

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

3-5

Subject

Social Studies

Lesson Title

Choctaw Code Talkers

Activity Description: Choctaw Code Talkers used their Native language to create a code within a code, which was instrumental during WWI in deceiving the enemy. Students will learn about the Choctaw Code Talkers, understand various phrases that were used, and create their own code of communication.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- WiFi access (recommended)
- [Youtube Video: "WWI Choctaw Code-Talkers"](#)
- [Choctaw Code Talkers Activity Guide](#)
- Paper
- Pencil or pen

STEPS

This activity is for children to do with a person from the family or community.

Who Were the Choctaw Code Talkers

1. Watch the [Youtube video "WWI Choctaw Code-Talkers"](#) with your child, and have a discussion with your child about the Choctaw Code Talkers:
 - a. While watching the video with your child share that Choctaw Code Talkers are sometimes referred to as telephone warriors because they used their Native language to create a code within a code. This helped the U.S. troops to deceived their enemies and protect battleground communications.

Create Your Own Code of Communication

1. Review some of the Code Words in the ["Choctaw Code Talkers Activity Guide"](#), and discuss that the Choctaw Code Talkers used their Native language to create a secret code that deceived their enemies.
2. On one sheet of paper, ask your child to create their own secret code of communication using symbols, numbers, shapes, or another method that they prefer.
 - a. Encourage them to create a symbol/number/shape for each letter of the alphabet, creating a key along the way that defines which letters match which symbols/numbers/shapes. Then create your code alongside them.
3. On a second piece of paper, each of you will create a sentence for the other to decipher using each others key.

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HELPFUL TIPS

Parents and caregivers: This is a wonderful opportunity for your child to learn about Native languages through the lens of Choctaw Code Talkers, and understand the significance of their role in WWI.

- English code words were replaced with Choctaw language translations. They used this code to protect battleground communications amongst U.S. troops in order to deceive their enemies.
- Share some examples below of the code words the Choctaw Code Talkers created:
 - **Company:** The code word for "company" was "bow", which translated to "iti tanamp" (i-ti ta-nam-po) in Choctaw.
 - **Ammunition:** The The code word for "ammunition" was "arrow", which translated to "uski naki" (us-ki- na-ki) in Choctaw.
 - **Soldier:** The code word for "soldier" was "warriors", which translated to "tvshka chipota" (tash-ka chi-po-ta) in Choctaw.
 - **Patrol:** The code word for "patrol" was "many scouts", which translated to "tikba pisa lawa" (tik-ba pi-sa la-wa) in Choctaw.
 - **Ration:** The code word for "ration" was "food", which translated to "ilhpa" (ilh-pa) in Choctaw.
- After you complete the "Create Your Own Code of Communication" with your child, share more about each others codes, such as:
 - "What is significant about each others code?"
 - "How your code can be useful in secret communications?"

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and Educators: This activity may open up other talking points about code talkers and Native languages. Here are some suggestions:

- [Native Words, Native Warriors: Code Talking](#)
- [The National WWII Museum: American Indian Code Talkers](#)
- [Native Languages of the Americas: Preserving and Promoting Native Languages](#)

Activity Resource Links:

- Youtube Video: "WWI Choctaw Code-Talkers": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sskGy3q5wpl>
- Adapted by: Choctaw Code Talkers Activity Guide: <https://nie.newsok.com/wp-content/uploads/NA-Heroes-Lesson-4.pdf>
- Native Words, Native Warriors: Code Talking: <https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter4.html>
- The National WWII Museum: American Indian Code Talkers: <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/american-indian-code-talkers>
- Native Languages of the Americas: Preserving and Promoting Native Languages: <http://www.native-languages.org/>