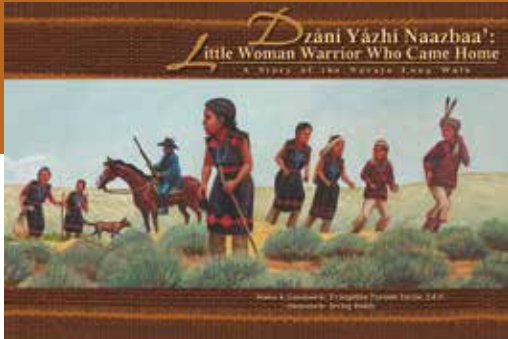


Teacher's Guide *Dzání Yázhí Naazbaa': Little Woman Warrior Who Came Home*

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About the Book

The Navajo Long Walk is one of the most important chapters in Diné history. In the 1860s, thousands of Navajo people were forced from their homelands and made to walk hundreds

of miles to the Bosque Redondo in New Mexico. Families endured hunger, cold, and loss, yet they carried their traditions, songs, and prayers with them.

In this story, we learn about the Long Walk through the eyes of Dzáníbáá, a young Diné girl. Her perspective helps students connect to the past in a personal way. Dzáníbáá notices the fear, sadness, and strength of her family. She also learns how her people use language, stories, and traditions to keep their spirits alive during the hardest times. By seeing history through a young girl's eyes, today's students can imagine what it was like for Navajo youth long ago and understand how important family and culture were to survival.

This story is not only about hardship—it is also about resilience. After years of struggle, the Diné people returned home, proving that their way of life could not be broken. When Navajo students hear Dzáníbáá's story, they see that young people like them played an important role in remembering the songs, prayers, and stories that carried the people forward.

For our students today, Dzáníbáá's story is a lesson in courage and hope. It shows that even in difficult times, Navajo children have the strength to carry traditions into the future. By teaching this history, we help young learners build pride in who they are and confidence that they too can overcome challenges and continue the story of the Diné.

Why Teachers Must Teach Hard History

Including the Long Walk in the curriculum is not easy—but it is necessary. Hard history gives students a truthful understanding of their people’s survival and shows them why resilience matters today. It prepares the next generation to recognize injustice and to build strength from the lessons of the past.

“If we don’t remember the past, we will continue it. We will continue to do the things that created inequality and injustice in the first place. So what we must do is we must disrupt the continuum of hard history.”

— Hasan Kwame Jeffries

By teaching Džáníbaá’s story, Navajo teachers honor the ancestors, strengthen the identity of young learners, and ensure that future generations walk forward with knowledge, pride, and resilience.

5-Day Grade 4 ELD Lesson Plan Little Woman Warrior Who Came Home

Day 1 – Introducing the Story & Building Vocabulary

Objective:

Students will activate background knowledge about Navajo history, preview key vocabulary, and make connections to their own lives.

ELD Standards:

- ELD 4.L.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding.
- ELD 4.R.1: Determine meaning of words and phrases in context.

Activities:

1. Listening & Discussion – Teacher introduces the book, showing the cover illustration by Irving Toddy. Ask: What do you notice? Who do you think the girl is?
2. Vocabulary Preview – Teach words: captive, sacred, ration, survival, homeland, ceremony. Use visuals and realia (e.g., basket, corn).
3. Reading Aloud – Read the first section (Džáníbaa’s early life). Students listen and track key words.
4. Illustration Study – Examine the first illustration. Ask: How do the colors and expressions show her life at home?
5. Quick Write – “One thing that is special about where I live...”

Scaffolds: Word wall, bilingual support (English/Diné), sentence starters.

Day 2 – Captured

Objective:

Students will sequence events from the capture scene and retell using both words and images.

ELD Standards:

- ELD 4.R.2: Identify main idea and details in a text.
- ELD 4.SL.1: Retell a sequence of events.

Activities:

1. Shared Reading – Read the section where Dzáníbaa is taken by soldiers.
2. Think-Pair-Share – “What happened first, next, last?”
3. Sequence Organizer – Fill in a three-box chart (First – Then – Finally).
4. Illustration Study – Look at the picture of Dzáníbaa being taken. Ask: What emotions do you see? How does the artist show fear?
5. Oral Practice – Students retell events to a partner using their organizer.

Scaffolds: Sentence frames: “First, Dzáníbaa... Then... Finally...”; teacher models retell with gestures.

Day 3 – The Long Walk

Objective:

Students will analyze Dzáníbaa’s feelings and compare them to their own emotions in hard times.

ELD Standards:

- ELD 4.R.3: Explain how characters respond to events.
- ELD 4.W.1: Write about experiences with supporting details.

Activities:

1. Close Reading – Read the Long Walk section aloud. Highlight emotion words (sad, frightened, tired).
2. Small Group Discussion – “How did Dzáníbaa feel? How do you know?”
3. Quick Write – “If I were on the Long Walk, I would feel ___ because ___.”
4. Illustration Study – Examine the image of families walking. Ask: What do the mountains and faces tell us about the journey?
5. Gallery Walk – Groups share their written responses on posters.

Scaffolds: Feelings word bank, sentence starters, peer support groups.

Day 4 – Life at Fort Sumner

Objective:

Students will compare life at Fort Sumner to their own lives and describe cultural survival.

ELD Standards:

- ELD 4.R.4: Compare and contrast information in text.
- ELD 4.SL.2: Participate in collaborative discussions.

Activities:

1. Read & Discuss – Section about rations, failed crops, and hardships.
2. T-Chart – Compare: “Life at Fort Sumner” vs. “My Life Today.”
3. Partner Speaking Practice – Each student gives one comparison orally.
4. Illustration Study – Study the picture of food or Fort Sumner. Ask: What details show suffering? What symbols of strength remain?
5. Writing Task – Write a short paragraph: “What helped Dzáníbaa survive?”

Scaffolds: Sentence frames – “At Fort Sumner, Dzáníbaa... Today I...”; teacher think-aloud to model compare/contrast.

Day 5 – Returning Home & Reflection

Objective:

Students will summarize the story and reflect on Navajo resilience.

ELD Standards:

- ELD 4.W.2: Write a narrative summary with clear sequence.
- ELD 4.SL.3: Present information orally.

Activities:

Summarizing Graphic Organizer – “Somebody – Wanted – But – So – Then” (SWBST).

1. Writing Task – Students write a short summary of Dzáníbaa’s journey.
2. Illustration Study – Final images of return to Black Mesa. Ask: How does the art show pride, strength, and survival?
3. Oral Presentations – Students read their summaries to a partner or small group.
4. Class Reflection Circle – “What lessons can Navajo students today learn from Dzáníbaa’s story?”

Scaffolds: Teacher-modeled summary, sentence frames (“Dzáníbaa survived because...”), group rehearsal before presentation.

3-Day Grade 4 Social Studies Unit Plan: “The Long Walk: A Story of Survival and Return”

Arizona Social Studies Standards (Grade 4)

- SS04.H1.2: Describe the causes and effects of the relocation of Indigenous peoples, including the Navajo (Diné).
- SS04.G2.1: Use maps and other geographic tools to locate tribal lands, migration routes, and areas of cultural significance.
- SS04.C2.1: Describe ways citizens work together to solve problems in their community.
- SS04.SP3.1: Use primary and secondary sources to explain continuity and change over time.

Supporting ELA Standards:

- RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly.
- W.4.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences using effective technique and descriptive details.
- SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

Day 1 – Life Before and During the Long Walk

Objective (SWBAT):

Students will describe what life was like for the Navajo people before the Long Walk and explain what led to their forced removal.

Vocabulary:

- Hwéeldi – Bosque Redondo (place of internment)
- Diné – The People
- homeland
- soldiers
- relocation

Activities:

1. Warm-Up / Prior Knowledge:

Ask: What do you know about where your ancestors lived before the Long Walk?
Create a KWL chart (Know–Want to Know–Learned).

2. Guided Read-Aloud (First Section):

Read aloud the opening paragraphs describing the Navajo homeland and early life.
Use a map to locate Canyon de Chelly and explain its cultural importance.

3. Discussion Questions:

- o What made the Navajo homeland special?
- o Why did the U.S. soldiers force the Navajo to leave?
- o How did families prepare for the journey?

4. Group Work:

Students sketch or label a simple map showing the homeland and the path to Bosque Redondo.

Writing Prompt:

“Imagine you are living in your homeland before the Long Walk. What do you see, hear, and feel around you?”

Assessment:

Students share one sentence from their writing describing the beauty of their homeland.

Day 2 – The Journey and Survival

Objective (SWBAT):

Students will identify the hardships of the Long Walk and explain how the Navajo people showed strength and survival.

Vocabulary:

- endurance
- captivity
- resilience
- starvation
- hope

Activities:

1. Review & Vocabulary:
Review yesterday's map. Discuss what "resilience" means in English and Diné Bizaad (e.g., t'áá hwó' ajít'éego – self-determination).
2. Guided Reading (Middle Section):
Read the passage describing the walk to Bosque Redondo. Pause to clarify difficult phrases. Use images of winter clothing, wagons, or rivers to provide context.
3. Comprehension Questions:
 - o What dangers did families face during the walk?
 - o What helped them survive?
 - o How did they care for each other on the journey?
4. Partner Discussion:
Turn and talk: What does it mean to be strong like our ancestors?

Writing Prompt:

"Write a journal entry as if you were walking with your family. Describe what you would carry and how you would stay strong."

Assessment:

Collect journal entries to check for empathy, historical understanding, and use of vocabulary.

Day 3 – Return and Remembering

Objective (SWBAT):

Students will explain how the Navajo people rebuilt their lives after the Long Walk and why remembering this history is important today.

Vocabulary:

- t'áá hwó' ajít'éego – self-reliance
- hózhó – balance, harmony
- rebuild
- freedom
- return

Activities:

1. Warm-Up:

Show an image of Canyon de Chelly or the Bosque Redondo Memorial.

Ask: What do you think it felt like to come home after the Long Walk?

2. Read-Aloud (Final Section):

Read the passage describing the return home. Emphasize gratitude, rebuilding, and restoration.

3. Discussion Questions:

o How did the Navajo people show strength when they returned?

o Why do we still tell this story today?

o What does hózhó mean in this context?

4. Cultural Connection:

Invite students to share stories from family members or community elders about resilience or homecoming.

Writing Prompt (Culminating Task):

“Why is it important for Navajo people to remember the Long Walk? What lessons does it teach us today?”

Assessment:

Students write a short paragraph (4–5 sentences) connecting history to their identity.
Teacher uses a simple rubric (Content, Vocabulary, Cultural Understanding, Conventions).

Extensions / Enrichment

- Invite a local elder or historian to visit the class and share family stories.
- Create a classroom wall display titled “We Remember Hwéeldi.”
- Integrate art by illustrating scenes of hope, homecoming, or balance (hózhó).

5-Day Grade 4 Social Studies Unit Plan: The Navajo Long Walk through Dzáníbaá’s Story

Day 1: Introducing the Long Walk

Focus Standard:

- SS.H1.4.1: Describe the difference between primary and secondary sources and explain how each are used to study the past.
- SS.H2.4.1: Use stories of people and events to explain the significance of cultural traditions and practices.

Objective: Students will understand what the Long Walk was and why it is remembered.

Activities:

1. Read Aloud: Teacher reads aloud the first part of Dzáníbaá’s story.
2. Discussion: Students share what they know about their family or community’s stories of the Long Walk.
3. Map Activity: Locate Navajo homeland and Bosque Redondo on a large classroom map.
4. Reflection Journal: Students write one question they have about the Long Walk.

Day 2: Life Before the Long Walk

Focus Standard:

- SS. G1.4.1: Use maps, globes, and other representations to explain the physical and cultural characteristics of places and regions.
- SS.H3.4.2: Describe ways that cultural characteristics, including language, beliefs, and traditions, influence the identity of groups of people.

Objective: Students will learn about Navajo homelands, hogans, clans, and traditions before the Long Walk.

Activities:

1. Class Reading: Passages describing Dzáníbaá’s family, hogan, and community life.
2. Word Bank Activity: Students define key words (hogan, clan, sacred mountains, ceremony).

3. Drawing Activity: Students draw their idea of home and label it with Diné words.
4. Discussion: Why is homeland important for Navajo identity?

Day 3: The Journey of the Long Walk

Focus Standard:

- SS.H2.4.2: Describe how diverse groups, including Native Americans, have shaped Arizona.
- SS.G3.4.2: Explain how human migration impacts communities.

Objective: Students will understand the hardships of the Long Walk.

Activities:

1. Read Aloud: Teacher shares Džáníbaá's experiences during the journey.
2. Graphic Organizer: Students complete a chart on "Challenges / How Navajo people stayed strong."
3. Group Activity: Small groups role-play family decisions about carrying songs, prayers, and traditions.
4. Class Circle: Students reflect on resilience and survival.

Day 4: Life at Bosque Redondo

Focus Standard:

- SS.H2.4.3: Describe the experiences and perspectives of different cultural groups in Arizona's history.
- SS.E1.4.1: Describe why scarcity requires people to make choices and trade-offs.

Objective: Students will learn about daily life at Bosque Redondo and how Navajo families survived.

Activities:

1. Class Reading: Passages describing life at Bosque Redondo.
2. Vocabulary Activity: Ration, starvation, survival, fort.
3. Simulation Activity: Students use "rations" of beans or corn kernels to plan meals—discuss scarcity.
4. Discussion: How did traditions, songs, and language help families stay strong?

Day 5: Return and Resilience

Focus Standard:

- SS.C1.4.2: Describe the importance of civic virtues such as respect, responsibility, and perseverance.
- SS.H4.4.1: Describe how significant historical events have influenced Arizona and its people.

Objective: Students will learn how the Diné returned home and why resilience is important for the future.

Activities:

1. Read Aloud: Dzáníbaá's family returning home.
2. Timeline Activity: Students create a simple timeline (Before the Walk — Long Walk — Bosque Redondo — Return).
3. Class Reflection: Discuss Hasan Kwame Jeffries' quote "If we don't remember the past, we will continue it. We will continue to do the things that created inequality and injustice in the first place. So, what we must do is we must disrupt the continuum of hard history."
4. Student Project: Write or draw "How I show resilience like Dzáníbaá."
5. Closing Circle: Students share what they learned about resilience, family, and culture.

Teacher Notes

- Encourage Diné bizaad (Navajo language) use during discussions and activities.
- Invite elders or family members to share oral histories if possible.
- Use maps, songs, and visual aids to make the story concrete for Grade 4 learners.
- Emphasize pride, identity, and resilience throughout the unit.

Vocabulary

1. Captive: A person who is taken and not free.
Example: Dzáníbaá became a captive when the soldiers took her away.
2. Sacred: Something very special, holy, or important to a people.
Example: The four sacred mountains protect the Navajo homeland.
3. Ration: A small amount of food given, often during hard times.
Example: The family got one ration of food each day at the fort.
4. Ceremony: A special event where people gather for tradition, prayer, or celebration.
Example: Dzáníbaá wished to have her kinaaldá ceremony at her homeland.
5. Homeland: The land where your family or people come from.
Example: The Navajo homeland is between the four sacred mountains.
6. Survival: The act of staying alive through hard times.
Example: Songs, prayers, and clans helped the Navajo with survival.

7. Fort: A place built by soldiers for protection and control.
Example: Dzáníbaá was taken to Fort Canby and later to Fort Sumner.
8. Journey: A long trip from one place to another.
Example: The Long Walk was a very hard journey for the Navajo.
9. Tradition: Something people do the same way over time, passed down from elders.
Example: The kinaaldá is a tradition for Navajo girls when they grow up.
10. Resilience: The strength to keep going and not give up.
Example: Dzáníbaá showed resilience during the Long Walk.
11. Soldier: A person who serves in the army.
Example: Soldiers came to the hogan and told the family they must leave.
12. Hogan: A traditional Navajo home made of logs and earth.
Example: Dzáníbaá looked back at her hogan one last time before leaving.
13. Clan: A group of Navajo families related to one another.
Example: Her clan gave Dzáníbaá comfort and identity during the walk.
14. Bosque Redondo: The place in New Mexico where Navajo people were forced to live.
Example: Life at Bosque Redondo was hard and food was scarce.
15. Deportation: Forcing people to leave their home against their will.
Example: The Long Walk was a deportation of the Navajo people.
16. Starvation: Suffering or dying from not having enough food.
Example: Some Navajo families faced starvation on the journey.
17. Return: To go back to one's home.
Example: After years at Bosque Redondo, the Diné were allowed to return.
18. Inequality: Unfair treatment of people who are different.
Example: The Long Walk showed the inequality the Navajo people suffered.
19. Justice: Fair treatment and the righting of wrongs.
Example: Returning to their homeland was a step toward justice.
20. Hope: Believing that good things will come in the future.
Example: Dzáníbaá carried hope that her people would one day be free again.

Resources for Teachers

Books

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