

Teaching Module for the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center

Exploring the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC)

by Name, Nation, Time, and Place

Teacher's Guide

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School (CIS) served as the model for off-reservation boarding schools across the U.S. and Canada. Operating from 1879-1918, the CIS enrolled over 10,000 students from across the United States. Rather than continue the costly “Indian wars,” the founder of Carlisle, Capt. Henry Richard Pratt convinced Congress that schools such as Carlisle should be established to assimilate and “civilize” Indian children. Who were these students? Where did they come from? How did they come to be enrolled at CIIS? What was the mission of the school and how successful was this “experiment in educating and assimilating Native American young people?” What were students taught? What methods were used? How was life at the school structured? What forms of discipline were used? How did it affect students’ lives after they left the school? What legacies remain?

Because of the role of the Carlisle Indian School in American and Native American history, CIS continues to be a major site of memory for many Native peoples, as well as a source of research and study for descendants, students and scholars around the globe.

The goal of this exercise is to explore the [Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center](http://www.carlisleindian.dickinson.edu) and what it has to offer. Much can be learned by searching through the primary documents, including student files and school publications – and also consulting secondary sources. This assignment can be adapted for college or high school classes or community workshops.

Materials

Primary Documents:

Student files, images, and publications (www.carlisleindian.dickinson.edu)

Capt. Henry Richard Pratt, Speech *Read: “Kill the Indian, and Save the Man”: Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans. Source: *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, “The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites,” *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian” 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

[Excerpt from Pratt’s Speech](#)

[Shorter version for 8th-9th grades](#)

Secondary Document:

[Introduction to Fear-Segal and Rose](#), *The Carlisle Indian School* (University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

[Map - Locations of Off-Reservation Indian Boarding Schools in the U.S.](#)

Guiding Questions:

- 1) When was the Carlisle Indian School(CIS) established? And where?
- 2) When did the first students arrive at the Carlisle Indian School – give date. Where were they from?
- 3) What does this suggest about the flagship school (located in the East near the end of the era of the Indian wars)?
- 4) When did it close? How many years was it in operation?
- 5) How many children were sent to CIS? And from where?
- 6) What were the goals of the Carlisle Indian School? What were Pratt's intentions? Why was CIS established?
- 7) Research one of the Indian nations that sent students to Carlisle. Where were they located geographically? How far were they from Carlisle?

For further independent research: What do you know, can you find out about this Nation? Origin stories? World view, cultural beliefs and values? Relationship to nature? What was their political economy – the basis of most people's livelihoods? Gender norms and relationships?

- 8) Read 2-4 student files from that nation – what can be gleaned about their life at CIS from their files? List their names here – and under each, provide a brief summary and record any particularly interesting details or quotations.
- 9) Analyzing what you found in the student files and your research on one of the nations, how did students' experience at Carlisle differ from what they had likely been accustomed to at home?
- 10) Imagine yourself as a child sent to the Carlisle Indian school. How do you think you may have felt? What may you have thought? What questions may you have asked?
- 11) In order to get more out of this assignment, you may want to read one or more of the following books or articles to gain a better understanding of how and why these young people were sent to CIS and what they encountered there. [View Selective Bibliography](#).

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Student Worksheet Secondary School (8-12)

Tens of thousands of children and young people were sent to the Carlisle Indian School from all across the country. Founded in 1879 near the end of the “Indian” wars, the school was meant to “civilize” Indian children and assimilate them into Euro-American society. Young people were deliberately sent far from home in order to break ties with their Native communities and traditions.

Who were these students? Where did they come from? Why were they sent here? How did they get here? What was their experience like? What was life like at the school? What did the students gain? What did they lose? What did they miss? How might you have felt? What happened to them after they left the school? There are so many questions to be asked and answered – over time and from multiple perspectives.

What was the mission of the school and how successful was this “experiment in educating and assimilating Native American young people?” What were students taught? What methods were used? How was life at the school structured? What forms of discipline were used? How did it affect students’ lives after they left the school? How does it affect Indians today?

*Read: “Kill the Indian, and Save the Man”: Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans. Source: *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, “The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites,” *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian” 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

[Excerpt from Pratt’s Speech](#)

[Shorter version for 8th-9th grades](#)

[Map - Locations of Off-Reservation Indian Boarding Schools in the U.S.](#)

1). What were Pratt’s goals? Why did he want to establish the Carlisle Indian School? What did he want the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to do?

2) Go to the [Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center](#) and go to explore student files.

Guiding Questions:

- When was the Carlisle Indian School(CIS) established? And where?
- When did the first students arrive at the Carlisle Indian School – give date. Where were they from?
- What does this suggest about the flagship school (located in the East near the end of the era of the Indian wars)?

- d) When did it close? How many years was it in operation?
- e) How many children were sent to CIS? And from where?
- f) What were the goals of the Carlisle Indian School? What were Pratt's intentions? Why was CIS established?
- g) Research one of the Indian nations that sent students to Carlisle. Where were they located geographically? How far were they from Carlisle?

For further independent research: What do you know, can you find out about this Nation? Origin stories? World view, cultural beliefs and values? Relationship to nature? What was their political economy – the basis of most people's livelihoods? Gender norms and relationships?

- h) Read 4 student files from that nation – what can be gleaned about their life at CIS from their files? List their names here – and under each, provide a brief summary and record any particularly interesting details or quotations.
- i) Analyzing what you found in the student files and your research on one of the nations, how did students' experience at Carlisle differ from what they had likely been accustomed to at home?
- j) Imagine yourself as a child send to the Carlisle Indian school. How do you think you may have felt? What may you have thought? What questions may you have asked?
- k) In order to get more out of this assignment, you may want to read one or more of the following books or articles to gain a better understanding of how and why these young people were sent to CIS and what they encountered there.

2. Read 1 of the following student files and fill in the table below (15-20minutes) and be ready to share information about this student with your classmates:

Name of student	Arrival date at CIS	Nation/Place Where are they from?	Note 2 interesting things you learned from the file.

3). What does this tell you about this students' experience at the CIIS?

4). What more would you like to know about this student's experiences?

5). a. Imagine yourself as a young person sent to the school from your native community. What might you have felt? What would you have wanted? What would you have gained? What would you have missed?

b. Write a short letter to Capt. Henry Richard Pratt. What would you want to tell him?

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Student Worksheet College/University level and AP

Tens of thousands of children were sent to the Carlisle Indian School from all across the country as the era of the “Indian wars” were ending. Established in 1879, the school was intended to “civilize” and assimilate Indian children into the dominant Euro-American society. In order to do so, young people were deliberately sent far from home in order to break ties with their Native communities and traditions.

Student Experiences: Who were these students? Where did they come from? How and Why were they sent here? How did they get here? What was their experience like? What was life like at the school? What was health care like? The food? Sports? The Dorms? Were they able to stay in contact with their families back home? Imagine yourself here – what might you have felt/thought/gained/missed? What happened to them after they left the school? Where did they go and what did they do? There are so many question to be asked and answered – over time and from multiple perspectives.

Institutional Goals and Structure: What was the mission of the school? What did it mean to Pratt to “civilize” the children? What were the school’s goals and how successful was this “experiment in assimilating Native American young people?” From the school’s (Pratt and the administration) point of view, what and who were some of the successes and failures? What strategies or methods were used by the school to educate, train, and assimilate the children? What were students taught? What was the curriculum like? How was life at the school structured? What forms of discipline were used? Why were students sent out on “outings” and what kind of work did they do? Who did they live with? How did the time at Carlisle affect students’ lives after they left the school? What legacies remain?

While you will not be answering all of these questions, they give an indication of the range of questions that can be addressed. For this particular assignment:

- I. Read: “Kill the Indian, and Save the Man”: Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans. Source: *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, “The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites,” *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian” 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

[Excerpt from Pratt’s Speech](#)

- a) What were Pratt’s goals? Provide your initial perceptions of the goals and aims of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School:

- II. [Read: Excerpt from “Intro”](#) to *The Carlisle Indian Industrial Indian School*, edited by Fear-Segal and Rose, University of Nebraska Press, 2016.
- III. Keep in mind these readings and go to the [Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center](#) and go to explore student files.

Questions:

- 1) When was the Carlisle Indian School (CIS) established? And where?
(see map - [Locations of Off-Reservation Indian Boarding Schools in the U.S.](#))
- 2) When did the first students arrive at the Carlisle Indian School – give date. Where were they from?
- 3) What does this suggest about the flagship school (located in the East near the end of the era of the Indian wars)?
- 4) When did it close? How many years was it in operation?
- 5) How many children were sent to CIS? And from where?
- 6) Peruse 2 of the following student files– what can be gleaned about their life at CIS from their files? List their names here – and under each, provide a brief summary and record any particularly interesting details or quotations. This should take about 30 minutes. Be ready to share information about this student with your classmates.

Name of student	Arrival Date	Nation/Place	Notes:

1. What stands out to you about this student file?

2. What does this tell you about this student's experience at CIS?

3. What would you like to know more about after interacting with this file?

4) Optional: Research one of the Indian nations that sent students to Carlisle. Where were they located geographically? How far were they from Carlisle?

5) For further independent research: What do you know, can you find out about this Nation? Origin stories? World view, cultural beliefs and values? Relationship to nature? What was their political economy – the basis of most people's livelihoods? Gender norms and relationships?

6) Analyzing what you found in the student files and your research on one of the nations, how did students' experience at Carlisle differ from what they had likely been accustomed to at home?

7) Imagine yourself as a child sent to the Carlisle Indian school. How do you think you may have felt? What may you have thought? What questions may you have asked?

8) In order to get more out of this assignment, you may want to read one or more of the following books or articles to gain a better understanding of how and why these young people were sent to CIS and what they encountered there. [View Selective Bibliography](#)

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