

Crazy Horse

A lesson plan for lower elementary grade levels

Background Information and useful vocabulary:

Note: *Much of the following information is taken from the author's note in the back of the book, **Crazy Horse's Vision**, by Joseph Bruchac.*

Who is Crazy Horse? He was a courageous Indian Chief from the Lakota Nation.

What is a Lakota? "Many Native peoples of North America call themselves Lakota. They are also sometimes called Sioux. The Lakotas are made up of seven different "sub groups" or nations: the Oglala, Brule, Minniconju, Sans Arc, Blackfoot Lakota, Two Kettles, and Hunkpapa. Crazy horse grew up to be one of the most courageous Lakota leaders.

Where was Crazy Horse born? In the Black Hills, close to the border that divides Wyoming and South Dakota.

******At the time Crazy Horse lived, the Lakota's and other Native people were being forced to give up their way of life. They made treaties, (contracts or promises) with the United States government and those treaties were broken. Indians felt cheated and betrayed. Villages were being attacked without warning. Indians were persistent in trying to defend their lands that they had lived on, grew crops on, and raised a family on, for many years.

Why were white settlers from Europe coming to America? To find a better way of life. They were looking for land to build and raise their family on.

When a Lakota boy is born, he is given a name, but that is not the child's name forever. As the boy grows up, if he performs an act of bravery or an important task, he earns his adult name. Sometimes, a boy's father gives up his name to give to his son. You will read about such a case in the story, **Crazy Horse's Vision**.

Sweat lodge: a place where a spiritual ceremony takes place. A native American may go there to find guidance and healing-both physically and mentally.

Objective: Students will learn about Crazy Horse and be able to state 3 facts about him.

Materials: story book, *Crazy Horse's Vision*, by Joseph Bruchac.
Lined paper (see attached) for students to write 3 factual sentences about Crazy Horse.

Lesson:

- Discuss background information provided at the top of this sheet.
- Read story, *Crazy Horse's Vision*.
- Discuss closure information provided below.
- Brainstorm "facts" that children have learned from the story and information provided.
- Have children write at least 3 facts in complete sentences on the line worksheet attached.

Closure: Inform students that Crazy Horse was killed in Fort Robinson, Ne. in September, 1877, by a soldier. The exact reason that he was killed is still unknown, but it was not in a battle. You can visit Fort Robinson, NE today and learn more about Crazy Horse and other Native American history. Today, Crazy Horse is still remembered by many as a one of the greatest warriors of all time.

Additional resources: book: *Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions & Answers* from the National Museum of the American Indian. Smithsonian Copyright 2007 is a great resource for kid-friendly questions regarding general native American history, culture and tradition.

Lesson Plan Explanation

This lesson plan was designed for lower elementary grades with the intention of introducing Chief Crazy Horse to students. This lesson was designed as an introductory lesson about this warrior chief. The lesson contains general background information to discuss with the student prior to reading the book. The story, along with the author's notes at the back of the book, helps young students get an idea of what a Lakota Indian is, who Crazy Horse was as a boy and the legacy he left long after his death.

I chose Crazy Horse as my subject because he is a hero to his people and displayed characteristics such as compassion, and bravery, among others. These are admirable traits that children would benefit from hearing about. I also thought that young children would be very interested in the Nebraska connection that Crazy Horse had. Some children may be familiar with Fort Robinson, have taken family vacations there, or perhaps have driven through western Nebraska at some point in their lives. Some children may also be familiar with the Black Hills, or traveled in or near South Dakota.

Lastly, I thought that using this particular book and short writing activity for this lesson was, at the very least, an adequate stand-alone lesson. As a teacher, if you have no time for any other Crazy Horse or native lesson, this can give enough general information to peak a student's interest and give them introductory knowledge on the topic. It has also incorporated a writing activity. This writing activity can be manipulated so that it can become more extensive, depending upon the writing skills of the students. It is easily cross curricular so that time spent on the lesson can be justified in multiple ways. This lesson is also designed so that if you choose to spend more time on Native American history, this has only opened the doors to more questions, more discussion and more overall interest in the subject matter. I have included an additional (optional) resource in this lesson so that any teacher can extend this lesson into a longer, more in-depth class discussion/learning experience in their classroom by having a current reference book put together by a reputable source such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.