

Performance Task Recording: Text List

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Choose one of the following excerpts from personal narratives written by survivors of American Indian boarding schools on which to base your performance task recording. Most authors have multiple excerpts from which to choose. You will also conduct brief research about the author of your chosen text to provide the audience with some biographical details and context for the excerpt. Remember, you may also choose an appropriate excerpt from your Independent Research Reading texts, if relevant to the task.

Source: *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian Girl at Home* by Marianna Burgess Embe

Note: Stiya, herself, is a fictional character; however, her experiences documented in the book are based on interviews with boarding school survivors.

Text Option A

My father and mother, who were at the station waiting for their daughter, rushed in my direction as soon as they saw me, and talking Indian as fast as they could tried to help me from the train.

My father took my valise, and my mother, seizing me by the arm, threw her head upon my shoulder and cried for joy.

Was I as glad to see them as I thought I would be?

I must confess that instead I was shocked and surprised at the sight that met my eyes. "My father? My mother?" cried I desperately within. "No, never!" I thought, and I actually turned my back upon them. I had forgotten that home Indians had such grimy faces.

I had forgotten that my mother's hair always looked as though it had never seen a comb.

I had forgotten that she wore such a short, queer-looking black bag for a dress, fastened over one shoulder only, and such buckskin wrappings for shoes and leggings.

"My mother?" I cried, this time aloud.

I could not help it, and at the same time I rushed frantically into the arms of my school-mother, who had taken me home, and I remembered then as I never did before how kind she had always been to us. I threw my arms around her neck and cried bitterly, and begged her to let me get on the train again.

Source: Embe, Marianna Burgess. *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian Girl at Home: founded on the author's actual observations*. Riverside Press, 1891.

Text Option B

I also took my father's hand, and through my tears smiled as best I could; but he never shall know how I suffered with mortification and regret that he was such an Indian. Somehow, I had my mind made up that my parents would be different, and it was hard for me to realize that they had been going backwards while I had been going forward for five years . . . I had unconsciously spoken in English. Indeed, I could not speak much Indian, and as my father and mother knew no English, my ride home was almost a silent one as far as I was concerned, but my father and mother talked as they rode along, my father on another burro at our side. I listened carefully to see if the Indian words would not come back to me, and some of them did.

Embe. *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian Girl at Home: founded on the author's actual observations*. Riverside Press, 1891.

Source: *My People the Sioux* by Luther Standing Bear

Text Option A

When the train stopped at the station there was a great crowd of white people there. It was but three years after the killing of Custer by the Sioux, so the white people were anxious to see some Sioux Indians. I suppose many of these people expected to see us coming with scalping-knives between our teeth, bows and arrows in one hand and tomahawk in the other, and to hear a great war-cry as we came off that Iron Horse . . . The place where we stopped was called Sioux City. The white people were yelling at us and making a great noise . . . Many of the little Indian boys and girls were afraid of the white people. I really do not blame them because the whites acted so wild at seeing us. They tried to give the war-whoop and mimic the Indian and in other ways got us all wrought up and excited, and we did not like this sort of treatment . . . The white people were all crowded up close to the windows on the outside, watching us and laughing their heads off at the way we acted (104–105).

Source: Standing Bear, Luther. *My People the Sioux*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928.

Text Option B

So lonesome I felt for my father and mother! I stayed upstairs all by myself, thinking of the good times I might be having if I were only back home, where I could ride my ponies, go wherever I wanted to and do as I pleased, and, when it came night, could lie down and sleep well. Right then and there I learned that no matter how humble your home is, it is yet home (111).

Source: Standing Bear, Luther. *My People the Sioux*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928.

Text Option C

I now began to realize that I would have to learn the ways of the white man. With this idea in mind, the thought also came to me that I must please my father as well. So my little brain began to work hard. I thought that someday I might be able to become an interpreter for my father, as he could not speak English. Or I thought I might be able to keep books for him if he again started a store. So I worked very hard. One day they selected a few boys and told us we were to learn trades. I was to be a tinsmith. I did not care for this, but I tried my best to learn this trade. Mr. Walker was our instructor. I was getting along very well. I made hundreds of tin cups, coffee pots, and buckets. These were sent away and issued to the Indians on various reservations. After I had left the school and returned home, this trade did not benefit me any, as the Indians had plenty of tinware that I had made at school (117).

Source: Standing Bear, Luther. *My People the Sioux*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928.

Source: American Indian Stories by Zitkala-Sa**Text Option A**

I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

Source: Zitkala-Sa. *American Indian Stories*. Hayworth Publishing House, 1921.

Text Option B

It was night when we reached the school grounds. The lights from the windows of the large buildings fell upon some of the icicled trees that stood beneath them. We were led toward an open door, where the brightness of the lights within flooded out over the heads of the excited palefaces who blocked the way. My body trembled more from fear than from the snow I trod upon . . . I had arrived in the wonderful land of rosy skies, but I was not happy, as I had thought I should be. My long travel and the bewildering sights had exhausted me. I fell asleep, heaving deep, tired sobs. My tears were left to dry themselves in streaks, because neither my aunt nor my mother was near to wipe them away.

Source: Zitkala-Sa. *American Indian Stories*. Hayworth Publishing House, 1921.

Source: *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School* by Francis La Flesche

Text Option A

When we entered the Mission School, we experienced a greater hardship, for there we encountered a rule that prohibited the use of our own language, which rule was rigidly enforced with a hickory rod, so that the new-comer, however socially inclined, was obliged to go about like a little dummy until he had learned to express himself in English.

Source: La Flesche, Francis. *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School*. Small, Maynard & Company, 1901.

Source: *Indian School Days* by Basil Johnston

Text Option A

They were a sad lot, this little crowd of babies; they seldom laughed or smiled and often cried and whimpered during the day and at night . . . these little waifs were even more wretched than we were . . . they were hunched in their wretchedness and misery in a corner.

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Text Option B

Clang! Clang! Clang!

"Line up!"

Two serpentine columns of listless boys formed.

"Okay! Quietly!"

But though tongues were quiet, boots beat down on the metal stairs, so that stairs, windows and railings rattled and reverberated from the bottom of the stairwell to the ceiling on the third floor.

In the recreation hall downstairs the boys either stood around in knots or sat slouched on the top board that served as a bench as well as a lid for the boxes that were built into the wall. But as I was to learn later, the boys were not really waiting in the commonly understood sense of the word "wait." Though they may have appeared to be waiting, the boys were in reality exercising a form of quiet disobedience directed against bells, priests, school and, in the abstract, all authority, civil and religious.

Since the boys could not openly defy authority either by walking out of the school and marching north or south on Highway 17 or by flatly refusing to follow an order, they turned to the only means available to them: passive resistance, which took the form of dawdling.

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Text Option C

"Father. Someone made a mistake. I'm supposed to be in Grade 6. I passed Grade 5 already." I tol' Father Buck, but he won't believe me."

Father Mayhew just looked at me. I'm told you're in Grade 5. There's nothing that you can do about it."

But my appointment to Grade 5, as I learned years later, was not a product of misunderstanding but a coldly calculated decision made "for my own good." For if I had been allowed to proceed to Grade 6 as I should have been, it would have disrupted the entire promotion and graduation schedule that decreed that all boys committed to a residential school remain in the institution until age sixteen, or until their parents, if living together, arranged an early parole. If I had progressed at my normal rate through elementary school I would have been ready for "entrance examinations" by age twelve. According to the administration it would not have been appropriate or in the best interests of society to release me or any one of my colleagues prior to age sixteen. The only solution was to have a boy repeat grades until Grade 8 and age sixteen were synchronized.

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Text Option D

But thoughts of family and home did not yield much comfort and strength; instead such memories as one had served to inflame the feelings of alienation and abandonment and to fan the flames of resentment. Soon the silence was broken by the sobs and whimpers of boys who gave way to misery and sadness, dejection and melancholy, heartache and gloom.

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Text Option E

The next thing I remember with clarity was our arrival in the late afternoon at the schools. After my sister was deposited at St Joseph's, I did not see her for another 6 weeks. As for me . . . I was driven to Saint Peter Claver's school . . . all the boys were dressed alike in beige corduroy riding breeches, beige shirts, gray woolen socks and black leather work boots; all were dark and dirty, their heads shaved bald. Every one of them stared and grinned.

Through this crowd a priest made his way to the car. The agents told him who I was and where I came from. 'I'm Father Book,' he said. 'Come with me.'

With fear and misgivings I followed the priest to the third floor, where he ordered me to shed my clothing. He handed me a bar of carbolic soap and shoved me into a shower. 'Scrub. Scrub hard' . . .

When I emerged from this purge, Father Buck gave me a small green bag with my uniform inside and a pair of work boots. After I had dressed, my guide led me to the dormitory where he assigned me a bed in the junior section.

'You are number forty-three,' he informed me, prodding me downstairs, so that I stumbled on the metal top risers and almost fell."

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Text Option F

In we filed and, for the next 20 minutes or a little longer, gave ourselves wholeheartedly to pea soup, bread, lard and green tea from Java. In quantity served there was just enough food to blunt the sharp edge of hunger for three or four hours, never enough to dispel hunger completely until the next meal. Every crumb was eaten and the last morsel of bread was used to sponge up any residue of soup that might still be clinging to the side or to the bottom of the plates, thereby leaving the place clean and dry, the way puppies lick their dishes clean. There was the same quantity for every boy, regardless of size or need. Yet not even the 'little shots', whose injestive capacities were considerably less than those of their elders and who therefore should have required and received less, were ever heard to extol a meal with 'I'm full'. 'I'm full' was an expression alien in our world and to our experience.

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Text Option G

Never having the luxury of a second serving or an extra slice, the boys formed a healthy regard for food that bordered on reverence that shaped their eating habits . . . Meals became rituals almost as solemn as religious services in their intensity, the only sound the clatter of spoons on plates and mugs and the muted 'Pass the mush' or 'You owe me a slice'; 'When you going to pay me that lard you owe me?' 'I'm so hungry right now, can you wait till tomorrow?'

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Text Option H

In comparison with courses of study in other schools, our curriculum would have been regarded as below standards. It's true that we did not have access to a well-stocked library, or attend classes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It's also true that we were taught to know what to do with what little we knew; we were taught to be resourceful. But unless one has a sense of worth and dignity, resourcefulness, intelligence and shrewdness are of little advantage.

Source: Johnston, Basil. *Indian School Days*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Source: *On the Warpath* (album) by Peter LaFarge**Text Option A****"Drums"**

From the Indian reservation to the governmental school,
Well they're going to educate me to the White man's Golden Rule.
And I am learning quickly, for I've learned to be ashamed.
And I come when they call "Billy" though I've got an Indian name.

But there are drums beyond the mountain. Indian drums that you can't hear.
There are drums beyond the mountain, and they're getting mighty near.
Now when they think that they'd changed me, cut my hair to meet their needs,
Will they think I'm white or Indian, quarter blood or just half breed?

Say, let me tell you, Mr. Teacher, who is going to make me "right,"
In six hundred years of fighting not one Indian turned white.

Well, you thought that I knew nothing when you brought me here to school.

Just another empty Indian, just America's first fool.
But I can tell you stories that are burnt and dried and old.
And in the shadow of their telling walks the thunder, brave and bold.

Why, there's Long Pine and Sequoia, Handsome Lake and Sitting Bull,
There's Mangas Colorado with his sleeves so red and full,
There goes Crazy Horse, the legend, and those who bit off Custer's soul.
They are dead, yet they are living with the great Geronimo.

Well, you may teach me this land's history, but we taught it to you first.
We broke your hearts, we bent your journeys; broken treaties left us cursed.

Even now you have to cheat us even though you think us tame.
In our losing we found proudness; in your winning you found shame.

Source: LaFarge, Peter. "Drums." *On the Warpath*, Folkways Records, 1965.

Source: *Song of Eskasoni: More Poems of Rita Joe* by Rita Joe

Text Option A

"I Lost My Talk"

I lost my talk
The talk you took away
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school
You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my world.
Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful.
So gently I offer my hand and ask
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.

Source: Joe, Rita. "I Lost My Talk." *Song of Eskasoni: More Poems of Rita Joe*. Prince Edward Island, Canada: Ragweed Press, 1988.

Source: *Original Fire: Selected and New Poems by Louise Erdrich*

Text Option A

"Indian Boarding School: The Runaways"

Home's the place we head for in our sleep.
Boxcars stumbling north in dreams
don't wait for us. We catch them on the run.
The rails, old lacerations that we love,
shoot parallel across the face and break
just under Turtle Mountains. Riding scars
you can't get lost. Home is the place they cross.

The lame guard strikes a match and makes the dark
less tolerant. We watch through cracks in boards
as the land starts rolling, rolling till it hurts
to be here, cold in regulation clothes.
We know the sheriff's waiting at midrun
to take us back. His car is dumb and warm.
The highway doesn't rock, it only hums
like a wing of long insults. The worn-down welts
of ancient punishments lead back and forth.

All runaways wear dresses, long green ones,
the color you would think shame was. We scrub
the sidewalks down because it's shameful work.
Our brushes cut the stone in watered arcs
and in the soak frail outlines shiver clear
a moment, things us kids pressed on the dark
face before it hardened, pale, remembering
delicate old injuries, the spines of names and leaves.

Source: Erdrich, Louise. "Indian Boarding School: The Runaways." *Original Fire: Selected and New Poems*. Harper, 2003.

Source: *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* by Celia Haig-Brown

Note: Excerpts provided are from interviews conducted by the author, Haig-Brown, with many American Indian boarding school survivors.

Text Option A

But the time that really, really gets to the bottom of my soul; the first day back . . . You're feeling pretty lonesome, suddenly go to bed and in the morning, you wake up and you see this white ceiling. You may as well have a knife and stab me through my heart. You know where you are and you got to survive and you just cover it over, seal it up for ten months. (Mary, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option B

And the thing I remembered when she used to strap me . . . I knew I was going to get five or ten straps on each hand and I knew it was going to draw blood – but I would remind myself, "It's not going to hurt. Just so I can make you angry, I'm not going to let you know it hurts . . ." and I would just stare at her in the face . . . and I wouldn't even let a drop, a tear come down. (Sophie, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option C

All in all my life hasn't really been that bad. It is just knowing I went through that humiliation and that hurt, that low self-esteem and having come out of it. And never letting that hate leave a scar on me . . . I have this place and the people that put me through it to thank for the strength I got . . . a lot of strength to fight back and that strength I got is what's made me into the woman I am today. (Sophie, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option D

In my time, we were always hungry . . . I seen them bringing in boxes and boxes of apples not too far from the dairy room. So I got these young women and I said, 'How are we going to get some apples?' . . . So for days and days the girls were scrounging around for strings and my job was to look for spike nails . . . We tied the strings together and there was an airhole in the root cellar. So we have all these girls watching out for us . . . and we try to spike apples. That's how we used to get our apples to feed the little ones. . . We got caught and we got punished but it took a long time because we supported each other in our crime. (Martha, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option E

I can remember Dad left really early that morning 'cause he never, ever wanted to see us go off to school. And when he left that morning at five, I tried sneaking out with him. He was really crying, my dad was. And he told me, "No, you stay. You got to go to school." And I just said, "No, I want to stay with you. I want to stay with you." And I was crying just as hard as he was. Finally, I just wrapped my arms and legs right around him and every time he went to take a step, he had to

pack me with him 'cause I was hanging on to him so hard. He walked back in the house and pulled me off of him and sat me on the couch and he finally yelled at me, "You sit right there and don't you move until them people come." But he was crying. He walked out and he got on his horse and went and left. That was really hard to take, you know . . . (Linda, Lillooett Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option F

In the morning, we had to get up at six o'clock, perfect silence. We all took turns going into the bathroom: we'd fill our basin full of water and we'd take it to our bedside. We'd wash, take that basin, empty it, clean it out, put it back, fix our bed, get dressed and as soon as you're finished - you only had half an hour to do all this - brush your teeth, get in a line and stand in line in perfect silence. If you're caught ever speaking one word, boy, you got cuffed around. (Sophie, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option G

And then we marched from there down to the chapel and we spent over an hour in the chapel every morning, every blessed morning. And there they interrogated us on what it was all about being an Indian . . . He would just get so carried away; he was punching away at that old altar rail . . . to hammer it into our heads that we were not to think or act or speak like an Indian. And that we would go to hell and burn for eternity if we did not listen to their way of teaching. (Sophie, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option H

They started teaching me their religion . . . telling me who God was, what Hell was and what angels were . . . They said, ". . . Anybody that doesn't go to church is a pagan." I started thinking, "Hey, my parents don't go to church all the time. They must be pagans . . ." I thought, "Gee, our family is really the pits." And I'd go home and I'd be really ashamed of my parents. (Alice, Thompson Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option I

You got used to it, [the school] . . . You were torn in-between . . . I know I blamed my parents for putting me there because I felt they didn't want me. And I blamed the sisters and the fathers that they were trying to take something away from me . . . I felt I was beginning to have hate . . . I was beginning to have resentment against my mother and my dad because I felt . . . that they didn't love me, that they just put me in there and threw me to the wolves. (Martha, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option J

I complained, "I would like to be a doctor or a teacher but I'm just an Indian and Indians don't become doctors." And I'd keep on this. "I would like to go to big school, university they call it . . . There's nobody there who's Indian."

She was a little tiny woman. She jumped up and stamped her feet . . . She said, "That's an excuse . . . You have hands, you have a mind, you have people who lived long before you who had a control of life . . . That is Indian. That is Shuswap. You have it flowing through your veins . . . It is because you are an Indian that you do well whatever you do . . ." (Charlie, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option K

You know something funny about speaking your own language. When I first come out of school, I was embarrassed to speak my language in front of white people . . . Now I speak Shuswap any place and any time . . . But it took about three or four years . . . to get away from that embarrassment of speaking it on the street . . . They just about brainwashed us out of it. (Leo, Shuswap Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Text Option L

I spoke Indian when I went to school. I could speak some English because [my sisters] went to school. So you learnt. They told you when they came back . . . "You can't speak Indian; you got to speak English. If you speak Indian, you get whipped." It took them a long time to get it out of me. And to this day . . . I speak some words . . . But I don't speak it fluently. I used to be able to speak it fluently before I went to school. (Linda, Lillooett Tribal Nation)

Source: Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988.

Sources:

Embe. *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian Girl at Home: founded on the author's actual observations*. Riverside Press, 1891. HathiTrust. Web. Public domain.

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