Culture and Schooling

Tracing the cultural effects of federal boarding school policy

OKH.C.6.2.A "Analyze the effects of federal policy to forcibly assimilate Native children through the establishment of Indian boarding schools (e.g., Riverside Indian School, Chilocco Indian Agricultural School) on Native culture."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two federal boarding school practices, circle a cultural effect of each, and give each practice and its related effect the same number.

What Boarding School Policies Changed

(1) At Riverside Indian School near Anadarko and Chilocco Indian Agricultural School near the Kansas border, federal officials tried to change how Native children lived. Many children were sent to boarding schools far from home, sometimes under pressure or without their families' consent. At school, officials required English and often punished the use of Native languages. School schedules replaced time spent learning from relatives and community elders. These rules did more than change classroom habits. When children could not practice their languages with family and peers, fewer chances remained to pass on stories, place names, and knowledge carried in those languages.

(2) At Chilocco, students studied academic subjects and trained for farm and trade work. Riverside students also combined classroom lessons with job training. Federal leaders presented this training as preparation for life in the wider U.S. economy, but they also used it to push Native children away from community ways of learning and working. At many boarding schools, uniforms, haircuts, and Christian instruction replaced forms of dress and spiritual practice that connected children to their families. These changes did not erase Native cultures, but they could make children feel that valued parts of their identities were unwelcome at school.

(3) The effects continued beyond graduation. Children who spent years away from home sometimes returned with less access to a Native language or to practices they would otherwise have learned from relatives. Separation also interrupted the everyday work of teaching younger generations. Yet students and families did not simply accept federal goals. Some children kept speaking their languages when they could, and families continued sharing traditions across generations. Today, Native communities teach languages and histories that boarding school policies tried to suppress. Their efforts show both the damage caused by forced assimilation and the persistence of cultures the policy failed to destroy.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could requiring English at school affect the passing down of Native knowledge?

2. How did job training at Riverside and Chilocco serve a federal goal beyond preparing students for work?

3. What effect could rules about dress, hair, and religious instruction have on a child's sense of identity?

4. How did time away from home affect cultural learning after students left school, and what limited that effect?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum label about Riverside and Chilocco. Connect two federal boarding school practices to effects on Native cultural learning, describe one way Native people sustained culture, and avoid claiming every child's experience was the same.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.6.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two federal boarding school practices, circle a cultural effect of each, and give each practice and its related effect the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could requiring English at school affect the passing down of Native knowledge?	**It reduced children's chances to practice Native languages and pass on stories, place names, and knowledge carried in those languages.**
2	How did job training at Riverside and Chilocco serve a federal goal beyond preparing students for work?	**Federal leaders used the training to push children away from their communities' ways of learning and working.**
3	What effect could rules about dress, hair, and religious instruction have on a child's sense of identity?	**Those rules could make children feel that parts of their Native identities connected to family were unwelcome at school.**
4	How did time away from home affect cultural learning after students left school, and what limited that effect?	**Some students returned with less access to language or practices learned from relatives. Families continued sharing traditions, and Native communities teach languages and histories today.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Federal boarding schools such as Riverside and Chilocco sought to reshape Native children's lives. Rules requiring English reduced opportunities for children to practice Native languages and pass on stories carried in those languages. Years spent away from relatives also disrupted the daily teaching of community knowledge from one generation to the next. Native families continued sharing traditions, and communities now teach languages and histories that the schools' policies tried to suppress. Students' experiences differed, but these policies threatened cultural learning without destroying Native cultures.

Accept other passage-supported links between a school practice and its cultural effect. Responses should distinguish the federal policy's goals from Native people's varied experiences and continued cultural practices.