



Classroom Guide for
QUIET HERO:
THE IRA HAYES STORY
 by **S.D. Nelson**

Reading Level

*Reading Level: Grades 4 UP
 Interest Level: Grades 2-8
 Guided Reading Level: P
 Lexile™ Measure: 930

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes

Heroism, Patriotism, Personal Courage, Loyalty, Honor, World War II, Native American History

National Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES: Culture; Individual Development and Identity; Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
LANGUAGE ARTS: Understanding the Human Experience; Multicultural Understanding

Born on the Gila River Indian Reservation in Arizona, Ira Hayes was a bashful boy who never wanted to be the center of attention. At the government-run boarding school he attended, he often felt lonely and out of place. When the United States entered World War II, Hayes joined the Marines to serve his country. He thrived at boot camp and finally felt as if he belonged. Hayes fought honorably on the Pacific front and in 1945 was sent with his battalion to Iwo Jima, a tiny island south of Japan. There he took part in the ferocious fighting to secure the island. On February 23, 1945, Hayes was one of six men who raised the American flag on the summit of Mount Suribachi at the far end of the island. A photographer for the Associated Press, Joe Rosenthal, caught the flag-raising with his camera. Rosenthal's photo became an iconic image of American courage and is one of the best-known war pictures ever taken. The photograph also catapulted Ira Hayes into the role of national hero, a position he felt he hadn't earned. Sadly, he drowned his conflicting feeling in alcohol and died at the age of thirty-two. His

people, the Pima Indians, memorialized and characterized Hayes as “a hero to everyone but himself.”

Background

Iwo Jima, a small island 660 miles (1,062 kilometers) south of Tokyo, became a primary objective of the United States military in 1945. By that time, most of the territory taken by the Japanese earlier in World War II had been recaptured. Because Iwo Jima had two airfields, the island was of great strategic importance. American bombers and the fighter planes that accompanied them could use the air bases on their flights to Japan. The battle to secure the island took thirty-six days of brutal fighting and the loss of thousands of lives, including three of the men who raised the flag with Ira Hayes and who were captured in Joe Rosenthal's photo.

Teaching Tip

You might feature this book in your reading center as part of your observance of Native American Heritage Month in November, and for Veterans Day, which is usually observed on November 11.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

Before introducing the book, share the background information with students. Then you might wish to explore one or more of the following questions to develop context.

1. What does it mean to be patriotic? How do you show patriotism?
2. What does it mean to be a hero? Who are some people you consider heroes?
3. Have you ever been away from your family for more than a day? How did you feel? Why did you feel that way?
4. Have you ever felt shy? Why do you think people sometimes feel this way?
5. How do people show sadness? How might you help someone who is sad?
6. What is a biography? Why are biographies of interest to readers? What biographies have you read?
7. What kinds of things make up a person's life story? Are people always in control of their life stories?

Exploring the Book

Display the book and have students read aloud the title. Ask students why someone might be called a “quiet hero?”

Discuss the characteristics of a biography. What kinds of information are usually included in a biography?

Review the different parts of the book including the title page, author's note, and bibliography.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

Read aloud this quotation from the author: "Real heroes are not perfect, after all. They are human. Let us learn from their mistakes as well as their victories." Ask students to read to find out what the author means by this statement.

Teaching Tip

The book mentions that Ira Hayes suffered from alcoholism. You will want to treat this part of the story with sensitivity as alcoholism is a painful issue for some families and the disease may have personally touched the lives of some of your students.

VOCABULARY

Quiet Hero contains numerous words that may challenge students. It might be helpful to categorize these words under themes so students have a context as they become familiar with them. Let students work in pairs to make up and write sentences using the words to describe events in the book. Below are two themes. Encourage students to find words for other themes found in the book.

Military/War

soldier	boot camp	grenade	regimentation	
tactic	parachute	battalion	private	wounded
base	shell	exploded	hardship	committed
honor	fierce	defense	battle	survivor

Marine Corps War Memorial

sculpting	muscles	monumental	re-create	scale
colossal	bronze	inspiring	glory	gigantic

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, review comprehension, and develop students' understanding of the story. Encourage students to refer back to the text and illustrations to support their responses.

1. How does the author describe Ira's childhood on the reservation?
2. Why did Ira feel out of place at the government boarding school?
3. Why do you think girls were trained to be maids and boys to be laborers?
4. Why do you think students weren't allowed to go home during the year?
5. What prompted the United States to enter World War II?
6. Why did Ira Hayes join the Marine Corps?
7. Why was Ira allowed to train with white soldiers?

8. The author writes: "Other men of color were forced to be cooks or carry supplies." What does this tell you about prejudice in the United States in the 1940s?
9. Why were the months of training "the happiest time of Ira's life?"
10. Why was it important to Ira to be an honorable warrior?
11. Why was Iwo Jima such a key base for the Japanese? Why was the United States so determined to control it?
12. Why did the Americans plant a flag on Mount Suribachi?
13. Why did the American people have such a strong response to Joe Rosenthal's photograph?
14. Why was Ira Hayes uncomfortable being considered a hero?
15. Why did Felix de Weldon create a statue based on the flag-raising photo? How did the statue become part of the Marine Corps Memorial?
16. What are some of the things that Ira Hayes had to overcome in his life? How did these issues affect him?

Literature Circles

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in focusing on the different roles of the group members.

- The **Questioner** might use questions similar to those in the Discussion Question section.
- The **Passage Locator** might look for words that describe the character of Ira Hayes.
- The **Illustrator** might draw pictures of scenes in the story that are not depicted in the book.
- The **Connector** might find other books about World War II heroes.
- The **Summarizer** should provide a brief summary of each section that the group has completed.
- The **Investigator** might research more about the battle of Iwo Jima.

*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: *Getting Started with Literature Circles* by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), *Literature Circles: Voice And Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and *Literature Circles Resource Guide* by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

Reader's Response

Use the following questions or similar ones to help students practice active reading and personalize what they have read. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, essays, or oral discussion.

1. What did you learn about being a hero from this book? What do you think are the major characteristics of a hero?

2. Why is this a sad story as well as a proud story?
3. What role did Ira Hayes's Native American heritage play in his life? What role does your heritage play in your life?
4. The happiest time in Ira Hayes's life was when he was training for the Marine Corps and he felt he belonged. What are some groups to which you belong? How does belonging make you feel?
5. "Uncommon valor was a common virtue." These words appear on the base of the Marine Corps Memorial and were a tribute from Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to the men who fought on Iwo Jima. What did Nimitz mean? Why did he pay this tribute?

Other Writing Activities

You may wish to have students participate in one or more of the following writing activities. Set aside time for students to share and discuss their work.

1. Retell the story of Ira Hayes in a poem.
2. Joe Rosenthal's photo of the Marines raising the American flag won a Pulitzer Prize and is thought to be the most reproduced photo in history. Write a paragraph describing your response to the photo of Ira Hayes and the other flag-raisers.
3. Compare and contrast your childhood with what you know about Ira Hayes's childhood.

ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners or who are learning to speak English as a second language.

1. Read aloud a sentence and have students repeat the sentence after you, pointing to each word as they speak.
2. Make an audiotope of the book and invite students to listen to it as they follow along in the book.
3. Like Ira Hayes, ELL students may feel like outsiders at times. By offering students frequent praise and support, you can help them feel more confident.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas.

Social Studies

1. Help students locate Iwo Jima on a map of the Pacific Ocean. Have them determine how far the island is from Japan, Hawaii, and the mainland United States. Students might also research other islands in the Pacific on which battles were fought during WWII and locate them on the map.

2. Have students locate other places mentioned in the book such as San Diego, Arlington, Phoenix, Pearl Harbor, Sonora Desert, and the Gila River Indian Reservation in Sacaton, Arizona.
3. Remind students that Ira Hayes was a Pima Indian. Have them do research to learn more about the Pima, their history, their traditional way of life, and their current status.
4. Print from the web copies of the commemorative stamp issued in 1945 of the Rosenthal photo (http://www.lapahie.com/lwo_Jima_Stamp_Lg.cfm) and the 2001 Heroes stamp issued in 2002 of a similar scene photographed by Thomas E. Franklin (http://www.usps.com/news/2002/philatelic/sr02_017.htm) in which firefighters raise the United States flag on the wreckage at the World Trade Center towers after the events of September 11, 2001. Use the stamps, or other prints of the photos, to compare the historical events each image commemorates.

Science

Iwo Jima is a volcanic island. Students might research to learn how such islands are formed and how they differ from other islands. Ask students to find out how the geology of Iwo Jima affected how the battle for it was fought.

Math

Provide the following information and then challenge students to find additional statistics to complete the chart. Suggest they use the book *Quiet Hero* and access a Web site such as www.nps.gov for their data.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WAR MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

When Dedicated: 1954

Height of Figures: _____

Height of Flagpole: _____

Height of Base: _____

Overall Height: _____

Amount of Water a Marine Statue's Canteen Would Hold: _____

Overall Weight of Statue: _____

Cost of Statue and Memorial: _____

Art

Students might try designing their own memorials. Their subject might be national or local. Provide pictures of various kinds of memorials for students to observe beforehand, and let them do additional research online to see a variety of memorials that have been built worldwide. Have students draw sketches and decide on the materials they might use. Students can either create small models or draw detailed pictures to show what their memorials would look like. Create an exhibit of students' work complete with labels describing each work and what it honors.

Citizenship

Discuss the significance of the flag in Joe Rosenthal's photo and the Marine Corps Memorial. Talk about what the flag symbolizes and why it is so important to Americans.

Have students make a chart of other important United States symbols to display in the classroom.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

S. D. Nelson is a full-time author and illustrator who lives in Flagstaff, Arizona. He is of Lakota descent and a member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. Nelson attended Moorhead State University in Minnesota. His lifelong interest in Ira Hayes inspired him to tell the story of this American hero for children. In addition to *Quiet Hero: The Ira Hayes Story*, Nelson has illustrated two award-winning books for Lee & Low—*Crazy Horse's Vision*, an ALA Notable Children's Book, and *Jim Thorpe's Bright Path*, winner of the Carter G. Woodson Award. Nelson is also the author and illustrator of several stories inspired by his Lakota heritage, among them *Gift Horse* and *The Star People*.

Book Information

\$8.95, PAPERBACK

ISBN 978-1-60060-427-0

32 pages, 9 x 10-3/4

Reading Level: Grades 4 UP

(Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula)

Interest Level: Grades 2-8

Guided Reading Level: P

Lexile™ Measure: 930

Themes: Heroism, Patriotism, Personal Courage, Loyalty, Honor, World War II, Native American History

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *Quiet Hero* at

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/93/pb/quiet_hero_the_ira_hayes_story

BookTalk with S.D. Nelson on *Quiet Hero*:

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/nelson.mhtml>

Also illustrated by S.D. Nelson

Crazy Horse's Vision:

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/38/hc/crazy_horse_s_vision

Jim Thorpe's Bright Path

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/69/hc/jim_thorpe_s_bright_path

Order Information

On the Web:

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/ordering.mhtml> (general order information)

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/93/pb/quiet_hero_the_ira_hayes_story (secure on-line ordering)

By Phone:

212-779-4400 ext. 25

212-683-1894 fax

By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10016

Copyright © 1997-2009 The Active Learner
Lee & Low Books, all rights reserved.
For questions, comments and/or more information
please contact us at general@leeandlow.com