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To the Teacher

According to *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*, a report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York (2004, second edition), “High-interest, low-difficulty texts play a significant role in an adolescent literacy program and are critical for fostering the reading skills of struggling readers and the engagement of all students. In addition to using appropriate grade-level textbooks that may already be available in the classroom, it is crucial to have a range of texts in the classroom that link to multiple ability levels and connect to students’ background experiences.”

Biographies about extraordinary people are examples of one such kind of text. The 16 Americans described in this collection should both inspire and reassure students. As students read, your instruction can include approaches that will support not only comprehension, but also learning from passages.

Reading and language arts skills not only enrich students’ academic lives but also their personal lives. The *Extraordinary Americans* series was written to help students gain confidence as readers. The biographies were written to pique students’ interest while engaging their understanding of vocabulary, recalling facts, identifying the main idea, drawing conclusions, and applying knowledge. The added value of reading these biographies is that students will learn about other people and, perhaps, about themselves.

Students will read stories demonstrating that great things are accomplished by everyday people who may have grown up just like them—or maybe even with greater obstacles to overcome. Students will discover that being open to new ideas, working hard, and believing in one’s self make them extraordinary people, too!

Structure of the Book

The Biographies

The collection of stories can be used in many different ways. You may assign passages for independent reading or engage students in choral reading. No matter which strategies you use, each passage contains pages to guide your instruction.

At the end of each passage, you will find a series of questions. The questions are categorized, and you can assign as many as you wish. The purposes of the questions vary:

- **Remembering the Facts:** Questions in this section engage students in a direct comprehension strategy, and require them to recall and find information while keeping track of their own understanding.
- **Understanding the Story:** Questions posed in this section require a higher level of thinking. Students are asked to draw conclusions and make inferences.
- **Getting the Main Idea:** Once again, students are able to stretch their thinking. Questions in this section are fodder for dialog and discussion around the extraordinary individuals and an important point in their lives.
- **Applying What You've Learned:** Proficient readers internalize and use the knowledge that they gain after reading. The question or activity posed allows for students to connect what they have read to their own lives.

In the latter part of the book, there are additional resources to support your instruction.

Vocabulary

A list of key words is included for each biography. The lists can be used in many ways. Assign words for students to define, use them for spelling lessons, and so forth.

Answer Key

An answer key is provided. Responses will likely vary for Getting the Main Idea and Applying What You've Learned questions.

Additional Activities

Extend and enhance students' learning! These suggestions include conducting research, creating visual art, exploring cross-curricular activities, and more.

References

Learn more about each extraordinary person or assign students to discover more on their own. Start with the sources provided.

To the Student

Let me be a free man—free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself—and I will obey every law, or submit to the penalty. Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other, then we will have no more wars. We shall all be alike—brothers of one father and one mother, with one sky above us and one country around us and one government for all.

—Chief Joseph

The lives of many Native Americans have made a difference in America. Writers, artists, scientists, teachers, politicians, ministers, lawyers, doctors, businesspeople, athletes—all have helped make America what it is.

Native Americans can be proud of their heritage. It is a pride all Americans can share. In this book, you will read the stories of 16 of these people:

- Nancy Ward, Beloved Woman of the Cherokee
- Tecumseh, Shawnee warrior and leader
- Sequoyah, Cherokee linguist
- Sacagawea, Shoshone interpreter and guide
- Sitting Bull, Sioux chief and spiritual leader
- Chief Joseph, Nez Percé chief
- Sarah Winnemucca, Paiute Indian rights activist
- Ishi, Yahi survivor and research assistant

- Susan LaFlesche Picotte, Omaha physician
- Jim Thorpe, Sauk and Fox athlete
- Maria Martinez, Pueblo potter
- Annie Dodge Wauneka, Navajo health educator
- N. Scott Momaday, Kiowa poet and writer
- Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Cheyenne U.S. Senator
- Wilma Mankiller, Chief of the Cherokee nation
- Frank C. Dukepoo, Hopi geneticist

The motto on the Great Seal of the United States reads E Pluribus Unum. That is Latin for “Out of many, one.” The United States is made up of many peoples of many races. These peoples have come together to form one nation. Each group has been an important part of American history. I hope you will enjoy reading about 16 Native Americans who have made a difference.

—Nancy Lobb

Frank C. Dukepoo

Hopi Geneticist

Frank C. Dukepoo was a geneticist. He was the first Hopi Indian to earn a doctorate in science. He was also the first Native American geneticist. At the time of his death in 1999, he was one of only six Native Americans in the entire United States who had earned doctorates in a science.

Dukepoo did important studies in the area of genetic defects among Native Americans. But he was equally well known for his work to improve education for Native Americans. He was also known as a crusader for Native American rights.



Frank C. Dukepoo was born in 1943 in First Mesa, Arizona. First Mesa is a village on the Hopi Indian Reservation. He was one of 13 children. His father was a Hopi farmer, and his mother was a homemaker of the Laguna tribe.

Dukepoo was born Pumatuhye Tsi Dukpuh. Tsi Dukpuh is the family name. The words *tsi dukpuh* refer to the sack that is carried by Hopi snake dancers. The snake dancers pray for rain which is needed to help the crops grow. The name Pumatuhye was given to him by his mother when he reached manhood. The word *pumatuhye* means a seedling or first crop.

Growing up in First Mesa, Dukepoo learned the Hopi ways. He also learned about agriculture as he helped his father with the crops. Dukepoo later said that what he learned in the fields gave him the base from which he became a scientist.

He said, “As a kid I really enjoyed watching the process of things growing. . . My father was a first-rate agronomist and a first-rate geneticist.” He went on to explain how his father taught him about different seeds and where to plant them.

Dukepoo went to a white elementary school near Phoenix. No one there could pronounce his name, so he was given the name Frank C. Dukepoo.

As a child, Dukepoo was small. He was often picked on by bullies. But the Hopi way is one of peace. In fact, the word *Hopi* means “peaceful ones.” Dukepoo decided his best bet was to outsmart the bullies in the classroom.

Dukepoo was an excellent student. He won five scholarships to the University of Arizona. But Dukepoo did not make the transition from high school to college well. He spent too much time having fun. When the grades came out at the end of the first semester, he had all D’s and F’s. He lost every one of his scholarships.

Dukepoo had only \$1.65 to his name. He knew that if he wanted to continue in college, he would have to pay his own way. Dukepoo found a job sweeping floors.

Dukepoo began to study hard. He improved his grades to all A’s. Finally, he got his bachelor’s degree. Dukepoo continued going to school. He received a master’s degree and then a doctorate in zoology with a focus on genetics. Dukepoo was the first Hopi and first Native American to earn a doctorate in genetics. He received his doctorate from Arizona State University in 1973.

Genetics is the study of genes. Genes determine the traits that each person has. For example, they determine skin color, eye color, hair color, and so on. A person’s genes are half from his or her father and half from his or her mother.

Dukepoo's main area of study is albinism. People (or animals) with albinism have no pigment (color) in their skin. They are called *albinos*. Albinism runs in families.

People who are albino have white hair. Their eyes are pink or blue with red pupils. Their eyes are very sensitive to light. Sometimes they are visually impaired. They are also more likely to get skin cancer since they have no protective pigment in their skin.

Albinism occurs more often in African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans than it does in whites. About one in every 10,000 white people has albinism. But one of every 227 Hopis is born with it.

The focus of Dukepoo's research was to find the gene that causes albinism. If the gene could be found, a cure might not be far away. He did much work toward mapping the albino gene. His study "Albinism among the Hopi" is now considered a classic paper in genetics. He also made two films about his research.

Dukepoo was a geneticist. This put him in a unique position to understand the effects of genetic studies on various groups of people such as Native Americans. He spoke up for the rights of people being included in genetic studies.

Dukepoo did a lot of work with the Human Genome Diversity Project. The project is a worldwide effort to create a database of genes from people all over the world. Many Native Americans were concerned about being included in the project. Dukepoo served as their spokesperson.

Dukepoo said, "To us (Indians), any part of ourselves is sacred. Scientists say it's just DNA. For an Indian, it is not just DNA. It is a part of a person. It is sacred with deep religious significance. It is part of the essence of a person."

Dukepoo wrote a booklet for scientists. He stated the possible concerns of Native Americans who were subjects in scientific studies

such as the Human Genome Diversity Project. He talked about making Native Americans aware of the purpose of the research in which they are included.

After Dukepoo got his doctorate, he taught at San Diego University. He worked with the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. Later, he began teaching at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. He became director of Indian Education, and finally, a biology professor.

But Dukepoo had not forgotten his roots. He was deeply concerned about the education available to Native American students. He began traveling to reservations and towns where many Native Americans lived. He traveled from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Mexico City. Everywhere he went he saw problems.

He said, “In my travels on the ‘res’ and ‘in town,’ much of what I heard was negative—high unemployment, poor health, death from accidents, suicides, homicides, alcoholism, and high school dropout rates.” Dukepoo wanted to improve the situation, but was not sure where to start.

In 1982, he began the National Native American Honor Society. Membership would be open to any student in fourth grade through graduate school who had earned a 4.0 (all A’s) semester at any time during his or her school career.

The Society honors students who have achieved in school. It encourages students to become fit socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually. The Society’s philosophy is based on traditional Native American values, customs, and traditions. Members are required to do community service.

The Society has received national recognition. It now includes about 2,000 straight-A Native American students from more than 190 schools in the United States and Canada. Dukepoo became known as one of the country’s outstanding motivators of Indian students.

Dukepoo traveled the country speaking about the motivation of Native American youth. He also worked to develop science materials that would be culturally relevant to Native American students. Dukepoo was also an amateur magician. He used his skills to give shows about science called “Mind, Magic, and Motivation.” Dukepoo also trained many teachers to work with Native American students.

Dukepoo was a founding member of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science. He also helped found the American Indian Science and Engineering Society. He hoped that these groups would open more educational opportunities for Native American students.

Dukepoo won many awards for his work. He was awarded the John Hay Whitney Fellowship. He won a Ford Foundation fellowship. He also won the Bo Jack Humanitarian Award and the Iron Eyes Cody Medal of Freedom Award.

In 1995, Dukepoo was named Indian Man of the Year. He was inducted into the Indian Hall of Fame. In 1996, he was named Hopi of the Year. He also received the Lifetime Achievement Award for service to Indian people.

In 1999, Dukepoo died at his home in Flagstaff. He was 56 years old.

Dukepoo was a geneticist who did important studies on albinism, birth defects, and inbreeding among the Hopi. But he will be especially remembered as a tireless crusader for Native American education and an advocate for Native American rights.

Members of the National Native American Honor Society have a pledge. Part of it states: “I promise to become educated and use my education for the benefit of my people. I also promise that as far as I go in education, I will never forget who I am and where I came from.” Frank C. Dukepoo lived this pledge his entire life.

Remembering the Facts

1. As a child, how did Dukepoo learn the attitudes he needed to become a scientist?
2. Why did Dukepoo have to work his way through college?
3. Why did Dukepoo decide to study albinism?
4. What are some characteristics of albinism?
5. Why do some Native Americans object to being part of genetic studies?
6. How did Dukepoo work to protect the rights of Native Americans who were subjects of genetic studies?
7. Why did Dukepoo start the National Native American Honor Society?
8. Name another way Dukepoo has worked to motivate Native American students.

Understanding the Story

9. Why do you think many Native American students living on reservations are not motivated to achieve in school?

10. Why do you think Dukepoo was so successful as a motivator of Native American students and their teachers?

Getting the Main Idea

Why do you think Frank C. Dukepoo is a good role model for young people today?

Applying What You've Learned

Write a paragraph explaining why a child who spends a lot of time outdoors might learn skills that would be important to a scientist.