

Navajo Code Talkers

The Navajo language is spoken by Navajo people in the Southwest. It once helped save many lives. The American military used the Navajo language during the Second World War as a secret code.

Using codes during wartime keeps one side from knowing what the other side is planning. The United States entered the war in 1941. The military began to look for a code that couldn't be cracked. American soldiers could be put in more danger if the enemy understood their secret messages.

In 1942, someone had the idea to use the Navajo language to send secret messages. The Navajo language is nearly impossible for others to learn. Twenty-nine Navajo men cooperated with the military to create the code. They were called code talkers. By 1945, there were about four hundred code talkers at work. The new code was easy for them to use. It was also much faster than the old system the Americans had used before.

Because of the work of the code talkers, enemies could not understand secret messages that the American military sent. This prevented the enemy from knowing battle plans and helped keep American soldiers safe.

104

190

Name/Date _____

Teacher/Grade _____

1. MONITOR ORAL READING FLUENCY

To monitor fluency and accuracy, use two copies of the passage, one for you and one for the student. On your copy of the passage, record the student’s oral reading behaviors and the minutes and seconds required for the student to read the entire passage.

Note expression, phrasing, and miscues.

INTRODUCE THE PASSAGE

Say: *This passage is titled “Navajo Code Talkers.” Read aloud to learn how the Navajo language was used as a secret code during the Second World War. You may begin now.*

RATE Use the student’s oral reading time to circle the Words Per Minute (WPM) range. After the assessment, determine and record the student’s exact WPM.

190 (Total Words Read) ÷ _____ total seconds = _____ × 60 = _____ WPM

Rate	1 INTERVENTION	2 INSTRUCTIONAL	3 INDEPENDENT	4 ADVANCED
Minutes:Seconds	2:44 or more	2:43–1:55	1:54–1:25	1:24 or less
WPM	69 or fewer	70–99	100–135	136 or more

ACCURACY Circle the number of miscues that are not self-corrected and record the percent of accuracy.

Accuracy	1 INTERVENTION	2 INSTRUCTIONAL	3 INDEPENDENT		4 ADVANCED	
Number of Miscues	9 or more	7–8	5–6	3–4	1–2	0
Percent of Accuracy	95 or less	96	97	98	99	100

If the student’s percent of accuracy or rate is below the instructional range, reassess with a lower-level passage to determine an instructional reading level.

Check one: _____ Expression and phrasing are appropriate.

_____ Expression and phrasing need attention.

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2. MONITOR COMPREHENSION

Circle the descriptors that best reflect the student's responses. Possible Independent responses for Sections 2 and 3 are provided. Accept other appropriate responses. The student may use the passage when responding.

SUMMARIZE Important/Main Ideas Say: *What are two important, or main, ideas in the passage about secret codes?* (Possible response: *The enemy broke secret American codes at the beginning of World War Two. Someone had the idea to use the Navajo language to send secret messages. A code using the Navajo language was created to keep American military messages secret.*)

Comprehension	1 INTERVENTION	2 INSTRUCTIONAL	3 INDEPENDENT	4 ADVANCED
Summarize: Main Ideas	Does not identify main ideas or does not respond	Gives a partially correct response, such as identifies 1 of 2 main ideas; may misinterpret information	Identifies 2 main ideas	Identifies 2 main ideas including details and specific vocabulary from the text

SUMMARIZE Details Say: *What are two details about why the Navajo language worked well to send secret messages?* (Possible responses: *The Navajo language is nearly impossible for others to learn. The code was easy to use.*)

Comprehension	1 INTERVENTION	2 INSTRUCTIONAL	3 INDEPENDENT	4 ADVANCED
Summarize: Details	Does not identify details or does not respond	Gives a partially correct response, such as identifies 1 of 2 details; may misinterpret information	Identifies 2 details	Identifies 2 details using specific vocabulary

Name/Date _____

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3. IN-DEPTH PROGRESS MONITORING

The items below provide more in-depth progress monitoring of specific skills. The student may use the passage when responding.

COMPREHENSION Sequence

- Say: **What are three events that took place in the passage, in the order in which they occurred?**
(Possible response: *The United States entered the war in 1941; the military began to look for a code that couldn't be cracked; in 1942, someone had the idea to use the Navajo Language for a code; 29 Navajo men created the code; in 1945 there were 400 code talkers at work.*)
- Say: **What clue words help you determine the sequence of events?** (Possible responses: *after; 1941; 1942*)

Comprehension	1 INTERVENTION	2 INSTRUCTIONAL	3 INDEPENDENT	4 ADVANCED
Sequence	Does not identify events in sequence or does not respond	Gives a partially correct response, such as identifies 1–2 of the 3 events in sequence	Identifies all 3 events in sequence	Identifies all 3 events in sequence and cites 2 clue words used to signal sequence using specific details from the passage

VOCABULARY Context Clues

- Point to the word *military* in the first paragraph. Say: **What does military mean?** (Possible response: *the armed forces in a country; soldiers*) **What words in the passage help you understand what military means?** (Possible response: *“during the Second World War; American soldiers”*)
- Point to the word *cooperated* in the third paragraph. Say: **What does cooperated mean?** (*worked together*) **What words in the passage help you understand what cooperated means?** (Possible response: *“cooperated with the men to create the code”*)

Vocabulary	1 INTERVENTION	2 INSTRUCTIONAL	3 INDEPENDENT	4 ADVANCED
Context Clues	Does not identify word meanings or does not respond	Gives a partially correct response, such as the meaning of 1 word or a context clue	Gives the meaning of each word and identifies a context clue for 1 word	Gives the meaning and identifies a context clue for each word using specific vocabulary and details from the passage

- End the conference.

WORD READING Syllable Patterns VCCCV, V/V Return to the Record of Oral Reading to determine whether the student read these words correctly: *understand, idea, cooperated, battle*.

Word Reading	1 INTERVENTION	2 INSTRUCTIONAL	3 INDEPENDENT	4 ADVANCED
Syllable Patterns VCCCV, V/V	Does not read any words accurately or omits them	Reads 1–3 of 4 words accurately	Reads all 4 words accurately	Reads all 4 words accurately and automatically