

National Native American Hall of Fame  
2018 Inductee

**WILMA MANKILLER**  
**CHEROKEE NATION**



**GOVERNMENT  
TRIBAL CHIEF**

## Two 50-minute class periods

This lesson is best suited to grades 8-12 but can be applied to grades 4-8 in simplified form.

By Shane Doyle, EdD

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

### **English, Writing, Literacy, Sociology, Government, 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

Who is Wilma Mankiller?

The impact Wilma Mankiller had on tribal leadership by women.

The significance of Mankiller's lifework.

What is leadership?

How to evaluate examples of leadership.

How to practice leadership.



*Wilma Mankiller reads to young students Image Courtesy Wilma Mankiller Foundation*

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Who is Wilma Mankiller?

How did her life experiences lead her to a sense of purpose and vision for her life's work?

What life experiences have you had that have made you passionately about something?

Do we have an obligation to work toward change when we are unhappy with the things happening around us?

Do you see yourself as an advocate? Who benefits from your advocacy?

Do you have agency and the capacity for leadership?

What traits from the list of Hall of Fame eligibility criteria did you recognize in Wilma Mankiller? Can you provide examples of where or how these traits were demonstrated?



*(L to R) Wilma Mankiller sworn in as Chief of the Cherokee Nation on December 14, 1985;  
Wilma Mankiller with Cherokee Tribal Seal in background*

## **STUDENT OBJECTIVES**

**Students will be able to**

Identify some of the key events in Wilma Mankiller's work.

Understand the life events that influenced Wilma Mankiller's vision and work.

Examine events in their own lives that have inspired passion or vision to lead others.

Identify important actions they can take as a leader.

Define an area where they can practice leadership and evaluate their leadership capabilities and growth as a leader.

## ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

### Suggested Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Active listening through note taking

Class discussion

### Culminating Performance Assessment of Learning Outcomes

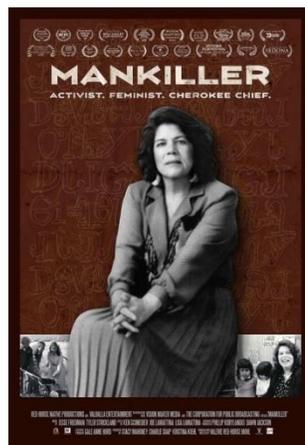
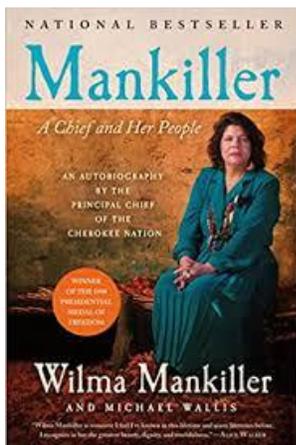
Leadership practice and personal reflection

## LEARNING MAP

## ENTRY QUESTIONS

Is anyone familiar with Wilma Mankiller?

**MATERIALS** Computer and internet access or printed copies of the materials listed below.



(L to R) Wilma Mankiller autobiography "Chief of Her People"

Wilma Mankiller documentary "Mankiller"

## LEARNING MODALITIES

Auditory

Visual

## SITUATED PRACTICE

Introduce the students to the Cherokee activist, social worker, community builder, and Chief, Wilma Mankiller. Allow students to gather in small groups to read the following interview with Valerie Red-Horse Mohl, producer of the documentary film, *Mankiller*.

<https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/mankiller-activist-feminist-choerokee-chief>

## OVERT INSTRUCTION

To gain more context for Wilma Mankiller’s work and our coming discussion, the class should watch the PBS documentary segments below (or watch the full documentary if a copy is available to the teacher):

<https://www.pbs.org/video/official-trailer-2upa36/>

<https://www.pbs.org/video/young-wilma-san-francisco-05bmmr/>

<https://www.pbs.org/video/across-aisle-b5ab05/> <https://www.pbs.org/video/bell-water-project-u3ln8z/>

Wilma Mankiller was known and respected by many as a great leader. Following the screening of this film, examine the concept of “servant leadership.” What makes them different?

**A good leader is one who:**

- **Values diverse opinions.**

A good leader values everyone’s contributions and regularly seeks out opinions. If you must parrot back the leader’s opinion, you are not in a servant-led organization.

- **Cultivates a culture of trust.**

People do not meet at the water cooler to gossip. Pocket vetoes are rejected.

- **Develops other leaders.**

The replication factor is so important. It means teaching others to lead, providing opportunities for growth and demonstrating by example. That means the leader is not always leading, but instead giving up power and deputizing others to lead.

- **Helps people with life issues** (not just work issues).

It is important to offer opportunities for personal development beyond the job. Let's say you run a company program to lose weight, or lower personal debt, or a class on etiquette. None of these may help an immediate corporate need, but each may be important.

- **Encourages.**

The hallmark of a good leader is encouragement. And a true leader says, "Let's go do it," not, "You go do it."

- **Sells instead of tells.**

A true leader is the opposite of a dictator. It's a style all about persuading, not commanding.

- **Thinks "you," not "me."**

Traditionally, there's a selfless quality about Native American leaders. Someone who is thinking only, "How does this benefit me?" is disqualified.

- **A Leader Thinks long-term.**

A true leader is thinking about the next generation, the next leader, the next opportunity. That means a tradeoff between what's important today versus tomorrow and making choices to benefit the future.

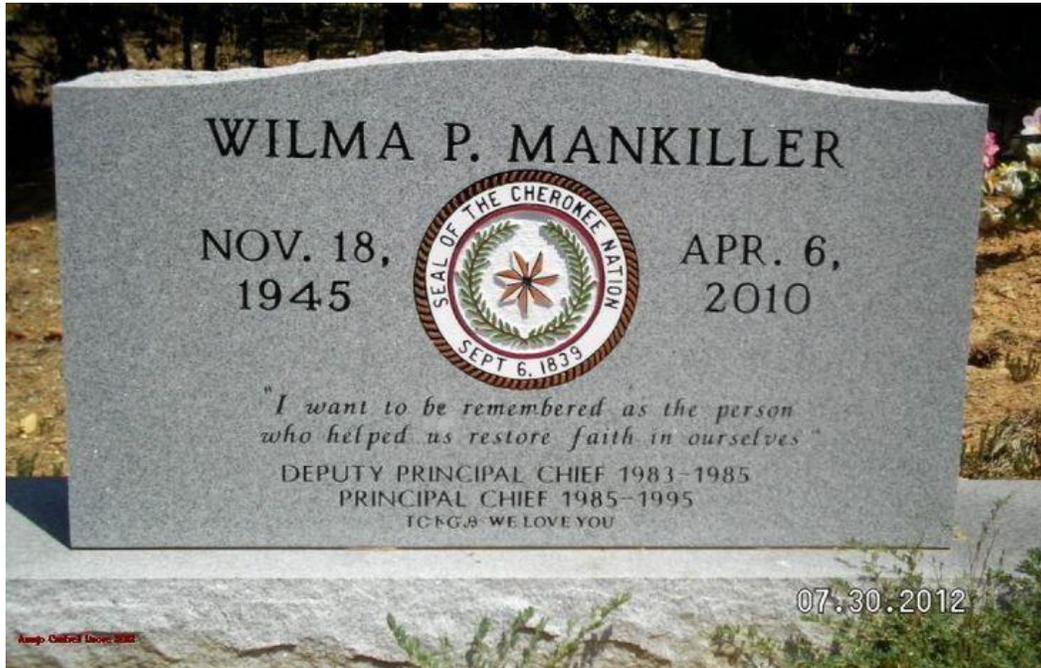
- **Acts with humility.**

The leader doesn't wear a title as a way to show who's in charge, doesn't think he or she is better than everyone else, and acts in a way to care for others. She/ he may, in fact, pick up the trash, or clean up a table. Setting an example of service, the leader understands that it is not about the leader, but about others.

In small groups allow students to discuss the following: I think \_\_\_\_\_ is a good example of leadership in our school... because....

## TRANSFORMED PRACTICE

Wilma Mankiller said, “I want to be remembered as the person who helped us restore faith in ourselves.” She got there by being a great leader. This is the legacy she left behind.



Considering the nine qualities of leaders, your assignment today is to look for opportunities to be a leader (this is possible even in small ways). Find at least 3 opportunities to demonstrate leadership. When we return to class tomorrow each of you will use your journals to write a reflection about your experience.

During class the next day ask students to record the following in their journals and write a reflection on their experiences.

1. What were the leadership actions you took?
2. Which qualities of native leaders did you demonstrate?
3. What was the outcome of practicing leadership? How did others respond? How did taking these actions make you feel? What were you able to accomplish?
4. What plans do you have for future leadership? What opportunities do you see in your daily life where you could exercise more leadership?

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

Struggling learners may need to select fewer key questions to answer in their reflection.. Students may also submit their leadership reflection as an audio or video submission if writing is a challenge or move from an audio recording of their thoughts and ideas into a written document supported by their verbal notes. Advanced learners could research the work of other Native leaders and present this work to the class as a means of informing their peers of inspiring examples to emulate. They could also adopt long-term leadership goals and evaluate their personal demonstration of the key qualities as they track their growth as a leader.

