

National Native American Hall of Fame
2018 Inductee

N. SCOTT MOMADAY
KIOWA TRIBE



WRITING
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR

Two 50-minute class periods plus time to read the novel (optional)

By Shane Doyle, EdD

SELECTED COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS/SUBJECTS

Writing, Literature, 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

N. Scott Momaday is a Kiowa author who has won many awards and honors as a writer, poet, and artist.

How to evaluate the plot, themes, characters, etc. of a work of literature.

How Momaday's background and Kiowa culture influence all aspects of his writing.

The impact of the oral tradition on the writing style of N. Scott Momaday.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How did N. Scott Momaday's upbringing influence his writing?

What did his life as an author look like?

What elements make an excellent story? Do these elements change based on whether the story is written or told orally?

What is an oral tradition?

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Active and critical listening

Class discussion

Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Text evaluation

LEARNING MAP

ENTRY QUESTIONS

Who was N. Scott Momaday?

What is the oral tradition?

What are the literary characteristics and influences of N. Scott Momaday's work?

MATERIALS

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

Younger children may read Momaday's "*Circle of Wonder*"

<https://www.fictiondb.com/author/n-scott-momaday~circle-of-wonder-a-nativeamerican-christmas-story~429400~b.htm>

Provide the class with copies of the novel, "*The Way to Rainy Mountain*" (Teachers also have the option to use the prologue of this book if the class is unable to read the full book. The link to this PDF is listed below. There is also a documentary film, "Return to Rainy Mountain" that students can view if it is purchased through PBS.)

How to do a literary analysis of Momaday's "*The Way to Rainy Mountain*"

<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-way-to-rainy-mountain/introduction>

N. Scott Momaday's prologue to "*The Way to Rainy Mountain*"

<http://www.b-g.k12.ky.us/userfiles/1049/The%20Way%20to%20Rainy%20Mountain.pdf>

What It Takes: Wallace Stegner and N. Scott Momaday – podcast from the Academy of Achievement (discipline, train, and direct your talent - 13 minutes in, Momaday begins speaking – 4 characteristics of a Kiowa warrior: bravery, fortitude, generosity, virtue/appropriate behavior - the comparisons between the two authors are interesting to study, but if time is limited teachers can focus only on Momaday)

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/what-it-takes/id1025864075?mt=2>

N. Scott Momaday – his literary awards <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/n-scott-momaday> http://www.returntorainymountain.com/N_Scott_Momaday.html

LEARNING MODALITIES

Auditory

Visual

OVERT INSTRUCTION

Familiarize students with N. Scott Momaday by directing them to these links or by allowing students 10-15 minutes to find out as much as they can about the author. Working in teams students might see which team can collect the greatest number of facts in 10 minutes.

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/n-scott-momaday>

http://www.returntorainymountain.com/N_Scott_Momaday.html

SITUATED PRACTICE

Begin by reading the Momaday's prologue aloud or listening to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pLXPP39pm4> (For younger children read *Circle of Wonder* aloud.)

How is listening to a story different than reading one? In listening to this prologue (or story) name one mental image that really stood out to you.

N. Scott Momaday, like Wallace Stegner, was famous for his portrayal of the western landscape. Both authors gained their unique perspective on the world from their experiences growing up in the west. Listen to the podcast featuring both authors:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/what-it-takes/id1025864075?mt=2>

CRITICAL FRAMING

The depth of imagery, concept, and character in Momaday's writings make his work interesting to deconstruct and critically examine. As you grow in your sophistication in understanding literature, you can become a better writer and reader by evaluating the works of great writers.

If students are reading the novel "*The Way to Rainy Mountain*", allow time and provide a reading schedule for the book's completion. The teacher can still proceed with this lesson without assigning the full book to students by only using the prologue. Walking students through the novel evaluation below will give them a comprehensive understanding of the novel, while also allowing them to recognize key elements of Momaday's literary form in the prologue.

Allow students to view the textual analysis of "*The Way to Rainy Mountain*" here:

<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-way-to-rainy-mountain> While displaying this webpage for the class, walk students through each tab demonstrating how to go

about a thorough text evaluation. Allow students to appreciate the complexity and depth of Momaday's writing by picking out key literary tools he uses in his writing.

TRANSFORMED PRACTICE

Use this text evaluation example as a jumping off point for your next class read, perhaps another of Momaday's novels. Older students will likely be assigned a novel, while younger children can read a shorter book. Based on the age of your students scale the complexity of the text evaluation from challenging, like the one shown for Momaday's work, to more simplistic, asking students to identify more basic story parts such as plot, setting, characters, and themes. Students may perform this literary analysis as an individual assignment, or the teacher may talk through the analysis in parts as the students move through their assigned reading. The overall goal of this analysis is to help students look for literary devices, and begin to see how they can employ them in their own writing, and appreciate how a deeper reading of a text brings a greater reward.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION FOR ADVANCED AND EMERGING LEARNERS

This is the audio file reading of the prologue used above:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pLXPP39pm4> Providing this link along with the written document to follow along with may help improve comprehension for struggling students. 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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Journey of Tai-me (1967), folklore

House Made of Dawn (1968), novel

The Way to Rainy Mountain (1969) (illustrated by his father, Alfred Momaday), folklore

Angle of Geese (1974), poetry chapbook

The Gourd Dancer (1976), poetry

The Names: A Memoir (1976), memoir

The Ancient Child (1989), novel

In the Presence of the Sun (1992), stories and poetry

The Native Americans: Indian Country (1993)

The Indolent Boys (Play) Premiered on the Syracuse Stage during the 1993-94 season.

Circle of Wonder: A Native American Christmas Story (1994), children's book

The Man Made of Words: Essays, Stories, Passages (1997), stories and essays

In the Bear's House (1999), mixed media

Four Arrows & Magpie: A Kiowa Story (2006), children's book

Three Plays: The Indolent Boys, Children of the Sun, and The Moon in Two Windows (2007), plays

Again the Far Morning: New and Selected Poems (2011), poetry