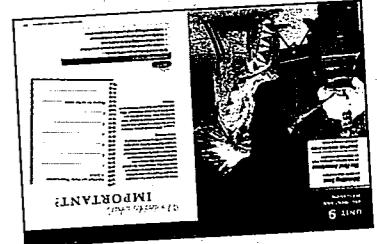


Indian Boarding Schools

ESSAY



Use with "Educating Sons" and "The First Americans," p. 210

FLORIDA

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD

Reading Process

BENCHMARK LA.8.1.7.2

analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of texts and understand how they affect meaning.

What's the Connection?

"Educating Sons" and "The First Americans" argue that a proper education should respect Native American history and culture. In "Indian Boarding Schools," you'll read about the experiences of Native American children who were sent away to special schools in the late 19th and early 20th century.

**PREDICT** Imagine a boarding school for Native American children from many tribes that is designed and run by white Americans around 1900. Have each member of your group predict one positive and one negative consequence for the children attending this school. Record your ideas in the chart. After you have read the selection, check to see whether your predictions were correct.

Positive Consequences	Negative Consequences

An author's perspective—that is, the way a writer looks at a topic—is influenced by his or her experiences, beliefs, and values. Here are some ways you can identify an author's perspective:

- Notice what aspects of a topic the writer focuses on.
  - Pay attention to direct statements he or she makes about the topic.
  - Note words and details he or she uses to describe the topic. Are they mostly positive, or mostly negative?
  - Think about what all of these elements together tell you about the writer's perspective on the topic.
- For more on author's perspective, see *Nonfiction Handbook* page R4.

LEARN THE SKILL: IDENTIFY AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

CLOSE READ

SET A PURPOSE

My purpose for reading is

Indian Boarding Schools

by Joseph Bruchac

Minnewa Ka, Kah Wah Wei  
 Minnewa Ka, Kah Wah Wei  
 Minnewa Ka, Kah Wah Wei  
 Carlisle! Carlisle! Carlisle!

—Carlisle Indian School song chanted by student fans at Carlisle football games, circa 1908

Apache boy



Twenty years ago, my friend Swift Eagle told me the story of how he ended up in an Indian boarding school. His Apache grandfather had gone with him up into the hills to keep him from being taken. So, while other boys were dragged off to the boarding school, Swift Eagle was living off the land in the old way with his grandfather. However, the U.S. Army was sent to bring in the Indian children who had escaped them, and Swift Eagle was caught. They brought him down to the railroad, where he was put into a group of other young people waiting

10 for the arrival of the train. People were looking at him, even the other Indians, for he was bare-chested and wearing a big shell pendant. This was the early 1900s, and most of the Pueblos and Apaches in New Mexico were not dressing that way anymore.

"I really looked like a wild Indian," he chuckled.

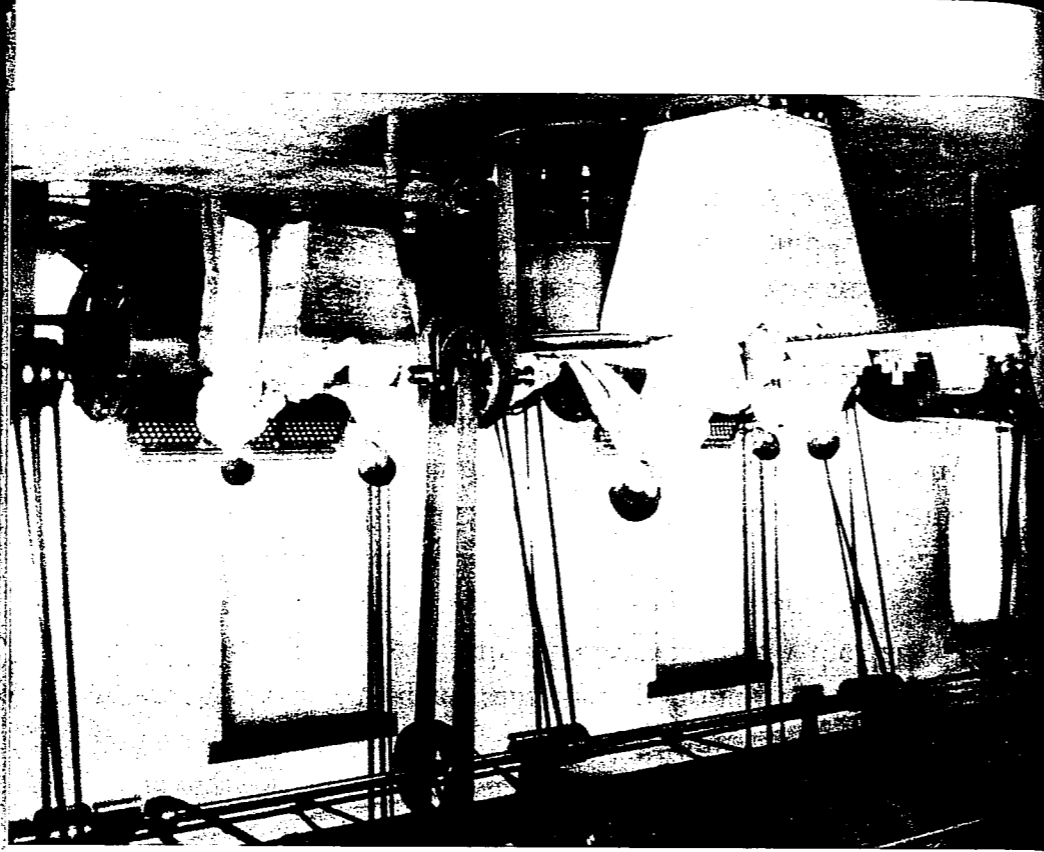
Then, he said, "I heard an awful scream, like the howling of some terrible monster. 'It is coming; people were saying. 'It is coming.' They were pointing along these two long, long pieces of metal that were laid on the ground. Then the ground started to shake, and those long, shiny pieces of metal began to shiver. I looked where everyone was pointing and I saw this huge creature coming. It looked like a giant tomato worm, and there was smoke coming out of it. That monster was coming right toward us. I looked around—everyone was just standing there, and I thought they were too frightened to move. 'Come on, I shouted in our language, 'follow me. I'll lead you to safety. Let's get away from that monster.' Then I started to run, but no one followed me except two of the army men, who tackled me and then put me in leg irons so I couldn't run away. They picked me up and carried me right up into that monster, the first train I had ever seen. That was how I ended up going off to Indian boarding school in chains." ▶

40 ndian boarding schools. Everybody who ended up in one and survived had more than one story about his or her experiences. Founded in 1879 by Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt and sited in an abandoned army barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the Carlisle Indian School was the first and most famous of these military-style institutions. There, Indian boys had their hair cut and were dressed in uniforms, and girls were outfitted with loose Mother Hubbard dresses. Both sexes were subjected to discipline in every sense of that word, from the morning bugle at six to evening taps' at nine. Carlisle's first class numbered 147. By 1917, the enrollment was more than seven hundred and included more than fifty tribes. ▶

1. taps: a bugle call that serves as an order to put lights out at bedtime.

**AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE**  
Think about the story Bruchac uses to introduce the topic of Indian boarding schools. What does his focus on this aspect of the topic tell you about his perspective on it?

**AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE**  
Joseph Bruchac is part Native American. How might his background affect the way he has learned about Indian boarding schools?



These students are doing laundry at the Carlisle school.

Lieutenant Pratt was a veteran of the 10th Cavalry—the famous Buffalo Soldiers, a black regiment with white officers. From what he had learned from his African-American men and his Indian scouts, Pratt developed a respect for minorities and a desire to help them "better" themselves. The humanitarian mission of Carlisle was to prepare Indians for assimilation as equals into American culture. That the Indians had no say in the matter was, to Pratt, a necessity. As Pratt said in an address to the United States Congress, "We accept the watchword; let us by patient effort kill the Indian in him and save the man." Not just children were sent to Carlisle. Among Pratt's students were men in their twenties and thirties who had ridden to war against the army, now reduced to the status of stiff-uniformed students in the dormitory barracks of Carlisle. ▶

The success of Pratt's Carlisle experiment led to the founding of numerous other similar boarding schools throughout the continent. By 1897, more than fourteen thousand American Indians were in twenty-seven boarding schools, but the mission

**DRAW CONCLUSIONS**

Do you believe Pratt truly had respect for minorities?

yes

no

Underline two details in the boxed paragraph that support your conclusion.

The word *curricula* may be unfamiliar to you. If so, recall that the suffix *-a* sometimes indicates the plural form of a word ending in *-um*. *Curricula* is the plural form of *curriculum*. Reread the sentence in which the word appears and look for context clues. Write your definition below. WORD ANALYSIS

FCAT TestSmart

How does the author view the schools' treatment of children?

- A. reasonable
- B. educational
- C. heartbreaking
- D. well-intentioned

TIP When answering a question about an author's perspective, consider the words and details the author uses and what they suggest about his or her tone, or attitude, toward the subject. Circle words and details in lines 71–78 that convey a particular attitude or feeling. What perspective on the Indian boarding schools do these words and details suggest?

of those schools was about to change. A new generation of

bureaucrats, such as Estelle Reel, the superintendent of Indian boarding schools from 1898 to 1910, was much less optimistic than Pratt. Indians were racially inferior and suffered, according to Reel, from "unfortunate heredity." The best that could be done would be to train them to be laborers in the trades and servants in the home, and the limited *curricula* of the schools would reflect that low expectation. ▶

70 Rather than finding an education, a great many Indian children discovered other things—both tragic and otherwise—at Indian schools. Many of them tried to run away, walking hundreds of miles back to the homes and families and lands where they had left their hearts. Every boarding school has stories of kids who were killed by trains while walking home along the tracks or who died from exposure. Not that there was any shortage of mortality at the schools themselves. If you walk, as I have walked, in the graveyards behind any of those schools, such as the Haskell Institute in Kansas (now an American Indian college), you will see headstones carved with the names of young men and women who died from the infectious diseases that swept like prairie fires through those schools. Although some of those children may have looked for their families to come and rescue them—there where immunity was low and where there was inadequate sanitation, poor nutrition, crowded conditions, and lonely despair—Death was usually the dark Horseman who came riding. ▶

90 **B** ut it was not all negative. The Lakota medicine man Lame Deer would talk later in life about the songs and stories he learned from other students when they got together where no white teachers would hear them. By being brought together with Indians from many Native nations, Indian boarding school students learned a lot about other tribes. There were strictly enforced rules against contact between the male and female students—rules enforced by such punishments as locking

100 recalcitrant students in basements or closets or beating those disobedient boys who waved at a girl across a room. . . . Despite that, a lot of romances and marriages came out of boarding schools. In many cases, those marriages were as intertribal as the children of storyteller, musician, and hoop dancer Kevin Locke, a Lakota from North Dakota, and his wife, a Tlingit from southeast Alaska. They met at boarding school. A significant part of the new Indian identity is intertribal because of boarding school "matchmaking" that produced innumerable hybridized offspring, kids who may have pairs of grandparents living a continent apart.

Many American Indian leaders of the late nineteenth century supported the idea of the boarding schools, knowing their children needed to know the ways of the white world

110 for their people to survive. Spotted Tail, of the Brule Lakotas, was so convinced by Pratt's words that he sent five of his own children to that first class at Carlisle. Although many of those leaders would later regret their decisions to send their children to boarding schools, gradually Indian education began to change. Criticism of the boarding schools and the high cost of maintaining them led to the creation of day schools built on the reservations. Ironically, by the time the government closed down most of the boarding schools in the second half of the twentieth century, the institutions had become true Indian schools, controlled more by Native needs than government

120 pipe dreams and offering courses of study that supported and encouraged traditions. The Haskell Institute, one of the few that still remains, is one such school. The Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which was founded in 1962 to encourage a new generation of Native artists, is one of the best examples of what a true Indian education can be today. Young Native painters and potters, poets and sculptors are eager to attend IAIAs as some of their grandparents were to run away from the old Indian schools. ▶

AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Underline words, phrases, and sentences in the boxed paragraph that suggest the author's perspective on modern Indian schools. Summarize his perspective in your own words.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Answer Numbers 1 through 6. Base your answers on the speech "Educating Sons," the letter "The First Americans" and the essay "Indian Boarding Schools."

- 1 In the article "Indian Boarding Schools," the anecdote about Swift Eagle reveals that
  - A. boarding schools taught skills that weren't useful to Native Americans.
  - B. Native American children were forced to go to the boarding schools.
  - C. stereotypes about Native Americans were common in the West.
  - D. children in boarding schools suffered from malnutrition.
- 2 The MAIN mission of the Carlisle Schools was to
  - F. prepare soldiers for the army.
  - G. help students fit into white society.
  - H. integrate people from many tribes.
  - I. train students to work as servants.
- 3 The author's perspective on the intermingling of tribes is that it
  - A. is a positive result of the Indian boarding schools.
  - B. weakened students' ties to their own culture.
  - C. doesn't reflect his own life.
  - D. was worth the upheaval.
- 4 Based on the description of history textbooks in "The First Americans," these books would likely describe the Indian boarding schools as
  - F. degrading to Native Americans.
  - G. an example of white Americans' cruelty.
  - H. a generous act by European Americans.
  - I. proving equality between whites and Indians.
- 5 Which idea is reflected in all three selections?
  - A. White people meant well in trying to educate Native Americans.
  - B. All white people treat Native Americans poorly.
  - C. Native Americans are cultured and value nature.
  - D. White schools did not serve Native Americans well.
- 6 Read this sentence from the essay "Indian Boarding Schools:"
 

A significant part of the new Indian identity is intertribal because of boarding school "matchmaking" that produced innumerable hyphenated offspring, kids who may have pairs of grandparents living a continent apart.

What does *hyphenated* mean?

  - F. of mixed background
  - G. living in two places
  - H. Native American
  - I. well educated