



# Island Hopping: The Story of Ned Begay

## *Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two*

<b>Author</b>	Jessica Medlin
<b>Grade Level</b>	5
<b>Duration</b>	2 class periods

### National Standards

#### GEOGRAPHY

##### Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

##### Element 4: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places

### AZ Standards

#### ELA

##### Reading Literature

##### Key Ideas and Details

**5.RL.1** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**5.RL.3** Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact). **Writing Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

**5.W.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

##### Range of Writing

**5.W.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### Other Arizona Standards

#### GEOGRAPHY

##### Global interconnections and spatial patterns are a necessary part of geographic reasoning.

**5.G4.1** Describe how economic activities, natural phenomena, and human-made events in one place or region are impacted by interactions with nearby and distant places or regions.

#### HISTORY

##### Cycles of conflict and cooperation have shaped relations among people, places, and environments.

**5.H2.1** Use primary and secondary sources to summarize the causes and effects of conflicts, resolutions, and social movements throughout the historical timeframe.

Key conflicts can include but are not limited to cultural conflicts, political conflicts, economic conflicts, military conflicts, and conflicts related to resource use and availability

##### Patterns of social and political interactions have shaped people, places, and events throughout history and continue to shape the modern world.

**5.H4.1** Use primary and secondary sources to describe how diverse groups (racial, ethnic, class, gender, regional, immigrant/migrant) shaped the United States' multicultural society within the historical timeframe.

### Overview

Navajo Code Talkers played an important role for the U.S. when fighting in World War II. The account

of the Code Talkers is both captivating and an example of American patriotism. Students follow the story of the fictional character, Ned Begay, as he leaves his homeland of the Navajo Nation to serve as a Code Talker for the U.S. Marine Corps.

## Purpose

In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of the Navajo contribution to the United States during World War II while following the story of the Ned as he starts out at a boarding school and later becomes a U.S. Marine who learns the Navajo Code. The students will understand how Ned's background and culture helped him survive and become successful in his education and his experience as a Marine.

## Materials

- Code Talkers Locations map  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/Code\\_Talkers\\_Location\\_Map.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/Code_Talkers_Location_Map.pdf)
- World map  
<https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/World-pa.pdf>
- Southwestern U.S. Indian Reservations  
<https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/SWRES.pdf>
- Arizona's Indian Reservations map  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ\\_Reservations.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ_Reservations.pdf)
- 1 Book: *Code Talker: A Novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two* by Joseph Bruchac
- Pictures of the Navajo Reservation (from 1930s and 40s if possible)
- US wall map
- Journal for each student (or notebook paper as an alternative)
- Atlases (optional to find Hawaii)

## Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Locate the Navajo Reservation on a map
2. Compare and contrast their first day of school to Ned's first day of boarding school
3. Describe how knowledge of Arizona's desert helped Ned become successful as a Marine.
4. Locate places the character travels in the book *Code Talkers*.
5. Describe the climate of the Pacific islands Ned visited.
6. Calculate the distance Ned traveled on one leg of the journey using the map scale
7. Explain the importance of the Navajo Code Talkers in World War II.

## Procedures

*Note to Teachers: While many activities can be done with this book, the following are ways to incorporate geographic learning as the book is read and discussed. This lesson can be as short as one period if only a chapter is read and learning activities are completed or it can be multiple days through the whole book and multiple days of suggested learning activities are completed.*

*Additional Information on Native American Code Talkers can be found in a different lesson called The Unbreakable Code.*

<https://geoalliance.asu.edu/node/134>

### Chapter One Suggested Activities

1. Journal Entry: Ask the students to write down what it was like on their first day of school (kindergarten). Be sure to have them describe their feelings and the setting.
2. Show the students the *Code Talker* book. Explain the story of Ned Begay (a fictional character who could represent a typical experience for one of the Native American code talkers) and give background on Navajo Code Talkers.  
Ned Begay was 6 years old when his family decided it was best that he left for boarding school. This school was 100 miles away, and he didn't know anyone at the school. He would only go home for the long vacations. At the boarding school he was not allowed to use the Navajo language but was forced to only use English. He was taught to forget his culture. It was very difficult, but he worked hard at school. Eventually he joined the Marines and became a Navajo Code Talker.
3. Read Chapter One.

### Chapter Two Suggested Activities

1. Have the students locate Arizona on a wall map. Project the map "Arizona's Indian Reservations" and have students identify the Navajo Indian Reservation.
2. Show pictures of the reservation. Discuss what type of lifestyle Navajos must have from living in the desert area. Have students write down in two columns in their journals the human and physical characteristics of the reservation.
3. Read Chapter Two, "Boarding School," to the class. Ask the class to verbally compare and contrast Ned's experience to their own as written in their first journal entry.

### Chapter Thirteen Suggested Activities

1. Distribute the Code Talkers Location map to students. Tell them that they will be keeping this map in their journals as the book is being read.

2. Distribute atlases to students or project a world map, so students can locate Hawaii. Have the students place a number 1 next to Hawaii on the Code Talker Locations map. Hawaii was the first place Ned was stationed.

### Chapter Fifteen Suggested Activities

1. Read aloud pages 98-100 from Chapter 15 "Field Maneuvers." Stop at the break on pg. 100. This story tells of how Ned had to survive on the desert side of Hawaii for two days without water.

2. Have students make two columns in their journals labeled Big Island and Arizona. Have students write down how the places were alike and different in terms of culture and climate. Then have the students explain why Ned and the other Navajos were so successful at this exercise.

### Chapters Sixteen to End Suggested Activities

1. Read the rest of the book. Have students describe in their journals the islands as Ned travels in the Pacific. (p.101 Guadalcanal, p.120 Bougainville, etc).
2. Discuss what it must have been like for Ned to leave Arizona and acclimate himself to a tropical island. Encourage students to explain why culture of the Pacific islands (including clothing and traditions) reflect the climate.
3. Have the students number on the map in their journals, the main locations where Ned traveled.
  1. Hawaii
  2. Guadalcanal
  3. Bougainville
  4. Guam
  5. Iwo Jima
  6. Okinawa
  7. San Francisco
  8. Arizona (back home after the war)
4. Have the students draw a line following Ned's journey. Have the students use the scale on the map to figure out the mileage from Hawaii to Guadalcanal.
5. Closure: Re-read Chapter Eleven aloud. Have the students write a journal entry on why code talkers were an important contribution to the U.S. war effort.

## Assessment

Students will score 80% or higher when numbering the locations correctly for a geography grade.

Students will score 4 or higher on the 6 Writing Traits Rubric on the journal writing activities. The traits that can be measured are Ideas and Content, Organization, Conventions, and Word Choice.

## Extensions

Write a letter home from Ned describing any experience from the book.

Explore [www.codetalkers.org](http://www.codetalkers.org) to learn about Choctaw Code Talkers

Discuss the final chapter. This chapter relates how Ned was treated when he returned from serving in the war.

## Sources

Bruchac, Joseph. *Code Talker: A Novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2005.

Code Talkers Locations map

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World map

<https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/World-pa.pdf>

Southwestern U.S. Indian Reservations

<https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/SWRES.pdf>

Arizona's Indian Reservations map

[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ\\_Reservations.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ_Reservations.pdf)

Photos of the Navajo nation can be found at <https://www.loc.gov/> In Search Box, enter Navajo 1930 or Navajo 1940 and in the pull down menu select Photos, Prints, Drawings. Look for photos that show human and physical features.