

# Teacher's Guide

## Code Talker

<b>Reading Level</b>	Lexile 910
<b>Genre/Length</b>	Historical Fiction; 240 pages
<b>Language Register</b>	Historical, Conversational, Cultural
<b>Content Load</b>	Navajo, WWII
<b>Selected Awards</b>	Best Books for Young Adults Top 10 Historical Fiction for Youth

### THE EXCHANGE QUESTION

**How can language divide and unite people?**

## Overview

**Background** Code talkers were Navajo Marines who used their native language to create a secret, unbreakable code. Native American languages are both complex and centralized within the United States, so they were perfect for secret codes in foreign wars. The United States primarily used the Navajo code during its fight against the Japanese during World War II. Despite Japan's best efforts, the code was never broken. Navajo code remained classified information until 1968, more than twenty years after the end of World War II. In 1982, Navajo code talkers were finally honored for their skill and bravery.

**Book Summary** *Code Talker* is a work of fiction, but it is based on real events during World War II. *Code Talker* tells the story of Kii Yázhí, a young Navajo boy who is sent away to a mission school to learn the ways of white people. He is taught to be ashamed of his culture as the school tries to strip Navajos of their identity. The school even changes Kii's name to Ned Begay. Even though Ned is treated poorly and is not respected for who he is, he rises above his people's troubled past to help the U.S. win World War II.

## About the Author

Joseph Bruchac was born on October 16, 1942, in Sarasota Springs, New York. He was raised by his grandparents near the Adirondack Mountains. Bruchac's grandfather was a Native American, but he kept his bloodline a secret. His grandfather feared that Bruchac might face prejudice if he revealed his Native American heritage. It took several years for Bruchac to discover that he was part Abenaki Indian.

Bruchac took a great interest in Native American stories. After leaving home for college, Bruchac sought out Native American elders and began collecting their stories. He wanted to preserve the stories and pass them on to his children. In 1975, Bruchac published his first short story collection.

Since then, he has continued to write stories and poetry based upon the Native American experience. He now lives in Sarasota Springs with his family, writing in the house in which he was raised.

# Reading the Book

There are several options for reading *Code Talker*. They include:

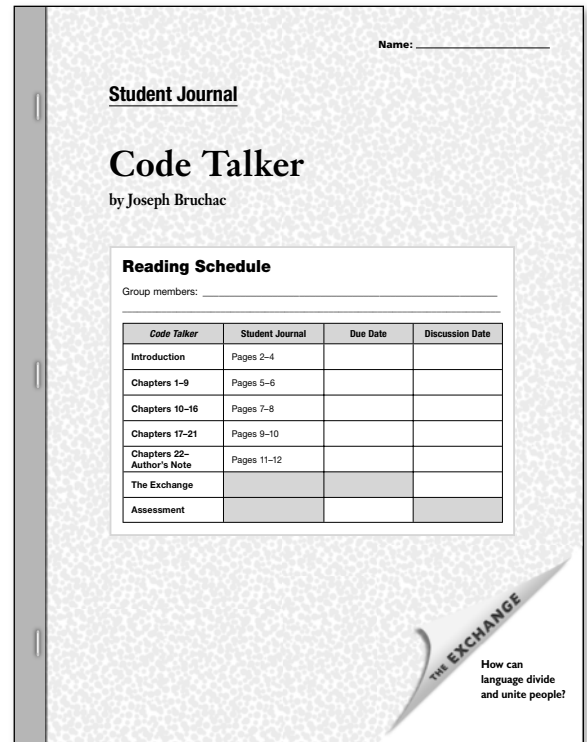
- Whole Class** Assign sections of the book and discussion dates using the planner on **Student Journal, page 1**. After students read a section and respond to the corresponding **Student Journal** pages, have a class discussion. At the end of the book, the class meets for **The Exchange**.
- Small Groups** Read the book's **Introduction** with the group. Group members then read an agreed-upon number of pages, complete the corresponding **Student Journal** pages, and meet to discuss. When they finish the book, they meet again for **The Exchange**. Use the planner on **Student Journal, page 1** to establish meeting times.
- Independently** Students read the book on their own and then meet as a group for **The Exchange**. Use the planner on **Student Journal, page 1** to establish the meeting time.
- Guided Reading** Have students read **Student Journal, page 2** and monitor their discussion of the **What If?** scenario. Read aloud the book **Introduction** to give students background on the book. As students read, use the **Before You Move On** questions to guide comprehension. Use the **Look Ahead** to set a focus for reading the next set of pages. At the end of each section, assign the appropriate **Student Journal** pages. Discuss the pages before starting the next section. Establish a date for **The Exchange** and record it on the planner.

# Getting Started

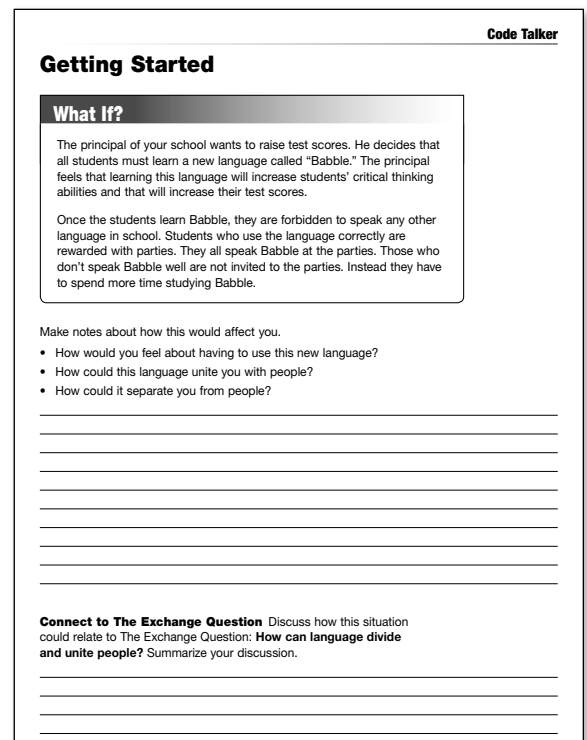
Have students read **What If?** on **Student Journal, page 2** and discuss the scenario. Encourage students to describe the similarities and differences between the scenario and their lives and imagine how the situation would affect them.

- Have students write their responses to the three questions below the scenario and compare answers with a partner or the group.
- Have students discuss how the situation might relate to **The Exchange** question and then write a brief summary of their discussion in the **Student Journal**.

## Student Journal, page 1



## Student Journal, page 2



# Introduction

Have students read the book's **Introduction**. Check their comprehension with the three follow-up questions on **Student Journal, page 3**.

## Student Journal, page 3

**Code Talker**

### Introduction

Read the Introduction on pages 9–11 in *Code Talker*. The Introduction will help you understand key concepts in the book. Knowing them will help you discuss and write about the book.

The Introduction includes information about

- why the Navajo language was used in WWII
- how the Navajo code works
- why the author wrote the book

After you read the Introduction, answer these questions to check your understanding.

1. Why were Navajos used as code talkers?  
In wartime, secrecy is vital. In order to plan attacks and communicate, soldiers needed to send secret messages. The Navajo language was the perfect secret code because it's difficult to learn, and it was unlikely there would be any Navajo speakers among the enemy.
2. Who created the Navajo code and how does it work?  
The Navajos created the code themselves. They chose a Navajo word to represent each letter in the English alphabet.
3. Why did Joseph Bruchac write *Code Talker*? What research did he do?  
Bruchac is part Native American and his writing focuses on Native American topics. He first heard about the Navajo code talkers in the 1970s and was very interested in the story. In order to write the book, Bruchac met with code talkers who served in the war.

# Introduction: Key Concepts

Have students study the first **Key Concept** with the help of the graphic organizer on **Student Journal, page 4**. After studying the example, they should create similar graphic organizers to focus their understanding of the remaining **Key Concepts**.

## Student Journal, page 4

**Code Talker**

### Introduction: Key Concepts

#### Personal Experience Chart

Study the **Personal Experience Chart** for *recruit*. Write a sentence using the word *recruit*.

**Personal Experience Chart**

**Key Concept:** recruit

Define or rename: to supply a group with new members or employees; to engage people for military service

**Specific Examples**

School: The baseball team began to recruit new members after losing a lot of games.	Work: The restaurant had to recruit more waiters so they hired me.	Military: The military began to recruit new members from our college after the war began.
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**Personal Connection:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Concepts**

confidential

conform

contribution

recruit

tolerate

On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar **Personal Experience Chart** for each of the **Key Concept** words.

Pages 17–67 **Answers for Before You Move On**  
**Chapters 1–9**

**PAGE 23**

**1. Narrator** Reread page 13. Who is Kii Yázhí telling the story to? Why?

*Kii is telling the story to his grandchildren so they can take pride in the Navajo contributions to the war.*

**2. Summarize** Reread pages 21–23. Why does Kii Yázhí have to go away to school?

*Kii has to learn the ways and language of the white man in order to communicate to them who Navajos are.*

**PAGE 39**

**1. Conclusions** Reread pages 31–33. Why is everything taken from the Navajo children, even their names and their hair?

*The school considers everything about the Navajos to be shameful and worthless.*

**2. Cause and Effect** Reread page 38. Why is Ned able to speak Navajo in private, while others are too scared?

*He is not openly defiant and rarely gets punished, so he has no fear.*

**PAGE 49**

**1. Conclusions** Reread pages 40–41. Why do Ned and his fellow classmates need to focus on things like sports and working hard to get through school?

*Focusing on sports and schoolwork helps them deal with being bored, lonely, and treated unfairly at school.*

**2. Inference** Reread pages 46–47. The Navajos vow to help America. Why is this surprising?

*The U.S. government has a history of being cruel to the Navajos, and Americans treat them as inferiors.*

**PAGE 67**

**1. Cause and Effect** Reread pages 51–52. The U.S. Armed Forces reject most of the Navajos that want to enlist. Why does that change in 1942?

*There is a mission that only Navajos can help with.*

**2. Conclusions** What does Johnny help Ned understand about Navajos and the Marines?

*That Navajos are strong and useful. And that Ned is good enough to be a Marine.*

**Student Journal, page 5**

Code Talker

**Respond to Chapters 1–9**

**1. Personal Response** Ned tells about some of the Navajo traditions, sayings, and ceremonies. What traditions does your family have and how are they important to you?

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**2. Paraphrase** What does Ned mean when he says that Johnny “was a different man” after he returned from the war? Use the word *contribution* in your response.

*He seems more like a white man than a Navajo. He is confident and has a lot of pride. He feels like he and other Navajos are making an important contribution to the war effort.*

**3. Character’s Point of View** Why is Ned so upset about his punishment from Mr. Straight?

*He doesn’t understand why he can’t be both a Navajo and a respected, good student. He doesn’t want to have to choose.*

**4. Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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**Student Journal, page 6**

Code Talker

**Respond to Chapters 1–9, continued**

**5. Character’s Point of View** In Chapters 1–9, Ned leaves home and his life changes. List what happens to Ned at mission school in the Causes column and then list the effects of these events.

Causes	Effects
<p>Ned’s hair is cut.</p> <p>Ned is determined to never forget Navajo language.</p> <p>Ned reads about Japan.</p> <p>Mr. Straight reprimands Ned for speaking Navajo.</p> <p>A message is sent that recruiters are looking for Navajos.</p>	<p>Ned feels naked and ashamed.</p> <p>Ned speaks Navajo every chance he gets.</p> <p>Ned wants to help.</p> <p>Ned feels frustrated that his teachers will never respect him.</p> <p>Ned is excited; he wants to be one of the proud and few.</p>

What happens at mission school that makes Ned so eager to become a Marine?

*Ned is made to feel unwanted and useless as a Navajo. The Marines are looking for Navajo speakers so Ned finally feels wanted and needed. He wants to prove himself to the world, and wants to help. He is fighting for the Navajo people and for his country.*

Chapters 10–16

Student Journal, page 7

PAGE 86

1. **Summarize** Reread pages 77–78. How does boot camp change Ned’s view of the white man?

*He learns that white men aren’t all intelligent and that white men and Navajos are fundamentally the same.*

2. **Argument** On page 86 Ned argues that Philip Johnson did not develop the Navajo code. What evidence does he use?

*Johnson could not speak Navajo fluently, which was necessary for the code. He was also not in Camp Elliot while the code was developed.*

PAGE 105

1. **Comparisons** Reread pages 92–93. How does Ned’s code talker training compare with his experiences in mission school?

*He enjoys training because he gets to speak Navajo again. He feels proud and accepted. The school requires him to abandon Navajo culture. He is conflicted and unhappy about that.*

2. **Inference** Reread pages 98. Why does Jimmy treat the piece of chalk from Johnny as if it were a medal?

*Passing the code on is very important for the war effort. It is an enormous responsibility that Jimmy is honored to do.*

PAGE 123

1. **Mood** Reread pages 106–108. How does the mood change when Ned talks about the enemy?

*The mood becomes sad because the soldiers realize the horrors of war and that their enemies are people struggling to survive, just like them.*

2. **Conclusions** Reread page 111. Why is it fun for the Navajos to keep the cactuses a secret?

*The Navajos have to work hard for recognition and respect, while the other American soldiers are treated better. They enjoy feeling stronger than the others.*

Code Talker

Respond to Chapters 10–16

1. **Personal Response** The Navajo language is very important to the war effort. Why is your language important to you?

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2. **Summarize** Why are the code talkers never officially recognized during the war? Use the word *confidential* in your response.

*The code talkers are the only people who could send and translate messages. Their jobs and the code have to be kept highly confidential in order for it to be effective.*

3. **Mood** What is the mood at Fort Elliot like? How does it make Ned and the other Navajo Marines feel?

*The mood is serious when they are training but light and fun otherwise. Ned and other Navajos are happy because they are able to speak Navajo and are doing a job that only they are qualified for.*

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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Student Journal, page 8

Code Talker

Respond to Chapters 10–16, continued

5. **Cause and Effect** Ned goes through boot camp, learns the code, and prepares for fighting. List Ned’s feelings and experiences in the **Details Web**.

Details Web



How does being Navajo affect Ned’s feelings and experiences in the Marines?

*He is very well prepared for certain tasks and ill prepared for others, like swimming, due to his upbringing and way of life. He is on guard and sometimes fearful of discrimination because he is kept in the dark about his mission. He is upset about not being recognized for his contributions.*

**Pages 124–169**    **Answers for *Before You Move On***  
**Chapters 17–21**

Student Journal, page 9

**PAGE 151**

**1. Inference** Reread page 130. Why does Ned think it is strange to do all that fighting without seeing a Japanese soldier?

*As a Navajo he has had to protect himself and fight, but it is more personal. He is used to fighting face to face without all of this army artillery.*

**2. Foreshadowing** Reread page 143. Ned says he met the president many years after the war. What does this tell you? *The Navajo code talker operation will be a great success, and Navajos will eventually be given the recognition they deserve.*

**PAGE 169**

**1. Conclusions** Reread pages 154–155. Wilfred says they could not “celebrate after that victory.” What does he mean? *There is so much death on both sides and so many horrible suicides that no one can celebrate.*

**2. Sequence** What events lead Ned to be shocked to see Charlie alive? *Charlie’s body is found and he appears to be dead. Wilsie puts one of Charlie’s dog tags in his mouth so his body could be identified. It turns out Charlie is still alive.*

Code Talker

**Respond to Chapters 17–21**

**1. Personal Response** Ned is glad that friends surround him during the war. Who or what helps you deal with tough experiences? Why?

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**2. Parallelism** Do you see any parallels between how the Japanese treat the native islanders and how the United States treat Native Americans? Use the word *tolerate* in your response.

*The Japanese gain control of the land and kill many of the islanders. The islanders are weaker and have to tolerate slavery and torture under Japanese rule. Americans force the Navajos to go on the Long Walk and fight battles against U.S. forces.*

**3. Minor Characters** Who are the minor characters that Ned encounters while he is on Bougainville and Guam? Why are they included in the story?

*Ned encounters Harry Tsosie, Bill Toledo, Smitty, Danny Akee, and Charlie Begay. These characters are included to show the large number of Navajos that are needed during the war. Including these characters gives the reader a better idea of what the war is like.*

**4. Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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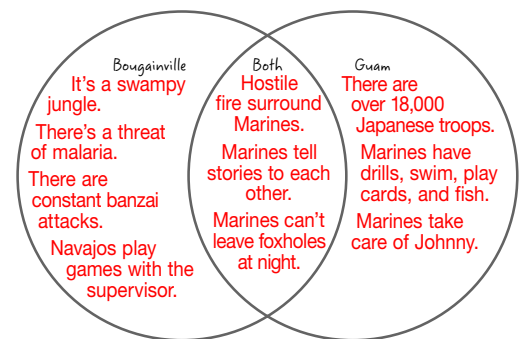
Student Journal, page 10

Code Talker

**Respond to Chapters 17–21, continued**

**5. Setting** In Chapters 17–21, you read about the first two islands Ned is sent to during the war. Write characteristics and events that occur on each island and on both.

Venn Diagram



How do the different settings affect the marines? What helps them deal with their challenges?

*The different terrains are dangerous and make the environment uncomfortable. They are under constant attack. But there is also a lot of down time where the Marines commiserate and joke around. This closeness helps them deal with the violence and fear of being in a war zone.*



Chapters 22—Author’s Note

Student Journal, page 11

PAGE 186

**1. Character’s Point of View** Reread page 174. Why does Ned wish he could go back to being a Navajo shepherd again?

*He doesn’t want to kill innocent people. He wants to help Navajos.*

**2. Comparisons** Reread page 182. Ned and Sam deal with comments from their white friends differently. What does this show about Ned?

*Ned believes that his white friends don’t mean to insult him. Ned is more confident.*

PAGE 205

**1. Author’s Style** Reread pages 191–193. How does the author make you feel the tension and fear of the Suribachi battle?

*He describes the mountain as being like “the shadow of a monster.” The commander says this will be the “bloodiest fight in Marine Corps history.”*

**2. Inference** Reread page 202. Why is it awful to have “too many friends” during war?

*The grief of friends dying makes the war more difficult.*

PAGE 224

**1. Character** The bar sign on page 220 means that they do not sell drinks to Indians. Ned jokes that it means they do not sell Indians. What does this show about Ned?

*Ned has learned to be above small-minded discrimination.*

**2. Character’s Motive** Reread pages 220–221. Why is Ned determined to become a teacher?

*He wants to pass on Navajo heritage.*

PAGE 233

**1. Main Idea and Details** Reread pages 227–231. Give 3 details that show that Navajos were discriminated against.

*They were forced to take the Navajo Long Walk, were not honored for military service, and were taught to be ashamed.*

**2. Author’s Purpose** The author wrote the book because he thinks that Navajos are underappreciated. Did he honor Navajos in this book and achieve his purpose?

*Yes, he showed how valuable the Navajos’ contribution was to WWII.*

Code Talker

**Respond to Chapters 22—Author’s Note**

**1. Personal Response** Ned and the other code talkers are proud of the important work they do during the war. Describe a job or accomplishment that you are proud of.

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**2. Summarize** Who are the Thought Police? Why do you think the Japanese military feels it is necessary to form this organization? Use the word *conform* in your response.

*The Thought Police are a branch of the Japanese military. They imprison and murder any Japanese citizen who speaks out against the war. They form this organization because they want citizens to conform to their beliefs.*

**3. Comparisons** Compare the American newspapers and the Japanese newspapers. How are the descriptions of the war in each newspaper different?

*American newspapers don’t tell the American people about the kamikazes because they want to maintain morale back home. Japanese newspapers glorify the pilots who fly the kamikazes. They say Americans will be defeated.*

**What If?**

**4. Connect** Look at your notes on Student Journal, page 2. Think about what might happen if you were forced to speak a new language. Compare this to Code Talker. Why does the Navajo language divide and unite Ned and other people?

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Student Journal, page 12

Code Talker

**Respond to Chapters 22—Author’s Note, continued**

**5. Perspectives** Ned and the other code talkers help bring the war to an end. List the ways Navajos were treated after the war. Use the **Details Tree** to answer the question.

**Details Tree**

Treatment After the War	can’t use the GI bill to start a business or build a house
	receive no recognition for their contributions
	are discriminated against, just as they were before the war

If you were a code talker, how would you have felt about what happened to you after the war?

*Students may say they would be angry. Code talkers make the same sacrifices and take the same risks as others but are not afforded the same rewards. Others may say that no matter how they are treated, they know the importance of their contribution and they would be proud.*

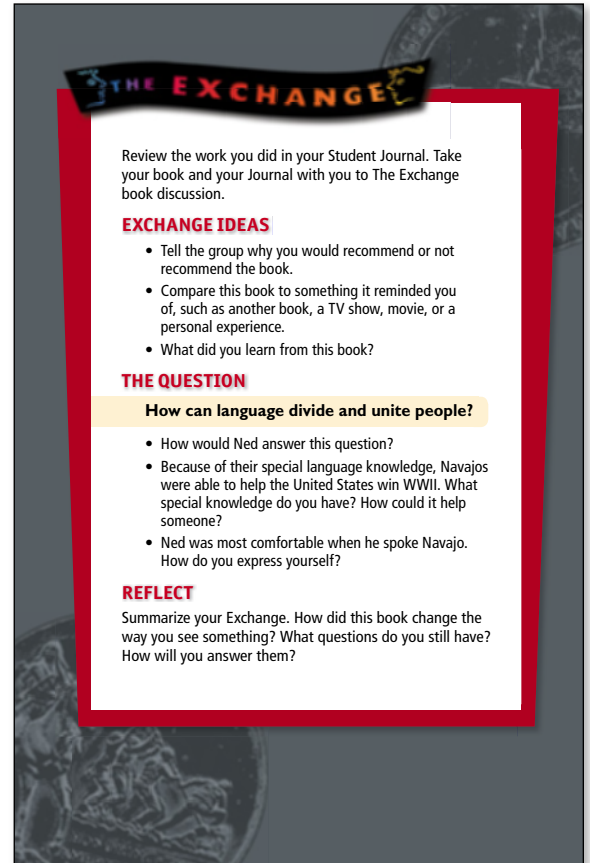
# Exchange Discussion

## THE QUESTION

How can language divide and unite people?

- **How would Ned answer this question?**  
*Ned would say that language united him with his family and other tribe members and allowed him to contribute to WWII. Language divided him from white people who discriminated against anything Navajo.*
- **Because of their special language knowledge, Navajos were able to help the United States win WWII. What special knowledge do you have? How could it help someone?**
- **Ned was most comfortable when he spoke Navajo. How do you express yourself?**

Code Talker, inside back cover



# Evaluate the Discussion

Use the reproducible master from page 9 of this **Teacher's Guide** to evaluate **The Exchange** discussion. The form may also be used by students for group assessment.

Discussion Rubric

Evaluate the Discussion		
Excellent	Good	Fair
<input type="checkbox"/> Everyone participated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most people participated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Only a few people participated.
<input type="checkbox"/> Everyone spoke clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most people spoke clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some people did not speak clearly.
<input type="checkbox"/> Everyone listened carefully.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most people listened carefully.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some people did not listen carefully.
<input type="checkbox"/> We stayed on the topic throughout the discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/> We stayed on the topic most of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/> We did not stay on the topic all the time.
<input type="checkbox"/> We responded to each other's thoughts and ideas often.	<input type="checkbox"/> We commented on each other's thoughts and ideas sometimes.	<input type="checkbox"/> We did not make many comments on each other's thoughts and ideas.
<input type="checkbox"/> Most people used examples from the book to support their points.	<input type="checkbox"/> Many people used examples from the book to support their points.	<input type="checkbox"/> Only a few people used examples from the book to support their points.
<input type="checkbox"/> Most people gave detailed answers using their experiences and even other texts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Many people gave detailed answers using their experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Only a few people gave detailed answers.

Notes:

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# Evaluate the Discussion

Excellent	Good	Fair
<input type="checkbox"/> Everyone participated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most people participated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Only a few people participated.
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Notes:

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# Assessment

Assess students' understanding of *Code Talker* by administering the multiple-choice test and essay questions. (Teacher's Guide, pages 11–13)

How you administer the **Assessment** depends on your objective. You may choose to use the test as:

- an open-book test to allow students to continue practicing reading strategies and/or become familiar with a typical standardized test format
- a closed-book test to check students' comprehension of the book and their abilities in various reading skills
- a take-home test to allow students to practice reading strategies as well as test-taking skills

Suggested point values are as follows:

**Assessment Part I:** 5 points per question for a total of 50 points

**Assessment Part II:** 40 points possible (see **Scoring Guide**, page 14)

## Assessment Part I

**Code Talker** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Assessment Part I**

Circle the best answer.

- Which of these is the best plot summary?
  - A Ned Begay attends mission school in order to learn how to communicate with white people. He is taught that his culture is useless. Therefore, Ned is surprised when he is recruited by the Marines for a secret mission. He becomes a code talker and takes part in helping the United States win World War II. For many years he has to keep his role a secret, but he is eventually rewarded for his service.
  - B Ned Begay is eager to join the Marines because he likes the uniforms. He lies about his age so that he can join. Ned and other Navajos do well in training because they are used to living off the land. They drink water from cactuses. The American Marines are surprised at how strong the Native American Marines are.
  - C Ned Begay is recruited by the Marines because he can speak Navajo. He has always wanted to be a teacher. After going to battle, he returns to the United States to become a teacher and help children understand and remember Navajo history.
  - D Ned Begay joins the Marines and becomes a code talker. He takes part in the two major battles—one in Bougainville and one in Guam. He realizes that it's better to not make friends during war because they can be killed so easily. After these battles, he decides he doesn't want to fight anymore. He returns to the U.S. to become a teacher.
- Ned's trip to school with his uncle is important because it—
  - A shows the importance of code talkers
  - B shows why Ned is being sent to school
  - C shows that his uncle is trying to make Ned forget his culture
  - D shows why Ned is angry at his family
- Ned has to tolerate harsh treatment from his teachers for many years. In this sentence, what does *tolerate* mean?
  - A defend
  - B fight against
  - C accept
  - D approve of
- A monument to the Navajo code talkers could not have been built prior to 1968 because—
  - A the code talkers were secret and classified until that time
  - B code talkers were still alive
  - C Americans did not believe that the code was successful
  - D the code talkers refused to acknowledge their involvement in the war

## Assessment Part II

**Code Talker**

**Guidelines for Short Essay**

Have students write a short essay in response to one of the writing prompts below. Use the **Scoring Guide** to assist in your evaluation of their essays.

**A. Write an analysis of why Ned is so eager to become a Marine, and what his experiences as a code talker teach him. Do you think Ned would still be discriminated against today? Explain.**

*Responses should include that Ned wants to prove that Navajos are useful and deserve respect. Ned has an interest in other countries and wants to help people. Ned's experiences teach him that Navajos are well prepared to be Marines, and that no matter what they do, some prejudice is hard to overcome.*

**B. Language and culture are very important in this book. How does speaking Navajo help Ned? How does it hurt him? Compare this to how you use language in your life and if it helps or hinders you.**

*Responses should include that speaking Navajo helps Ned become an important part of the war effort, builds his confidence, and connects him to his people. Speaking Navajo hurts Ned because he encounters discrimination and punishment.*

**Scoring Guide**

Score	Description of the response:
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is accurate and thoughtful</li> <li>• Explanation is fully developed</li> <li>• Support includes specific and relevant text evidence</li> <li>• All parts of the question are clearly addressed</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is adequate</li> <li>• Explanation is developed but may lack some insight</li> <li>• Support includes most specific and relevant text evidence</li> <li>• All parts of the question are addressed to some degree</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is literal or limited</li> <li>• Explanation is incomplete</li> <li>• Support includes some specific and relevant text evidence</li> <li>• Only parts of the question are addressed and mostly in a limited way</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is weak</li> <li>• Explanation is vague</li> <li>• Support includes few, if any, relevant details from the text</li> <li>• Only one part of the question is minimally addressed</li> </ul>
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant

## Assessment Part I, continued

**Code Talker** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Assessment Part I, continued**

Circle the best answer.

- The mood at Camp Elliott is light and fun because—
  - A the Navajos are on furlough
  - B the Marines are not in combat
  - C some of the Navajos were promoted
  - D the Navajos are respected and allowed to speak Navajo
- Which sentence from the book suggests that war injures people mentally?
  - A I only got a small wound from that bullet.
  - B He ended up losing his leg just below the knee.
  - C Some of the men on the hospital ship with me didn't have any visible wounds, but were badly hurt.
  - D But there was little opportunity for me to give in to fatigue.
- Code talkers know a lot about the war because—
  - A they have radios
  - B they send all of the important messages
  - C they carry the General's equipment
  - D Ned tells them
- Ned's experience at mission school is important because—
  - A it shows how most white people feel about Navajos during that time
  - B it shows how Ned escapes from his family
  - C it shows how Ned prepares for the war
  - D it shows how Ned realizes that English is a better language than Navajo
- Ned works hard and saves many lives in WWII. These are examples of his \_\_\_\_\_ to the war effort.
  - A tribe
  - B tolerance
  - C conformity
  - D contributions
- What can you conclude about the Navajos from their experiences in boot camp?
  - A They are not good soldiers.
  - B They get tired easily.
  - C They do not like other Marines.
  - D They are well prepared for the Marines.

## Assessment Part I

Circle the best answer.

1. Which of these is the best plot summary?
  - A Ned Begay attends mission school in order to learn how to communicate with white people. He is taught that his culture is useless. Therefore, Ned is surprised when he is recruited by the Marines for a secret mission. He becomes a code talker and takes part in helping the United States win World War II. For many years he has to keep his role a secret, but he is eventually rewarded for his service.
  - B Ned Begay is eager to join the Marines because he likes the uniforms. He lies about his age so that he can join. Ned and other Navajos do well in training because they are used to living off the land. They drink water from cactuses. The American Marines are surprised at how strong the Native American Marines are.
  - C Ned Begay is recruited by the Marines because he can speak Navajo. He has always wanted to be a teacher. After going to battle, he returns to the United States to become a teacher and help children understand and remember Navajo history.
  - D Ned Begay joins the Marines and becomes a code talker. He takes part in the two major battles—one in Bougainville and one in Guam. He realizes that it's better to not make friends during war because they can be killed so easily. After these battles, he decides he doesn't want to fight anymore. He returns to the U.S. to become a teacher.
2. Ned's trip to school with his uncle is important because it—
  - A shows the importance of code talkers
  - B shows why Ned is being sent to school
  - C shows that his uncle is trying to make Ned forget his culture
  - D shows why Ned is angry at his family
3. Ned has to tolerate harsh treatment from his teachers for many years. In this sentence, what does *tolerate* mean?
  - A defend
  - B fight against
  - C accept
  - D approve of
4. A monument to the Navajo code talkers could not have been built prior to 1968 because—
  - A the code talkers were secret and classified until that time
  - B code talkers were still alive
  - C Americans did not believe that the code was successful
  - D the code talkers refused to acknowledge their involvement in the war

**Assessment Part I**, continued

Circle the best answer.

5. The mood at Camp Elliott is light and fun because—
- A the Navajos are on furlough
  - B the Marines are not in combat
  - C some of the Navajos were promoted
  - D the Navajos are respected and allowed to speak Navajo
6. Which sentence from the book suggests that war injures people mentally?
- A *I only got a small wound from that bullet.*
  - B *He ended up losing his leg just below the knee.*
  - C *Some of the men on the hospital ship with me didn't have any visible wounds, but were badly hurt.*
  - D *But there was little opportunity for me to give in to fatigue.*
7. Code talkers know a lot about the war because—
- A they have radios
  - B they send all of the important messages
  - C they carry the General's equipment
  - D Ned tells them
8. Ned's experience at mission school is important because—
- A it shows how most white people feel about Navajos during that time
  - B it shows how Ned escapes from his family
  - C it shows how Ned prepares for the war
  - D it shows how Ned realizes that English is a better language than Navajo
9. Ned works hard and saves many lives in WWII. These are examples of his \_\_\_\_\_ to the war effort.
- A tribe
  - B tolerance
  - C conformity
  - D contributions
10. What can you conclude about the Navajos from their experiences in boot camp?
- A They are not good soldiers.
  - B They get tired easily.
  - C They do not like other Marines.
  - D They are well prepared for the Marines.



## Guidelines for Short Essay

Have students write a short essay in response to one of the writing prompts below. Use the **Scoring Guide** to assist in your evaluation of their essays.

- A.** Write an analysis of why Ned is so eager to become a Marine, and what his experiences as a code talker teach him. Do you think Ned would still be discriminated against today? Explain.

Responses should include that Ned wants to prove that Navajos are useful and deserve respect. Ned has an interest in other countries and wants to help people. Ned's experiences teach him that Navajos are well prepared to be Marines, and that no matter what they do, some prejudice is hard to overcome.

- B.** Language and culture are very important in this book. How does speaking Navajo help Ned? How does it hurt him? Compare this to how you use language in your life and if it helps or hinders you.

Responses should include that speaking Navajo helps Ned become an important part of the war effort, builds his confidence, and connects him to his people. Speaking Navajo hurts Ned because he encounters discrimination and punishment.

## Scoring Guide

	Description of the response:
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is accurate and thoughtful</li> <li>• Explanation is fully developed</li> <li>• Support includes specific and relevant text evidence</li> <li>• All parts of the question are clearly addressed</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is adequate</li> <li>• Explanation is developed but may lack some insight</li> <li>• Support includes most specific and relevant text evidence</li> <li>• All parts of the question are addressed to some degree</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is literal or limited</li> <li>• Explanation is incomplete</li> <li>• Support includes some specific and relevant text evidence</li> <li>• Only parts of the question are addressed and mostly in a limited way</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation is weak</li> <li>• Explanation is vague</li> <li>• Support includes few, if any, relevant details from the text</li> <li>• Only one part of the question is minimally addressed</li> </ul>
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant