

Storytelling: A Look at Jim Thorpe

In this lesson, students will learn about Jim Thorpe, a Native American athlete who excelled in multiple sports, the challenges he faced, and his lasting impact on sports history.

Grades: 6-8	Subject: SS & ELA
Essential Question(s)	What significant events caused trauma in Jim Thorpe's life?
Focus Standard(s)	D2.His.2.6-8 Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity. RI.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
Learning Objective	Students will be able to explain how Jim Thorpe's legacy was restored long after his death reflects broader themes of change and continuity in American history.
Materials/Resources	America's Own "Greatest Athlete" Chart paper
Vocabulary	Perseverance: quality of not giving up; resilience: strength to bounce back from hardships; agility: ability to move quickly and easily; beacon: bright light, sign
Anticipatory Set	Begin by asking students, "Who are some famous athletes that you know today?" (Encourage students to name well-known figures.) Then ask, "What makes someone the 'greatest' athlete in history? Is it about winning the most games, breaking records, or something else?" (Allow time for students to discuss.)
Mini-Lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce Jim Thorpe and provide some background information using the Slide Show and video feature within the article. 2. Read the article aloud with students, focusing on his major achievements, including his Olympic wins and his diverse skills in multiple sports. 3. After reading, ask students to consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What events in Jim Thorpe's life reflect change? [reinstatement of his Olympic medals] • What parts of his life represent continuity? (ongoing status as an athletic icon and the perseverance he demonstrated) 4. On a piece of chart paper, make a timeline of Thorpe's life, highlighting key events like his Olympic victories, the loss of his medals, his NFL career, and his reinstatement as a champion.
Activity	Have students either independently, or with a partner, retell the true story of Jim Thorpe. Invite them to think about the following questions: "Was his life a tragedy? Or was he triumphant? How do you want other people to remember Jim Thorpe? How can storytellers alter people's perceptions?"
Closure/Assessment	Ask students, "What can we learn from Jim Thorpe's story about overcoming challenges and leaving a lasting legacy?" Invite students to reflect on one key moment that stands out to them.
Differentiation	Adjust lexile® levels as needed. Use accessibility and Read to Me features. Print copies of articles.