

## “What was the purpose of American Indian Boarding Schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879-1918)?”

An inquiry lesson into the purpose and impacts of American Indian Boarding Schools around the turn of the century, in the United States.

### I. Brief Overview –

In this lesson students will work with primary sources to determine the purpose of the American Indian Boarding Schools, specifically the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. They will then develop a thesis about this topic, and support it with evidence from the primary sources.

Often in U.S. History curriculum, American Indian history is studied as a precursor to U.S. history, and the histories of Native people are not extended into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is important for students to understand the continued experienced of American Indian people in this country. The forced assimilation of Native children is an important chapter in understanding the government’s war on American Indians, and American Indian survival.

### II. Before You Teach

- Be sure that students understand what primary sources are.
- Be sure that students understand that this time period comes after the “Indian Wars”.

### III. Lesson in Brief

#### Time frame:

- 2 class periods

#### Lesson Steps:

1. Timeline of Native American history activity
2. Introduce focus question
3. Look at source 1 together and fill out chart together (on overhead)
4. Students work in groups to look at sources 2-4 together and fill out chart
5. Students develop thesis, write paragraph
6. Students complete “Thinking About Impact” section of handout

#### List of Sources:

1. Sun Elk, Taos Pueblo, 1890  
[http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/13\\_04/witness.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/13_04/witness.shtml)
2. Photographs of Apache children arriving at Carlisle, and 4 months later. 1886.  
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/printable/section.asp?id=6>
3. Richard H. Pratt, 1892 <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4929/>
4. Sign at Carlisle Cemetery  
[http://native-americanhistory.suite101.com/article.cfm/carlisle\\_indian\\_school](http://native-americanhistory.suite101.com/article.cfm/carlisle_indian_school)

#### IV. Standards

*OUSD Historical thinking standards*

##### Examining Evidence

1. Students are familiar with a wide range of artifacts, photographs, stories, music, historical maps, and written sources from the periods they are studying. They use these sources to generate questions about the past.
2. Students identify the uses of an artifact. They identify parts of the artifact and how they might contribute to its usefulness. They identify the main subject of a photograph. They identify details in a photograph and explain how they contribute information to the picture. The students understand the meaning of the vocabulary used in written sources and accurately read information from them. They identify the main idea or ideas stated in the source as well as supporting details.

#### California State Standards

#### V. Expanded Lesson

##### 1) Student Question

“What was the purpose of American Indian Boarding Schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879-1918)?”

##### 2) Lesson plan content

###### DAY 1

1. Background Activity: Timeline of Native American History (10 min)
  - a. Draw a timeline across the whiteboard (see below for possible events to include)

##### **Sample Timeline of Native American History pre-1900**

**1492** – Columbus arrives in the Americas. First contact between Europeans and American Indians.

**1600s**- widespread disease introduced by Europeans (eg. Small pox. Perhaps 90% percent of Native population killed over 400 years through 93 epidemics.)

**1803**- After the Louisiana Purchase, President Jefferson hired explorers Lewis and Clarke to travel west. Opened “diplomatic relations” with American Indians.

**1830**- Indian Removal Act of 1830, passed under President Andrew Jackson, forces all tribes to move west of the Mississippi. Trail of Tears- 1838.

**1850s-1890s**—Sioux War (Plains War)—a series of conflicts between federal government and Plains tribes over land. ex: 1876- The Battle of the Little Big Horn- Custer’s Last Stand- Under Sitting Bull’s leadership, Sioux defeat U.S. army

**1851**- Indian Appropriations Act- begins establishment of reservations by executive order. First one in Oklahoma. President Ulysses Grant pursues this policy. Many tribes ignore these orders, and are forcibly moved.

**1850-1875**- Extermination of buffalo limits Plain Indians food supplies and ability to survive

**1877**- Dawes Act- Gives president power to reduce land holding of Indian Nations

- b. Ask students what important events they know of in Native American History and write them onto the timeline
  - c. Ask leading questions to generate student response  
(eg. What happened in 1492? What did many Native Americans die from in the 1600s? What did the Indian Removal Act of 1830 do?)  
See attached Sample Timeline
  - d. As you get towards 1900, there will likely be less the students have heard of.
2. Transition (2 min)
- a. Let students know that they are going to look at an important part of Native American history around the turn of the century. The United States government created boarding schools where they forced American Indian children to attend. Altogether, 100,000 children attended over 500 of these schools in the U.S.. Children were brought from as far as Alaska and Puerto Rico to these boarding schools.
  - b. Write focus question on board: What was the purpose of American Indian Boarding Schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879- 1918)?  
Let students know they will examine some primary sources to find the answer to this question.
4. Modeling Source 1 (10 min)
- a. Pass out packets of sources and charts for analysis
  - b. Put Source 1 on overhead, with chart underneath it
  - c. Read Source 1 aloud and then go through the chart, using student response to fill it out on the overhead
5. Students complete analysis of sources 2-4 in groups (or individually) (25 min)
- a. In their groups, students go through chart and analyze each source, following process we just did on overhead.

## DAY 2

6. Students write thesis and paragraph (15 min)
  - a. Read instructions which follow the chart and complete handout
7. Share out/Discuss (15 min)
8. Fill out "Thinking About Impact" part of handout (10 min)
9. Share out (10 min)

### **Resources- All materials necessary to teach the lesson.**

- Sample Timeline
- Student packet of Primary Sources
- Student packet of Source Analysis
- Teacher packet of Source Analysis Chart (sample answer key)

## Answer Sheet for Focus Question:

What was the purpose of the American Indian Boarding schools, specifically, the Carlisle Indian Industrial school?

	~Author ~Year ~Place	Main Idea of source- In your own words, what does this text mean? How does it answer the focus question?	Quote from the text that is evidence	Analysis and Commentary (sample sentence starters) “This photograph shows...” “This writer suggests...” “This quotation illustrates...”	Personal reactions, thoughts, and questions
Source #1	~Sun Elk ~1890 ~Carlisle, Pennsylvania	The school taught Indians to try to be like white men and to look down on their own people.	“We wore white man’s clothes... We began to say Indians were bad.”	Sun Elk suggests that the Carlisle School was trying to get American Indians to become more like white men and distance themselves from their own people’s ways.	
Source #2	~U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer ~1886 ~Carlisle, Pennsylvania	The children who attended the school changed their appearance. They cut their hair and wore uniforms and shoes.	In the second photo: Their hair is cut short. They have on uniforms. They are wearing shoes.	This photograph shows how the students at Carlisle changed the way the students dressed.	
Source #3	~Richard H. Pratt ~1892	Indians should become like white Americans. They should show they are real men by becoming patriotic and working hard.	“Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.” “Carlisle fills young Indian with the spirit of loyalty to the stars and the stripes...”	The quotation shows how the Carlisle school was intended to make American Indians lose their Indian identity and become loyal to the United States as a country.”	
Source #4	-Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission ~2003 ~Carlisle,	The school was meant to assimilate American Indians. 186 students died while at the school.	“The school was the model or a nationwide system of boarding schools intended to assimilate American Indians into mainstream culture.”	This quotation clearly shows that the purpose of the school was to assimilate American Indian into white American culture.	

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After reading these documents, come up with a tentative thesis to answer the question: What was the purpose of the American Indian Boarding Schools?

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Thesis: *The purpose of the Carlisle Boarding School was to assimilate American Indian children into white American culture.*

Now, what evidence (quotes) from the sources can you use to support your thesis? Write a paragraph supporting your thesis with evidence.

*The American Indian Boarding schools tried to take Indian culture away from the Indians. Sun Elk writes, "We wore white man's clothes and ate white man's food." This writer suggests the school was trying to get Indians to be more like white men and forget their own ways. The founder of the school, Richard H. Pratt states the same purpose, that the school, "fills young Indians with a spirit of loyalty to the stripes and stars." This quotation shows how the school intended to make the American Indians become loyal to the United States government and forget their tribal loyalty. Both these pieces of evidence support the claim the Carlisle School's purpose was to assimilate American Indians. (Note: the concluding sentence speaks to corroboration of evidence.)*

Now that you have a sense of the purpose of this school, speculate on the impact this kind of school had on the children who attended. How might it have affected them? *Various answers are possible.*

What additional evidence would you want to better answer the question about the impact of this kind of schooling? *Various answers are possible.*

Student Materials  
Primary Sources: American Indian “Boarding Schools”

Focus Question:

What was the purpose of American Indian Boarding Schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879-1918)?

Part I - Read the following source documents and use information from the documents to complete the analysis chart that follows.

**Source #1;** Sun Elk, who had been a student at the Carlisle School 7 years prior, writes about his experience.

"They told us that Indian ways were bad. They said we must get 'civilized'....It means 'be like the white man'... And the books told how bad the Indians had been to the white men—burning their towns and killing their women and children. But I had seen white men do that to Indians. We all wore white man's clothes and ate white man's food and went to white man's churches and spoke white man's talk. And so after a while we also began to say Indians were bad. We laughed at our own people..."

-Sun Elk, Taos Pueblo, Carlisle, 1890

**Source #2:** These 2 photographs show a group of Apache children when they arrived at the Carlisle school in 1886, and then 4 months later.



Apache children arriving at Carlisle School, Pennsylvania, 1886



The same group of youth, 4 months later.

**Source #3:** This is an excerpt from a paper written by Richard H. Pratt, founder of the Carlisle School. He read this paper at a convention in 1892.

A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man....

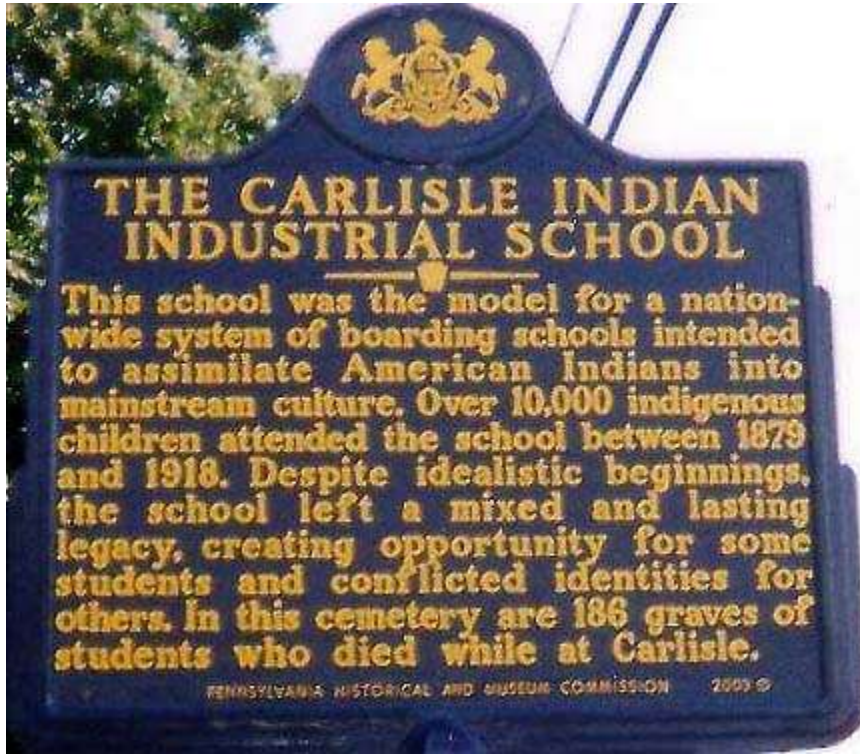
It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like all the rest of us. Left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life. We, left in the surroundings of civilization, grow to possess a civilized language, life, and purpose. Transfer the infant white to the savage surroundings, he will grow to possess a savage language, superstition, and habit. Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit...

Carlisle fills young Indians with the spirit of loyalty to the stars and stripes, and then moves them out into our communities to show by their conduct and ability that the Indian is no different from the white or the colored, that he has the inalienable right to liberty and opportunity that the white and the negro have. Carlisle does not dictate to him what line of life he should fill, so it is an honest one. It says to him that, if he gets his living by the sweat of his brow, and demonstrates to the nation that he is a man, he does more good for his race than hundreds of his fellows who cling to their tribal communistic surroundings. . . .

Richard H. Pratt, founder of the Carlisle School, 1892



**Source #4:** This sign hangs in front of the Carlisle School cemetery. It was erected in 2003 by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.



Marker in front of Carlisle School Cemetery, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

## Primary Source Analysis: American Indian “Boarding Schools”

Focus Question:

What was the purpose of the American Indian Boarding schools, specifically, the Carlisle Indian Industrial school?

	~Author ~Year ~Place	Main Idea of source- In your own words, what does this text mean? How does it answer the focus question?	Quote from the text that is evidence	Analysis and Commentary (sample sentence starters) “This photograph shows...” “This writer suggests...” “This quotation illustrates...”	Personal reactions, thoughts, and questions
Source #1					
Source #2					

	~Author ~Year ~Place	Main Idea of source- In your own words, what does this text mean? How does it answer the focus question?	Quote from the text that is evidence	Analysis and Commentary (sample sentence starters) “This photograph shows...” “This writer suggests...” “This quotation illustrates...”	Personal reactions, thoughts, and questions
Source #3					
Source #4					

After reading these documents, come up with a tentative thesis to answer the question: What was the purpose of the American Indian Boarding Schools?

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now, what evidence (quotes) from the sources can you use to support your thesis?  
Write a paragraph supporting your thesis with evidence.

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What additional evidence would you want to better answer the question about the impact of this kind of schooling?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

