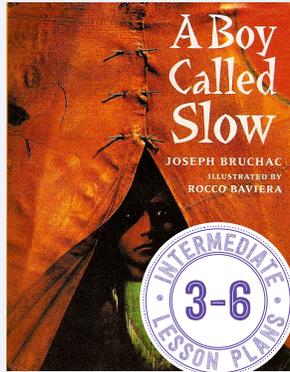


# A Boy Called Slow

by Joseph Bruchac

## Themes

Never Give Up  
Determination  
Perseverance  
Practice



This beautifully illustrated story tells the tale of how Native American legend, Sitting Bull, earned his name. Children of the Lakota Sioux tribe earned their names based on how they were perceived by the tribe members. As a boy, Sitting Bull was named Slow. This tale of perseverance shows how Slow “Never Gave Up” as he worked hard to reach his goal of earning a new name, a name of which he could be proud.

### Key Vocabulary

**Legend:** a popular story handed down from earlier generations. Often explains how or why something came to be.

**Deed:** an act or accomplishment

**Vision:** looking to the future at something that might happen

**Bravery:** quality of being fearless, ready to face danger

**Courage:** face fear or danger without fear of what might happen

**Determination:** doing what’s required to accomplish something

**Reputation:** what other’s think of you based on your actions

**Inherited:** common traits that are shared between parent and child

**Murmuring:** low, soft, continuous sound

**Deliberate:** said or done on purpose

**Raid:** sudden attack to take possession of others

### Tricky Phrasing

**Quick as the whirlwind:** simile-comparing the speed of dogs pulling load to a fast moving wind

**Cried in Triumph:** sense of joy from success, usually after a war or battle

**Hunkpapa band or people:** one of 7 council fires of Lakota Sioux Native Americans

**Lakota Sioux:** also known as Teton Sioux from the Great Plains; occupied lands in both North and South Dakota

**Tiyospaye:** extended family; circle of relatives including mother, father, grandfather, aunts, uncles & cousins

**Travois:** frame for carrying a heavy load, often behind a dog

**Tanned its skin:** process of turning animal skin to leather

**Moccasins:** slipper-like shoe

**Breech cloth:** strip of material (usually bark, cloth or leather) that is attached to a belt and wraps from front to back

**Coup stick:** sticks which warriors touched their enemies in battle as a sign of courage

### Native American Vocabulary

## Discussion Starters

- How did the Hunkpapa tribe name babies? How does this differ from how you were named?**  
*Childhood name given based on the way a child acted. Answers will vary – family name handed down, often decided before birth, always given with 1-2 days of actual birth, sometimes several names until they see baby-then decide.*
- Why was he named ‘Slow’? How did his name make him feel about himself as a young boy? How could a boy change his name?**  
*It took him a long time to eat and come when called - every action was slow moving! He was not happy, but most young boys were not happy with their names. He had to earn a new name by having a powerful dream or by doing some brave or special deed.*
- Slow ‘Never Gave Up’ trying to earn a new name. What did he do to work towards his goal?**  
*He listened to his mother tell stories about his father’s bravery in battle; Remembered his father*

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sharing horses with the other people (generosity & wisdom); Used his gift of listening to animals; was proud of his father and wanted to be like him. He did his best at racing, hunting and wrestling, and kept practicing. He was careful and deliberate in everything he did. Once he decided, he put his head down and went forward - he NEVER GAVE UP!

**4. How did the tribe prepare for battle? How was this different from how Slow prepared?**

The men of the tribe put on their best clothing, marked their faces with paint, had war shields, coup sticks and lances. Slow only wore his moccasins, breech cloth and held a coup stick.

**5. What happened at the battle with the Crow? Why was this significant to Slow's goal of getting a new name?**

Slow didn't wait for his father to give word to attack - he went first, and so fast that the others could not catch up. He struck first in battle-he was NOT slow. He was victorious in the battle.

**6. What was Slow's new name? How did it impact his life?**

Tatan'ka lyota'ke means Sitting Bull. It was one of the strong names given to his father when he encountered the old bull buffalo. Sitting Bull went on to become of the greatest of all warriors. Success comes through NEVER GIVING UP (effort).

## Writing Prompt

What would you like your Native American name to be? Why? What things could you do in your life to make sure your name reflected who you are? Write about your goals and include 3 specific things you will try to do so that your name is true about you. Remember - NEVER GIVE UP on your goals.

## Activities

### Make a Class Book

If you were to be named today based on your actions, what would your Native American name be and why? Give 2-3 examples to support your choice. Challenge students to be bold in naming their own talents and traits, particularly reserved students. Create leather-looking paper to write your final drafts for a class booklet of all the "new names" of the students. To illustrate each page, try chalk art in the style of Plains Indians (study the story's illustration style). Spray pages with fixative to keep chalk from smearing.

### Write a Story

Write your own creative version of *A Boy Called Slow* in today's setting and call it "A Boy Called \_\_\_\_" or "A Girl Called \_\_\_\_." Explain why you were named. Using the printable as a guide, follow a similar story structure as author Joseph Bruchac. Follow all steps of the writing process (pre-write, draft, revise, edit, publish) to finish your story. Make a cover for your story using the leather-look paper. Share the stories with the class!

### CREATE LEATHER-LIKE PAPER:

- Tear** paper bags open at the seam. Cut out the bottom rectangle to make a flat piece of paper.
- Soak** the paper in water
- Crumple** the bag tightly, squeezing out excess water. Unfold the paper, smooth lightly, and lay flat for drying. Leave as many wrinkles in the paper as possible.
- Brush** thinned brown or black paint over the paper. Use paper towels to remove most of the paint, leaving a mottled look to simulate aged leather
- Let it **dry** completely before **tearing** the paper into desired size; do not use scissors, as the torn edge will add to the leather look. Hint: Use a Q-Tip and water to draw a curved line where you want to tear the paper - it will tear easier along the wet line.
- Add chalk drawings & pencil writing.



PRINTABLE:

Story Structure

Info

Accelerated Reading Quiz: 16870

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

AUTHOR JOSEPH BRUCHAC'S WRITING PLAN	YOUR STORY PLAN
Title: A Boy Called Slow	Title: A _____ Called _____
A baby is born – <i>details about family</i>	
A baby is named – <i>the reasons for the name</i>	
How you feel about the name	
Learning what you need to do to earn a new name - <i>Explain how you will NEVER GIVE UP as you practice and get better!</i>	
The moment of triumph	
Earning the name change	
What can happen after your name is changed	

