



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 3, WEBISODE 8

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview

The conflict between Native Americans and the United States government intensified after the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Two final, tragic chapters closed the Indian Wars: the capture of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce, and the massacre at Wounded Knee.

Although President Grant set aside land specifically for the Nez Perce, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills brought a flood of prospectors and homesteaders. Chief Joseph urged his warriors to forsake violence and wait for the United States government to make good on its promises. His faith in the government was misplaced, however; in spite of treaties and promises, the Nez Perce were ordered off their land. When the army threatened to force Chief Joseph and his band onto the reservation, Joseph reluctantly broke camp and started off toward the reservation. But after several enraged young warriors raided nearby settlements, the United States Army attacked the Nez Perce.

Chief Joseph led the seven hundred surviving Nez Perce, consisting mostly of women and children, on a race of over a thousand miles to hoped-for sanctuary in Canada. Although they fought their pursuers with vigor and skill, the Nez Perce were outgunned, outnumbered, and ultimately outlasted and surrounded. Just thirty miles from the Canadian border, Joseph surrendered. The Nez Perce were taken to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Chief Joseph was exiled to a reservation in Washington. When Chief Joseph died in 1904, the cause of death was listed as “a broken heart.”

Finally, in 1890, the massacre of over two hundred and fifty Native American men, women and children at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, signaled the end of the Indian Wars. Chief Joseph’s noble speeches championing freedom, liberty, and equal rights for all people stand as an eloquent statement of justice and a rebuke to the nation that realized its own injustice too late.

Teacher Directions

Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.

- What were the long-term effects of the Native American victory at Little Bighorn?
- Where did the Nez Perce live?
- What happened to change the relations between the Nez Perce and whites?



Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss, Cont.

- Why did Chief Joseph eventually fight against the United States army?
- Why did Chief Joseph eventually surrender?
- What happened at Wounded Knee?

2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

Even though the Native Americans defeated Custer at Little Bighorn, this victory only accelerated the violence against the Indians and their eventual destruction. The Nez Perce lived in present day Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. While the Nez Perce had befriended whites who passed through their land, the discovery of gold brought miners, homesteaders, and demands for the Nez Perce to abandon their lands. When the United States Army ordered Chief Joseph to leave his tribal lands and attacked, he fought back. After leading his band of mostly women and children for over a thousand miles, Chief Joseph finally surrendered just thirty miles from Canada because he was outgunned, outnumbered, and surrounded. At Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the United States Army massacred over two hundred and fifty native Americans. It signaled the end of the Indian Wars.

Teacher Directions

1. Review with students the United States government policy toward Native Americans in the late 1800s. Include in the discussion the following points.
 - the resettlement of tribes on reservations
 - the attempt to Americanize, including the suppression of Indian culture, lifestyles, and religions
 - the annihilation of the Indian people by the United States Army
2. Provide some background information about Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce tribe to students. On a classroom map, locate the Nez Perce tribal regions in present-day Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.
3. Distribute the Student Sheets: *Chief Joseph Speaks*. Working in small teams, students examine the photographs and read the quotations.
4. Students discuss the quotations using the following questions as guidelines.
 - What were the characteristics of the Nez Perce tribe?
 - Describe the early relationship between the Nez Perce and the whites.
 - What events created problems between the whites and the Nez Perce?
 - How did the United States government seek to solve the problem?
 - What incident resulted in the flight of the Nez Perce?
 - Despite the Indians' struggle to keep their land and customs, what was the final outcome?



History Sleuth

History Sleuth, Cont.

5. Students imagine they are television reporters and have the opportunity to interview Chief Joseph. Working with teammates, students develop a list of possible interview questions.
6. Visit each team to help the students develop good interview questions. Check that all students are involved in the activity. Allow each team to briefly share a few questions with the class.
7. Using the team's questions as a guide, each student works with a team partner to develop an interview. The interview should be realistic, and whenever possible, use Chief Joseph's actual words from the Student Sheets: *Chief Joseph Speaks*.
8. Partners decide which student will be the reporter and which will be Chief Joseph. Each partnership shares its interview with teammates. If time permits, a number of volunteers can share their interviews with the class.

Teacher Directions

Students discuss the following questions.

- How could the conflict with Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce have been resolved without violence?
- Do you think the Native Americans should have fought for their land regardless of the consequences?
- Do you think the government was unjust in its treatment of the Nez Perce? Explain your position.

Teacher Directions

1. Display the Transparency: *Quotations*.
2. Working in small learning teams, students interpret the quotations and identify their sources.
3. Discuss the following questions with students.
 - What do these two quotations have in common?
 - How do Chief Joseph's words reflect the meaning of the Declaration of Independence?
 - How did Chief Joseph move our nation toward freedom?



What do you
Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom



Connections

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Geography/Library — Students research the physical terrain and weather conditions encountered by the Nez Perce on their flight. Students create a map that displays this information.

Music — Students listen to some Native American music. What part did music play in the life of the Native Americans? How were music and dance related?

Art/Library — Students use web sites or library resources to find examples of Native American drawing and decoration. What do some of the picture symbols represent?

Quotations

***“We hold these Truths
to be self-evident,
that all Men are created equal,
that they are endowed
by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights,
that among these are
Life, Liberty and the Pursuit
of Happiness...”***

***“All men were made
by the same Great Spirit Chief.
They are all brothers.
The earth is the mother of
all people, and all people should
have equal rights upon it....I only
ask of the Government to be
treated as all other men
are treated.”***

Chief Joseph



Library of Congress

“I have no grievance against any of the white people.”

Chief Joseph Speaks

Selected Statements and Speeches by the Nez Percé Chief

I.

"The first white men of your people who came to our country were named Lewis and Clark. They brought many things which our people had never seen. They talked straight and our people gave them a great feast as proof that their hearts were friendly. They made presents to our chiefs and our people made presents to them. We had a great many horses of which we gave them what they needed, and they gave us guns and tobacco in return.

All the Nez Perce made friends with Lewis and Clark and agreed to let them pass through their country and never to make war on white men. This promise the Nez Perce have never broken."

II.

"For a short time we lived quietly. But this could not last. White men had found gold in the mountains around the land of the Winding Water. They stole a great many horses from us and we could not get them back because we were Indians. The white men told lies for each other. They drove off a great many of our cattle. Some white men branded our young cattle so they could claim them. We had no friends who would plead our cause before the law councils.

It seemed to me that some of the white men in Wallowa were doing these things on purpose to get up a war. They knew we were not strong enough to fight them. I labored hard to avoid trouble and bloodshed. We gave up some of our country to the white men, thinking that then we could have peace. We were mistaken.

The white men would not let us alone. We could have avenged our wrongs many times, but we did not. Whenever the Government has asked for help against other Indians we have never refused. When the white men were few and we were strong we could have killed them off, but the Nez Perce wishes to live at peace."

U.S. Cavalry



National Archives

The United States cavalry leaving Fort Bowie on an expedition to keep the Native American tribes under control

Chief Joseph Speaks

“On account of the treaty made by the other bands of the Nez Perce the white man claimed my lands. We were troubled with white men crowding over the line. Some of them were good men, and we lived on peaceful terms with them, but they were not all good. Nearly every year the agent came over from Lapwai and ordered us to the reservation. We always replied that we were satisfied to live in Wallowa. We were careful to refuse the presents or annuities which he offered.

Through all the years since the white man came to Wallowa we have been threatened and taunted by them and the treaty Nez Perce. They have given us no rest. We have had a few good friends among the white men, and they have always advised my people to bear these taunts without fighting. Our young men are quick tempered and I have had great trouble in keeping them from doing rash things.

“I have carried a heavy load on my back ever since I was a boy. I learned then that we were but few while the white men were many, and that we could not hold our own with them. We were like deer. They were like grizzly bears. We had a small country. Their country was large. We were contented to let things remain as the Great Spirit Chief made them. They were not; and would change the mountains and rivers if they did not suit them.”

III.

[At his surrender in the Bear Paw Mountains, 1877]

“Tell General Howard that I know his heart. What he told me before I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead, Tu-hul-hil-sote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who now say yes or no. He who led the young men [Joseph's brother Alikut] is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people—some of them have run away to the hills and have no blankets and no food. No one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death.

I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more against the white man.”

Indian Camp



San Diego Museum of Man

Crow camp along the Greasy Grass (Little Big Horn) River

Chief Joseph Speaks

IV.

[On a visit to Washington, D.C., 1879]

“At last I was granted permission to come to Washington and bring my friend Yellow Bull and our interpreter with me. I am glad I came. I have shaken hands with a good many friends, but there are some things I want to know which no one seems able to explain. I cannot understand how the Government sends a man out to fight us, as it did General Miles, and then breaks his word.

Such a government has something wrong about it. I cannot understand why so many chiefs are allowed to talk so many different ways, and promise so many different things. I have seen the Great Father Chief [President Hayes]; the Next Great Chief [Secretary of the Interior]; the Commissioner Chief; the Law Chief; and many other law chiefs [Congressmen] and they all say they are my friends, and that I shall have justice, but while all their mouths talk right I do not understand why nothing is done for my people. I have heard talk and talk but nothing is done.

Good words do not last long unless they amount to something. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country now overrun by white men. They do not protect my father's grave. They do not pay for my horses and cattle. Good words do not give me back my children. Good words will not make good the promise of your war chief, General Miles. Good words will not give my people a home where they can live in peace and take care of themselves. I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and all the broken promises.

There has been too much talking by men who had no right to talk. Too many misinterpretations have been made; too many misunderstandings have come up between the white men and the Indians. If the white man wants to live in peace with the Indian he can live in peace. There need be no trouble. Treat all men alike. Give them the same laws. Give them all an even chance to live and grow.”

Colville Reservation



Montana Historical Society

The last home of Chief Joseph

Chief Joseph Speaks

All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief. They are all brothers. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect all rivers to run backward as that any man who was born a free man should be contented penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. If you tie a horse to a stake, do you expect he will grow fat? If you pen an Indian up on a small spot of earth and compel him to stay there, he will not be contented nor will he grow and prosper. I have asked some of the Great White Chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he shall stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me.

I only ask of the Government to be treated as all other men are treated. If I cannot go to my own home, let me have a home in a country where my people will not die so fast. I would like to go to Bitter Root Valley. There my people would be happy; where they are now they are dying. Three have died since I left my camp to come to Washington.

When I think of our condition, my heart is heavy. I see men of my own race treated as outlaws and driven from country to country, or shot down like animals.

I know that my race must change. We cannot hold our own with the white men as we are. We only ask an even chance to live as other men live. We ask to be recognized as men. We ask that the same law shall work alike on all men. If an Indian breaks the law, punish him by the law. If a white man breaks the law, punish him also.

Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to talk, think and act for myself—and I will obey every law or submit to the penalty.

Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other then we shall have no more wars. We shall be all alike -- brothers of one father and mother, with one sky above us and one country around us and one government for all. Then the Great Spirit Chief who rules above will smile upon this land and send rain to wash out the bloody spots made by brothers' hands upon the face of the earth. For this time the Indian race is waiting and praying. I hope no more groans of wounded men and women will ever go to the ear of the Great Spirit Chief above, and that all people may be one people.

Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekht has spoken for his people."

From Chester Anders Fee, *Chief Joseph: The Biography of a Great Indian*, Wilson-Erickson, 1936.