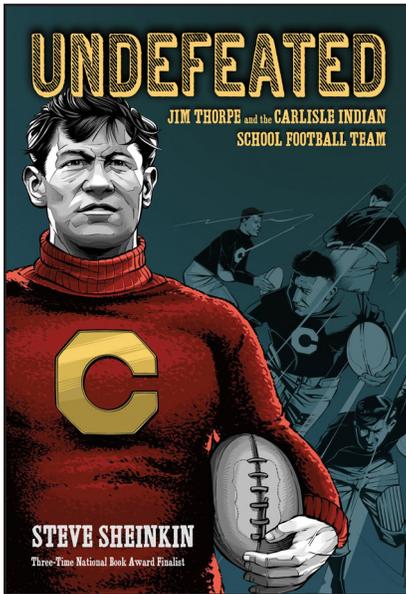


A Teacher's Guide for

UNDEFEATED

JIM THORPE and the CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

FOR
USE WITH
COMMON CORE
STATE
STANDARDS



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Jim Thorpe: Super athlete, Olympic gold medalist, Native American
Pop Warner: Indomitable coach, football mastermind, Ivy League grad

Before these men became legends, they met in 1907 at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, where they forged one of the winningest teams in American football history. Called “the team that invented football,” they took on the best opponents of their day, defeating much more privileged teams such as Harvard and the Army in a series of breathtakingly close calls, genius plays, and bone-crushing hard work. *Undeclared: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team* is an astonishing underdog story—and more. It’s an unflinching look at the U.S. government’s violent persecution of Native Americans and the school that was designed to erase Indian cultures. Expertly told by nonfiction powerhouse author Steve Sheinkin, it’s the story of a group of young men who came together at that school, the overwhelming obstacles they faced both on and off the field, and their absolute refusal to accept defeat.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

STEVE SHEINKIN is the award-winning author of fast-paced, cinematic nonfiction histories for young readers. *The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights* was a National Book Award Finalist and received the 2014 Boston Globe–Horn Book Award for Nonfiction. *The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism & Treachery* won both the Boston Globe–Horn Book Award and the YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults. *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World’s Most Dangerous Weapon* was a Newbery Honor Book, a National Book Award Finalist, and winner of the Sibert Award and the YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults. *Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War* was a National Book Award Finalist and a YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction Finalist for Young Adults. Sheinkin lives in Saratoga Springs, New York, with his wife and two children. Visit him online at stevsheinkin.com.



This guide is aligned with the Common Core Standards. Standards for the sixth grade are noted, but activities can be applied to grades four through eight. To attain specific grade-level standards for their classrooms and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities listed in this guide to their classes’ needs. You know your kids best!



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BEFORE READING

1. Many famous people from history are introduced in *Undeclared* including Black Hawk, Pop Warner, John Heisman, Richard Henry Pratt, Teddy Roosevelt, and Dwight Eisenhower. Have students select one person to research and write a one page narrative about an important moment in their life.

CCSS.W.6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.W.6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

2. “Today Pop Warner is remembered as one of the greatest football coaches of all time . . . But as a boy in the small town of Springville, New York, Glenn Warner did not inspire visions of athletic glory” (p.13). Explain how Pop Warner showcases a Growth Mindset rather than a Fixed Mindset by overcoming his lack of athleticism to become one of the greatest football coaches of all time.

CCSS.RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.RI.6.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

DURING READING

1. Why did Richard Henry Pratt create the Carlisle Indian Industrial School?
2. When students arrived at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, what steps did the school take to strip them of their Native American identities?
3. How was the media biased against the Carlisle Indian Industrial School football team in their coverage? Why were the headlines inaccurate?
4. Describe the most talked about play in the 1896 football season. Do you think the referee accidentally blew the whistle or were his Yale loyalties coming into play?
5. Why did Theodore Roosevelt fight for football’s survival? Use the political cartoon on page 68 and the newspaper article from 1905 to explain your thinking. www.documentcloud.org/documents/1175005-144576144-1.html
6. What was the outcome of the nation’s first East-West Championship game? What impacted the game’s outcome?
7. In the last conversation Jim had with his father, his father said, “Son, you are an Indian . . . I want you to show other races what an Indian can do.” (p.97). How did this conversation change the course of Jim’s life?
8. What did the journalist from the *Washington Post* say about the female student athletes at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School?
9. How did the formation of the NCAA improve the safety of football and change how the game was played?
10. Compare and contrast the challenges faced by Jackie Robinson when he became the first African American in baseball with the Carlisle Indian football team.
11. Most football history books cite a 1913 game between the Army and Notre Dame as the first game with a forward pass. Why is this wrong?
12. Predict why Jim Thorpe said playing summer baseball was “the greatest mistake in my life” (p.135).
13. What is a “soul wound” and how did this impact the students at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School?
14. Why were the Carlisle football players determined to beat the Army football team? How was this event more than a football game for the players?



AFTER READING

1. After researching the Indian Removal Act create a multimedia presentation to share with the class. The presentation should include evidence about the Act and its impact on Native American tribes.

CCSS.SL.6.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

2. Create a Venn diagram comparing football rules when the sport was first created and the rules of football today.

CCSS.RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

CCSS.W.6.1.B Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

3. Steve Sheinkin argues that the attacks against Jim Thorpe and his summer baseball season negating his amateur status for the Olympic Games “would not be happening to a student from Harvard. This would not have been happening to a white American” (218). Explain why you agree or disagree with Sheinkin, citing evidence from the text as well as from additional research.

CCSS.RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.RI.6.2 Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.RI.6.9 Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

4. “Daniel Snyder, owner of the NFL’s Washington Redskins, vows never to change his team’s name. ‘It represents honor,’ he insists, ‘represents respect, represents pride.’” (230). Write a letter to Daniel Snyder either agreeing or disagreeing with his choice to keep the team name of Redskins. Support your claim with relevant evidence from the text and additional research.

CCSS. W.6.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS. W.6.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

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