



Spy Kids: Code Talkers

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Spy Kids: Code Talkers



Crucial sources of enemy information were obtained by surveillance, code breaking, and subterfuge throughout WWII. Intelligence agencies helped the Allies win the war by slipping behind enemy lines to serve as spies, or working to break Axis message codes and steal critical information. In this program, students will try out their decoding skills and examine the tools and manpower the Allies used to defeat the enemy.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will gain knowledge of American Indian code talkers during World War II.
- Students will use higher level thinking skills to encode and decode messages.
- Students will summarize and present information gained.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Grades 6-8

TIME REQUIREMENT: 1 hour

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

All lesson plans meet numerous national Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, as well as National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.

Coı	mmon Core St Standards	6th-8th
dards	RI - Reading Informative Text	4, 7
Standa	SL - Speaking and Listening	1, 2, 4
χ	RH - History/Social Studies	2, 3, 4, 7

Natl. Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Themes	1: Culture	Middle Grades
	2: Time, Continuity, and Change	Middle Grades
	4: Individual Development and Identity	Middle Grades
	8: Science Technology, and Society	Middle Grades



Lesson Plan



Students are to be paired up; each pair is given a Top Secret folder containing:

- *Navajo Dictionary Alphabet
- *ATTACK flow chart
- *Need A Word For That?
- *Mission worksheet 1
- *Mission worksheet 2
- * Mission worksheet 3 (note that this sheet is different for each folder)
- *Mission worksheet 4

Have copies prepared of the information cards that coordinate with the Mission 3 worksheets.

FACILITATION:

- 1. Deliver background information to the students. (see page 4)
- 2. Have students open their Top Secret folder and look at the **Navajo Dictionary Alphabet**. Show how the alphabet was coded: In English, "A" is the first letter for the word "ant," and in Navajo the word for "ant" is "WOL-LA-CHEE." And so on through the alphabet.

You may want to tell students that the real Navajo Dictionary Alphabet used up to three different words for each letter, just to complicate the code. (It can be found online.) We are using a simplified version to quickly learn how to use the code.

3. Have students find the **ATTACK** flow chart in their Top Secret folder. Use it to direct students through the encoding and decoding process. The following informational script may be helpful:

First, code talkers were given a message in English from their commanders which they translated into code (ENCODE) and then transmitted by walkie-talkie or field phone on to another code talker. This second code

talker would translate the coded message back into English (DECODE), circle the first letters of each English word, and then give the final message to its intended recipient.

4. Have students find the sheet titled Need a Word For That? in their Top Secret folder. Use it to direct students through the following information: The code became more complicated because many of the words needed simply did not exist in the American Indian languages. There had never been "tanks" or "battleships" in their past lives, so no word existed. As a result, the Indians developed special words for these new terms by looking at pictures of the items and choosing words they knew that seemed to to fit the pictures. For example, tanks reminded them of turtles, so the native word for turtle, WAKAREE'E, was adopted. A battleship was called LO-TSO, meaning "whale."

Ask students: What animal or word from nature would you use to describe a fighter plane? (Use the final hummingbird image to divulge the answer.)

- 5. Direct students to find the **Mission**1 worksheet in their Top Secret folder.
 Guide students through completing this encoding exercise.
- 6. Direct students to flip over to the **Mission 2** side of the worksheet. Guide students through completing this decoding exercise.



- 7. Have students find the **Mission 3** worksheet in their Top Secret folder. Direct students to decode their folder's unique Mission 3 message and bring it to you. If they have completed it correctly, give them the **coordinating information card**.
- 8. They are to read that information and use it to complete the top portion of the **Mission 4** worksheet (It should be copied onto the backside of Mission 3).

Note that there is another activity on the bottom portion of the Mission 4 worksheet for students who have extra time.

9. Have student pairs present the information they learned with Missions 3 and 4. Become familiar with the information on their cards so you can enhance their presentation for the class.

Look for World War II signal corps equipment at local museums, antique stores, or online sellers to let students get their hands on this history!





BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE FACILITATOR

Today we are going back in time to the early 1940's, during WWII. World War II was made up of two teams: the Allies and the Axis. Three main countries made up the Allied forces. They were the U.S., Great Britain, and the USSR. Dwight D. Eisenhower was chosen to be a Supreme Allied Commander of these Allied forces. The main Axis countries were Germany, Japan, and Italy. However, over 100 other countries were involved (making it a "world war"), but these were the most influential.

Military information needed to be shared and every country involved had secrets they wanted to keep—and information they wanted to steal—from the enemy. Keep in mind that this time period was before the invention of computers, cell phones, and other modern communication devices. Most importantly—messages needed to be top secret. The methods used to accomplish this were numerous. We are going to spend the next hour learning about one specific and very successful way that the United States military was able to keep their messages a secret from the enemy during World War II: Code Talkers.

Code talkers were American Indian men who served in the U.S. military and used their native tribal languages as a means of secret communication during the war. Code talkers transmitted secret tactical messages over military telephone or radio networks. American Indian languages worked well because few people outside of each tribe had ever learned to speak the language. Therefore, it would be enough to speak in their own language, but they went a step farther and put their language into a code. Let's take a look!



MISSION 1:

Your Commanding Officer has given you the following message to encode and transmit:

ENEMY IS NEAR

1ST LETTER	→ ENGLISH WORD	→	NAVAJO WORD
E	→ EAR	→	АН-ЈАН
N	→ NEEDLE	-	
E	→	-	
	→	→	
	→	-	
	→	→	
	→	→	
	→	→	
	→	-	
	→	→	
	→	→	



You have received the following incoming message to decode and give to your troop's commander.



DIBEH AH-JAH TSAH BE TSE-GAH AH-JAH DIBEH-YAZZIE CLA-GI-AIH

The General says

MISSION COMPLETE

You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

MOASI GAH WOL-LA-CHEE BESH-DO-TLIZ TSAH-AS-ZIH GLOE-IH TSE-GAH TKIN D-AH AH-JAH TSIN-TLITI WOL-LA-CHEE TSAH

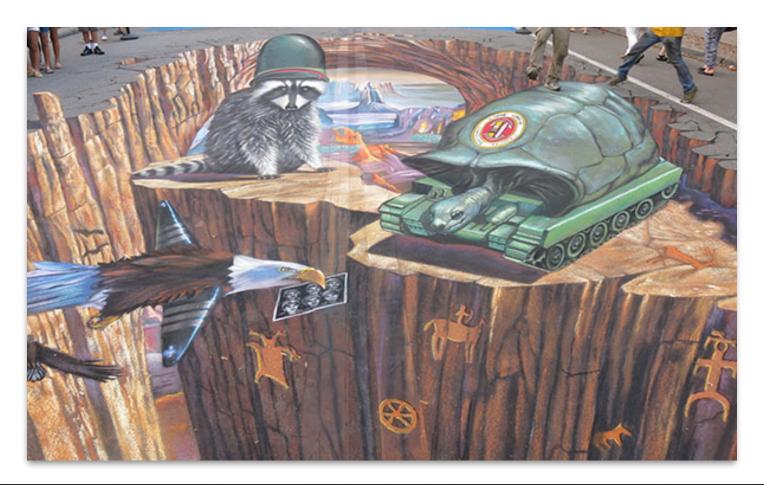
NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		-	
	→		→	
	→		\rightarrow	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		-	
	→		→	
	→		-	
	→		→	

Decoded Message:

CRAZY WHITE MAN

Comanche Indians of the 4th Signal Company created a dictionary of over 100 code terms using words in their own languages. Using a substitution method similar to the Navajo, the Comanche word for tank was "turtle," the machine gun was a "sewing machine," and Adolf Hitler was "crazy white man." Because the Navajo's native language had no word for the military terms needed for communication, they also made up a unique blend of words to designate words they needed. This helped make the code more complex and difficult for enemies to break. Even other untrained members of their own tribes could not make sense of it. Can you spot some of these examples in the chalk drawing below? It was created as a tribute to the code talkers.

colonel = silver eagle
pyrotechnic = fancy fire
hand grenade = potato
gofasters = running shoes
ink sticks = pens
bomber = buzzard
scout = short raccoon



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

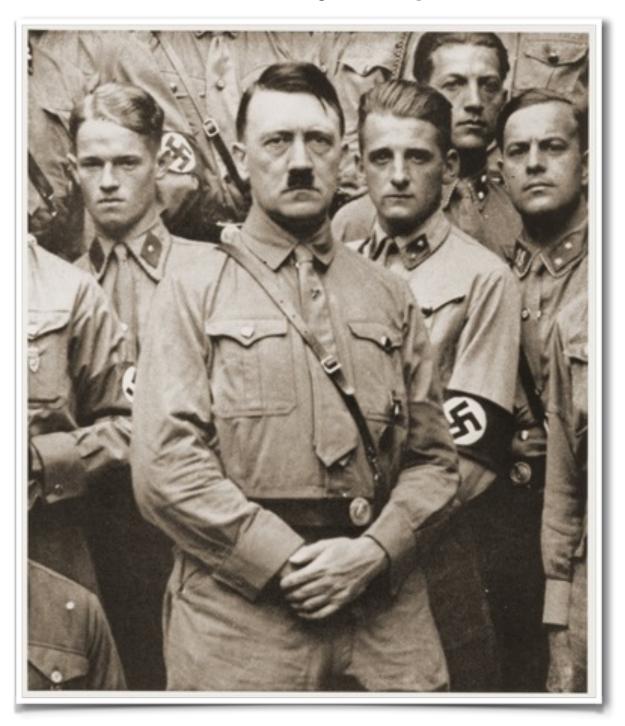
WOL-LA-CHEE BE A-KHA DIBEH-YAZZIE CHUO TSE-GAH TKIN D-AH DIBEH-YAZZIE AH-JAH GAH

NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
-	→		-	
_	→		→	
_	→		—	
_	→		→	
_	→		→	
_	→		→	
_	→		→	
_	→		→	
_	→		→	
-	→		→	
-	→		→	

Decoded Message:

ADOLF HITLER

Adolf Hitler knew about the successful use of code talkers during WWI, so he sent a team of anthropologists to learn Native American languages before the outbreak of WWII. The many languages and dialects made it too difficult for them to learn much, but because of Hitler's attempts, the U.S. Army did not implement a large-scale code talker program in the European Theatre. The majority of code-talkers were used in the Pacific Theatre against the Japanese.



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

SHI-DA D-AH WOL-LA-CHEE TSE-GAH NA-HASH-CHID AH-JAH WOL-LA-CHEE MOASI TSE-GAH

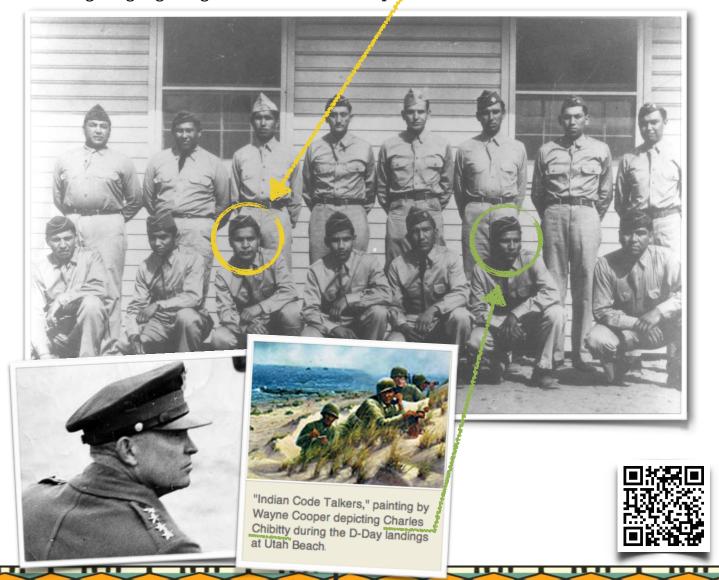
NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		\rightarrow	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		—	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		→	

Decoded Message:

UTAH BEACH

General Eisenhower was the Supreme Allied Commander for the European Theater. Under his command, on June 6, 1944, 160,000 Allied troops landed along a 50-mile stretch of heavily-fortified French coastline to fight Nazi Germany on the beaches of Normandy, France. The invasion was a success, and by day's end, the Allied gained a foot-hold in Normandy and began the march across Europe to defeat Hitler.

Among those Allied troops were fourteen Comanche code talkers serving with the 4th Infantry Division, 4th Signal Company. Under heavy German fire on Utah Beach (one of the Normandy invasion sites), they laid communications lines and began sending messages in coded Comanche. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. was the commanding officer of the 4th Infantry Division on Utah Beach. Roosevelt's driver and radio man was Private First Class Larry Saupitty, a Comanche code talker. He sent the first coded message: "We made a good landing. We landed in the wrong place. We are five miles right of the designated area. Five miles inland. The fighting is getting fierce and we need help."



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

TSAH A-KHA GAH D-AH TSE-GAH WOL-LA-CHEE CHUO GAH TKIN MOASI WOL-LA-CHEE

NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		→	

Decoded Message:

NORTH AFRICA

Under the leadership of General Eisenhower, the Americans made their first large-scale appearance with the Allied forces in when they landed in North Africa in November 1942. Several Meskwaki code talkers were among the soldiers serving in the 168h Infantry, 34th Red Bull Division who made those initial advances on the beaches of Algiers, North Africa. The code talkers saved many lives using their unique language to communicate vital military messages about enemy troop movements, battlefield tactics, and directions for artillery fire. Eisenhower called them his "eyes and ears."

With the support of the vast American fleet, airpower, and ground troops, the Allies gained territory in North Africa and then launched attacks on the coast of Italy in September 1943. The Meskwaki code talkers continued with this Italian campaign, fighting the mighty German defenses through the mountains north of Naples, and finally liberating Rome on June 4, 1944.



These are the eight Meskwaki Indians from the Sac & Fox tribe in Tama, Iowa who became code talkers with the Army's 34th Infantry Division in the North Africa campaign, known as Operation TORCH.

You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

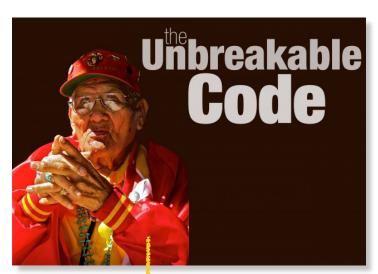
SHI-DA TSAH NA-HASH-CHID GAH A-KAH JAD-HO-LONI AH-JAH TSAH

NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		→	
	→		-	
	→		→	
	→		→	

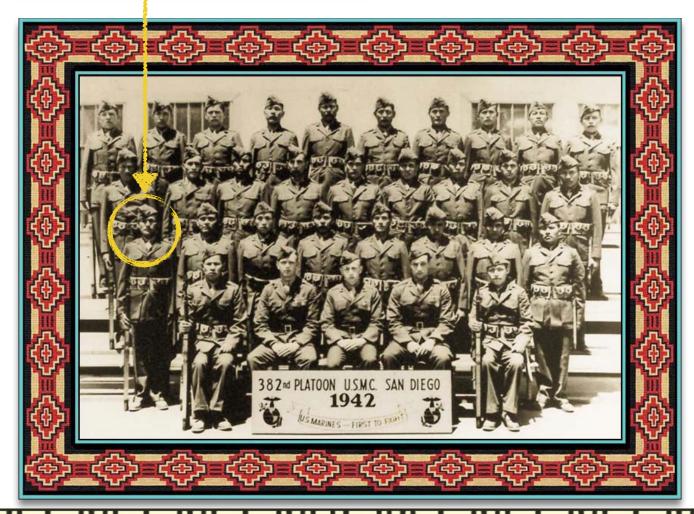
Decoded Message:

UNBROKEN

The codes developed and used by the code talkers were never broken by enemy cryptographers. In the spring of 1942, twenty-nine Navajo men volunteered to join the US Marine Corps. They were trained as soldiers and became the 382nd Platoon. This group created the Navajo code, which was first tested on



untrained Navajos who were not able to break it. By the end of the war, there were 420 Navajo code talkers. They sent and received thousands of critical messages and not one was deciphered. Part of the code's complexity is that every syllable in the Navajo language means something different and must be pronounced correctly. Subtle differences can completely change the meaning. Chester Nez (on left), is one of the original Navajo men who developed and used this unbroken code.



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

BE AH-JAH MOASI DIBEH-YAZZIE WOL-LA-CHEE DIBEH DIBEH TKIN CHUO TKIN AH-JAH BE

NAVAJO WORD	ENGLISH WORD	FI	RST LETTER
-	→	\rightarrow	
_	→	→	
-	→	-	
-	→	→	
_	→	→	
	Decoded Messag	e:	

DECLASSIFIED

Because the military thought they might need to use the code in future military engagements, the Navajo code talkers were sworn to secrecy and the code was classified as Top Secret. In fact, some Navajo code talkers were used in the Korean war in the 1950's and in Vietnam in the 1960's. It wasn't until 1968 that the government finally declassified the program.

"When we got out, discharged, they told us this thing you that you guys did is going to be a secret. When you get home you don't talk about what you did; don't tell your people, your parents, family, don't tell them what your job was. This is going to be a secret; don't talk about it. Just tell them you were in the service, defend your country and stuff like that. But, the code, never, never, don't mention; don't talk about it. Don't let people ask you, try to get that out of you what you guys did. And that was our secret for about 25, 26 years. Until August 16th, 1968. That's when it was declassified; then it was open. I told my sister, my aunt, all my families what I really did." —Chester Nez, Navajo Code Talker, National Museum of the American Indian interview, 2004



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

AH-TAD A-KHA DIBEH-YAZZIE BE TSIN-TLITI AH-JAH BE WOL-LA-CHEE DIBEH-YAZZIE

NAVAJO WORD	ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
→		-	
→		→	

Decoded Message:

GOLD MEDAL

Congressional Gold Medals were awarded to Navajo code talkers in 2000. All other tribes received medals in 2008. Several Code Talkers were wounded in battle but all survived the war. Each tribe's gold medal had a different design. These valiant soldiers are credited with saving the lives of thousands of American and Allied service men. In 2013 Congress and President Obama honored the code talkers and their descendants at a reception in Washington D.C. They will be forever remembered by a grateful nation.



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

AH-YA-TSINNE WOL-LA-CHEE CLA-GI-AIH WOL-LA-CHEE TSAH

NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	\rightarrow		\rightarrow	
	→		→	
	-		-	
	→		→	
	→		-	

Decoded Message:

JAPAN

Code talkers participated in all of the major battles in the Japanese-controlled Pacific Theatre including Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Bougainville, Tarawa, Cape Gloucester, New Britain, Kwajalenin, Roi-Namur, Enewetok Atoll, Saipan, Tinia, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, Okinawa.

The speed and accuracy of the Navajo code talkers was amazing. At the Battle of Iwo Jima, Major Howard Connor had six Navajo code talkers working around the clock during the first two days of the battle. These six sent and received over 800 messages, all without error. Connor later stated, "Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima" from the Japanese.

Former code talker Bill Toledo, recalled an incident on Iwo Jima when his battalion commander told him to request an artillery barrage on a nearby hill that sat atop a pillbox and a tunnel. Toledo encoded the request and sent it to his Navajo counterpart about a mile away. The attack was launched, and Marines took advantage of the dust to lob in hand grenades and dynamite to destroy the hill. "Elapsed time: six to eight minutes," Toledo said. "The system was efficient." Code talker William Dean Wilson (below) is standing in front of the memorial statue based of Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima.

Code talker William Dean Wilson (right) is standing in front of the memorial statue based of Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima.



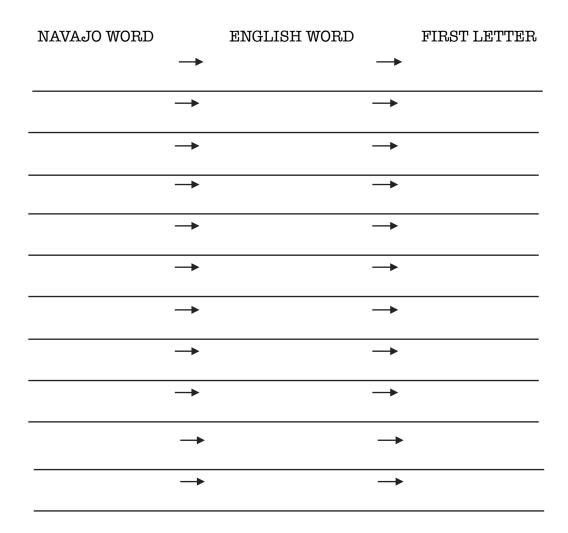
Below right: Private First Class George H. Kirk, USMC and Private First Class John V. Goodluck, USMC.

Below left: Unknown Marine code talker in foxhole with communication equipment.



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

DIBEH TKIN AH-TAD TSAH WOL-LA-CHEE DIBEH-YAZZIE MOASI A-KHA GAH CLA-GI-AIH DIBEH



Decoded Message:

SIGNAL CORPS

Following basic military training, a Code Talker completed extensive training in communications and memorizing the code. Code Talkers did more than speak into a hand-held radio or phone. They had to know how to operate both wire and radio equipment, and often had to cary it on their backs. They had to know how to set up and maintain the electronic communication wires or lines. The work of sending and receiving messages on the

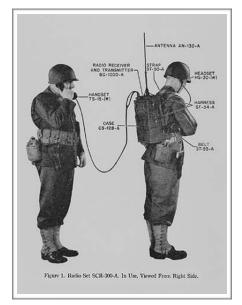
After they memorized more than 200 Navajobased code terms and their English equivalents, the code talkers were put into combat units and sent into battle, armed with their rifles — and their radios, telephones, pens and notebooks.

battlefield made the difference of life and death.

"While we were shooting and the radio or telephone rang, we put down our rifles and took the messages," former code talker Samuel Tso said.

With 40 pounds of communication gear on his back, "I was ready to send a message or receive a message anytime, regardless of what was going on around me," said code talker Keith Little, who served on the Marshall Islands, Saipan and Iwo Jima.

"When a message came in, you start writing it down right there, or you send a message right there," he said. "You don't wait. You stop what you're doing. What you're doing is receiving and sending messages. That's your job."





You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

TSAH WOL-LA-CHEE A-KEH-DI-GLINI WOL-LA-CHEE AH-YA-TSINNE A-KHA

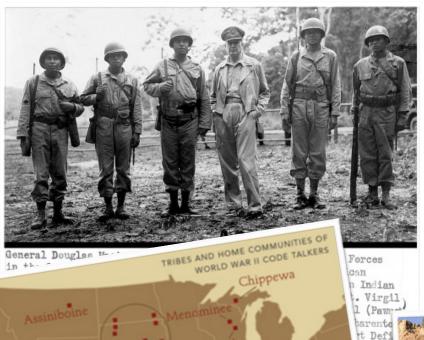
NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		-	
	→		→	
	→		-	
	→		-	

Decoded Message:

NAVAJO

There were three different areas or "theaters" where World War II took place: Europe, Pacific, and North Africa. The Navajo and Hopi were assigned to service in the Pacific in the war against Japan. The Comanches fought the Germans in Europe, and the Meskwakis fought them in North Africa. In all, thirteen different American Indian tribes were used as code talkers to send secret military messages in the different theaters of WWII. While twelve of these tribes had from two to 20 men who served (from each tribe), the Navajo tribe had about 420 men who served, so we tend to hear more about the Navajo code talkers in the media. It is hard to estimate the number of American lives they saved and it is almost certain that America would not have been able to win the war in the Pacific without the Navajo Code Talkers.

Seminole.

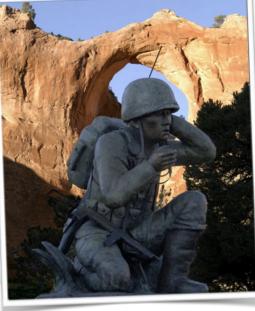


This map shows the names of the tribes and the communities (when known) of the World War II Code Talkere National Museum of the

American Indian, Office of Education.

Left: General Douglas MacArthur was the Commander of the Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific. He is shown in this photo with code talker representatives from four different American Indian tribes serving in the U.S. Army: Pima, Pawnee, Chitzatcha, and Navajo.

> Below: Navajo Code Talker Monument at Window Rock, Arizona.



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

GLOE-IH WOL-LA-CHEE GAH GAH TKIN A-KHA GAH DIBEH

NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		→	
	→		—	

Decoded Message:

WARRIOR

American Indian men have protected their people and lands for thousands of years. They would do anything, including laying down their own lives, to help their people survive. Boys were trained to develop the spiritual and physical strength to become warriors. It was this warrior tradition of protecting their people called many American Indians to serve in the U.S. military.

Despite warring against the United States in their recent history, and only having just been granted citizenship in 1924, it may be surprising to learn that a high percentage of Indians—more than 44,000 out of a population of less than 350,000—joined the United States armed services during WWII. It has been noted that, historically, Native Americans have the highest record of service per capita in comparison to other ethnic groups. The reasons are deeply rooted in the warrior tradition of American Indian culture.

The warrior tradition includes a willingness to engage the enemy in battle and is best exemplified by the qualities of strength, honor, pride, devotion, and wisdom that are revered in the American Indian cultures. This cultural desire to be a warrior also provides American Indian men an important step in gaining status in Native America culture.

Nine of the original seventeen 4th Signal Company Commache Code Talkers
Front row L-R: Forrest Kassanavoid, Charles Chibitty, Larry Saupitty, Roderick Red Elk
Rear row L-R: Edward Nahquaddy, Haddon Codynah, Ralph Wahnee, Willis Yackeshi, Perry Noyobad

When I went to Germany, I never thought about war honors, or the four "coups" which an old-time Crow warrior had to earn in battle....But afterwards, when I came back and went through this telling of war deeds ceremony... lo and behold I [had] completed the four requirements to become a chief. — Crow World War II Veteran

Charles Chibitty (left and below) saw plenty of fighting during the landings at Utah Beach during the D-Day, and saw a lot more action during the Battle of the Bulge. He and his unit were among the first Americans to liberate Paris and later to enter Germany. After the war, Chibitty received many honors from the U.S. government and a respected Chief of the Comanche tribe.

You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

TSIN-TLITI WOL-LA-CHEE GAH TKIN TSAH AH-JAH MOASI A-KHA GAH CLA-GI-AIH DIBEH

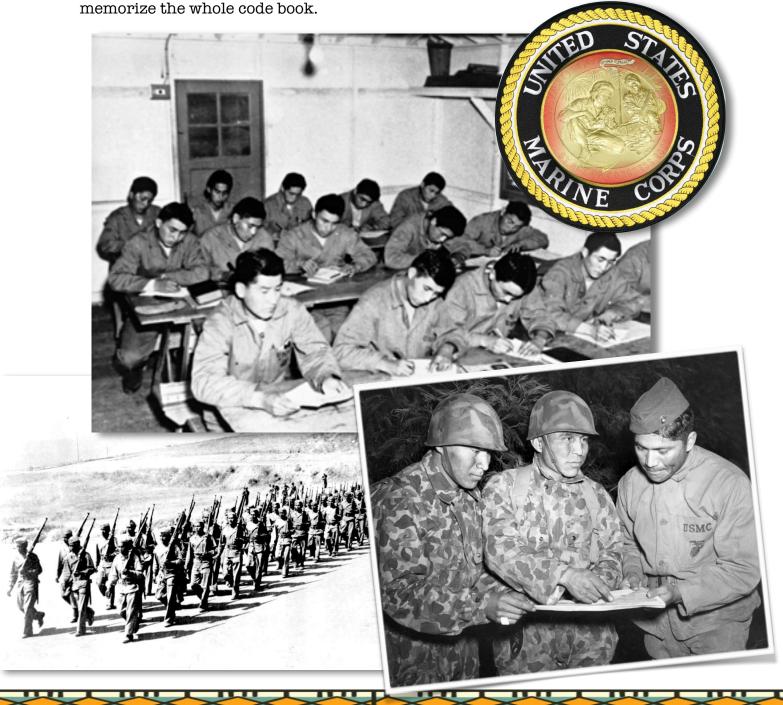
NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		→	

Decoded Message:

MARINE CORPS

Philip Johnston initiated the Marine Corps's program to enlist and train Navajos as messengers. Johnston, the son of a missionary, grew up on a Navajo reservation and became familiar with the people and their language.

In early 1942, Navajo soldiers demonstrated to the Marine Corps that they could encode, transmit, and decode a three-line English message in 20 seconds, versus the 30 minutes required by machines at that time. The Marine Corps agreed, and a code book (or dictionary) was developed. This code book was for classroom purposes only and was never to be taken into the battlefield so it could not fall into enemy hands. The Code Talkers were required to



You have received the following incoming message to decode. When you have completed this, give to your troop's commander (the teacher) who will exchange it for a larger message that you will report to your class.

DIBEH GLOE-IH WOL-LA-CHEE DIBEH D-AH TKIN JAD-HO-LONI WOL-LA-CHEE

NAVAJO WORD		ENGLISH WORD		FIRST LETTER
	→		→	
	→		-	
	\rightarrow		\rightarrow	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		-	
	→		—	

Decoded Message:

SWASTIKA

The swastika symbol has a long history. It was used at least 5,000 years before Adolf Hitler designed the Nazi flag. It had been used by cultures throughout the ancient world and had numerous meanings. To American Indian tribes, most notably the Navajo, it was a good luck symbol. Adolf Hitler learned of the symbol's association with the ancient Aryan culture (the Germans' ancestry that he thought was the only "pure" race), and decided to use it on the flag for the Nazi party that went on to cause so much hatred, violence, and murder during World War II. Because American Indians felt that the symbol was desecrated by the evil that Hitler—and therefore the swastika—represented, they decreed that the thunderbird would take the place of the swastika on their artwork and architecture.



Write down three facts you learned about code talkers in Mission 3 that you can share with the rest of the class.

1.

2.

3.

If you have finished and are waiting on others, use the Navajo alphabet code to write your name or a message to a friend.



REVISED AS OF 15 JUNE, 1945.

A WOL-LA-CHEE ANT

B NA-HASH-CHID BADGER

C MOASI CAT

D BE DEER

E AH-JAH EAR

F CHUO FIR

G AH-TAD GIRL

H TSE-GAH HAIR

I TKIN ICE

J AH-YA-TSINNE JAW

K JAD-HO-LONI KETTLE

L DIBEH-YAZZIE LAMB

M TSIN-TLITI MATCH

N TSAH NEEDLE

O A-KHA OIL

P CLA-GI-AIH PANT

Q CA-YEILTH QUIVER

R GAH RABBIT

S DIBEH SHEEP

T D-AH TEA

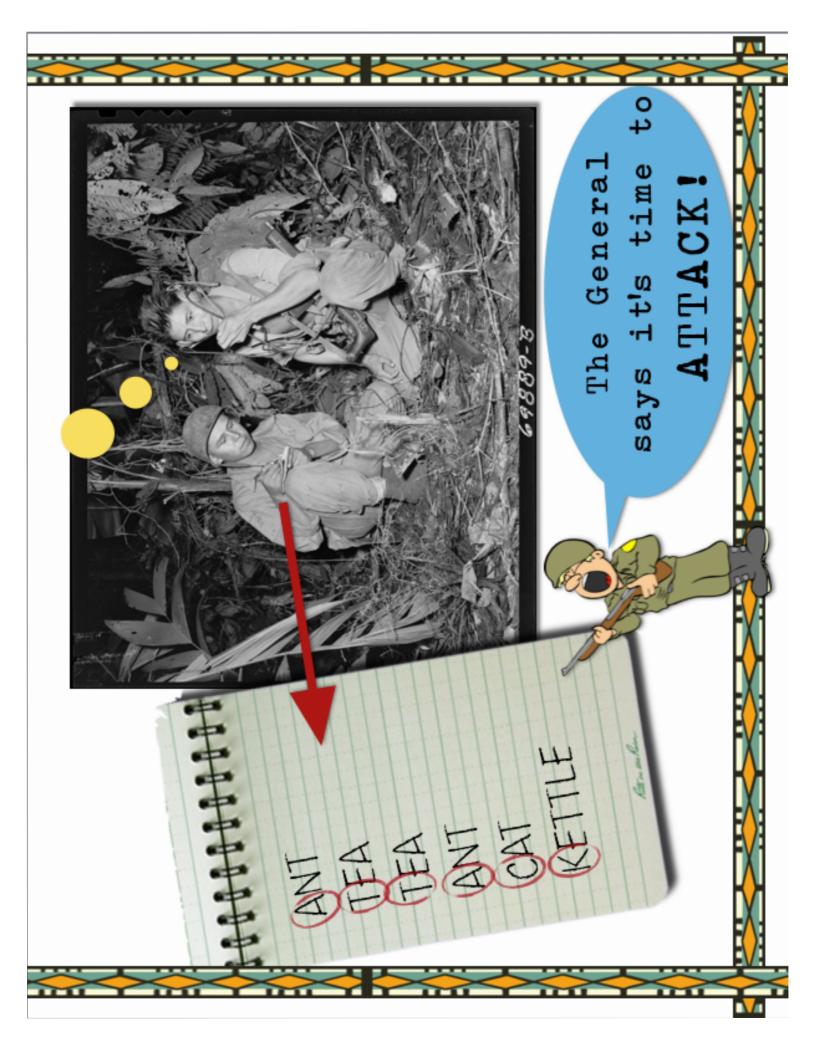
U SHI-DA UNCLE

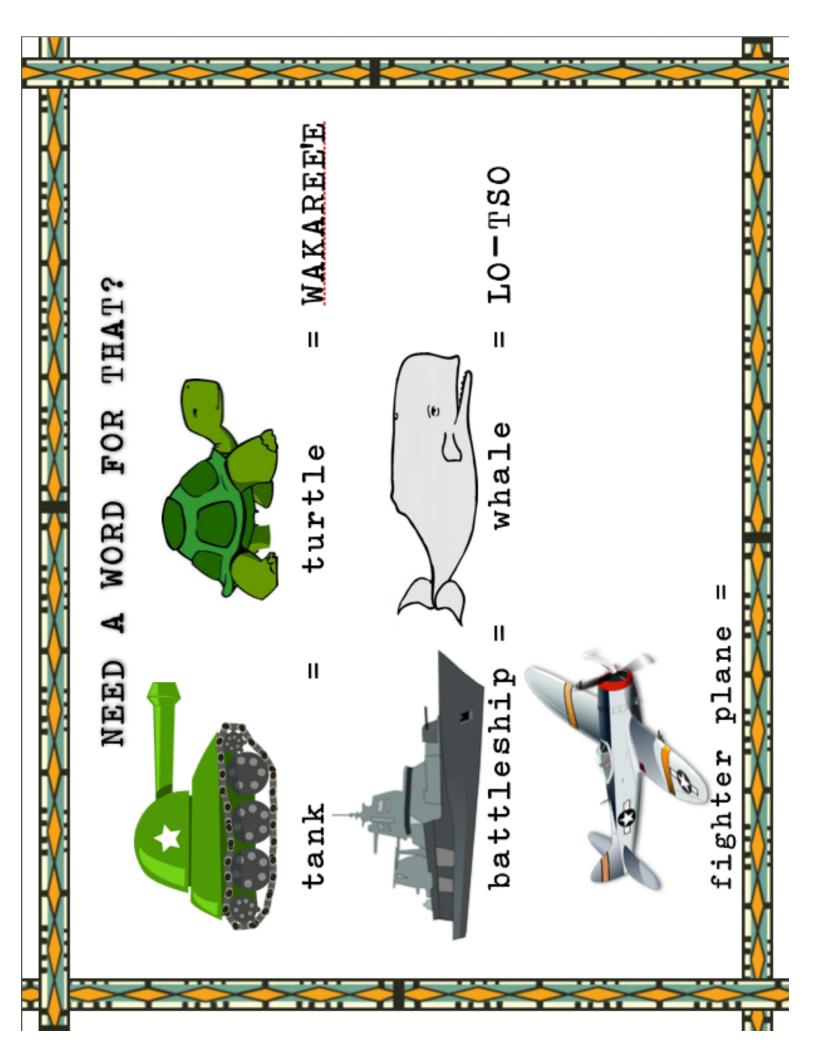
V A-KEH-DI-GLINI VICTOR

W GLOE-IH WEASEL

X AL-NA-AS-DZOH CROSS









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