

National Native American Hall of Fame  
2018 Inductee

**LORI PIESTEWA**  
**HOPI TRIBE**



**MILITARY  
AMERICAN HERO**

1 50-minute class periods

## **SELECTED COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

### **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.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1**

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3**

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

## **GOALS FOR UNDERSTANDING**

### **Students will understand**

- Lori Piestewa was an American hero for her ultimate sacrifice in Iraq in 2003
- Lori Piestewa served in the military because she believed in serving her country and her family had a long history of military service
- Lori enlisted in the army during war time, showing her commitment and courage

- Lori left behind two young children and an amazing legacy of love, pride and recognition

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Why is Lori Piestewa considered to be an American hero?

How did Lori become a soldier in the US military?

What type of military role models did Lori have in her own family?

How can we best honor Lori Piestewa in our own lives?



## ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

### Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Active listening through note taking

Small group discussion

Class discussion

### Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes

- Students will finish their own small group K/W/H/L charts
- Participate in a small group discussion
- Answer the essential questions when reporting out as a group to the class

## **ENTRY QUESTIONS**

Who was Lori Piestewa?

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

How did Lori Piestewa's sacrifice make a difference to her community and to the nation?

## **MATERIALS**

Computer and internet access is required to view the following videos and printed copies of the biographies are available at the end of this lesson.

6-minute video tribute to the heroic life and career of Lori Piestewa.

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2yy79u>

2-minute video about the legacy of Lori Piestewa

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=35&v=yYE92uMz8pY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=35&v=yYE92uMz8pY&feature=emb_logo)

35-minute video of traditional Hopi ceremony performed to honor Lori Piestewa

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=575&v=rn6o27BezJM&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=575&v=rn6o27BezJM&feature=emb_logo)

3-minute video of Native American code talkers

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFLu73qKA8k&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFLu73qKA8k&feature=emb_logo)

## **LEARNING MODALITIES**

Audio/Visual: Students will watch videos of tributes to Lori Piestewa and begin to understand the positive impact that she made within her community, state and nation.

Writing/Recording: Students will take notes while observing the films, identifying key concepts, sentences or statements that Vine makes during his interview. These notes will be used to complete the K/W/H/L chart in the small groups.

## **OVERT INSTRUCTION**

- 1) The instructor will begin the lesson by creating a "K/W/H/L" Chart, which stands roughly for "What they Know/What they Want to Know/How to Research this topic/What they Learned" chart on the white board for the students contribute their voices in a classroom exercise.

- 2) The instructor will ask the class to read the short biography of Lori Piestewa and follow that up with a 5-minute discussion in setting up the K/W/H/L chart. Using the information in the bio, the students will help the instructor begin completing the chart.
- 3) The teacher will divide the class into groups of 4, with each person reading the longer biography article individually. Some of the words may be unfamiliar to students and searching for definitions may be a necessary part of this process.
- 4) After the reading, students will then watch the video dedications to Lori to see the outpouring of love and support for her family.
- 5) Following the video, students will spend 20 minutes answering the following questions in their small groups. Every team member will contribute, with one person recording the information on a separate sheet. This information can also be utilized for the group K/W/H/L chart.

### **Questions**

- a. How did Lori Piestewa become an American hero?
  - b. What made Lori Piestewa's death so tragic?
  - c. How did Lori Piestewa's family set an example of patriotism for the United States?
- 6) 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.
  - 7) The instructor will open up the discussion to include any final thoughts, questions or insights about Lori Piestewa, her legacy, and the legacy of Native Americans serving in the U.S. military.



**This concludes the first 50 minutes of the Lesson**

### **Extension Exercises**

- 1) Students who wish to continue their research on Lori Piestewa and on the role that Native Americans have played in the U.S. military can write an essay in class and focus on the following questions: What role have Native Americans served in the U.S. military? Why would Native people serve in an army that had forcibly removed their ancestors from their homelands and left their culture devastated?
- 2) Excerpts from the film *Code Talkers*, or portions of writings about the Native Code Talkers can be utilized for this extension exercise.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFLu73qKA8k&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFLu73qKA8k&feature=emb_logo)

### **CRITICAL FRAMING**

Instructors can provide context to Lori Piestewa's life experience and historic background by describing the enormous contribution that Native Americans have made to the United States military. Going as far back as the Revolutionary War, Native Americans have always served for the United States military in some capacity, despite the conflicts over their own tribal brethren. Navajo Code Talkers were made famous after World War 2, but there were many other Native American code talkers who provided critical services to the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines.

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

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/remembering-lori-ann-piestewa-hopi-woman-warrior-NgdChhPV1UG1\\_spYcHFhag](https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/remembering-lori-ann-piestewa-hopi-woman-warrior-NgdChhPV1UG1_spYcHFhag)

## **Indian Country Today**

*Article by Patti Jo King Apr 13, 2011*

*It was a crisp, March Arizona morning when Percy Piestewa heard from her daughter Lori Piestewa for the very last time.*

*"We're going in," Lori wrote in an e-mail, "Take care of the babies, and I'll see you when I get back."*

Lori, a member of the 507th Army Maintenance Company, was traveling with her crew in a convoy in the early days of the Iraq War when the caravan ran headlong into an ambush near Nasiriyah on March 23, 2003.

Lori, driving one of the group's Humvees, was initially able to avoid incoming fire, but in the end her vehicle was disabled by a rocket-propelled grenade. The blast slammed the Humvee into a tractor-trailer, killing three passengers and leaving Lori with severe head wounds. Taken prisoner with others of her company, she died at an Iraqi civilian hospital.

The first woman killed in the Iraq War, and the first American Indian woman to die in combat in the U.S. armed forces, Lori was 23 years old, and a Hopi warrior.

The youngest of four children, Lori Ann Piestewa was born in 1980 in Tuba City, Arizona, a border town between the Hopi and Navajo reservations. Her Hopi name, Köcha-Hon-Mana, means "White Bear Girl. Her parents, Terry Piestewa and Priscilla (Percy) Baca-Piestewa, raised their children in a modest, but loving home with respect for family and cultural values.

An energetic student and tough competitor, Lori pitched and played second base on the Tuba City High School softball team. She was also active in ROTC.

In 1997, she married her high school sweetheart, Bill Whiterock, a Navajo, and moved with him to Fort Bragg, North Carolina where Bill served in the U.S. Army. The marriage produced two children, Brandon Terry, born in 1998, and Carla Lynn in 1999. Unfortunately, the marriage did not last, so Lori set her sights on a military career.

After her death, Lori was returned home and now rests on the Hopi reservation near Tuba City. Her two young children, Brandon and Carla, were entrusted to the care of her parents.

In retrospect, Lori's brief life was not much different than that of most native kids growing up in reservation communities. As is the case in many Indian homes, both her grandfather who served in World War II, and her father, who served in Vietnam, embraced the warrior tradition, a pride they instilled in their children. After her death, PFC Lori Piestewa, was awarded the Purple Heart, the Prisoner of War Medal, and posthumously promoted from the rank of Private First Class to the rank of Specialist.

Although almost everyone in a tribal community knows everyone else, the chances of notoriety outside the reservation are slim. Lori Piestewa, however, was an exception. Her heart, spirit, and undaunted courage made her an icon for Indians and non-Indians alike.

Her tragic passing became a catalyst for beneficial awards and community projects. Within weeks after her death, a grassroots movement among Indians from tribal nations across North America created a clamor to change the name of Arizona's "Squaw Peak" to "Piestewa Peak." The tremendous outpouring of native support for the name change prompted then-governor Janet Napolitano to push the Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names to abandon the usual five-year waiting period and make the change immediately. It was a controversial move, but the U.S. Board on Geographic Names finally sanctioned the change April 10, 2008. Most Native Americans saw it as a huge victory.

Piestewa has been memorialized at the Mount Soledad Veteran's Memorial in California; at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico where a tree was planted in her honor; and at Fort Bliss, Texas. She was also featured in an exhibit at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, at Arlington National Cemetery. In 2003, the National Indian Gaming Association received over \$85,000 in pledges for the Lori Piestewa Memorial Fund, a fund to benefit her children.

Finally, in 2003, Grand Canyon State Games announced its inaugural Lori Piestewa National Native American Games, stating, "Lori's passion for sports will be emblematic of the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment the participants will put forth in this competition." According to the Arizona Sports Council, the Games are affiliated with 47 other state games throughout the United States and are sanctioned by the U.S. Olympic Committee through the National Congress of State Games. In 2010, over 30,000 Arizonans participated, making it the largest Native American athletic gathering in the nation.



This past March 23, friends and fellow veterans gathered at Piestewa Peak to honor Lori's memory and the sacrifices of all fallen soldiers at an 8th Annual Sunrise Ceremony. In an interview posted on the Jessica Lynch Forum, Lori's brother Wayland expressed awe over his sister's notoriety. "My parents have been visiting

tribes all over the nation since Lori's death and Piestewa Peak is a symbol of honor and pride among all Indian peoples."

In 2007, Lori's father, told the Arizona Republic, "The Hopi believe that once you go on your journey, you don't look back." Still, there can be no denying that Lori Piestewa left an indelible mark on the world she left behind.

## Native American Code Talkers

A **code talker** was a person employed by the military during wartime to utilize a little-known language as a means of secret communication. The term is now usually associated with United States service members during the world wars who used their knowledge of Native American languages as a basis to transmit coded messages. In particular, there were approximately 400 to 500 Native Americans in the United States Marine Corps whose primary job was to transmit secret tactical messages. Code talkers transmitted messages over military telephone or radio communications nets using formally or informally developed codes built upon their native languages. The code talkers improved the speed of encryption and decryption of communications in front line operations during World War II.

There were two code types used during World War II. Type one codes were formally developed based on the languages of the Comanche, Hopi, Meskwaki, and Navajo peoples. They used words from their languages for each letter of the English alphabet. Messages could be encoded and decoded by using a simple substitution cipher where the ciphertext was the native language word. Type two code was informal and directly translated from English into the native language. If there was no word in the native language to describe a military word, code talkers used descriptive words. For example, the Navajo did not have a word for *submarine*, so they translated it to *iron fish*.

The name *code talkers* is strongly associated with bilingual Navajo speakers specially recruited during World War II by the US Marine Corps to serve in their standard communications units of the Pacific theater. Code talking, however, was pioneered by the Cherokee and Choctaw peoples during World War I.

Other Native American code talkers were deployed by the United States Army during World War II, including Lakota, Meskwaki, Mohawk, Comanche, Tlingit, Hopi, Cree and Crow soldiers; they served in the Pacific, North African, and European theaters.

