The Chickasaw Nation
Secondary Student Curriculum
Unit 2: Lesson 5
Pearl: Never Give Up
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Lesson 5
Pearl: Never Give Up
Overview

Chokma (Hello),

Thank you for your interest in the Chickasaw Nation Student Curriculum. We are pleased to offer this curriculum that explores our deep history, culture and traditions. Started in 2010 with the development of the Chickasaw Cultural Center, the curricula are designed to inform and educate individuals about the dynamic history of our Chickasaw leaders, monumental events and culture. Chickasaw historians, researchers, archaeologists and other educators, as well as tribal elders, have worked tirelessly to develop this curriculum to share our story.

We are excited to offer Unit 2. Each lesson focuses on a specific event and/or individual throughout the Chickasaw Nation’s history and is complete with its own lesson plan, reading material, discussion questions, student activity and reference list for convenience. All provided materials have been reviewed and approved by the Chickasaw Nation Department of Culture & Humanities and the Chickasaw Nation Department of Communications & Community Development. To further assist, we have worked with Oklahoma educators to outline the *Oklahoma Academic Standards each lesson addresses.

The Chickasaw Nation would like to thank you for your commitment and support. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Joe Thomas, special assistant to the secretary of the department of culture and humanities, at (580) 436-7258 or joe.thomas@chickasaw.net.

*The following Oklahoma Academic Standards, as outlined in the Oklahoma State Department of Education’s 2012 Social Studies guide, are to be used only as a basic guide. Other standards may be applicable that could be based on a teacher’s own interpretation of the lesson material or ability/need to make a conceptual connection:

Grades 9-12

✓ Oklahoma History and Government: The Foundation, Formation and Transformation of Oklahoma, Content Standard 4, Item 7: Describe the contributions of Oklahomans in the 1920s and 1930s including Deep Deuce and African-American jazz musicians, Will Rogers’s and Wood Guthrie’s political and social commentaries, Wiley Post’s aviation milestones and the artwork of the Kiowa Six (formerly the Kiowa Five).
Lesson Plan

BENCHMARKS

The following Oklahoma Academic Standards, as outlined in the Oklahoma State Department of Education’s 2012 Social Studies guide, are to be used only as a basic guide. Other standards may be applicable that could be based on a teacher’s own interpretation of the lesson material or ability/need to make a conceptual connection:


SET (5 min.)

Note: The following is a suggested script for you, the teacher, to reference while discussing this lesson plan. Based on a number of factors, such as your students’ ages or maturity levels, you may choose to deviate from the script as you see fit.

“Let’s start today with a fun question: Has anyone ever piloted a plane? [Take a few minutes to answer the question.] Okay! Has anyone ever flown in a plane? [Take a few minutes to answer the question.] For 12-year-old Pearl Carter Scott, flying played a major role in her development as a youth. Her upbringing in Oklahoma during the 1920s was greatly different, for she drove her father around town in his vehicle, in addition to becoming the first Chickasaw aviator and youngest pilot in the United States. How does Pearl’s youth differ from your youth? [Take a few minutes to answer the question.]

“Today, we will be talking about the life of Chickasaw citizen, Pearl Carter Scott. Her determination and fearless personality elevated her to a famed career as an aviatrix, in addition to the service and commitment she displayed toward the Chickasaw people and culture throughout her lifetime.”

OBJECTIVES

1. The students will practice reading out loud.
2. The students will interact with the reading by answering discussion questions.
3. The students will write two to three paragraphs outlined in the activity section below.
**READING PROCEDURES (20 min.)**

a. The teacher will read the first paragraph of text to the students, and then ask students to read the following paragraphs.

b. The students will continue the reading, with the teacher stopping them at appropriate points to ask students to define particular words or to make a point.

*If the students are uncomfortable with oral reading, the teacher may wish to consider reading the entire passage to model good reading habits. For students who already display great comfort with oral reading, the teacher may wish to have the students read the entire passage. Teachers should feel free to stop the reading and pose knowledge questions about the text—e.g., asking students to define words or explain more. Similarly, the discussion questions may be answered in discussion, as intended, or the teacher may use them to make a free-response worksheet for the students.*

**MATERIALS**

1. Reading text (provided)

2. Discussion questions (provided)

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL**

1. *Pearl* the film

   *[To order the Pearl DVD, please visit [www.chickasawoutpost.com](http://www.chickasawoutpost.com) or these retail locations: Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center, Davis, Oklahoma; Chickasaw Visitor Center, Sulphur, Oklahoma; The Outpost, Ada, Oklahoma; The Capitol Museum, Tishomingo, Oklahoma; Chickasaw Cultural Center, Sulphur, Oklahoma.]*

**EVALUATION**

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of the following: oral reading, participation in discussion and any comments made that the teacher considers particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher’s
discretion.

**ACTIVITY PROCEDURE (20 min.)**

a. The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: “Pearl’s father instilled in his children to never give up! Relate an experience or notable quote from your childhood that has inspired you to never give up. A few examples can include the support of your parents, grandparents, brother, sister, best friend or a notable quote that has continuously motivated you.”

b. The teacher will supervise the students as they write two to three response paragraphs.

c. At the end of the writing period, the teacher will select one to three students and have them read their response paragraphs aloud to the class.

**MATERIALS**

1. Pen/pencil
2. Paper

**EVALUATION**

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of the following: oral reading, participation in discussion, writing skills and any comments made that the teacher considers particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher’s discretion.

**CLOSURE (5 min.)**

“So, what have we learned today? How did Pearl’s father’s blindness enable her to never give up? How did her upbringing contribute to her aviation career? [Pause for brief answers to questions.] That’s right! Pearl’s father instilled in his children to never let anything deter them from what they wanted to do. Because of this, Pearl gained a fearless mentality toward life, for she began driving by the age of 12 and became the first Chickasaw and youngest aviator in United States history. Pearl’s passion to fly was
deeply influenced by her parents’ encouragement and support. Pearl stepped away from flying professionally when she was 18. Years later, she would again make a major contribution, not to the aviation world, but to the Chickasaw Nation, serving as the tribe’s first Community Health Representative (CHR). Eleven years later, she was elected to the Chickasaw Nation Tribal Legislature. Throughout her life, Pearl displayed the courageous spirit and giving nature of the Chickasaws. She lived out her father’s motto, and she left a lasting impression on many around the world.”
Reference Material

Pearl, as she preferred to be called, was born in Marlow, Oklahoma, into a family of five children, one of whom was adopted. Opaletta was born first on June 19, 1912. Subsequent children were born at approximate three-year intervals: Pearl, December 9, 1915; Arnetta, April 22, 1918; and George Jr., August 31, 1921. The Carters later adopted a Choctaw boy named Willie Wilson, who would become an equally loved member of the family. Willie was born in 1910, so he became the older brother to the Carter children.

Pearl’s mother, Lucinda “Lucy” Gibson Carter, was an original Chickasaw enrollee and had married George Carter, an up-and-coming businessman in 1910. George became blind at the age of 16 and taught his children that adversities in life could always be overcome. “Never give up!” was often heard in the Carter household as Pearl was growing up. Pearl once said of her father, “He thought that I could do just about anything, and I tried because he couldn’t and I could.” It was that mentality that prompted Pearl’s fearless approach.
to life. Because of her father’s blindness, she was driving by the age of 12. That same
year, her father’s friend, Wiley Post, convinced her father to let Pearl take flying lessons.
With George’s permission, Wiley took Pearl up for her first flight, which Pearl later said
she considered her first lesson. After that, she was hooked.

For some time, Pearl had been dropping hints about wanting an airplane of her
own to fly. Finally, Wiley asked her one day when she was 12 if she was truly serious
about wanting to be an aviator. Pearl responded that she was. Wiley asked if she was
certain, and again Pearl said yes. Wiley told her that she had the temperament and the
determination to be successful. He urged her not to let, “anything deter you from what
you want to do. You may fall down once in a while, but don’t give up. Get mad, and get
up and show ‘em that you can do what you can.” They continued talking, and Wiley
agreed to visit that evening with her father about the idea of Pearl getting a plane of her
own, in which she could receive intensive training.

That evening, Wiley told George that Pearl was “just a born flyer” and was quite
capable of becoming a pilot, even at her age. George asked Pearl if she was really serious
about flying, and she assured him that she was. George reflected for a moment and then
asked Pearl, “Well, do you think you can do it?” Pearl replied, “I know I can.” Wiley
assured George that, “She has that feeling; she has that knack for it.” George turned to
Wiley and said, “Well, all right, then. I’ll build her an airport, and I’ll build her a hangar
and…I’ll let you pick out a plane and get it to her.” Pearl was ecstatic.

Wiley selected and flew Pearl’s plane, a dual-controlled Curtiss Robin. The plane
featured a burnt orange body and yellow wings. A strut-braced monoplane, its design was
strongly influenced by Charles Lindbergh’s famous *Spirit of St. Louis* aircraft, in which the legendary aviator flew across the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Paris, in May 1927. Anticipating that many of the Robins would be operating from pastures or poorly prepared fields, the aircraft was ruggedly built. Prototypes of the plane were test flown by several well-known pilots, including Lindbergh himself.

Pearl’s Curtiss Robin was just under 26 feet long, and its wing span was 41 feet. The aircraft weighed 1,480 pounds when empty and was rated to carry a load of up to 737 pounds. Its maximum speed was 99 mph, its cruising speed was 84 mph, and its landing speed was 44 mph. The Robin had a range of up to 590 miles on a 50-gallon tank of fuel, averaging more than 11 miles to the gallon. Equipped with dual controls and a “completely upholstered and pleasingly finished” interior, Pearl’s airplane cost approximately $4,800—a considerable sum in 1929. Of course, George also spent an unknown sum of money to prepare the airfield and build a hangar.

George hired Slim Marshall of Duncan, Oklahoma, as a full-time pilot to teach
Pearl how to fly and to fly George on business trips. Gripped by aviation fever, George soon purchased another airplane for his son-in-law, Arthur Williamson, to use in learning how to fly. It was an Eaglerock biplane, equipped with an OX-5 engine and manufactured by the Alexander Aircraft Company in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It was a favorite aircraft of barnstorming pilots in the 1920s and 1930s because of its maneuverability and ability to land in pastures. Slim gave Pearl lessons in both the Curtiss Robin and the Eaglerock. Pearl enjoyed flying both planes, but preferred her Curtiss Robin because it had an enclosed cabin. Regardless of which plane she flew, Pearl was thrilled that her aviation training was underway.

Pearl began flying and learning with Slim virtually every day, and she “loved every minute of it.” Pearl and Slim usually would meet at the airport by sunrise, fly until school time and fly after school. Often, George would fly with them since the Robin had room for two passengers in addition to the pilot.

It was during one of these flying lessons that Pearl impressed Slim with her fearlessness. Slim decided to see if Pearl would panic under emergency conditions, and he wanted to test her “nerve.” He had Pearl put the plane in a spin headed toward the ground. At 300 feet, Slim took control and pulled out of the spin and dive while Pearl laughed at him. On the ground, he told Pearl that she had more nerve than anyone he had ever seen and that he would never again try to scare her. Pearl quickly discovered that she loved stunt flying. Barrel rolls, spins and dives were exhilarating to her. “Looping and rolling” her plane gave Pearl her “greatest thrill.” Moreover, she loved to take friends up and then “scare them to death.”
One memorable morning, Sept. 12, 1929, Pearl and Slim were flying before school, as usual. When they landed, Slim said, “Pearl, you know all I know, so take it up!” Pearl immediately climbed back into her plane and took off. Years later, thinking about her first solo flight, Pearl asserted, “I wasn’t a bit scared. I looked around and there was just me—just me!” For Pearl, flying solo was “just about as close to heaven as anyone can get.” Just as Pearl took off, someone “ran to the phone” and called George. By the time Pearl landed, both George and Lucy were there to witness the end of Pearl’s first solo flight. Pearl was convinced she could have soloed much earlier, but she was so young, her parents had been reluctant to let her. Still, at 13 years old, Pearl became the first Chickasaw aviator and youngest flier in the United States. At the age of 13, Pearl was granted her Student Pilot’s Permit by the Aeronautics Branch of the United States Department of Commerce in June 1930.
Pearl’s fame as an aviator spread quickly, and she was a guest of honor on many occasions. Organizers of special events, such as dedications of new roads or airports, flying circuses and other occasions, frequently invited Pearl to bring her Curtiss Robin and be a guest of honor. Photos of Pearl and her plane, along with stories, often appeared in local newspapers, and her presence at an event enhanced attendance. One of her early appearances as a guest of honor was for the dedication of a new airport in Frederick, Oklahoma. Luther Wagon, a former president of the Marlow Chamber of Commerce, had moved to Frederick and was responsible for the invitation. Pearl, who had “Marlow” painted in block letters under one of the wings of her plane, was a big hit at this and other events.

Pearl enjoyed flying immensely during her high school years. In addition to appearances at special events and air circuses, she flew her father to various locations so he could conduct business. And she flew for the “fun, the thrills and the danger of it!”

Pearl was a unique student in high school. As a member of the Marlow High School pep squad, the Marlow newspaper reported the young aviator would “be at the Marlow-Duncan football game at the county fairgrounds Thursdays doing her share of the pep leading.” Pearl flew to this and other Marlow away games in her Curtiss Robin.

Pearl’s days as an aviator came to an end, however, at the age of eighteen. By then Pearl had a husband, a baby and another child on the way. Shortly before the birth of her second baby, Pearl realized that she loved stunt flying and just could not resist doing it when she was in the air. She was “just too much of a daredevil.” So, Pearl walked away from one of the great passions of her life—flying. At age 18, she recognized and accepted
that she had a family whom she loved and who needed her.

In 1972, at the age of 57, Pearl went to work for the Chickasaw Nation as its first Community Health Representative (CHR) after studying at Desert Willow Indian Training Center in Tucson, Arizona. CHRs were to visit with Indian people within their assigned geographical areas, provide health-related information and determine if the people needed to see a physician for any sort of treatment. Former Governor of the Chickasaw Nation Overton James stated the CHRs would be the foot soldiers of the Chickasaw Nation, making direct contact with the people. With her acceptance of the CHR position, Pearl began an association with the Chickasaw Nation that would endure the remainder of her life. Eleven years later, she was elected to the Chickasaw Nation Tribal Legislature and served three terms, during a time of great growth in tribal operations and services.

Pearl was inducted into the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame, the Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame, the International Women’s Air and Space Museum Hall of Fame and was a...
charter member of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

She was also one of only three people to have ever flown the Winnie Mae, Wiley Post’s airplane that he flew for the first solo flight around the world. Pearl passed away March, 28, 2005, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Funeral services were held on April 1, 2005, at the First Methodist Church in Marlow, where her mother had taken her to church as a child, where she had taken her children and where she had remained a member throughout her life.

Governor Bill Anoatubby eloquently spoke about Pearl stating that she “was truly a legend in the history of Oklahoma, the world of aviation and in the Chickasaw Nation.” Moreover, he continued, “The legacy she leaves us is one of hope for better days, love for all things and all people and determination to make contributions to the greater good.

“She will be missed, but she will be remembered for all her works. No one will fill Pearl’s shoes…that would be impossible. Her memory lives on in all that she has done.”

In her life, Pearl displayed the courageous spirit and giving nature of the Chickasaw people. She lived out her father’s motto to “never give up” throughout her life, and because she did so, left a lasting imprint on the world around her.

[Portions of the narratives were taken from Paul F. Lambert’s book, Never Give Up! The Life of Pearl Carter Scott.]
Discussion Questions

1. “Never give up!” was often heard in the Carter household as Pearl was growing up. Why was this phrase so popular within the Carter family?

2. Describe Pearl’s first airplane?

3. What memorable event took place on the morning of Sept. 12, 1929?

4. Why did Pearl step away from flying at the age of 18?
5. After flying, how did Pearl serve the Chickasaw Nation?
Reference List

For more information, see the following sources:


http://www.chickasaw.net/docs/journal_Pearl_Carter.pdf (Article by Jeannie Barbour)

http://www.taxi-strip.com/Pearl.html (Article edited by Bob Kemper)