



Te Ata:  
Oklahoma Cultural Treasure  
by Pati Hailey  
Instructional Guide for Teachers



### ***Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure***

Pati Hailey loves to write both non-fiction and fiction. She writes training materials for large corporations, lesson plans for Educational publishers, articles for magazines, and books for children and young adults. She has been published in both *Cricket* and *Hopscotch* magazines.

Te Ata's life and work hold a special meaning for Pati. Her grandmother was a full-blood Cherokee. Her family kept this a secret for a very long time because of the attitudes toward Native Americans. She grew up with no knowledge of her Cherokee heritage. She understands on a deep level the ramifications of lost traditions, culture, and heritage.

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## **Note for Teachers**

This teacher's guide for *Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure* is designed for use in classrooms of third through fifth grade students. However, teachers of other grades can easily modify the lessons and activities to match the level of their students.

This guide was created to be used in the classroom to supplement subjects of English language arts and social studies. Some activities also use visual arts, and drama to engage students in the learning process.

Although many other states use the Common Core State Standards in their schools, Oklahoma schools currently use the Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills. Oklahoma Hall of Fame Publishing purposely tried to integrate relevant standards and skills from both into the lessons and activities for this teacher's guide.

# English Language Arts

## Reading Comprehension

Hold up the book *Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure*. Have students answer the following questions:

Q: What is the title of this book?

A: *Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure*

Q: Who is the author of *Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure*?

A: Pati Hailey

Ask students to describe what they see in the photo on the front cover. (a Native American woman in traditional dress sitting by a lake) Ask students to tell who the woman might be and why a photo of a Native American in traditional dress was used on the cover. (*Te Ata*; the book might be about *Te Ata*'s love of the outdoors or her love of traditional dress)

Have students identify the following parts of the book: front cover, spine, back cover, title page, copyright page, table of contents, and back matter. Discuss the need for each book part. Help students understand how the different parts of the back matter can be used to better understand the text and to provide more information about *Te Ata*. Point out that boldfaced words in the text are words listed in the glossary at the back of the book.

Tell students this book is a biography, a true, nonfiction text about a real person's life. Ask students to tell what facts they think might be included in a biography. Then open the book to its table of contents. Have volunteers read aloud the titles of the book chapters.

Read aloud the book to the students or ask volunteers to read aloud passages from the text.

Ask students to answer the following questions about the text:

- How is the text organized? For example, is it written in mostly chronological order (from *Te Ata*'s younger years through to her older years) or written according to his favorite times in life or written in another way? (mostly chronological order)
- Where was *Te Ata* born? (in Emet, in Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory)
- Why do you think *Te Ata*'s father did not want to teach his children to speak the Chickasaw language? (He worried they would not fit in the white society.)
- What was one of *Te Ata*'s great loves? (nature, the outdoors, Native American culture) What makes you think this? (Many chapters in the book told about her love of nature, the outdoors, and the Chickasaw culture.)
- What can you infer as the reason *Te Ata* chose to perform a one person show about Native American culture instead of being an actress in movies? (She wanted to show the world the beauty and wisdom of the culture.)

- What caused Te Ata to hide under her bed at Bloomfield Academy to do beadwork? (Girls attending Bloomfield Academy were not allowed to do anything related to the Chickasaw culture.)
- How are biographies the same and different from fiction books? (Both biographies and fiction books can have chapters. Both biographies and fiction books can be about real people but biographies are about true events in a real person's life; fiction books may have made up events about characters who are real.)
- Why do you think the Eleanor Roosevelt named a lake in New York state for Te Ata? (She was proud of Te Ata's achievements and wanted to honor her.)
- Te Ata gathered folklore and artifacts from many different Native American tribes and used them in her performances. Why?
- What sport did Te Ata play at Bloomfield Academy? (basketball) What other physical activities did she like? (running and jumping)
- What did Te Ata choose as her life work or purpose? (changing the attitudes of people around the world about Native Americans.) Was she successful? (Yes.) How do you know? (today Chickasaws are allowed to practice the traditions of their culture, visitors from around the world come to learn about and experience Chickasaw Culture at the Chickasaw Cultural Museum)

### **Activity #1: Drama**

Have students choose a passage from the book to dramatize. Passages they might choose include Te Ata performing on the Chautauqua circuit, performing for President Roosevelt, Te Ata sitting around campfire with kids telling them stories, perform the story at the back of the book (How Day and Night Came to Be.)

Ask students to think of other ideas for how day and night might be divided. In Oklahoma are the days and nights equal times? (In the summer daytime is longer than in the winter)

### **Activity #2: Visual Arts**

Ask students to draw a picture of a scene from a chapter in *Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure*. Then have students write a caption under their illustration which describes the scene. Have children tell which chapter it is from.

### **Activity #3: Using Back Matter as a Reference Tool**

Have students use the back matter to answer the following questions:

- Chapter 4 includes the word **boarding school** in boldfaced letters. What part of the back matter explains the meaning of this word? (glossary) What is the meaning of this word? (a school where students live during the school year. They do not go home or see their families very often.)
- What part of the back matter tells the years that events in Te Ata's life occurred? (Timeline) Using the timeline, when was Te Ata featured in the Girl Scouts of the USA calendar as one of America's hidden heroines? (1976)
- Te Ata's real name. What was she called by family and in school. Mary Thompson.

- What did Te Ata first want to study when she went to college? (Forestry. She wanted to learn about how to plant and grow trees.) Why? (Te Ata loved nature. Quote on page 17, “Everything that grew or flew or fruited appealed to me and I wanted to find out more about everything in nature.”)
- Why was Te Ata’s father opposed to her going to college. (Women were expected to marry and have children at that time of history.)

#### **Activity #4: Writing**

Ask students to choose one of the following prompts to write a paragraph with complete sentences:

- Create or make up a story about Te Ata and her mother walking through nature choosing plants to make something useful. Include dialogue between them. Describe what they want to make.
- Think of a person’s biography you would like to read. Tell why you would like to read about this person’s life.
- What plant would you like to know more about? Why? Describe which reference materials you could use to locate various facts about this animal.

## **Social Studies**

Remind students that *Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure* includes two maps within the chapters. Open the book to the first map in Chapter 2, page 9.

Have students answer the following questions:

- What state’s outline is shown on the map? (Oklahoma)
- Which part of former Indian Territory is shown in brown? (Chickasha Nation)
- What Oklahoma Chickasaw Nation town is shown on the map? (Emet)
- What symbol on the map shows the location of Emet? (a star)
- Most maps are shown with north at the top of the map, south at the bottom, east at the right, and west at the left of the map. In which part of Oklahoma is Chickasha located? (in the southeastern part)

Open the book to its second map in Chapter 4, page 14.

Have students answer the following questions:

- Which part of Indian Territory is shown in brown on the map? (Chickasaw Nation)
- What do the stars on the map indicate? (location of Emet, Tishomingo and Bloomfield Academy)
- Why is it necessary to indicate the locations with stars? Why can’t the names of the towns show their locations? (The stars show the exact locations; The names are too long to pinpoint the exact locations.)
- In which parts of Oklahoma are the towns located? (southeastern Oklahoma)

**Activity: Maps**

Ask students to draw their own outline map of the state (or country if not born in the U.S.) in which they were born. Then ask them to place a star on the location of the town (or area) in which they were born and to label it with the town name.

**Activity: Research**

Use *Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure* as a reference for a research project. Students may do research in groups or alone.

- Subject: Muriel Wright
  - Why was Muriel Wright important in Te Ata's life?
  - What special honor does Muriel Wright share with Te Ata?
  - Why did Muriel Wright receive this honor?
  - Which tribe was Muriel Wright from?
  - Why was Muriel Wright a role model to Te Ata?
  - What did Muriel Wright ask Te Ata to do that Te Ata had been forbidden to do before?
  - Why was this important?
  - Where did Muriel Wright teach when Te Ata was her student?
- Subject Francis Davis
  - Why was Francis Davis important in Te Ata's life?
  - What special honor does Francis Davis share with Te Ata?
  - Why did Francis Davis receive this honor?
  - When, where and how did Francis Davis meet Te Ata ?
  - Why was Francis Davis a role model to Te Ata?
  - How did Francis Davis help Te Ata get work as an actress?
  - What did Francis Davis ask Te Ata to do to show before she gave her the lead in the play, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.