

National Native American Hall of Fame
2018 Inductee

JIM THORPE
SAC AND FOX NATION



ATHLETICS
DECATHLON & PENTATHLON
OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST

Two 50-minute class periods

By Shane Doyle, EdD

SELECTED COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS/SUBJECTS

Writing, Literature, Health Enhancement, History

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

Jim Thorpe was once considered the greatest athlete in the world, winning gold medals in both the Pentathlon and Decathlon in the 1912 Olympics. The Olympic Decathlon consisted of 10 different events that include:

1. 10,000 Meter Run (6.2 miles)
2. Long Jump
3. Shot Put
4. High Jump
5. 400 Meter Run
6. Discus Throw
7. 110 Meter Hurdles
8. Pole Vault
9. Javelin Throw
10. 1500 Meter Run

The Pentathlon consisted of 5 events:

1. Long Jump
2. Javelin Throw
3. 200 Meter Run
4. Discus Throw
5. 1,500 Meter Run (Just under a mile)

Jim Thorpe also played professional baseball and football. Later in his career, Thorpe became a coach in what became the National Football League. Eventually he was named its first president (NFL Commissioner today). Today, whichever team wins the NFC Championship is awarded the Jim Thorpe trophy. The National Football League Hall of Fame is located in Canton, Ohio, where Thorpe coached the Canton Bulldogs.

He also played Jim Thorpe attended the Carlisle Indian Boarding School.

Jim Thorpe's Olympic medals were first taken away from him when it was discovered that he was paid to play baseball before he participated as an amateur athlete in the Olympics, the medals were later returned years after his death, to his surviving children in 1982.

Jim Thorpe overcame many obstacles to become a world-class athlete and competitor.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What type of obstacles did Jim Thorpe persevere through as an athlete and as a person to become a champion?

How did Jim Thorpe become known as the greatest athlete in the world?

What was the greatest irony of Jim Thorpe's participation and success in the 1912 Olympics?

What is the role of visualization in peak performance?

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Active listening through note taking

Class discussion

Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Visualization reflection

LEARNING MAP

ENTRY QUESTIONS

Who was Jim Thorpe?

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

What can we learn about Jim Thorpe's life that can inspire us to strive to be better at what we do?

MATERIALS

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

Article about Jim Thorpe's missing shoes at the 1912 Olympics

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/jim-thorpe-shoes-olympics/>

ESPN Video about Jim Thorpe, Part 1

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=World%27s+Greatest+Athlete+Jim+Thorpe&>

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=sportscentury+jim+thorpe+part+2&view=detail&mid=9A0E2F0234B17F5847429A0E2F0234B17F584742&rvsmid=D9DF74C28CADE14F1C2DD9DF74C28CADE14F1C2&FORM=VDQVAP>

ESPN Video about Jim Thorpe, Part 2

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=sportscentury+jim+thorpe+part+2&view=detail&mid=FAE5C9662AF56584D7BAFAE5C9662AF56584D7BA&FORM=VRDGAR>

Trailer for the Hollywood film starring Burt Lancaster

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=World%27s+Greatest+Athlete+Jim+Thorpe&view=detail&mid=6ABB1EA212618D410CC76ABB1EA212618D410CC7&FORM=VRDGAR>

Smithsonian article about Thorpe's athletic practice

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/why-are-jim-thorpes-olympic-records-stillnot-recognized-130986336/>

LEARNING MODALITIES

Auditory

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 Jim Thorpe, thing they want to know, how they will learn what they want to know. The teacher will return to this chart over the course of the lesson to add information students have learned.

OVERT INSTRUCTION

Following a 5-minute discussion in setting up the K/W/H/L chart, the instructor will assign the students to read the following story about Jim Thorpe's missing shoes in the 1912 Olympics

Article about Jim Thorpe's missing shoes at the 1912 Olympics

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/jim-thorpe-shoes-olympics/>

The teacher will divide the class into groups of 4, with each person reading the article individually. After the reading, students will answer the following questions in their small groups. Each person will receive two minutes to answer the question, for a total of 32 minutes to complete this exercise. One person will record the answers for the group.

Question #1: Why do people doubt the story of Jim Thorpe winning the Pentathlon while wearing one borrowed shoe, and one found in the trash can?

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

Question #3: What can we learn from how Jim Thorpe competed in the 1912 Olympics?

Question #4: Why does it take more than just talent to be considered the greatest athlete in the world?

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 watch the two 15-minute segments about Jim Thorpe and his notoriety as the greatest athlete in the world. Following each video, the class will attempt to complete their K/W/H/L charts in their small groups for 5 minutes. After the second film and small group session, the groups will then report out to the teacher to complete the classroom chart on the whiteboard.

ESPN Video about Jim Thorpe, Part 1

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=World%27s+Greatest+Athlete+Jim+Thorpe&&view=detail&mid=9A0E2F0234B17F5847429A0E2F0234B17F584742&rvsmid=D9DF74C28CADE14F1C2DD9DF74C28CADE14F1C2&FORM=VDQVAP>

ESPN Video about Jim Thorpe, Part 2

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=sportscentury+jim+thorpe+part+2&&view=detail&mid=FAE5C9662AF56584D7BAFAE5C9662AF56584D7BA&&FORM=VRDGAR>

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CRITICAL FRAMING

Many people placed the label of “lazy Indian” on Jim Thorpe because they did not understand his method of becoming a great athlete. From a young age Jim learned to observe the movements of animals and worked to emulate those that gave them speed, agility, and strength. While he was practicing in his mind, people saw only a stereotype.

Allow students to read the article below either in print for or projected from the internet. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/why-are-jim-thorpes-olympicrecords-still-not-recognized-130986336/>

Help students zero in on the end of this article:

*The result of all this varied activity was that he became highly practiced in two methods modern athletes now recognize as building blocks of performance: **imitation** and **visualization**. Thorpe studied other athletes as closely as he had once studied horses, borrowing their techniques. He was “always watching for a new motion which will benefit him,” Warner said.*

By the time Thorpe embarked for Stockholm aboard the ocean liner Finland with the rest of the U.S. Olympic contingent—among whom numbered a West Pointer named George Patton and a Hawaiian swimmer named Duke Kahanamoku—he was in the peak shape of his life and spent a good deal of his time tapering and visualizing. This led to the legend that he was merely a skylarker. Newspaperman Francis Albertanti of the New York Evening Mail saw Thorpe relaxing on a deck chair. “What are you doing, Jim, thinking of your Uncle Sitting Bull?” he asked.

“No, I’m practicing the long jump,” Thorpe replied. “I’ve just jumped 23 feet eight inches. I think that will win it.”

Begin a class discussion. How did Jim’s “unconventional” training methods influence how athletes perform today? How did Jim’s work make today’s athletes better athletes? What is the irony of Jim’s story?

TRANSFORMED PRACTICE

As we close this lesson about Jim Thorpe, let spend some time on the concept and practice of visualization. I want each of you to tear a sheet of paper out of your notebook and crumple it into a ball. (Place the trash can in a central location.) Now toss your paper in this trash can. Did you make it?

Tear another sheet out and crumple it again. Now this time everyone is going to close their eyes. Hold your paper in your hand. Feel its shape and its weight. Now visualize in your mind where and how far the trash can is located from you. Picture yourself tossing your paper ball in a perfect arch that puts it directly into the center of the trash can. Don’t open your eyes until you’ve seen and heard your ball drop into the can perfectly. Ok now you can open your eyes and toss your paper balls. How many of you made it that time? How did visualization affect the way that you threw your ball. Did it help with your body motion and your accuracy? Now if Mr. Principal had looked in just then would he have seen students becoming more proficient at something or a room full of teens with their eyes closed about to make a mess?

In what other areas of life do you or could you use visualization to improve your performance and do what you do better?

What does visualization do for the body and for the mind?

How would our class be impacted if we practiced visualization prior to our activities?

Tonight, I’d like you to try visualization before you do something that is challenging for you. Then give me a one paragraph reflection on the impact of visualization on that activity. Remember reflections are thoughtful and insightful and they get beyond the surface of an ordinary answer.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FOR ADVANCED AND EMERGING LEARNERS

Reading the article aloud in small groups or with the class, while students are following along with the text may help struggling learners improve their comprehension. Space should be made for struggling learners to have a voice in small group discussions. This can be achieved by implementing rotations or games that cause each student to need to respond. The reflection assignment provides a low-stakes way for struggling students to practice written expression and becomes a private place where they can receive encouragement from the teacher. Advanced learners may wish to do deeper research into the effects of visualization or even conduct an experiment to test the validity of the hypothesis that visualization improves performance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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