

March Toward The Thunder
Discussion Guide
Grades 7-9

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

Before using this book with your class or recommending the book to students we suggest reading the book closely to determine if it is a good fit. Consider saying to your students:

“This book contains topics that may be sensitive. Not all books fit all readers. If you are uncomfortable with this book, you have the right to stop reading it, but please pick another.”

- Watch this video to activate background knowledge and enhance engagement:
<https://americanindian.si.edu/static/why-we-serve/video/>
- As a class, explore the remaining The Civil War resources on the website for the National Museum of the American Indian.
- Have students engage in a jigsaw read protocol using the following texts: 1) [How the US Civil War Divided Indian Nations \(History.com\)](#) and 2) [The Civil War Wasn't Just About the Union and the Confederacy. Native Americans Played a Role Too \(Time.com\)](#).
- Consider utilizing the resource titled *The Forgotten Warriors of the Civil War*, from the National Park Services website.
- Utilize RIF's [Titles Can Be Telling](#) graphic organizer to make predictions, connections, and reflections throughout the story.

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- Prologue (p. 1-3): Why do you think the author chose to write this chapter to start the story?
- Ch. 2: A recruiter persuades Louis to join the army although he is underage. Do you think that is moral or immoral? What might this tell us about what motivates Louis? Explain your answer.
- Ch. 4: Louis is determined to be a strong soldier. Have you ever wanted to perfect a goal of yours before? How did you reach that goal? Give an example from your own life.
- Ch. 6: How does Louis feel about being an American Indian? How do the soldiers treat Louis knowing he is an American Indian? Give examples from the story.
- Ch. 8: Why do you think the author chose to include the italicized portions in the text? How does that help us understand Louis' character?
- Ch. 12: How do you imagine Louis is feeling after the “Bloody Angle”, knowing his character? Give examples from the text.
- Ch. 16: In what ways does Sergeant Flynn think the Irish are like American Indians? Do you agree or disagree? How might people from different minorities be (un)able to understand one another? Explain your answer.
- Pg. 129, Ch. 17: On page 129, Flynn says, “If ye don't know which way t' go, then march toward the thunder”. What do you think this means? How does this help us better understand the title?
- End of Ch. 17: Why do you believe Merry lied about their identity? What does Merry and Louis' friendship demonstrate? Give examples from the text.

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- Ch. 18 and Ch. 21: How valuable are the newspapers to Louis and his company? Why do you think they are this valuable? Give examples from the story.
- Ch. 19: Why do you think songs are so important to the characters?
- Ch. 23: What are some of the worst hardships Louis and his company have faced as they have traveled and fought? How do they survive these events? What tactics or techniques would you use to survive if you were in this situation? Explain your answer.
- Ch. 27: Do you think Louis has good reasons for becoming a soldier? Why or why not? What reasons might you find to be convincing of such a challenge?
- Ch. 30: How do you imagine Louis is feeling at this point in the war? Use experiences directly from the book to explain his feelings.
- Ch. 32: Why do you think the author chose to end the chapter this way? Have you read other stories where the author uses this technique?
- Ch. 35: How does Louis' relationship and interactions with his mom demonstrate aspects of the Native American culture?
- After final chapter: How did the friendship between Louis and Artis help them survive? Do you have any relationships that help you push through challenges?

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- **Discuss:** Why do you think the author chose to write a historical fiction story based on real events rather than a nonfiction story? What are the differences?
- **Discuss:** Why is it important to read about **marginalized** communities and their experiences on historical events? How many experiences should you study in order to fully understand an event?
- **Reflect:** How might people learn more about their own identities by reading about others? How does your history affect how you live your life?
- **Extend:** Engage your students in a cultural representation activity by comparing and contrasting their own experiences with elements of the story using a Venn diagram.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Have them research the history American Indian soldiers in The Civil War and make connections between the true events and what they read in the story.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.