



**“Honoring the Warrior Spirit”**  
**Grades 9–12 Social Studies/History**  
**by Casie Wise**

**Inquiry by Design Blueprint**

<b>Essential Question(s)</b>	Do American Indian/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiian military veterans embody a traditional warrior spirit?
<b>Standards This Unit Meets</b>	RI.9-12.1 (Cite textual evidence and make inferences) RI.9-12.2 (Determine central idea and its development) RI.9-12.5 (Analyze author’s ideas across the text) RI.9-12.6 (Determine author’s point of view and rhetoric) RI.9-12.7 (Analyze various accounts told through different mediums) W.9-12.2 (Write explanatory texts) W.9-12.7 (Conduct short/sustained research projects)
<b>Staging the Question</b>	<p>November 2020 is the unveiling of the National Native American Veterans’ Memorial in Washington D.C. As a way to honor those that have served as well as delve into a deeply embedded cultural value of American Indians, this unit will connect and honor the embodiment of the traditional warrior spirit of great warriors of the past by veterans who have served in the U.S. military. The three lessons in the unit will focus on the ancient tradition of the warrior, warriors in WWII (Code Talkers), and the modern warrior spirit exemplified through recent veterans of the U.S. military. The focus of this unit will be to bridge the depiction of American Indians in history as spear-carrying warriors, to the living embodiment of the warrior spirit in modern American Indian veterans who live, work, and serve today. The sources in this unit will also provide students with a deeper understanding of why Native people would choose to fight for a country that once worked to eradicate their people and even today do not recognize Native resilience. If access is available, you can stage this unit by visiting the official website of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) for the National Native American Veterans’ Memorial to share some of the images and videos with students. Allow students to begin to ask questions as a foundation for this inquiry-design model.</p>

	Share with them that they will hear stories of past and present veterans as they define the warrior spirit.	
Entry Question #1	Entry Question #2	Entry Question #3
What is the American Indian warrior spirit?	How did WWII Code Talkers and the power of their Tribal languages in a time of war exemplify the warrior spirit?	How do American Indian veterans today connect their military service to the warriors of the past?
Formative Performance Task #1	Formative Performance Task #2	Formative Performance Task #3
Based on all the sources you have studied in this lesson, what is the American Indian warrior spirit? Compare Chief Joe Medicine Crow and the artist Gerald Cournoyer. How do both men embody a warrior spirit?	Synthesizing all the sources your group has studied for this inquiry, write a response to “How do the WWII Code Talkers’ experiences before, during, and after WWII exemplify the warrior spirit, and how does the use of Tribal language affect this spirit?” Be sure to cite specific details from today’s sources and reference the sources in your response.	Choose one of the following poetry forms (diamante, calligram, blackout poem, or haiku) and compose a poem that creatively exemplifies the warrior spirit of American Indian Veterans.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<b>Source:</b> <a href="#">“The Warrior Spirit”</a> video by <i>The American Legion</i> <b>Source:</b> “This Crow GI Became the Last Indian War Chief in WWII,” by Blake Stilwell <b>Source:</b> “American Indian Veteran Artist: Gerald Cournoyer,” interview excerpt	<b>Source:</b> “An Unbreakable Code” by the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs <b>Source:</b> Native American Heritage: Code Talkers by <i>National Archives Catalog</i> <b>Source:</b> Code Talking: Intelligence and Bravery, by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian	<b>Source:</b> excerpt from <i>America’s First Warriors: Native Americans and Iraq</i> by Steven Clevenger <b>Source:</b> “The Warrior Tradition,” by the Public Broadcasting Service <b>Source:</b> “Healing the Warrior’s Heart,” Western Folklife Center

<p><b>Source:</b> “The Warrior Spirit,” definition essay by Kenneth G. White Jr.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> “Native Americans ‘Warriors’ Mark Military Service,” interview from NPR</p>	<p><b>Source:</b> Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code, by the Central Intelligence Agency</p> <p><b>Source:</b> “Last of the Original 29 Code Talkers Remembered for Courage,” by Richard Walker, <i>Indian Country Today</i></p> <p><b>Source:</b> “Boarding Schools: Struggling with Cultural Suppression,” National Museum of the American Indian</p> <p><b>Source:</b> <i>Warriors: Navajo Code Talkers</i> by Kenji Kawano from Northland Publishing Company</p>	
<p><b>STUDENT HANDOUT Lesson #1</b></p>	<p><b>STUDENT HANDOUT Lesson #2</b></p>	<p><b>STUDENT HANDOUT Lesson #3</b></p>
<p><b>Enduring Understanding(s)</b></p>	<p>Mainstream history narratives and curricula typically represent American Indians in ways that promote stereotypes such as the “noble savage” or the “defeated” or “extinct” warrior peoples. These gloss over the genocide and forced assimilation by Western European colonizers. U.S. History tells a painful story of the battles between the colonists and American Indians as Indians were and still are continuously forced off their lands. However, that historical narrative slowly begins to shift as American Indians begin joining the U.S. military toward the twentieth century. Why would a people who have suffered at the hands of an oppressor then join the oppressor? That answer lies in a clearer understanding of the eternal American Indian warrior spirit and an acknowledgement that the warrior spirit is alive and well in the resilient tribal nations here today.</p>	

<p><b>Summative Performance Task</b></p>	<p>Using your new understanding of the warrior spirit and American Indian veterans' service in the military, select one of the veterans featured on the <a href="#">Willing to Serve: American Indians page by the Veterans History Project</a>. Read and/or watch the primary source documents provided for your selected veteran. (<a href="https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-nativeamericans.html">https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-nativeamericans.html</a>).</p> <p>Consider also researching the specific tribe/region that the veteran is from, the tribal language used during wartime, as well as the war in which they served. Then, create a (multimedia) presentation that demonstrates how that veteran embodied the warrior spirit.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Imagine that the National Museum of the American Indian wants to display a Warrior Spirit student art exhibit in honor of the National Native American Veterans' Memorial. Using your new understanding of the warrior spirit and American Indian veterans' service in the military, design an artistic representation of the American Indian Warrior Spirit for display. This can be a range of art types from drawing, painting, or sculpting, to a multimedia or digital art project.</p>
<p><b>Mapping Informed Action (Optional)</b></p>	<p><b>Understand:</b> Guide students to consider the critical value of Native American veteran service to our country. Challenge students to honor past and present veterans by collecting stories from known veterans for the <a href="#">Library of Congress Veteran's History Project</a>. Encourage students to consider how to bring recognition and respect to Native veterans in their community.</p> <p><b>Assess:</b> Consider together how and why American Indian veterans may be honored in their communities but have not been honored nationally until now. Guide students in thinking about how they can acknowledge the contributions of American Indians in their communities and the history of the presence or absence of tribes in their region. Encourage them to research the narratives of what is now their state history in regards to American Indian relocation or assimilation. Share with students that even the creation of states and boundaries is a colonial construct that pushed Natives off their home lands. Then, expand student thinking on how to recognize local American Indian military service members if possible.</p>

<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<b>Act</b> (optional): Native Knowledge 360° <a href="#">Framework for Taking Informed Action</a> .
*Adapted by Honoring Tribal Legacies from the publication of the IDM Blueprint from Native Knowledge 360°, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of the American Indian.	

## ENTRY QUESTION 1\*

\*This lesson can be completed in one 90-minute block or broken into two days of instruction for a standard class period.

**Entry Question #1:** What is the American Indian warrior spirit?

## SOURCES

***The Warrior Spirit,***

a short film by The American Legion,  
published on YouTube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=228&v=M4cBq0ygHN0&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=228&v=M4cBq0ygHN0&feature=emb_logo)

***Images of Indians: How Hollywood Stereotyped the Native Americans,***

A 25-minute documentary (2003).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJFi7SRH7Q&list=PLNmYXptw8QBZB9XiD2vfwxRtkQlluCyXI>

***The Reel Indian: On the Trail of the Hollywood Indian,*** a trailer and 3 clips hosted by PBS

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/reel-injun/>

**“This Crow GI Became the Last Indian War Chief in WWII,”**

<https://www.wearethemighty.com/history/crow-chief-world-war-ii?rebellitem=6#rebellitem6>

article by Blake Stilwell,  
published in *We Are The Mighty*

YouTube video linked in article-  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=O9-arto8D8&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=O9-arto8D8&feature=emb_logo)

**“American Indian Veteran Artist: Gerald Cournoyer,”**  
a primary source-interview with Gerald Cournoyer

Included in instructional materials

**“The Warrior Spirit,”**  
a definition essay by Kenneth G. White Jr., from *Igniting the Warrior Spirit*

<https://www.ignitingthewarriorspirit.com/>

**“Native American ‘Warriors’ Mark Military Service”**  
(interview and book excerpt) (National Public Radio)

<https://www.npr.org/2010/11/11/131243209/native-americans-have-long-history-of-military-service>  
\*this audio broadcast includes an excerpt from *America’s First Warriors: Native Americans and Iraq*, by Steven Clevenger

#### Academic Vocabulary

#### Formative Assessment Task

**Tier 2 (direct instruction)**  
stereotype  
reservation

**Tier 3 (content-specific/  
provided)**  
historical trauma

**Writing prompt:** How would you define the warrior spirit after today’s lesson? Compare Chief Joe Medicine Crow and the artist Gerald Cournoyer. How do both men embody a warrior spirit?

#### Lesson Objectives:

- Students will determine the central idea of multiple informational texts and cite evidence from these texts to make inferences about the warrior spirit.
- Students will synthesize information across multiple sources to define the warrior spirit.
- Students will analyze the military story of Joe Medicine Crow told across print and media.
- Students will compare the experiences of two American Indian veterans to analyze how each represented the warrior spirit.

## **Preparation for Teaching:**

### **Before the lesson teachers should:**

- Review and print the Student Handout for Lesson 1
- view each video linked in the lesson and ensure it will play correctly in the classroom
- read/view each source and complete the student handouts to anticipate student responses
- Source 3 contains an image of artwork that will need to be digitally displayed for students to see the symbolic colors if color printing is not available.
- To better understand the historical and cultural value of Chief Medicine Crow, we suggest that teachers read this article ["Honoring a Cultural Treasure"](#) by Mardi Mileham from Linfield Magazine
- This lesson will feature a veteran who is now an artist at Bacone College. Though this is now a tribal college, it is only recently changed from a Baptist operated college for American Indians. To better understand the history and context of tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) visit this link <http://www.aihec.org/who-we-serve/TCUmap.cfm>

## **Teacher/Student Actions:**

**Lesson Opener (5–7 mins):**

Ask students to jot down what words or images come to mind when they hear the word “warrior.”

-Have students think/pair/share their thoughts and listen to some of the ideas.

-Ask students what they think of when they hear “Native American”; then ask learners to synthesize the two images.

-Then ask students what they think of when they hear “Native American warrior.”

-Again, have students think/pair/share before opening the discussion to the class. While answers may vary, it is likely that some students may gather the image of a half-dressed Native man with a feather headdress and a tomahawk, a common stereotype of Native American people. If so, ask students if the term warrior is reserved for people of the past or if we still have warriors in today’s society. Press for more explanation.

**Staging Entry Question #1 (5–20 mins):**

-Now that students have shared their perceptions of warriors and Native American warriors, show this YouTube video [“How Hollywood Stereotyped Native Americans.”](#) This can be shortened for time considerations based on teacher preference.

-Pause for students to reflect on their own or with a partner. Use this as an opportunity to discuss that stereotypes generally come from not knowing the truth about people and that this inquiry-design lesson series will help them research multiple sources to challenge stereotypes and hopefully expand their perceptions of past and present Native American warriors.

-Direct students to a chart/poster/whiteboard with the entry question posted: “For American Indians, what is a warrior spirit?” Explain that they will share their responses on this chart after their engagement with the sources. They can add to it each day.

-Then, direct student attention to the vocabulary list on the Student Handout. These will be provided for them or defined as the lesson progresses.

**Whole-group Source Engagement (35 min):**

-Ensure students have the printed version or digital access to “This Crow GI Became the Last Indian War Chief in WWII” from *We Are the Mighty*. This text includes several images of Joe Medicine Crow and concludes with a 12-minute YouTube video link.

-Students can either independently read the brief article and answer question #1 or you can share the reading aloud before watching the video clip.

-Ask students to think about how Joe Medicine Crow defines a warrior and how he connects this to his experiences in war.

-Direct students to questions 2–5 to answer as the video link at the bottom of the article plays. It is also linked separately in the text list above. If needed, pause the video to ask clarifying questions or to give students time to complete the questions on the student handout.

**Teacher can share this background information before or after completing the article:**

Joseph Medicine Crow was:

- a member of the Crow (Apsáalooke) tribe in Montana.
- trained by his grandfather to be a warrior from the age of 6.



- known for being a well-known Native American historian and writer, rich legacy of knowledge.
  - the last surviving person to hear a first-hand account of the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn. He heard it from his grandmother's brother named White Man Runs Him who was a scout for Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer.
  - the first member of his tribe to receive a Master's degree
  - died in 2016 at the age of 102.
  - "When you meet Joe Medicine Crow, you're shaking hands with the 19th century."
- Spoken by Dr. Herman Viola, curator of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

### **Small-group Source Engagement:**

- Divide students into small groups based on best practices for grouping.
- Ensure students have these two sources: "American Indian Veteran Artist: Gerald Cournoyer" and "The Warrior Spirit" definition essay by Kenneth G. White Jr.
- Tell students that in their groups they will be reading the two sources and completing the tasks on the handout. Depending on teacher preference, this task can be more structured so that each student is assigned a section of reading and the tasks are shared by the group.
- Before students begin, direct their attention back to the entry question. Provide each group with a chart marker or way to add responses to the posted question. Direct students to send a representative from each group to add answers to the chart as they finish.
- When the small-group activity is over, review the chart with the class pressing for clarity and validating their responses.

### **Formative/Independent Task (7–10 mins):**

- Provide students with the Formative task sheet in the student handout packet OR request that they use a separate sheet of paper. The student handout packet should remain with students, but the formative tasks should be collected daily to monitor student understanding. Students should have enough time to write a short essay response to the questions below. Ensure that they have access to their handouts and sources.

***-How would you define the warrior spirit after today's lesson? Compare Chief Joe Medicine Crow and the artist Gerald Cournoyer. How do both men embody a traditional and modern warrior spirit?***

### **Independent Task/Homework assignment (15 mins):**

- This task can be done independently as it is an audio broadcast. It can be accessed on a range of devices such as computer, tablet, and/or smart phone.
- Explain to students that they will hear an NPR broadcast interview with Steven Clevenger who has published a book on Native veterans who fought in the Gulf War. One of the featured warriors in the book Lt. Bill Cody Ayon is also a part of the interview. This broadcast will shed light on why American Indians would fight for a country that did not protect or value them.
- Read and/or listen to the ["Native American 'Warriors' Mark Military Service" broadcast](#) from NPR

### Homework/Additional Reading

Based on teacher judgement and accessibility to technology, the independent task above can be assigned for homework as a precursor for the next lesson. If time does not allow in class, encourage students to complete this at home and be prepared to discuss why American Indians choose to join the military and take pride in their service.

### Additional Resources or Supplemental Texts:

**For a more in-depth look into the life of Joe Medicine Crow and his legacy, access this article “Honoring a Cultural Treasure” by Mardi Mileham** (Note: This article was published prior to Medicine Crow’s death in 2016)

[https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1057&context=linfield\\_magazine](https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1057&context=linfield_magazine)

### Accommodations and Modifications

For students who need modified text or text types, “The Warrior Spirit” definition essay is the most accessible text and provides a thorough description of the warrior spirit to answer the entry question. The video of Joe Medicine Crow is also more accessible for struggling learners and can be used as the leading story to represent the warrior spirit. A possible modified example is for students to read the definition essay and discuss, write, or draw how Joe Medicine Crow demonstrated the warrior spirit.

## Lesson 1: Source 2

### **“This Crow GI Became the Last Indian War Chief in WWII,”**

by Blake Stilwell, published online at *We Are the Mighty*\*

(<https://www.wearethemighty.com/history/crow-chief-world-war-ii?rebelltitem=6#rebelltitem6>)

\*article is formatted from online to print version. All images and text are unchanged and properly referenced

### **Interview with the Artist**

Few American veterans will ever officially earn both the Presidential Medal of Freedom *and* the title of Crow War Chief. Joe Medicine Crow might be the only one. His other awards include the Bronze Star and the French Légion d'Honneur. How he earned the title of War Chief of the Crow tribe is a feat unheard of for decades before World War II started. But for all his feats, he only ever reached the rank of “Private” in the U.S. Army.

There are four criteria to become a Crow War Chief, all of which Joe Medicine Crow accomplished during two years of service with the U.S. Army in Europe:

- Touching an Enemy Without Killing Him
- Taking an Enemy's Weapon
- Leading a Successful War Party
- Stealing an Enemy's Horse

The Crow did not likely think this would be so difficult in the age of machine guns and tanks, but as Joe Medicine Crow showed, it was clearly not impossible.

This Native American GI was working in a shipyard in Washington state for the first part of World War II. In 1943, he decided to join the U.S. Army. He came from a remarkable nomadic warrior tradition. He was the last person to hear a first-hand account of the Battle of Little Bighorn and his grandfather served as a scout for Gen. George Armstrong Custer before the general's last stand. Joe Medicine Crow would carry this tradition forward, as well as many others.

Before he left for the war, a medicine man provided him with a painted eagle feather he would wear under his uniform before fighting. He would also paint traditional war paint under his uniform, placing two red stripes on his arms. And then, he became a War Chief, the last Crow War Chief.

While fighting at the Siegfried Line, the border fortification that would take the U.S. Army into Germany, the warrior was ordered to take a team—a war party, if you will—and cross a field under a hail of bullets to retrieve some dynamite from a previously destroyed American position. Joe Medicine Crow and seven fellow GIs crossed a field of devastating fire that probably should have killed all of them, grabbed the explosives and blew a huge hole in Hitler's vaunted line. No one was killed. One criterion for being a Crow Warrior Chief achieved.

After penetrating the line, Joe Medicine Crow and the 103d Infantry advanced on a nearby town that turned out to be heavily defended. As a scout, Joe was ahead of most of his unit. After they were ordered to flank some German defenders, Joe was separated and decided to take a shortcut. That's when he ran right into a Nazi defender while running at full sprint.

For anyone else, this might have been embarrassing at the least and deadly at the most, but this is Joe Medicine Crow. He sent the Nazi flying and the Nazi's rifle across the lawn. The American was still standing as he bent over and grabbed his enemy's weapon. Second requirement for becoming a Crow Warrior Chief achieved.

Instead of killing the German, Joe decided to drop the weapon and let his warrior skills take over. The two men fought hand-to-hand for what seemed like hours. When Joe finally got the upper hand and started to kill the Nazi soldier with his hands at the man's throat. But the German began to whimper, and Joe let him go. Three down.

Then, there's the task of stealing a horse.

Joe Medicine Crow was scouting a farmhouse behind enemy lines one night when he realized it was full of high-ranking **SS officers**. They all rode there on horses, which were corralled under guard near the house. Joe Medicine Crow snuck through the guards with only his M1911 to protect him. Having grown up learning to ride horses bareback, mounting one of them in Europe was no problem. He let out a Crow war cry and sang a song as he herded all the horses out of the corral and into U.S. Army lore.

**\*SS officers:** an elite unit of Nazi soldiers under Adolf Hitler's rule

## Lesson 1: Source 3

### American Indian Veteran Artist: Gerald Cournoyer

#### Artist Background

Gerald Cournoyer is an Oglala Lakota of South Dakota who comes from a family of warriors. His father fought in WWII and two of his brothers fought in Vietnam. Both Cournoyer and his son served in the Marine Corps. After the service, he followed his dream to represent his service and Native heritage through his immense artist talents. He holds an Associate's Degree in Fine Art painting from the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe and a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of South Dakota. He received a Master's Degree in Fine Arts and taught at the University of Oklahoma. Cournoyer also holds a Master's in Non-profit Arts Management which he is utilizing to revitalize and grow the art department as the current Chair of the Indian Art Department at Bacone College.

Bacone College was originally founded in 1880 under the name Indian University. It is the oldest running higher education institution in Oklahoma. The college, which has also been named Bacone Indian University in the past, is known for its liberal arts program for American Indians, and it has produced many famous Native artists such as Richard West, Acee Blue Eagle, the Kiowa Six, Jerome Tiger, and many others. The school has strong historical ties to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Cherokee. For more information on the history of art education at Bacone College, visit <https://www.bacone.edu/school-of-art/>

#### The Warrior (watercolor by Gerald Cournoyer)



\*image and explanation used by permission of the artist. All artworks are Copyright Protected by Gerald Cournoyer. This image may not be downloaded, copied, linked to, or edited in any manner or form for use on any website, image gallery, clipart collection, distributed product, or other non-educational uses without express written permission from the artist.

## Interview with the Artist

### ***Can you describe your warrior painting?***

My military service is a part of my work as an artist, especially because of my warrior spirit as depicted in this painting. This warrior is protecting his people. There's a society, and it wasn't an easy society to be a part of. It's warrior society. They call them sash-wearers.

So at the end of his sash, there's a little hole where the tip of his spear goes in. As he is walking, the sash is trailing behind him, and he stops and he pokes the spear through that hole. All he has is a knife and a shield, and he's willing to give his life for the protection of his people. Only another person within that warrior society can come and release him. Only they can come and grab that spear to release the sash and say, "We'll fight again." So they retreat back. Sometimes it is for certain death.

This is what they would do if they are willing to give their life at that moment. You just have the very basics; you have a shield and you have a knife, and that's it. You are ready to take anybody and everybody on.

### ***What is significant about the number 140?***

I chose that number because it is our 140th year at Bacone College. We've survived, and this is kind of our mantra as well. It is that after a hundred and forty years, we're still that warrior. The Warrior spirit is still at the college. They've been trying to close us for quite some time. The religious organization that funded the school gave less and less money to support the college.

So my colleagues and I joined the college at a crucial time when they wanted to close the college two years ago. They were thinking that this college should no longer exist. They took the money and did other things with it without the intention of fulfilling the mission which is to teach Native American students.

So when we came on board, we had to become that warrior. We had to put that spear in the ground behind us. We had to be ready to fight to the death, which would be the closing of the school, or we win that battle to become our own tribal college.

### ***Are the colors such as the red and blue significant?***

In my other works I have used red to represent the blood of the people. So the blood of the people goes from one generation to the next. So your children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will carry the blood of your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, all the way back. This warrior comes from and protects the bloodline of his people.

For my work, the blue typically represents water, which is life. Nothing can live without water. Water is very important—most important.



## Lesson 1: Source 4

### **“The Warrior Spirit,”**

by Kenneth G. White Jr. (Navajo)

Kenneth G. White Jr. is the CEO of Native Health Care Solutions in Arizona. He is also the founder of the Igniting the Warrior Spirit movement which seeks to help Native Americans heal from historical trauma and other emotional or mental issues through revitalizing and embodying the traditional warrior spirit. This definition essay is featured on the official site for Igniting the Warrior Spirit (<https://www.ignitingthewarriorspirit.com/>)

### **The Warrior Spirit**

All Native Americans have the Warrior Spirit within themselves; it is a gift from God Almighty. Some people recognize they have it, some don't. All females or males are true Warriors in Native society.

The Warrior Spirit is a physical, mental, and spiritual state of being, and way of life. It unconditionally recognizes, honors, and embraces one's Native American essence; identity; and historical and traditional foundation.

The Warrior Spirit is an intrinsic, all encompassing, embedded character, behavior, and spiritual way of humbling and empowering oneself through the recognition, awareness, and application of self-respect, and the prayers, language, and traditions of our ancestors.

The Warrior Spirit is a universal unwavering duty and responsibility to meet the needs and ensure the wellness of Native people and Mother Earth as defined by the Great Spirit from the beginning of time, to today, and in the future.

The Warrior Spirit never sleeps or rests; it is always awake, vibrant, and ready to take on any new challenge.

The Warrior Spirit is righteous and full of grace and power.

The Warrior Spirit never gives up until the goal is completed.

Find, embrace, and celebrate the Warrior Spirit within you.

## HONORING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

**STUDENT NAME:**

**ENTRY QUESTION #1: What is the American Indian warrior spirit?**

**Source 1: “How Hollywood Stereotyped Native Americans,”** YouTube video by framesinmotion2007

As you watch the video, jot down your reflections on your own perceptions of American Indian warriors. Are they similar to or different from what you see in the video?

Why do you think you have those beliefs or perceptions?

## STUDENT HANDOUT: Lesson 1

### Vocabulary

**stereotype:** a mistaken idea or over-generalized belief about a person or group based on an outside trait or group identity

**historical trauma:** the cumulative effects of past trauma caused by a tragic event or treatment of a group of people that is passed down over time

**reservation:** land designated by the U.S. government for tribes to manage and live (generally after being forced their homelands)

**Source 2: “This Crow GI Became the Last Indian War Chief in WWII,” by Blake Stilwell & Medicine Crow War Chief Story (YouTube video)**

1. What do the four requirements to become a war chief reveal about the American Indian perspective of what a warrior means?	
2. How did Joe Medicine Crow's American Indian heritage prepare him for combat in WWII?	
3. What does Medicine Crow's hand-to-hand combat with the German soldier reveal about his character?	
4. Based on the video, what can you infer about the historical relationship between the American Indians and the U.S. government?	
5. Using the article and video, explain how Medicine Crow exemplifies the warrior spirit?	

### Small Group Activity

**Source 3: American Indian Veteran Artist: Gerald Cournoyer**

6. What is significant about Gerald Cournoyer's position at Bacone College?	
7. What is the purpose of the sash on an American Indian warrior? Why is this important?	
8. How does Gerald Cournoyer connect his own experience to that of his painting of The Warrior?	
9. Considering what you have heard about Native stereotypes in the media, why do you think Gerald Cournoyer painted an image of a traditional warrior rather than a modern representation of one?	

**Source 4: "The Warrior Spirit" definition essay by Kenneth G. White Jr.**

10. How does Kenneth G. White, Jr. extend the warrior spirit definition beyond the battlefield?	
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11. How does White's definition align to Gerald Cournoyer's art and explanation in Source 3?

Student Name:

## Formative Writing Task #1

**Directions:** Synthesizing all the sources you have studied for this first lesson, write a short essay response to the questions below. Be sure to cite specific details from at least two sources and reference the sources in your essay.

**Prompt:** *Based on all the sources you have studied in this lesson, what is the American Indian warrior spirit? Compare Chief Joe Medicine Crow and the artist Gerald Cournoyer. How do both men embody a warrior spirit?*

[illegible]

[illegible]

## ENTRY QUESTION 2\*

\*This lesson can be completed in one 90-minute block or broken into two days of instruction for a standard class period.

**Entry Question #2:** How did WWII Code Talkers exemplify the warrior spirit?

## SOURCES

**“An Unbreakable Code,”**  
YouTube video by the U.S.  
Department of Veterans’ Affairs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmignAQTTCl>

**“Photos of Navajo Indian “Code talkers” in the UC Marine Core, 1943–1948,”**  
National Archives Catalog

[https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=\\*&f.parentNalid=532395&f.level=item&sort=nalidSort%20asc](https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=*&f.parentNalid=532395&f.level=item&sort=nalidSort%20asc)

**“Native American Heritage: Code Talkers,”**  
National Archives Catalog

<https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/military/code-talkers.html>

**“Code Talking: Intelligence and Bravery,”**  
Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian

<https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter4.html>

**“Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code,”**  
Central Intelligence Agency

<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2008-featured-story-archive/navajo-code-talkers/>

<b>“Last of the Original 29 Code Talkers Remembered for Courage,”</b> by Richard Walker, <i>Indian Country Today</i>		<a href="https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/last-of-original-29-code-talkers-remembered-for-courage-and-humility-PR-fOTimFUujcKIhbDY_nw">https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/last-of-original-29-code-talkers-remembered-for-courage-and-humility-PR-fOTimFUujcKIhbDY_nw</a>
<b>“Boarding Schools: Struggling with Cultural Suppression,”</b> National Museum of the American Indian		<a href="https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter3.html">https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter3.html</a>
<b>“Navajo Code Talkers Dictionary (declassified),”</b>  from <i>Naval History and Heritage Command</i>		<a href="https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/n/navajo-code-talker-dictionary.html">https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/n/navajo-code-talker-dictionary.html</a>
<b>Academic Vocabulary</b>		<b>Formative Assessment Task</b>
<b>Tier 2 (direct instruction)</b>	<b>Tier 3 (content-specific/ provided)</b> declassification	<b>Writing prompt:</b> Synthesizing all the sources your group has studied for this inquiry, write a response to “How do the WWII Code Talkers’ experiences before, during, and after WWII exemplify the warrior spirit?” Be sure to cite specific details from today’s sources and reference the sources in your response.
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>		
-Students will determine the central idea of multiple informational texts on Code Talkers. -Students will identify the impact of Code Talkers during WWI and WWII. -Students will analyze primary and secondary sources to infer how Code Talkers exemplify the definition of the American Indian warrior spirit. -Students will refine research skills and evaluating information by accessing multiple online and multimedia sources.		
<b>Culturally Respectful Teaching Practices</b>		



Discussions about boarding schools, battles, reservations, and other difficult topics can be psychologically painful for some Native students as well as very new and/or disturbing information for non-Native students. It is very critical to consider the historical trauma that many tribes still endure. It is best to speak with any American Indian students and/or families prior to these lessons to better understand how to approach the topic as well as engage the community in the lessons. Consider inviting an elder or tribal representative to the classroom during this unit.

For additional understanding of teaching about historically traumatic issues, access the resource [“Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom”](#) by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

### **Preparation for Teaching:**

#### **Before the lesson teachers should:**

- view each source link and media item to ensure student access.
- determine how students will access sources for the inquiry task (print, digital, blend, grouping).
- read/view each source and complete the student handouts to anticipate student responses.
- select and print some of the primary source images/artifacts for students to gallery walk at the beginning of the lesson.
- determine if your community has informational sources about Code Talkers or WWII American Indian Veterans that can be used in the classroom (including historians or researchers).

### **Teacher/Student Actions:**

**Lesson Opener (5–7 mins):**

- Begin the lesson with a connection back to the NPR broadcast students listened to independently. Pose the question, “According to the interview, why do American Indians fight in a military for a country that once tried to eradicate their ancestors?”
- Have students think/pair/share their thoughts and listen to some of the ideas. Be open to expanding some ideas or jot down questions they may have that can be addressed later.
- Share with students that they will engage in their own inquiry time today. Their sources will share the story of the brave Code Talkers of WWII and the valuable contribution to the success of the war. However, they will also find that celebrating these heroes also means recognizing the suffering that they endured as a people, in boarding schools, and even after the war. Emphasize how, as students read about these 20<sup>th</sup> century Native warriors, they should also consider how the Code Talkers felt to be celebrated for the United States in war but not valued as a people by that same country.

**Staging Entry Question #2 (10 mins):**

- Direct students to a chart/poster/whiteboard with the entry question posted: “How did WWII Code Talkers exemplify the warrior spirit?” Explain that they will share their responses on this chart after their engagement with the sources. They can add to their responses each day.
- Gallery Walk: On classroom walls, put up 5–7 teacher-selected primary source images from the National Archives catalog as well as the National Museum of the American Indian lesson site for [Boarding Schools](#) and [Code Talkers](#). (An online digital gallery is another option.)
- Direct students to walk in small groups around the room and just quietly look at the images without taking notes. Give students enough time to view all the images. For the impact of the lesson, provide a range of photos from Code Talkers in action to normal activity, boarding school images such as the famous image of Tom Torlino before and after entering boarding school on the NMAI site on Boarding Schools. You may also want to post an image or two of the last remaining Code Talkers alive to honor their resiliency.
- Then, direct student attention to the Student Handout to jot down their reflections and wonderings. These do not have to be shared aloud. This is more time to reflect on and prepare for the upcoming lesson.

**Whole-group Source Engagement (5 min):**

- Direct students to the handout again. Tell them that they will watch a brief introduction to the Code Talkers: [“The Unbreakable Code”](#) by the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs.
- Tell students as they watch to consider why the use of Navajo code was such an effective and intelligent way to send messages.

**Small-group Source Engagement (45–60 minutes):**

- This task can be organized in different ways based on teacher and/or student preference. Any of the following formats are applicable:
  - \* [Jigsaw](#) collaborative method (<https://www.jigsaw.org/>)
  - \* Print 5 copies of each source. Rotate small groups around sources until students have engaged with all sources.

\* Small groups use laptops or tablets to access all sources online simultaneously.

\* Printed versions of all sources are provided to all students and students are grouped by teacher/student preference.

-Ensure students have their student handouts to answer overarching questions and complete the graphic organizer as they engage in sources.

-Teacher monitors students working to facilitate discussion and clarify any misunderstandings.

-For 45–60 minute class periods, this is a pausing point whereby students may resume working the following day.

### **Formative/Independent Task (15–20 mins):**

-Provide students with the Formative task sheet in the student handout packet OR request that they use a separate sheet of paper. The student handout packet should remain with students, but the formative tasks should be collected daily to monitor student understanding. Students should have enough time to write a short essay response to the questions below. Ensure that they have access to their handouts and sources. Collect their responses when they are finished.

***- Synthesizing all the sources your group has studied for this inquiry, write a response to “How do the WWII Code Talkers’ experiences before, during, and after WWII exemplify the warrior spirit?” Be sure to cite specific details from today’s sources and reference the sources in your response***

### **Whole group re-engagement (10 mins):**

-Refocus students to direct their attention to the Entry Question #2 chart posted. While they are wrapping up the small group task, each group should select a representative to record their responses to Entry Question #2 on the class chart.

-As time allows, open up a brief discussion on student responses as well as press for more if student response is limited.

-This discussion may also bring out additional questions or reflections on the historical and current relationship of tribes with the U.S. government and/or non-Native people.

-If the teacher is not Native or familiar with this historical relationship, rather than attempt to answer these questions immediately, consider jotting down student questions to answer at a later time after doing more research and reaching out to a local elder or tribal representative.

-Discussions about boarding schools, battles, reservations, and other difficult topics can be psychologically painful for some Native students as well as very new and/or disturbing information for non-Native students. It is very critical to consider the historical trauma that many tribes still endure. It is best to speak with any American Indian students and/or families prior to these lessons to better understand how to approach the topic as well as engage the community in the lessons. Consider inviting an elder or tribal representative to the classroom during this unit.

### Homework/Additional Reading

If applicable, teachers may want to allow students to select an independent reading text that aligns to this topic. The entire class could independently read a text such as *Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two* by Joseph Bruchac. Students could also select from the texts on this list [“Native American Veterans in Children’s Literature.”](#) Teachers will need to vet this list to consider reading levels and student interests.

### Additional Resources or Supplemental Texts:

This lesson can potentially create more questions around code talkers as well as boarding schools. While it is very important to highlight and value the service of the code talkers, it is just as important to speak to the atrocities of boarding schools and the U.S. government’s attempt to eradicate American Indian culture. For further information and primary source lessons about boarding schools, visit the Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/indianschools/>. It is also imperative that teachers approach this topic with sensitivity and respect. If you are uncertain how to address the topic of boarding schools, reach out to a local tribal education organization or visit the [National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#) for additional support. For a more in-depth story from the Navajo Code Talker Chester Nez, read his book (or excerpts) [Code Talker: The First and Only Memoir by One of the Original Navajo Code Talkers of WWII](#) by Chester Nez and Judith Schiess Avila.

### Accommodations and Modifications

For students who need modified text or text types, the number of sources can be paired back or limited to just multimedia options for students who may be more auditory. Consider having students record their answers digitally or reducing the writing requirements and question amounts.

## HONORING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

**STUDENT NAME:**

**ENTRY QUESTION #2:** How did WWII Code Talkers exemplify the warrior spirit?

**Reflection:** Share any reflections or questions you have after the picture Gallery Walk.

**Video Introduction: “An Unbreakable Code” by the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs**

Why was the use of Navajo code talking effective in WWI and WWII?

## STUDENT HANDOUT: Lesson 2

### Vocabulary

#### Tier 2

**Reservation:** (teacher explains or students research the meaning)

#### Tier 3

**declassification:** to remove secrecy or confidentiality restrictions, to make public

### Lesson 2 Inquiry Task: Code Talkers

**Directions:** During this inquiry-based task, you will engage with the list of sources below to answer several guiding questions. These answers will prepare you to answer the entry question “How did WWII Code Talkers exemplify the warrior spirit?” Though you may know some information about the Code Talkers, these sources will give you more, in-depth perspective on the historical treatment of American Indians, government mandated boarding schools, the cultural values of the Code Talkers, and the importance of Code Talkers to the outcome of WWII. As you engage with and respond to the following sources, continue to think about the historical relationship between tribes and the U.S. government alongside the cultural pride of the Code Talkers in serving their country and homeland.

<p><b><i>Photos of Navajo Indian “Code talkers’ in the UC Marine Core 1943-1948</i></b> National Archives Catalog</p>	<p><a href="https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=*&amp;f.parentNald=532395&amp;f.level=item&amp;sort=naldSort%20asc">https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=*&amp;f.parentNald=532395&amp;f.level=item&amp;sort=naldSort%20asc</a></p>
<p><b><i>Native American Heritage: Code Talkers</i></b> National Archives Catalog</p>	<p><a href="https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/military/code-talkers.html">https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/military/code-talkers.html</a></p>
<p>“Boarding Schools: Struggling with Cultural Suppression,” National Museum of the American Indian</p>	<p><a href="https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter3.html">https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter3.html</a></p>
<p>“Code Talking: Intelligence and Bravery,” Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian</p>	<p><a href="https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter4.html">https://americanindian.si.edu/education/codetalkers/html/chapter4.html</a></p>
<p>“Navajo Code Talkers and the Unbreakable Code,” Central Intelligence Agency</p>	<p><a href="https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2008-featured-story-archive/navajo-code-talkers/">https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2008-featured-story-archive/navajo-code-talkers/</a></p>
<p>“Last of the Original 29 Code Talkers Remembered for Courage,” by Richard Walker, <i>Indian Country Today</i></p>	<p><a href="https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/last-of-original-29-code-talkers-remembered-for-courage-and-humility-PR-fOTimFUujcKlhbdY_nw">https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/last-of-original-29-code-talkers-remembered-for-courage-and-humility-PR-fOTimFUujcKlhbdY_nw</a></p>
<p><b>Optional source for student interest</b></p>	

<p>“Navajo Code Talkers Dictionary (declassified),” from <i>Naval History and Heritage Command</i></p>	<p><a href="https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/n/navajo-code-talker-dictionary.html">https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/n/navajo-code-talker-dictionary.html</a></p>
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### Small-group Inquiry Task: Student Worksheet

STUDENT/GROUP NAME:		
<b>Guiding Question:</b> How did the Code Talkers’ tribal heritage influence their decisions to join the military as well as their experiences in the war?		
Source (abbreviate title)	Evidence	Explanation


### Small Group Inquiry Task: Student Worksheet

STUDENT/GROUP NAME:		
<b>Guiding Question:</b> How did WWII Code Talkers have an impact on the outcome of WWII?		
<b>Source</b> (abbreviate title)	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Explanation</b>




### Small Group Inquiry Task: Student Worksheet

STUDENT/GROUP NAME:

**Guiding Question:** What does the story of the Code Talkers show us about the relationship between the tribe nations and the U.S. government?

Source (abbreviate title)	Evidence	Explanation


Student Name:

Formative Performance Task #2
<p><b>Directions:</b> Synthesizing all the sources your group has studied for this inquiry, write a response to the questions below. Be sure to cite specific details from today's sources and reference the sources in your response.</p> <p><b>Prompt:</b> <i>How do the WWII Code Talkers' experiences before, during, and after WWII exemplify the warrior spirit?</i></p>
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This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

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### ENTRY QUESTION 3\*

\*This lesson can be completed in one and a half 90-minute blocks or broken into three days of instruction for a standard class period.

**Entry Question #3:** How do American Indian veterans today connect their military service to the warriors of the past?

### SOURCES

**“Why Treaties Matter,”**

a video from National Public Radio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bexvE4lZRG0&t=116s>

Excerpt from ***America’s First Warriors: Native Americans and Iraq,***

by Steven Clevenger

Interview with Lieutenant Bill Cody

Ayon,

New Mexico National Guard

<https://www.npr.org/2010/11/11/131243209/native-americans-have-long-history-of-military-service>

(second half of webpage)

**“Healing the Warrior’s Heart,”**

Western Folklife Center

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1oTS6Fp624>

<b>“The Warrior Tradition,”</b> a documentary by the Public Broadcasting Service		<a href="https://www.pbs.org/video/the-warrior-tradition-fkaz4h/">https://www.pbs.org/video/the-warrior-tradition-fkaz4h/</a>
<b>The Warrior Spirit</b> Definition essay by Kenneth G. White Jr. From <i>Igniting the Warrior Spirit</i>		<a href="https://www.ignitingthewarriorspirit.com/">https://www.ignitingthewarriorspirit.com/</a>
<b>Academic Vocabulary</b>		<b>Formative Assessment Task</b>
<b>Tier 2 (direct instruction)</b> treaty	<b>Tier 3 (content-specific/ provided)</b> Fallacy	<b>Creative Writing prompt:</b> Choose one of the following poetry forms (diamante, calligram, blackout poem, or haiku) and compose a poem that creatively exemplifies the warrior spirit of American Indian Veterans.
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>		
-Students will determine the central idea of multiple informational texts on veterans and their military service. -Students will identify how American Indian veterans uphold the warrior spirit. -Students will analyze multimedia sources to make inferences about American Indian veteran experiences and warriors of the past.		
<b>Culturally Respectful Teaching Practices</b>		

During this lesson, students and/or teachers may learn about treaties and tribal sovereignty for the first time. Before this lesson, it is important that teachers gain an understanding of the recognition of tribes as nations who believe in their sovereign right to govern themselves. This sovereignty was not “granted” by the government. It is an inherent right since before time immemorial. Between the years of 1774 and 1868, the U.S. government signed numerous treaties, legally binding contracts, with different tribes/nations. Many of these treaties surrendered vast amounts of lands in exchange for government protection, education, health services, funding, freedoms, and the right to maintain tribal use of land for things such as fishing and hunting. However, the underlying narrative of history shows that the U.S. government revoked many of the treaties and retained the land and resources that were supposed to go to the tribal nations. The U.S. government did this by arbitrarily declaring that tribes were no longer recognized as nations in 1871 and ending the treaty-making period, and yet, American Indian tribes did not even receive U.S. citizenship status until 1924. This explains something about the subsequent evolution of government-to-government relationships and will help clarify how some tribes were “terminated” and later “restored.”

This revoking of treaties added to long-standing tension between tribes and the government, but many tribes had assimilated into American society and could do little about the treaty violations. But to this day, many tribes work tirelessly to gain back their lands and regain the tribal sovereignty that was upheld by the treaties. In order to understand the value and significance of an American Indian’s decision to serve in the U.S. military despite this tense and unjust history, it is important that students and teachers recognize and understand tribal sovereignty and know the value of treaties to tribes. For additional information, read [“Treaty: Promise Between Governments,”](#) by the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission, or visit the National Archives catalog of [American Indian Treaties](#).

#### **Preparation for Teaching:**

##### **Before the lesson teachers should:**

- Read the background information on treaties: [“Treaty: Promise Between Governments,”](#) by the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission and:
- view each source link and media item to ensure student access.
- determine how students will access sources for the inquiry task (print, digital, blend, grouping).
- read/view each source and complete the student handouts to anticipate student responses.
- (recommended) seek tribal representatives or elders in the community for any additional information regarding tribal sovereignty, military service, or treaties.

#### **Teacher/Student Actions:**

**Lesson Opener (5–7 mins):**

- Ask students to reflect on the great value that the Code Talkers brought to both wars, especially WWII. Teachers can opt to open this for discussion or simply ask for a reflection. Then share with students that American Indians were not legally recognized as U.S. citizens until 1924. Prior to that, they were considered citizens of their own tribal nations.
- Ask students to think/pair/share what that means in relationship to American Indian military service in both World Wars. Share with students that they will watch a brief video on how the U.S. government and tribal governments made treaties as separate bodies of government.
- Begin the lesson with the video "[Why Treaties Matter](#)," by the National Public Radio. Have students complete the reflection portion of the handout.

**Staging Entry Question #2 (10 mins):**

- Direct students to a chart/poster/whiteboard with the entry question posted: "How do American Indian veterans today connect their military service to the warriors of the past?" Explain that they will share their responses on this chart after their engagement with the sources.
- Further encourage students to return to the question of why American Indians would fight for a country that tried to wipe them out as they read and watch the lesson sources.

**Whole-group Source Engagement (50 minutes):\***

- Show the documentary film "[The Warrior Tradition](#)", by the Public Broadcasting Service.
- \*If time is limited, this source can be eliminated or cut short based on teacher preference.

**Small-group Source Engagement (30 mins):**

- In small groups, students will read the "excerpt from *America's First Warriors: Native Americans and Iraq*," by Steven Clevenger. This excerpt is an interview with Lieutenant Bill Cody Ayon from the New Mexico National Guard.
- Direct students to the task sheet in their student handout that they will complete as they read.
- Students will also watch the video.

**Whole-group Re-engagement (10 mins):**

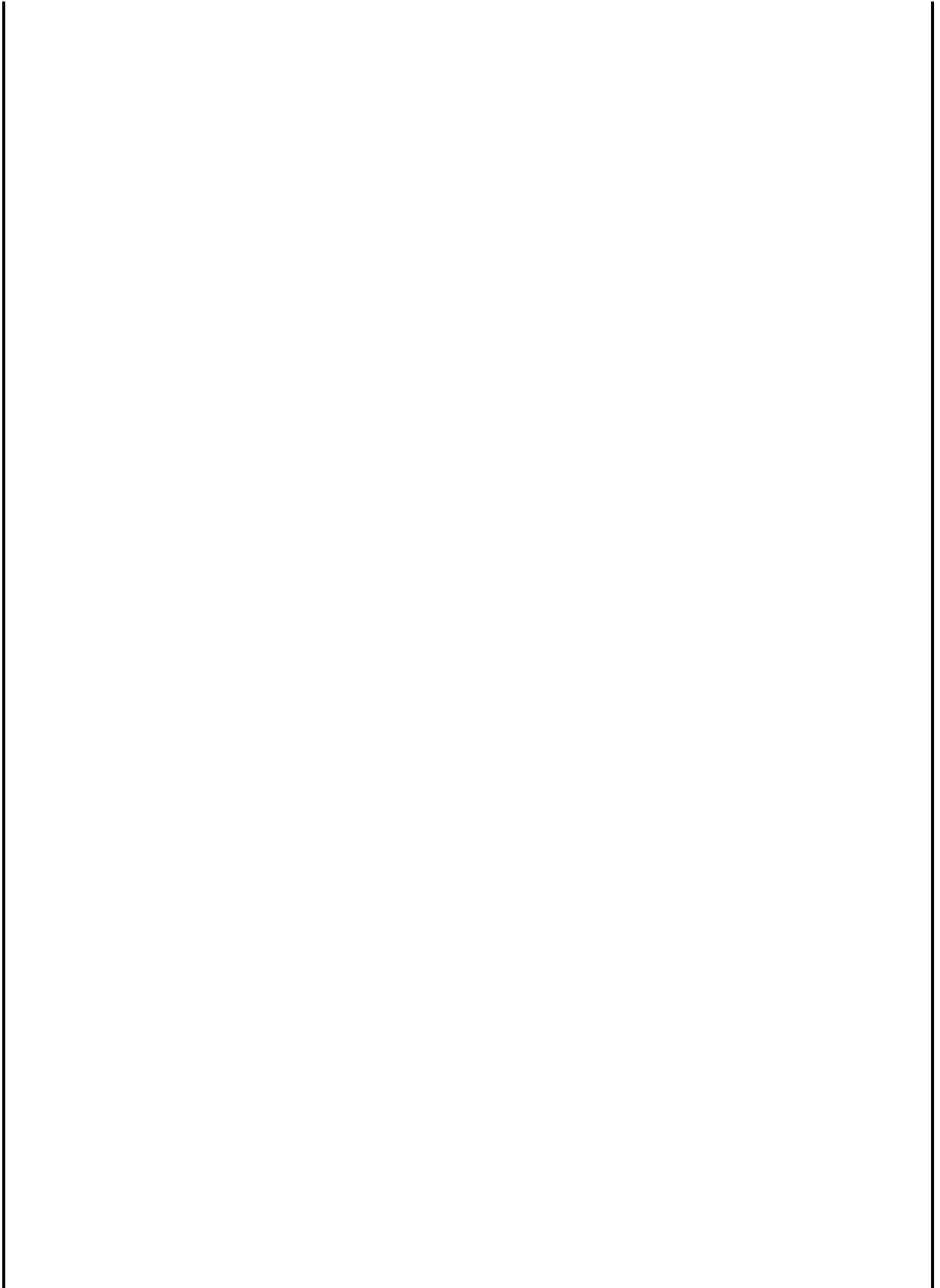
- Show the documentary film [The Warrior Tradition](#) by the Public Broadcasting. Encourage students to read the questions before starting the film. Questions are broad, and they can be answered throughout the viewing of the film.

**Formative/Independent Task (15–20 mins):**

- Provide students with the Formative task sheet in the student handout packet OR request that they use a separate sheet of paper. This is a creative writing task and may also be assigned for homework to allow students more time to work.

**- Choose one of the following poetry forms (diamante, calligram, blackout poem, or haiku) and compose a poem that creatively exemplifies the warrior spirit of American Indian veterans.**





### Accommodations and Modifications

For students who need modified text or text types, the number of sources can be paired back or limited to just multimedia options for students who may be more auditory. Consider having students record their answers digitally or reducing the writing requirements and question amounts.

### Lesson 3: Source 2

Excerpt from *America's First Warriors: Native Americans and Iraq*,  
by Steven Clevenger

Lieutenant Bill Cody Ayon, New Mexico National Guard: Interviewed September 16, 2007,  
Camp Cropper, Iraq

<https://www.npr.org/2010/11/11/131243209/native-americans-have-long-history-of-military-service>

These ceremonies and returning ceremonies are to cleanse the person before they leave, so they know that they are supported at home, which makes their job a little bit easier when they leave. And also when they return home as a purification rite, showing that all the bad they've seen or all the hurt they have felt or all the evil that surrounded them in whatever portion of the world they may have been in, or what situation they may have been in, is left behind. Like one of my uncles used to say, "It follows them like a shadow cast off. It's behind them now."

By all the family coming together and helping send you off this way, and helping you come back in the same fashion, returning the same way, it reassures the service member he's not alone in this fight. Because when a warrior goes off, he goes off to defend his way of life, to defend what is our culture, what is deemed our way of being, our way of living. And when he returns, he needs to be brought back into that circle, into that light. By having all people around him support him in this manner, it's a cleansing aspect.

We sing Dog Soldier songs in the sweat lodge. Dog Soldier songs are very old. They were passed on to my father and his wife. And these songs are sung in times of great need, and great strength is needed to do something like this. My father and his wife sing these songs for me in the sweat lodge, so that I will have the courage to do what I have to do. Also, we sing many songs in the sweat for strength, for endurance that we'll need in the days to come.

When I stepped off to leave from our home and came over on this deployment, I was blessed with my father's eagle fan, and he said prayers over me with my family around me in a circle. And I feel that power that is created from their love and appreciation of what I'm doing, and from what other service members are doing.

I feel it is an honor to defend what is America now. Because it is where our people and where my family resides. Therefore, I am still carrying on the tradition that was passed on to us, which is to defend our homeland. That aspect hasn't changed. Whether it is an American flag or a camp circle of lodges. That unique representation has always been there inside me. To me there is no irony in that. There is only honor in defending what is yours, what is your way of life. The old ones did that because they felt they were being encroached upon and their lifestyle was threatened. The way they thought the world to be was threatened. So they fought for their very lives against overwhelming odds. And that is to be honored. As we see throughout history that people are subdued, or conquered if you will. But their spirit never is. The spirit of that culture never is. I don't think there is a Cheyenne today that will tell you that we were conquered. I won't tell you that, and I don't expect any other Cheyenne to tell you that. Tricked, duped, maybe. That is a whole different ball of wax. But no, I feel no irony in defending my country and defending my way of life and my people and my family. I feel no irony in that. Like I said, I see only honor. And I'm glad to see my people still respect that. Whether it's a warrior for the United States flag or it's a warrior for the Cheyenne people. That is what it is to be honored. That is what it is to be a warrior.

We as Cheyenne people aren't going out to pick a fight. But when you come pick a fight, we bring a fight. And that is what I love about our culture. And whether you believe it or not, that is the same culture that America is built on. And I think that is why Native Americans hold close to that ideal.

I think that when you come from a society or a family like mine, where they raise you in this fashion, where they honor you to be in the military and serve your country, that's what you are supposed to do. To defend this country and defend your tribe and defend your people and your land. You are supposed to do that. You are supposed to give yourself for the betterment of the people and the betterment of man. I feel that when you go into something with that mind-set, you are light-years above a young man who might come into the service and say, "I did this for college money."

When you have eighteen years behind you, your family telling you every day, this is how a warrior is, these are the people you come from, look at the battles they fought, look at the trials they faced. You can stand up in front of a person like that and say, "This isn't that big of a deal." And when I return home, I'll be a stronger man because of it.

I would like to tell you the story of Two Twist. It was one of the first stories I was ever taught in my tribe. If you listen to the story, you will understand why I think the way I do. It pretty much sums it up:

Long before the United States had conquered the western half of the United States, when our tribe was roaming free, there was a man and his name was Red Robe. Red Robe lost two sons in a conflict with our enemy the Crow. Because of this, he gave all that he had away. He was in mourning. He had a lot of horses, a lot of wealth for the time. He had a prominent family. He was an elder who was revered in the tribe. He gave everything away. He didn't want anything. He pretty much lived homeless.

The warrior societies in our tribe—the Bow String, the Fox, the Dog Soldiers, the Elk—they all came together and asked him to come back to the camp. Because he was living on the outskirts, away from the people. He didn't want to be a part of people's life.

They came together and honored this elder and asked him to come back. He still refused. He said that his sons had died and he was in mourning for them. The societies told him, "Your sons died in the best way that a Cheyenne ever could. And that is to die in battle. He didn't live to be an old man. He didn't live to die of sickness. Your sons died defending their people, their way of life, which is the warrior culture of our tribe."

There was a soldier, a leader of one of the societies, the Bow String Society. His name was Two Twist. Two Twist made a vow, a pledge that he would lead the tribe against the Crow. He would die in battle. This would be the last battle on earth. All the tribe at that time vowed to go with him when he made this pledge.

The tribe moved against the Crow in mass formation. Two Twist led the Cheyenne against the Crow. And the Crow scouts saw they were coming and dug in. They knew they were surrounded in this valley where they were at. The Cheyenne let up. Two Twist led the tribe. He sang his war songs. His Bow String war songs. Made his pledge that he would never walk on this earth again. And all he had was a weapon that he had captured from the enemy. He had a saber. And he led the tribe into battle on his pony with this saber, and nothing else. He charged into the Crow. And he made all the rest of the people stay back until he went first into the fight.

He jumped into the breastworks of the Crow and fought by himself. The people saw him go down in the dust. He was dragged down as he was fighting his way through the enemy. At that time, the Cheyenne moved forward, surrounded the Crow and scattered the Crow to the wind. And beat back their enemy and destroyed them.

Two Twist lived through this battle. They found him, and he was still alive. From that day on, he was revered as a great warrior and a tribal leader. Which he became later on in life. The people never let him fight again because he had made this vow for another man.

Red Robe took him as his son. Red Robe honored him. Red Robe told the rest of the people that in this way you honor those who go to combat for you, that go to war for you.

By telling you this story, I want to show you that we as native people, as Cheyenne, still do that to this day. People such as myself and my family and my loved ones and people I know have come forth to represent our country in times of need like this. When we come back home, our families carry on that tradition that Red Robe did. He was honored that Two Twist went to fight for him, to die for him. In this way, you give them honor, the support, the recognition they need. Just as in the old days. Two Twist was one of the greatest warriors our tribe has ever known. Because of this, our people move forward in that same fashion to this day.

### HONORING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

**STUDENT NAME:**

**ENTRY QUESTION #3:** How do American Indian veterans today connect their military service to the warriors of the past?

**Reflection: “Why Treaties Matter,”** YouTube video by NPR

How does this video challenge your thinking about the “rights” to land in the United States?

Why are treaties significant to American Indians?

### STUDENT HANDOUT: Lesson 3

#### Vocabulary

**treaty:** a legal agreement between two countries

**fallacy:** a misleading or mistaken belief, something founded on false logic

**Source: excerpt from *America's First Warriors: Native Americans and Iraq***

By Steven Clevenger

Interview with Lieutenant Bill Cody Ayon, New Mexico National Guard

1. How does a tribal community and its traditions play a role in a tribal member's military service?

2. How does Lieutenant Bill Cody Ayon explain the reason that American Indians serve in the military?

3. What is the purpose of telling the story of Red Robe and Two Twist?



**Source: “The Warrior Tradition”**  
documentary by the Public Broadcasting Service

4. Why is American Indian service in the military so complex?

<p>5. How has the United States federal government both suppressed and capitalized on the American Indian warrior spirit?</p>	
<p>6. How does this documentary add to your understanding of why American Indians are still proud to serve in the military?</p>	
<p><b>Source: "Healing the Warrior's Heart,"</b> a video by the Western Folklife Center</p>	
<p>7. How does the veteran being interviewed look at the U.S. flag differently? What does each part of the flag represent?</p>	

<p>8. How does this video demonstrate the needs of American Indian veterans after they leave their military service?</p>	

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<b>Bringing it all together</b>
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<p>Now that you have engaged in multiple sources, what is your understanding of the American Indian warrior spirit?</p>
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How has your understanding or knowledge of American Indian veterans changed during this inquiry? Create a visual that shows how your perspective has changed from your image at the beginning of the lesson to how you view Native American warriors now.

Student Name:

### Formative Performance Task #3

**Directions:** Synthesizing all the sources you have accessed, complete the creative writing prompt below. You can also consider all of the sources for the unit, not just this lesson.

**Creative Writing Prompt:** Choose one of the following poetry forms (diamante, calligram, blackout poem, or haiku) and compose a poem that creatively exemplifies the warrior spirit of American Indian Veterans.

Poetry type	Example
<a href="#">Diamante</a>	
<a href="#">Calligram (shape poem)</a>	
<a href="#">Blackout poem</a>	
<a href="#">Haiku</a>	

**Compose your poem here or use the back of this page if needed. You may also request to use other materials.**