Code Talkers Lesson Plan

Summary

Content Area Social Studies/ELA

Grade Level Grade 3-5

Topic / Unit of Study Native American Language / Code Talkers of WWII

Objective Students will be able to:

- Explain the role of the code talkers during World War II.
- Learn how indigenous languages served as a code and method to protect our country from enemies.
- Utilize Indigenous words appropriately to create a message.
- Understand the importance of preserving Indigenous language.

Duration 60 Minutes

Implementation

Materials

- Playground linguistic panel*
- Secrets of the Code Talkers PBS Video
- Writing materials

Instruction

1. Assess prior knowledge by asking what students know about WWII and/or Code Talkers.
2. Show Secrets of the Code Talkers PBS Video.
3. Discuss the complexity and variety of indigenous languages and how they were used during WWII.
4. Have students each bring a pencil and notebook to the playground linguistic panel.*
5. Identify which language is depicted on the linguistic panel and lead children to pronounce terms in the Indigenous language depicted. Explain that some languages were not written and discuss how symbols may be used instead of written language.
6. Tell students to choose at least three indigenous terms from the linguistic panel to create a secret message.
7. Divide students into groups of five. Return to the classroom and have one student from every group write their group member's Indigenous codes on separate notecards. Have the student write each of the corresponding messages on another set of note cards.
8. Have each group trade cards with another group. Using the Code Talkers worksheet, instruct each group to match the codes to the messages.
9. When finished, have each group consult the other group to check their answers.
10. Exit ticket: Explain in 2-3 sentences the importance of Native languages during WWI.

Assessment

1. Students will be able to name three Indigenous languages used with the WWII Code Talkers.
2. Explain the function of the Code Talkers during WWII.
3. Attempt to create and interpret messages using Indigenous terms from the linguistic panels.

* If linguistic panels are not available, utilize Indigenous Language Research Guide to find Native language terms.

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WWII Navajo Code Talkers Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____ Teacher _____

Student	Indigenous Code	Message

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