

Crack the Code: Comanche Code Talkers in Tiverton

Lesson Plan

<p>National Curriculum links & curriculum fit</p>	<p>As well as local history study, this lesson could sit within many parts of the curriculum, including:</p> <p>KS2 History: a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history.</p> <p>KS3 History: challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world (1901 to the present day).</p> <p>MFL.</p> <p>Work on codes within English or Maths.</p>
<p>How to use</p>	<p>Fourth activity in the Telling Our Stories pack. It could also be a standalone, or part of a scheme of work on WW2; local history; codes; or Native Americans.</p>
<p>Aims</p>	<p>Knowledge of a little-known episode from the war.</p> <p>Empathy with Comanche people a long way from home.</p> <p>Have fun making and solving coded messages.</p> <p>Learn some words in another language.</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>1 hour</p>
<p>Materials required</p>	<p>Video from Youtube 'Code of Honor' video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fABizJmghFk</p> <p>Comanche Powerpoint presentation (Resource 4b)</p> <p>Handout of Comanche vocabulary (Resource 4c)</p>
<p>Differentiation</p>	<p>To make the language activity easier, take out a few words.</p>
<p>Background reading & references for teachers</p>	<p>There are many Comanche language resources online: app.memrise.com/course/1981870/comanche/</p> <p>Additional resources are also held by Ghee Bowman, who developed this activity (please contact us to request).</p> <p>Memories of GIs in Devon: www.americansremembered.org/blog/2019/6/4/75-years-ago-4id-in-wwii-issue-3-training-in-england-march-1944</p> <p>For younger students, there's a nice colouring book on the Comanche Museum website: www.comanchemuseum.com/pdf/ColoringBook.pdf</p>

Stage 1 (KS2 and KS3):**The story of the Code Talkers (20 - 25 mins)**

Show the Powerpoint presentation on the Code Talkers (**Resource 4b**).

There is a commentary in the notes beneath each slide.

After slide 10 (Larry Saupitty and Dick Red Elk), show a 4 minute video section from the 'Code of Honor' video (the relevant section runs 23'18" – 27'20").

The first part is an advert for the Comanche Museum, showing scenes from the museum. There is then commentary from Phyllis Wahahrockah-Tasi of the Comanche Museum. Next comes a reconstruction of the scene on Utah Beach on D-Day, with recordings of some of the messages (these are reconstructions – the actual messages were not recorded) and archival footage from D-Day.

Ask the students a couple of questions:

- In what way were these men special?
- How do you think they felt so far away from home?
- Why do you think this story is unknown?

Stage 2 (KS2 and KS3):**Learning Comanche vocabulary (10 mins)**

- Give the students the Comanche vocabulary handout (**Resource 4c**).
- At the top are five phrases to translate (these are also on slide 12 of the PPT).
- Work together to translate them (don't worry about pronunciation).

Comanche was not written down until after the war, but it is still spoken by Comanche people, and is – for a baby - no harder or easier than any other language. Its vocabulary reflects what the Comanche people saw and experienced. The Code Talkers had to invent new words to communicate military terms like 'tank' or 'officer': things which did not exist within their society.

Stage 3 (KS2 and KS3): Sending signals in pairs (20 mins)

In pairs (AA, BB, CC, DD), ask the students to translate some messages from English into Comanche.

Then swap the pairs round (AB, AB, CD, CD) and get them to send the signal to their new partner, who then translates it back into English.

For added fun, try sending the message by phone, across the playground or school hall, or even using tin cans and string.

Extension: Ask the students to start all their messages with 'meekununa' – you can hear it on the video.

At the end of the lesson, show the students the last two slides on the PPT, which show the medals awarded to the Code Talkers and a statue in their memory in Oklahoma.

Extension / homework activities

Some students love codes. They appeal to young people with a linguistical mind, and those with a mathematical mind, and they're also secret and like detective work.

For homework or a follow-up lesson, you could look at some classic codes (scytale code, puzzles, book code, poem code, morse, semaphore). Students then could devise their own code and use a code to set and solve a treasure hunt. This can also fit well with MFL and/or English lessons.