

Home to Medicine Mountain

Topic: American Indian Boarding Schools

Grades level(s): 5

Time required: Approximately 1 hour

Background: Fifth graders learn about why European settlers came to America, but the effect this had on American Indians is often overlooked or glossed over. In what ways did settlers affect American Indians? One way was an effort to assimilate the Indians into European culture by taking the Indian children from their families and putting them in boarding schools where they lived under strictly regimented conditions. The idea was to take the “Indian” out of them.

Nevada State Social Studies Standards:

HI.5.7 Examine the cultural exchange among the Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans.

Common Core State Standards:

RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges; summarize the text.

Objectives:

1. Following a read-aloud, students will write five key details from the story.
2. Students will use five key details to summarize the story.
3. Students will identify the theme of the story.

Key Vocabulary:

European settlers

Tribe

Boarding school

Dormitory

Matron

Boxcar

Materials:

1. a copy of the book, *Home to Medicine Mountain* by Chiori Santiago,
2. chart of key vocabulary words,
3. index cards (5 for each pair of students),
4. paper and pencil

Setting the Stage: Ask the students, “Have you ever been homesick?” “What was the situation?” “What happened?” Lead a short discussion of this idea with a focus on students’ sharing.

Activities/Strategies:

1. Introduce the book by asking students to look at the cover and state two describing words for what they see.
2. Read aloud the illustrator’s note on page 3. Students turn to a shoulder partner and tell how they would feel about going to a boarding school.
3. Read the book aloud, stopping to discuss illustrations and key vocabulary as it appears.
4. After reading the story, ask students to once again look at the cover and state two describing words for what they see now.

5. Give each pair of students five index cards. Together students write five key details or events from the book, one on each card.
6. Pair students with another pair to share key events cards. Do they agree on the most important events? Ask the groups of four to combine their cards to make five key details or events.
7. Individually, students use their final five cards to write a one-paragraph summary of *Home to Medicine Mountain*.
8. Students share their summaries with others.
9. Ask students what the theme of the story might be. What big idea does the author want you to remember or learn from her story? Students write one or two words at the bottom of their papers to state the theme of the story.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Use the students' paragraph summaries and theme responses to determine their understanding.

Grading Rubric:

3	2	1
<p>Students summary demonstrates understanding of the negative impact the boarding school experience had on Indian families</p>	<p>Students summary offers details to the book and demonstrates thematic understanding</p>	<p>Student summary needs guidance to ensure understanding of the books theme</p>