



First Nations

Literacy

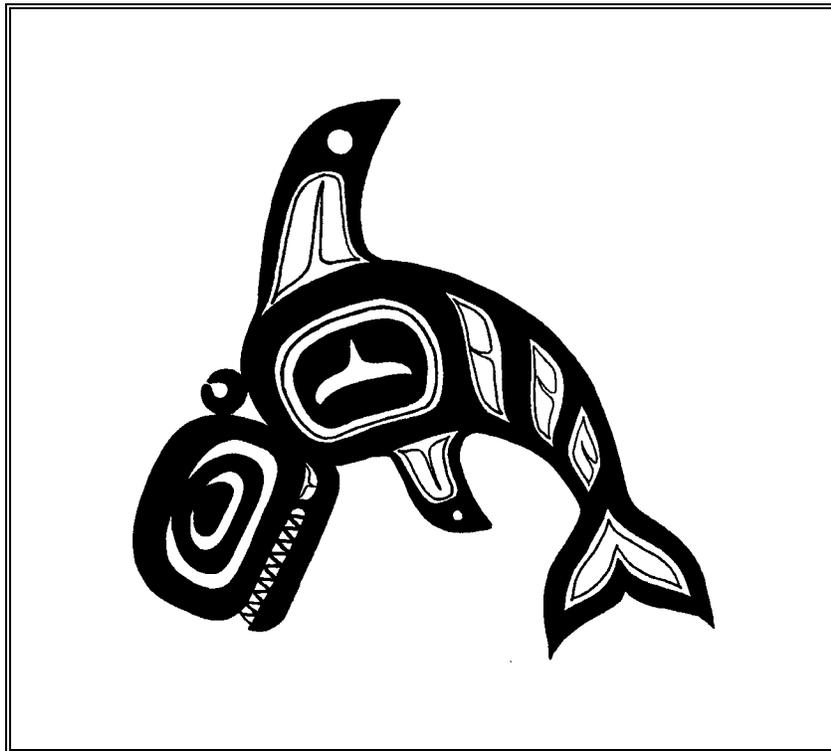
Theme Units

An Instructor's Guide



# INTRODUCTORY

## NOTES



# INTRODUCTORY NOTES

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These theme units have been developed for First Nations groups in British Columbia who are working together to improve their literacy skills. The units cover a wide variety of topics and issues, but share one basic objective: to provide First Nations adults with an opportunity to examine their place in this world in the light of historical events, present conditions, and future paths for First Nations people.

Language is the medium that we, as humans beings, use to name the world around us, to think about that world, to exchange information, ideas and feelings. When we understand literacy as the ability to use language in all its forms, we see that learning to be literate does not take place in a vacuum. We see that literacy cannot be taught or learned as if it were a package of skills, void of any value or content. Literacy is part of a bigger picture, one that includes history, present social and economic conditions, ideas, feelings, etc. In this context, these theme units offer opportunities for reflection, dialogue, reading, writing, and action. Learners are invited to discuss issues that are important to them and encouraged to express and exchange ideas about those issues.

These theme units represent a community-based/learner-centred literacy program based on *community connectedness* and *self-expression*. This type of program provides opportunities for the learners to become more knowledgeable about the various communities to which they belong, and to recognize that they are members of various levels of community: they are aboriginal people of the Americas, they are members of a particular First Nation, and they are citizens of Canada. These theme units provide First Nations learners with opportunities to recognize the voices of other First Nations people and to find their own.

There is a certain amount of overlap and repetition of tasks in the various theme units, but this approach enables learners to examine issues from more than one perspective, and provides practice and reinforcement of the literacy skills they are acquiring.

The designs on the covers of each unit have no particular significance to the material. Their sole purpose is to provide a First Nations motif.

There are five theme units:

Unit 1: An Introduction to Communication

Unit 2: First Nations History in British Columbia

Unit 3: An Exploration of Our Communities

Unit 4: An Introduction to First Nations Literature

Unit 5: Making Sense of the Legal System

The first theme unit, Introduction to Communication, has a large selection of activities based on elements of everyday life. It introduces topics that are explored in greater detail in the subsequent theme units, and it provides easy opportunities for learners to begin developing the reading, writing, and analytical skills they will apply in working on later theme units.

The time taken to complete each theme unit will vary according to the number of activities you do, the number of extension activities you choose to include, the literacy levels of your learning group, and the resources available to individuals and the group. You may want to allow some time for learners to read independently (novels, stories, or any other materials not contained in the theme unit), and you may want to spend extra time with learners who need more specific help. But make sure that the bulk of your time with the learning group is spent on the theme units. It is important to schedule the work so that the learners maintain a sense of progress in each unit.

Any literacy group is bound to be multi-levelled. Throughout the theme units there are activities that lend themselves to cooperative learning; in these activities more advanced learners can teach others while still improving their own skills. Not all learners will be able to read, write, and express themselves on all topics. But all learners need to “have a stab” at everything. Writing a few “key” words, instead of a whole paragraph, may be a useful start for some learners. Some may need to read with help from another learner or from you, the instructor. Exposing these learners to more and more reading, writing, and speaking is an important part of improving their literacy skills.

Don't let yourself get bogged down by thinking that your learners' level is not high enough for a particular task. Assume that your learners are competent, and you will find ways to make the activities work for everybody, as each learner will approach the activity from his or her own level.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

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A number of teaching and learning strategies are referred to throughout these theme units. These are printed in **boldface** type when mentioned in the various activities. They are listed below in alphabetical order with a brief description that you can refer to as you work through the theme units.

### **Audiotapes**

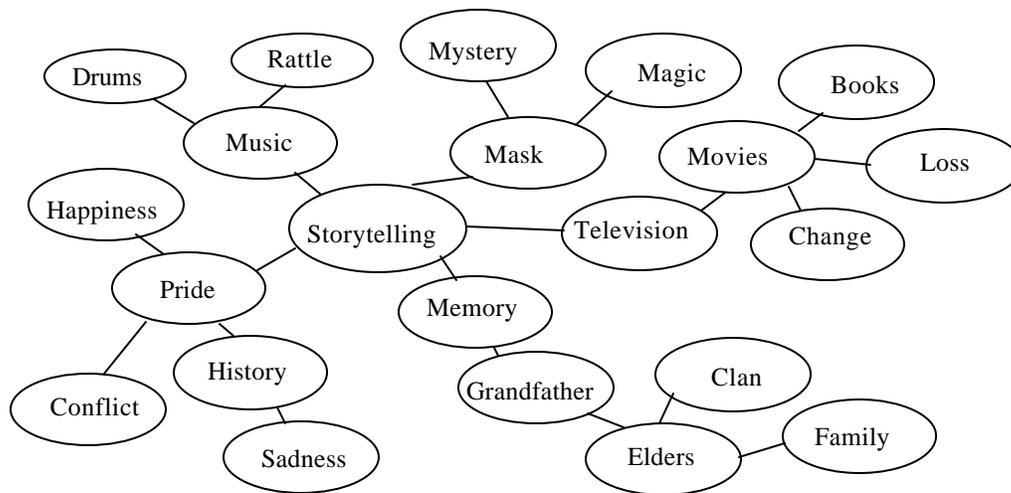
Audiotapes can be an efficient medium for recording interviews, stories, and cultural events. Nevertheless, transcribing recorded material into print form can be a long and boring task. A good way to handle this task is to assign a number of learners to transcribe five minutes of tape each. The work is often easier when learners work in pairs: one operates the tape recorder as they listen to the tape together and agree on the exact words spoken, while the other does the actual transcription.

### **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming sessions are fast-moving activities in which learners are encouraged to come up with any and all ideas about a given topic. The ideas do not need to be complete sentences; they can be words or phrases. What is important is that all ideas are valid. Do not stop the flow of ideas by allowing the group to critique, analyse or justify the ideas put forth. The purpose is to get learners thinking about the subject in a lively and entertaining way, and to make them aware of the various aspects of the topic. During a brainstorming session, the instructor can take on the role of the recorder and write a list or make a web of ideas, as they are expressed.

### Clustering, concept-mapping, or webbing

This is a technique designed to give a visual form to thoughts. Usually, a central idea/issue is written down in the middle and circled. As related ideas begin to emerge in the discussion or conversation, key words are written around the central issue, circled and connected with lines between each other and/or with the central issue.



### Double-entry journal

This kind of journal combines facts and commentary. Factual notes are written on the left hand side of the page; comments, questions, key words, concerns and any other observations are written on the right hand side.

### Guided discussion

This is a discussion directed by the facilitator (or instructor), usually by posing a number of questions designed to focus attention on specific issues.

### Note-taking

This is the process of writing down important bits of information while a talk, discussion, or activity is going on. After the activity is over, the notes serve as a reminder of what was said or discussed and help the note-taker to learn and understand key concepts. There is no right or wrong way to take notes. Some people jot down key words or phrases; others write complete sentences. Many people use abbreviations and symbols. Generally, notes are meant to be understood only by the person who took them.

**Open-ended discussion**

This is a discussion in which participants are free to offer ideas and opinions without the pressures of being “right” or “wrong.” The purpose of an open-ended discussion is not to arrive at a consensus or agreement, but rather to create a safe environment where everybody can feel comfortable enough to express his or her views.

**Peer editing**

This is a process in which other learners (or friends, co-workers, family members) provide feedback about the content and form of a learner’s writing. This feedback is a measure of the clarity and effectiveness of the writing. It tells the writer whether the intended message has been understood or not.

When a group of learners use the peer editing process, it is important to establish some firm rules before they start:

- Comments must be framed positively; putdowns are hurtful and unhelpful.
- Comments on content must come before comments on spelling, punctuation, etc.
- The writer must be consulted before any marks are made on her or his paper, and marks in red are not allowed.
- Written commentaries must be clearly written and must not cover up what is already written.

These rules could also apply to an instructor’s comments on the learner’s work.

**Quick-writing**

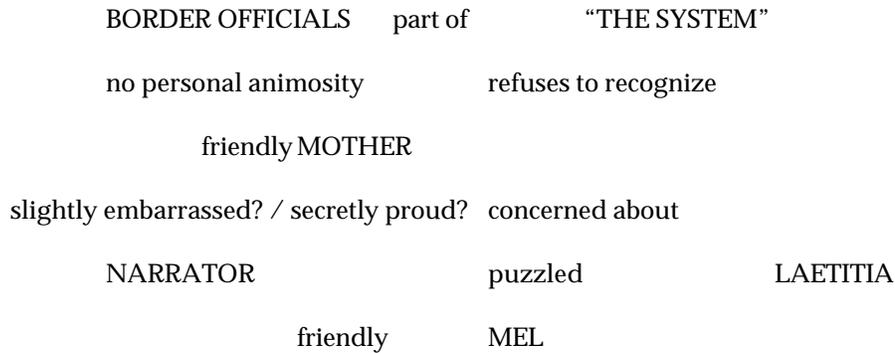
In this activity, learners are asked to write down whatever comes to mind as they think about a topic, issue, or object to be discussed. The writing may consist of sentences and paragraphs or it could be single words and phrases. The idea is for learners to just write – without worrying about form, punctuation, or spelling. There will be time (if deemed necessary) for those later; the main issue is to “bring out everything” at the time of the quick-writing.

**Response journal**

Learners write their reactions to works of literature in a special section of their notebook or in a separate journal.

### Sociogram

This is quite similar in appearance to a webbing diagram. It shows the relationships between characters in a piece of literature. The names of characters in a piece of literature are written randomly on a page. Lines or arrows drawn from one name to another indicate the relationships between them.



### Summary writing

A summary is a short statement describing the main points of an article, presentation, video, etc. It expresses the main points or ideas without any details. It may be written in full sentences or in point form.

### Vocabulary sorts

This involves making a list of words taken from a text to be studied and then having learners group the words that are related.

innocence	fate	destiny
invisible	fancy	integrate
crime	dubious	nerves
alien	potential	different

### **Word association**

The instructor makes up a worksheet which has, on the left side, a list of words taken from a text to be studied. Next to each word on this list, on the right side of the sheet, are several other words. From these words, learners select (by circling or underlining) the ones that are connected to the list word next to them.

MARITIME	sea	clock	coast	shipping
CUSTOMARY	usual	regular	border	shopping
TECHNIQUES	electronics	methods	tricks	ways

More information about these and other teaching strategies may be found in the following materials:

***Educating for Change: A Community-Based Student-Centred Programming with First Nations Adults***, K'noowenchoot Center, Salmon Arm, 1994.

This package presents the philosophy behind a community-based learner-centred literacy program, and the practical steps that instructors can take to create one. The educational philosophy behind these theme units and much of the terminology used is thoroughly explained in the handbook, while the video shows the experiences of four instructors who have been successful in carrying out this kind of programming in British Columbia.

It also lists other titles that could be used as background reading, tools for practice, materials and resource organizations.

It is available for \$91 from A.A.P.S.I. Education Resource Center.

***Fundamental Level English Theme Units***

Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, and Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development, Victoria, BC. 1991.

***Native English Curriculum Guidelines***

Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training, and Technology, Victoria, BC. 1993.

These are available from

Provincial Curriculum Publications

Marketing Department

Open Learning Agency

4355 Mathissi Place

Burnaby, BC. V5G 4S8

Order Number: VA0110 (*Theme Units*); VA0108 (*Guidelines*)

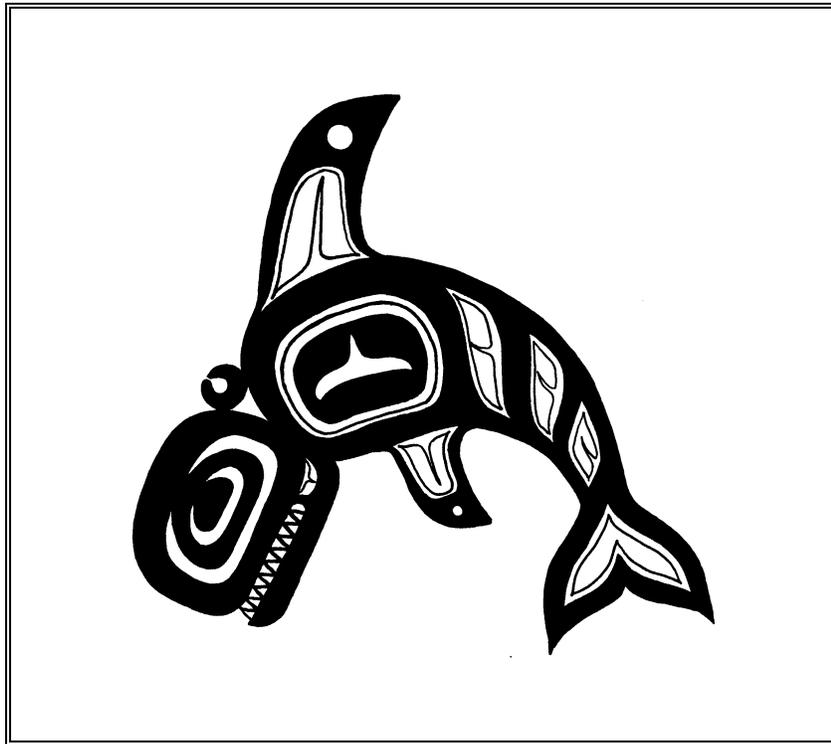
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**THEME UNIT 1**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO  
COMMUNICATION**



# Table of Contents

Learning Goals .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Part One: Personal Communication .....	4
Activity 1: The “Telephone” Game .....	4
Activity 2: Communication and Common Ground .....	5
Activity 3: Silence as Communication .....	6
Activity 4: What does a Body Say? .....	7
Activity 5: Following Directions .....	8
Activity 6: Feelings .....	10
Activity 7: Slang, Yesterday and Today .....	12
Activity 8: Who’s Talking Here? .....	13
Activity 9: Memory .....	15
Activity 10: What Did You Hear? .....	16
Activity 11: Public Speaking .....	18
Activity 12: Preparing a Speech or a Presentation .....	19
Activity 13: Making a Speech .....	22
Activity 14: Reasons for Writing .....	23
Part Two: Mass Media Communication .....	25
Activity 15: Mass Media in Everyday Life .....	25
Activity 16: TV Programs: Content, Audience, and Message .....	27
Activity 17: Analyzing a Children’s Cartoon Program .....	28
Activity 18: Reviewing a Television Program .....	31
Activity 19: Television News .....	34
Activity 20: First Nations People and TV: “North of Sixty” .....	37
Activity 21: Analyzing Magazine Advertisements .....	39
Activity 22: Stereotypes in Advertising .....	41
Part Three: Traditional First Nations Communication .....	42
Activity 23: Traditional Communication Tools .....	42
Activity 24: Symbols: Meaning and Message .....	43
Activity 25: Reflecting on Communication .....	44
Activity 26: Producing a Video .....	45
Additional Resources .....	47

### **LEARNING GOALS**

By the end of this unit, learners should be able to:

1. Describe basic concepts of effective communication.
2. Discuss critically methods and ways of communicating.
3. Identify and interpret messages communicated in the media.
4. Explain the importance of communication skills for achieving personal success, developing leadership abilities, and dealing with social problems.

## INTRODUCTION

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One of the fundamental frustrations of all literacy learners is their limited ability to communicate. Not only do they have difficulty expressing themselves in writing, but they also have difficulty presenting concepts, ideas, and opinions orally. For many First Nations learners, the experience of formal education has not encouraged the development of communication skills. In school they were conditioned to become passive learners with little confidence in their own creativity or ability to express themselves.

The challenge for teachers in this unit is to help learners recognize the value of their unique experiences and perceptions, and at the same time, help them gain a better understanding of the communication process, and develop more effective ways of communicating

### **Unit description**

Part One of this theme unit explores communication at the interpersonal level. It shows how verbal and non-verbal communication are an integral part of daily life. The early activities deal with the concept of communication, non-verbal communication, ways to express feelings, and memory. The later exercises are designed to develop the learners' reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills.

Part Two examines mass media and its role in our lives, our culture, and society as a whole. It helps learners to think critically about the forces that affect their personal lives and their communities. (*Fundamental Level English Theme Units*, pages 103-128, contains more activities on this subject.)

Part Three reviews the methods of communication traditionally used by First Nations peoples. It encourages learners to recognize the value of those methods (something that is reinforced in other theme units), even in a world dominated by electronic media and messages.

This theme unit requires only basic skills and simple resources. Throughout the unit, learners are encouraged to think about how they communicate and how information is communicated to them. The unit helps learners recognize the value of their personal experience and the importance of what they think and say. They are given every opportunity to reflect on issues that concern them directly, and to express their ideas, views, and opinions.

Focusing on real-life topics, this unit helps learners develop and practice basic reading and writing skills and prepares learners for the type of analysis and critical thinking they will do in more complex activities in the other theme units (History, Communities, Literature, and Legal System).

We encourage you to select a range of activities that meet the needs and interests of your learners. The activities are designed to be flexible: modify, adapt, and extend them to suit your class and your teaching style.

**PART ONE****PERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

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**ACTIVITY 1: THE “TELEPHONE” GAME**

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity is a “fun” way to introduce the theme of communication. It demonstrates how communication can break down, even when there is a desire to communicate clearly.

Find a brief phrase or slogan. Sit with the learners in a circle and whisper the phrase into the ear of the learner on your right. The learners pass the message on around the circle.

Have the last learner say the phrase aloud, and then compare it with your original message. If the learner’s version is correct, repeat the process with a longer or more complicated phrase.

When the final message is different from the original message, ask learners to suggest why communication broke down.

Point out how good communication depends on both the speaker and the listener.

## ACTIVITY 2: COMMUNICATION AND COMMON GROUND

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### **Purpose / description:**

“Communication” comes from the Latin word “communis,” meaning “common.” When we try to communicate, we are trying to meet on common ground with the receivers of our messages in order to share information, attitudes, ideas, and understanding. This activity aims to make learners aware of the striving for “commonness” that underlies communication.

Write on a blackboard, or on an overhead projector, a dictionary entry for “communication.” Read aloud the definition, or have one of the learners read it. Point out the etymology.

Ask learners to define “common” in such expressions as “common ground,” “to have something in common,” “common experience,” “common room.”

Ask learners to **brainstorm** the following questions:

- Who attempts to communicate?
- When do we communicate?
- Why do we communicate?
- Where do we communicate?
- How do we communicate?

Ask learners to consider questions about different types of “common ground:”

How might a commercial fisher communicate with another fisher?  
a mother talk to her daughter?  
a father talk to his son?  
a friend chat with a friend?  
a politician address a public meeting?  
a government official answer questions from the public?  
a lawyer discuss a case with a client?  
a lawyer present a case to a judge and jury?  
a company advertise its product for the general public?  
a person give directions to a stranger in the community?

Which of these situations might require formal communication? Which situations are informal? Discuss the differences between formal and informal communication.

## ACTIVITY 3: SILENCE AS COMMUNICATION

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity helps learners to become aware that silence is a form of communication. However, silence is very difficult to interpret and thus can be a barrier to effective communication.

Write the saying “Silence speaks volumes” on the board or the overhead projector. Ask learners for their interpretation of this saying (i.e., silence can communicate a great deal). Ask them to suggest occasions when silence is the most effective response. Guide the discussion toward the following questions:

- Is it easy to understand the message of silence?
- Do we always get the right message when a person is silent?

Ask learners to work together in groups of two or three to discuss the following questions:

- In what ways is silence a good or poor method of communication?
- Does silence build walls between people or does it bring them together?
- Have you had experiences when silence has become a barrier to communicating with other people – in your family, your community, your work, etc.? Tell your partner about these situations and about how you felt.

## ACTIVITY 4: WHAT DOES A BODY SAY?

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity introduces the importance of body language in communication.

Begin by approaching a few people in the class and tapping them on the shoulder, patting them on the back, or shaking their hand. Ask the following questions:

- What am I doing by using these examples of physical touch?
- What am I communicating?
- What is the message of a tap on the shoulder, a pat on the back, a handshake?

Expand the discussion by asking learners to brainstorm about other forms of non-verbal communication we use in everyday life. Ask them to “translate” each example into words. As the ideas come up, make a list on the board or on flip chart paper. Here are some examples:

- Finger-pointing: “It’s your fault”; “That’s him, over there.”
- Wink: “I understand”; “We understand, don’t we?”
- Shrug: “I don’t know”; “I don’t care.”
- Smile: “I like you”; “I agree with you.”

Discuss gestures and tone of voice.

- How can you tell when people are uncertain of what they are saying?
- What do people often do to hide their uncertainty? Talk loudly? Look away from the person they’re talking to? Exaggerate the facts? Change the subject as quickly as possible?
- What makes a speaker seem confident and assured?
- How does body language vary from one culture to another?

## ACTIVITY 5: FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

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**Purpose / description:**

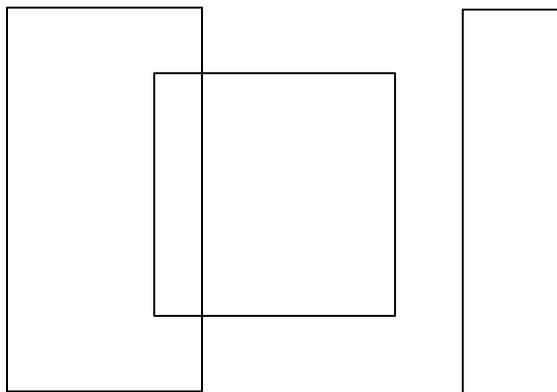
This game is fun, and demonstrates how two-way communication is more effective than one-way communication. It also provides an opportunity for learners to analyze past experiences in schools, at home, and in the larger society, when communication was only one-way.

**Materials:**

Sheet of paper and pencil for each learner

Give each learner a sheet of paper and pencil. Ask them to write “One-way communication” on the top of one side and “Two-way communication” on the other.

Explain that you are going to give instructions on how to draw a series of rectangles. The objective is to give directions to learners so that they can draw a series of rectangles identical to the drawing shown at the end of this activity. Only you should see the drawing. Students are not allowed to talk or make any noises (grunts, laughter, groans, etc.) while you are giving the instructions. You can use the following drawing or create your own:



Before you give instructions, write the time on the board. Students should begin on the “one-way” side of their sheet. Proceed to give as accurate instructions as possible so that learners can draw the series of rectangles. Make sure that you do not repeat yourself; speak clearly and at a normal speed. When you finish, write the time on the board.

Ask learners to turn their pages over and work on the “two-way” side. Repeat the process with the following modifications: this time, learners are allowed to ask questions and you can respond. You can also repeat any instructions if learners ask you to. You can also give learners more time if they ask for it.

When everyone is finished, ask learners to turn their pages over so that they are looking at the “one-way” side. Now ask learners to compare their drawings with the original; you may want to project the original on an overhead or hand out copies. Then ask them to turn their sheets over and compare their “two-way” side with the original.

Use the following questions for a “debriefing” discussion:

- Which of your two drawings is closer to the original?
- Which took more time? Why?
- Which situation did you prefer? Why?
- How did you feel during the “one-way communication” part?
- How did you feel during the “two-way communication” part?

Ask learners to think about communication in their everyday lives:

- Did the one-way communication part remind you of any other situations you have been in? (School, home, government offices)
- When was there more communication: in the “one-way” section or the “two-way” section? Why?

## ACTIVITY 6: FEELINGS

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity helps increase learners' awareness of the ways in which they communicate feelings.

**Materials:**

Feelings Work Sheet – copy for each learner

Copy and distribute the Feelings Work Sheet. Go over the situations with the whole group. You can do this by reading the sheet aloud yourself, or by having learners read each question aloud to the group. Make sure that learners understand that they need to supply two responses: a verbal and a non-verbal one.

Ask the learners to form groups of three. One learner in the group reads the situation aloud, and each person then responds in turn. Encourage learners to share their personal experiences with each other. They could discuss questions like:

- Have they been in specific situations where they expressed these feelings either verbally or non-verbally to someone else?
- Were they understood?
- What is their preferred way of expressing feelings?
- What did they learn about how they usually express their feelings?
- Do they need to think of better ways to communicate their feelings?

Encourage learners to write down responses to these questions in their journals or notebooks.

## ACTIVITY 6: FEELINGS WORK SHEET

How do you express your feelings when:

1. You feel bored with what is going on in a discussion.

Using words \_\_\_\_\_

Without using words: \_\_\_\_\_

2. You feel very annoyed with someone with whom you want to build a better relationship.

Using words \_\_\_\_\_

Without using words: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Another person says or does something to you that hurts your feelings deeply.

Using words \_\_\_\_\_

Without using words: \_\_\_\_\_

4. An acquaintance asks you to do something that you are afraid you cannot do well. You want to hide the fact that you feel inadequate.

Using words \_\_\_\_\_

Without using words: \_\_\_\_\_

5. You feel affection and fondness for someone but you're not sure the person feels the same way about you.

Using words \_\_\_\_\_

Without using words: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Your close friend is leaving town for a long time, and you feel alone and lonely.

Using words \_\_\_\_\_

Without using words: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 7: SLANG, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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### **Purpose / description:**

This activity is designed to make learners aware of the varieties of language used in our society. For example, young people often use slang that older people don't understand. People who do the same job often have special jargon. Groups with specific ethnic or cultural backgrounds also have their own ways of speaking. This is a three-part activity that involves class discussion, research at home or in the community, and a follow-up class discussion.

### *Part One*

Have learners **brainstorm** a list of words or expressions that they used to use but which are now outmoded. Write the words and expressions on a board or on flip chart paper.

Ask learners to copy these words in their notebooks. Encourage learners to help each other with this task.

Ask learners to suggest reasons why this change might have occurred: e.g., Why is "groovy" out and "awesome" in?

Have the learners form small groups to generate a list of current popular phrases that they themselves use.

Give the learners a small research project: have them take their lists home to discuss with their children or with other young people. Ask them to make another list of expressions that are currently popular with young people.

### *Part Two*

Students do research.

### *Part Three*

Have learners report back to the class with their lists. Ask them to mention some of the words or phrases and say what they mean. Discuss the results of their research. Are the expressions used by the younger generation the same ones used by class members? How are they similar or different?

## ACTIVITY 8: WHO'S TALKING HERE?

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**Purpose / description:**

This exercise, related in some ways to Activity 2, helps learners to identify the appropriate type of language for different situations.

Using an overhead projector, blackboard or flip chart, present the following paragraph to the whole group.

Them guys always talk about travelling. I've never went nowhere. When I get some cash, I wanna go around the world, meet other First Nations people. That'd be real neat!

You can read it aloud, or ask one of the learners to read it.

Ask learners who they think wrote it. If they get “stuck,” you could ask questions such as:

- Do you think the Queen of England would have written that? Why or why not?
- What about the Prime Minister? Why, or why not?
- The Director of this Literacy Centre? Why, or why not?
- What about me, your teacher? Why, or why not?

Lead the discussion so that learners recognize that the paragraph is an example of “non-standard English.”

Emphasize the fact that there is nothing “wrong” with non-standard English. In some situations, it's the most appropriate way to speak. Ask learners to imagine what might happen if they learned to speak the standard English of England (the way the Queen speaks) and went back to their home community speaking that way.

Go on to explain to the class that while non-standard English is appropriate in many situations, there are certain contexts and occasions when it is not. Ask learners to suggest situations when standard English is best (writing a letter for a job interview; writing a formal report for school; answering questions during an interview, etc.)

Explain to the class that one way to learn standard English is to translate non-standard sentences. Emphasize that the process is “translation,” not “correction.”

Return to the sample paragraph and engage the whole class in translating it. Ask learners to identify words or phrases that are non-standard and to suggest alternatives in standard English. Write the new paragraph on the board as the translation progresses, and have learners copy it down. Encourage learners to help those who need assistance with writing.

The result might be something like this:

People always talk about travelling. I've never gone anywhere. When I have some money, I want to go travelling around the world and meet other First Nations people. That'd be really neat!

Conclude the activity by reviewing the differences between the two paragraphs.

**Extension activities:**

Students can make a “dictionary” of standard English equivalents for non-standard words and phrases they use.

Find a piece of very formal writing: for example, a speech by the Queen or a prominent politician. Ask learners to translate it into non-standard English.

## ACTIVITY 9: MEMORY

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**Purpose / description:**

This is a simple listening activity that helps learners become aware of how difficult it can be to remember accurately what someone else has said.

Have learners sit in a circle. Ask each one to introduce himself or herself by attaching an adjective to their first name (e.g., Silly Sally, Crazy Cathy, etc. ). Every person in the group must repeat the previous people's names, plus their own. This game can also be played with objects that people identify in the classroom, or any other category the group wants to try. The goal is to remember the exact words and the order in which they were said.

Have learners discuss what was easy to remember and what was hard to remember:  
Generally easy to remember: words that start with the same letter or sound (Silly Sally, Crazy Kathy), words that rhyme (Swervin' Mervin), phrases that are repeated over and over, words you already know.

Discuss the value of writing down information: e.g., writing itself helps one remember; the information may be referred to at a later time.

Discuss the value of listening and looking (an important part of the First Nations oral tradition), e.g., direct association of names and faces, memory reinforced by the sound or tone of a person's voice and way of speaking, clues from body language, e.g., smiles, shyness, boldness.

## ACTIVITY 10: WHAT DID YOU HEAR?

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**Purpose / description:**

Effectiveness in relations with friends, family, or people in authority depends to a great extent on our ability to listen. The following activity provides learners with an opportunity to practice their listening skills and to reflect on the qualities of a “good listener.”

Present the following five topics to the group on an overhead projector or a flip chart. If these topics are not appropriate for your learners, feel free to choose others or ask learners to suggest topics of interest to them.

- Women should stay home with their children.
- Non-First Nations teachers should not be teaching in First Nations schools.
- The Oka crisis created more tension for First Nations people.
- Prisoners should not have access to privileges like education and TV.
- Women still have fewer rights than men.

Have learners break into pairs – one a speaker, the other a listener. Ask a learner in each pair to select one topic from the list and to speak about it for two or three minutes to their partner.

After the speakers have finished, ask the listeners to present to the group as a whole a summary of what she or he heard. The pairs will probably discover some discrepancies between what was said and what was heard. Ask the pairs to consider why these differences occurred. Was the listener really listening?

Have learners switch roles so that each member of a pair has a turn as a speaker and as a listener. Suggest they choose a different topic for this second round.

Ask the group as a whole to discuss the experience. They could use the following questions in their discussion:

- Did you have difficulty listening?
- Did you have difficulty getting across what you wanted to say?
- How did you feel when the listener paraphrased what you had said, and it was clear that he or she hadn't quite understood you?
- What was the difference between your feelings as a listener and your feelings as a speaker?
- What are the qualities of a good speaker?
- What are the qualities of a good listener?

Discuss ways to remember more effectively what was said: e.g., jotting down key words or phrases while a person is speaking, or summarizing what was said as soon as the speaker is finished. Referring to the activity they have just done, indicate to learners the type of information to note: the speaker's name, his or her main point (agreement or disagreement with the topic statement), and his or her reasons for that view. If possible, show learners examples of these strategies.

It might be useful to emphasize that these notes are mainly a reminder for the person who makes the notes; they are not usually meant to communicate information to other people.

Ask learners to do a **note-taking / summarizing** exercise. Offer them a range of possibilities: some could write a list of key words in a newspaper item, others could summarize the item in two or three sentences. Some could write up real or imaginary phone messages: e.g., Sam called, good fishing in the Sound, back Tuesday night, pick him up at the dock around 9:30. Others could make notes as they listen to a radio or TV news item. Ask learners to help each other wherever possible, but make sure that all learners actively participate in the exercise.

Review the learners' work with them. Try to help them with specific reading and writing difficulties, but encourage them to express what they think and feel. That is more important at this stage than correcting spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Regularly assessing the skill levels of learners enables you to plan suitable exercises for them to do in future.

## ACTIVITY 11: PUBLIC SPEAKING

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### **Purpose / description:**

One of the greatest challenges for anyone is to speak effectively to a group of people. This challenge is even greater for literacy learners who may have experienced poor communication skills and low self-esteem. In this activity, learners can share their concerns about speaking in front of others and thus reduce their anxiety about public speaking.

Begin by conducting a **brainstorming** session about situations in which learners might be required to speak before a group. Record their ideas on a list on the board, flip-chart, or overhead projector. Ask learners to indicate how speaking in public is different from talking to friends.

Have an open-ended discussion about the ways learners feel about such situations. Do a **webbing diagram** that shows feelings or concerns about those situations.

Follow the open-ended discussion with a guided discussion using the following questions:

- How could you overcome any negative feelings you might have about public speaking?
- What conditions would you need in order to feel adequate in a public speaking situation?
- How could you develop your skills enough so that you could actually enjoy public speaking?

Review the elements of communication that have already been examined in this unit and indicate how they contribute to the ability to express oneself clearly in everyday conversation as well as in a public situation.

Ask learners to write a list of 3 – 5 topics they would be able to talk about for 5 minutes to the class. Emphasize the fact that they don't have to be 'experts' on any subject. The topics could be based on:

Personal experiences: e.g., My Mother's Bannock,

Skills: e.g., How to make a Beadwork Cape,

Opinions about a current issue: e.g., Roadblocks: a Good (or Bad) Way to deal with Land Claims.

## ACTIVITY 12: PREPARING A SPEECH OR A PRESENTATION

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity involves the preparation of a short speech or presentation on a topic taken from the lists learners generated in Activity 11.

**Materials:**

Presentation Work Sheet – copy for each learner.

Tell learners that this activity involves the preparation of a short speech or presentation on a topic taken from the lists they generated in Activity 11. Each learner will make the speech to the class.

Distribute and review the worksheet to make sure that all learners understand what they have to do.

It might be helpful to create an very simple example for the learners to see:

The **topic** could be: My Mother's Bannock.

The **main points** are the most important or interesting things about the bannock, the things that make it special or different. These might be: the wonderful taste, the way the smell fills our house, the ingredients she uses, the traditional way she makes it, the fact that she always makes some for my father when he goes fishing even though there's a cook on the boat, the opinion of friends and neighbours who say it's the best bannock in the world.

So the learner might write on Worksheet: taste, smell, ingredients, traditional cooking, dad always takes it on the boat, friends love it.

Perhaps the learner has to do a little **research** that involves visiting her mother to ask about the special ingredients (what they are, where she gets them), to watch her prepare bannock in the traditional way.

The **style** of the speech would be conversational, since the learner will be talking in an informal setting to a friendly, supportive audience. A speech to a public meeting in the community, or to a government committee would be a formal situation.

At this point the learner might remember a funny event that happened when an uncle dropped the bannock and made her father really mad until her mother produced another batch of bannock - just in case something happened to the original batch!

At the **end of the speech** it is often a good idea to make one last point. It might mean giving emphasis to a point already made, or it could be the single most important fact that the speaker wants to make. In this example, it might be the fact that, at 85 years of age, with arthritic hands and poor eyesight, my mother is still cheerfully making wonderful, tasty, traditional bannock that makes us all happy and proud.

Point out that there is no one correct way to make a speech, so there's no need for all speeches to follow this pattern exactly. Nevertheless, effective communication is based on a clear idea of what is to be said, and on a logical or purposeful organization of ideas and information. Thinking about a subject, making notes of what to say, and then organizing those notes and ideas in a particular order – these steps can help make a speech or presentation more interesting and more powerful.

Suggest to learners that they think about the traditional First Nations storytellers and how they told their stories – how they created images with words and sounds; how they created mystery, and suspense; how they made listeners feel the cold or the heat or the wonder of the supernatural.

Have learners form small groups to share ideas and information about the topics each has chosen, possible sources of information, and different ways of approaching each topic. Encourage learners to feel positive and confident about what they can do themselves, especially with the support of fellow learners.

Then ask learners, working individually or still in the groups if they wish, to fill in the Worksheets. Give more advanced learners the option of writing a summary of what they might talk about, or even writing the entire speech if they think they can do it.

Conclude the activity by asking learners to do their research and suggest that they practice making their speech with other learners or family or friends. They might also collect anything they would like to show the class when they make their speech, e.g., some bannock, a beadwork cape, some newspaper clippings about roadblocks.

## ACTIVITY 12: PRESENTATION WORK SHEET

The topic of my speech or presentation:

The main points I want to communicate:

Research I need to do:

The style of my speech: Formal / Conversational / Humorous

At the end my speech I will emphasize:



## ACTIVITY 13: MAKING A SPEECH

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity is designed to give learners an opportunity to practice public speaking in a safe and supportive situation.

Ask learners to give their speeches or presentations to the class.

The listeners should pay close attention to the speakers and at the end of each speech be prepared to offer feedback on the following points:

- Were the ideas and issues presented in a clear fashion? If not, what was unclear? How could they be made clearer?
- Was the speaker easy to understand? Were the words clear or slurred? Could the speaker be easily heard?
- Did he or she speak too quickly or too slowly? Did the speaker make eye contact with the audience?
- Was the speaker's posture effective? Was he or she standing straight?
- Did the speaker move her body and hands or did she look like a telephone pole?

Review and discuss the skills that contribute to an effective presentation.

## ACTIVITY 14: REASONS FOR WRITING

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity is designed to remind learners of the importance of clear written communication not just in the classroom, but in everyday life.

**Materials:**

Sentences Worksheet – copy for each learner.

**Brainstorm** with learners about the kinds of written communication people need in everyday life. Do a **web** or list. The list could include letters, messages for bulletin boards, phone messages, notes for teachers, greeting cards.

Copy and distribute the Worksheet.

Ask learners to work in groups of three. Ask them to read all the sentences and then choose three to work with. For each of the sentences they are working with, learners should decide:

- What was the intended message?
- What was the actual message communicated?

Ask each group to revise the sentence so that it conveys the intended message. Perhaps you could go over one sentence as an example. If necessary, help learners with some basic grammar rules about the placement of related information.

Ask each group to report back to the whole class to compare their revised sentences.

Conclude this activity by discussing the difficulties of communicating with the bureaucracy – the people who handle the day-to-day work of government departments and institutions. Point out to learners that the people who wrote these sentences were probably experiencing a great deal of stress at the time. Ask learners to discuss the pros and cons of writing instead of communicating orally by phone or talking to government officials in person.

Encourage learners to describe some of their own experiences of trying to communicate with official agencies. These experiences could be the starting point for further learner writing: e.g., a short paragraph of five to six sentences describing who the learner was communicating with, what sort of problem arose, and what the result was.

## ACTIVITY 14: SENTENCES WORKSHEET

The following sentences appeared in letters written by people who were applying for social assistance.

I am forwarding my marriage certificate and six children. I have seven but one died and was baptized, on a half sheet of paper.

I am writing to the Welfare Department to say that my baby was born two years old, when do I get my money?

I cannot get sick pay. I have six children, can you tell me why?

I am glad to report that my husband, who was reported missing, is dead.

I am very annoyed to find that you have branded my son as illiterate, as this is a lie. I was married to his father a week before he was born.

In accordance with your instructions, I have given birth to twins, in the enclosed envelope.

You have changed my little boy to a little girl. Will this make any difference?

\*\*\*\*\*

Write your revised form of any three of these messages in the space below:

1.

2.

3.



**PART TWO****MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION**

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**ACTIVITY 15: MASS MEDIA IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity introduces the concept of mass media and of their influence on our daily life.

**Materials:**

Mass Media Worksheet

Ask learners to identify the mass media they are exposed to in everyday life.

Distribute the worksheet and go over it to make sure that all learners understand the questions.

Ask learners to work in small groups to discuss the questions on the Worksheet. Ask each learner to answer the questions in writing. Encourage learners to help each other, but stress the importance of each learner giving his or her own opinions.

Ask each group to select one learner to record on a separate piece of paper the favourite medium of each group, how often it is used, and the main reasons for its popularity. Ask the group to select another learner to report those results to the rest of the class.

In full class setting, have each group report the results of their discussion. On the blackboard or flip chart, record the information from each group.

Point out to learners that this activity is called a survey: i.e., the collection of information that presents a general view of something. In this case, the survey shows the learners' use of mass media.

Discuss the results of this survey. The following questions may be useful:

- How have mass media affected everyday life?
- What would your life be like without movies? newspapers? magazines? radio? TV?
- Where would you get information from?
- What would you do for entertainment without these media?
- Are there any negative aspects of these media? If so, what are they?

### ACTIVITY 15: MASS MEDIA WORKSHEET

Draw a circle around your answers to the following questions:

What do I use mass media for?

News

General information

Entertainment

Which medium do I use most?

Movies

Newspaper

Magazines

Radio

TV

How often do I use this medium?

Every day

4 or 5 days a week

Less than twice a week

Answer the following questions in your own words.

Why do I use this medium more than others?

Why don't I use other media?

## ACTIVITY 16: TV PROGRAMS: CONTENT, AUDIENCE, AND MESSAGE

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### **Purpose / description:**

In this activity learners begin to think critically about television by analyzing the content, likely audience, and general message of various types of television program.

### **Materials:**

Flip chart sheet with following questions on it:

- Content: What is this type of program about?
- Audience: Who is this type of program aimed at?
  
- Message: What does the audience learn about the world or their community by watching this type of program?
- How is the message presented in this type of program? Is it obvious? Is it hidden? How can you tell what the message is?
  
- Do you believe what this type of program is telling you?
- Do you ever question what the television shows you?

Conduct a **brainstorming** session on the kinds of television programs available (news, information, comedies, police or crime dramas, historical dramas, daytime soaps, game shows, sports, talk shows, children's cartoons, music, cooking, etc.). Create a list or **web** on the board or on a flip chart.

Have the learners form small groups. Assign one type of TV program to each group. Ask each group to discuss the questions listed on the flip chart.

Identifying the message of TV programs is not always easy, even in dramas where good people usually defeat bad people, where violence is often the solution to problems, and problems are always solved by the end of the program. You could ask learners to consider how real life is different from what they see on television.

In a full group setting, ask each group to give a summary of their discussion. Encourage learners to ask questions or offer different opinions.

## ACTIVITY 17: ANALYZING A CHILDREN'S CARTOON PROGRAM

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity involves analysis of a specific program in more detail than in the previous activity. It is a three-part activity that involves a review of worksheet, the actual TV viewing assignment, and a class discussion

**Materials:**

Cartoon Worksheet

*Part One*

Arrange for learners to watch a specific cartoon program at a particular time. Discuss with learners the best program and best time to watch so that everyone sees the same episode. (Copyright laws do not permit instructors to tape materials off-air for classroom use, but learners who have a VCR could tape the program for other learners who are unable to watch it at the time of broadcast.)

Distribute the Worksheet and go over it so that everybody understands the questions on it.

Review suitable ways to watch the program. Review **note-taking** techniques if necessary. Because it is very hard to watch a program (especially fast-moving cartoon action) and write notes at the same time, it is best to answer the questions at the end of the program. And because it is easy to forget details of a TV program very quickly, it is important to answer the simple questions right away and then think about the more difficult ones.

*Part Two*

Students watch program and complete the Worksheet.

*Part Three*

Have learners bring their Worksheets to class to discuss the program. Ask the learners to share their answers with the rest of the class.

You could broaden the discussion by asking learners to consider the following questions:

- What do kids learn about the world or the community by watching this program?
- What do scenes of violence or “accidents” communicate to our children?
- Should parents be concerned about what their children watch?

Conclude the activity by asking learners to compare popular children’s television programs with traditional First Nations legends and stories.

- How are they similar?
- How are they different?
- What values are emphasized in each?
- How do the values expressed in stories and legends affect children’s lives today?
- How do the values expressed in TV programs affect children’s lives today?

### ACTIVITY 17: CARTOON WORKSHEET

Write in this information before the program begins:

NAME OF PROGRAM:

TV CHANNEL NUMBER:

TODAY'S DATE:

TIME OF THE PROGRAM:

Watch the program and then fill in the following information:

The hero or heroine (There may be more than one):

The villain (The enemy of the hero or heroine):

How did the hero defeat the villain?:

(Put a \_ next to the answer or answers below)

- By being very clever or smart O
- By trickery O
- By causing "accidents" (villain goes over cliff, gets hit by rock, truck, etc.) O
- By using violence (guns, bombs, booby traps, explosions, hitting, etc.) O
- By good luck (e.g., always reaching a hiding place in time) O

If the violence in many cartoons was shown in a live-action movie, would it be suitable viewing for children?

Why, or why not?

What would happen to real-life people or animals if they were the victims of the "accidents" and violence seen so often in cartoons?

How is the violence "disguised" in a cartoon?

What makes it funny?



## ACTIVITY 18: REVIEWING A TELEVISION PROGRAM

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**Purpose / description:**

Students use the critical strategies introduced in previous activities to analyze a television program of their own choice. It is a three-part activity that involves a review of the worksheet, the TV viewing assignment, and a class discussion.

**Materials:**

TV Program Worksheet

*Part One*

Ask learners to name three or four favourite TV programs. Then have learners form small groups so that each group watches one of those programs together. Two or more groups may watch the same program if necessary.

(Copyright laws do not permit instructors to tape materials off-air for classroom use, but learners who have a VCR could tape the program for other learners who are unable to watch it at the time of broadcast.)

Review **note-taking**, and introduce the concept of **double-entry journals**. Prepare an example of the latter to show learners.

Distribute the Worksheet and go over it so that everybody understands the questions on it.

*Part Two*

Students watch program, make notes or entries in their journals, and complete the Worksheet.

*Part Three*

Have learners bring their Worksheets, notes and journals to class to discuss the program. Ask each group to share their answers with the rest of the class.

Encourage learners to ask any questions about the program and to share their views about the program or issues or events in the program.

Conduct a **guided discussion** in order to make connections between the different types of programming learners watch. Here are some examples of strategies you could use:

If some learners watched news and others watched detective/police dramas, ask which type of program presents a more realistic view of crime in our society.

If some learners watched science fiction/space drama, and others watched nature programs, ask why both these types of programming appeal to viewers so much.

If some learners viewed soap operas and some viewed talk shows, ask whether both types of program deal with the same kind of issues.

Encourage learners to look critically at what is shown on television and at how it might affect their view of the world and of themselves. Here are some questions you might use:

- How much do you think television influences our way of thinking, feeling, behaving?
- What sort of women do you usually see on television? What about the women in commercials? How do you feel when you compare yourself to these TV women? Do you feel inadequate?
- How many First Nations people do you see on television? What about other members of visible minorities?

## ACTIVITY 18: TV PROGRAM WORKSHEET

### CHECKLIST

Fill in the information below in the commercial breaks or immediately after the program has ended:

The central characters (heroes, heroines, villains):

Other main characters:

The main problem to be solved:

As soon as the program is over, think about the program in the same way the class analyzed the cartoon program and answer these questions:

What is the program about?

Who is this program aimed at?

What do viewers learn about the world or the community by watching this program?

How is the message presented in this program?

Do you believe what this program is telling you?  
Why? Why not?

Do you ever question what this program shows you?  
If so, what sort of thing do you question?

## ACTIVITY 19: TELEVISION NEWS

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**Purpose / description:**

Students analyze a television news program. This is an additional activity for use if there is enough interest in the class to warrant further study of television. It is another three-part activity.

**Materials:**

Television News Checklist – copy for each learner  
Newspapers

*Part One*

Distribute copies of the Checklist and explain the activity to the learners. Ask them to watch a particular edition of television news: e.g., the late night CBC news, and select one or two of the first few items in the news for analysis. They should then fill in the Checklist immediately after the news items have finished (or during the next commercial break).

Go over the checklist to make sure that everyone knows what to do.

Discuss the difference between fact and opinion. Discuss objectivity: the concept that a person, e.g., a reporter, journalist, writer, or scientist, should not let feelings, opinions or biases alter the description of an event, an experiment, the results of a research study.

Discuss the different roles in TV news: the reporters and camera crews who go to the location of a news event and interview people on the scene; the news reader whose main job is to read what the reporters and editors have prepared.

*Part Two*

Students watch the assigned TV program.

*Part Three*

Obtain a copy, or copies, of a newspaper that covers the same stories that appear on the TV news.

Have learners report the results of their viewing and discuss the questions on the Checklist.

Have learners compare the TV news items with the newspaper items.  
You might ask learners:

- Which medium gave the most information?
- Which medium gave the most useful information?
- Did the headlines in the newspaper give an accurate idea of the news items?
- If not, why not?
- After seeing a news item on TV did you still want to know more about the subject? What sort of things did you want to know?
- Did you feel that people in the news were able to present their views fully?
- If not, why not?

Encourage learners to ask questions or make comments on any aspects of the news that interests or concerns them.

**Extension Activity:**

Have learners collect newspaper reports of a First Nations issue, e.g., land claim negotiations, a blockade, fishing policy. Ask them to watch TV news to see how the issue is covered.

Discuss the issue using the questions on the checklist (and any other questions that you or the learners ask).

## ACTIVITY 19: TV NEWS CHECKLIST

Watch the news and fill in the following information:

Point of view:

Who told the story?

Was that person part of the story?

Whose story was it?

What images supported the verbal message?

Did the person telling the story present facts?

Did someone in the news item present their opinion?

Did someone in the news item present a different opinion?

Did the person telling the story present his or her opinion?

Some things to think about:

Who do you think decides what's news?

How do reporters find out what's going on? How do they get their information?

## ACTIVITY 20: FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE AND TV: “NORTH OF SIXTY”

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity aims to make learners more aware of how media present First Nations people. It is a three-part activity.

**Materials:**

North of Sixty Worksheet – copy for all learners

*Part One*

Conduct a **brainstorming** session to generate a list of programs that portray First Nations people on television. Ask learner to consider:

- How many television programs present a positive image of First Nations people?
- Do you think there should be more programs about First Nations people and issues?

Distribute copies of the Worksheet and ask learners to watch a particular episode of “North of Sixty.”

*Part Two*

Students watch “North of Sixty” at home.

*Part Three*

Lead a guided discussion using the questions on the learner reference sheet.

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### ACTIVITY 20: "NORTH OF SIXTY" WORKSHEET

As you watch the assigned episode of "North of Sixty," look for answers to the following questions:

What are the names of the main characters in the program?

Do the characters seem real to you? Why? (or why not?)

Is the community portrayed in a way that seems true to life?

What was the main issue in this episode?

How was the issue resolved?

Are the issues dealt with in this show relevant for First Nations people outside the North? Why? Why not?

Do you like this show? Why? Why not?

What did this show make you think about?

What changes would you make in this program if you were the producer?

## ACTIVITY 21: ANALYZING MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity is designed to help learners become more aware of how today's sophisticated advertising techniques influence people and create the desire to consume.

**Materials:**

Collection of ads from magazines, newspapers, and flyers.

Ads Worksheet – copy for each learner

Bring to class a collection of advertisements clipped from magazines and newspapers. The most effective examples are the full-colour magazine ads for cosmetics, alcohol, automobiles and clothing.

Distribute the Worksheet. Go over the Worksheet and answer any questions that learners may have. Read the questions aloud. Ask learners for some examples of “visual elements” so that you are sure everyone understands this term (e.g., use of colour; images of attractive men or women; scenes suggesting success or luxury; beautiful images of nature; images of “normalcy,” health, peacefulness).

Ask learners to get into pairs. Give each pair an ad.

Give learners time to discuss the ads and fill in the Worksheet.

When learners have finished their write-up, bring the group together again, and invite pairs to share their ads with the rest of the class. Encourage each pair to offer their analysis of the ad they have studied. Students may also wish to share their write-up in response to the ad.

**Extension activities:**

Students can analyze a television commercial, using the same questions.

Students can design their own magazine ad or TV commercial for something healthy and positive.

## ACTIVITY 21: ADS WORKSHEET

Look at the magazine ad you have and do a quick write-up in response to this ad. Don't worry about spelling or punctuation. Just write down the ideas and feelings that come to mind.

Then discuss the following questions with your partner:

What is this ad trying to sell?

What visual elements are used to persuade you to buy the product?

What words are used?

Make a list of key words that come up in your discussion.

According to this ad, what will happen if you use this product? How will you feel? What will you look like? What will happen to your life?

## ACTIVITY 22: STEREOTYPES IN ADVERTISING

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**Purpose / description:**

In many advertisements, women are presented in stereotypical ways; they are frequently objectified or used as decoration. Analyzing advertisements can be an effective way to introduce the topic of women's role in our society.

**Materials:**

Examples of magazine ads which show women as sex symbols, objects, decoration, housewives or cleaning ladies.

Begin the activity with a **guided discussion** on stereotypes. Here are some questions you might use:

- What are some common stereotypes of First Nations people?
- How are other non-mainstream groups stereotyped?
- How are women usually portrayed in advertisements?

Show the ads to learners. Use the following questions to guide learners' analysis of the ads:

- How are women portrayed in this ad?
- What message is communicated?
- If you were an alien coming to this planet and your only knowledge of Earth had come from TV commercials and magazine ads, what would you think of the role and place of women in this world?

Conclude with a writing project. Students could write a personal response to two or three ads, e.g. "This ad makes me feel ....," or if an ad seems particularly offensive, they could write a letter of complaint to the manufacturer of the product.

**Extension activity:**

If learners are interested in exploring gender issues, you could consult the theme unit "Gender roles and discrimination" in *Fundamental English Theme Units*, Pages 302-307.

## PART THREE TRADITIONAL FIRST NATIONS COMMUNICATION

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Prior to the arrival of Europeans, First Nations people communicated without books, newspapers, magazines, radio or television. It is important for First Nations literacy learners to have an opportunity to learn more about the traditional communications tools used by their ancestors and still current in First Nations communities.

The following activities introduce learners to aspects of communication that they will explore in greater detail and from a slightly different perspective in Unit 2: History, Unit 3: Community, and Unit 4: Literature.

### ACTIVITY 23: TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

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**Purpose / description:**

Students review many aspects of First Nations culture and discuss traditional methods of communication.

Conduct a **guided discussion** of traditional ways of communication used by First Nations. The following questions may help you to facilitate the discussion:

- Before the arrival of the Europeans and the introduction of writing, how did First Nations people pass on their history from one generation to the next?
- How were the beliefs and values of a Nation maintained?
- Are storytelling, dancing, ceremonies, etc. still part of First Nations culture? Can you give some examples?

At the end of this discussion, it should be clear to the group that the First Nations of this continent developed many ways of communicating prior to the arrival of the Europeans. Many of these communications tools are still used today and remain an integral part of First Nations cultures.

## ACTIVITY 24: SYMBOLS: MEANING AND MESSAGE

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### **Purpose / description:**

Students examine the symbols traditionally used by First Nations cultures to communicate information, values and beliefs.

Conduct a **brainstorming** session to list the symbols that can be found in First Nations art and culture.

Lead a **guided discussion** on the importance of symbols in First Nations art and craft, e.g., the symbols that potters, jewellers, carvers, weavers, and beaders use to reflect who they are and where they come from. You could do this by bringing in a sample of local work (a carving, drawing, weaving, etc.) and asking learners to identify the various symbols it employs, e.g.,

- If we look at a West Coast button blanket, what do we see embroidered on it? What is the meaning of these symbols? What do they communicate?
- If we look at a totem pole, what do we see? What do these symbols represent? What do they communicate? What can we learn about a family if we study their totem pole?
- What are the symbols used by the Nation that you are part of? What do they mean?

If there are some symbols they can't explain, ask them how they could find out the meaning of these symbols.

Have each learner write a short statement about the meaning and significance of one symbol used by his or her people.

### **Extension activity:**

Students interview local artists in order to find out the meaning and significance of the symbols they use.

## ACTIVITY 25: REFLECTING ON COMMUNICATION

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**Purpose / description:**

Students reflect on what they have learned about personal and mass communications, and connect it to their knowledge of traditional First Nations communication.

Conduct a **brainstorming** session with learners about what they have studied in this unit on communications. Create a **web** linking the various topics. Invite learners to share their reactions, ideas, impressions, newly acquired knowledge, etc.

Ask learners to suggest ways their new knowledge and skills might help them in their everyday life: e.g., in dealing with social problems, in taking a more active part in community affairs, in increasing their employment possibilities.

You might suggest that they discuss the abilities of community leaders and elders to see how communications skills are often linked to leadership.

Ask learners to write the first draft of a short description of their reaction to this unit. Then have learners work in pairs or small groups to edit each other's work in a **peer-editing** exercise.

When the reaction pieces have been revised, publish them either in a bulletin board display or in a binder.

## ACTIVITY 26: PRODUCING A VIDEO

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### **Purpose / description:**

If you have access to video equipment (camera, editing facilities) you could encourage learners to produce their own program. This involves learners in a range of literacy activities: research, planning, analyzing, writing, reading, public speaking, etc. But video production can be a very time-consuming process. You may find it more appropriate to focus on just one aspect of production – e.g., research and script-writing, doing a video interview of a community leader.

Students need first to decide what kind of program they want to produce: news, drama, documentary, interview, talk show, etc. Try to make sure that learners take on something reasonably modest. Too ambitious a scheme can lead to frustration. You may want to see if the local cable television station would assist you with this project as part of its community programming.

Have learners assume particular responsibilities. Here are some of the jobs that need to be filled:

- producer (manages everything, obtains and allocates resources)
- script writer
- director (works with actors and writer to get the right performances)
- actors
- camera operators
- set designers/properties
- editor (organizes footage into smooth finished program)

Don't focus too much on the ultimate goal of producing a program. Instead, establish a number of interim goals and support learners in achieving these. Here are some examples of interim goals you could set for a documentary:

- Send learners to library to find books on video production.
- Complete research notes for the script.
- Write letters or make phone calls to obtain use of facilities.
- Write letters or make phone calls to people learners want to interview in the documentary.

- 
- Write letters or make phone calls to find out if local community cable service or a college media resources program might be able to provide technical support.
  - Write a script.
  - Convert a written script into a storyboard. Plan the visuals that would support the ideas in the script.
  - Go out to visit possible locations. Prepare notes to describe each location and its suitability for the production.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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The following publications contain activities related to the focus of this theme unit:

### Fundamental Level English Theme Units

This publication may be ordered from:

Provincial Curriculum Publications  
Marketing Department  
Open Learning Agency  
4355 Mathissi Place  
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4S8

Telephone: (604) 431-3210  
Fax: (604) 431-3381  
Toll-free in B.C.: 1-800-663-1653

Order Number: VA0110

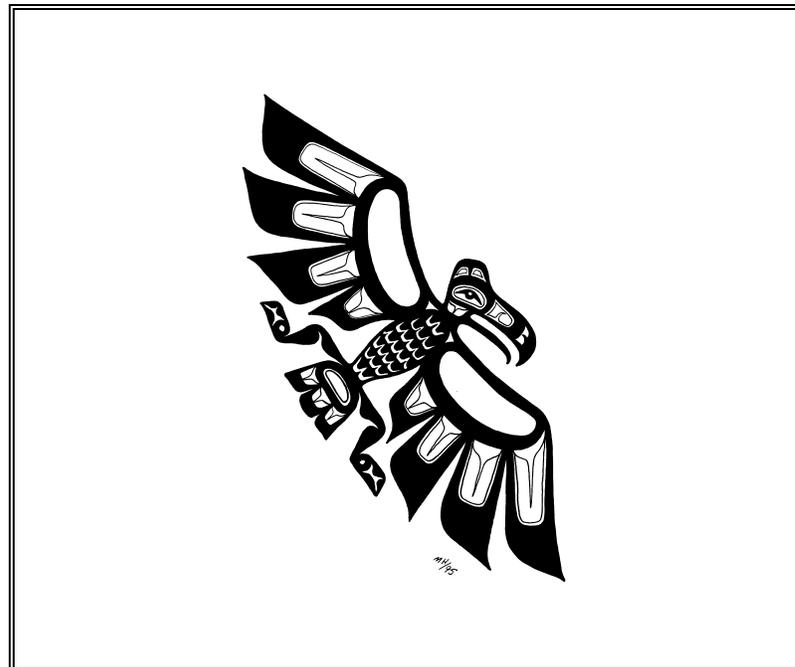
D. Sawyer and H. Green, The NESAs Activities Handbook for Native and Multicultural Classrooms, Volume I

This may be obtained from:

Arsenal Pulp Press  
Ste. 103 - 1014 Homer Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2W9

Telephone: (604) 687-4233  
Fax: (604) 669-8250

# FIRST NATIONS HISTORY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



# Table of Contents

Learning Goals .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Part One: What is History .....	5
Activity 1: Our Story, not History .....	5
Activity 2: No, Not Columbus .....	10
Activity 3: Personal Timeline .....	13
Activity 4: Historical Timeline .....	14
Part Two: First Nations and European Society .....	18
Activity 5: The Maritime Fur Trade on the Northwest Coast .....	18
Activity 6: Simulation Game: “The Discovery of the Planet Earth” .....	23
Part Three: Current Issues .....	32
Activity 7: Land Claims: Kanehsatake .....	32
Activity 8: Land Claims: Blockade .....	35
Activity 9: The Impact of Legislation .....	38
Activity 10: First Nations Identity .....	41
Part Four: Our Lives, Our Culture .....	45
Activity 11: The Personal is Political: Fay Wilson .....	45
Activity 12: Genograms/Family Trees .....	50
Activity 13: Cultural Presentation .....	56
Part Five: Summing Up .....	58
Activity 14: Review of the Unit .....	58
Activity 15: Assembling the Class Booklet .....	59
Additional Resources .....	60

## **LEARNING GOALS**

By the end of this unit, learners should be able to:

1. Demonstrate improved reading and writing skills in researching and presenting information orally and in writing.
2. Display improved communication skills in conducting interviews and making speeches and presentations.
3. Recognize the value of the First Nations perspective in the learning process.
4. Recognize the value of oral history as well as written history.
5. Present their opinions and assessment of historic and current First Nations-white relations in British Columbia society.
6. Explain the connections between individual experiences of social problems and the collective experience of living in Canadian society.

## INTRODUCTION

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This theme unit examines the political, economic, and cultural relations between First Nations and Canadian society from a First Nations perspective. It presents a view that is highly critical of the actions and institutions of the dominant European culture that have shaped First Nations life and society in Canada.

The activities in this theme unit examine the ways in which government policies and European attitudes have contributed to the destruction of traditional ways of life. While it is essential for First Nations individuals to find sobriety, acquire an education, get a job, improve parenting skills, etc., solutions to these immediate problems are grossly inadequate if the individuals do not have an understanding of the historical processes that have shaped their lives.

A continuous thread throughout the history of colonization has been the process of attempted assimilation. The efforts to destroy First Nations identity have resulted in the blurring of cultural identities, the loss of stories and family histories, and the creation of stereotypes of what an “Indian” is. This unit poses a challenge to that assimilation process by engaging the learners in a process of self and cultural re-discovery.

Traditionally, First Nations approach learning from a holistic perspective. They do not recognize any artificial distinction between the intellectual, spiritual, physical, and emotional parts of the self. Nor do they set aside a separate space and time in which learning is to occur. In keeping with that tradition, this unit values oral history as highly as written history. It encourages work within and beyond the classroom. And by utilizing community resources and knowledge, it revalues what colonization has attempted to devalue.

Most importantly, the unit encourages learners to learn about, and work with, the unique culture and tradition in which they live. By learning about their history from First Nations sources, learners can gain a better understanding of First Nations - white relations and the types of oppression that First Nations have faced. Drawing upon their own experience and the communal roots of resistance and survival, learners can find a strong voice and identity from which to speak about their lives and their futures.

### **Unit description**

This theme unit is designed to bring together academic resources, personal experiences, community resources, and opportunities for community activism and involvement. It attempts to balance the intellectual aspects of reading activities with the experiential understandings of simulation games. It utilizes traditional First Nations methods of learning such as music, stories, and oral history, and it also includes modern media – film, video, and popular music.

Reading activities in this unit could take several forms. Instructors using a whole-language approach to reading may read to the learners, or have more advanced learners read to the others in small groups or pairs. Some learners may only learn to read a few key words, some may learn new vocabulary; others may begin to understand the organizational structure of different types of information. In any case, the learner's understanding of the "message" is more important than technical fluency in reading.

The time needed for activities in this unit varies widely. The Historical Timeline activity could be open-ended: i.e., learners could suggest additions to the Timeline as they progress through the unit. As well, learners should be encouraged to suggest possible resource people, topics for discussion, or other activities for inclusion in the unit.

The final activity of assembling all of the learners' research and information into a booklet is designed to encourage learners to make a positive response to the social problems and outside pressures they have to deal with. It represents a

personal and local response based on cultural pride, resistance and survival. It is a small but significant step towards rewriting First Nations history from a First Nations perspective.

We encourage you to select a range of activities that meet the needs and interests of your learners. The activities are designed to be flexible: modify, adapt, and extend them to suit your class and your teaching style.

**PART ONE****WHAT IS HISTORY?**

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**ACTIVITY 1: OUR STORY, NOT HISTORY**

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**Purpose / description:**

Students read a poem and discuss the way First Nations history has been presented by non-First Nations writers.

**Materials:**

Poem “Our Story Not History,” by Ron Hamilton – copy for each learner.

[\(Poem on page 9\)](#)

Distribute the poem to the learners.

Divide the learners into groups of four or five. Ask each group to select a recorder to write down the ideas that come out of the discussion, and a reporter to present these ideas to the class.

Ask each learner to read aloud one verse from the poem. Summarize the verse and have learners discuss and interpret the meaning of it. Continue to the end of the poem, then give the groups time to discuss the poem and record their thoughts and ideas. Point out that there is no “correct” interpretation of the poem, but each learner should try to give a reason for his or her interpretation.

Ask learners to come back together in the large group. Go verse by verse through the poem, and have each group report on one verse at a time. Use **clustering** or **concept-mapping** to record what the group reporters present.

This may be a good time for the instructor to introduce the concepts of *voice* and *voice appropriation*. Voice is a term used to describe the transmission of information about oneself or one’s culture. It refers to the definition of one’s identity and one’s view of reality. Voice appropriation occurs when someone else, someone outside the culture, provides that information. This is relevant to this unit because First Nations people are rarely the ones who produce news stories, magazine articles, books, or movies about First Nations issues and events, and until very recently, First Nations accounts of past events or traditional land use and resource practices were generally discounted or ignored.

This may also be the time to point out that history, as a discipline or field of study in the western world, has strict criteria about what is accepted as the “truth.” Only documented or written information is seen as legitimate.

The following questions may help you to conduct a guided-discussion of the poem:

- What do the first two verses say about the field or study of history?
- Who writes these text books?
- How much of this history is written by First Nations people?
- Why do you think that First Nations people have not told these stories?
- Why do you think that anthropologists, historians, politicians, film makers, journalists, etc., feel that they have a greater right to tell this story than the First Nations people themselves?
- In the third verse, who are those few that are changing history, redefining it, and making it responsible?
- Who are those caught in its “sticky web”?
- Do historical works have an impact on the daily lives of First Nations peoples?
- How are people made “prisoners of history”?
- How are “their futures determined” and who are “their enemies” who compile that history?

Remind learners that an increasing number of First Nations people are using story telling, creative writing, film making, community newspapers, and performing and visual arts, to tell First Nations stories from a First Nations perspective: e.g., *Slash*, a novel by Jeannette Armstrong, “The Honour of All,” the Alkali Lake story on film, and *Kahtou*, a First Nations newspaper.

There are many other examples (see First Nations Literature theme unit) and it would be useful to refer to any ones in your local area.

**Brainstorm** ideas on how history (as recorded by Europeans) has affected First Nations peoples: e.g., government funding formulas, school curricula, non-Indian perceptions of First Nations communities, etc.

At this point you could introduce the concepts of “objectivity” and “subjectivity” and discuss their place in the writing of history. Objectivity means to be free from feelings, opinions or biases when describing something – an event, an experiment, the results of a research study. In

scientific and academic circles it is one of the basic requirements of research. Some social scientists and journalists believe that First Nations people should not study or write about First Nations people because personal opinions could affect the accuracy of their work.

Subjectivity is the opposite of objectivity. Subjective accounts of an event may include mention of how observers felt about what they saw. In recent years there has been intensive debate over the relative importance of objectivity and subjectivity. One of the important results of this debate was the evidence showing that even when scientists claimed to be objective, their own feelings, opinions, and biases influenced the way they approached a subject, what they saw or didn't see, and how they recorded the results of their work. Point out that in the field of social sciences, total objectivity is expected. But also stress that every human being has his or her own likes and dislike, biases and prejudices.

Discuss the value of First Nations methods of passing on knowledge and historical information, even if those methods do not conform to the standard academic structures of history. Some possible questions are:

- How do you interpret the final line of this poem?
- When the author says "making history," does he mean that they are making it up?
- Does this last line of the poem give you a sense of hope that First Nations people can make history by re-writing it and setting some records straight?
- Does it also give hope that their acts and deeds can create the history that future generations will remember them for?

Conclude the discussion with some reflections on the reasons why First Nations ways of recording and passing on history are not valued.

- Why doesn't Canadian society recognize oral history, songs, story telling and totem poles as valid and truthful history?
- Why can't you use your clan crest as evidence of when and where you were born when you want to register in school? Or to get your driver's license?
- Why aren't the stories told by the elders regarded as suitable material for learning in school?

To end the activity on a positive note, learners could discuss the value of stories and songs as a means of recording and passing on history.

You could list the positive values of stories and songs on the board or flip chart and ask learners to copy them in their journals or notebooks. Encourage learners to make their own notes throughout this unit. They should write down any thoughts or questions they have about the material being studied (pictures, poem, songs, stories, articles, interviews, and videos).

“Our Story Not History”  
by Ron Hamilton

We are walking up the road  
That leads to history.  
Some are being led peacefully  
Others are driven from within.

Some are dragged kicking and screaming.  
Pulled forcefully  
Down the road that leads  
Away from their history.

A very few are changing history.  
Redefining the meaning of history.  
Making history responsible  
To those caught in its sticky web.

Sadly some are prisoners of history,  
Their very lives defined,  
And their future determined,  
By a history compiled by their enemies.

Some are being made by history.  
Some are “making” history.

*circa 1968-75,  
in Victoria*

Hamilton, Ron. *Our Story Not History* Reprinted with permission of the publisher from *In Celebration of our Survival: The First Nations of British Columbia* edited by Doreen Jensen and Cheryl Brooks (Vancouver: UBC Press 1991). All rights reserved by the publisher.

## ACTIVITY 2: NO, NOT COLUMBUS

---

**Purpose / description:**

Students listen to a song that reminds listeners that the history of North America does not start with the arrival of Columbus.

**Materials:**

Tape or disc of “No, Not Columbus” by David Campbell  
available for \$15 plus \$3 postage/handling from:

David Campbell

PO Box 93533, Nelson Park Post Office

Vancouver BC V6E 4L7

(Specify “People of Turtle Island” album; cassette or CD)

Tape recorder or CD player

Song lyrics copies for all learners

Play the song “No, Not Columbus” for the class.

Distribute the copies of the lyrics and ask learners to read the biographical note about David Campbell. (found on page 12)

Play the song again while learners read the words.

Conduct a **guided discussion** of the messages contained in this song. A number of important points can be made:

First Nations do not have to accept the “history book” version of what happened in their history.

American (North, Central and South) history did not begin in 1492.

The European or Western model is only one way of recording history; the First Nations peoples of the Americas have another way.

In asking us to use our heads, David Campbell is calling on us to reclaim the teachings of our elders.

Focus the discussion on some of the specific details in the song:

- Who is the “man with a red beard” and “a gun?”
- Who is the “man with a big black bomb” or “an endless Pepsodent smile?”
- Who is the “salesman so hungry for gold?”

Conclude by asking learners to write a paragraph in their notebooks about the earliest history of their clan or Nation, or about some historical event that took place before Europeans came to BC. They could do this in pairs or small groups working together, especially if they need to do some research, e.g., asking elders for information.

NO, NOT COLUMBUS  
by David Campbell

Burn your history books  
Use your head  
Tell me now what you know  
Tell me who it was found this land  
A long, long time ago

CHORUS:  
No, Not Columbus  
He thought he'd reached India  
A very long, long time ago  
Who do you think found America?

No it wasn't a man with a long red beard  
No it wasn't a man with a gun  
Was a little brown man with an arrow and bow  
A-chasin' after the sun

No, it wasn't a man with a big black bomb  
Or an endless Pepsodent smile  
Was a little brown man with an arrow and bow  
Who'd been hunting for many a mile

No, it wasn't a salesman so hungry for gold  
He'd lost his soul and his hair  
Was a little brown man with an arrow and bow  
Who followed the wind everywhere

Spoken:  
'Yeah--it coulda been a little brown woman too'

Born and raised in Guyana, South America, DAVID CAMPBELL is the child of an Arawak father and a Portuguese mother. Brought up in the British school tradition (Guyana was a British colony), he struggled for a long time to overcome the feeling of shame and inferiority he had because of his ancestry. He lived in Sweden, England and Scotland before he made his home in Canada and became a Canadian citizen. He is known throughout the world for his music which sings of the troubles, tribulations and joys of First Nations and immigrant people. He presently lives in Vancouver, BC.

*No, Not Columbus.* Words and Music by David Campbell. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission.

## ACTIVITY 3: PERSONAL TIMELINE

---

**Purpose / description:**

Students create their own personal timelines. They decide what dates and events to put on their timelines, and thus get a feel for “creating” their own history.

**Materials:**

Large sheets of paper

Describe a timeline. The starting point may be as far back as each person can go on his or her family tree or it may begin with their own date of birth. It might be helpful if you are prepared to present your own personal timeline as an example to the class. Your personal timeline could include such events as date of birth, birth of children, when you held certain jobs, major moves, etc.

Give each learner a large sheet of paper and have them draw a line down the centre of the page. The dates will go on the left-hand side of the line, and words describing the events will go on the right-hand side of the line. Students may work individually or in pairs.

Give the learners a few minutes to brainstorm ideas of what to put onto a personal timeline before they begin to work on their own. Ask them to write some key words for use when they are working individually or in pairs.

Ask learners to describe and show their timelines to each other. Depending on time constraints and the comfort level of the learners, presentations can be done in small groups of 4 or 5, or to the class as a whole.

## ACTIVITY 4: HISTORICAL TIMELINE

---

**Purpose / description:**

Students compile a chronology of First Nations history.

**Materials:**

Timeline – copy for all learners ([found on page 16](#))

Large sheets of paper

Felt pens

Measuring stick

Scissors

Glue

Tell the learners that just as they have done a timeline of their own personal histories, now they will do one for their collective histories. Emphasize the fact that you do not expect them to be experts on First Nations history; they should simply record the significant events at the local, national and international level that they know about. You should also mention that some of the events in their personal timelines may have historical significance. For example, learners from Davis Inlet would likely include in their personal timelines their participation in the actions that stopped judges and policemen from coming into the community in September 1994. Such events were important to other First Nations and would therefore be included in the historical timeline as well.

Conduct a brainstorming session and list all the events that learners mention alongside their corresponding dates (these may be approximate at first) on the blackboard or on flip chart paper.

Alert the learners to the fact that they may differ among themselves about dates and interpretations of events. Not everybody will remember the same events; some will place them at different times; what some may consider very significant others may consider unimportant. Point out that academic historians have to deal with these same dilemmas and despite efforts to be objective, subjective choices and biases still enter into discussions of history.

Hand out copies of the timeline. Ask learners to form small groups to compare the timeline and the events they came up with in their brainstorming session.

Have the full class construct a timeline similar to the handout. Put on it the dates that have come out of the activity, but leave space for pre-contact events (if available), and for events still to come in the next decade or so. New additions can be made throughout the study of this unit and throughout the school year.

Ask learners to look at the Historical Timeline and their Personal Timeline together to see how their own lives have been affected by political policies and events.

Using the timeline as a reference point, discuss the general plan of study for this unit. Ask learners to suggest topics or issues of particular interest, additional materials for discussion, and possible resource people. Encourage them to volunteer as resource people themselves. Make sure that everyone has an opportunity to mention their interests or concerns so that the needs, goals, and expectations of the class can be clarified.

This would be a good time to introduce the idea that learners could publish a “Class Booklet” that would include examples of their work on this theme unit. This timeline is an example of what they could include in the booklet. Assembling and arranging the material in booklet form would be the final activity in the unit, and the booklet would be a positive example of people using their own “voices” to record their history.

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## HISTORICAL TIMELINE: FIRST NATIONS, BC, AND CANADA

- 1763 Royal Proclamation by George III, referring to the colonies of British North America, reserves to the Indians all land not “ceded to or purchased by” the British crown.
- 1774 - 1810 Contacts between aboriginal peoples of BC and European explorers.
- 1830 Indians in eastern Canada moved into reserves.
- 1850s First Nations around Victoria sign fourteen treaties with James Douglas, Governor of the colony administered by the Hudson’s Bay Company. European population of Vancouver Island and Lower Mainland increases steadily.
- 1862 Cariboo Gold Rush. Smallpox epidemic reduces aboriginal population of BC by one third.
- 1868 Canadian government enacts legislation to promote “the gradual civilization of Indian Peoples.”
- 1871 BC enters Confederation. The Government of Canada has jurisdiction over aboriginal people and reserve lands. The province owns all public land and takes action to limit the size of Indian reserves.
- 1876 All legislation affecting First Nations people is combined in the Indian Act.
- 1884 Amendment to the Indian Act prohibits aboriginal ceremonies, dances and potlatches.
- 1889 Federal Fisheries Act prohibits Indians from selling fish or owning fishing licences.
- 1890s Residential school system established.
- 1908 Gitksan delegation meets with Prime Minister Laurier to protest European incursions into their territory.
- 1912 - 1916 McKenna-McBride Commission adds 35,000 hectares to reserves but takes away 20,000 hectares of more valuable land from existing reserves.

- 
- 1912 - 1927 Allied Indian Tribes of BC press their land claims upon the province and Canada, seeking larger reserves and negotiation of treaties. In response, Parliament outlaws claim-related activities.
- 1922 RCMP seizes potlatch goods in raid at Alert Bay. Goods displayed in museums in eastern Canada.
- 1951 Indian Act amended; potlatch and claims prohibitions are repealed.
- 1969 - 1973 Nisga'a land claim before courts.
- 1982 Constitution of Canada affirms and recognizes existing aboriginal rights and treaty rights. The first "cut-off" land claim in BC is settled.
- 1991 BC agrees to join federal government in treaty negotiations with First Nations.
- 1992 The First Nations Summit and the Governments of Canada and BC establish the BC Treaty Commission to facilitate treaty negotiations.

## PART TWO            FIRST NATIONS AND EUROPEAN SOCIETY

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### ACTIVITY 5: THE MARITIME FUR TRADE ON THE NORTHWEST COAST

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**Purpose / description:**

Students read a synopsis of an article about relations between First Nations people and European traders. The article presents evidence to show that First Nations people were not passive victims of European exploitation.

**Materials:**

Synopsis of the article “Indian Control of the Maritime Fur Trade and the Northwest Coast” by Robin Fisher – copy for each learner.

Flip chart paper, overhead projector or black board.

Read the synopsis so you are familiar with the content.

Distribute copies of the synopsis to learners. Explain what a synopsis is and why it is useful, i.e., the article itself is much longer and harder to read.

Divide the learners into groups of three or four. Ask each group to decide how they want to read the synopsis: e.g., the people that feel most confident can read it aloud to the rest of the group, each person can take a turn reading aloud, etc.

It might be helpful to make up a list of difficult words ( e.g., maritime, gullible, staple, customary, acquired, exaggerated, mutually) ahead of time and be ready to answer questions about them. You could do a **word sort** or **word association** exercise based on these words.

When learners have finished reading the synopsis, ask each group to discuss the following questions:

- What did early historians say about European – First Nations relations in the maritime fur trade?
- What sorts of information were they ignoring?
- Did the omission of certain kinds of information give an accurate or truthful account of what happened?
- How would you describe the actions of First Nations traders in their business dealings with European traders?
- How does the traditional view of First Nations-White relations shape the way the First Nations people are seen today?

Ask learners to come back together for a whole group discussion. Record the learners' ideas and responses on flip chart paper, overhead projector or the board.

Since Fisher's main objective is to point out that First Nations peoples were not ignorant or passive victims of the fur trade, this is an excellent opportunity to discuss First Nations "agency" and "autonomy" at the time of contact. Agency refers to the actions, often secret and sometimes illegal, e.g., holding potlatches, taken by individuals and groups to maintain their identity and traditions in the face of hostile government policies and social attitudes. In doing so, they were the "agents" of their own survival and the survival of their cultures.

Autonomy is a state of independence and self-government. Before the arrival of the Europeans, First Nations had structures and laws that governed all aspects of social and cultural life, and their trading relations with each other. Each nation had its own language, culture and traditions, its own land and resource base. That autonomy was destroyed when Europeans occupied Canada and imposed their laws, e.g., the Indian Act, on the First Nations.

In the concluding discussion, you should stress the fact that the writers of history books were ordinary people who were swayed by the attitudes of their times. For many years in the middle of the 20th century, those attitudes were influenced by the "Cowboys and Indians" western movies that portrayed First Nations people as savages and villains. It was acceptable to portray First Nations as helpless, ignorant victims. In other times, history writers portrayed First Nations people as "Noble Savages" – good environmentalists and extremely spiritual people whose souls were close to the animals. Even though these may appear positive or flattering, they are still stereotypes, and

today, First Nations people are moving away from any kind of stereotypes to better understand and value the uniqueness of each Nation.

Ask learners, working alone or in small groups, to write in their journals a paragraph or two about someone who has taken action to maintain their community's identity and culture, or an event or ceremony that maintains their community's identity and culture.

If some learners have trouble with this type of assignment, you could help them by showing how to organize the information:

- The name of the person, their position or role in the community, what they did, and why it's important.
- The name of the event or ceremony, when and where it happened (or happens on a regular basis), who is involved in it, and what it means to the community.

## INDIAN CONTROL OF THE MARITIME FUR TRADE AND THE NORTHWEST COAST

by Robin Fisher

### SYNOPSIS

The first contact between Indians and Europeans on the northwest coast was in 1774 when the Spanish navigator Perez met a group of Haida off the Queen Charlotte Islands. Four years later, Captain James Cook arrived at Nootka Sound. While he was there, he obtained some sea otter skins. In 1784, the official account of Cook's voyage revealed that these furs were sold in China for very high prices. A year later, the first British trader arrived at Nootka.

That was the beginning of the maritime fur trade on the northwest coast. In the next few years, more British trading ships arrived. American ships began arriving too, and by 1793 they outnumbered the British. The peak years for the maritime fur trade were from 1792 to 1812.

Early historians have described the maritime fur trade on the northwest coast as a trade in which gullible Indians were exploited by greedy and unprincipled European traders. While this view is critical of European behaviour, it does not represent a true picture of the trade.

During the early years of the trade, sea otter furs were easily acquired and some European traders made large profits. But even when furs were plentiful in the 1790s, the prices demanded by the Indians rose rapidly. Perez and Cook and other European captains recognized that they were dealing with expert and skilful Indian traders.

There is much evidence to show that Indian traders knew what they wanted and were determined to get it. They wanted metals such as iron, copper, and brass for tools and decoration. Once they had plenty of these, their interest turned to cloth, clothing, and blankets. Blankets were useful for clothing, they were easily counted, and their quality could be easily judged. They soon became a staple item in the fur trade and also in potlatches. In later years, muskets also became important trade items.

The Indians used a number of techniques to force prices up. They went from ship to ship looking for the best price for their furs. They told Europeans there was always another trader willing to pay their price, or that other Indian traders were demanding even higher prices.

It was clear to European traders that definite trading patterns already existed on the northwest coast. Coastal Indians obtained furs from other Indians to sell to the Europeans. Sometimes, they used force to get them. Coastal Indians also tried to prevent any other Indians from dealing with the Europeans. By acting as middlemen, they pushed prices up for their own profit.

European traders soon had to change their trading methods. In the early years of the trade, Indians paddled out to the ships to sell their furs. But once the trade was established, European traders had to do business on Indian terms. Before actual trading began, Indians sang songs and carried out certain rituals; exchanges of gifts were customary. The Indians were often in no hurry to trade. Unlike the Europeans who wanted to fill their ships as quickly as possible, they had plenty of time, and were able to wait until a European captain finally agreed to a deal. Most of the trading was done with Indian chiefs, some of whom became very wealthy as a result of the fur trade.

It has been said that European captains did not expect to return to the same place to trade and so they were able to cheat the Indians and even use violence against them. But the records show that over the years, most of the trading was done in a few specific places. So a European trader who made more than one voyage to the northwest coast was likely to return to where he had traded earlier.

There were some violent incidents. Some European traders, caught between rising costs on the northwest coast and declining prices in China, found it hard to accept Indian trading methods. Nevertheless, it is clear that the hostility between Indians and Europeans was exaggerated in European records. Captains came to the coast expecting to meet hostile Indians and often perceived hostility where none existed. Indians sometimes felt insulted when European traders rejected offers to trade, especially when furs were offered in a ceremonial exchange of presents. But both sides realized that attacking potential customers was not good for trade.

During the maritime fur trading period, the Indians were not passive objects of exploitation. They were part of a mutually beneficial trading relationship over which they exercised a good deal of control. Within the trading relationship they selected those goods that they wanted and rejected those they did not. The overwhelming impression that emerges from the journals of the European traders is that the Indians were intelligent and energetic traders, quite capable of driving a hard bargain.

## ACTIVITY 6: SIMULATION GAME: “THE DISCOVERY OF THE PLANET EARTH”

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**Purpose / description:**

This is a simulation game in which learners can explore the ways that the First Nations of BC. have been exploited and oppressed.

**Materials:**

- “The Discovery of the Planet Earth” sheet – copy for each learner
- “Culture and Spirituality” – copy for each learner in this small group
- “Written Records” – copy for each learner in this small group
- “Social Development” – copy for each learner in this small group
- “Economic and Political Power” – copy for each learner in this small group

Begin by passing out a copy of “The Discovery of the Planet Earth” to each learner. Read this aloud to the class or ask for a volunteer to read it.

Ask learners if they have any questions or need any points clarified.

Divide the class into four groups. Each group should elect a recorder (to write down the decisions of the group on a large sheet of paper) and a reporter (to make the group’s final presentation to the class). Each group is to discuss one of the following issues:

1. Culture and Spirituality
2. Written Records
3. Social Development
4. Economic and Political Power

Distribute the appropriate sheets to each group and allow time for learners to read and understand the sheet. Emphasize the fact that the questions on each sheet are just a starting point; learners should feel free to be innovative and creative in this problem-solving process.

Ask the groups to discuss the questions on the sheet. Underline the importance of a thorough and open discussion before any recording occurs, so that every person in the group has an opportunity to say what they think. When group members have made agreements and decisions, the recorder is to put these onto a large sheet of paper and tape it onto the wall.

When all the groups are ready, ask the reporters make their presentations. Follow each presentation with a question period. Encourage other members of each group – not just the reporter – to respond to the questions.

When all the reports have been given, explore the process that each group used to arrive at decisions. You could point out that many First Nations used consensus decision-making, while Canadian society operates on the principle of majority rule. Examine the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Ask learners to identify the similarities and differences between the oppressed peoples in this simulation game and the struggle of First Nations. Record the learners' responses in two columns on the board or on a flip chart. The questions below might be helpful, but allow the debriefing to move in the directions that the learners feel need to be addressed:

- When modern technology (e.g., Nintendo, TV, pain killing medication, mind-altering drugs, etc.) becomes even more dominant in everyday life, will the younger generations in the simulation game or in the Native community care about hanging onto cultures and traditions?
- What are some of the strategies that the groups came up with to re-ignite this interest in the young people? Are these similar to some of the initiatives taken up in some native communities?
- Can you see any parallels between the society in this game that is trying to keep their literacy alive by teaching reading and writing, and the First Nations people who are trying to revive the oral tradition?
- Does the removal of children and the stitching up of their mouths remind you of any of the colonial developments in Canada? Can you see any similarities between that society trying to maintain their language and history, and the efforts of First Nations people to do the same?
- What kinds of activities did the “social development” group come up with that would bring people together?
- Do you think this would have been what First Nations people did when the potlatch was banned?
- What are some First Nations people doing today to bring people back to the culture and to bring them together?
- Does the experience of the Human Beings in working with the “unity” issue give you some insights into the difficulties that the First Nations of BC face in delegating one leader to speak for them?
- How would you establish priorities when there are so many issues to be dealt with?

Conclude the activity by asking learners to consider the following questions:

- Did some people find it overwhelming to look at the issues of all of the four groups? Or is this something that you are used to in growing up in a First Nations community?
- Do you have any other comments about this game?

## THE “DISCOVERY” OF THE PLANET EARTH Simulation Game

In the year 2092, the Zenith Beings discovered the primitive planet Earth on the far side of the galaxy. They were disappointed to find that the Human Beings who inhabited this planet still used their voices to communicate and still relied on domesticated animals and vegetation for their subsistence needs. But there were some assets to this discovery. The human beings possessed a good strong energy that radiated from their heads which they called their brains. The Zeniths were able to change that energy into power for their own advanced communication systems. The humans also knew about the geography of the planet and the Zeniths were very interested in learning this. The planet itself had some gases in its atmosphere and this really pleased the Zeniths as they had used up most of what surrounded their own planet. The air alone would have been reward enough for their discovery so they celebrated their good fortune.

A few adjustments had to be made. The uncivilized Humans had no concept of title and ownership to the oxygen, thus the Zeniths had to create new institutions to govern this. The Zeniths did not have the heart to allow the poor humans to go on speaking with their vocal chords or to continue using their mouths for eating food so they took the Human children into their care to teach them the new ways, and to stitch their mouths shut. Sharing this wealth of knowledge with the Humans was difficult because they resisted every step of the way. They refused to give up their children until the Zeniths created law to forced them to do so. They insisted upon speaking until the lips of the children were stitched together. The adults continued to hide their plant and animal foods even though it had become illegal for them to do so. But these were minor obstacles to the Zeniths for they knew their own superior ways would succeed.

The Zeniths were quite surprised to find that the Humans were extremely attached to their primitive religious practices, their buildings, and their books. The Humans even desired to remain as separate Nations, each with its own language, customs, tradition, religion and geographic territory. But as with the education of their young, the Zeniths had no doubts that the Humans would eventually change their primitive ways. How could they refuse the superior methods of transportation, the convenient ways of maintaining the body or the advanced system of communication?

So began the clash between the Zenith and the Humans! Removing the children increased the pace of change. So too did the administering of pleasure or pain to the human brain with the Zenith communication systems. Zenith control of the Government, the laws and the air was the final death blow to the old Human way of life. Would they survive in the face of such oppression?

## THE “DISCOVERY” OF THE PLANET EARTH Simulation Game

### Issue Sheet 1: CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY

#### Religion:

- Now that all places of worship have been destroyed and all forms of gatherings outlawed, how will we maintain our spiritual way of life?
- Where will we meet? How would we come together?
- How will we organize ourselves?
- How will we communicate our information, our values and beliefs to each other without being found out by the Zeniths?

#### Food and Nourishment:

- The Zeniths have slaughtered all of our animals and burnt all of our crops. Where will we keep the animals that we have hidden?
- Where will we plant new crops?
- How will we teach our young to care for the animals and to grow fruits and vegetables?
- How will we teach them the traditional methods of preparing these foods?
- How will we bring our families together when we aren't permitted to gather at the dinner table?

#### Art:

- Because we are not allowed to use our voices any longer, we have lost our songs and dances. How will we bring back the numerous forms of dance (ballet, tap, jive, swing, ballroom, hoop and powwow, jig, etc.)?
- How will we teach our numerous forms of music to the young people? Will they be interested in learning?
- How will we revive interest in live theatre and movies?

#### Customs:

- Each Nation once had its own kinship systems, its own style of dress, its own cultural art forms, etc. How will we keep these things alive in the memories of the future generations?
- Will these future generations care about such things?
- Our houses no longer have dining rooms and kitchens. We only have electronic hat outlets which attach to our heads to feed us. In exchange for nourishment they steal energy from our brains. What has this new system destroyed for us and how can we regain what we have lost?

## THE “DISCOVERY” OF THE PLANET EARTH Simulation Game

### Issue Sheet 2: WRITTEN RECORDS

#### Literacy:

- All of our libraries have been burnt down, all of our books and written records have been destroyed. How will we prevent the loss of our ability to read and to write?
- Where will we get materials such as pens, pencils, and papers?
- How can we teach those who have already lost this skill?
- With all of the publishing companies and printing presses being closed down, we no longer have newspapers, magazines, literature, or text books. How can we regain what we have lost?
- With the closure of all of our government offices, how will we keep such records as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, medical and health, etc.

#### History:

- With our method of transmitting knowledge and information destroyed, how will we tell our story as a Human Race? How will we pass this history on to the next generation?
- How will we pass on the different languages?
- How will the young people know which race and which part of the world their ancestors came from?
- How do we document the history that is being created today?
- With all of our courthouses converted into energy production centres, what will become of the laws that have governed us for centuries?
- How will we maintain the knowledge of our medical professions? Who will remember all of the discoveries of our research?
- How can we continue to find cures when our voices and our written records have been taken away from us?

#### Education:

- In order to function in the Zenith world, we need the use of their technology. How can we use that technology and incorporate it into our lives without forgetting our own culture and losing our own ways?
- How can we make sure that our perspectives, beliefs, and interests are taken into consideration by the educational authorities?
- What steps can we take to ensure that our children also learn our culture, our language, and our history in the classroom?
- What measures must we take to get “Human control of Human Education?”

## THE “DISCOVERY” OF THE PLANET EARTH Simulation Game

### Issue Sheet 3: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Addictions and Suicide:

- Our youth feel so much shame towards their Humanness that they no longer value their own lives. They have an illegal network from which they buy “brain wave pleasure.” The abuse of this substance drastically shortens their lives and their ability to think. What can we do to deal with this addiction?
- What can we do to raise the self-esteem of our youth, so that they can once again value who they are?
- How can we reduce the suicide rate amongst the Humans?
- Where do we begin when all of us are afflicted with this addiction, all of us suffer from internalized discrimination, all of us no longer value life?

#### Discrimination:

- How can we begin to tell the Zeniths that we are a good group of people when we do not feel good about being human beings?
- How could we convince the youth that Human ways and cultures are valuable?
- How do we stop discrimination?
- How do we remove the laws that discriminate against us?
- How can we bring about equality within the laws and institutions which govern our lives?

#### Social Institutions:

- With the absence of the Fine Arts and the “Dinner Table” experience, what other kinds of social institutions can we develop which would bring our people together?
- What kinds of activities could we plan and how would we go about organizing it?

## THE “DISCOVERY” OF THE PLANET EARTH Simulation Game

### Issue Sheet 4: ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POWER

#### Self-determination:

- With absolutely no power and no rights for Humans, where will we begin?
- How can we reclaim the oxygen, our brain energy, and other resources that we feel rightfully belong to us?
- How will we organize ourselves so that we can regain control over our own lives, our own resources, and our own future?
- How would we select those who would lead us? What criteria would we use in making these choices?
- How will we ever be able to speak with a united voice? Because we come from many different races and from different parts of the world, and because our needs, goals and cultures are so different from one another, how can we speak with one voice?

#### Environment:

- The Zenith Transportation System is depleting our atmosphere of oxygen, a gas that is crucial to our survival. How will we convince the Zeniths to travel using the slower jet planes that Humans used before they came?
- How do we explain to the Zeniths that the growing of vegetation on our planet is important for the creation of oxygen when they think this is all a part of our religious superstitions?

#### Law and Government:

- What strategies could use to get the right to vote for Humans (suffrage)?
- If we did get the right to vote, how would we train our people to participate in the political process and still remain loyal to our cause?
- With so many injustices, where would we begin?
- With such an unfair distribution of financial and natural resources, how would we go about trying to gain control over our territories?
- They have complete control over the justice system. We cannot access this information because of our lack of telepathic ability. What can we do to get a greater degree of control in this justice system which tries and convicts so many of us?

Training and Employment:

- With minimal skills to hold down jobs in a Zenith-controlled economy, how would we get the proper training?
- Even with proper training, we can't seem to get these jobs. What strategies could we use to get into these jobs?
- With the dependence of our people on the suffocating welfare system, how do we break this destructive cycle?
- With our poor record in the Zenith Educational System, we have very few professionals in the fields of health, government, law, education, social development, economics, etc. How can we change this situation?

**PART THREE****CURRENT ISSUES**

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**ACTIVITY 7: LAND CLAIMS: KANEHSATAKE**

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**Purpose / description:**

Students watch a video of the Oka Crisis and examine the events and issues from different points of view.

**Materials:**

Video *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*

This is available from:

National Film Board of Canada

Telephone: 1-800-267-7710 (Montreal)

or from

Vancouver Public Library

Catalogue Information

Telephone: 331-3603

Any newspaper clippings and magazine articles about the “Oka Crisis” that you can obtain.

Start with a brief discussion of the “Oka Crisis.” Since many of the learners will be familiar with this issue, ask some questions that allow them to express what they already know. The following questions might be helpful:

- Does anyone remember what the Mohawks did in July of 1990?
- Does anyone know the names of the two Mohawk communities that were involved? (Kanehsatake and Kanawake)
- What lands were the Mohawks defending? (Proposed golf course for the town of Oka, on Kanehsatake land)
- Did their stand had any effect on other First Nations in Canada?

The responses to the last question may range from bringing First Nations people together in solidarity with one another, to the whole event being an educational process for non-Indian people. The important thing is to have learners who know about the events and issues at Oka describe them for the other learners.

Provide some information about the film-maker: Alanis Obomsawin is a First Nations woman who has directed other films for the National Film Board on First Nations issues (e.g., “No Address,” “Diary of a Metis Child”). She spent 78 days filming the Oka standoff.

Show learners the newspaper clippings and magazine articles on the “Oka Crisis.” You could distribute them among the learners, or read aloud headlines and relevant passages yourself. Allow time for learners to discuss the way the events were described.

Before screening the video, ask learners to pay particular attention to how the story is told, and how this is different from what they have just seen in the newspapers and magazines.

Encourage the learners to take notes on what they think are important points in the video. They might be able to jot down key words as they watch the video, but it is probably easier and better to make notes as soon as the screening is over. A possible alternative is to stop the video after each major sequence and have learners jot down their notes before continuing the screening. Give learners a bit more time to make entries in a **double-entry journal** if they wish.

After viewing the video, ask the learners to form small groups to discuss the content of the video. Each group should have a recorder and a reporter. To encourage discussion, ask the groups to consider several points of view.

A first set of questions explores the events of this standoff from a Mohawk or First Nations perspective:

- What were the reasons for the Mohawks putting up the road blocks?
- Did the Mohawks see this action as their only recourse, or did they see another alternative?
- What part did the Elders play in the standoff?
- Did the outlook of the Warriors change over the 78 days? How?
- Why did the Warriors believe that this was a life or death cause?
- What did the Warriors set out to do? Did they achieve these goals?
- How did other First Nations people express their support for the Kanehsatake?

Another set of questions looks at police, government and military actions and objectives:

- This video is made from the Mohawks' point of view. How do you think it would be different if it was made from a police point of view?
- Consider how it might have been made from a military point of view.
- How would it have been made from a government perspective?
- Why was the army called in?
- What tactics did the police and the army use to intimidate the Warriors? Were they effective?
- How did the army break the agreements reached in earlier negotiations?
- What reasons were given for the army raiding the Longhouse?
- How did the Warriors feel about that act?

The third set of questions provides learners with the opportunity to take a critical look at the Oka Crisis and take a stand on the issues:

- What was the role of the media in the standoff?
- Was the media presence necessary? Why or why not?
- Was Alanis Obomsawin's presence important?
- Could this confrontation have been ended sooner?
- Why was it dragged out over 78 days? Who was responsible for dragging it out?
- How do you think the Oka Crisis affected other First Nations in Canada?
- Do you think that situations similar to Oka may develop in other parts of Canada?

When the groups have completed their discussions, ask the reporters to present to the whole class the responses to the first two sets of questions. Use **clustering** or **concept mapping** to record the responses from each group. Label one cluster "The Mohawk Perspective." At the centre of the second cluster write, "Government, Police and Military Perspective." Compare the responses recorded around each cluster.

Then ask the groups to report on their answers to the third set of questions. At this point, open the discussion to everyone so that not only the reporters speak. Use a cluster again, titled "Our Class Thinks...." Allow plenty of time for learners to present their own point of view on all of the issues and the implications of the Oka situation.

## ACTIVITY 8: LAND CLAIMS: BLOCKADE

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**Purpose / description:**

Students watch a video of the efforts of the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en people to protect their land and examine the different points of view expressed in the program.

**Materials:***Video Blockade*

This is available from:  
National Film Board of Canada  
Telephone: 1-800-267-7710 (Montreal)  
or from  
Vancouver Public Library  
Catalogue Information  
Telephone: 331-3603

Give a general introduction to the video. It documents the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en struggle for their land in northern BC, and even though it was directed by a non-First Nations person, it presents the issues from a First Nations perspective. Tell the learners about the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Court Case. Ask learners to express what they know about the land claims issue in BC, and particularly about the situation in their area.

Screen the video. Encourage the learners to take notes or keep a double-entry journal.

After viewing the video, continue the land claims discussion. The following questions may be helpful:

- Is history valid only when someone writes it down? Is this the only truth there is?
- Is it the truth when the First Nations use the oral telling of history through the elders or through visual art, songs, and music?
- Are the land surveys, maps and books more truthful than the testimony of the elders? Why? Why not?

This is another opportunity to examine the issues of *voice* and *voice appropriation*. Point out how the words used by writers of history influence readers' understanding of what happened in history: e.g., in descriptions of armed confrontations between the First Nations and the Europeans, when the whites won, it was called a war; but when the Indians won, it was called a massacre. Examine the role of the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en court case in the long struggle to have the oral tradition recognized by the justice system.

- Why is it called “extortion” when the Gitksan take their land back?
- What did the history books call it when the settlers stole Indian lands?
- A man in the video says that First Nations culture died upon contact. What do you think his definition of culture is?
- Why do you think he and many writers of history books are interested in having us believe that First Nations people have lost their culture?
- What is your definition of culture?
- Do you think culture is frozen in time?
- Do First Nations people still have culture if they use the materials of non-Indian people, such as driver's license, European tools, television and other modern technology?
- Are the survivors of residential schools and the child welfare system people without culture?
- What is the present condition of communities that no longer know their songs, dances, spiritual traditions, etc.

Point out to the class that these were arguments that came up in the courts.

Highlight the ways that many First Nations people have resisted adopting the values, beliefs and world views of the dominant colonial culture. In spite of all the attempts to assimilate them completely, First Nations people still have a unique identity and character which separate them from the larger Canadian society.

Conclude the activity by examining the challenging issue of allies and foes. This is particularly relevant to this activity because the video *Blockade* was made by a non-First Nations woman, Nettie Wilde.

- Are people our allies simply because they are also First Nations?
- Do all First Nations people agree about what should be done about land claims, clear-cutting, social programs, political action, etc.?
- Are all Canadians racist and opposed to First Nations rights, simply because they are non-Indian?

- Historically, most Europeans felt superior to First Nations people, describing them as “primitive” and calling them “savages.” Does this hold true today?
- In what ways do wealth and social class affect attitudes towards First Nations people?
- Do wealthy First Nations people share the views of those who live in poverty?
- In what ways can non-First Nations people actively support the recognition of First Nations rights and title?
- How is this video different from other videos made by non-First Nations people?
- Does Nettie Wilde claim to be an expert? Does she claim to be objective? Does she let First nations people describe their history and present situation in their own ways?

## ACTIVITY 9: THE IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

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**Purpose / description:**

Students read a synopsis of an article that shows how laws have been used to try to eliminate First Nations communities and culture from Canadian society.

**Materials:**

Synopsis of the article “Conspiracy of Legislation: the Suppression of Indian Rights in Canada” by Joe Mathias and Gary R. Yabsley – copy for each learner.

Read the synopsis yourself so you are familiar with the subject matter.

Read the synopsis aloud to the class or have learners read to one another in small groups. Be prepared to explain difficult concepts, clarify points, and answer questions that arise through the reading.

Carry out a **guided discussion** of the synopsis. Here are some questions that may help to stimulate discussion:

- Mathias refers to the belief that Indians were “sleeping on their rights.” What does that mean? How is it similar to the views of early historians that Robin Fisher described (in Activity 5)?
- In the video *Blockade*, one of the non-Indian residents of the area also claimed that natives had “slept on their rights.” Where do you think he got that idea?
- What is the meaning of “conspiracy” in the context of this article?
- In what ways have the First Nations people defended their rights?
- In what ways have Canadian laws restricted the First Nations way of life?
- What has been the impact on you, your family, and your community?
- First Nations people now have the right to vote and have access to the courts. How can these rights best be used to make up for the injustices of the past?
- Since traditional practices are no longer illegal, what can individuals and communities do to rebuild, restore, or revitalize their culture?

Ask learners to write a one or two paragraphs about what the loss of land has meant to their community. You could suggest that learners keep this work for later inclusion in the Class Booklet.

“Conspiracy of Legislation: the Suppression of Indian Rights in Canada”  
by Joe Mathias and Gary R. Yabsley.

SYNOPSIS

Joe Mathias, whose Indian name is St’sûkwanem, is a hereditary Chief of the Squamish people. He has also held the position of elected Chief since 1967. In 1969 he was appointed political spokesperson for the Squamish Nation. In 1985 he became the band’s Land Claims Coordinator. From 1985 to 1990 he was British Columbia’s regional vice-president to the Assembly of First Nations.

Many people who oppose the recognition of any Indian rights to land and resources in BC say that First Nations did nothing over the past century to protect those rights and therefore should be barred from claiming those rights. Indians have, the argument says, “slept on their rights.” But Indians have struggled for over 100 years to protect their lands and their culture, in spite of laws to eliminate Indian rights and deny Indian access to courts and political institutions. These laws are the root cause of the injustice that Indians experience today.

The damage done by these laws to economic well-being, political power, cultural integrity and spiritual strength cannot be measured. From an Indian perspective, these laws represent nothing less than a conspiracy to eliminate Indians and “indianness” from Canadian society.

These laws effectively took away Indian lands. The Colonial Land Ordinance of 1870 allowed any European male over 18 years of age to occupy 320 acres of land regardless of any pre-existing Indian rights to that land. In 1916, the McKenna-McBride Commission, set up by the federal and provincial governments, removed large areas of valuable land from existing reserves in BC. No Indian bands agreed to these changes, but the land was taken, even though the Indian Act required the agreement of the band whose reserve was being reduced.

When Indian bands tried to go to court to save their lands, the federal government, in 1927, changed the Indian Act to make it illegal for Indians to retain a lawyer or raise money to advance their claims to land.

These laws struck at the heart of what was most sacred to West Coast Indian societies and threatened their very survival. In BC, from 1880 to 1951, the Indian Act prohibited potlatches and the practices of the longhouse. Indians trying to preserve their culture and religion were forced to hold potlatches and other ceremonies in secret. Many were arrested and put in prison.

The federal government then forced its own form of government on Indian nations. They set up the band council system. But band councils had little real power. Nearly all decisions, especially ones dealing with money and finances, had to be approved by the Ministry of Indian Affairs.

While Indians were denied the right and the means to be independent or self-reliant, they were at the same time denied the rights and powers enjoyed by non-Indians in Canadian society. Until the 1950s, Indians could not vote in municipal, provincial, or federal elections.

The government's answer to this dilemma was assimilation. Indian children were taken from their homes and families and put in residential schools. They were punished for speaking their own languages and were taught to be ashamed of being Indians. They were forced to act and think like white children.

Indians who wanted to get a university degree or became lawyers, priests or ministers faced a cruel choice. The Indian Act gave them the right to vote and a grant of land from their reserves. The price they had to pay was the loss of their Indian identity and status.

It is clear that the federal and provincial governments have done all they could to eliminate First Nations cultures and traditions from Canadian society. Only the strength, courage, and continuing struggle of the First Nations has enabled them to survive.

## ACTIVITY 10: FIRST NATIONS IDENTITY

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**Purpose / description:**

Students discuss the synopsis of an article that details how a recent amendment to the Indian Act not only makes it harder for First Nations people to reclaim and maintain their identity, but seriously divides First Nations communities.

**Materials:**

Synopsis of the article “Assimilation Tools: Then and Now” by Shirley Joseph – copy for each learner.

Distribute the synopsis to learners.

Use the biography at the beginning of the synopsis to tell the class a bit about Shirley Joseph.

Read the synopsis aloud to the class or have learners read it together in groups. Explain difficult concepts, clarify points, and answer questions that arise through the reading.

Lead a **guided discussion** of points made in the synopsis. This may begin during the reading or immediately afterwards. Ask learners to consider the following questions:

- What is your understanding of matriarchy and patriarchy?
- What system did/does your Nation have?
- How has the Indian Act been used as a weapon of genocide or assimilation?
- Have you, or has anyone you know, applied through Bill C-31 for Indian status?
- What has happened to those people who have gained “status” through Bill C-31? Have there been benefits or not?
- Have these “new” band members been welcomed back into their communities?
- What do you think of the fact that the Canadian government can decide who should be considered an Indian, who can live on Indian lands, who can benefit from Indian resources?

“Assimilation Tools: Then and Now”  
by Shirley Joseph

SYNOPSIS

Shirley Joseph, of Wet’suwet’en and Carrier ancestry, was born in 1948 and raised on the Hagwilget reserve in Northwestern BC. Since 1978 she has been involved in the struggle to bring about changes to the Indian Act. This has involved extensive research, writing submissions and briefs, conducting workshops, and participating in the 1979 100-mile demonstration from Oka to Ottawa. She has also worked for the Native Women’s Association of Canada.

Over the years, the First Nations people of Canada have learned that fine and eloquent words come easily to Canadian government leaders. They have also learned that actions that bring change and positive results do not.

In June 1985, the Canadian government enacted Bill C-31, a piece of legislation designed to change the Indian Act and end 116 years of discrimination against Indian women. The purpose of the change was to remove sexual discrimination from the Indian Act, restore Indian status and band membership rights to eligible individuals, and to recognize band control over membership.

However, Bill C-31 is yet another attempt to assimilate Indian people into Euro-Canadian society. Discrimination still exists in other government policies and in other parts of the Indian Act. The equality of all Indians is reduced by changes to classification: instead of two groups: status and non-status, now there are four groups: Status with Band Membership, Status only, Non-Status Band Members, and Non-Status Indians.

While bands may confer membership on an individual (if 50% plus one of the band members are in favour), the federal government retains the right to determine status.

To receive the full range of benefits and services available under the Act, Indian people have to live on a reserve. But most reserves have too little land and too few resources to meet the needs of people returning to live on the reserve. The result is more resentment towards the federal government and conflict within bands.

In 1876 all laws affecting Indian people were combined in one piece of legislation called the Indian Act. But instead of assisting Indians, the Canadian government aimed to eliminate Indians by assimilating them all into Euro-Canadian society. Over the years since then, government policies represented a serious assault on First Nations identity, culture, and existence.

Tribes were divided into status and non-status Indians. The traditional matriarchal system of many BC tribes was replaced by a patriarchal system.

If an Indian woman married a man not classified as an Indian by the government, she lost her Indian status. She and her children were not allowed to live on reserve land. They could not take part in social and cultural affairs, nor could they receive services provided for Indians. As a final insult, they could not be buried on reserve land. On the other hand, if an Indian man married a non-Indian woman, that woman was given the full rights and privileges of an Indian woman.

The potlatch was outlawed. The government claimed it was “protecting Indian people from themselves.” In the 1890s, the removal of children from their homes and villages to be placed in residential schools was the single most destructive action taken by the government against Indian people.

After World War II, when Canada signed the UN Declaration of Human Rights, it was forced to examine its treatment of First Nations people. In 1951 the banning of the potlatch was ended. In 1960, Indian people were given the right to vote in federal elections. Residential schools were phased out in the 1970s. And in 1985, the Status and Non-status classification of Indians was changed to meet the requirements of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

But in 1985, the government badly underestimated the number of people who would seek reinstatement as Indians and the amount of resources needed to “right the wrongs of past discrimination.” As a result, the National Aboriginal Inquiry was set up to evaluate the impact of Bill C-31 on Indian people. People from BC presented a large amount of evidence to the Inquiry. Almost all submissions were critical, if not openly hostile, and there were accusations of racism and genocide. In BC, the main issues were status and band membership, band land and resources, benefits associated with status and band membership, and social and cultural impacts.

To be reinstated as band members, applicants have to prove that they are eligible. This usually involves a long and difficult search of band records, land offices, cemeteries, church records and public archives for information going back 100 years or more. This is made worse by the knowledge that the Department of Indian Affairs already has a lot of the necessary information but will not release it.

Another area of serious complaint is the Second Generation Cut-Off section of Bill C-31. People with only one parent entitled to reinstatement can transmit status to succeeding generations only if they marry a status Indian.

Sexual discrimination still remains. Women who lost status through marriage cannot pass status on to succeeding generations as easily as their brothers who married non-Indian women. Children born out of wedlock face an almost impossible task in gaining status.

Bill C-31 creates artificial divisions that promote disagreements in First Nations communities and is completely different from the traditional laws of First Nations. It is another example of the federal government telling First Nations people who is and who is not a member of their community and who can and cannot live on their lands.

Because the demand for land, housing, and financial resources is so great, bands are in a worse position now than they were before Bill C-31. Band after band presented evidence to show that even before 1985, the government's broken promises and commitments had already left bands with inadequate resources to meet the needs of their members.

Since reserves cannot accommodate all those who wish to be reinstated, status Indians who live off the reserve gain almost nothing from Bill C-31. They are only entitled to limited educational and medical benefits, and cannot vote in band elections.

In conclusion, Bill C-31 is an example of legislation and policies that are contrary to basic human rights and freedoms. The government has failed to consider traditional forms of government and social practices. It has not protected the rights of people who live on reserves, and it has not lived up to its responsibilities to aboriginal people who live away from reserves.

Aboriginal people continue to be sacrificed to the plans of Euro-Canadian governments for the ongoing development of Canada. From the time of first contact with Europeans, aboriginal people have faced a seemingly endless series of obstacles in their efforts to resolve their grievances. They have seen walls built to divide their forces and weaken their energies. To correct the injustices suffered by native people it is essential to demolish the impassable boulder of a paternalistic government that defines aboriginal people in its own way. To remove the frustrations and complications that mark the present day life of native people, walls of rules and regulations must be torn down. But as history shows, in spite of the years of systematic effort to eliminate them, Canada's First Nations continue to persevere, to adapt, and to survive.

**PART FOUR****OUR LIVES, OUR CULTURE**

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**ACTIVITY 11: THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: FAY WILSON**

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**Purpose / description:**

Students read about the life of Fay Wilson, a First Nations woman who has struggled to survive and become strong in the face of powerful social forces that have had a huge impact on the lives of First Nations people.

**Materials:**

Excerpts from “We’re here to stay: an interview with Fay Wilson” – copy for each learner.

You could begin by reminding learners about the connections between their Personal Timelines and the Historical Timeline.

Distribute copies of the interview to all learners. Ask them to read it alone or with somebody’s help, if necessary.

Ask learners to talk about their reaction to the interview. Encourage learners to express their thoughts about any part of it. Invite learners to tell of their experiences that are similar to Fay Wilson’s. You might ask learners questions like these:

- In what ways is Fay Wilson’s life similar to the lives of other First Nations people?
- In what ways is it different?
- Do you know people who have had bad experiences similar to Fay Wilson’s?
- Are there people in your community who, like Fay Wilson, have overcome their suffering?
- What can First Nations people learn from Fay Wilson?

Then have individual learners read sections of the interview. After each section (a paragraph or two) ask learners to identify:

1. significant events in Fay Wilson’s life,
2. political, social, and economic forces that affect First Nations people.

Use **clustering** to record those events on the board or on a flip chart. Place “Fay Wilson” in the centre, and add the events and forces around it.

E.g.,

residential school	missionaries	loss of language
mother leaves	alcoholism	powerlessness
violence	sexual abuse	sobriety
healing	oppression	education
anger	go to Vancouver	getting pregnant
abortion	working for Union of BC Indian Chiefs	
George Manuel	activism	internalized racism
cultural hegemony	political policies	theft of land
theft of resources	theft of rights	loss of values
survival		

It might be helpful to use one colour for events in Fay Wilson’s life and another colour for the forces that she mentions.

Ask learners to discuss the statement “The personal is political.” Have learners suggest where to draw lines from the “forces” to events in Fay Wilson’s life. Encourage learners to identify and discuss any other forces that have not been mentioned in the interview.

Ask learners to discuss the problem of internalized discrimination. Oppressed peoples sometimes begin to believe that their social problems are entirely of their own making, or they think that stereotypical views that others hold of them are true. Are learners aware of that kind of thinking in their communities? In what ways does Fay Wilson’s life show that such views and beliefs are wrong? How can First Nations people change those views and beliefs?

To conclude the activity, ask learners to write a paragraph or two about topics like:

The best thing I remember about my childhood

Bad times in my life

A good time in my life

What helps me to survive

Activism: What it means to me

Ask learners to keep this work for possible inclusion in the Class Booklet.

## “WE’RE HERE TO STAY”

### Excerpts from an interview with Fay Wilson

Fay Wilson is a member of the Homalco Band, Coast Salish Nation. At the time of this interview she was a History student at Simon Fraser University.

Interviewer: *What changes did contact (between aboriginal peoples and Europeans) bring about for your people?*

FW: Well, it certainly disrupted the family unit. Prior to contact, the family unit wasn't a nuclear one, it was an extended family where child rearing was a communal responsibility, not just women's work. The residential school system really took a lot away from the family. This began in the late 1800s when attendance was made compulsory. The missionaries would take the children away at a very early age and keep them in the residential school year round.

Interviewer: *You went to residential school, eh?*

FW: Yeah, I did. I went when I was nine in Sechelt for a year and a half and then I went again to St. Mary's in Mission when I was fifteen and sixteen. I don't have very fond memories of it. There are historians now that are saying that it benefited our people because we got educated and now those people are the political leaders. But I think that's stretching it considerably! To say that we benefited from it! (Laughs) For me it was a really tragic experience. The story that's really common with everyone that survived the residential school system has to do with our Native language. For example, I wasn't allowed to speak to my brother in my language; I got slapped by one of the supervisors for speaking my language. They took away our language. And with it, they took away our traditional way of education. English is so different from the way we speak in Indian, that there's just no translation for some expressions. So, without that kind of communication it's really difficult to share, to pass on what those values are, what the lessons are in the stories.

Fay Wilson talks about her early childhood: a world of alcoholism, family violence, and sexual abuse. Her father died when she was four, and her mother left her four children when Fay was five. The traditional way of life had been changed drastically by government policies and laws. People felt powerless. Fay began drinking herself when she was almost fourteen.

FW: My recovery began with becoming sober which in itself was a real struggle. There were no Native sobriety groups. So we struggled with sobering up in the city. I've been sober for about twelve years now. And that's where my healing began. And after I was sober I was able to stay in school long enough to start to learn and understand. The understanding comes from finally recognizing the oppression rather than feeling I'm to blame, like I created all this nightmare in my life. Well, up to that point I hated my mother, I really hated her for leaving me in that environment where she knew that I would be sexually abused. She knew that I would experience all this violence. Well, she broke up the family. I didn't grow up with my brother and sister and I felt a lot of rage towards her about that and even now, sometimes the emotional part of me gets really angry with her.

And I think my education has been a real saviour to me, in being able to understand that there's much more to this world than the emotional part of me. And that's what's brought about the reconciliation, just being able to see that she was a victim of the oppression just as much as I am today. And she didn't have the same kind of opportunities that I have to fight that oppression.

When Fay was in Grade 11 at the residential school, her mother died. Fay became very depressed, and when she was punished for that, she ran away. She continued her education in Vancouver. She finished Grade 11 and 12, getting As in English, Math, and Biology. But there was still violence, anger, and hostility in her life in Vancouver. To numb the pain that she felt, Fay continued to drink.

FW: In the midst of all that drinking I remember going to the gynecologist and finding out that I was pregnant and I was drunk and I was crying, just crying. I just knew I couldn't even take care of myself, how could I possibly take care of somebody else. So I had an abortion. And that really hurt. Like the abortion was – it was awful. I wondered about that life sometimes – what if it had been born – I dreamed about – him I guess, I don't know if it was a him but I've had dreams about a little boy. So that really turned me around I think, just having to give up this child. I was still a child myself; I needed nurturing, healing and growing and I wanted to get my life in order. I didn't want to spend my life on welfare, I wanted to go to school. So I started thinking about sobering up. It was hard to do on my own, but I did it.

I think what really caused the break in the cycle for me was working for the BC Union of Indian Chiefs. The leader, the president at the time, was George Manuel, an activist from the '40s and '50s who's been really instrumental in keeping the struggle of Native people alive. He really paid attention to our well-being and where we were at, and made sure that we weren't just these busy little beavers doing the work that needed to be done. He made sure that we understood why we were doing what we were doing.

Up to that point my experience had told me Indians were really rotten parents. We didn't deserve to have any children. I mean, after all, look what they'd done to me. And I really couldn't comprehend why we would be fighting for Indian control of child welfare. that was beyond me. I couldn't understand that.

Also I saw the substandard education we were getting on reserve and I thought there was no way that we should have control of our education either. We were all going to be a bunch of dummies! Like me. I just really had what today I call "internalized racism." I really hated my Indian identity and I wanted it gone and I thought the sooner we assimilated, the better off we would be. The sooner we learned to pick ourselves up by our bootstraps and merge into society, the better off we would be.

And George started to explain some stuff that really turned on some lights upstairs for me, and I started to see things in a whole new light. It started a process that hasn't turned around. It has never stopped in me since I heard it from him. He talked about the middle-class values that social workers were imposing on Indian homes. He told us about that and I started to feel angry in a whole new way and in a different direction. I wasn't so angry with my family and the way they'd raised me. I started to realize how victimized they were by the system. I started to see a reason to fight and in order to fight I'd have to stay sober.

Interviewer: *Would you celebrate the fact, though, that in spite of all that has been done to First Nations People, you're still here?*

FW: We definitely have a legacy of survival. it is a miracle that we've endured, that we have not only survived the genocide, but also the bombardment of the different institutions and political policies that have disenfranchised my people: the theft of the land; the theft of the resources and all of our rights; the alcoholism; the residential school experience; the invasion of the social workers and the educational system that doesn't reflect our experience; all those things. but, we are still here, and we are here to stay.

## ACTIVITY 12: GENOGRAMS / FAMILY TREES

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**Purpose / description:**

A research and recording activity for learners in which they examine the forces which affected themselves and their families.

**Materials:**

Sample genogram (made by instructor) – copies for all learners

Family Information Worksheets – copies for all learners

This activity requires some preparation ahead of the class time. First, the activity is designed to include a discussion of the child welfare system, but because of the high incidence of child apprehension, there will invariably be one or two learners in a First Nations classroom who have been raised in foster homes or adoptive families. To avoid any embarrassment to those individuals, it would be preferable to speak with them privately ahead of time and ask how they would like to deal with the issue.

Second, it may be helpful to make up a sample genogram or family tree. In one widely used format, the names of all females are circled and male names have a triangle around them. When two people marry or form a couple, a horizontal line is drawn between their names. When the couple has a child, a vertical line is drawn from the centre of the line connecting the parents down to the child's name. Deaths are shown by putting a slash through the name. The family tree chart may be easier to understand if color coding is used: the names of brothers and sisters written in one color, and aunts and uncles in another color.

Begin the activity by handing out copies of the sample genogram and the Family Information Worksheets. Answer any questions that learners may have and encourage learners to suggest their own ideas about how a family tree could be made. Discuss the Family Information Worksheet. In the Other Information column, learners may enter "Spouse," "Cause of Death: .....,," "Family Violence," "Residential School" or any other information they want to record. Have extra copies of each Worksheet page for learners with large families.

Describe the activity to the learners: it is a research project to get them thinking about the many forces which shape the lives of First Nations people. Allow 15 or 20 minutes for learners to jot down the type of questions they might ask relatives or other community members as they investigate their family history.

E.g.,

- Why did my sister die in her teens?
- Which family members suffer from addictions?
- Why does aunt Kathy avoid all family members?
- Who still practices our First Nations spirituality?
- Why did my mother move to the United States?
- What is the history of family violence in our family?
- Which family members attended Residential School?
- Which family members went to jail and why?
- How many of my relatives have moved to the city and why?

Remind them to also ask about good and positive events in their lives.

Symbols or letters can be placed below the names of people on the chart to make visible possible patterns and links, e.g., an “S” under the names of those who committed suicide, “RS” for those who went to Residential School; a \* beside people involved in healing and sobriety, etc.

This might be an appropriate time to discuss the child welfare system. This would provide an opportunity for learners to express their concerns about the ways the system is ignorant and uncaring of the values, practices, and needs of First Nations people. Examining these aspects of the system is one way to help learners realize that many of the difficulties in their lives are not entirely their own fault but are also due to factors beyond their control.

Allot time for the learners to talk among themselves, discuss possible resource people, and make arrangements to gather the information they need for their genograms.

Remind learners working on their Family Information worksheets to consider outside forces and events that may have affected their lives and the lives of family members: events in the community, changes in the local economy, new government policies and actions, etc.

Encourage the learners to be as thorough as possible in their research. Point out that knowledge of one's family and clan ties is very important because most First Nation culture and tradition in BC is passed on through the family and clan system.

Ask learners to keep their genograms for possible inclusion in the Class Booklet.

### **Extension Activity:**

#### Personal History

Ask learners to form small groups. Have the groups develop the questions they would use to ask about someone's life story. Some groups might come up with 5 questions, others with 15.

Then have the groups report back to the full class. Record the questions on the board or on a flip chart.

Discuss the questions and have learners select the "best" ones, i.e., the ones they think are necessary to get a clear picture of a person's life.

If the list is not too long, ask learners to copy the list of selected questions in their journals or notebooks, and then write their life stories by answering the questions as if they were being interviewed.

Take into account the learners' writing abilities when the questions are being discussed. If the list is too long, or the questions too general, select some key questions yourself, or guide the discussion towards a few simple and direct questions that most learners will be able to answer.

FAMILY INFORMATION Worksheet 1

Family members	Birthdate	Other Information
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My Children

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My Sisters' Children

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My Brothers' Children

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My Mother

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My Father

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My Step-Mother or Foster Mother

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My Step-Father or Foster Father

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## FAMILY INFORMATION Worksheet 2

Family members	Birthdate	Other Information
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My Mother's Sisters

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My Mother's Sister's Children

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My Mother's Brothers

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My Mother's Brother's Children

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My Father's Sisters

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My Father's Sister's Children

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FAMILY INFORMATION Worksheet 3

Family members	Birthdate	Other Information
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My Father's Brothers

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My Father's Brother's Children

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My Maternal Grandmother

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My Maternal Grandmother's Brothers and Sisters

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My Maternal Grandfather

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My Maternal Grandfather's Brothers and Sisters

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My Paternal Grandmother

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My Paternal Grandmother's Brothers and Sisters

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## ACTIVITY 13: CULTURAL PRESENTATION

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**Purpose / description:**

Students research specific aspects of their culture and make a presentation to the class. This is a three-part activity that involves (1) discussion of the project, (2) research in the community, (3) presentations to the class.

**Part One: Preparation**

Review with learners some of the issues discussed in the very first activity. Who writes history? Whose point of view is given? Whose point of view is rarely heard? What kind of topics are emphasized in textbooks? What kind of information is the basis of most history books?

Point out to learners that this activity focuses on the ways that First Nations record and pass on their histories.

Describe the activity: small groups are to research specific aspects of their culture and make a presentation to the class. They may use any kind of media in their presentation.

Conduct a brainstorming session to help learners come up with possible topics. If need be, offer some suggestions:

Traditional stories and legends

Traditional songs and dances

Regalia and traditional dress

Clan and family stories

Seasonal gatherings and ceremonial events (sundance, powwow, winter smoke house dance, etc.)

The roles and responsibilities of women, elders, youth, or men in traditional First Nations societies

The place of spirited or homosexual people in traditional First Nations societies

The origin and meaning of traditional names of people

The origin and meaning of place names

Traditional systems of law

Current political issues affecting First Nations culture

Once a variety of topics have been identified, ask learners to select the ones that interest them most.

Then ask learners to form small groups of people with similar interests. Allow time for the groups to discuss the topic they have chosen and possible approaches to it.

When topics have been decided and groups defined, ask the full class to suggest ideas for resources and resource people for each topic. Encourage learners to consider a wide range of community resource people, so that key people, especially elders, are not overloaded by requests for information.

Encourage learners to do their research in a number of different ways: e.g., interviews, readings, field trips. Encourage them to use tape recorders, cameras, or video cameras to record information. Some learners might like to do drawings or paintings.

Ask learners to re-form their groups to plan their course of action. This might involve assigning specific tasks to each group member, developing interview questions, checking into the availability of resources and resource people.

#### Part Two: Research

Throughout the research stage, and especially as groups begin to prepare their presentations, offer as much guidance, encouragement, and support as possible. Encourage learners to use all kinds of media for their presentations: e.g., regalia, drums for singing, art work, books, food, work tools, diagrams, etc. Emphasize the importance of speaking out clearly and spontaneously instead of reading from written notes or a written account.

Allow time and space for groups to rehearse their presentations.

#### Part Three: Presentations

Have each group make its presentation to the rest of the class. If possible, record the presentations on video or on audiotape. Suggest that any writing and graphics done by learners be kept for inclusion in the class newsletter.

#### **Extension activity:**

Ask learners to reflect on the presentations and write down their reactions, feelings, and thoughts, not only about the different presentations, but also about the whole process. Give individual learners freedom to produce a work of art instead of a piece of writing. Ask learners to keep this work for possible inclusion in the Class Booklet.

**PART FIVE****SUMMING UP**

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**ACTIVITY 14: REVIEW OF THE UNIT**

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**Purpose / description:**

Students reflect on what they have learned and discuss how to use that knowledge in their personal lives and their communities.

Ask learners to review their knowledge and skills in an open-ended discussion of the question: What did you learn by working on this theme unit?

Allow learners to decide whether they would like to discuss the question in a full class session or in small groups before reporting to the full class. In either case, make sure that everybody has a chance to express their views and participate in the discussion.

You might ask learners the following questions:

- Has the experience of working through this theme unit changed your view of history? In what ways?
- How has it changed your view of your community?
- How might you use the knowledge and experience you've gained in your everyday life?

Ask learners to write a one-page response to this theme unit. Aspects of the unit that might be mentioned include the material they found most interesting, their favourite activity or activities, the most useful knowledge and skills they have gained, and how they might use the knowledge and skills in their communities.

## ACTIVITY 15: ASSEMBLING THE CLASS BOOKLET

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**Purpose / description:**

Students compile a booklet that represents the work they have done on this unit.

**Materials:**

Six sheets of flip chart paper

Felt pens

Tape six sheets of flip chart paper to the wall or board. Write the heading CONTENT on two sheets, TASKS on the next two, and SUBSCRIBERS on the last two.

Ask the learners to write on the CONTENT sheets all the articles, stories, art, pictures, genograms, etc. they think should go in the booklet. Ask them to list under the TASKS heading the different jobs that need to be done to produce a booklet, e.g., selecting the material, organizing it, typing, proof-reading, photocopying, collating, distributing the newsletter, etc. Ask learners to list on the SUBSCRIBERS sheets the names of people who could receive a copy of the newsletter.

Review the CONTENTS and TASKS lists with the class. Make sure that everyone has had time to get their ideas and suggestions onto the lists.

Go over the process of producing a booklet to see if any tasks have been overlooked. Ask learners to distribute the tasks amongst themselves, but try to make sure that everyone in the class has a job to do. Discuss a possible production schedule and deadlines for tasks to be completed.

The SUBSCRIBERS list should remain up for a few more days so that learners can add names to the list at any time.

In the days following these discussions, supervise, as necessary, the assembly, organizing, and typing of the contents, the selection of graphic materials, photocopying, collating, and distribution of the finished booklet.

When the booklet is ready to be distributed, bring the class together to see and celebrate the finished product.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Doreen Jensen and Cheryl Brooks (Editors), In Celebration of Our Survival – The First Nations of British Columbia, UBC Press, Vancouver, 1991.

Two articles and a poem in this collection were used in activities in this unit. Other articles and poems provide further understanding of a First Nations perspective of their history .

Contact:  
UBC Press  
University of British Columbia  
6344 Memorial Rd.  
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2  
Tel. (604) 822-3259  
Fax (604) 822-6083

The NESAs Activities Handbook for Native and Multicultural Classrooms, Volume I (Sawyer and Green, 1984), Volume II (Sawyer and Napoleon, 1991), and Volume III (Sawyer and Lundeborg, 1993), Tillacum Library, Vancouver.

Contact:  
Arsenal Pulp Press  
Ste. 103, 1014 Homer Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V6B 2W9

Resource Reading List. Annotated Bibliography of Resources by and about Native People, compiled by Catherine Verrall and Patricia McDowell in consultation with Lenore Keeshig Tobias.

Contact:  
Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples,  
P.O. Box 574, Stn. P,  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 2T1,  
Tel. (416) 972-1573.

Other sources of material:

Idera Films  
International Development Education Resources Association  
2524 Cypress Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V6J 3N2  
Tel. (604) 738-8815

*Kahtou News*,  
Tel. 1-800-561-4311

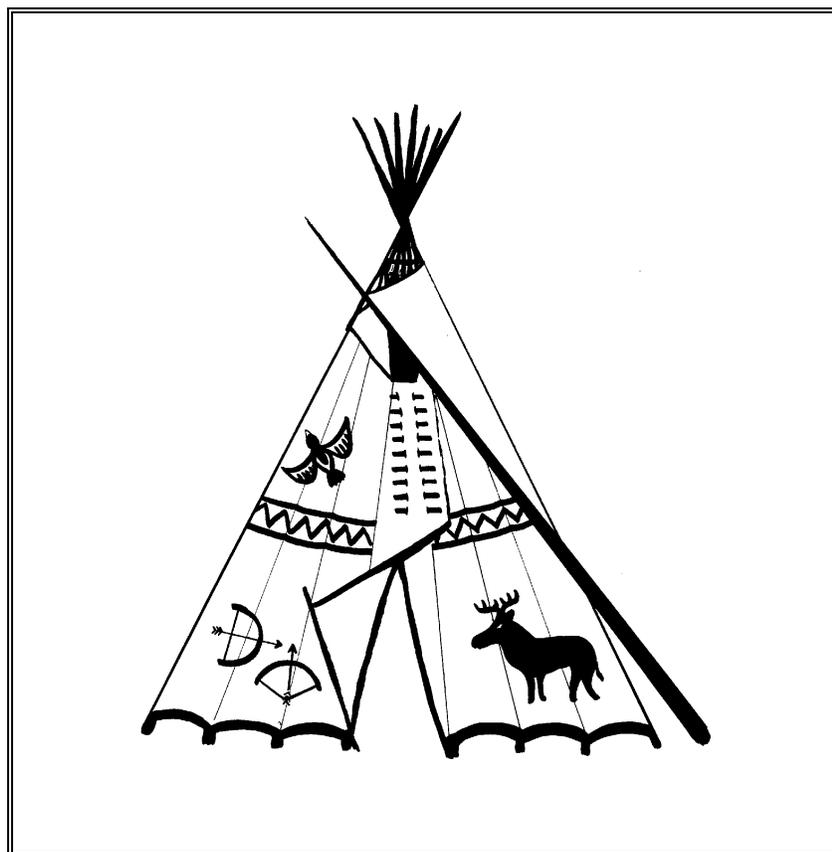
Alkali Lake Indian Band  
Box 4279  
Williams Lake, BC  
V2G 2V3  
Tel. (604) 440-5611

Gitksan Wet'suet'en Government  
Box 229  
Hazelton, BC  
V0J 1Y1  
Tel. (604) 849-5591

Yenka Dene Language Institute,  
R.R. # 2, Hospital Rd.,  
Vanderhoof, BC V0J 3A0,  
Tel. (604) 567-9236.

Other bands throughout BC can provide information for instructors using this unit.

**AN EXPLORATION OF  
OUR COMMUNITIES**



# Table of Contents

Learning Goals .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Activity 1: Introducing our Community .....	4
Activity 2: Stories about the Past .....	5
Activity 3: Working with Transcribed Stories .....	7
Activity 4: Working with Notes .....	8
Activity 5: What Does a Story Mean? .....	9
Activity 6: Traditional Food .....	10
Activity 7: Cooking Together .....	12
Activity 8: Traditional Arts and Crafts in our Community .....	14
Activity 9: Experiencing a Traditional Art .....	15
Activity 10: Where are We? .....	16
Activity 11: Our Communities Today .....	18
Activity 12: Working Towards an Ideal Community .....	20
Activity 13: Describing the Ideal Community .....	22
Activity 14: A Booklet about our Community .....	23
Additional Resources .....	24

## **LEARNING GOALS**

By the end of this unit, learners should be able to:

1. Demonstrate improved reading and writing skills in researching and presenting information orally and in writing.
2. Display improved communication skills in conducting interviews and seeking co-operation from other community members.
3. Use research sources to find information about past events and current issues in their communities.
4. Study community issues in other First Nations in Canada.
5. Describe their vision for the future of their communities.
6. Produce a booklet about the past and present of their community.

## INTRODUCTION

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In mainstream educational institutions, First Nations learners often do not have an opportunity to study their own communities. The purpose of this theme unit is to enable learners to research the history and the development of their own communities, and at the same time, study other First Nations communities.

A major focus of the unit is on research. When people hear the word “research,” they think of university scholars spending their days in libraries, surrounded by mountains of books. They may also imagine a “researcher” going out “into the field” armed with extensive prior knowledge of the subject matter and complex “research instruments.” But in the context of a literacy class, research may involve taking a field-trip to a relevant place in order to see what it is like; talking to a family member about traditional practices; finding a story and reading it in order to learn about a particular issue. This theme unit encourages learners to conduct simple but serious research in order to learn about their communities and themselves.

### **Unit description**

Many of the activities in this theme unit involve learners researching their own community and their own cultural traditions. If you are working at an education centre in an urban setting, you may want to divide learners into small groups according to their cultural background and/or the geographical location of their respective nations. Groups can carry out their research and then report their findings to the whole class.

Perhaps learners could then go on to research or discuss the urban centre where they live and attend school. The unit also provides an opportunity for learners to create a vision of how they would like their own community to be, and what can be done to make that vision a reality.

At the end of the unit, learners can publish their findings and make them available in the form of a booklet to other members of their communities and/or the general public.

The materials used in the activities come from different cultures, and there has been no intention to favour one nation or culture over another.

We recommend that you do this theme unit after the theme unit “First Nations History in British Columbia” which will give learners a solid background for their work on local issues.

Please review the entire theme unit before you begin. This will give you the opportunity to decide which activities to use, and in what sequence. You can also decide if you need to order any materials (e.g., videos) in advance.

## ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCING OUR COMMUNITY

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity uses a collage of images to initiate a discussion of learners' community – the historical forces that shaped it, its present characteristics, and its future prospects.

**Materials:**

Collage of community scenes (see below)

To prepare for this activity, assemble a collage that shows aspects of a First Nations community in the past, present, and future. This collage should suggest some of the important issues in the community. For example, one part of the collage could present a family or a group of First Nations people in traditional clothing, involved in traditional activities. Another section could contain images of assimilation, such as a picture of children in a residential school. A final section of the collage could show First Nations children in contemporary settings, some happy and others clearly neglected and discontent.

Use this graphic with learners as a code or trigger, i.e., a concrete representation of a variety of issues to be discussed. Ask learners to describe what issues the collage makes them think of. Keep a list on a flip chart of all the issues and topics which learners suggest.

As a conclusion to the discussion, explain to the learners that this theme unit will allow them to explore issues concerning the past, present, and future of their community.

## ACTIVITY 2: STORIES ABOUT THE PAST

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners invite elders to tell stories about the past history of their community or Nation.

**Materials:**

Tape recorders, cameras (if available)

*Part One*

Suggest to the group that they invite two or three elders from the community to tell stories about the past. Ask for suggestions about possible guests.

Before the visit, help learners to predict what the elders' stories might reveal about the past. Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Have any of you already heard stories about the past from your grandparents? What were their stories about?
- What was life like before contact? What were child-rearing practices like? What did people do with their time? What kinds of houses did they live in? How did they dress? What did they eat?
- How did the people govern themselves? Were there some people who were more important than others? Was there poverty and inequality?

After the discussion, ask learners to work in small groups to prepare a list of questions to ask the elders.

Plan the details of the visit. Decide who will invite the elders and when they should come. Perhaps it will be necessary to make special arrangements to bring the elders to the class if, for example, they do not drive. Ask for volunteers to welcome the elders and introduce them to the group. If the learners want to present a gift to the guests, make sure that the group takes the initiative to organize it.



The group also needs to decide whether they want to record the elders' stories. The transcribed stories could be published in the community booklet at the end of the unit. If learners want to record the stories, they will need first to receive the elders' consent.

Ask for volunteers to be in charge of the recording. They will need to test the equipment and practice recording in advance. Ask them to plan the equipment set-up so that the microphone and recorder are as inconspicuous as possible.

### *Part Two*

During the session itself, engage the learners in note-taking or keeping a double entry journal. This is particularly important if the stories are not being taped.

After the story telling session, learners may want to ask the elders questions. Also, a general discussion on life in the past may ensue.

If the learners audiotaped the stories, see Activity 3.

If the learners took notes on the stories but did not tape them, see Activity 4.

## ACTIVITY 3: WORKING WITH TRANSCRIBED STORIES

---

**Purpose / description:**

This activity guides learners through the process of preparing the audiotaped stories for publication.

**Materials:**

Tape recorders

Transcribing long stories can be tedious and time-consuming. Divide the work among several learners; if each assumes responsibility for transcribing five minutes of tape, then the task won't seem so large. Alternatively, pairs could work together on sections of the story, listening to the words, agreeing on the exact words to be transcribed, and taking turns transcribing. In assigning this task, you will need to consider the writing skills of the learners.

Editing the stories for publication could be done by small groups or even the whole group. One person could read the story and the rest of the group provide feed-back on "how it sounds." Is there something missing? Will people who haven't heard this story before be able to understand it?

To check punctuation, spelling and other matters related to form, you could set up an editing committee or do it yourself.

**Extension activities:**

These written versions of the oral stories can become the basis for discussions on the differences between the use of oral and written language. As well, they can become reading/listening material (as in the case of taped books) for learners who need to improve their basic reading skills. Similarly, the transcribed stories could be used as the basis for character wheels, sociograms, vocabulary sorts and word association exercises, response journals, etc.

## ACTIVITY 4: WORKING WITH NOTES

---

**Purpose / description:**

This activity guides learners through the process of using notes to prepare written versions of the elders' stories.

Note: Even if the stories have not been taped, learners will still need the elders' consent to publish written versions.

Learners can work in small groups to assemble their notes and reconstitute the stories.

Choose one group's version and display it on the overhead or read it aloud. Learners can suggest corrections or additions. The entire group can work to edit and revise in order to complete as accurate a version as possible.

A pair of learners could assume responsibility for incorporating the revisions and producing a final, typed version.

## ACTIVITY 5: WHAT DOES A STORY MEAN

---

**Purpose / description:**

One of the most important aspects of any story is its meaning: i.e., the values and beliefs it communicates. The following activity will allow learners to consider the meaning of their elders' stories.

**Materials:**

To make a collage:

old magazines, photographs or other materials from learners' homes.

cardboard

scissors, tape, glue, markers and other art materials available.

*Part One*

Engage the group in a brainstorming session on the values and beliefs in the stories told by the elders. You may need to begin by asking the learners about their concept of "values" and "beliefs." Relate learners' comments to the elders' stories. The role of the instructor during this discussion may involve asking questions about particular characters and situations in the stories. For example:

- What did x do when y happened?
- What were her/his values?
- What did she/he believe was important to do in that situation?
- In what other ways could she/he have reacted in such a situation?
- How would her/his values and beliefs have been different then?

Discuss personal values and beliefs. What are the learners' values and beliefs today? How are their values different from or similar to those expressed in the elders' stories?

*Part Two*

Learners can make a collage that expresses their values and beliefs. They will need to assemble the materials listed at the start of the activity.

Ask each learner to begin their collage by printing "My Values And Beliefs" in the centre. Then learners can work on filling their cardboard sheet with images and words that represent their values and beliefs.

*Part Three*

Learners can share their finished collages in groups, explaining their choice of images and words. The collages can be displayed around the room.

## ACTIVITY 6: TRADITIONAL FOOD

---

**Purpose / description:**

This activity directs learners' attention to information about material culture in the elders' stories.

It is likely that the stories mentioned aspects of material culture such as food, arts, building techniques, etc. If not, introduce this activity by explaining that the activities of everyday life in the past also form an aspect of a community's history.

Engage the learners in a brainstorming session about traditional foods in their community. List or cluster everything they say.

Animate a discussion on the traditional way of securing these foods (possibly hunting, fishing, and gathering) and on their nutritional value. Here are some questions to guide discussion:

- Are these foods available today?
- What obstacles are there to obtaining them?
- How have they been replaced?
- What is the nutritional value of some of today's purchased food?
- How does it compare to traditional foods?
- What would a traditional meal be composed of?

If you are working in an urban centre with learners from different backgrounds, you may end up with several lists of traditional foods. For the subsequent activities, you may want to divide the class and have each group work on foods from their own areas.

After your discussion on traditional food, ask the group to create a menu for a traditional meal. This can be done with the whole group. You can act as discussion leader and recorder.

Once the menu has been set, decide how many people to invite to the traditional meal. Choose one dish from the menu, and with the whole group, write up a recipe on a flip chart or overhead. The format you use in recording this recipe will serve as a model. Point out to learners that the imperative is used in recipes (“cut the meat”, “stir the berries”, etc.). If necessary, review some common terms used in recipes. You may need to do some preliminary work on quantities (kilograms, cups, spoons, etc.) and conversions.

Divide the learners into small groups, one for each of the remaining dishes on the menu. Ask each group to prepare a recipe for a particular dish, following the format established in the sample recipe. Learners can write on flip chart paper so that it will be easy to discuss the recipe with the whole group.

Each group can share its work with the others. Adjustments to the recipes (e.g., revising quantities ) and editing for spelling, punctuation, etc., can be done at this time. The recipes can be posted on the classroom walls and used later in the community booklet (Activity 14).

## ACTIVITY 7: COOKING TOGETHER

---

**Purpose / description:**

Learners work together to make a traditional First Nations meal.

**Materials:**

Cooking facilities and utensils

Ingredients for recipes

If you do not have access to cooking facilities, encourage the learners to find a kitchen where this activity can take place.

Acting as leader and animator, help learners to organize the meal. Areas to organize include:

Time and place

Invitations: If the learners want to invite families and other community members to share their meal, invitations need to be made and delivered.

Obtaining the ingredients: Using the recipes, write a shopping list. Calculate the quantities needed, based on the number of learners and guests. The job of shopping can be shared by several learners. Encourage them to find creative ways of obtaining what they need; perhaps community members can donate ingredients. The program may have to provide a small budget for the purchase of the ingredients.

Getting equipment: Learners may need to contribute by bringing utensils.

Cooking groups and their responsibilities: Learners can divide into small groups, each responsible for one dish. Each group can appoint a leader.

Recording the event: The group may want to record the cooking process and the feast with photographs and interviews. A small group of learners may act as “reporters”. In this case, they will have to make sure that they have tape recorders and cameras. They will also need to get together in advance and work on some questions to ask the participants. After the

event, the interviews and photographs can be prepared for publication in the booklet.

**Set-up and cleanup:** Plan in advance how to set up the cooking and eating space and how to clean up afterwards. Everybody in the class should be part of either one of these two parts of the activity.

**Hospitality:** If community members have been invited, the class may consider having a short welcoming speech by one of the learners, asking an elder to lead a prayer, etc.

If the activity is well organized, the cooking and eating time will go smoothly and be fun!

## ACTIVITY 8: TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

---

**Purpose / description:**

Learners review and research the traditional arts and crafts of their communities.

Brainstorm with learners about traditional arts and crafts. Some of their ideas will obviously come from their everyday experiences, while others may come from the elders' presentations and stories. List or cluster everything they say.

After the initial brainstorm, animate a discussion about traditional arts and crafts. Here are some questions you can use to guide discussion:

- What arts and crafts are still practiced today?
- Which ones have been lost? Why?
- How were the lost ones replaced, if at all?
- What function do arts and crafts have in your community today?
- Do any learners practice a traditional art or craft?
- What materials are used today?
- What materials might have been used in the past?
- What has caused these changes?

Working in small groups of 2 or 3, learners can search for written material about traditional arts that were (or still are) practiced in their own community. They can do this research in the library or you can provide a classroom collection of materials. Each group should find at least one article.

Each group can read the article and prepare a summary of its main points to report to the whole group.

## ACTIVITY 9: EXPERIENCING A TRADITIONAL ART

---

**Purpose / description:**

This activity gives learners the opportunity to experience a traditional art or craft. The objective is not to create a perfect product but rather for learners to experience the process.

**Materials:**

Camera and film (if available)

Art materials (will depend on art form or craft selected)

Choose an art form or craft that seems likely to be of particular interest to learners. For example, it could be something that people in the community have traditionally excelled in; perhaps it could be a craft that has recently been revived in the community. You will need to decide whether you want to have the learners work on this art form throughout the development of this theme unit, or simply take part in a one-session workshop.

Discuss with learners how they want to learn about this art form. You can provide written or audiovisual guides. The group may consider inviting people from the community to teach them.

Take photos during the session (or series of sessions). It is important to document the process as well as the final product.

Ask learners to write about their experience. They can all start with this sentence: "While I was making [x], I felt ...." Learners can make a list of adjectives, or write complete sentences.

At the end, prepare an exhibition. The exhibition can include photos of the workshop, learners' writing about the process, and samples of the work produced. Photographs of the work and learners' writing can be included in the final booklet about the community (Activity 14).



## ACTIVITY 10: WHERE ARE WE?

---

**Purpose / description:**

This activity encourages learners to think about their community in terms of its physical landscape.

**Materials:**

Video: *Edge of Ice*

This is available from:

National Film Board of Canada

Telephone: 1-800-267-7710 (Montreal)

or from

Vancouver Public Library

Catalogue Information

Telephone: 331-3603

Map of Canada

Map of British Columbia

Introduce this section with the video. As they watch, learners can take notes under the following headings:

- places mentioned
- types of landforms
- plants
- animals
- climate

After the screening, initiate discussion with the following questions:

- Where did the action take place?
- Where is the Arctic? (Be sure to have a map or globe handy.)
- What words would you use to describe the landscape?
- What animals and birds live there?
- What kinds of plants grow there?

- How would you describe the climate?
- How does the landscape affect people's lives?

Introduce a map of British Columbia to the class. Invite them to approach the map and identify the region that they come from. Encourage them to describe their region. Here are some questions you can ask:

- Where is your community located?
- What is the climate like?
- Are there mountains? Is there a coastline?
- What is the vegetation like?
- What kind of animals and birds live there?
- How does the physical landscape affect people's lives in this region?

After this discussion, introduce the term geography. Explain that “geo-” means earth; “graphy” comes from *graphis* meaning to write. Geography is the study of the earth. It can include the study of soils, rocks, landforms, water movements, weather, plants and animals, and human interactions with the landscape.

In groups of two or three, learners can collect research material on the physical landscape of their community. Encourage them to find maps, articles, photographs, videos, etc.

As learners study the material they have found, they can prepare a report about the geography of their region and its impact on people. This report can include a map, photographs, a description of the land, the climate, etc. The reports can be presented both orally and in writing to the rest of the class. The written reports can become articles for the community booklet (Activity 14).

## ACTIVITY 11: OUR COMMUNITIES TODAY

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### **Purpose / description:**

This activity uses the video *On Indian Land* to introduce some of the issues that face First Nations communities today.

### **Materials:**

Video *On Indian Land*

This is available from:

Gitksan Wet'suet'en Government

Box 229

Hazelton, B.C.

V0J 1Y1

Tel. (604) 849-5591

or from:

Vancouver Public Library

Catalogue Information

Telephone: 331-3603

### *Part One*

Show the video *On Indian Land*. Ask learners to take notes during the screening. Here are some headings they can use for their notes:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Important in my community?</b>	<b>Important to me?</b>
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After viewing, give learners time to make more notes or expand the notes they have taken during the video.

Record on a flip chart the issues that learners noted in the video. Issues such as land-claims, culture, self-government, education, health, child welfare, housing, etc., will probably arise. Note whether these issues/topics are important in learners' own communities today.

Ask the learners to form groups of 3-4 people each. Have each group choose one of the issues to research. Encourage them to use all kinds of research methods: reading articles and parts of books, viewing films, interviewing community members such as the Chief, band councillors, health workers, etc. If they decide to interview community members, ensure that they prepare questions in advance and have access to a tape-recorder.

To develop critical thinking skills, learners should gather different points of view on each issue, decide whether their informants are providing facts or opinions (or both), and then provide some reasons for their own point of view on the issue they are researching.

*Part Two*

Learners do their research.

*Part Three*

After the interviews, they will need to work on transcribing the information.

Based on their research have each group prepare an oral and written report on their issue for the whole class.

## ACTIVITY 12: WORKING TOWARDS AN IDEAL COMMUNITY

---

**Purpose / description:**

Learners examine the nature of present communities and try to identify the qualities of an “ideal community.”

**Materials:**

Video *The Honour of All*

This is available from:

Alkali Lake Indian Band

Box 4279

Williams Lake, B.C.

V2G 2V3

Telephone: (604) 440-5611

or from:

Vancouver Public Library

Catalogue Information

Telephone: 331-3603

Introduce the video by having learners discuss the following questions:

- Two common approaches to solving community problems are (1) economic development, and (2) human development. What do think is involved in each of these approaches, and which is the better one?
- In what ways are they separate approaches?
- In what ways might they be connected?
- In what ways do meaningful jobs contribute to the well-being, not just of the individuals employed, but of the community as a whole?

Show the video *The Honour of All*. During the viewing, learners can take notes or use a double entry journal. Here are some headings learners can use for their note-taking:

- The community
- Problems

- Solutions that didn't work
- Solutions that worked

After viewing, discuss the video with the group. Here are some questions to guide discussion:

- How did the Alkali Lake community begin to heal itself?
- Can you see that happening in your own community or other First Nations communities?
- What would need to be done to have more successful stories like the one shown in the video?

Engage the group in a **brainstorming** session about their “ideal community.” As they talk, do a **web**.

Break the class into small groups. Using the web about the ideal community, assign each group two or three points to work on. The task for each group is to develop the ideas. For example, if one of the points noted on the web is “good schools,” then the job of the group assigned that point is to come up with a more precise description of good schools, and some ideas for how to get good schools for their own community.

Have each group report back to the class. Make notes on a flip chart or overhead as groups report. Engage the class in discussion about each point. Allow for opinions to arise and for debate to happen.

Make a list on a flip chart of topics and issues that the learners believe are important to address when attempting to build an ideal community. These issues may include education, self-government, health services, sobriety, good jobs, etc. With each topic, have learners suggest concrete steps that could or should be taken to move towards an ideal community.

## ACTIVITY 13: DESCRIBING THE IDEAL COMMUNITY

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners work in small groups to prepare a description of an ideal community. The list prepared in the previous activity can serve as a guide to the topics they should address.

**Materials:**

List from Activity 12

If necessary, review the list from Activity 12. Remind learners that in planning an ideal community, they will need to deal with all the topics in the list.

In groups of two or three, learners can write a description of their ideal community.

The descriptions can be included in the final booklet. Alternatively, you could ask each group to present its description. Then, working with the whole class, you could prepare a summary description that would include all the best points on each topic.

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## ACTIVITY 14: A BOOKLET ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

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**Purpose / description:**

This activity is the culmination of the theme unit. It gives learners the opportunity to assemble what they have learned and to publish it.

Ask learners to assemble all the material they think should go into the booklet. Review the steps involved in publishing a booklet. (If learners produced a booklet at the end of the History theme unit they will be familiar with this process.) Decide in advance how many copies to produce, and how many pages the booklet will be.

Create committees or small groups to take responsibility for each task:

editing	typing
proofreading	desktop publishing
designing the booklet	printing or photocopying
choosing graphics	distributing

Learners may suggest additional tasks such as preparing a distribution list or doing publicity. Most tasks can be done by learners, but it may be necessary to find outside help for jobs such as desktop publishing and printing.

Create a table of contents for the booklet so that everyone in the class knows what the booklet will contain. Planning the table of contents is a useful review of the topics covered in this theme-unit.

Create a timeline. Set deadlines for each task. (These don't have to be rigidly followed, but it will help learners to plan the project if they have a sense of how long each task might take.)

You will probably need to take on the role of co-ordinator. Some tasks can be done simultaneously (e.g., designing and editing). Some are sequential (e.g., typing, then proofreading). Try to help learners organize activities so the work flows smoothly from one stage to the next. You will need to plan activities for learners who have finished their work, or are waiting for their turn (e.g., the proofreader may not have any work at the outset of the activity; once the publication is being printed, editors, designers and typists will be finished).

When the booklet is ready, have a celebration. Invite elders and other members of the community to the “book launch.”

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Ahenakew, Freda and H.C. Wolfart (editors). Our Grandmothers' Lives as Told in Their Own Words. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1992.

"First Nations Women of the Americas: 500 Years of Resistance." *Aquelarre Magazine*. Winter/Spring 1991/92. K'noowenchoot Centre, Salmon Arm, BC.

Blackman, Margaret B. During My Time. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1982.

Chief Dan George. My Spirit Soars. Surrey: Hancock House, 1989.

Handbook to Indian Self-Government in Canada. Assembly of First Nations.

Highwater, Jamake. Native Land. Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1986.

Moran, Bridget. Stoney Creek Woman. Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1989.

Napoleon, Art. Native Studies of Northeastern B.C.: An Adult Basic Education Curriculum. Victoria: Ministry of Advanced Education, 1991.

"Native Communities in Recovery". Four Worlds Exchange. 1:2, Winter/Spring 1989.

Resource Reading List. An Annotated Bibliography of Resources by and about Native People. Toronto: Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with the Native Peoples. Available from the K'noowenchoot Centre, Salmon Arm.

Ridington, Robin. Trail to Heaven. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1988.

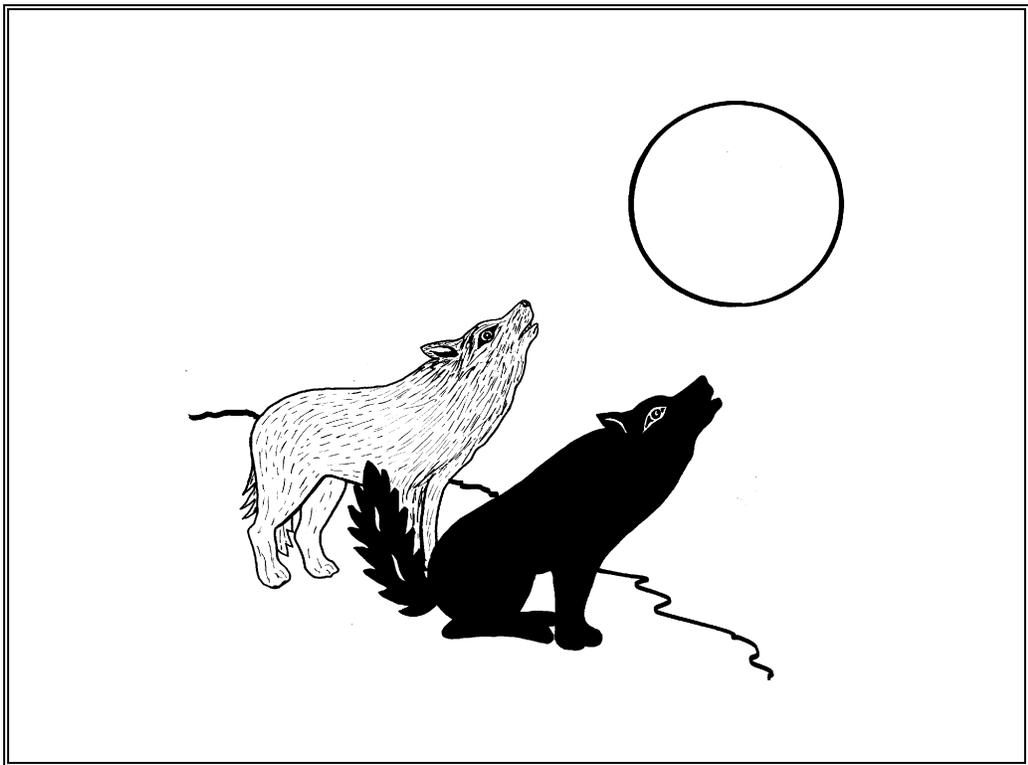
### Videos:

*Augusta, Cree Hunters of Mistassini, Rice Harvest, These Are My People.*

These are all available from the National Film Board.

*Dene: People Themselves.* Produced by CBC. Available from Audio Visual Services, Health and Welfare Canada.

**AN INTRODUCTION TO  
FIRST NATIONS LITERATURE**



# Table of Contents

Learning Goals .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Activity 1: Different Kinds of Writing .....	4
Activity 2: Literature and the Oral Tradition .....	6
Activity 3: Plot — What Happens? .....	8
Activity 4: Setting — Where and When Does the Story Take Place? .....	11
Activity 5: Characterization — Who is the Story About? .....	13
Activity 6: Point of View — Who’s Telling the Story? .....	15
Activity 7: Imagery: What Do We See, Feel, and Hear? .....	17
Activity 8: Theme — Does the Story Have a Central Idea? .....	20
Activity 9: Poetry .....	21
Activity 10: Final Review .....	26
Commentary .....	27
Additional Resources .....	28
Glossary of Literary Terms .....	29

### **LEARNING GOALS**

By the end of this unit, learners should be able to:

1. Display improved reading and writing skills.
2. Describe various forms of First Nations literature.
3. Identify some elements and techniques that authors use to communicate ideas.
4. Write their own pieces of literature.
5. Demonstrate an improved capacity for critical thinking.
6. Appreciate and enjoy literature.

## INTRODUCTION

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Teaching literature is both an opportunity and a privilege. It is an exciting process that opens minds to the vast range of human thought and experience.

It is especially exciting to be able to introduce First Nations learners to literature through the works of First Nations writers. In recent years, as First Nations have renewed their efforts to shape their own destinies, control their own education, and write their own stories, many First Nations writers have emerged. The material in this unit comes from such writers, poets, and playwrights. Some of the stories also come from elders who, after hundreds of years of passing them on orally from one generation to the next, now share them with the rest of the world in written form.

Most basic literacy learners have had limited opportunities to think and talk about literature and the craft of working with words. The main goal of this theme unit is to engage learners in a process of reflection, analysis, and appreciation of literature. Learners will explore the reasons why people write, and the many avenues, approaches and styles that writers use to convey who they are, where they come from, and how they feel. This unit will help learners to examine the different elements or components that make up stories and poems, and in the process, it will strengthen their capacity to think critically and to make educated decisions about their literary heritage.

### **Unit description**

This theme unit reviews the difference between literature and other written material, examines the First Nations oral tradition, and provides a starting point for the further study of short stories and poetry.

Learners are introduced to basic literary terms such as plot, setting, characterization, theme, point of view, and imagery. Discussion of these subjects provides learners with opportunities to articulate their own ideas about what they read, and to gain confidence in their own use of language, both oral and written. As well, learners will have the opportunity to do their own creative writing, and thus to discover that who they are and what they have to say are worthwhile.

The cost of reproducing Thomas King's work was prohibitive; therefore, we were unable to include a copy of "Borders" and King's "Commentary" from All My Relations. This is unfortunate, as we have referred to "Borders" frequently in this unit. We suggest that you purchase a copy of One Good Story, That One, to make use of "Borders", or substitute that selection with one the learners will enjoy.

An excellent resource for this theme unit would be:

**An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English**, Daniel Moses and Terry Goldie, editors. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992. ISBN 0-19-540819-5. There are numerous selections that can be used with all the activities in this unit.

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## ACTIVITY 1: DIFFERENT KINDS OF WRITING

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners learn how to make judgments about what is literature and what is not.

**Materials:**

Overhead projector or flip charts

Two paintings (Any two paintings chosen by you that would be suitable for a discussion of what represents “good” art)

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session about the kinds of writing that people engage in. You can assist them by “filling in the gaps:” i.e., suggesting items such as grocery lists, love letters, newspaper articles, etc. As they present their items, write them down in list form on the overhead or flip chart.

When you have finished compiling the list, discuss which items the learners would consider “literature.” Ask them why such items as short stories, poems and novels are “literature,” while grocery shopping lists are not. It might be helpful to mention some elements often found in literature:

- imagination: imaginary people, things, places, and events
- exploration of serious ideas
- discussion of moral and spiritual values
- more complicated language than in popular entertainment
- any combination of some or all of these elements that provides a thoughtful and moving experience for the reader

Ask the learners to examine the two paintings you have brought to the class. This could be done in a full class session or by the learners in small groups. When they have had some time to do this, discuss the paintings with them.

- What do you like or dislike about these paintings?
- What makes these paintings good pieces of art, or perhaps, not art at all?
- Who decides what is art?
- Who decides what is good art?

From the discussion of the paintings, move on to a similar discussion about literature. You might ask them to think about a story or poem they have read and enjoyed:

- What made the story or poem good?
- What are the elements of a good story?

Mention, if the learners have not, things like characterization, setting and plot (see Glossary of Literary Terms in the Appendix). Explain what these terms mean and discuss them in relation to the stories the learners have talked about.

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## ACTIVITY 2: LITERATURE AND THE ORAL TRADITION

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners discuss excerpts from the autobiographies of First Nations people to explore the links between the oral tradition and written accounts of life in the past.

**Materials:**

Autobiographical excerpts: examples: Max Smokeyday and Frances Scott, from *And They Told Us Their Stories*, Saskatoon Tribal Council, 226 Cardinal Crescent, Saskatoon, S7L 6H8.

Begin the activity by discussing the differences between literature and oral storytelling. If learners have trouble with this, you could mention traditional storytelling gestures, music, the tone of voice and the loudness or softness of the storyteller. A writer has only words to offer. The rest of the story is in the reader's imagination. Point out how the oral tradition has influenced many Native writers.

Distribute autobiographical excerpts to the class. Have the learners break into small groups to read these stories. They can do this by having one person read aloud, by taking turns reading to each other, or by reading silently.

The History theme unit emphasizes the fact that First Nations people have always passed on their history in the form of stories. In the context of the two stories they have read, what do the learners think “as told by...” means? You could ask learners questions like these:

- How is the experience of reading these accounts different from listening to the speaker directly?
- How many learners in the class would be able to understand the native language of a First Nations person from the Prairies?
- What is the value of these written accounts?

Ask the learners to reflect on stories they remember from their own communities.

- Who told you stories about your family?
- What kind of stories do you remember?
- What elements of the stories do you remember: exciting events? happy events? the hardships of life in the past?
- What were the traditions of your families, clans, and cultures?

Ask the learners to write one page about themselves (an autobiography), or about someone else they know (a biography) such as a relative or family member. Since learners were asked to do this in Activity 12 in the History theme unit, you might suggest that they try to do something slightly different this time: e.g., describe their first memories of childhood, or memories of their parents or grandparents. Encourage them to be more “literary” than “historical,” i.e., describe a scene in some detail, and say what they thought and how they felt, instead of just describing what happened and when.

When they have finished, ask them to form pairs, and in a **peer-editing** activity, read and revise each other’s stories. The goal of the revisions is to make sure that:

- Information is clearly stated so the reader can understand what the writer wants to say.
- Information is organized logically, e.g., events are described in chronological order.
- Paragraphs have unity, i.e., they deal with one major topic, grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct.

Allow time for this work and then invite learners to share their stories with the rest of the class, if they wish.

It might be interesting if one of the learners were to read aloud what he or she had written, then put the paper aside and tell the story once more, but this time speaking from memory and using gestures (and perhaps music) in the style of a traditional storyteller.

### **Extension activity**

If the class has not already done so (in Activity 2 of the Communities theme unit), learners could interview an elder in the community or invite elders to come into the class to tell them their stories.

## ACTIVITY 3: PLOT – WHAT HAPPENS?

---

**Purpose / description:**

Learners read a short story that shows how events can be organized in different ways to add interest to a story.

**Materials:**

“Borders” by Thomas King , from *One Good Story, That One* , Toronto: Harper Perennial, 1993. ISBN: 000-224-000-9, or any other suitable story.

Begin the activity by noting the similarities between the craft of writing and other crafts. Just as potters, carvers, jewellery designers, and drum makers create beautiful things out of materials like clay, wood, argillite, silver, gold, and hide, so writers work with language to create different forms of literature such as novels, poetry, drama, essays, and short stories. And just as we examine the structure of a piece of pottery by referring to the type of clay, the shape of the finished product, the designs carved or painted on it, and the glaze, so we examine a piece of writing by examining the elements of language used by the writer. This and the next four activities examine the techniques and materials that writers use.

Distribute the story to the learners.

Read it aloud to the class, or have pairs or small groups of learners read it together, until the scene in which television people arrive. Ask learners to stop reading at the end of the sentence: “ Some of the television people went over to the American border, and then they went to the Canadian border.”

Ask learners to predict what is going to happen next. You could record their predictions on a flip chart or you could ask learners to take some time to write a brief ending to the story. They might like to do this in small groups.

Ask learners to read their endings to the class. Discuss the different endings. Which one do the learners like best? Why?

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Then finish reading the story. Ask learners to discuss the ending:

- Is the outcome a surprise? Why? Why not?
- Is the author's ending better than any suggested by the learners? Why? Why not?
- Is it a good ending? In what ways?

Before examining the story in detail, ask learners to discuss their reaction to the story.

- Did you like the story? Why, or why not?
- What did you like best about it?
- How did you feel when you read the story? Happy? Sad? Angry? Did you have other feelings?
- Did the people in the story seem real? In what ways?
- How was this story different from what you read in Activity 2?

Then ask learners to address the question "What happened in this story?" by identifying the sequence of events that occurs in the story. A useful way to show the structure of the story is by writing three headings – Beginning, Middle, and End or Conclusion – on an overhead projector or on a flip chart, and asking learners to indicate where events in the story should be listed. Ask learners to consider questions like:

- What events take place?
- In what order do they occur?
- Who does what to whom?
- How does this influence the outcome of the story?
- In the unfolding of the plot, is there a high point (climax)?
- Is there any suspense?

This may not be a simple story for learners because there are events that do not easily fit into the Beginning, Middle, and End categories. You might find it helpful to discuss the concept of "flashback" in which the narrator, in the middle of one story, tells of things that happened at an earlier time. Learners familiar with stories of Coyote or Raven may recognize this technique; it is used in many of those stories. "Borders" contains several "flashback" sections – to the time when Laetitia is taken to the border, and going even farther back to the time before Laetitia left home.

You could ask learners to identify where those sections begin and end:

("I was seven or eight when Laetitia left home." ... )

("When she was still at home, Laetitia would go on and on about Salt Lake City. ... ")

("When Laetitia and Lester broke up, ...")

("One Sunday, Laetitia and I were watching television. ...")

Discuss where these events should be listed on the flip chart.

Discuss why King did not start his story when Laetitia and Lester were just talking about Salt Lake City. In what ways does King's approach make the story more interesting?

Conclude the activity by reminding learners that the plot is not always a straightforward chronological sequence of events. Sometimes two events are happening at different locations at the same time; sometimes events are mixed up in time as in this story.

Ask learners to keep their copies of "Borders" for use in the next five activities.

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## ACTIVITY 4: SETTING – WHERE AND WHEN DOES THE STORY TAKE PLACE?

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners examine how a writer describes the time and place of events in a story.

**Materials:**

“Borders” by Thomas King

Ask learners to read “Borders” and identify any reference to the place where events in this story occur. List these on a flip chart sheet or on the board.

Since the learners have read the story in the previous activity, they will know that the main events in this story occur at the Canada-US border. Some may know that Coutts is in Alberta and Sweetgrass is in Montana, but for any who don't, there are many clues to the general location:

- references to Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Banff, Cardston (all in Alberta);
- the family are Blackfoot, a prairie Nation;
- mention of prairies and the water tower: “It’s the first thing you see.”

Even though King does not describe the setting in any detail, you could ask learners to discuss the following questions:

- What kind of town is Coutts? Is it a busy, thriving town? Do many tourists visit it?
- Is this a busy border crossing? How might the story have been different if the border crossing had been on a major highway between two cities?

Ask learners to suggest two or three places they know well enough to describe in one paragraph. Have them form pairs or small groups to write about one of the suggested places. Allow time for learners to recall the scene and to list some of the most obvious features of the place. Encourage them to also think of and describe aspects of the place that makes it special or

distinctive: e.g., the colour of the leaves on the trees along the river in fall, the way snow piles up against the fences, the way lights and neon signs splash the streets with colour on rainy nights.

Then have each group share their writing with the rest of the class. Discuss the descriptions.

If more than one group described the same place, discuss the similarities and differences in the descriptions.

- Was it possible to tell whether each group liked or disliked the place they had described?
- How might a description be different if the writer disliked the place he or she was describing?

Summarize the activity by reviewing the basic elements of a setting:

- place
- time (date, month, year, season, historical era)
- time of day or night

Review additional elements sometimes included in a setting:

- sounds
- smells
- a particular time in one's life
- weather

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## ACTIVITY 5: CHARACTERIZATION – WHO IS THE STORY ABOUT?

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners examine a story to find out about the characters in it and the ways those characters interact.

**Materials:**

“Borders” by Thomas King

Glossary of Literary Terms (see Appendix) – copy for each learner

Distribute the Glossary of Literary Terms. Ask learners to read “Borders” once more, making a list of the major and minor characters.

Learners who have difficulty with this concept might consider a favourite television program, such as “North of 60,” where the major (lead) roles are fairly obvious.

Ask learners some general questions about the people in this story, e.g.:

- Do these people seem real?
- Do you know, or have you met, anyone like the people in this story?
- Which character do you like most?
- What do you think about after reading about the narrator’s mother?

Ask learners to refer to the Glossary of Literary Terms and identify the protagonist in this story. Ask learners to consider the following questions and give reasons for their answers:

- Is there an antagonist in this story? Is it one person? Several persons?
- Are those people personally antagonistic to the protagonist?
- Are the antagonists “good” people or “bad” people?
- Is the protagonist fighting the “system”?
- Is it a familiar struggle?



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Arrange the learners in small groups and have each group work on a **sociogram**. Then have each group produce a profile of one of the characters (a different character in each group), listing his or her characteristics and answering the following questions:

- What do we know about this character's identity, appearance and background?
- How is the character revealed in the story? By what he/she says or by what he/she does? Through his/her thoughts? By the way others react to him/her? By the way the author describes him/her?
- Does the character go through any changes in the course of the story?
- Would we know more about the characters if the narrator were an adult and not a 12 or 13 year old?

Now that learners have a "feeling" for the characters in the story, ask them to read the story aloud. Each learner could read a short section of the story in turn, or they could dramatize the reading by having different learners take on particular roles in the story.

## ACTIVITY 6: POINT OF VIEW – WHO’S TELLING THE STORY?

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**Purpose / description:**

Students carry out a small role-play exercise to get a first-hand experience of how point of view can affect the description of an event or of other people. They then examine point of view in Thomas King’s short story “Borders.”

**Materials:**

“Borders” – copy for each learner (from Activity 3)

Explain to the class that this is a role-play activity in which they are to: imagine a particular event, e.g., a car accident at a busy street corner, and act the parts of people who saw the accident or were involved in it. Then each role player has to describe what happened from their own point of view. (These descriptions should all be slightly different from one another.)

E.g.,

- Character A is driving a car and hits a pedestrian, character C.
- Character B, another pedestrian, is waiting for the crosswalk light.
- Character D is in his/her own car, waiting for the green light.
- A police officer arrives and asks characters A, B, C, & D what happened.

Ask learners to take the parts of the different characters and imagine what might have happened. Then have them describe to the police officer (or the class) what happened from their own point of view.

Discuss how each point of view is different and why the descriptions vary. You could explore some of the factors that can affect point of view, e.g., physical location, relationships between the characters, personal values and beliefs, emotional state of the observer.

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Then, in full class session, discuss point of view in the story “Borders:”

- Is the story being told in the first person (“I thought,” “I said,” “I saw,” etc.) or in the third person (“he said,” “she looked,” etc.)?
- From whose point of view is the story being told?
- Is the story told by a participant in the action (as in the role play described above) or by a narrator who is outside of the action?
- Is this a reliable account of what happened?
- How might the narrator’s point of view be different from an adult’s point of view?

Divide the learners into two groups. Have one group tell the story from the mother’s perspective and the other from the border guard’s perspective. Then have each group present its version of the story to the whole class. Compare the different points of view. How are they different from the narrator’s version?

Ask learners to try to recall an incident that might have embarrassed them when they were around twelve years old that involved their mother, a relative or friend. Invite them to write about their recollection from the point of view of the twelve year old.

Have them edit each other’s work in pairs (**peer-editing**).

Once they have done the revisions, invite the learners (if they feel comfortable) to share their stories with the whole class.

## ACTIVITY 7: IMAGERY: WHAT DO WE SEE, FEEL, AND HEAR?

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners examine the power of words to create vivid pictures in our minds.

**Materials:**

“The Rice Song” by Jamie Lee , from *Winds of Change* Magazine, Volume 6, Number 4, AISES, Autumn, 1991. ISSN: 088-8612

“Borders” by Thomas King (from Activity 3).

Glossary of Literary Terms

Distribute the story “The Rice Song” to the learners and ask them to read it alone or in groups.

Before examining the story in detail, ask learners to discuss their reaction to it.

- Did you like the story? Why, or why not?
- What did you like best about it?
- How did you feel when you read the story?
- How was this story different from what you have read in previous activities in this unit?

Ask learners to review the elements studied in previous activities in the context of this story:

- What is the setting?
- What is the plot?
- Who are the major and minor characters?
- From whose point of view is the story told?

Introduce the concept of imagery (see Glossary of Literary Terms). Find a passage in the story where the writer uses language to create an image that enables the reader to see, hear, or feel what the narrator is experiencing.



Ask learners to discuss the following phrases:

- “...but something about those dark grains jumbled with plain old steamed white rice ...”
- “...a little bit of brown in all that whiteness...”
- Why does Lee use that image twice?
- What is the importance of that contrast?

Ask learners the following questions:

- What was Christina’s deep need?
- What image does Lee use to describe that need?
- What are Christina’s memories of her grandmother?
- What is the primary image that evokes that memory?

Introduce the literary devices of simile and metaphor (see the Glossary of Literary Terms). Provide some common examples of each, e.g.,

- He ate like a horse.
- She was as light as a feather.
- His mind was a garbage dump, full of useless information.
- In the circus world, Tiny Tim was an intellectual giant.

Ask learners to find similes and metaphors in “The Rice Song:”

E.g.,

“a sprig of parsley asleep beside it”

“like mud and grit

“like great thirst”

“a gunpowder flash of recognition”

“like the paling chlorophyll of a plant”

“the swirling vortex of thoughts”

- What do learners see when they read those words?
- In what ways do those words make the story more interesting or lively or real?

Ask learners to read through “Borders.” Ask them to discuss the meaning of phrases such as:

- “floating after some man like a balloon on a string”

- “to chase rainbows down alleys”
- “spreading jelly on the truth”

- Are there simpler ways of saying what these phrases mean?
- Do these phrases fit well into the story, i.e., are they words that real-life people might use?
- What do these phrases add to the story?

Provide some examples of alliteration, hyperbole, and onomatopoeia, and ask learners to look for these in “The Rice Song:”

E.g.,

- “bone brittling weariness”
- “It was another place, another planet.”
- “clack clacking of a computer keyboard”

Conclude the activity by reminding learners that both writers and storytellers use a wide range of literary devices to make their stories richer and more interesting.

### **Extension activity:**

In “The Rice Story,” a simple plate of rice brings forth a stream of memories for Christina. You may be able to stimulate learners’ memories in much the same way with a number of items familiar to First Nations people.

Place the following items in separate paper bags:

- alder, cherry wood or cedar
- smoked fish or dried trout
- berries: raspberries or saskatoon berries
- a piece of hide

Let each learner inhale the smell of the bag’s content without looking at the object. Ask them to recall what they remember or associate with the smell. Does this smell bring back any memories? Are they good or bad? Give the class time to remember and reflect on the past.

Have learners write a description of the memories they have of the smell and what it means to them. Encourage the use of imagery, metaphor and other literary devices that have been discussed.

Have the learners edit each other’s work in a **peer-editing** activity. Ask them to share their writing with the whole class.



## ACTIVITY 8: THEME – DOES THE STORY HAVE A CENTRAL IDEA?

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners look for the central idea or central message of a short story.

**Materials:**

“The Rice Song” – copy for each learner (from Activity 7).

“Borders” – copy for each learner (from Activity 3).

Indicate that while setting, plot, characterization, and point of view are important in themselves, they also have a more important function, that is, to establish the theme of the story. Ask learners to think about “The Rice Song” and consider new questions that involve looking deeper into the story:

- What is the meaning of this story?
- What is the author really trying to communicate?
- How does the author communicate that message?

This could be done in small groups or in a full class session. Compare and discuss the learners’ ideas until they reach agreement on what the story means. Ask learners to refer to the story when they answer these questions. If necessary, guide the learners by examining the implications and consequences of certain actions and events in the story.

Ask learners to think about “Borders.”

- Is it a simple story of the problems encountered when a mother tries to visit her daughter in the United States?
- The title of the story is “Borders,” but strictly speaking there is only one border involved. What other border is Thomas King referring to?
- Where is the border between First Nations people and European society: at the edge of each reserve? On the surface of a person’s skin? In the laws imposed on First Nations? Somewhere in the mind? Somewhere else?

Conclude the activity by pointing out to learners that Jamie Lee and Thomas King have both described relatively simple events, yet managed to communicate in a wonderfully powerful and inspiring way the abiding strength of First Nations culture and spirit.

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## ACTIVITY 9: POETRY

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners examine the differences between prose and poetry and explore the power of poetry.

**Materials:**

Poem “Sweetgrass,” by Mary Sky Blue Morin.

Poem “Walking Both Sides of an Invisible Border,” by Alootook Ipellie.

Read the poem “Sweetgrass” to the learners.

Then distribute the copies of the poems to the learners. Allow time for learners to read “Sweetgrass.”

Before examining “Sweetgrass” in detail, ask learners to discuss their reaction to it.

- Did you like the poem? Why, or why not?
- What did you like best about it?
- How did you feel when you read the poem?
- How was this poem different from what you have read in earlier activities in this unit?

Ask learners to list the differences between poetry and prose. At this stage of learning, most learners will note only differences in external form: e.g., line length, overall length, rhyme.

Discuss the poem. Ask learners:

- What are the qualities of sweetgrass?
- What effect does sweetgrass have on people?
- How does this poet communicate these qualities?

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud “Walking Both Sides of an Invisible Border.” If learners are reluctant, read it aloud yourself.

Ask learners to discuss their reaction to the poem.

- Did you like the poem? Why, or why not?
- What did you like best about it?
- How did you feel when you read the poem?

If you sense that some learners are having difficulty understanding words in the poem, have learners form small groups or pairs to make up lists of words they do not know. Ask groups to report to the whole class and record the words on one complete list. Divide the list into sections for pairs or groups of learners to find dictionary definitions for their assigned words and report back to the class.

Have the learners reread the poem.

In both the story by Thomas King and the poem by Alootook Ipellie, the authors write about borders. Discuss what these borders are. Are they the same or different? How are they different?

Return to the discussion of the differences between prose and poetry. Encourage learners to go deeper than the differences in external form. If necessary, refer to “Borders” and the poems just read to show how poems are more often concerned with feelings, ideas, impressions, and images than with telling a story. Discuss the language of poetry as opposed to the language of prose. Direct the learners’ attention to the economy of language, the rhythm, the play of words used in poetry.

Divide the learners into five groups and divide the poem into five parts: (a) stanza 1 & 2, (b) stanza 3 & 4, (c) stanza 5 & 6, (d) stanza 7 & 8, (e) stanza 10, 11 & 12

Ask each group to refer to the Glossary of Literary Terms to make a list of metaphors, similes, alliterations, and any other literary devices they can find in the stanzas they have just read.

Ask the groups discuss their interpretations of the assigned stanzas.

Have all the groups read stanza 9 and discuss the following questions:

- What is the author saying?
- What are the two different worlds?
- What are the two opposing cultures?
- According to the author, why are these cultures unable to integrate?

Have the small groups come back and piece the poem back together. Discuss with the whole group the significance of the last two lines of the poem. Do they agree or disagree with the writer's feelings? Why or why not?

### **Extension Activity**

Ask the learners to go to the library and find other kinds of poetry. Have them choose one poem they particularly enjoy to share with the class. Have them explain their reasons for choosing the poem.

Have the learners write a poem about an experience, a feeling, an idea, an event or an impression important to them. Encourage them to read their poems aloud to each other.

## SWEETGRASS

by Mary Sky Blue Morin

The Sweetgrass  
braided  
sacredness –  
opens minds  
appeases spirits  
calms  
Indian hearts  
protects Indian souls.  
The Sweetgrass  
is strong.

Once lit  
it is  
passed to  
me.  
I grasp  
the smoke  
spread  
it over  
my hair  
my body  
my heart  
I am cleansed.

The Sweetgrass  
weaves  
its familiar  
scent  
around my friends.  
Its Power  
captures  
their senses  
to come back  
to the Indian Way.  
The Sweetgrass  
is strong.



WALKING BOTH SIDES OF AN INVISIBLE BORDER

by Alootook Ipellie

It is never easy  
Walking with an invisible border  
Separating my left and right foot

I feel like an illegitimate child  
Forsaken by my parents  
At least I can claim innocence  
Since I did not ask to come  
Into this world.

Walking on both sides of this  
Invisible Border  
Each and every day  
And for the rest of my life  
Is like having been  
Sentenced to a torture chamber  
Without having committed a crime

Understanding the history of humanity  
I am not the least surprised  
This is happening to me  
A non-entity  
During this population explosion  
In a miniscule world

I did not ask to be born an Inuk  
Nor did I ask to be forced  
To learn an alien culture  
With an alien language  
But I lucked out on fate  
Which I am unable to undo

I have resorted to fancy dancing  
In order to survive each day  
No wonder I have earned  
The dubious reputation of being

The world's premiere choreographer  
Of distinctive dance steps  
That allow me to avoid  
Potential personal paranoia  
On both sides of this invisible border

Sometimes this border becomes so wide  
That I am unable to take another step  
My feet being too far apart  
When my crotch begins to tear apart  
I am forced to invent  
A brand new dance step  
The premiere choreographer  
Saving the day once more

Destiny acted itself out  
Deciding for me where I would come from  
And what I would become

So I am left to fend for myself  
Walking in two different worlds  
Trying my best to make sense  
Of two opposing cultures  
Which are unable to integrate  
Lest they swallow one another whole

Each and every day  
Is a fighting day  
A war of raw nerves  
And to show for my efforts  
I have a fair share of wins and losses

When will all this end  
This senseless battle  
Between my left and right foot

When will the invisible border  
Cease to be

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## ACTIVITY 10: FINAL REVIEW

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners reflect on what they've learned in this unit.

**Materials:**

Thomas King's commentary on Native literature . This can be found in the 1990 edition of All My Relations, King, Thomas, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Read Thomas King's commentary on Native literature aloud to the class, or ask learners to read it aloud. Ask the class to note any words they are unsure of. Provide (or assign learners to find) definitions of those words.

Discuss King's views. Ask learners whether they agree or disagree with King. Why or why not?

Have the learners review the stories, poems, and plays they have read. Discuss the knowledge they have gained from their reading and their understanding and appreciation of the range of Native literature.

Have them write a one-page description of what they liked and disliked about their readings. Remind them to give the reasons for their point of view.

Have learners discuss their different points of view in an **open-ended discussion**.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Highly recommended anthologies containing work by First Nations writers:  
**Pens of Many Colours: A Canadian Reader**, Eva C. Karpinski and Ian Lea.  
Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada, 1993.

**The Last Map Is The Heart, an anthology, WESTERN CANADIAN FICTION**, Forrie, O'Rourke, Soresstad, editors. Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 1990.

**An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English**, Daniel Moses and Terry Goldie, editors. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Brant, Beth. A Gathering of Spirits. Toronto: Firebrand Books, 1988.

Campbell, Maria. Halfbreed. Halifax: Goodread Biographies, 1984.

Coulter, John. The Trial of Louis Riel. Ottawa: 1968.

Craven, Margaret. I Heard the Owl Call My Name. London: Pan Books, 1987.

Funk, Jack. And They Told Us Their Stories. Saskatoon: Saskatoon Tribal Council, 1991.

Graham, Bill. Tales of Northern B.C. Burns Lake: College of New Caledonia, 1992.

Grant, Agnes, ed. Our Bit of Truth: An Anthology of Canadian Native Writing. Winnipeg: Pemmican, 1990.

Highway, Tomson. The Rez Sisters. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1988.

Hodgson, Heather. Seventh Generation. Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd, 1989.

King, Thomas. All My Relations. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990.

King, Thomas. One Good Story, That One. Toronto: Harper Perennial, 1993.

Maracle, Lee. Soujourner's Truth and Other Stories. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1991.

Pollack, Sharon. Walsh. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974.

Ryga, George. The Ecstasy of Rita Joe. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. Storyteller. New York: Seaver Books, 1991.

Young-Ing, Greg. Gatherings. Vol. II. Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd, 1991.

## GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS

Alliteration: the repetition of the same first sound or letter in a group of words or a line of poetry: “sweet silent sounds.”

Antagonist: the major opponent in a story.

Autobiography: the story of a person’s life written by him/herself.

Biography: the story of a person’s life written by someone else.

Character: a person portrayed in a novel, play, short story or poem.

Climax: the peak, the highest, most interesting point in a story.

Fiction: novels, short stories, and other prose writings that tell about imaginary people, places, and events, even though these may be based on reality.

Hyperbole: an exaggeration, an overstatement.

Imagery: pictures in the mind created by words ; things imagined by the reader through the senses.

Simile: a comparison in a poem or story which uses the word “like” or “as.”

Metaphor: a comparison in a story or poem without the use of “like” or “as.”

Myth: a legend or story about events in the supernatural world.

Onomatopoeia: the naming of a thing or action by imitating the sound made by the thing or action: e.g., “buzz,” “hum,” “sizzle.”

Plot: the plan and sequence of events in a story or novel.

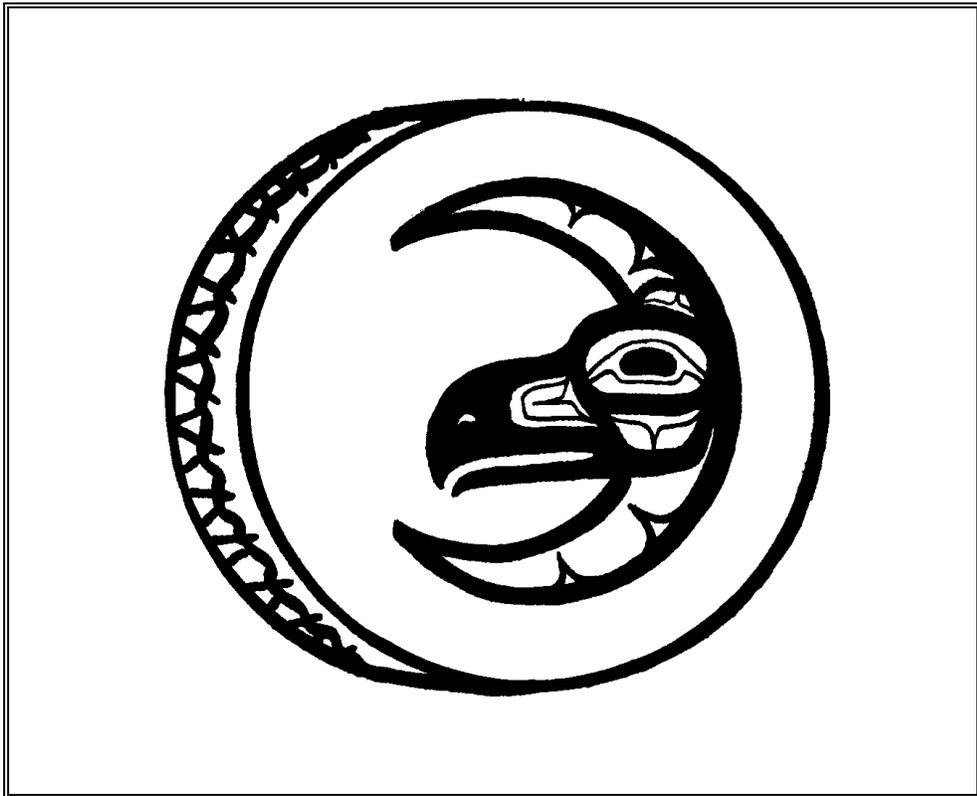
Prose: the ordinary form of spoken or written language.

Protagonist: the main character in a play, short story or novel.

Setting: the time and place where the action occurs in a story, novel or play.

Theme: the main and central idea in a story, novel, play or poem.

**MAKING SENSE OF  
THE LEGAL SYSTEM**



# Table of Contents

Learning Goals .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Activity 1: What are Laws? .....	3
Activity 2: Law in Canada .....	5
Activity 3: How Laws are Made .....	7
Activity 4: Living with BC's Legal System .....	9
Activity 5: Working in BC .....	10
Activity 6: Renting a Home .....	11
Activity 7: Young People and the Law .....	12
Activity 8: Family Law .....	14
Activity 9: Criminal Law .....	16
Activity 10: Civil Law .....	17
Activity 11: Law Courts .....	18
Activity 12: Problem Solving .....	19
Activity 13: Law Centre Display .....	21
Additional Resources .....	22

### **LEARNING GOALS**

By the end of this unit, learners should be able to:

1. Display improved reading and writing skills.
2. Understand the concept of “law.”
3. Demonstrate an understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities.
4. Apply this knowledge to personal and community situations.

## INTRODUCTION

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The average citizen knows very little about the law and the legal system. However, it is likely that all of us will have to deal with legal issues at one point or another in our lives. Overcoming our ignorance and unfamiliarity with the law will not only make us better informed citizens, but will also help us deal with any difficult situations we may have to face.

This theme unit introduces learners to the BC legal system. The body of the unit is based on the material in the booklet Learning about the Law: British Columbia's Legal System. Written in plain, clear language, this publication is the basic "reader" for this unit. Activities also make use of other resources such as videos, newspapers, magazine articles, guest speakers, and field trips. One of the final activities in this unit is a problem-solving exercise that enables learners to assess and evaluate what they have learned.

By the end of this theme unit, learners will have compiled a portfolio of legal information that they can use to deal with a wide range of legal issues they may encounter in everyday life.

**NOTE: Learning about the Law: British Columbia's Legal System is available in libraries throughout BC. It can also be ordered from**  
**People's Law School                      or              Law Court Ed. Society**  
**Suite 150, 900 Howe Street                      # 219, 800 Smithe Street**  
**Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2M4                      Vancouver, V6Z 2E1**  
**Phone: (604)688-2565. You may photocopy it freely.**

**The videos required for activities in this theme unit should be ordered well ahead of time. They may not be available immediately and it may be weeks before they can be delivered.**

## ACTIVITY 1: WHAT ARE LAWS?

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### **Purpose / description:**

Learners discuss unspoken rules, decide for themselves what laws should govern their behaviour in the class, consider how to enforce those laws, and decide what the consequences should be for breaking those laws.

Ask learners what they think laws are, and where they come from. Explain to learners that the ways that people behave, and the accepted limits of behaviour, are rooted in the rules that a society lives by. Some of these rules are unspoken, but in complex industrial societies, most of the rules need to be stated. These are laws.

Ask the learners to see themselves as a community. Discuss, in a **brainstorming** session, what makes this group of learners a community.

- What has brought these individuals together?
- What are the unspoken rules (laws) that guide their time together in this class?

Record the learners' ideas in a **webbing** diagram. Make sure that everyone in the class has an opportunity to present their ideas.

Invite the class to state rules that they would like to live by as a group.

- Will they allow smoking in the room?
- Will it be okay to interrupt another person to present one's own views?
- Do they want to have rules regarding attendance/lateness?

Make notes of each suggestion on flip chart paper. Discuss the suggestions to reach agreement on what shall be the "laws" for this community.

Have pairs of learners write each one of the “laws” on flip chart paper and post them on the wall.

Renew the opening discussion about the concept of “law.”

- What are laws? Who enforces them?

Ask learners to give examples from their own experience?

- What laws govern their behaviour when they are driving?
- When they are on the street?
- When they are with their wives? husbands? boyfriends? girlfriends? children?
- Who enforces these laws?
- What happens if they break the law?

List their ideas or do a **web** as they talk.

Discuss the “laws” that they just finished making about their own classroom.

- Who will enforce these laws?
- What will be the consequences if somebody breaks them?

Lead the discussion toward consensus on how to deal with these issues.

Keep the “laws” posted throughout the study of this unit and try to ensure that the class abides by the decisions they made. If this is difficult, it might be useful to include some time for an activity in which the learners discuss the situation and decide whether the laws should be modified, changed, or left as they are.

## ACTIVITY 2: LAW IN CANADA

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners watch a video that deals with the origins and history of the Canadian legal system.

**Materials:**

Video *Law*

This is available from:

Legal Services Society

Box 8, Suite 200, 1140 West Pender Street

Vancouver, BC

V6E 4G1

Telephone: (604) 660-4600 or 660-4665

Fax: 660-9579

Preview the video ahead of time so you are familiar with it.

Before screening the video in class, ask learners to be ready to take notes as they watch it. Review **note taking** techniques if necessary. To make the note-taking process even easier, you could make up ahead of time a checklist of things to watch for in the video. Distribute copies of the checklist and then learners only have to check off the items as they watch the video.

Screen the video.

After the video, give learners some time to review their notes or make entries in a **double entry journal**. (Recording journal entries can be time-consuming, and most viewers cannot do that and effectively watch all of the video.)

Have learners work in pairs to formulate questions about the video that they will pose to other classmates to ensure that everyone has understood the video. Then ask learners to form groups of four and ask their questions of each other.

Ask each group of four to tell the rest of the class what they thought the main points of the video were. Discuss the ideas brought forward.

Focus the discussion on law-making in Canada. Learners could consider the following questions:

- Who makes the laws in Canada?
- Where does the law making take place?
- How are the people, leaders and officials who make laws in Canada chosen?
- What are the law-making bodies (governing institutions) in Canada called at the federal level? At the provincial level? At the city or town level? In unorganized rural areas? In First Nations communities?
- How are the laws made known to people?
- How are the laws or rules enforced?
- How is justice served?

As learners present their ideas, write them on a flip chart. Since it is quite likely that learners will only have partial answers to these questions, explain that these questions represent a transition to the next activity. Don't try to complete the answers at this time.

Keep the flip chart list for the next activity.

## ACTIVITY 3: HOW LAWS ARE MADE

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners view a video that explains the roles of governments and the courts in the lawmaking process in Canada.

**Materials:**

Video *How Laws Are Made*

This is available from:

Legal Services Society

Box 8, Suite 200, 1140 West Pender Street

Vancouver, BC

V6E 4G1

Telephone: (604) 660-4600 or 660-4665

Fax: 660-9579

Again, preview the video ahead of time so you are familiar with it.

Before screening the video in class, ask learners to be ready to take notes as they watch it.

Screen the video.

After the video, give learners some time to review their notes or make entries in a **double entry journal**.

Discuss the video and ask learners the same questions asked in the previous activity:

- Who makes the laws in Canada?
- Where does the law making take place?
- How are the people, leaders and officials who make laws in Canada chosen?
- What are the law-making bodies (governing institutions) in Canada called at the federal level? At the provincial level? At the city or town level? In unorganized rural areas? In First Nations communities?
- How are the laws made known to people?

- How are the laws or rules enforced?
- How is justice served?

Discuss the answers and how much they now know about the legal system.

This could be an appropriate time to review some aspects of First Nations history touched upon in the History theme unit. Part of that history is related to the making of laws that were foreign to First Nations and that were imposed on them without their consent or participation. Learners could consider how those laws have affected First Nations society and social behaviour.

Introduce the idea of having an ongoing “Law Centre” in the classroom. This centre could include:

- a bulletin board where newspaper clippings related to the subject are posted
- a small library
- a video collection
- a box where their questions on legal matters could be collected and used for discussion
- a space where images, collages, photographs (or other visual materials) could be posted
- a wall chart where a list of legal terms could be developed as learners proceed through this unit

Discuss the practical aspects of this project. Have learners assign and accept responsibility for organizing the space and gathering materials. Provide help and guidance wherever necessary.

## ACTIVITY 4: LIVING WITH BC'S LEGAL SYSTEM

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners write descriptions of situations where they felt their rights were not respected, or where they did not live up to their responsibilities and broke the law.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System – copy for each learner.

Distribute the booklet to the learners and inform them that this will be the basic resource for most of the activities in this unit. Give learners a few minutes to look through it. Direct their attention to the Table of Contents and ask them to consider the different chapters listed: Working in BC, Renting a Home, Young People and the Law, Family Law, Criminal Law, Civil Law, Law Courts. Ask them if these terms are familiar to them. Why? Have they ever encountered legal problems in some of these areas? Ask learners to mention some examples.

Have learners form groups of 3-4 and tell each other about incidents in which they felt their rights were not respected, or where they did not live up to their responsibilities and broke the law. These could be related to work or family situations, problems with landlords, etc.

Ask learners to write their stories. Stories should only be about five paragraphs.

Have the groups engage in **peer editing**. If learners feel comfortable about telling their stories, ask them to share them with the class.

Encourage the class to look for and discuss possible solutions to the problems individuals have described. The stories could also be posted in the "Law Centre."

Because Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System is simply and clearly written, it can easily be used for a variety of vocabulary exercises throughout the following activities.

## ACTIVITY 5: WORKING IN BC

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners review and summarize the laws and regulations that affect employment in BC, then interview people in the community about their working conditions.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System, Chapter One  
Tape recorders and audiotape

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session on what the chapter's title – Working in BC – brings to mind. Do a **web**. Encourage discussion about rights and responsibilities in the area of employment.

Have the learners read the chapter. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, pairs or individually. The reading can be accompanied by **note-taking**, **word association** exercises, **webs**, **vocabulary lists**, **vocabulary sorts**, etc.

Have pairs of learners formulate questions on the information contained in the chapter. Have pairs come together to form groups of four and ask each other their questions.

Have the learners form groups of 3 or 4 to interview somebody they know who works in a local business, as a domestic worker in a home, as a labourer in a mill or factory, etc. Ask each group to prepare the questions they will ask the selected person. These questions should be related to the issues they have just read about in the chapter, such as workers' rights, minimum pay, hours of work, or maternity leave.

Have the groups do their interviews. Ask learners to write a short report that summarizes the information gathered in the interview.

**Extension Activity:**

Invite a union organizer or leader to visit the class and discuss the role of unions in BC or in a local business or industry.

## ACTIVITY 6: RENTING A HOME

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners review and summarize the laws and regulations that affect rental accommodation in BC, fill in a rental agreement as if they were renting a home, and invite a guest speaker to talk to the class about rental issues.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System, Chapter Two  
Sample tenancy agreements (These are readily available in stationery stores.)

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session on what the chapter's title brings to mind. Do a **web**. Encourage discussion about rights and responsibilities in the area of rental accommodation.

Have the learners read the chapter. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, pairs or individually. The reading can be accompanied by **note-taking**, **word association** exercises, **webs**, **vocabulary lists**, **vocabulary sorts**, etc.

Have pairs of learners formulate questions on the information contained in the chapter. Have pairs come together to form groups of four and ask each other their questions.

Distribute the tenancy agreements and ask learners to read them and fill them out as if they were renting a home.

Discuss all the implications of the different sections of the agreement. Ask learners to recount some of their experiences in renting accommodation.

Invite a guest speaker from the Tenant's Rights Action Coalition (or from a local community organization dealing with rental accommodation issues) to talk to the class about tenants' rights.

Ask the learners to practice writing a letter to their landlord giving moving out notice.



## ACTIVITY 7: YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE LAW

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners discuss the issues raised in videos dealing with the problems of young people in today's world.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System, Chapter Three

Video series: *Wednesday's Children*

These are available from:

Legal Services Society

Box 8, Suite 200, 1140 West Pender Street

Vancouver, BC

V6E 4G1

Telephone: (604) 660-4600 or 660-4665

Fax: 660-9579

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session on what the chapter's title brings to mind. Do a **web**. Encourage discussion about rights and responsibilities in the area of young people and the law.

Have the learners read the chapter. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, pairs or individually. The reading can be accompanied by **note-taking, word association** exercises, **webs, vocabulary lists, vocabulary sorts**, etc.

Have pairs of learners formulate questions on the information contained in the chapter. Have pairs come together to form groups of four and ask each other their questions.

Show some or all of the videos in the series *Wednesday's Children* to the class. Have the learners take notes during the screening or use a **double-entry journal** right after each screening.

Discuss the issues raised in the videos. You might ask learners:

- How would you like your community to deal with young people in trouble?
- How did communities traditionally deal with people who broke the “law?”
- Would traditional methods work today? Why? Why not?
- How could communities help families avoid problems like those seen in the videos?
- What skills, experience, and resources are needed to help families avoid problems like those seen in the videos?
- How can First Nations communities do to help young people deal with the economic and social pressures of modern Canadian society?

## ACTIVITY 8: FAMILY LAW

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners discuss the issues raised in videos that show how people deal with a family crisis.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System, Chapter Four

Videos: *Coming Apart, Dad's House, Mom's House* and/or *The Malcolm Matter: A Family Court Case*

These are available from:

Legal Services Society  
Box 8, Suite 200, 1140 West Pender Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V6E 4G1

Telephone: (604) 660-4600 or 660-4665

Fax: 660-9579

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session on what the chapter's title brings to mind. Do a **web**. Encourage discussion about rights and responsibilities in the area of family law.

Have the learners read the chapter. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, pairs or individually. The reading can be accompanied by **note-taking, word association** exercises, **webs, vocabulary lists, vocabulary sorts**, etc.

Have pairs of learners formulate questions on the information contained in the chapter. Have two pairs come together to form groups of four and ask each other their questions.

Screen the videos. Ask learners to **take notes** during the videos or use a **double-entry journal** immediately after the screenings.



Discuss the videos. Explore the possible actions that people in the videos could have taken. Ask learners to think about the economic and social pressures that affect First Nations families and communities as they consider possible reasons for the problems shown in the videos.

If learners are comfortable with the idea of relating their own experiences to the class, invite them to describe difficult family situations in which they have had to make use of the legal system.

- What problems did they encounter?
- How did they resolve them?
- What makes it hard to report a case of wife-battering or child abuse?

Discuss the chapter once more, especially the connections between the situations in the videos and the information in the chapter.

- Could the people in the videos solve their problems, or avoid problems, if they knew more about their rights and responsibilities?

## ACTIVITY 9: CRIMINAL LAW

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners discuss criminal law.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System, Chapter Five

Selection of recent newspapers

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session on what the chapter's title brings to mind. Do a **web**. Encourage discussion about rights and responsibilities in the area of criminal law. Ask learners to tell about any criminal law cases they have heard on radio or seen on television.

Have the learners read the chapter. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, pairs or individually. The reading can be accompanied by **note-taking, word association** exercises, **webs, vocabulary lists, vocabulary sorts**, etc.

Have pairs of learners formulate questions on the information contained in the chapter. Have two pairs come together to form groups of four and ask each other their questions.

Distribute the newspapers and have the groups of learners look for articles on crimes and court cases dealing with crimes. Have learners read the articles and **summarize** them for the full class. Record any difficult words and do some vocabulary exercises.

Learners might like to discuss or debate the role of Native police in various communities in Canada. Those in favour of the concept could form one group and write out a list of reasons why it is a good idea. Those opposed to the idea could form another group. And learners with no firm opinion on the matter could form a sort of "jury" to hear each of the other groups present its case.

Learners could also consider traditional approaches to dealing with crime in the community.

## ACTIVITY 10: CIVIL LAW

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners visit the Small Claims Court to see how it works.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System, Chapter Six

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session on what the chapter's title brings to mind. Do a **web**. Encourage discussion about rights and responsibilities in the area of civil law.

Have the learners read the chapter. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, pairs or individually. The reading can be accompanied by **note-taking, word association** exercises, **webs, vocabulary lists, vocabulary sorts**, etc.

Have pairs of learners formulate questions on the information contained in the chapter. Have two pairs come together to form groups of four and ask each other their questions.

Attend a case at a Small Claims Court with the class.

Discuss the experience. You might ask questions like these:

- How much money was involved in the case?
- Who presented information about the case to the court?
- What sort of questions did the judge ask?
- Did you agree with the judge's decision? Why, or why not?

Ask learners to write a short description of the case.

## ACTIVITY 11: LAW COURTS

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners tour a law court in their area to see how the court system works.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System, Chapter Seven

Engage the learners in a **brainstorming** session on what the chapter's title brings to mind. Do a **web**.

Have the learners read the chapter. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, pairs or individually. The reading can be accompanied by **note-taking**, **word association** exercises, **webs**, **vocabulary lists**, **vocabulary sorts**, etc.

Have pairs of learners formulate questions on the information contained in the chapter. Have two pairs come together to form groups of four and ask each other their questions.

Arrange for a guided tour of one or more of the different kinds of courts in your area.

Have learners discuss what they saw and heard. If they happened to see a case being heard, ask them to identify the ways in which court procedures were different from those in the Small Claims Court.

Ask them to write a one-page report on the experience.

**Extension Activity:**

Have the learners visit some of the different agencies listed in the Resources section at the end of this unit. Ask them to collect whatever information material is available from each agency. These can go in the Law Centre Display (see Activity 13.)

## ACTIVITY 12: PROBLEM SOLVING

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**Purpose / description:**

Learners form small groups to imagine, organize, and act out specific scenarios (a small scene or play) in which a legal problem has to be dealt with.

**Materials:**

Learning About the Law: British Columbia's Legal System

Ask learners to form small groups to imagine, organize, and act out specific scenarios in which a legal problem has to be dealt with. The scenarios should involve issues already dealt with in this theme unit. Learners could base their scenarios on their own experiences or select a case from the list on page 29 of Learning About the Law.

Have each group present its scenario to the class.

Engage the class in a “problem solving” session. Learners should use information from the booklet to decide the best course of action and the steps that have to be taken to solve the problem.

Write, in note form, the “problem” at the top of a sheet of flip chart paper. Ask learners to list the possible courses of action. When they have selected one course to follow, ask them to list the steps that then have to be taken, e.g., gather the information needed by the police or lawyers, contact specific government agencies or departments, etc.

If necessary, help learners use the booklet to find information about how to deal with the problem.

**Extension Activity:**

Organize a “dial a law” session. Ask learners to consult with legal professionals (see page 38 of the booklet Learning About the Law: British Columbia’s Legal System), perhaps about the possible resolution of the problems shown in some of the scenarios acted out in the activity above.

**Extension Activity:**

Invite a lawyer or legal worker to talk to the class about the work they do, typical cases, and particular interests.

Ask some of the learner groups to present their scenarios to the invited guests. Discuss possible solutions to the problems.

**Extension Activity:**

Have learners consider traditional methods of dealing with the problem presented in one of the scenarios presented to the class. They could also discuss how they would like their community, (or the police and the government) to deal with the problem.

## ACTIVITY 13: LAW CENTRE DISPLAY

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**Purpose / description:**

Students review what they have learned in this theme unit.

**Materials:**

Everything collected and assembled during the previous activities.

Review the material that learners have studied in this unit. Discuss the most important or most valuable knowledge that learners have gained from their studies. Ask learners to indicate any areas they are still unclear about, and try to clarify those areas in a full class discussion.

Review the materials that were collected and displayed in the “Law Centre” during the development of the theme-unit.

Ask learners to consider organizing a “Law Centre” Open House for the community by assembling the materials they have gathered, arranging them according to topic or legal area, and setting up some displays. Perhaps a lawyer or some legal workers could be invited to attend and answer questions from the public about the legal system in BC.

If learners like the idea, review the tasks that would have to be done and the assignment of people to do those tasks.

Encourage learners to put together a portfolio of the material they have collected, including the booklet Learning About the Law: British Columbia’s Legal System to keep at home as reference material.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Audio-Visual Library Catalogue 1992-93.

Publications Catalogue 1992-93.

These two documents list a great number of publications and audio-visual material developed by the Law Courts Education Society of BC and the People's Law School.

They are available from:  
Law Courts Education Society of BC  
Suite 219, 800 Smithe Street,  
Vancouver, BC  
V6Z 2E1  
Tel. (604) 660-2919