



Island Hopping: The Story of Ned Begay

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

Students learn geographic concepts through the story of Code Talkers in WWII.

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Grade Level	4
Duration	2 class periods

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

ELEMENT FOUR: PLACES AND REGIONS

4. The physical and Human Characteristics of Places

Arizona Geography Strand

Grade 4

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

PO 2 Interpret political and physical maps using the following map elements:

e. scale

PO 7 Locate physical and human features in Arizona using maps, illustrations, or images.

Concept 2: Places and Regions

PO 1 Describe how the Southwest has distinct physical and cultural characteristics.

Other Arizona Standards

Grade 4

Strand 1 American History

Concept 8 Great Depression and World War II PO 3. Describe the impact of World War II on Arizona (Native American contributions)

ELA Common Core Standards

Reading

Literature

Key Ideas and Details

4.RL.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text

4.RL.3

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Writing

Research to Build and Present

Knowledge

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

Apply *grade 4 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., "Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions].").

Range of Writing

4.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.

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—one per student and transparency for overhead with Hawaii is marked and labeled
- Map of Arizona's Indian Reservations—transparency for overhead
- 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.

Chapter One

1. Journal Entry: Ask the students to write down what it was like on their first day of school (kindergarten). Describe their feelings and the setting.
2. Show the students the *Code Talker* book. Explain the story of Ned Begay 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

1. Have the students locate Arizona on a wall map. Use the map "Arizona's Indian Reservations" and identify the Navajo Indian Reservation on the overhead.

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 journal entry.

Chapter Thirteen

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 use an overhead of the Code Talker Location 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

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

1. Read 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 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 like Ned were an important contribution to the U.S. war effort.

Assessment

Students will get 80% or higher of the map 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/.Content, Organization, Conventions, and Word Choice.

Extensions

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

Explore www.codetalkers.org

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.

Maps are from the Arizona Geographic Alliance <http://alliance.la.asu.edu/azga/>

Photos of the Navajo nation can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov> In Search Box, enter Navajo 1930 or Navajo 1940 Look for photos that show human and physical features.