

Code Breaker Math Lesson

2-4 Grade

Introduction: The lesson will begin with a short discussion on the Navajo code talkers from World War II. The Navajo code talkers took part in every assault the U.S. Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945. They served in all six Marine divisions, Marine Raider battalions and Marine parachute units, transmitting messages by telephone and radio in their native language--a code that the Japanese never broke. The students will conduct their own exercises in decoding and re-coding messages using math problems.

Procedure: Each student will receive a worksheet: one half will contain a set of addition and subtraction problems that will help the students break a code (example: $A = 3 + 1 = 4$). The students will then complete the other half of the worksheet that will ask them to decode a message (example: 4, 1, 3 -- "the") and then put another message into code.

Closure: After decoding the first message, the students will put a written message into code using the same parameters as before. If students wish to continue, they may take turns creating new coded messages and decoding those messages.

Assessment: The worksheets will be collected to determine whether the codes were correctly "broken," whether the problems were answered correctly, and whether the messages were correctly decoded and put into code.

On Page 2 there is a sample worksheet!