Beyond Oklahoma

How achievement can change public expectations

OKH.C.8.6.B "Analyze the influence of Oklahomans in various fields, such as the arts, literature, and sports (e.g., Ralph Ellison, Jim Thorpe, Bill Mauldin, the Five Moons [Indian Ballerinas], Allan Houser, N. Scott Momaday, Reba McIntire, Joy Harjo..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each Oklahoman's name, underline one achievement for each person or group, and put a star beside two sentences that explain how an achievement affected audiences or public expectations.

Oklahomans on National Stages

1. A novel can change whose experiences readers take seriously. Ralph Ellison, born in Oklahoma City, published *Invisible Man* in 1952. Its unnamed Black narrator describes being overlooked by people who refuse to see him as an individual. The novel became a major work of American literature and pushed readers to examine racism beyond individual acts of cruelty. Joy Harjo, a Muscogee writer born in Tulsa, reaches audiences through poetry and music. As U.S. poet laureate from 2019 to 2022, she created *Living Nations, Living Words*, a project that shared Native poets' voices nationwide. Both writers widened the stories Americans could encounter.

2. On a ballet stage, Maria Tallchief challenged expectations through movement rather than words. Born in Fairfax and a member of the Osage Nation, she became New York City Ballet's first prima ballerina. Her performances in ballets choreographed by George Balanchine helped shape the young company's reputation. Tallchief was one of the Five Moons, five Native American ballerinas from Oklahoma who earned international recognition. They were not a single dance company. Their individual careers showed that dancers from Oklahoma and Native communities could lead in a European-rooted art form. Their visibility changed who audiences might imagine as a ballet star.

3. Sports offered another public stage. Jim Thorpe, a member of the Sac and Fox Nation who grew up in Indian Territory, won both the pentathlon and decathlon at the 1912 Olympics. He also played professional baseball and football, showing unusual range across sports. Olympic officials later took away his titles because he had previously been paid for minor-league baseball. The titles were fully restored in 2022. Thorpe's achievements challenged narrow expectations of Native athletes, while the dispute over his titles invites debate about who gets recognized and under what rules. Like the artists, he reached audiences well beyond Oklahoma.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Ellison and Harjo use different kinds of work to widen the stories Americans encountered? Give one detail about each writer.

2. How did Tallchief's achievements challenge expectations about ballet? Use two details from the passage.

3. How does Thorpe's Olympic story show that influence involves both achievement and recognition?

4. Compare how the Five Moons and Thorpe affected public expectations in different fields.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Plan a two-stop school exhibit about two Oklahomans from different fields in the passage. In 75 to 95 words, name your exhibit, give one passage fact about each person, explain why visitors should see the stops in your chosen order, and end with a question for visitors to consider.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond Oklahoma

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.8.6.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each Oklahoman's name, underline one achievement for each person or group, and put a star beside two sentences that explain how an achievement affected audiences or public expectations. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Ellison and Harjo use different kinds of work to widen the stories Americans encountered? Give one detail about each writer.	**Ellison's novel asked readers to examine a Black narrator's experience of being overlooked. Harjo's poetry and music reached audiences, and her *Living Nations, Living Words* project shared Native poets' voices nationwide.**
2	How did Tallchief's achievements challenge expectations about ballet? Use two details from the passage.	**Tallchief, an Osage dancer from Fairfax, became New York City Ballet's first prima ballerina. Her performances helped shape the company's reputation, showing that a Native dancer from Oklahoma could lead in ballet.**
3	How does Thorpe's Olympic story show that influence involves both achievement and recognition?	**Thorpe won two events at the 1912 Olympics, challenging narrow expectations of Native athletes. Officials later took away his titles over earlier minor-league baseball pay, and the titles were fully restored in 2022.**
4	Compare how the Five Moons and Thorpe affected public expectations in different fields.	**The Five Moons' international ballet careers showed that Native dancers from Oklahoma could succeed in a European-rooted art form. Thorpe's Olympic wins challenged narrow expectations of Native athletes in sports.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Exhibit title: Beyond the Expected. At stop one, visitors meet Maria Tallchief, an Osage dancer from Fairfax who became New York City Ballet's first prima ballerina. At stop two, they meet Jim Thorpe, a Sac and Fox athlete who won two events at the 1912 Olympics. I put dance first because ballet may surprise visitors before they reach a more familiar sports story. Together, these careers show how Native Oklahomans changed ideas about who could lead on major stages. Who decides when an achievement receives lasting recognition?

Accept supported interpretations that connect a named achievement to its effect on audiences or public expectations. For the exhibit, check that the two people represent different fields, both facts match the passage, and the order has a clear purpose.