

Distance Learning for Middle School

Social Studies Lesson

Instructions: As you read the article below, consider yourself a detective that would like to know more and has an interview planned with the author. In the boxes provided, ask a question spurred by the text you read. You will then reflect on the most important questions you would like to ask. Use the Question Matrix below as a tool to help you create more complex questions.

Question Matrix	Is? Does? Present	Has? Did? Was? Past	Can? Possibility	Should? Opinion	Would? Could? Probability	Will? Prediction	Might? Imagination
What? Event							
Where? Place							
When? Time							
Which? Choice							
Who? Person							
Why? Reason							
How? Meaning							

1 **The History of Taking Away Native Culture at Stewart Indian School**

2 By Alicia Barber, August 26, 2018 (Listen [here](#))

3 Throughout most of American history, federal policies toward American Indians were governed by the belief
4 that native cultures were inferior to the culture of white Euro-Americans. That belief translated into actions
5 ranging from violent military campaigns to the forced removal of native tribes from their ancestral homes to
6 make way for white settlement.

7 By the late 1800s the government began to promote the cultural assimilation of tribal members, with the goal
8 of replacing their traditional beliefs and practices with those of the dominant white society. In order to speed
9 the assimilation process, the Bureau of Indian Affairs began to open off-reservation boarding schools for
10 Indian children. The first was the Carlisle School, founded in Pennsylvania in 1879. By 1902 there were 25
11 Indian boarding schools across the U.S., including the Stewart Indian School, which opened south of Carson
12 City, Nevada in 1890.

13 Many former students have documented their memories of attending Stewart in oral histories that reveal some
14 of the challenges that met them when they first arrived, including, in many cases, learning an entirely new
15 language.

16 “The year was 1926 when I was about nine years old and my first year was in the third grade,” said Hillman
17 Tobey, a former student. “My folks never spoke English, so I never did, either, except when I went to school.
18 But I wasn’t very good at it. When I went to Stewart I had a very difficult time before I could really talk the
19 way the other guys talked.”

20 Families were not allowed to visit the school. Instead, government officials picked the children up and brought
21 them there, where they were stripped of everything that reflected their Indian heritage, dressed in government-
22 issued clothing, and given western-style haircuts. In his interview from, Tobey, who was a Pyramid Lake
23 Paiute, also recalled the school’s military-style regimentation, which included roll calls, lining up for
24 inspection, and endless marching.

25 “One of the things we had to do was drill—drill, like soldiers,” Tobey said. “And we had to wake up to bugle
26 calls, and everything was bugle calls. Sundays was the day for chapel. We had our own Sunday uniforms. We
27 had to polish our shoes and get our uniforms ready to wear for Sunday. Nobody was exempt from that; you
28 had to go.”

29 Christian instruction was just part of the curriculum. And on top of their academic regimen, students were also
30 required to work. Over time, the nature of that work shifted from field labor to more vocational training that
31 could help the students better integrate into towns and cities.

32 “You had to decide what you wanted to do, as far as work was concerned, because half of the time you worked
33 and half of the time, you were in school. I chose carpentry,” Tobey said. “That was good for me, because what
34 knowledge I learned there about carpentry helped me find jobs after I left school.”

35 Starting in the 1930s Indian children were finally allowed to attend mainstream public schools, but many
36 Indian families from throughout the West continued to send their kids to Stewart, which gradually became
37 more supportive of native traditions and transformed into a high school. By the time it closed in 1980, it is
38 estimated that more than 30,000 students from more than 200 tribes had attended the school. Today the
39 grounds are open to the public, with plans well underway to open a permanent museum and cultural center
40 there.

If you could ask the author, Alicia Barber, just one of your questions, which question would you ask her?

What makes this question so important?