

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

History Lesson

by Natasha Trethewey

I am four in this photograph, standing
on a wide strip of Mississippi beach,
my hands on the flowered hips

5 of a bright bikini. My toes dig in,
curl around wet sand. The sun cuts
the rippling Gulf in flashes with each

tidal rush. Minnows dart at my feet
glinting like switchblades. I am alone
except for my grandmother, other side

10 of the camera, telling me how to pose.
It is 1970, two years after they opened
the rest of this beach to us,

15 forty years since the photograph
where she stood on a narrow plot
of sand marked *colored*, smiling,

her hands on the flowered hips
of a cotton meal-sack dress.

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17 The poem reflects history by using imagery that contrasts life in Mississippi before and after —

- A** a hurricane
 - B** the Great Depression
 - C** desegregation
 - D** summer
-

18 In lines 7 and 8, the poet uses a simile that has the ironic effect of making the minnows seem —

- F** curious
 - G** threatening
 - H** beautiful
 - J** humorous
-

19 Which of these best states the poem's theme?

- A** Although children may disagree with their elders, family bonds remain strong.
- B** Sentiment is a waste of time and energy.
- C** Progress can be judged only by an impartial observer.
- D** Even in the midst of historic change, some things remain constant.

20 Read these lines from the poem.

I am four in this photograph, standing
on a wide strip of Mississippi beach,
my hands on the flowered hips
of a bright bikini. . . .

In these lines, the poet's tone can best be described as —

- F** nostalgic
- G** strident
- H** apologetic
- J** reverent

21 In lines 14 and 15, the "narrow plot/of sand" can be best interpreted as symbolic of —

- A** the speaker's lack of empathy for her grandmother's situation
- B** the grandmother's restricted opportunities
- C** the grandmother's limited perspective
- D** the speaker's refusal to be bound to the past

22 In line 12, the reader can infer that the speaker uses the pronoun "us" to refer to —

- F** African Americans
- G** the general public
- H** her extended family
- J** young women

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Navajo Code Talkers: The Century's Best-Kept Secret

by Jack Hitt

1 During World War II, on the dramatic day when Marines raised the American flag to signal a key and decisive victory at Iwo Jima, the first word of this momentous news crackled over the radio in odd guttural noises and complex intonations. Throughout the war, the Japanese were repeatedly baffled and infuriated by these seemingly inhuman sounds. They conformed to no linguistic system known to the Japanese. The curious sounds were the military's one form of conveying tactics and strategy that the master cryptographers in Tokyo were unable to decipher. This perfect code was the language of the Navajo tribe. Its application in World War II as a clandestine system of communication was one of the twentieth century's best-kept secrets.



Two Navajo Code Talkers serving with the U.S. Marines in the Solomon Islands send messages during World War II. The Code Talkers created an unbreakable code based on the ancient language of their people, helping save lives and hastening the war's end. In 2001 the Navajo Code Talkers received Congressional Medals of Honor.

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2 After a string of cryptographic failures, the military in 1942 was desperate for a way to open clear lines of communication among troops that would not be easily intercepted by the enemy. In the 1940s there was no such thing as a "secure line." All talk had to go out onto the public airwaves. Standard codes were an option, but the cryptographers in Japan could quickly crack them. And there was another problem: the Japanese were proficient at intercepting short-distance communications, on walkie-talkies for example, and then having well-trained English-speaking soldiers either sabotage the message or send out false commands to set up an ambush. That was the situation in 1942 when the Pentagon authorized one of the boldest gambits of the war.

- 3 The solution was conceived by the son of missionaries to the Navajos, a former Marine named Philip Johnston. His idea: station a native Navajo speaker at every radio. Since Navajo had never been written down or translated into any other language, it was an entirely self-contained human communication system restricted to Navajos alone; it was virtually indecipherable without Navajo help. Without some key or way into a language, translation is virtually impossible. Not long after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the military dispatched twenty-nine Navajos to Camp Elliott and Camp Pendleton in California to begin a test program. These first recruits had to develop a Navajo alphabet since none existed. And because Navajo lacked technical terms of military artillery, the men coined a number of neologisms specific to their task and their war.
- 4 According to Chester Nez, one of the original code talkers: "Everything we used in the code was what we lived with on the reservation every day, like the ants, the birds, bears." Thus, the term for a tank was "turtle," a tank destroyer was "tortoise killer." A battleship was "whale." A hand grenade was "potato," and plain old bombs were "eggs." A fighter plane was "hummingbird," and a torpedo plane "swallow." A sniper was "pick 'em off." Pyrotechnic was "fancy fire."

From the *Navajo Code Talkers' Dictionary* (1945)

Name of Month	Navajo Word	Literal Translation
January	Atsah-be-yaz	Small eagle
February	Woz-cheind	Squeaky voice
March	Tah-chill	Small plant
April	Tah-tso	Big plant
May	Tah-tsosie	Small plant
June	Be-ne-eh-eh-jah-tso	Big planting
July	Be-ne-ta-tsosie	Small harvest
August	Be-noon-ta-tso	Big harvest
September	Ghaw-jih	Half
October	Nil-chi-tsosie	Small wind
November	Nil-chi-tso	Big wind
December	Yas-nil-tes	Crusted snow

Source: Naval History and Heritage Command

- 5 It didn't take long for the original twenty-nine recruits to expand to an elite corps of Marines, numbering at its height 425 Navajo Code Talkers, all from the American Southwest. Each Talker was so valuable, he traveled everywhere with a personal bodyguard. In the event of capture, the Talkers had solemnly agreed to commit suicide rather than allow America's most valuable war code to fall into the hands of the enemy. If a captured Navajo did not follow that grim instruction, the bodyguard's instructions were understood: shoot and kill the Code Talker.

6 The language of the Code Talkers, their mission, and every detail of their messaging apparatus was a secret they were all ordered to keep, even from their own families. They did. It wasn't until 1968, when the military felt convinced that the Code Talkers would not be needed for any future wars, that America learned of the incredible contribution a handful of Native Americans made to winning history's biggest war. The Navajo Code Talkers, sending and receiving as many as 800 errorless messages at fast speed during "the fog of battle," are widely credited with giving U.S. troops the decisive edge at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

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23 Which words from paragraph 1 best help the reader understand the meaning of the word *clandestine*?

- A** *curious sounds*
 - B** *best-kept secrets*
 - C** *linguistic system*
 - D** *tactics and strategy*
-

24 Who first suggested using Navajo for military radio communications?

- F** The son of missionaries
 - G** A Navajo Marine
 - H** A Code Talker
 - J** A communications expert
-

25 The author begins and ends the selection with references to successful battles in order to —

- A** remind readers of the human toll caused by war
- B** indicate that the war would have been lost without the Code Talkers
- C** emphasize the Code Talkers' contribution to the war effort
- D** examine the strengths and weaknesses of different military strategies

26 Read these sentences from paragraph 2.

In the 1940s there was no such thing as a "secure line." All talk had to go out onto the public airwaves.

The author includes this information to —

- F demonstrate technological advances during the twentieth century
- G establish the need for an unbreakable secret code
- H explain why Pearl Harbor was vulnerable to attack
- J question whether the right to free speech should be protected during wartime

27 In paragraph 1, the author mentions "guttural noises and complex intonations" in order to —

- A describe the difficulties of communicating during wartime
- B highlight an important victory during World War II
- C illustrate how frustrated the Japanese were in their attempts to break the code
- D give an idea of what the Navajo code sounded like

28 Which of these best illustrates how much the general public knew about the Navajo code immediately following World War II?

- F *Its application in World War II as a clandestine system of communication was one of the twentieth century's best-kept secrets.*
- G *A hand grenade was "potato," and plain old bombs were "eggs."*
- H *That was the situation in 1942 when the Pentagon authorized one of the boldest gambits of the war.*
- J *Each Talker was so valuable, he traveled everywhere with a personal bodyguard.*

29 Which of these is the best summary of the selection?

- A** Too little credit has been given to the Navajo Code Talkers, who played a decisive role in the American defeat of Japan during World War II. If more people were aware of their contribution, there is no doubt that the Code Talkers would be celebrated and honored throughout the United States.
- B** Navajo-speaking Code Talkers played an important role in the struggle against the Japanese during World War II. Because of the complex and unfamiliar nature of the Navajo language, the Code Talkers were able to broadcast messages over the radio that couldn't be deciphered by the Japanese.
- C** During the early part of World War II, the Japanese were able to figure out any secret code used by the U.S. military. To solve this problem, the Marines created a special alphabet used by Navajo soldiers to send messages the Japanese couldn't decipher.
- D** At the beginning of World War II, the Navajo language was perfect for use as a secret code. It had never been translated into another language, and because it had no alphabet, it had never been written down. The only people who knew the language were native speakers in the United States. Before the language could be used for coded communication, an alphabet and spelling system had to be developed for it.

30 From information included in the table from the *Navajo Code Talkers' Dictionary*, the reader can learn —

- F** how the Code Talkers used Navajo words for military terms
- G** the origins of some English words
- H** the literal translations of several Navajo words
- J** that some Navajo words have their origins in English

31 What is one purpose of the caption accompanying the photograph of the Code Talkers?

- A** It details how the Navajo code was developed.
- B** It offers a brief history of the Code Talkers.
- C** It demonstrates why the Japanese were unable to break the code.
- D** It underscores the unique characteristics of the Navajo language.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

from The Custom of the Country

by Edith Wharton

- 1 In the great high-ceilinged library of a private *hôtel*¹ overlooking one of the new quarters of Paris, Paul Marvell stood listlessly gazing out into the twilight.
- 2 The trees were budding symmetrically along the avenue below; and Paul, looking down, saw, between windows and tree-tops, a pair of tall iron gates with gilt ornaments, the marble curb of a semi-circular drive, and bands of spring flowers set in turf. He was now a big boy of nearly nine, who went to a fashionable private school, and he had come home that day for the Easter holidays. He had not been back since Christmas, and it was the first time he had seen the new *hôtel* which his step-father had bought, and in which Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt had hastily established themselves, a few weeks earlier, on their return from a flying trip to America. They were always coming and going; during the two years since their marriage they had been perpetually dashing over to New York and back, or rushing down to Rome or up to the Engadine: Paul never knew where they were except when a telegram announced that they were going somewhere else. He did not even know that there was any method of communication between mothers and sons less laconic than that of the electric wire; and once, when a boy at school asked him if his mother often wrote, he had answered in all sincerity: "Oh yes—I got a telegram last week."
- 3 He had been almost sure—as sure as he ever was of anything—that he should find her at home when he arrived; but a message (for she hadn't had time to telegraph) apprised him that she and Mr. Moffatt had run down to Deauville to look at a house they thought of hiring for the summer; they were taking an early train back, and would be at home for dinner—were in fact having a lot of people to dine.
- 4 It was just what he ought to have expected, and had been used to ever since he could remember; and generally he didn't mind much, especially since his mother had become Mrs. Moffatt, and the father he had been most used to, and liked best, had abruptly disappeared from his life. But the new *hôtel* was big and strange, and his own room, in which there was not a toy or a book, or one of his dear battered relics (none of the new servants—they were always new—could find his things, or think where they had been put), seemed the loneliest spot in the whole house. He had gone up there after his solitary luncheon, served in the immense marble dining room by a footman on the same scale, and had tried to occupy himself with pasting postcards into his album; but the newness and sumptuousness of the room

¹A *hôtel* is a city mansion of a person of rank or wealth.

embarrassed him—the white fur rugs and brocade chairs seemed maliciously on the watch for smears and ink-spots—and after a while he pushed the album aside and began to roam through the house.

5 He went to all the rooms in turn: his mother’s first, the wonderful lacy bedroom, all pale silks and velvets, artful mirrors and veiled lamps, and the boudoir as big as a drawing-room, with pictures he would have liked to know about, and tables and cabinets holding things he was afraid to touch. Mr. Moffatt’s rooms came next. They were soberer and darker, but as big and splendid; and in the bedroom, on the brown wall, hung a single picture—the portrait of a boy in grey velvet—that interested Paul most of all. The boy’s hand rested on the head of a big dog, and he looked infinitely noble and charming, and yet (in spite of the dog) so sad and lonely that he too might have come home that very day to a strange house in which none of his old things could be found.

6 From these rooms Paul wandered downstairs again. The library attracted him most: there were rows and rows of books, bound in dim browns and golds, and old faded reds as rich as velvet: they all looked as if they might have had stories in them as splendid as their bindings. But the bookcases were closed with gilt trellising, and when Paul reached up to open one, a servant told him that Mr. Moffatt’s secretary kept them locked because the books were too valuable to be taken down. This seemed to make the library as strange as the rest of the house, and he passed on to the ballroom at the back. Through its closed doors he heard a sound of hammering, and when he tried the door-handle a servant passing with a tray-full of glasses told him that “they” hadn’t finished, and wouldn’t let anybody in.

7 The mysterious pronoun somehow increased Paul’s sense of isolation, and he went on to the drawing rooms, steering his way prudently between the gold armchairs and shining tables, and wondering whether the wigged and corseleted heroes on the walls represented Mr. Moffatt’s ancestors, and why, if they did, he looked so little like them. The dining room beyond was more amusing, because busy servants were already laying the long table. It was too early for the florist, and the center of the table was empty, but down the sides were gold baskets heaped with pulpy summer fruits—figs, strawberries and big blushing nectarines. Between them stood crystal decanters with red and yellow wine, and little dishes full of sweets; and against the walls were sideboards with great pieces of gold and silver, ewers and urns and branching candelabra, which sprinkled the green marble walls with starlike reflections.

8 After a while he grew tired of watching the coming and going of white-sleeved footmen, and of listening to the butler’s vociferated orders, and strayed back into the library. The habit of solitude had given him a passion for the printed page, and if he could have found a book anywhere—any kind of a book—he would have forgotten the long hours and the empty house. But the tables in the library held only massive unused inkstands and immense immaculate blotters: not a single volume had slipped its golden prison.

Public domain. From *The Custom of the Country* by Edith Wharton. Copyright © 1913 by Charles Scribner’s Sons. Published by Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York.

32 In paragraph 3, the word *apprised* means —

- F** denied
- G** warned
- H** told
- J** relieved

33 Read this quotation from paragraph 5.

In the bedroom, on the brown wall, hung a single picture—the portrait of a boy in grey velvet—that interested Paul most of all. The boy’s hand rested on the head of a big dog, and he looked infinitely noble and charming, and yet (in spite of the dog) so sad and lonely that he too might have come home that very day to a strange house in which none of his old things could be found.

The quotation suggests that the selection explores the theme of —

- A** the companionship of a faithful family pet
- B** neglect of children in wealthy families
- C** the grace and charm of a fine work of art
- D** respect for the memory of ancestors

34 In paragraph 8, the author uses a metaphor that suggests both —

- F** material wealth and a lack of freedom
- G** natural beauty and a sense of order
- H** perpetual loneliness and a desire for knowledge
- J** intellectual passion and a feeling of regret

- 35** Which line from the selection provides the best evidence that Paul’s mother has remarried more than once?
- A** *He had been almost sure—as sure as he ever was of anything—that he should find her at home when he arrived. . . .*
 - B** *It was the first time he had seen the new hôtel which his step-father had bought, and in which Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt had hastily established themselves. . . .*
 - C** *His mother had become Mrs. Moffatt, and the father he had been most used to, and liked best, had abruptly disappeared from his life. . . .*
 - D** *Paul never knew where they were except when a telegram announced that they were going somewhere else.*
-

- 36** In paragraph 4, the author uses personification to emphasize how —
- F** uncomfortable Paul is in his surroundings
 - G** much Paul misses his books and toys
 - H** lonely Paul felt while eating his lunch
 - J** unhappy Paul is with his new stepfather
-

- 37** From the description of Mr. Moffatt’s library, the reader can infer that he —
- A** has many intellectual interests and a strong hunger for knowledge
 - B** is more interested in displaying his wealth than in reading or writing
 - C** earns his living working in his library and rarely ventures out of it
 - D** is proud of his ancestors’ contributions to science and literature

38 Which of these best helps the reader visualize the setting?

- F** *From these rooms Paul wandered downstairs again.*
- G** *Against the walls were sideboards with great pieces of gold and silver, ewers and urns and branching candelabra, which sprinkled the green marble walls with starlike reflections.*
- H** *The dining room beyond was more amusing, because busy servants were already laying the long table.*
- J** *This seemed to make the library as strange as the rest of the house, and he passed on to the ballroom at the back.*

SHORT ANSWER #2

DIRECTIONS

Answer the following question in the box labeled "Short Answer #2" on page 3 of your answer document.

How would you describe Paul in the excerpt from *The Custom of the Country*? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

BE SURE YOU HAVE WRITTEN YOUR ANSWER
ON PAGE 3 OF THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.

