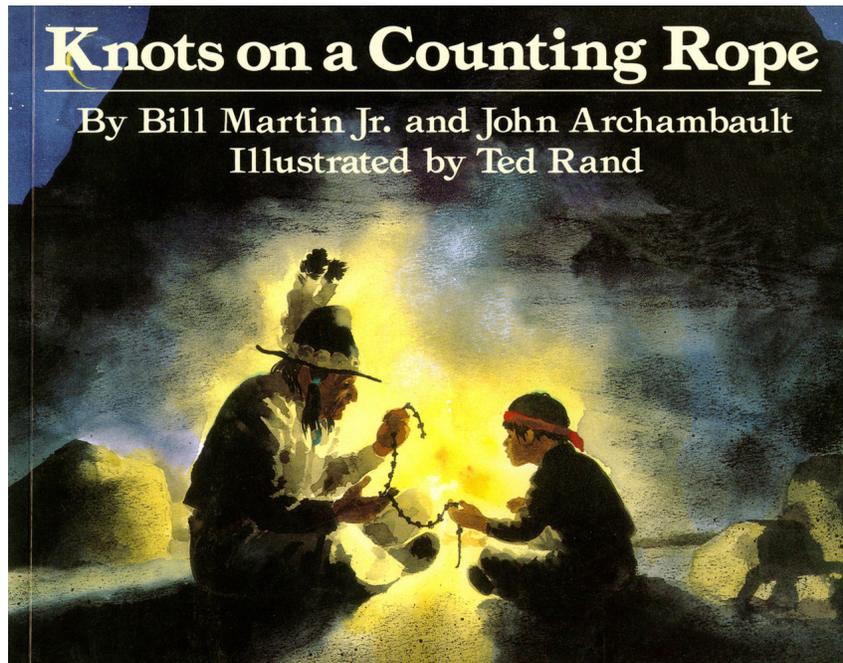




## A TEACHER'S GUIDE

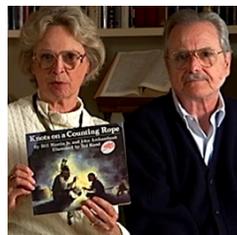
SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 3<sup>RD</sup> - 4<sup>TH</sup>



# 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](http://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: 3<sup>RD</sup> - 4<sup>TH</sup>

## 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 textual evidence. *Standards listed below are for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades but can be adapted to 2<sup>nd</sup> 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  
Pencil

### 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  
Venn diagram (  Google It! )  
*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.

# ACROSS THE CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

## 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.

## PROCEDURE —

- Step 1: Explain what a timeline is and how it is used. Ask students how they think a timeline could be helpful.
- Step 2: Show students an example of a timeline and discuss.
- Step 3: Model how to create a timeline by making a timeline of the class daily routine on chart paper.
- Step 4: Direct students to make a timeline of their life including at least five special events with the years.

## 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.

# EYES SHUT TIGHT DATA SHEET

**How do blind people compensate for the loss of sight?**

Name of Group: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Objects	Identified	Not Identified

## CLASS SUMMARY

Complete after each group has completed the experiment.

Objects	Number Identified	Number Not Identified

# CHART OF INDIGENOUS NATIVE AMERICAN GROUPS

NATIVE AMERICAN GROUP	HOMES	CLOTHING	FOODS
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

## ABOUT STORYLINE ONLINE

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation's children's literacy website *Storyline Online*® streams imaginatively produced videos featuring celebrated actors to help inspire a love of reading. Storyline Online receives millions of views every month in hundreds of countries. Visit Storyline Online® at [storylineonline.net](http://storylineonline.net).

## ABOUT THE SAG-AFTRA FOUNDATION

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation provides vital assistance and educational programming to the professionals of SAG-AFTRA while serving the public at large through its signature children's literacy program. Founded in 1985, the Foundation is a national non-profit organization that relies solely on support from grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual contributions to fund our programs. Visit [sagaftra.foundation](http://sagaftra.foundation).

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