

Word Warriors

The Code Talkers of Oklahoma

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Grade Level	9th Grade	**Time Frame**	90 minutes
Subject	Social Studies		
Course	Oklahoma History		

Essential Question

Who were the code talkers from Oklahoma? What were their contributions? Why is it important for us to acknowledge their contributions?

Summary

This lesson introduces students to the American Indian code talkers from Oklahoma who heroically defended the United States in both World Wars. By viewing a documentary, playing a matching game, reading an article, and analyzing an excerpt from a graphic novel, they will also learn the stories of some individual code talkers from the Comanche, Pawnee, Choctaw, Seminole, and other tribal nations.

Snapshot

Engage

Students watch a video of D-Day that features a reenacted conversation between two code talkers.

Explore

Students play a matching game to learn about the codes created and used by Choctaw and Comanche soldiers.

Explain

Students read an article and complete a Stop and Jot activity as a guide.

Extend

Students use an It's OPTIC-al graphic organizer to guide them as they analyze an excerpt from a graphic novel about code talkers.

Evaluate

Students write a Two-Minute Paper summarizing what they have learned about Oklahoma code talkers.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
IDT402: Identify a clear central idea or theme in somewhat challenging passages or their paragraphs
IDT403: Summarize key supporting ideas and details in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

OKH.5.9: Summarize and analyze the impact of mobilization for World War II including the establishment of military bases, prisoner of war installations,and the contributions of Oklahomans to the war effort including the American Indian code talkers and the 45th Infantry Division.

Attachments

- Annumpa-Luma-Code-Talker-Word-Warriors - Spanish.docx
- Annumpa-Luma-Code-Talker-Word-Warriors - Spanish.pdf
- Annumpa-Luma-Code-Talker-Word-Warriors.docx
- Annumpa-Luma-Code-Talker-Word-Warriors.pdf
- It-s-OPTIC-al-Graphic-Organizer-Word-Warriors - Spanish.docx
- It-s-OPTIC-al-Graphic-Organizer-Word-Warriors - Spanish.pdf
- It-s-OPTIC-al-Graphic-Organizer-Word-Warriors.docx
- It-s-OPTIC-al-Graphic-Organizer-Word-Warriors.pdf
- Lesson-Slides-Word-Warriors.pptx
- Matching-Game-Word-Warriors - Spanish.docx
- Matching-Game-Word-Warriors - Spanish.pdf
- Matching-Game-Word-Warriors.docx
- Matching-Game-Word-Warriors.pdf
- Teacher-s-Guide-It-s-OPTIC-al-Graphic-Organizer-Word-Warriors.docx
- Teacher-s-Guide-It-s-OPTIC-al-Graphic-Organizer-Word-Warriors.pdf
- Word-Warriors-Stop-and-Jot-Article - Spanish.docx
- Word-Warriors-Stop-and-Jot-Article - Spanish.pdf
- Word-Warriors-Stop-and-Jot-Article.docx
- Word-Warriors-Stop-and-Jot-Article.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Matching Game Handout (attached; one per group)
- Article-Stop and Jot handout (attached; one per student)
- Excerpt from "Annumpa Luma: Code Talker" (attached; one per student)
- It's OPTIC-al Graphic Organizer handout (attached; one per student)
- It's OPTIC-al Graphic Organizer (Teacher Guide) (attached)
- Pens or pencils
- Paper
- Internet access

10 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Preparation

Prior to teaching the lesson, print and cut out as many copies of the attached **Matching Game** handout cards as needed to accommodate the groups of four you will be creating during the Explore phase.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson.

Begin by telling students they will be watching a clip from a documentary, but don't tell them anything more. The name of this documentary is "Comanche Code of Honor." This resource was produced by the Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Display **slide 2.** Have students watch the video from the 25:14 mark through the 27:20 mark. Ask them to listen carefully to examples of recreated conversations.

Once you have stopped the video, have students answer the following questions:

- *What do you think is going on here?*
- *Which war do you think this is?*
- *Where do you think this took place?*
- *What language do you think was being spoken?*
- *Why do you think they were speaking in a different language?*

Possible Student Responses

- *It looks like a battle during a war.*
- *I think this might be World War II.*
- *It looks like a beach, maybe in Europe or Asia.*
- *It sounds like a Native American language.*
- *Maybe they didn't want the enemy to know what their strategy was.*

After listening to students' responses for a couple of minutes, explain that they have just listened to a recreated conversation between two code talkers during the Normandy invasion (D-Day) that took place on the coast of France during World War II.

Tell students that the language they heard was spoken by members of the Comanche Tribal Nation. Ask students to take notes:

- The actors in the video represent people from the Comanche Tribal Nation and several other tribal nations from Oklahoma.
- These American Indian citizens worked as code talkers during WWII.
- Oklahoma citizens also served in the U.S. military as code talkers during World War I.

Display **slide 3** and introduce the title of the lesson. Go to **slide 4** and review the essential questions:

1. Who were the code talkers from Oklahoma?
2. What were their contributions?
3. Why is it important for us to acknowledge their contributions?

Go to **slide 5**. Review the lesson objective:

- Explain why code talking became an important strategy used by the U.S. military during both world wars.

20 minutes

Explore

Inform students that they will be playing a matching game that will teach them about the specific codes created by the Choctaw Code Talkers during WWI and the Comanche Code Talkers during World War II.

Teacher's Note: The Rules of the Game

- Divide the students into groups of four.
- Make sure that you have cut up one copy of the **Matching Game handout** for each group of students prior to the start of class.
- Divide the slips of paper into two groups: *Code Talker Terms* and *Translations*. Begin by handing one set of *Code Talker Terms* to each group.
- Display **slide 6.**
- Explain that each group will have about 5 minutes to write down on a piece of paper what they think these code words translate to in English.
- After the translation activity, have the class reconvene briefly and invite volunteers from each group to share some of the ideas they came up with.
- Display **slide 7.** Hand out one set of *Translations* to each group. Tell students they will have 5 additional minutes to work with their groups to match the *Code Talker Terms* with their *Translations.*
- Once time is up, have the class reconvene and display the answers on **slides 8-10.** Ask students if they are surprised by any of the answers.

30 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note

If time allows for students to learn more about the experiences of American Indian students in boarding schools and the efforts that school officials made to ensure assimilation, refer to another K20 Center LEARN lesson: "Surviving Assimilation."

Display **slide 11.** Give each student a copy of the attached **Article-Stop and Jot** handout. Since there is a lot of information to process, students will use the Stop and Jot strategy to answer questions that will guide their thinking about the paragraphs they are reading.

Go over the instructions in the slide. Ask students to look at the handout to make sure they understand how the strategy works. After students have spent about 20 minutes reading and taking notes on the article, ask for a few volunteers to share what they have learned about the code talkers with their classmates.

20 minutes

Extend

Explain to students that they will complete this activity in their original groups of four.

Distribute copies of the excerpt from the attached **Annumpa Luma: Code Talker** and the **It's OPTIC-al** handout to each student.

Display **slide 12.** Explain to students that they will be working in their groups of four using the It's OPTIC-al strategy to analyze a page from a graphic novel about code talkers. Discuss each letter in the columns of the handout:

- **O** (Observations)
- **P** (Parts)
- **T** (Title)
- **I** (Interrelationships)
- **C** (Conclusion)

Have students work for about 15 minutes to analyze the excerpt and discuss it with their peers. Once they have finished filling out the table in their handout, spend 5 minutes inviting student volunteers to share the findings their groups made with the rest of the class. Feel free to consult the attached **It's OPTIC-al Graphic Organizer (Teacher's Guide)** for examples of responses students might include in their charts.

Teacher's Note: Museums

There are many excellent museums across the state and the country which feature exhibits or artifacts that tell some of the incredible stories of the American Indian code talkers from Oklahoma who served in both world wars. If students are interested in learning more about the code talkers, encourage them to visit any of the following museums: Choctaw Nation Museum, Tuskahoma; Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center, Lawton; First Americans Museum, Oklahoma City; Five Civilized Tribes Museum, Muskogee; 45th Infantry Division Museum, Oklahoma City (Several Pawnee soldiers profiled here, including Sgt. Brummett Echohawk, received Congressional Gold Medals for code talking.); National Cryptologic Museum, Annapolis Junction, MD; National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC; National WWII Museum, New Orleans, LA; Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City; Seminole Nation Museum, Wewoka; Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, TX.

5 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 13.**

Ask students to take out a piece of paper and pen or pencil. Explain to them that to conclude the lesson they will be writing a Two-Minute Paper in which they will summarize what they have learned about the code talkers from Oklahoma. The prompt for the activity is as follows: "How did code talkers from Oklahoma help the United States win both World Wars?"

Afterward, collect students' responses and assess them as a summative evaluation.

Special Thanks

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Resources

- Comanche Museum. (2013, December 10). Code of Honor - Comanche Code Talkers of WWII [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fABizJmghFk
- K20 Center. (n.d.). It's OPTIC-al. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/99
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stop and Jot. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/168
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Surviving Assimilation. Lessons. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/2024
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two-Minute Paper. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/152