

## **Santa Fe National Cemetery Code Talkers Secondary (7th-12th grade) Lesson Plan**

**Time** (minutes): 1-2 50+ minute class periods

**Lesson Overview:** Students will investigate the importance of Native American culture, language and people, called Code Talkers, in the military during WWI and WWII. Teachers can use the anchor website as a guide and for further information and primary and secondary documents. Please give your students trigger warnings as you deem necessary: Native oppression, wartime sound effects, war

**Inquiry Question:** How did Native American tradition become an important part of fighting for American freedom during World War I and World War II?

### **Relevant Common Core Anchor Standards:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

### **Relevant New Mexico Social Studies Standards:**

9-12 Benchmark 1-A. New Mexico: analyze how people and events of New Mexico have influenced United States and world history since statehood:

3. Analyze the role and impact of New Mexico and New Mexicans in World War II (e.g., Navajo code talkers, New Mexico national guard, internment camps, Manhattan project, Bataan death march);

### **Required Materials:**

- Student access to the anchor website: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/code-talkers/>
- Ability to play audio for the class
- Printed maps: [map of Native American languages](#) and two maps depicting the homes of Native American Code Talkers in WWI ([link](#)) and WWII ([link](#))
- Internet access and projection abilities

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Students will analyze and take notes on primary and secondary source documents
- Students will understand the important role Native American cultural tradition played in WWI and WWII
- Students will have a basic understanding of Native American Code Talkers and their roles in the military

**Special Vocabulary:** Land Acknowledgement, Code Talkers, Navajo, Cultural Tradition

## **Procedures:**

**Warm Up/Introduction Activity:** Teacher will play the audio (visuals can be shown as well) of the Pledge of Allegiance in the Navajo language. As it is played the first time, have students focus on listening only. Play the audio a second time and tell students to free-write while they listen: What are your reactions to listening to the Pledge of Allegiance in another language? What are your reactions to hearing the Navajo language; have you heard it before? What questions, images, or feelings come to mind as you listen?

Youtube link to the Pledge of Allegiance in Navajo:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiS\\_bF\\_ihp4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiS_bF_ihp4)

After giving students some time to free-write, have a brief discussion. Students should share their reactions, ideas and questions first with a small group or partner, then volunteers should share with the whole class.

## **Lesson:**

1. Have students work in pairs to examine a [map of Native American languages](#). While examining the map, students can journal about the prompts: I used to think, now I think, I wonder...
  - Discuss: How is language an important part of culture or identity? Does anyone here speak more than one language?
2. The teacher should start with a land acknowledgement. Explain that our communities, homes, and schools are on Native land. It is important to recognize that Native peoples have made many sacrifices in order for us to be here today. Native peoples have fought to protect their land, communities, and loved ones even from the United States government itself. As the United States government continued to gain more and more land, Native peoples were forbidden to practice their own traditions including speaking their own languages. This has caused many of the languages seen on the map to die out. Although Native peoples were not considered U.S. citizens until 1924, brave Native Americans enlisted into military service to continue defending their beloved land and loved ones. Beginning in World War I, Native American servicemen were asked to help create secret codes using their native languages.
3. Pass out the two maps depicting the homes of Native American Code Talkers in WWI ([link](#)) and WWII ([link](#)). After students have time to examine the maps and discuss with a partner, prompt a brief class discussion with the following  
Guiding Discussion Questions:
  - Where is New Mexico?
  - Where were Code Talkers from in New Mexico?
  - Do you recognize the names of other places and tribes?
  - Are these maps secondary sources or primary sources? How do you know?

## **Model:**

1. Open the [Anchor Website, Native Lands, Native Warriors](#) from the National Museum of the American Indian, and display it so all students can see. Briefly describe the layout of

Chapter 4: Code Talking and review primary and secondary sources. Click on an example of each and complete a Think Aloud to demonstrate how students should analyze the information and complete an investigation to answer the inquiry question.

Questions for Think Aloud strategy:

- Is this a primary or secondary source? How do you know?
- How can we summarize this source in 1-3 sentences? What is the source about and who wrote it?
- What are the key facts or ideas that stand out from this source?
- How does this source help me answer the lesson inquiry question: How did Native American tradition become an important part of fighting for American freedom during World War I and World War II?
- What questions come to mind after analyzing this source?

**Practice/Activity:** Students will read, explore, and examine primary and secondary sources of the Code Talking page (chapter 4) of the anchor website:

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/code-talkers/code-talking/>

1. Allow students time to explore *Chapter 4: Code Talking* with a partner. They should look through the pictures and documents, read or listen to the text, and listen to the audio provided (songs, language samples, interviews, etc.), and note down information that stands out to them as interesting.
2. Students should work in pairs to complete an investigation of *Chapter 4: Code Talking* in order to answer the lesson inquiry question.
  - Student pairs should choose one source to analyze by answering the analysis questions. Notes can be taken in a journal or teacher-made worksheet depending on differentiation and scaffolding needs.
  - When complete, have each pair discuss their notes with another pair. How does the information each pair investigated compare? What part of what we learned today stands out to you the most?

Source Analysis Questions:

- Is this a primary or secondary source? How do you know?
- How can we summarize this source in 1-3 sentences? What is the source about and who wrote it?
- What are the key facts or ideas that stand out from this source?
- How does this source help me answer the lesson inquiry question: How did Native American tradition become an important part of fighting for American freedom during World War I and World War II?
- What questions come to mind after analyzing this source?

**Wrap Up:**

1. The teacher can read names of Code Talkers buried in the Santa Fe National Cemetery ([Link](#))

2. Have students journal responses to the lesson's inquiry question: How did Native American tradition become an important part of fighting for American freedom during World War I and World War II?

Leave time for students to share with a partner and then with the class.