them to respect the languages which cannot be separated from the cultures of our Native People.
7. There are those who angrily oppose any language other than English in the United States. With your new understanding, convince them creatively to understand the relevance and importance of keeping one's first language alive. Be sure you think of more reasons than just national security. Put yourself in a child's position to feel like something is inferior with his life, culture, and language . . . what would make a difference to these people?
8. What reasons would you give to persuade someone to become as fluent as possible in his/her Native Language?

9. If you had lived in the 1800s, around "Removal" time, pick an event from the Historical Chronology of Events, analyze the entire situation, and create your own plan to solve problems as you see fit.
10. Traditionally, then and now, American Indian people do not tell of their own accomplishments. We must tell their story. How would you propose to honor these inventive, clever, skilled patriot warriors?



Bertram Bobb in the Church with his Choctaw Hymn Book.

Image courtesy of Bill Sheehy.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 6: Art Exercise

Examine the numerous choices of art activities. Choose one that resonates with you.

1. Create a portrait using photos as resources to honor a Choctaw Code Talker.
2. Illustrate the feeling of keeping this “classified” secret for these many years.
3. The French and Choctaws have always been friends. Demonstrate through art, these moments and feelings in history. Storyboard if you like.
4. Using science and art, illustrate or demonstrate the problems facing the Allies in WWI regarding “secure communications”



Choctaw Bible; Belonged to Tobias Frazier.
Image courtesy of Bill Sheehy.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 7: Digital Exploration

Look back at the list of Choctaw terms from the Vocabulary Activity, Activity Handout 2. Then choose one of the following activities to familiarize yourself with the Choctaw language, or with the difficulty of battlefield communication.

1. Record yourself or another student practicing the Choctaw language.
2. Record yourself communicating with another student in the Choctaw language – convey something of importance as if in the midst of battle.
3. Record on audio, video, or both, yourself communicating with another student in a public place or crowded area, to simulate the difficulty of communicating above the sounds of battle. This can be in English, or using the Choctaw words from Activity 2.



Bill Sheehy shooting the grounds on Wheelock Academy.

Image courtesy of Matt Woodson.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 8: Physical Education Exercise

The following activities should be developed and played with as much cultural background applied to the games as possible. While it may not be possible to obtain an actual “chunkey” disk or stickball apparatus, students may use innovative ideas to create their own playing pieces or equipment. The goal of these activities is to reenact and recreate the physical endurance actions and skills that native Choctaws grew up with traditionally.

1. Stickball was a game that Choctaws played to work out conflicts within the tribe. Reenact a stickball game using today’s lacrosse sticks, borrowed from a physical education department or a local team. Stickball sticks and balls could also be fashioned out of old broomsticks, baskets, net, or other household items. Perhaps you might use internet research to find ways to make the equipment necessary to play the game.
2. Make arrangements to go to an archery range or to bring in archery equipment for the students to use. Study techniques for pulling the bow and practice the skills necessary to become proficient with a bow and arrow.
3. Hold a race for runners. Brainstorm before the race about the necessary skills and abilities, both physical and mental, needed to be a runner. After the race, have a period of quiet reflection about the necessity of keeping in shape for the unknown future we face as human beings.



This photo was taken upon returning to the United States from fighting in WWI on June 7, 1919.

Image courtesy of Stacy Mahoney

4. Walking can keep your heart healthy. Organize a walking club at school. Estimate the number of miles walked from Mississippi to Oklahoma and see who can walk that far during the school year.
5. Challenge students to create board games that integrate physical activities with academic tasks and cultural knowledge about the Choctaw. Then have a game day in which all students get to play games together.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choctaw Code Talkers Activity 9: In Review

Top 8 Takeways to Remember

1 Sovereignty: Sovereignty is an internationally recognized power of a nation to govern itself. Choctaws have a Nation-to-Nation relationship with the United States. When these rights were not respected, there were major implications for the Choctaws and other tribes. Imagine how you would have felt if you had been treated in the ways that the American Indians were.

2 Language: The Native American Languages Act has three important implications. First, it is a continuation of the policy of Indian self-determination that has been effect over the last twenty years. Second, it is a reversal of the historical policy of the United States Government to suppress Indian languages in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other schools. And third, it is a reaction to the attempt to make English the official language of the United States. The Act represents the grass roots support of Indian people for their native heritage. Language and Culture are inseparable. There are concepts in Indian languages which cannot be translated into English.

3 Culture: Many separate and unique cultures exist in this land of diversity, the United States of America. Our Native cultures were here, and have never tried to change any

of the “visitors” cultures; however, there has been an unending chain of traumatic and harrowing experiences for the native people of this land. They shared their resources, their knowledge, and their land, which they never thought could be owned by anyone, rather they were stewards of this beautiful continent. Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society. Thus, culture includes many societal aspects: language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organizations, and institutions, such as family, education, religion, work, and health care.

4 Treaties: Treaties were agreements between sovereign nations that granted special peace, alliance, trade, and land rights to the newcomers. Indian governments used treaties to confirm and retain rights such as the sovereign right of self-government, fishing and hunting rights and jurisdictional rights over their lands. Treaties did not, as is commonly assumed, grant rights to Indians from the United States. Tribes ceded certain rights to the United States government and

reserved the rights they never gave away. By looking at the words of the treaties in succession, a definite pattern is extremely apparent. Westward Expansion and other “polite” terms were used for taking the land from the American Indians.

5 Spirituality: In the film Choctaw Code Talkers, much discussion was shared about the deep spirituality of the Choctaw Indians. The lack of a common language created huge misunderstandings about the spiritual beliefs of the Choctaw people from the first writings about them as “sun worshippers”, as they pointed to “Heaven” where they believed the Sacred Spirit, their Creator, looked over them and cared for them.

6 Choctaw Language: In the film Choctaw Code Talkers, it is apparent that the Germans were masters of decoding any code used so far in World War I...until the Choctaws were asked to use their language. From that point on, the war turned in favor of the Allies, and the Choctaw Code Talkers were credited with helping to win the war by creating a code within the code of their native language. The irony of this is that the U.S. government had enforced a policy to destroy the languages and cultures of Native Americans through the process of

boarding schools. Thank goodness they were not successful in eradicating the Choctaw language.

7 Government Policies: Assimilation, Ethnocide, Removal (Trail of Tears) and public attitudes all worked together to create a terrible situation for the American Indians of our country. They were here, and had their own societies and belief systems, which were all considered primitive and inferior by the “visitors” who never left, and wanted all the resources for themselves. They took lands by wars, betrayals, and other methods to get this beautiful land and its resources for themselves. They never rewarded the Choctaw Code Talkers with medals as they promised. Only now, is the story being told, and perhaps a belated justice will be given to the family members who survive them.

8 International Relations: Other countries, notably France, have always honored and respected the Choctaw Indians as a sovereign nation of people. It is stated in the film that only the French have truly recognized and appreciated the Choctaws and their service during World War I. A Nation to Nation relationship still exists, and there is harmony and friendship between these nations.

Credits

About the Author



Linda Skinner is an Oklahoma Choctaw, professional educator of 39 years, who has served as a teacher of preschool, kindergarten, 2nd grade, 4th grade, and university. She has conducted professional development workshops, and created publications for teachers and students, during these many years. She has worked all over North America to collaborate with tribes and public schools in developing culturally relevant, creative curriculum which is authentic,

tribal specific, and related to curriculum standards. Her work includes being an artist-in-residence in storytelling and puppetry, featuring native oral traditions. She is a teacher of the gifted and talented in Edmond, Oklahoma today, and very involved with her local Indian Education program and award-winning JOM Summer School. Indian Education and public education are her passion because non-Indians must also understand Indian history and cultures-beyond that of the textbook "histories" written by non-Indians and stereotypical activities of our past, so that America will be able to truly demonstrate the values we profess: Tolerance, Mutual Respect, Responsibility, Peace, and Justice.

She has worked with the Mississippi Band of Choctaws and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and served the Department of Teacher Education for the Oklahoma State Department of Education. She was recruited to be the Director of Indian Education for the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Because her own father experienced whippings as punishment at government boarding schools for speaking Choctaw, she did not grow up with her native language, which is regrettable and a deep personal loss. Consequently, when serving as the Director of Indian Education, she was an activist for Native Language policies, and by 1990, Choctaw languages (and other native languages) were "allowed" to be taught and students could earn "foreign" language credits in Oklahoma schools. She is ecstatic to be able to contribute her efforts in bringing this powerful story of the honor and valor of the Choctaw Nation Code Talkers to the public. Her father, DeRoy Skinner, Sr., volunteered for World War II, serving in the Pacific Theatre. She dedicates this work to his honor, and for all our brave warriors, true patriots, who have so loyally served this country they love so much throughout every war.

About the Producer



Valerie Red-Horse, who is of Cherokee ancestry, is the owner/founder of Red-Horse Native Productions, Inc. which has become the pre-eminent collaborator with American Indian Tribal Nations to bring important Native stories accurately and respectfully to the screen. Red-Horse's body of work spans over two decades of film and television content creation and

production; always proving insightful, sensitive and unique perspectives for both the historical and contemporary indigenous story. From the Company's premiere feature film—Naturally Native, an official Sundance Festival selection which Red-Horse wrote, produced, co-directed, starred in and distributed, to Pop Hunter's Dew Drop Inn, a PBS/NAPT short about an American Indian owned legendary night club—Red-Horse consistently brings unique access, community-based insight and a depth of creative experience to any production. Perhaps best known for her award-winning True Whispers: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers, a PBS nationally broadcast documentary produced with Gale Anne Hurd of Valhalla Motion Pictures, Red-Horse is currently in pre-production as director/producer for the feature film Standing Bear, depicting the first American Indian Human Rights Trial in the United States. Red-Horse's collaborations have included projects funded by or working with the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, the Navajo Nation, the Powhatan Renape Nation, the Chumash Band of Mission Indians, the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay, the Choctaw Nation and the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska.

About VisionMaker

VisionMaker, a service of Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT), with major funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), is the premier source for quality Native American educational and home videos. Profits from video sales are invested in new NAPT productions. NAPT shares Native stories with the world through support of the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media.

- www.nativetelecom.org
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