

National Native American Hall of Fame  
2018 Inductee

**BILLY MILLS**  
**OGLALA LAKOTA SIOUX**



**ATHLETICS**  
**OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST**

Three 50-minute class periods

By Shane Doyle, EdD

## **SELECTED COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS/SUBJECTS**

### **History, Health Enhancement, Literacy**

#### **CCSS Literacy SL 10-1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### **CCSS Literacy SL 10-1d**

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

#### **CCSS Literacy WHST 10-4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### **CCSS Literacy RH 10-5**

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

## **GOALS FOR UNDERSTANDING**

### **Students will understand**

Billy Mills is an American hero and the only American to win an Olympic Gold Medal in the 10,000 meter run (a little over 6 miles).

Billy Mills came from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and is an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota nation.

Billy Mills overcame many challenges to become an Olympic champion and social leader.

Billy Mills has dedicated his life to Native people, and is the spokesperson for *Running Strong*, a foundation that supports Native youth throughout the nation.

Tribal communities have a tradition of giving back when successful, and that's what Billy Mills has done by helping to start the *Running Strong Foundation*.

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

What type of challenges did Billy Mills have to persevere through as an athlete and as a person to become a champion?

How does Billy Mills' life reflect the values of the Oglala Lakota community?

What was Billy's inspiration and motivation to become an Olympic champion?

What is the most common and powerful prayer of the Lakota people?

## **ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

### **Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

Active listening through note taking

Class discussion

### **Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

Values and goals reflection

Thank you letter

## **LEARNING MAP**

## **ENTRY QUESTIONS**

Who was Billy Mills?

Why is he noteworthy enough to be in the National Native American Hall of Fame?

What can we learn about Billy Mill's example that can inspire us to strive to be better at what we do?

What types of programs does Billy's foundation support and run?

## **MATERIALS**

Computer and internet access and printed copies of the articles linked and listed below.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=billy+mills+movie&view=detail&mid=F2FD107E43CF3AFF936FF2FD107E43CF3AFF936F&FORM=VIRE>

<http://indianyouth.org/billy-mills>

## **LEARNING MODALITIES**

Audio

Visual

## **SITUATED PRACTICE**

The instructor will begin the lesson by creating a K/W/H/L chart on the white board for the students contribute their voices in a classroom exercise.

Students should contribute to the teacher's chart by suggesting things they know about Billy Mills (K), things they want to know (W), how they will learn what they want to know (H). The teacher will return to this chart over the course of the lesson to add information students have learned (L).

## OVERT INSTRUCTION

Following a 5-minute discussion in setting up the K/W/H/L chart, the instructor will begin showing the film *Running Brave*. The film is free online at this link: <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=billy+mills+movie&view=detail&mid=F2FD107E43CF3AFF936FF2FD107E43CF3AFF936F&FORM=VIRE>

Watching the entire film is up to the discretion of the instructor. It is 1:45 minutes, so it would take at least 3 class periods to complete the lesson if the entire film is watched.

Finish the film with at least 15 minutes left in the class period so that students will have time to discuss the storyline and the Hollywood portrayal of the characters. After the first viewing, the class is divided up into small groups of 4 to discuss these questions:

One person will record the answers for the group.

Question #1: What stereotypes did Billy Mills face in his quest to run competitively at the University of Kansas?

Question #2: What would you do if you were faced with a similar problem?

Question #3: How did Billy's family and community support him on his path towards greatness?

Question #4: Do the same stereotypes that Billy Mills faced in the film still exist today?

Following the small group discussions, each group will report out on their answers, and the answers will be included into the K/W/H/L chart.

This concludes the first 50 minutes of the Lesson

### **Part 2**

The instructor reconvenes the class into their groups of 4 and begins to complete the K/W/H/L chart that was started on day one.

The class will now finish watching the 1983 film *Running Brave*. Following the video, the class will attempt to complete their K/W/H/L charts in their small groups for 5 minutes. Each group will then report out to the teacher to complete the classroom chart on the whiteboard. The class may then have an all-group

discussion about the different perspectives and common threads in the K/W/H/L chart.

This concludes Part 2

### **Part 3**

During the third session, students will explore the *Running Strong Foundation's* website, reviewing the information about the Foundation and its spokesperson, Billy Mills. The instructor will refer to the K/W/H/L chart before beginning the classroom exploration into the *Running Strong* website.

Dividing into groups of 4, each group member will explore the website to answer one of two questions:

Question 1: What kinds of programs does the *Running Strong Foundation* offer, and how do they help Native children?

Question 2: What does Billy Mills say inspired him and led him to his Gold Medal?

The small groups will continue to fill out their chart for 20 minutes, then reconvene as a class and report out to the teacher, who will insert the information into the classroom K/W/H/L chart.

### **CRITICAL FRAMING**

Billy Mills had an understanding of the Lakota prayer, Mitakuye Oyasin (all my relations), integrated into his life philosophy and understood that his purpose in life was related to everyone around him. He lived according to this prayer and to the Lakota values. Ask students to read this article about Lakota values and talk about the ways these values are exemplified in Billy Mill's life: [Seven Values of Lakota Life - SGU Virtual Center for Teaching Excellence \(google.com\)](#) After a 15-minute discussion and reporting out, the teacher will ask the students to reflect on their own dreams and inspirations and to think about how these aspirations are connected to their own values. The teacher asks how we can support one another in our pursuit of those goals. What are the best ways to show our love and respect for one another as friends and colleagues, and ultimately, as relatives?

### **TRANSFORMED PRACTICE**

To close this lesson, each student will be given a 15-minute block of time to brainstorm 7 of their own values that are important to them. Next they will be asked to write about the connection between these values and their hopes, dreams, and goals for the future. Finally, ask students to write a letter of thank you or support to someone they know who has inspired them and or made them want to be a better

person. This is a way of recognizing our relations and the role they play in our successes.

The final assessment will be contingent upon the student's participation in the discussions, their own personal K/W/H/L chart, and their values and goals reflection and their letter of inspiration and/or thank you.

### **DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FOR ADVANCED AND EMERGING LEARNERS**

Struggling learners may report the new information they learn verbally and have the teacher add their thoughts to the chart. During the values exercise the teacher may modify the number of values the student needs to work with to adjust the writing and time burden so that students can still do quality work and meet the set expectations. Students might also be allowed to audio or video-record their thoughts and deliver their thank you personally through spoken word and snap a picture to record the moment. Advanced learners may want more time with their values exercise and may wish to record their goals and aspirations in more developed or creative ways such as an art project to display their important values and goals as a consistent guide in life or they may want to create a podcast to talk with other students about their values and goals and publish this online for the class.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Billy Mills has written two books: *Lessons of a Lakota* and *Wokini*