



About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Historical Page Count: 24 Word Count: 2,417

Book Summary

The Cheyennes, written as fiction and based on historical events, tells about a group of people who lived in an area of the United States many years ago. The story focuses on the life of Black Bird, a boy who grew up as a Cheyenne, one of many Native American tribes. With a band of Sioux, another Native American tribe, they fought to preserve their way of life—a struggle that eventually forced the Cheyennes to live a very different way of life. Illustrations, nonfiction features, photos, and maps support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Retell

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of retelling to understand and remember text
- Sequence events
- Identify and understand comma usage
- Identify similes

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Cheyennes* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Sequence events, commas, similes worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:

Story Critical: *astonishment* (n.), *ceded* (v.), *chaos* (n.), *ordeal* (n.), *reservations* (n.), *sovereignty* (n.)

Enrichment: *awe* (n.), *bluffs* (n.), *brutal* (adj.), *catapulted* (v.), *commotion* (n.), *destitute* (adj.), *determined* (adj.), *dismounted* (v.), *infinite* (adj.), *pemmican* (n.), *shaman* (n.), *silhouetted* (v.), *solstice* (n.), *sweat lodge* (n.), *trance* (n.), *wisdom* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the phrase *Native Americans* on the board and invite students to share what they know about this term. Explain that it is the name of a broad group of people and that there is a huge number of smaller groups that belong to this general group of people.
- Explain to students that when discussing Native Americans it is important to know that there were thousands of Native American groups and each had its own traditions.

- Explain to students that there was a period in the history of the United States when Native American groups were involved in fierce battles with white settlers. The fights usually were over Native American land. Native American people had to fight to try to keep the land that had always been theirs. Eventually, they were forced from their homes and land, and made to live on reservations or conform to the ways of the white settlers.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- Point out that *The Cheyennes* is a fictional book. Discuss with students that while the book is a work of fiction, it is based on actual facts and events. It is considered *historical fiction* because it is written around historical facts. Ask students to name other books they have read that are historical fiction.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Retell**

- Explain to students that good readers stop every now and then to retell in their mind what is happening in a book. This helps them understand and remember what they read.
- Remind students that when someone retells something, he or she tells the most important details of a story or event. It is common for people to retell what they did over the weekend when they return to work or school on Monday. It is also common for people to tell someone about a movie, television show, or sporting event they watched or attended. Ask students to offer suggestions of times when they have either heard or given a retelling of something.
- Model retelling by telling about a recent weekend.
Think-aloud: *Last weekend, I had family visit from out of town. I took them to the art museum on Friday night. On Saturday, we visited the zoo and had lunch at my favorite restaurant. On Sunday, we had a picnic at the park.* Explain to students that the retelling included the most important details needed for them to know what happened over the weekend.
- Explain to students that as they read *The Cheyennes*, they will better understand and follow the main idea of the story if they stop as they read to retell in their mind what is happening.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Sequence events**

- Remind students that the order in which something happens is called the *sequence of events*. Ask: *When might it be important to tell something in a certain order?* (following directions, cooking instructions, writing a paper, and so on).
- Discuss with students that sequencing events can be useful when telling about oneself. Lead a discussion about how putting major events that have happened in students' lives in time order can help them to tell their story. Explain that keeping the events in order is important.

- Model how to sequence events by drawing a basic timeline on the board. Explain to students that the left side of the timeline is where the sequence of events begins, and that the events are then written as they happen to the right. Point out that timelines may have dots or hash marks to distinguish where on the line events occur.
Think-aloud: *I will start my timeline on the left with the day I was born. (Include as much of your birthday as you would like.) When I was two years old, my family moved. I will make a hash mark and write that event just a bit down the line. When I was five years old, my sister was born. I will make that mark and write that event to the right. When I was ten, my family took a trip to France for the summer. We visited a castle. I will write that event down. I was on the honor roll and earned trophies in high school while on the tennis team. (Continue adding details specific to your life as you move down the timeline.) When you look at my timeline, you understand some of the events that have taken place in my life. It may help you to know me better.*
- Remind students that *The Cheyennes* is historical fiction and that it tells a story that happened over a period of time. Explain that after they read the book, students will make a similar timeline of events and details they read about in the book.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As you preview the book, ask students to talk about what they see in the illustrations and use the vocabulary they will encounter in the text. Model how to use what they know about Native Americans and life on the Plains and in the West as they preview the illustrations.
- Reinforce new vocabulary by incorporating it into the discussion of the illustrations. For example, on page 4 you might say: *The boy is alone and looks as if he is worried. I wonder why he is alone at night. He may be thinking of the ordeal and troubles he is going through.*
- Model for students the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, point to the word *shaman* on page 4. Model using the familiar word part *man* to read the word. Adding the familiar consonant digraph *sh*, work from the beginning of the word to the end and read the word aloud. Then read the sentence to students and ask if the word *shaman* makes sense.
- Model how students can use the glossary to find a word's meaning. Have them locate the word *shaman* in the glossary. Invite a volunteer to read the definition for *shaman*. Have them compare the definition with how the word is used in the text.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find out about the Cheyennes and the story of Black Bird. Remind them to stop every now and then to retell in their mind what has happened so far, and to try to remember some of the events for the timeline they will make.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 6. Tell them to reread the pages if they finish before everyone else.
- Model retelling the main event of the story so far.
Think-aloud: *The beginning of the story tells of a Cheyenne boy sitting on a rocky hill. He sits alone for two days and two nights. I wonder if he is scared during this time alone. I also wonder if it is hard to sit in one place for that length of time. While he is there, the boy has a vision of a great black bird. The bird speaks to the boy and tells him that he will be a great warrior. The boy then goes back to his village. I wonder what the shaman will say about the vision.*
- **Check for understanding:** Have students share some of the things they thought about as they read the information on the pages so far. Select volunteers to share how they retold this chapter of the story to themselves.

- Introduce and explain the **sequence events worksheet** to students and ask them to identify the main events of the chapter so far. Ask them to record these events on the timeline. Allow volunteers to share what they recorded (boy on hill for two days and two nights, vision of great black bird, boy is told by bird he will be a great warrior).
- Have students read pages 7 through 13. Ask them to add the main events to their timeline. Invite student volunteers to retell the main events from the chapters read (shaman names boy Black Bird, Black Bird watches the buffalo hunt, the Cheyennes refuse to live on the reservation, soldiers attack the village, Black Bird's people go to live with a band of Sioux led by Sitting Bull).
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to stop after each chapter to retell in their mind what they've read. Remind them that after each chapter, they should skim it again and add main events or details to their timeline to record the sequence of events that took place.



Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Have students share how they used the strategy of retelling while reading. Reinforce that retelling in their mind as they read keeps them actively involved in the reading process and helps them understand and remember what they have read.
- **Think-aloud:** *When I came to the end of page 19, I stopped to retell some of the information on pages 17 through 19. Those pages contained many details about the battle at Greasy Grass, or Little Bighorn. I wanted to keep the information clear in my mind so I would understand whatever I was going to read next, so I retold the information to myself in my own words to keep it clear.*
- Check student understanding by inviting them to share places in the text where they stopped and how they retold the information to themselves.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review with students that sequencing events means placing things in order. Point out that timelines are frequently used as tools when telling about historical events. Remind students that while this book is fictional, some of the events are based on historical fact.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in groups and review each other's timelines. Encourage them to work together to ensure that main events are recorded in the proper order. Say: *The timeline should reflect the main events and details from each page or chapter. The completed timeline will provide a summary of the key information in the book.*
- **Independent practice:** Have students skim the book to check that all the important events are listed on their timeline. Suggest that they make any edits they feel are necessary.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you read about Black Bird, a young Cheyenne boy, and the struggle of his people as they fought for the right to live and hunt on the land that had been theirs before the arrival of European settlers. Based on factual information, the author creates a character with whom we can relate and grow to understand, even though we did not live during that time period. One theme of the book is the struggle between individuals and groups. This is an age-old theme and is commonly a focus in other pieces of literature. Where have you seen this theme in writing before? Does this theme of people struggling against one another exist in our world today? Where?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Commas

- Remind students that there are many different ways commas can be used. Four specific ways are with: *introductory words*, *words in a series*, *prepositional phrases*, and *in complex sentences*.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Suddenly the rain poured from the sky.* Select a student to read the sentence aloud. Then circle the word *Suddenly* and explain that this is an introductory word. Explain that introductory words are often used to tell *how* or *when* and are a lead-in to the rest of the sentence. Inform students that a comma is often used after an introductory word. Place a comma after the word *Suddenly* and have the student read the sentence again. Point out that *Suddenly* tells how the rain fell.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Josh Kristy and Sam were in my group.* Ask a volunteer to read it aloud as it is written, without pauses. Ask students to tell what is missing from the sentence to make it read more smoothly (commas). Explain that the names in this sentence represent a series of words, and that commas are used to separate the words in a series. Add commas to rewrite the sentence: *Josh, Kristy, and Sam were in my group.* Have the volunteer reread the sentence using proper pauses.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *At last the boy was rescued.* Have a student read the sentence aloud. Circle the word *At*. Explain that the word *at* is a preposition. *Prepositions* show the relationship of one word in a sentence to another. These words will tell: *where something is (location)*, *where something is going (direction)*, *when something will happen (time)*, or *the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in the sentence (relationship)*. Add the comma after the word *last* and reread the sentence. Ask: *What is the preposition showing? (time)*
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Even though she was tired the girl stayed awake for two days.* Have a student read the sentence aloud. Underline *Even though she was tired* and circle *the girl stayed awake for two days*. Explain that a *complex sentence* contains an independent clause and a dependent clause. If the dependent clause comes at the beginning of a sentence, a comma follows the clause. Add the comma after the word *tired* and reread the sentence. Ask: *What is the dependent clause? (Even though she was tired)*



Check for understanding: Have students turn to page 7. Have a volunteer read the first sentence aloud. (*The next day, the boy went to the shaman's teepee.*) Instruct students to circle the comma. Ask them to determine whether the comma is used after introductory words or to separate words in a series (introductory words). Have students find the third paragraph and read the last sentence. (*The people of the Northern Cheyenne village feasted, sang, and danced well into the night.*) Instruct students to circle the commas. Ask them how the commas are used in this sentence (to separate words in a series).

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [commas worksheet](#).

Word Work: Similes

- Review or explain that similes are comparisons that show how two things are similar. A simile compares one thing to another using the signal word *like* or *as*. Authors use similes to make their writing more vivid and interesting.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Her smile was as bright as the sun.* Underline the signal word *as* (the first one in the sentence) and ask students what two things are being compared (smile/sun).
- Have students turn to page 4 and read the second-to-last sentence: *Now, with his empty belly aching and his throat as dry as the dust on his moccasins, he waited.* Ask students to find the signal word (*as*) and to name the things being compared (throat/dust).
- **Check for understanding:** Repeat the exercise above by having students go on a simile hunt. Have them find the rest of the similes in the story (page 5: *black as the night*; page 7: *as fast as the wind*; page 16: *as numerous as grasshoppers*).

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [similes worksheet](#).

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students practice retelling events to someone at home as they read.

Extend the Reading

Historical Fiction Writing Connection

Have students work in pairs to research a group of people that has struggled for freedom (women, African-Americans, Jews, and so on). Have them write a story based on the facts they find. Allow students to share their stories by placing them in the class library.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Have students use information they gathered in the Writing Connection activity to make a timeline of important events that took place during the time span of their story.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- effectively and accurately retell events during discussion
- accurately sequence events in text orally and on a timeline
- identify comma usage during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify similes in class discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)