



Grade Level: 9-10
Subject: ELA

Marrow Thieves - Coming To Story

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- History
- Identity
- Lifeways

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to write a narrative that reflects their Coming To Story.
- Students will be able to construct their Coming To Story using figurative and sensory language.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

- Connecting to the lives of students
- Proximity
- Higher level thinking: creating
- Connecting to students' personal families and family members
- Preserving and honoring cultural history

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on their proficient completion of their Coming To Story

Overview

Students will read sections of The Marrow Thieves, focusing on the “Coming To Stories” and how a person's experiences make up who they are. In these sections, storytelling is used to describe how that person came to be who they are. The Marrow Thieves, although fiction, makes reference to native history and how tribal peoples' identity have been shaped by federal indian policies, assimilation and indian boarding schools. Students will research these topics and will then write their own Coming To Story.

MATERIALS

- The Marrow Thieves by Cherie Dimaline
- [Chemawa Smoke Signals Article](#)
- Computers or tablets
- Paper & Pencil OR access to a word processor

LOGISTICS

- Where does this activity take place?
Classroom
- How are the students organized?

Whole Class Individually

TIME REQUIRED

2-3, 50 minute sessions

STANDARDS

Oregon Common Core Standards ELA:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Oregon Social Science Standards

Historical Knowledge HS.59 Analyze and explain the history of the American Indian/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians in Oregon and the United States regarding their culture, tribal sovereignty, and issues of concern, past and present.

Historical Knowledge HS.63 Examine the personal and historical development of identity, including concepts of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.

Background for Teachers

Storytelling is a traditional way of life for tribal communities. Stories help explain how places, people, things and ideas came to be. Grand Ronde has many traditional stories. Grand Ronde stories vary a great deal depending on time period. Some relate back to when the world was created and others explain how a group of people, such as the Molalla tribe or Willamette Falls came to be. There are also personal or individual stories. These stories reflect a person and their experiences that shaped who they have become today.

The stories that we hear about Native American boarding schools, both from the past and present, display the effect that these schools have had on Native Americans both young and old. During the adolescent years, the formation of identity is a fragile and complicated concept. These boarding schools have played a crucial role in the formation of young Native American identities for many of years. These boarding schools have changed their policies and procedures over the years but can still be an extremely sensitive topic for Native elders and families.

VOCABULARY

- **Indigenous-** Originating in a particular region or country; native.
- **Indian boarding schools-** began in the 1860's. These schools were opened off reservations and were meant to teach native children traditional education and assimilate them into mainstream society. These students lived in residential halls at the school where they were kept a close eye on. In these schools, native children were not allowed to speak their native languages, practice their cultural songs and dances or participate in any cultural ceremonies.
- **Genocide-** the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic group or nation.
- **Colonization-** the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.
- **Land displacement-** considered involuntary when affected individuals, communities or groups of people unlawfully lose the rights to their land and have to relocate or are forced to relocate.

Opening

Begin the lesson by watching the video, Real Life as A Young and Native American (<https://youtu.be/ulNNLzc3Kcw>). This video will introduce students to the concept of the “modern Native American” and will set the tone for the lesson.

After the video, review vocabulary terms with students.

Activity

1. As a class or individually have students read pages 1-17, this is Frenchie’s Coming To Story.
2. After reading the chapter, stop and allow for students to discuss, either as a whole group or in pairs. Frenchie’s story describes his struggles; yet in a unique way, he has hope in some form of how he will survive this part of his life.
3. Ask students to identify the figurative language that Frenchie uses to tell his Coming To Story. Remind students that figurative language is descriptive and whenever you describe something by comparing it with something else you are using figurative language. Similes, metaphors, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, allusions and idioms are all examples of figurative language.

Ask students: *How does the use of figurative language enrich the writing?*

4. Discuss with students the connection between past and present treatment of Native Americans.

Ask students: *In this story, the government has reopened the residential schools to house the Indigenous people they steal. Does this reflect something that could happen in today’s society? Is this something that has happened in Oregon’s history?*

5. Have students do research on Chemawa Indian School located in Salem, Oregon. Although the school has changed policy and ways of teaching, it is still in existence today with an average enrollment of 200-300 Native students who live on campus.

Suggested Links:

- Chemawa Indian School By SuAnn M. Reddick:
https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chemawa_indian_boarding_school/#.Yd3UMP7MK71
- Chemawa History: <https://chemawa.bie.edu/history.html>
- Behind the Fence: Chemawa’s Culture of Secrecy:
<https://www.opb.org/news/series/chemawa/indian-school-oregon-finance-history-board-future/>

6. Have students read the Smoke Signals article where Grand Ronde tribal members talk about their experiences at Chemawa Indian School:

<https://www.smokesignals.org/articles/2011/04/15/fates-of-grand-ronde-tribe-chemawa-indian-school-span-100-years/>

Ask students: *How do these experiences shape history and identity?*

Closure

Have students write their own Coming To Story using figurative and sensory language. Explain to students that they should include their origins, struggles, a turning point and something that gives them hope for the future.

Differentiation

1. Depending on student learning styles, students can create other types of media to share their coming to story, such as a power point, poster or writing a poem.

Extension

1. A teacher can enrich this lesson by presenting other Coming To Stories in Marrow Thieves. Miigwan and Wab also have chapters dedicated to their Coming To Stories (Pages 81 & 100). Other character's Coming To stories are intertwined throughout the book.
2. Teachers can choose to elaborate on Chemawa Indian School and have students research deeper. Below is a video about Chemawa Indian School
https://youtu.be/_xMdcl29p9k
3. Using the BIE Schools map located in the article [Behind the Fence: Chemawa's Culture of Secrecy](#), have students research another BIE School and compare/contrast with Chemawa Indian School.

Notes/Other

Jan Michael Looking Wolf's or Grand Ronde Canoe Family audio tracks can be played as background music while students are working. These audio tracks can be found on Spotify or Apple Music.

Jan Michael Looking Wolf: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

Grand Ronde Canoe Family: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

Appendix

The Marrow Thieves book: Available through the CTGR Curriculum Office. Find the class-set request form at <https://www.grandronde.org/history-culture/culture/curriculum/other-resources/>.

Contact CTGR Curriculum Specialist Cheyanne Heidt at cheyanne.heidt@grandronde.org or at 503-879-2144 for assistance if needed.

Real Life as A Young and Native American Video: (<https://youtu.be/ulNNLzc3Kcw>)

Chemawa Smoke Signals Article:

<https://www.smokesignals.org/articles/2011/04/15/fates-of-grand-ronde-tribe-chemawa-indian-school-span-100-years/>

Chemawa Research Articles:

- Chemawa Indian School By SuAnn M. Reddick:
https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chemawa_indian_boarding_school/#.Yd3UMP7MK71
- Chemawa History: <https://chemawa.bie.edu/history.html>
- Behind the Fence: Chemawa's Culture of Secrecy:
<https://www.opb.org/news/series/chemawa/indian-school-oregon-finance-history-board-future/>