KNOTS ON A COUNTING ROPE

WRITTEN BY BILL MARTIN, JR. AND JOHN ARCHAMBAULT
ILLUSTRATED BY TED RAND

Watch the video of actors
Bonnie Bartlett & William Daniels
reading this story at
storylineonline.net
ABOUT THIS STORY

SYNOPSIS
A blind Native American boy named Boy-Strength-of-Blue-Horses begs Grandfather to tell the stories of the night he was born and of a great race. In this poignant story, the counting rope is a metaphor for the passage of time and for a boy's emerging confidence facing his greatest challenge: blindness.

THEMES IN THE STORY
Love, Hope, Courage, Culture, Overcoming a disability
**READING AND WRITING**

**SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 3RD - 4TH**

**ELA COMMON CORE STANDARD**

*Reading Literature:* Students read and respond to works of literature with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textural evidence. *Standards listed below are for 3rd and 4th grades but can be adapted to 2nd grade standards.*

**BEFORE VIEWING**

**Standards:** CCSS.SL.3.1, CCSS.SL.4.1

**Objective:** Tap knowledge and build background to prepare for reading the story.

**Procedure:**

**Step 1:** Build background for students by discussing the following points with students:
- Native Americans
- Blindness
- Stories students have been told about their birth

**Step 2:** Explain metaphor: a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used to make a comparison between two things that aren’t alike but do have something in common.

**DURING VIEWING**

**Focus:** Active Reading Strategies

**Standards:** CCSS.SL.3.2, CCSS.SL.4.2

**Objective:** Students will build active reading skills during the read aloud.

**Materials:** Notebook or paper

**Procedure:**

**Step 1:** Explain to students that during the read aloud they will build active reading skills by engaging with the text. Instruct students to jot down their thoughts as they listen to the story.
- Listen for metaphors
- List any unfamiliar words
- Make I wonder statements: I wonder why….
- Make connections: text to text; text to self

**Step 2:** Discuss students’ responses after read aloud.

**AFTER VIEWING - CHARACTER, SETTING, MAIN EVENTS**

**Standards:** CCSS.RL.3.2, CCSS.RL.3.9, CCSS.RL.4.2, CCSS.RL.4.9

**Objective:** Students will compare and contrast the characters, setting, plot and themes in two Native American stories.

**Materials:** Grade appropriate texts: Native American folk tales

**Teacher prep:** Gather folk tales (1 per each group)
Procedure:

Step 1: Divide students into groups. Give each group a folk tale book.

Step 2: Explain that they will read another Native American folk tale and compare it with Knots on a Counting Rope. Students should focus on setting, characters, plot, and lesson as they read.

Step 3: Discuss the similarities and differences of the stories within the group. Make sure students understand that they should only focus on similarities and differences in setting, characters, plot and the lesson.

Step 4: Complete the Venn diagram. Students should identify at least three things in each section of the diagram.

Step 5: Present findings to class.

READING RESPONSE

Standards: CCSS.RL.3.1, CCSS.RL.4.1, CCSS.RL.3.2, CCSS.RL.4.2

Objective: Students will answer the prompt using at least two details from text to support the response.

Reading Prompt: What is the lesson in the story? Use details from the story to support your response.

WRITING - PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Standards: CCSS.W.3.3, CCSS.W.4.3

Objective: Students will write a narrative piece using grade appropriate sentence structure and spelling.

Writing Prompt: The Boy’s Grandfather was a very important person in his life. Choose someone from your life that is special to you. Write about this important person and explain what makes them so special.

Materials: Writing tools

Procedure:

Step 1: Discuss why the Boy’s Grandfather was special to him.

Step 2: Group students and have them tell about their special someone.

Step 3: Use the Writing Process to complete the piece.

Step 4: Hold a VIP speaking event. Have students bring in a picture and read their piece aloud to the class. If possible, have students invite their someone special to the event.
SCIENCE — EYES SHUT TIGHT

OBJECTIVE —
How do blind people compensate for the loss of sight? Students use all senses, except sight, to identify objects.

MATERIALS —
Blindfolds (1 per group)
Data sheet (on page 7)
Paper bags (1 per group)
Variety of common objects (Ex: cut up fruits and vegetables, candy, baseball, golf ball, cotton ball, plastic straw, school tools, etc)

Teacher prep:
• Place chosen objects in a paper bag. You will need one object for each member of the group.
• Type in objects you are using on Data Sheet. Copy and place each copy in a separate folder.

PROCEDURE —
Step 1: Divide the students into groups. Appoint one student in each group to be the facilitator of the experiment.
Step 2: Distribute a blindfold to each group. Hand the folder containing the Data Sheet to the facilitator with directions not to open.
Step 3: Describe the procedure: Each student in the group will take turns being blind folded and attempt to identify the object he/she chooses from the bag by touching, smelling, tasting, and listening. The results will be recorded on the Data Sheet by the facilitator. The facilitator should be instructed not to let any members of the group see the sheet.
Step 4: Complete the experiment.
Step 5: Discuss and summarize findings within each group. Members can use the following questions to explore findings:
  • How many objects were identified correctly? Examine the data to determine which objects were difficult to identify and try to explain why.
  • Did the ability to identify the objects depend on the group’s familiarity with the objects?
  • How did touch and taste help to identify each?
Step 6: Complete the Summary Chart. A member of each group should record findings as each group presents.
Step 7: Discuss the results with the whole class using the group questions.

SOCIAL STUDIES — TIMELINES

OBJECTIVE —
Students create a timeline of important events in their life.

MATERIALS —
Chart paper
Large paper
Pencil
Markers

Teacher prep: Find an example of a timeline.
**TECHNOLOGY — RESEARCH**

**OBJECTIVE —**
Students use the internet to find information on Native Americans.

**MATERIALS —**
Computers with internet access
Chart of Indigenous Native American Groups (on page 8)

**PROCEDURE —**

Step 1: Write on chart paper or whiteboard:

*Which tribe of Native Americans is indigenous to (area where you live)*?

Step 2: Use the context of the sentence to have students define the word *indigenous* (originating in a particular area; native).

Step 3: Explain to students that they will use the internet to research and answer this question.

Step 4: Instruct students on how to use the computer to research the topic.

Step 5: Distribute the Chart of Indigenous Native American Groups to each student and explain.

Step 6: Complete the chart.

Step 7: Use the computer to type and print the report. Encourage students to find and include pictures or other visuals in their report.
How do blind people compensate for the loss of sight?

Name of Group: ____________________________________________

Put a check mark in the correct column for each object.

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<th>Objects</th>
<th>Identified</th>
<th>Not Identified</th>
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**CLASS SUMMARY**

Complete after each group has completed the experiment.

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About This Guide: The purpose of this guide is to enhance the ELA curriculum by providing quality children's literature to engage students in listening to expressive read alouds. Suggested story related activities are aligned with ELA Common Core Standards.
# Chart of Indigenous Native American Groups

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<thead>
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