



Overseas cap for a U.S. soldier's uniform. Belonged to William F. Rainwater, Native American from Kansas.
Online Collections Database, 1991.42.1, www.theworldwar.org/research/database. National WWI Museum and Memorial.
Online.

Native Americans and WWI: An Exploration of Service

Recommended Grade Levels: 5-12

Course/Content Area(s): U.S. History, World History

LESSON OVERVIEW:	Through videos, readings and a VR experience, students will learn about the contributions and struggles of Native Americans during WWI, including their role as the first Code Talkers. Students will visit stations to complete a series of comprehension and research questions. They will then use what they have learned to create a piece of media that tells the story of the contributions of Native Americans to the Great War.
OBJECTIVES:	<i>Students will:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn about the experiences and contributions of Native Americans during and after WWI. • learn specifics about the United States military's first Code Talkers; what they did, how they did it, and why do their actions matter. • build empathy for those who served during WWI and build a broader understanding of who those soldiers were. • learn about communications technology during WWI. • create media to show their learning.
STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:	National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework Standards: D2.Civ.2.6-8. Explain specific roles played by citizens. D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts. D2.His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.
TIME NEEDED:	One or Two 45-minute classes
INTERDISCIPLINARY:	Media design, ELA
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should have a general understanding of the causes of WWI • Students should have a general understanding of the reason for U.S. entry into WWI
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared student access to the VR Experience Pre-Check and Post-Check • Digital access to the article: America's First "Code Talkers" • Digital access to the article: Native Americans in WWI: Courage and Sacrifice • Digital access to the article: Communication Technology • Digital access to the video: Native Americans in WWI • Classroom VR Trunks: Choctaw Code Talkers 1918 • Copies of the Research Record Sheet

LESSON

INTRODUCTION:

1. Have students take the VR Experience [Pre-Check](#)
 - a. This is used for Museum and Memorial feedback on student growth to clarify efficacy of VR trunks in classrooms and allows us to continue and potentially expand the program. Please do not make a copy, so that we can see the responses.
2. Display the coded message from [SECRET – List of Coded Words](#) on a projector or with copies at each table.
3. Host a discussion with students on the following questions:
 - a. What does this say?
 - b. Does it make sense?
 - c. What do you think this message is about?
 - d. Why do you think it exists?
4. After giving students time to share potential explanations of the coded message, explain the context of secret messages (see the article for explanation).
5. Ask students if any of them have heard of Code Talkers before. Some students might recognize the term.
6. Introduce that the first instance of Code Talkers in the United States Military was during WWI and they were Native American.

DIRECTIONS:

Part 1: Initial Information Gathering

1. Prepare copies of the Research Record Sheet.
2. Prepare stations for students for the following research tools. This could be digital for individual work or could be as stations students move through. The VR headsets must have their own space:
 - a. Digital access to the article: [America's First "Code Talkers"](#)
 - b. Digital access to the article: [Native Americans in WWI: Courage and Sacrifice](#)
 - c. Digital access to the article: [Communication Technology](#)
 - d. Digital access to the video: [Native Americans in WWI](#)
 - e. Five VR headsets with Choctaw Code Talkers 1918
3. Determine if you would like students to work in groups, solo, or allow personal choice.
4. Explain stations to students and what information they will be collecting using the Research Record Sheet.
5. Explain to students that they will be creating a piece of media that shares what they have learned about Native American contributions during WWI.
 - a. Assign a specific type of media or allow students to decide for themselves.
 - b. Examples include an informational video, an infographic, a presentation, a news article or segment, etc.

6. Monitor and provide students with support as needed while they complete the first part of their research and learning.
7. Have students take the VR Experience [Post-Check](#)
 - a. This is used for Museum and Memorial feedback on student growth to clarify efficacy of VR trunks in classrooms and allows us to continue and potentially expand the program. Please do not make a copy so that we can see the responses.

Part 2: Focused Research

8. After students complete Part 1, they plan for their media creation.
9. They should decide on a form of media and determine what stories they will want to highlight through that media. They will not be able to tell the entire story, so they should focus on a topic area:
 - a. Code Talkers
 - b. Enlisted and drafted soldiers
 - c. Homefront
10. Once they have decided on their area of focus, they should do any additional research needed to complete their media piece.
11. Additional research options include:
 - a. Reviewing the already shared content
 - b. [War Communication during WWI](#)
 - c. [Fighting Talk: First World War Communications](#)
 - d. [The Science of World War I: Communications](#)
 - e. [Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces: World War I](#)
 - f. [Honoring Native American Soldiers' World War I Service](#)
 - g. [World War I Code Talkers](#)
 - h. [Native American Sailors in World War I](#)
 - i. [American Indians' Service in World War I, 1920](#) (primary resource)
 - j. [American Indians in World War I](#) (site with a broad range of stories and topics)

POST-ASSESSMENT:

Part 3: Media Creation

1. Provide students time to create their media or assign it as homework.
2. Students should include the following in their media project:
 - a. An overview of the topic
 - b. At least 1 specific, detailed story about an individual or group's actions
 - c. A "why does this matter" section
 - i. If students are struggling, prompt them to consider the treatment of Native Americans within the United States historically, and even in modern times. They should consider what affects these contributions have had on the progress towards rights for Native Americans.

MODIFICATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

- Consider allowing students the ability to work in teams to support one another.
- Provide a specific list of media options to reduce stress of choices.
- Prompt struggling students to create a script or outline of their media before they create.