

Steve Sheinkin Curriculum Guide and Classroom Resources

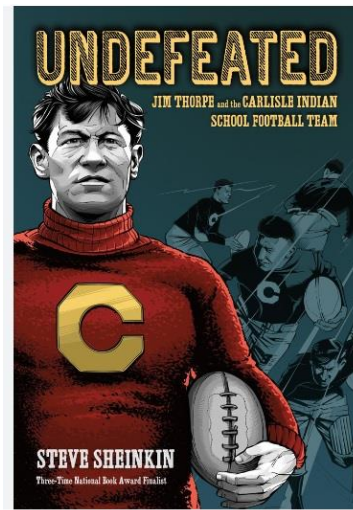
Winner of the 2023 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature –

Steve Sheinkin

Lesson ideas for selected reading: *Undeclared: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team* by Steve Sheinkin

Prepared by Laura Raphael, MA, MLIS, Children's Services Coordinator, Tulsa City-County Library

<http://stevesheinkin.com/>



“Telling it true” doesn’t mean telling it boring – prolific nonfiction writer **Steve Sheinkin** is testament to that. He is the master of writing fast-paced yet detail-rich historical accounts of everything from making the atomic bomb to the adventures of early female pilots to the selected book featured today: *Undeclared*, the story of Oklahoman Jim Thorpe and his adventures in early football at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania in the early 20th century. Topics addressed include football then and now, Indian boarding schools of the late 19th and early 20th century, legendary football coach Pop Warner, President Teddy Roosevelt, and the Olympics!

Background: Steve Sheinkin

See Steve Sheinkin's "Confessions of a Textbook Writer" on his website, explaining his past as a textbook writer and how his later books were designed to make up for this background:

Confessions of a Textbook Writer

If you promise not to get too mad, I'll tell you a secret. I used to write textbooks.

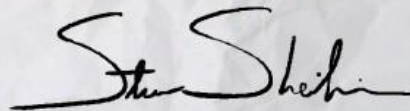
Yes, it's true. I helped write those big books that break your back when you carry them, and put you to sleep when you read them. But let me say one thing in my own defense: I never meant for them to be boring!

I used to spend long days in the library, searching for stories to make my history textbooks fun to read. And I filled up notebooks with good ones—funny, amazing, inspiring, surprising, and disgusting stories. But as you've probably noticed, textbooks are filled with charts, tables, lists, names, dates, review questions... there isn't any room left for the good stuff. In fact, every time I tried to sneak in a cool story, my bosses used to drag me to this dark room in the basement of our building and take turns dropping filing cabinets on my head.

Okay, that's a lie. But they could have fired me, right? And I've got a wife and kids to think about.

So here's what I did: Over the years, I secretly stashed away all the stories I wasn't allowed to use in textbooks. I kept telling myself, "One of these days I'm going to write my own history books! And I'll back them with all the true stories and real quotes that textbooks never tell you!"

Well, now those books finally exist. If you can find it in your heart to forgive my previous crimes, I hope you'll give this book a chance. Thanks for hearing me out.



Other Steve Sheinkin Resources

- **Primary Source Podcast Interview**

<https://theprimarysourcepodcast.podbean.com/e/s2e4-interview-with-steve-sheinkin-author-of-fallout-spies-superbombs-and-the-ultimate-cold-war-showdown/>

- **Author-Fan Face-Off**

Check out these entertaining and educational video series where young fans “face off” with their favorite authors to see who knows the topics of their books better. Steve Sheinkin masterminded the series.

Series on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@AuthorFanFaceoff/playlists>

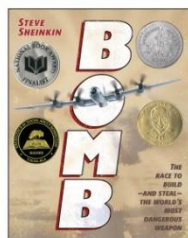
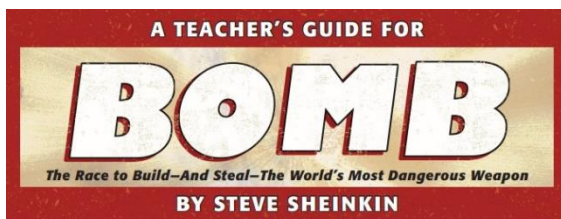
To The Best of Our Knowledge Podcast story: <https://www.wamc.org/the-best-of-our-knowledge/2021-01-14/the-best-of-our-knowledge-1582-the-author-fan-face-off>

Shake Up Remote Lessons with Author-Fan Face-Off

<https://www.nysut.org/resources/all-listing/2021/january/shared-success-author-fan-face-off>

- **Teacher Guides**

Find these teacher guides to *Bomb* and *Port Chicago 50* at <http://stevesheinkin.com/resources/>



Grades 5 to 9; Ages 10 to 14
HC: 9781596434875
eBook: 9781596438613

ABOUT THE BOOK

In December of 1938, a chemist in a German laboratory made a shocking discovery: When placed next to radioactive material, a Uranium atom split in two. That simple discovery launched a scientific race that spanned three continents. In Great Britain and the United States, Soviet spies worked their way into the scientific community; in Norway, a commando force slipped behind enemy lines to attack German heavy-water manufacturing; and deep in the desert, one brilliant group of scientists was hidden away at a remote site at Los Alamos. This is the story of the plotting, the risk-taking, the deceit, and genius that created the world's most formidable weapon. This is the story of the atomic bomb. *Bomb* is the winner of the 2013 Newbery Honor and the Sibert Medal, a YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults finalist, and a 2012 National Book Award finalist for Young People's Literature.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

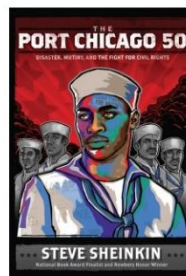
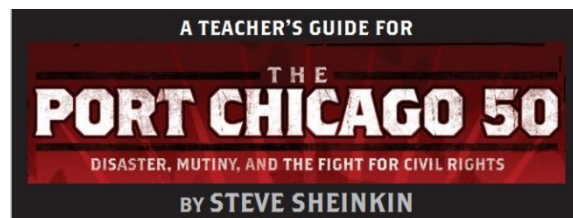
Steve Sheinkin is the award-winning author of several fascinating books on American history. He lives in Saratoga Springs, New York. Visit Steve at his website stevesheinkin.com.

ABOUT THE GUIDE AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS

This guide was created in alignment with the Common Core State Standards. Questions and activities develop skills outlined in Reading Standards for Informational Text and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. In an effort to support educators, reference is made to specific anchor standards where appropriate.



ROARING BOOK PRESS
An imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group
macmillan.com



Grades 5 to 9; Ages 10 to 14
HC: 978-1-59643-796-8
e-Book: 978-1-59643-983-2

ABOUT THE BOOK

On July 17, 1944, a massive explosion rocked the California Navy base at Port Chicago, killing more than 300 sailors who were at the docks, critically injuring off-duty men in their bunks, and shattering windows up to a mile away. On August 9, 244 men refused to go back to work until unsafe and unfair conditions at the docks were addressed. When the dust settled, fifty were charged with mutiny, facing decades in jail and even execution. This is a fascinating story of the prejudice that faced black men and women in America's armed forces during World War II, and a nuanced look at those who gave their lives in service of a country where they lacked the most basic rights.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Sheinkin is the award-winning author of several captivating books on American history and the Newbery Honor Winner and National Book Award Finalist for *Bomb*. He lives in Saratoga Springs, New York. Visit Steve at his website stevesheinkin.com

ABOUT THE GUIDE AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS

The pre- and post-reading activities included herein were written to correlate with the Common Core State Standards. Questions and activities develop skills outlined in Reading Standards for Informational Text and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. A diverse list of supplemental reading materials and a key terms vocabulary list are also included. In an effort to support educators, reference is made to specific anchor standards where appropriate.

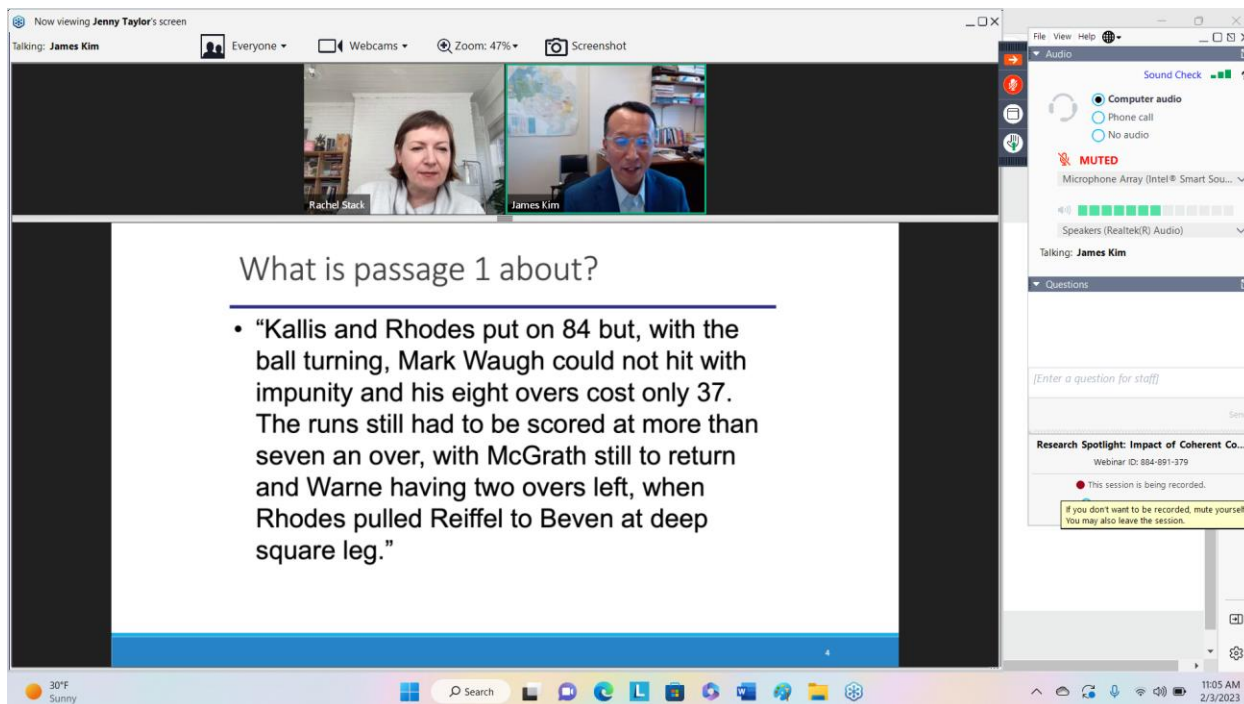


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Lesson: Football Word Skeletons (or Trees, or Webs)

Leading cognitive and education research shows that the more a reader knows about a topic, the higher their comprehension will be in reading a passage about that topic. Interestingly, what is most frequently used to demonstrate this to American educators is comparing the reading of excerpts about the game of cricket with excerpts about the game of football.

[For example, here is a screenshot of a recent reading webinar presented by a Harvard professor of education, using a reading passage about cricket:]



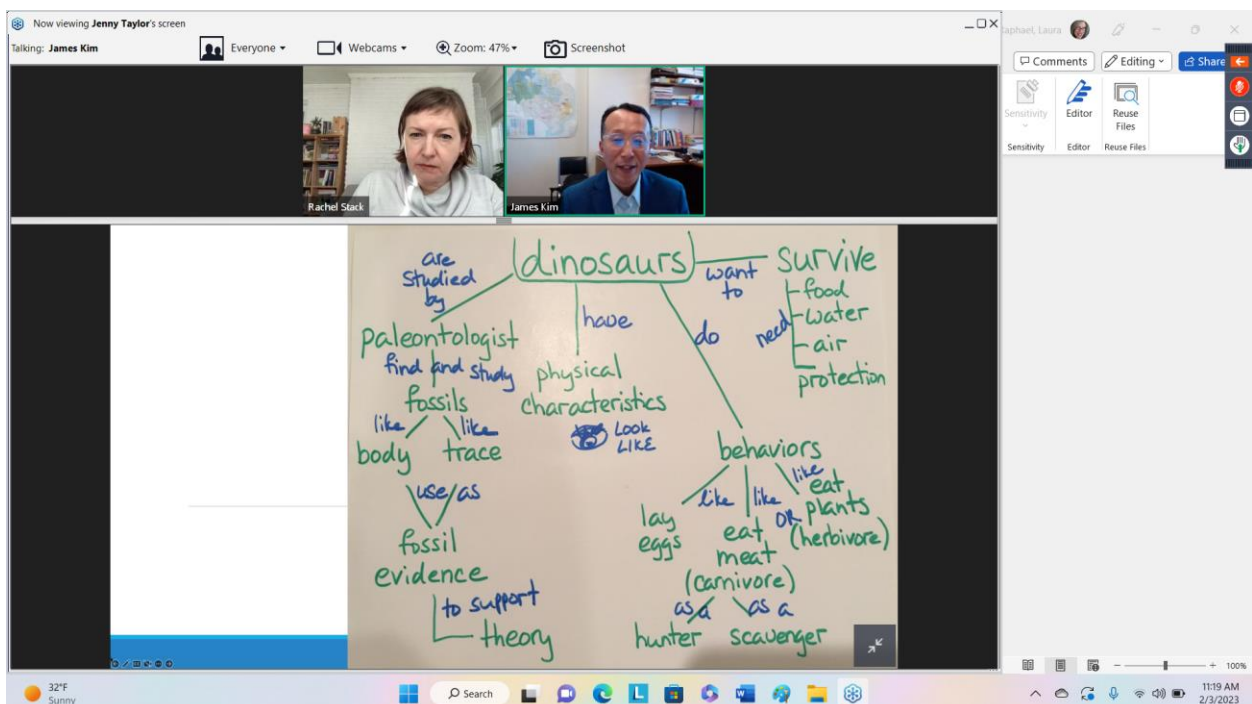
Naturally, American audiences – even those who are not deeply invested in football – tend to know A LOT more about football than cricket and can read football texts much more easily because of this.

In this lesson, you will help students understand this reading phenomenon better, particularly as they read the sections in *Undefeated* about the game of football. You can use this lesson to introduce *Undefeated*, to prime both their motivation to read and their knowledge to help them better read it.

1. Start by having students look at the cover of *Undefeated* and asking: Based on this cover, what is this book going to be about? What topics will it cover?
2. Look at the Table of Contents. What do you notice about what ties the three sections together? [Tryout, First Half, Second Half]
 - a. Answers to #1 and #2 should solicit FOOTBALL, which you can write in the middle of the whiteboard/poster paper.

3. Tell students that this book will be easier to read for them because, as Americans, THEY ARE EXPERTS ON FOOTBALL, whether they realize it or not.
4. You will prove this statement to them by having them create “word skeletons” (or word maps, or word trees – whatever metaphor you like best) related to football.
5. Decide if you want the entire class to brainstorm these word skeletons or if you want them to do it in small groups or as individuals before sharing with the whole class.
6. Set a timer (5-7 minutes) and brainstorm all the words related to football that they know. For example: sport, quarterback, midfield, touchdown.
 - a. Once they get started, they will see how many words they already know!
7. Marvel at how many words they know! “See, you are experts!”
8. The list will be pretty messy and large – now it’s time to start putting some of the words into CATEGORIES, such as: equipment, rules, players, scoring. (Again, decide if you are doing this as a whole class or smaller groups.)
9. Create a new word skeleton that incorporates these categories as branches.

[Here is an example from the same reading webinar from above, with the topic of dinosaurs:]



10. Present the idea that the more they know about a topic, the better they will be able to understand a reading passage (or book!) about that topic. One way to prepare to read a text is to learn more about a topic OR to create word skeletons like this to remember all that they know. The fancy term for this is “activate prior knowledge.”
 - a. You can even give them the cricket example to demonstrate this! Explain that Americans have a harder time with articles about cricket because it’s not a game commonly played here and we tend not to know a lot about it.

11. Tell students again that because they know a lot about football, they will understand and read *Undefeated* better than if they were from England or another country without a strong football culture.
12. Keep the football word skeleton(s) displayed in your classroom for referring to when reading *Undefeated* and its football sections.
13. BONUS: You can do the same lesson with the topic of SCHOOL, which *Undefeated* also has many passages about. Students are experts on school as well! Brainstorming these words into word skeletons and having these up in the classroom might also help their reading of those sections.

Lesson: Calvinball – Create a Game!

In this classic “Calvin and Hobbes” comic strip, the game of “Calvinball” is introduced, with lots of...*interesting*...rules!

1. Start your lesson by sharing this comic strip and loosely listing the “rules” – including, of course, the “only permanent rule” of not playing it the same way twice!



2. Next, read aloud these descriptions of early football and its rules (or lack thereof) in *Undeclared*:

p. 16: [In response to player saying he didn't know anything about how to play football]:

“ ‘Never mind... All you've got to do is keep them from going through you and spoiling the play when we've got the ball. And when they've got the ball, knock the tar out of your man and tackle the runner. Perfectly simple.’ ”

pp.17-18:

“The first American football game between college teams was played on November 6, 1869 on the campus of Rutgers University in New Jersey. A group of twenty-five students came from nearby Princeton University to challenge the Rutgers team. The players took off their hats, jackets, and vests, and, to minimize confusion on the crowded field, the Rutgers students tied scarlet bandanas, pirate-style, over their heads.

“Princeton kicked off, and the first football game was under way. It would be unrecognizable to fans today.

“Basically, it was a chaotic mash-up of soccer and rugby, with all fifty athletes on the field at once.”

pp. 18-19:

“Each play started with the teams lined up, facing each other, the ball on the ground between them. Before the play began, opposing linemen grunted at one another, spat, picked up dirt and threw it in each other's eyes. A lineman on offense snapped the ball to the quarterback, who then tossed it backward to one of the running backs lined up behind him. The man with the ball started forward, and defenders tried to knock him down. Teams could score by carrying the ball across the opponent's goal line, or by kicking it through goalposts at the goal line. The ball itself was bigger and rounder than today's ball, made for tucking under an arm or kicking, not throwing.

“There was no such thing as passing; the forward pass was illegal.

“Modern players memorize binders full of intricately choreographed plays. This was not the sport Warner learned. Early-day football was simple, repetitive, and – believe it or not – much *more* violent than today's game. The typical play involved the ballcarrier plunging headfirst into a tightly packed wall of defenders, while his entire team pushed and pulled him – a “mass play,” as it was called. Some teams even sewed suitcase handles onto the pants of their running backs so teammates could lift and drag ballcarriers through the pile. Defenders dove for the runner's legs or leaped onto his back until he fell to the ground.

“But the play still wasn't over. It wasn't over until the man with the ball quit moving. So while he squirmed and wriggled forward, more defenders piled on, and plays ended in massive,

writhing mounds, inside of which guys would throw elbows and knees, scratch and bite, spit and choke, until the refs could untangle the heap.

“Then, bruised and bleeding, everyone lined up and did it again.”

3. Finally, inspired by this description, use the following form to help students “CREATE YOUR OWN CALVINBALL”!

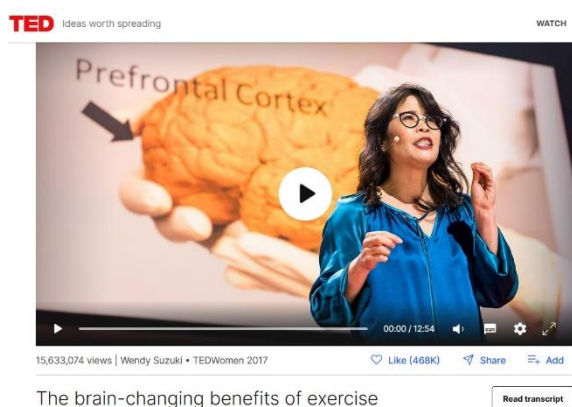
Create Your Own Calvinball!

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What ball or object will you use as a ball?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What space will you use to play the game? Inside? Outside? Amount of room?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What equipment will be needed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the object of the game?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many players? Teams? Players per team?

4. Vote on best games – most creative, strangest, most likely to be played at recess, etc.

Lesson: You Are Jim Thorpe's Teacher. Now What?

1. Introduce the lesson with a statement: "Jim Thorpe was not a good student. But he thrived and excelled in running and movement, particularly outdoors."
2. Read these excerpts from *Undefeated* to support this:
 - About Jim Thorpe as a student, p. 48 of *Undefeated*: while Jim's twin brother Charlie was described "as an excellent student, 'calm, even-tempered, and a natural friend to his school books'," Jim himself "struggled from the start. He shot at flies with rubber bands when he was supposed to be reading. He was a daydreamer and 'an incorrigible youngster,' according to school records, 'uninterested in anything except the outdoor life' and 'always fidgeting to get outdoors.'"
 - About Jim Thorpe's love of movement and the outdoors, from p. 46: " 'I was always of a restless disposition,' [Jim] Thorpe would say, looking back on his childhood. 'I played all the games and played them hard.' ...[Jim and Charlie's] favorite sport was one of their own creation: a free-form, marathon follow-the-leader. Jim always wanted to be the leader. He'd take off running, then climb over a barn, splash through a stream, scramble up a tree, and swing from a high branch to the ground, then start running again. Everyone else – Charlie and six or eight local boys, both Indian and white – had to keep up. Or pay the price. 'Any kid who failed to follow the leader in the various stunts would be put through the familiar slapping machine,' Jim explained. 'This consisted of scampering on hands and knees between the legs of the others in the game, assisted by a brisk paddling.' "
3. The interesting thing is that now we know that movement and exercise is actually GOOD for learning! Share this website overview on "Movement and Learning," from the University of North Carolina: <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/movement-and-learning/>
 - a. You can also play this TED Talk, "The Brain-Changing Benefits of Exercise": https://www.ted.com/talks/wendy_suzuki_the_brain_changing_benefits_of_exercise



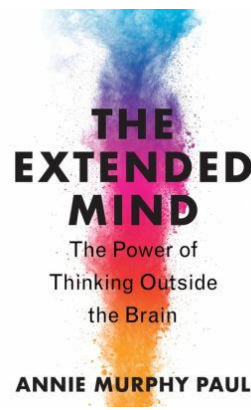
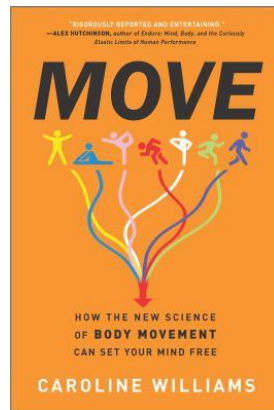
4. Knowing all of this, why do you think Jim Thorpe did not do well in school?
5. If you were Jim Thorpe's teacher, what are some things you would do to use his talents for physical activity and movement in learning?
6. FURTHER: Ask students to choose a topic from the list below (or come up with their own) taught to 3rd grade students (see www.coreknowledge.org or the book "What Your Third Grader Needs To Know" for a more in-depth list of curriculum topics for these grades):

SCIENCE

- I. Investigating Forces
 - A. Forces and Motion
 - B. The Force of Friction
 - C. Predicting Motion
 - D. The Force of Magnetism
- II. Life Cycles, Traits, and Variations
 - A. Organisms Have Life Cycles
 - B. Organisms have Traits
 - C. The Environment Affects Traits
 - D. Advantages of Specific Traits
- III. Habitats and Change
 - A. Living Things and Their Environments
 - B. Ecosystems and Environmental Change
 - C. Evidence of How Organisms and Environments Have Changed Over Time
- IV. Weather and Climate
 - A. Earth's Atmosphere
 - B. Wind: The Movement of Air
 - C. Weather and Climate
 - D. Reducing the Impact of Hazardous Weather

- **Investigating Forces:** Forces and Motion; The Force of Friction; Predicting Motion; The Force of Magnetism
- **Life Cycles, Traits, and Variations:** Organisms Have Life Cycles; Organisms Have Traits; The Environment Affects Traits; Advantages of Specific Traits
- **Habitats and Change:** Living Things and Their Environments; Ecosystems and Environmental Change; Evidence of How Organisms and Environments Have Changed Over Time
- **Weather and Climate:** Earth's Atmosphere; Wind: The Movement of Air; Weather and Climate; Reducing the Impact of Hazardous Weather

7. Create a list of activities that would help teach an aspect of this topic to an 8-year-old Jim Thorpe.
8. Bonus content. If you are interested in this topic, there are a number of recent and related books that discuss "embodied cognition": *Move: How the New Science of Body Movement Can Set Your Mind Free* by Caroline Williams and *The Extended Mind: The Power of Thinking Outside the Brain* by Annie Murphy Paul.



Lesson: Would You Want To Go To This School? (You Think YOU Have It Bad...)

The students of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School worked... A LOT.

p.38:

“[M]ost days at Carlisle were routine – strict, grinding, boring routine.

“Pratt ran his school as a military academy, with every minute of the day accounted for. A bugler woke students at five-thirty, and they marched to exercises before breakfast. At meals, they sat on long benches in the dining hall while school staff watched over them, correcting table manners. Students spent the rest of the morning in the classroom, learning reading, writing, history, and math. Afternoons were for vocational training – which explains the “Industrial” in the school name. The boys learned carpentry, tailoring, printing, baking; girls practiced cooking, canning, sewing, childcare.”

Look at the pictures on p. 39 and the caption: “Pratt wanted his school to be self-sufficient, which meant nearly endless work for both male and female students in workshops, kitchens, and the campus laundry.”

1. After reading/reviewing these details, consult the schedules below, which can be accessed on a digital site with Carlisle documents, here:

<https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/>

Monday		
A. M.		
Rising Bell and Reveille	6.00	
Assembly Call	6.15	
Breakfast Bell.....	First 6.25; Second	6.30
Work Whistle.....	First 7.25; Second	7.30
Physical Culture—Small Boys.....	7.30	
Band Rehearsal.....	7.30	
School Bell.....	First 8.25; Second	8.30
Recall School Bell.....	First 11.30; Second	11.35
Recall Work Whistle.....	11.30	
Assembly Call	11.45	
Dinner Bell.....	First 11.55; Second	12.00
P. M.		
Work Whistle.....	First 12.55; Second	1.00
School Bell.....	First 1.10; Second	1.15
Recall School Bell.....	First 4.00; Second	4.05
Physical Culture—Girls of odd section, Rooms 4, 4½	4.10	
5, 6, and 7	4.10	
Recall Work Whistle	5.00	
Assembly Call	5.15	
Supper Bell.....	First 5.25; Second	5.30
Study Hour (in Quarters).....	First 6.55; Second	7.00
City Pastors' Meetings of all Protestants in Invincible, Standard, and Y. M. C. A. Halls.....	7.00 to	8.00
Catholic Instruction for Girls in Susan's Room.....	7.00 to	8.00
Recall Study-Hour Bell.....	First 8.00; Second	8.05
Physical Culture—Troops A, B, and Band (Boys).....	8.15	
Roll Call and Prayers for Girls.....	8.10	
Lights out for Girls.....	9.00	
Roll Call and Prayers for Small Boys.....	8.45	
Lights out for Small Boys.....	9.00	
Roll Call and Prayers for Large Boys.....	9.05	
Taps, and Lights out	9.30	

Schedule	
DEPARTMENT.	Sep
Blacksmithing	
Carpentry.....	4
Painting and Papering	4½
Leather Work	5
Sheet Metal Work.....	6
Tailoring	7
Printing	8
Engineering	9
Laundry.....	10
Sewing Room.....	
Substi	

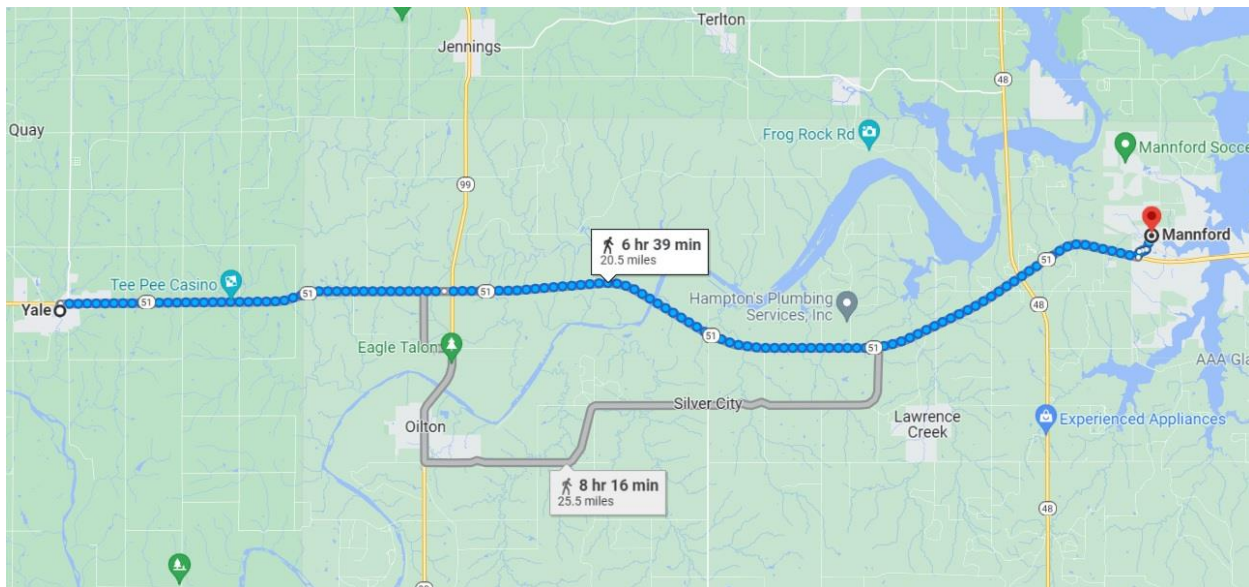
2. Ask students to create a general daily schedule for a student at Carlisle from 6 a.m. until 9:30 p.m.
3. Now create THEIR OWN daily school schedule, from when they wake up until they go to sleep.
4. Read the other sections in *Undefeated* about how Carlisle students were treated. (See “Alien World” pp. 32-40 and “The Carlisle Rut” pp. 62-5.) Another good source can be found in the American Indian Experience database on the library’s website. (See entry for Carlisle School in the Appendix.)
5. Use these notes to brainstorm the following Single Paragraph Outlines. Assign writing the SPOs to individuals, groups, or do as a whole class activity.

Topic sentence: While Carlisle School students learned some skills like sewing and carpentry, overall they were not treated well. [Provide this topic sentence and brainstorm sections about how they were not treated well, below.]	Topic sentence: I would not want to be a student at the Carlisle Indian School for many reasons! [Provide this topic sentence and brainstorm sections, below.]
1. Their hair was cut and clothes taken away.	#1 reason
2. They were forced to give up their languages.	#2 reason
3. They didn’t have any free time but had to work constantly every day.	#3 reason
4. They were cut off from families and deep cultural traditions.	Concluding sentence:
Concluding sentence: [Write together as a class]	

Lesson: Map Jim Thorpe's World

Jim Thorpe ran away from his boarding school. A lot. He walked 23 miles one way from his Sac and Fox Agency School to his home in Yale, Oklahoma.

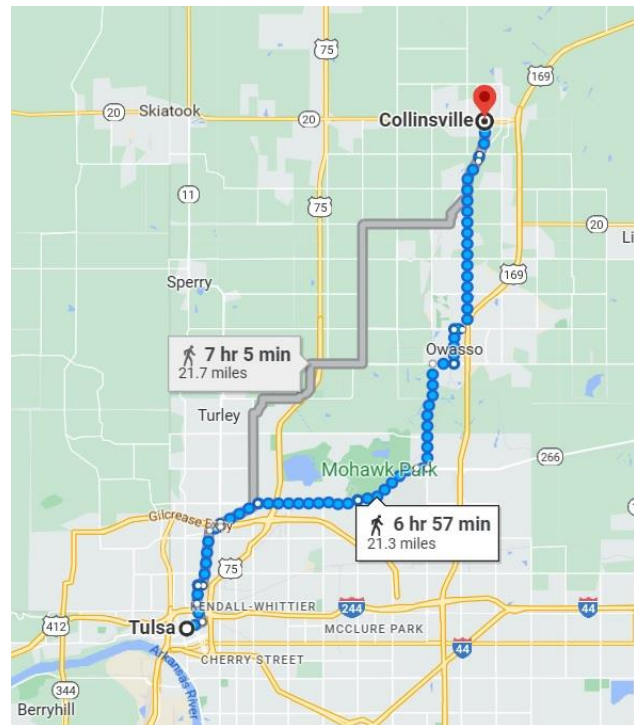
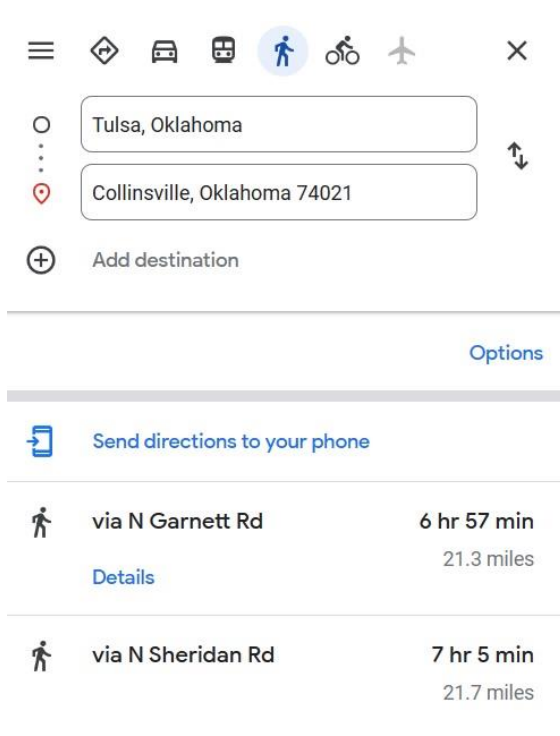
Show students the map from Yale, OK to Mannford, which is almost 23 miles away, on Google Maps, using the "Walk" option to show that it would take between 6 ½ hours and 8 hours to walk this.



After reading the sections about Jim Thorpe's childhood in *Undefeated* and knowing what kind of person he was, ask students to make a list: while Jim Thorpe was on one of his 23-mile walks from school to home (or home to school, after his father made him turn around and go back)...

- 1) What did Jim Thorpe think about?
- 2) What did Jim Thorpe do?
- 3) What did Jim Thorpe plan to do when he finally arrived?

Another Google Maps activity can include finding a viable 23-mile walk from your school or a student's home. For example, it is nearly 23 miles from Tulsa to Collinsville:



Ask students to make a plan for how they would walk this distance today. (They should NOT do the actual walk, just make the plan!) How would they prepare? What would they do to make sure they made it? What would motivate them to make this kind of trek?

BONUS: Could students see if they could walk 23 miles in a week? Could a group of students walk enough in one day to reach 23 miles all together? Challenge smaller groups to “Do the Jim Thorpe Walk” to see who could collectively reach that mileage first.

Lesson: "FOOTBALL MUST GO!" Editorials Then & Now

As long as football has been in existence, there have been those who have spoken against its dangers. Indeed, one state (Georgia) even voted to ban the sport completely in 1897 (the governor overruled and football stayed) while several universities abolished their football programs in 1905.

1. To prepare for this lesson, read aloud or have students read the sections of *Undeclared* that deal with this, including President (and former college football player) Theodore Roosevelt's work to save football:

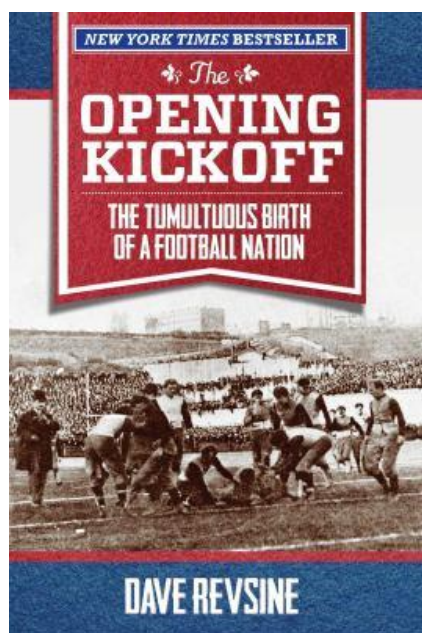
pp. 65-68

pp.105-6

Sheinkin quotes some of the newspaper editorials against football, but a more thorough look can be found in this article, which itself is an excerpt from a longer book.

<https://www.esquire.com/sports/news/a32837/murder-in-that-game-football-history/>

2. Share the article or this particular section quoting 1897 editorials:




"The Georgia press, by and large, supported the measure [to ban football]. One paper called football "inhuman," while the *Columbus Enquirer* wrote that the banishment of the game would be "hailed with delight by thousands in Georgia." In a banner headline, Gammon's hometown paper, the *Rome Tribune*, proclaimed "Football Must Go; Stop the Deadly Game." *The Atlanta Journal* took a similar stand. In an editorial that ran the day after the bill's passage in the senate, the paper concluded that the state had seen enough football "to force the conclusion that it is not a game that should be encouraged." It

continued, "Governor [William Yates] Atkinson will, of course, sign the bill . . . and football matches may be considered a thing of the past." The article said that "football will never become a great American game."


3. After reading this article, as a class, summarize why people wanted to ban football at the time. It might look something like this:

Why Should Football Be Banned?
Players keep dying from playing football.
If not death, other players are frequently injured.
Did we mention people die?
Football distracts college students from the real purpose of school, which is learning.

4. 100+ years later, we're still having some of the same conversations and arguments about football. Share or have students find and share editorials about the dangers of football in contemporary editorials. A few examples are below from various news sources. You can also find several entries in the "Issues & Controversies" database from the library. (Go to www.tulsalibrary.org, select "Research" at the top and then "Databases" – find "Issues & Controversies." You will have to enter your last name and library card number to access the database if you are not in a Tulsa City-County Library location.)



Issues & Controversies



NFL Head Injuries

Is the National Football League (NFL) Doing Enough to Address Head Injuries?

As millions of Americans watched on television, a startling injury put an abrupt end to a Monday night National Football League (NFL) game on January 2, 2023, after 24-year-old...

Recent headlines:

Health

We Know Football Is Dangerous. So Why Are We Still Letting Our Sons Play It?

The latest research reveals how dangerous football is for kids, whose brains are being damaged even without concussions. Parents explain why they're letting their sons play anyway.

ANDREW LAWRENCE PUBLISHED: JUL 10, 2018

<https://www.menshealth.com/health/a21346159/should-kids-play-football/>

We have no idea how dangerous football really is

Is there a scientific case for banning the sport?

BY NICOLE WETSMAN | PUBLISHED FEB 1, 2020 4:10 PM EST

HEALTH

<https://www.popsoci.com/how-dangerous-is-football-cte/>

American football is too dangerous, and it should be abolished

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/04/american-football-is-too-dangerous-and-it-should-be-abolished>

Is football really the most dangerous sport?

Football gets a lot of attention as the riskiest sport. But it's really about the type of injury that players get playing the game.

<https://www.grid.news/story/science/2023/01/06/is-football-really-the-most-dangerous-sport/>

5. Based on these articles, what are the "PROS" and "CONS" for football today?

PROS – why football should stay	CONS – why football should go

6. Compare the above list to the one from earlier editorials.

Lesson Starters: Undeveloped Ideas for *Undeclared*

If you are feeling extra creative, further develop some of these first-draft lesson ideas ("lesson starters") for *Undeclared*:

- **Pop & Jim, Wonder Twins: Life Timelines**

Glenn "Pop" Warner was Jim Thorpe's football coach at the Carlisle School, but despite being born years apart and coming from very different worlds, they shared some remarkable similarities, including working Texas farms – and, of course, football. Have students create timelines of both Pop and Jim, highlighting what they had in common.

- **Letter to the Olympics Committee**

Jim Thorpe won two gold medals in the 1912 Olympics but was embroiled in a scandal that took away his medals. After reading the chapters in *Undeclared* that details this (especially "Brutal Business"), ask students to follow up with more research on attempts to restore Jim Thorpe's medals from the Olympics Committee. (Spoiler alert: the committee finally did the right thing, just a few years ago.) Many people, both famous and not, wrote to the committee to do this. Ask students to write the letter that finally convinced the committee to give Jim Thorpe his rightful place in Olympics history.

- **Football Then & Now Single Paragraph Outline**

Using the Single Paragraph Outline (SPO) as part of The Writing Revolution website (<https://www.thewritingrevolution.org/>), ask students to write a thesis statement and three to four ways that early football was different from how football is played today.

- **Tom Brady: Photographs for History**

Undeclared uses numerous photographs of its hero Jim Thorpe (and others) to supplement the story and add detail and additional information for the reader. Ask students to choose 3 to 5 photographs they would use to illustrate a history about the football player Tom Brady for an audience a hundred years from now, in 2123. Why did they choose these photographs? What would they add to a book about Tom Brady for this future audience?

- **"Football Hair" Advertisements**

Before there were helmets and padding, football players grew out their hair to stay safe on the field. Ask students to come up with other "natural" solutions like this that the players could have used and then to choose one to create a magazine ad selling this to football players.

Book Reviews: *Undeclared*

School Library Journal:

/ Starred Review */* Gr 6 Up—Proclaimed "the greatest all-around athlete in the world" by legendary football coach Glenn "Pop" Warner, Jim Thorpe dominated sports in the early 1900s. His natural athleticism, in tandem with Warner's innovative coaching style, helped establish the Carlisle Indian Industrial School's football program as one of the nation's best, eclipsing perennial gridiron powerhouses Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Despite the fame and attention Carlisle received because of its winning team, a stark reality existed: the cultures of these same young men were being systematically eradicated by the school (e.g., prohibiting students from speaking Native languages, forcing them to cut their hair). Operating under the premise that the "Indian problem" could be solved by stripping students of their cultural identities, Carlisle founder and superintendent Richard Henry Pratt, a U.S. Army captain, vowed to "Kill the Indian; Save the Man" through any means necessary. Sheinkin has created a rich, complex narrative that balances the institutionalized bigotry and racism of the times with the human-interest stories that are often overshadowed by or lost to history. Within this framework, he brings to life the complicated, sometimes contentious relationship between a coach and a star athlete, their rise to glory, and the legacies they left behind. --Audrey Sumser

Kirkus:

/ Starred Review */* Young readers of this biography may be surprised that Jim Thorpe, an athlete they may never have heard of, was once considered "the best athlete on the planet." Most students at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania were shocked by the treatment they received under superintendent Richard Henry Pratt, who believed white American culture was superior and to "help" his students meant to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man." New students were given new names, new clothes, and haircuts and were allowed to speak English only. It was a harsh, alien world, and only a small percentage of students ever graduated. The child of a Sac and Fox/Irish father and Potawatomi/French-Canadian mother, Jim Thorpe grew up in a mix of white and Indian culture and was better prepared than many when he entered Carlisle at the age of 15. Sheinkin weaves complicated threads of history—the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the story of Carlisle, the early days of football, and the dual biographies of Thorpe and his coach Pop Warner—with the narrative skills of a gifted storyteller who never forgets the story in history. He is unflinchingly honest in pointing out the racism in white American culture at large and in football culture, including headlines in the newspapers ("INDIANS OUT TO SCALP THE CADETS"), preferential officiating, and war whoops from the stands. Sheinkin easily draws a parallel in the persisting racism in the names of current football teams, such as the Braves and Redskins, bringing the story directly to modern readers. Superb nonfiction that will entertain as it informs.

Related Titles

If you are looking for accompanying titles for *Undeclared: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team*, these books are a good place to start:

	<p>Fatty Legs by Margaret Pokiak-Fenton and Christy Jordan-Fenton</p> <p>A “powerful and moving account” of a young American Indian girl forced into a boarding school like Carlisle. Set in 30 years after Jim Thorpe’s experiences, the similarities are still striking, and students will be able to draw parallels.</p> <p>“At the school she was stripped of her Native identity and forced to conform in thought and comportment to the ways of the nuns and priests that ran the school. Hard labor in the gardens, laundry, cleaning, and helping in the local hospital all took their toll, but young Margaret was stubborn and clever, managing to find ways to stay strong and true to herself.” [School Library Journal]</p>
	<p>Innovations in Football</p> <p>Why was the forward pass a literal game-changer? How did changing the points for touchdowns impact scores of football games? This nonfiction book goes into further detail about how football started and how it became the game we see today.</p>
	<p>Full-Court Quest: the Girls From Fort Shaw Indian School, Basketball Champions of the World by Linda S. Peavy</p> <p>Like the Carlisle School football team, the girls’ basketball team at Fort Shaw Indian School stunned sports enthusiasts with their athleticism and winning ways – coming home from the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair with a championship trophy.</p>

Appendix: “Carlisle Indian School” Excerpt

You can find this article as well as more resources on the American Indian Experience database at <https://www.tulsalibrary.org/research/databases>

Carlisle Indian Industrial School

The first government-run, off-reservation Native American boarding school was Carlisle Indian Industrial School, which started up in 1879 with 136 students. The school was founded and directed by Col. [Richard Pratt](#) for 24 years, and graduated only 158 students during that time. Pratt was a stern disciplinarian, but believed with all his heart that his Native American students could do anything that other American students could do, if given the proper education. In spite of his refusal to see anything positive in Native cultures, his firm belief in the power of education for Native Americans and the model of Carlisle infused American educational policy for years to come.

Pratt first identified a location for the school, which was an abandoned Army barracks at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Next he had to persuade the government to give it to him for the purpose of establishing a new boarding school for Native Americans. He lobbied Carl Schurz, Secretary of the Interior of the United States, appointed by President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877. Pratt convinced Schurz to support his concept of an Indian boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, reasoning that since the government owned the property but was not using it, and it was not located in [Indian Country](#), so that local white people would carry no prejudice against the Indian students, that it would provide the ideal location. The 27-acre compound contained numerous buildings that would initially provide all the necessary space for a boarding school. The order to give Carlisle to Pratt for his school was finally signed in 1882, and all the necessary approvals were won.

For most of the new Native American students arriving at Carlisle, their arrival and initial treatment were shocking, traumatic experiences which they remembered well for the rest of their lives. Many of the children have memories of entering the school grounds through an archway, and being led into cold, dark, frightening buildings. Boarding school students were lined up, always standing in lines. They lined up for inoculations and health checks. They were issued government regulation clothing, and often required to discard all of their own clothing. Their hair was cut immediately, and fine-combed for lice. They lined up for baths. Family members were separated as the children were assigned dormitories based upon gender and age, with the beds in a line. They lined up for the mess hall, where they were served strange, unappetizing food, and they lined up early each morning for close-order marching drills, divided into companies.

In an obvious effort to strip them of their culture and identity, students were not allowed to speak their native languages or practice any cultural traditions. Then they were given numbers or English names. More than one student compared their initial treatment at boarding schools as being similar to how animals are treated. Daklugie, an Apache from Curriculum guide for *Undeclared* by 2023 Zarrow Award winner Steve Sheinkin – Created by Youth Services Department, Tulsa City-County Library, page 23

Geronimo's band, was sent to Carlisle along with other young Apache prisoners. He recalls his first days at Carlisle: "The next day the torture began. The first thing they did was cut our hair. I had taken my knife from one of my long braids and wrapped it in my blankets, so I didn't lose it. But I lost my hair. And without it how would Ussen recognize me when I went to the Happy Place? The bath wasn't bad. We liked it, but not what followed. While we were bathing our breechclouts were taken, and we were ordered to put on trousers. We'd lost our hair and we'd lost our clothes; with the two we'd lost our identity as Indians."

Most students attended Carlisle for three years, after which they returned home with a trade in order to begin work or furthered their education in a regular public school, if available. This led to an educational program unlike any other in the United States; half of Pratt's program was educational, but at a very basic level, due to the lack of English language skills of the students. The other half of the Carlisle program emphasized Carlisle's establishment as an industrial or trade school. Those Native American students entering Carlisle who did not speak English were not given books, but slates and chalk, and class consisted of naming and writing names representing common objects. Classes continued with basic education; in 1889 Carlisle added a "normal department" for teaching teachers, after students graduated from the 8th grade. The normal department students were used to help teach the entering and younger students.

The school had an elaborate print shop which produced a newspaper, *School News*, as well as the monthly *Red Man* and the weekly *Indian Helper*. These publications were, naturally, in English, and were used to promote Pratt's message of assimilation and for students to encourage each other to use English. Although the use of their native languages was officially prohibited while on campus, this was difficult to enforce and Native language use did occur, based on the flow of articles in Carlisle's publications exhorting students to speak English at all times.

Although the educational program was very basic at Carlisle, the extras were not neglected. Carlisle had a music program with a 30-piece band. During 1892, the Carlisle students in their neat military uniforms, accompanied by their band and a large banner which read "Into Civilization and Citizenship," marched in parades in both Chicago and New York. Pratt was highly aware of the necessity of advertising his program and promoting it in a positive light in order to keep the government funds coming in. Like many other Native American educational programs, Carlisle's burgeoning fame rested primarily upon its sports programs, about which Pratt was quite ambivalent. Although he enjoyed the publicity they garnered, he was concerned about the violence of the sports, especially [football](#), and thought this to be a negative influence on the student body. However, the students wanted to play sports, so Pratt hired the legendary "Pop" Warner as a football coach, and he created a winning team; one which traveled around the country playing and making money for Carlisle and which produced such exemplary athletes as Jim Thorpe.

Currently, there is little left to remind us of Carlisle, other than the large graveyard filled with rows of similar white headstones bearing such names as Fanny Chargingshield, Dora Morning, and Samuel Flying Horse. The 186 headstones also list a tribe and a death date. Just as Carlisle provided a model for future government boarding schools for Native American youth, the pernicious health issues which plagued Carlisle continued to take too large a toll of student lives at all of the boarding schools. The students faced diseases that their immune systems were not prepared to handle. Brought to Pennsylvania from many different places and confined in crowded dormitories, sharing meals in mess halls, and sharing towels and musical instruments, it is no wonder that diseases swept through the student populations. In addition to periodic influenza outbreaks, the most common diseases in the boarding schools were trachoma, an infectious and painful eye disease, and most especially, tuberculosis.

Once the government saw and approved of the Carlisle model, government funds were used to establish similar off-reservation boarding schools, although none was located so far east as Carlisle. Government funds began to dry up for mission-based schools located on [reservations](#), although ultimately the privately-funded [mission schools](#) often became elementary schools feeding into regional government boarding schools, which offered a high school curriculum. Carlisle became a model and an icon for boarding schools.

In the late 19th century, Col. Pratt's enthusiastic embrace of complete assimilation as a policy for Native American education, once popular, was becoming less so, and his supporters decreased as his detractors increased. In 1904, he addressed the New York Minister's Conference, publicly advocating the destruction of the Indian Bureau, and was dismissed. After Pratt left Carlisle, he was replaced by one of the career bureaucrats he disliked so much, and the athletic program was emphasized to the detriment of the school. In 1913, the students petitioned the government to investigate conditions at the school, and corruption in the school's athletic program was exposed. Another new superintendent was appointed, who let discipline lapse, so that runaways and expulsion of pregnant girls became more common. Finally, using World War I needs as a pretext, Carlisle was closed forever in 1918 and returned to its original use as an army facility.

Mary A. Stout

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Appendix: Single Paragraph Outline

Find this and other writing templates at <https://www.thewritingrevolution.org/>



Single-Paragraph Outline

Name: _____ Date: _____

T.S.

1.

2.

3.

4.

C.S.
