

SMCHS FRESHMAN SUMMER READING STUDY GUIDE

Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War II

Prereading (Informational Text): Read the “Author’s Notes” on pages 215-224, and answer the following questions.

1. Where and when do ethnologists believe the Navajos originated from?
2. Where are the “four sacred mountains” and what is that area called today? Find the map in this packet, locate this area, and label it.
3. Why does the author believe the Navajos were not warlike raiders?
4. Describe the Navajo Long Walk:
5. Describe the Navajo Reservation:
6. Why did most people not know about the important role the Navajos played in WWII?

INTRODUCTION: Read the Foreword (“Listen, My Grandchildren”) on pages 1-3. Use context clues to support your answers.

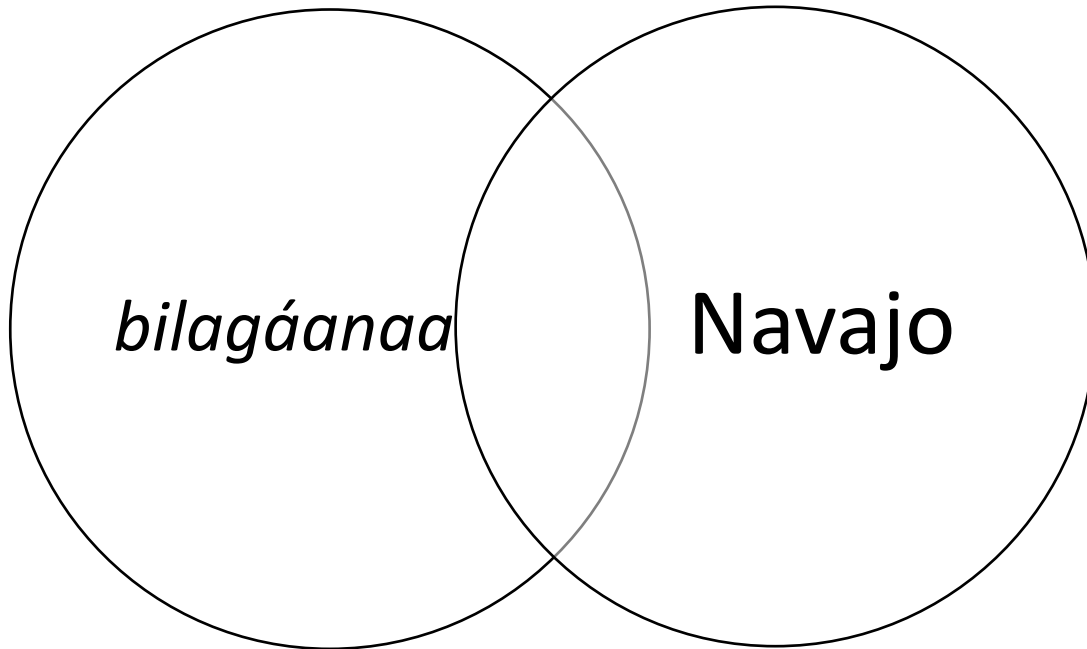
7. Who is the narrator? What is the point of view (1st person, 2nd person, or 3rd person)?
8. What do you think the author means when he states, “You can’t weave a rug before you set up the loom...I will go back to the beginning, pound the posts in the ground, and build the frame”? What literary device is this?
9. There are several examples of Navajo language in the foreword. Identify these words and determine their meaning using context clues.

CHAPTERS 1-5: Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

10. How does the main character’s name provide a description of him?

11. What is the significance of Kii Yazhi allowing a drop of his blood to drip into the ground?

12. Compare and contrast the *bilagáanaa* and the Navajo using drawings or phrases:



13. What do you think the mission school leaders are implying with the words of the sign at the front of the school, “Tradition is the enemy of progress”?

14. Describe his first day at boarding school.

15. Some of Ned’s classmates, including John Roanhorse, openly defy their boarding school teachers. Ned also disobeys his teachers, but in his own quiet way. How does Ned defy his teachers?

16. Look at the following quote found on page 29: “*Some of them would even pat me on my head, as if I were a little pet monkey that had just done well at obeying a command.*”

a. What type of figurative language is used here?

b. What idea is Ned trying to convey to his grandchildren?


CHARACTERIZATION: Authors develop characters using **direct characterization** (describing specific details of the character’s physical appearance, personality, or motivations) or through **indirect characterization** (revealing details about a character through actions, interactions, speech, thoughts, but not directly describing them). For each character, find a quote that shows actions that character takes which reveals a character trait.

CHARACTERIZATION CHART		
Character Name	Actions that Show Indirect Characterization <i>Include a quote and page #</i> For example: “He looked like an eagle staring down from a high mountain crag” (47).	Character Traits Revealed <i>Sentence that describes this character’s personality.</i>
KII YAZHI (NED)		
MR. REAMER		
MR. O’SULLIVAN		
TOMMY NEZ		
MOTHER & FATHER		
UNCLE		
MR. STRAIGHT		
JOHNNY MANUELITO		


DELINEATE AN ARGUMENT: At the end of Chapter 7, Ned requests his parents' permission to deceive the military and enlist at the age of 15. Ned calmly accepts his parents' answer despite it not being what he wants.

In Chapters 8-9, **Johnny Manuelito** uses some different reasons to try to convince the Navajos to join the marines. Complete the chart below to show how he convinces them.

REASON #1:	
Details:	Details:



REASON #2:	
Details:	Details:



REASON #3:	
Details:	Details:

17. How do Johnny's arguments compare to Ned's arguments to join the military?

CHAPTERS 6-13: Answer the following using complete sentences.

18. What was the marine motto? Why do you think they chose this motto? (Page 47)

19. Ned notices that the Navajos have a much easier time adjusting to life as Marines than the white me. Why does he feel his life as a Navajo prepared him for being a Marine? (Page 49)

20. Irony is defined as *a situation in which there is a contrast between expectation and reality*. What is **ironic** about the location of his journey? (Page 58)

21. Describe boot camp. What were three things he learned there? (Chapter 10)

Description:

Lesson #1:

Lesson #2

Lesson #3:

22. Ned says that his weeks in training at Camp Elliott are “some of the best in my life.” Why is this so? (Page 81)

23. When Ned is terribly worried about crossing the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean in a boat, how does his friend Bill Toledo encourage him? (Pages 89-90).

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE REVIEW: Simile, Metaphor, & Personification

Example from <i>Code Talker</i>	Type of Figurative Language	Meaning from the Novel
“The hours and days, the weeks and months and even the years, grew legs” (30).		
“He looked like an eagle staring down from a high mountain crag” (47).		
“I am a plucked turkey” (59).		
“War is time out of balance” (139).		
“That guy...can vanish in one moment as brief and shocking as a flash of lighting” (191).		

SETTING: Ned's Journey Using this map of the South Pacific (and internet searches if needed) trace Ned's travels. Draw a picture or symbol to show what happened at each of the locations that Ned visited, then *connect the dots to show the order of his journey*.

- Four Corners (home)
- School in New Mexico (100 miles from home)
- Camp Elliot (San Diego, California)
- Hawaii
- Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands)
- Bougainville (Papua New Guinea)
- Guam
- Iwo Jima
- Okinawa
- San Francisco
- Four Corners (at the end).



CHAPTERS 19-END: Answer the following using complete sentences.

24. How did some of the Marines deal with the horror of war? How does Ned deal with the horrors of war? (Chapter 19)
25. One of the Marine generals writes a report saying, "The Navajos have proved to be excellent Marines, intelligent, industrious, easily taught to send and receive by key and excellent in the field." Why is Ned so surprised to read this report? (Chapter 19)

26. Throughout his time in training and in service as a code talker, Ned carries a pouch of corn pollen with him. What does this pouch mean to Ned, and how does he use it?

27. Ned mentions that the Japanese army does not follow the “rules of modern warfare.” List three examples that support Ned’s statement. (Chapter 23)

- a.
- b.
- c.

CREATING THE CODE: THEME

The Navajos devised a code that worked extremely well. They made a list of Navajo words that would represent each letter in the English language alphabet. For example, the Navajo word for apple (be-la-sana) stood for the letter A. The Navajo word for bear (shush) stood for the letter B, and the Navajo word for cat (moast) stood for the letter C. The code talkers sent messages by using Navajo code words to spell out words in English. For example, to say "Navy," code talkers would say the Navajo words that stood for each letter: Nesh-chee (or nut, for N), wol-la-chee (or ant, for A), a-keh-di-glini (or victor, for V), and tsah-as-zih (or yucca, for Y).

ENGLISH LETTER	NAVAJO WORD	MEANING
A	Wol-la-chee	Ant
B	Shush	Bear
C	Ba-goshi	Dog
D	Lha-cha-eh	Cow
E	Dzeh	Elk
F	Ma-e	Fox
G	Ah-tad	Girl
H	Lin	Horse
I	Tkin	Ice
J	Yil-doi	Jerk
K	Klizzie-yazzie	Kid
L	Ah-jad	Letg
M	Na-as-tso-si	Mouse
N	A-chin	Nose
O	Ne-ahs-jah	Owl
P	Bi-so-dih	Pig
Q	Ca-yeilth	Quiver
R	Gah	Rabbit
S	Klesh	Snake
T	A-Who	Tooth
U	Shi-da	Unce
V	A-keh-di-glini	Victor
W	Gloe-ih	Weasel
X	Al-na-as-dxoh	Cross
Y	Tsah-as-zih	Yucca
Z	Besh-do-tliz	Zinc

Using the chart, write a phrase that describes a theme (a message or lesson) from this novel.

28. THEME (USING ENGLISH ALPHABET):

29. THEME (USING NAVAJO WORDS):

30. THEME (IN NAVAJO WORD MEANING):

SYMBOLISM: Symbolism is a person, situation, word, or object used to represent another thing.

31. Open the front cover of the novel and read “NAVAJOS WANTED,” then turn the page past the title to the “Dedication” and read it. What **symbol** represents the Navajo Code Talkers, and what does it represent?

SYMBOL: _____ REPRESENTS: _____

“The Code Talkers participated in every major Marine operation in the Pacific theater, giving the Marines a critical advantage throughout the war. During the nearly month-long battle for Iwo Jima, for example, six Navajo Code Talker Marines successfully transmitted more than 800 messages without error. Marine leadership noted after the battle that the Code Talkers were critical to the victory at Iwo Jima. At the end of the war, the Navajo Code remained unbroken.”

~From the Office of the U.S. Director of National Intelligence.



REFLECTION AFTER READING THE NOVEL: Answer the following and be prepared to discuss in class.

- I think the hardest part about Ned’s journey was...because...
- My favorite part of the book was...because...
- I was sad/upset when...because...
- I was surprised when...because..
- This book made me want to learn about...because...