UNIT 6: FROM THE HEART—POETRY

Poets explore the depths of their emotional experiences, dreams, visions, and reflections, and seek to find words that will let them share with others what they have found. Poetry comes in many forms, as many as there are poets willing to experiment with the play of placing words on a page, a piece of birch bark, or a rock face. Poems can be found in dance, song, carvings, and paintings. This unit is meant to entice students into the experiences and experimentations of First Peoples poets, to discover the impulse of their own creative powers, and to have students compose their own poetry.

The poetry chosen for study in this unit is primarily written in English, although some of the poets include words and lines from songs in their native languages. Students will hear voices from many diverse First Peoples communities but they will easily recognize a commonality of world view in the themes of the poems: respect for and appreciation of the natural environment, the importance of relations with family and community, trust in the wisdom of Elders, the power that comes from the spirit world, and the devastating impact of colonization. Students will also recognize that the structures and poetic devices used in crafting this poetry is similar to poetry written by non-First Peoples writers, but that the voices of the poems and their imagery is distinctly different.

Primary Texts

ALERT
Although there are no cautions regarding the specific poems cited for use in this unit, other works within the two anthologies contain occurrences of offensive language and sensitive subject matter. These occurrences are all in context, and it can be assumed that Grade 12 students who encounter these texts will be mature enough to handle the material. However, to forestall any potential problems, each text should be used in class only under teacher direction and supervision. They should not be sent home with students, unless the text have received an authorized or recommended resource designation from the Board of the school district or local education authority.

For an itemized list of specific cautions for each text, please refer to the Text Recommendations section at the front of this Teacher Resource Guide.

Supplementary Texts
Selected poems and songs from the following texts are suggested for use in the unit, although the unit can be conducted using only the poems from primary texts if necessary. Note also that many of the individual poems listed for use in the unit are available in other anthologies already found in schools, as well as online.

Aglukark, Susan. “Shamaya” (on the album This Child, EMI Music Canada/EMI, 1995)
**Unit 6: From the Heart—Poetry**


Sainte-Marie, Buffy. “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee” (on the album *Coincidence & Likely Stories*, Chrysalis, 1992; also on the album *Up Where We Belong*, EMI Records, 1996)


**Time Allotment:** approximately 15 hours (unit is structured as eleven 80-minute classes)

**Lesson Plans in This Unit:**

- Drums/Songs/Poetry
- Poetic Devices and Themes
- Types of Poems, Poetic Devices and Themes
- Types of Poems, Poetic Devices and Themes (continued)
- Sharing “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” Creative Assignments
- Poetry Interpretation Test
- Follow-up Poetry Test and Introduction to Poetry Writing
- Poetry Writing—Developing Imagery
- Final Poetry Projects: Focus on Themes
- Project Organizing and Unit Review
- Unit Test and Project Work

**Handouts and Resources:**

- Poetic Devices
- Other Poetic Techniques
- Types of Poems
- English 12 First Peoples—Poetry Interpretation
- Poetry Research
- Group Poetry Performance
- Suggested Poems
- Poems by Theme
Drums/Songs/Poetry

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, B8, B9, B10, B12, B13, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

Introduce the unit by having students sit quietly in their seats/desks (arranged so that everyone in the class can see one another). Tell them that you want them to put their heads on their desks and close their eyes (without falling asleep) so that they can let their imaginations awaken while listening to drumming and singing. (If possible, have students drum and sing, or have local drummers and singers visit the class; if not, play a CD.)

Have students open their learning logs and write a stream of consciousness composition of what scenes came to mind and how they felt while they were listening to the drumming and singing.

Ask if any of them would be willing to read their composition aloud. Explain that their reading will be shared without interruption or comment.

Talk about how many First Peoples poets were inspired to write by listening to drumming as they grew up in their communities. Make the connection that their own responses to drumming could be shaped into poetry.

Ask: How is drumming and singing like poetry? (Students are likely to comment on rhythm, they both inspire imagination, feelings are aroused.)

With the lyrics of the song in front of them, have students listen to the song “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” by Buffy Sainte-Marie. (Lyrics are available with the CD liner notes, or online at multiple web sites.) Before playing it, tell students that you want them to highlight key words and images that have an effect on them. After the song is heard, ask them to share these words and images and talk about how they were affected by them.

Distribute the handout “Poetic Devices” provided with this unit and explain that their homework assignment is to study the handout and identify any six poetic devices in “Eagle Man/Changing Woman.” Encourage them to help each other with their homework. Encourage students to extend their work by researching the life of Buffy Sainte-Marie.

Poetic Devices and Themes

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A5, A9, A10, A11, B1, B4, B6, B7, B8, B9, B10, B13, C2, C4, C9, C10

Begin the class by playing the “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” song again. Have students talk about the poetic devices that they were able to identify; if some were missed, give them this information. Examples:

- “Rainbow’s my yarn/The sky is my loom” (metaphor)
- “I will weave sunsets” (imagery)
- “Snow woman/Climbing the Wind/Blue light of winter/fills her baskets” (assonance)
- “Lightning and feathers” (juxtaposition)
- “Give me your hands/We close the circuits of time” (symbolism)
- “Angel Ranger/Stay here by me/Guide my transmission/of energy” (rhyme)
- “Red light of evening/falls like rain” (simile)

Ask the students if they think they could draw a picture of this poem. Ask them to describe what it might look like.

Ask the students to write a couple of sentences about what they think the poem is about. Ask them to share and discuss their ideas. Explain that the main idea of the poem is called a theme and that a poem may have more than one theme. Explain that there is a fine line between discussing and debating; in this class we will...
be discussing—in literature, it is limiting to think that there is only one way to think about a theme. But when presenting interpretations of a poem, the interpretation will be more convincing with reference to lines in the poem for support.

Ask students if any of the poetic devices previously discussed alerted them to possible interpretations.

Ask if anyone was able to learn about Buffy Sainte-Marie’s life. If so, ask them to share this information with the class orally. If not, tell the class a bit about the poet’s life and ask them to talk about why Buffy’s First Peoples heritage means so much to her even though she grew up in a loving non-First Peoples family.

Read the poem aloud to the class without the music. Ask them how the poem makes them feel. Explain that this is called mood or atmosphere. Ask them if this device might give further clues about the theme.

Explain homework: “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” creative assignment options:
• create a picture based on this poem
• write a short essay (250 words) interpreting the theme of the poem and quoting sounds and images that support this interpretation
• create a mask for one of the characters in the poem
• compose a piece of music that illustrates the changing mood within the poem
• compose a mandala of the poet’s life with a picture of the poet and information about the poet’s life in the centre, images from the poem illustrating the periphery, and incorporating the song’s lyrics over the images.

DUE: three classes from now.

**Types of Poems, Poetic Devices and Themes**

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A13, B1, B13

Tell the students that today we will thinking about how poems can be structured in different ways for different purposes. Have the students read the “Types of Poems” handout and ask them to think about the poems they’ve read. Point out that a poem can be both lyrical and free verse.

In groups of three, have students read an assigned poem and decide what type of poem it is. Also ask them to identify any poetic devices and think about how the devices help to give meaning to the poem. The assignment is to prepare for a 5-minute oral presentation: one student will read the poem, one will identify the type of poem it is and identify poetic devices used in the poem, and the third will talk about the meaning and whether any particular poetic devices clued them in to the meaning.

Suggested poems for this activity:
• “Circle the Wagons” by Marilyn Dumont – from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*
• “the eye of the raven” by Wayne Keon – from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*
• “Keep a few embers from the fire” by Chief Dan George – from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*
• “replac[img]t[img]ng the heritage tree” by Wayne Keon – from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*
• “Commitment” by Emma LaRocque – from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*
• “The Poetry Reading” by Joan Crate – from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*
• “The Song My Paddle Sings” by E. Pauline Johnson – from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*

While students are in groups, check back with each group and help those who are having difficulty. (Note the irony of “Circle the Wagons” being written in a rectangular form. Also note the tones of both “Circle the
Wagons” and “The Poetry Reading”; talk about how tone affects mood and meaning. Talk about Wayne Keon’s concrete poems.)

Students who are ready to present will be asked to do so; the others will present at the beginning of the next class. (Formative assessment: This is a rehearsal for a future assignment so students simply receive a check mark for completion of the task.)

Remind students that the class after the next one, they will be handing in their “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” creative assignment. Also, those who didn’t do their group presentation today will do so next class.

**Types of Poems, Poetic Devices and Themes (continued)**

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, B1, B13

Remind students that their “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” creative assignment is due next class.

Complete presentations. Review the handout on types of poems for a short quiz. Note that none of the poems read were sonnets or epics. Tell them that the sonnet is primarily an Italian and English poetic form. Show them *Harry Robinson: Write it On Your Heart* and tell them that if they want a glimpse of an First Peoples epic, they can look for it in Harry’s storytelling. Also tell them about how European epics like the Greek story of *The Odyssey* and the Scandinavian story of *Beowulf* were originally oral storytellings similar to the oral storytelling of First Peoples, and were only written after hundreds (if not thousands) of years of telling. You might also tell them that some of the stories in the Old Testament are based on oral traditions, like the stories told about creation and the flood.

**Sharing “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” Creative Assignments**

**Learning Outcomes:** A3, A9, A10, A11, B7, B8, B9, B10, C4

Arrange desks or tables to face the bulletin board in a U shape so that the artwork can be seen, and the students can see each other for discussion purposes.

Students who chose to compose a musical piece will perform (or play a recording) in front of the bulletin board with a reader reading the lyrics aloud.

Students who chose to write an essay will either read it aloud standing in front of the bulletin board and/or have it photocopied so that the other students can model future essays from it.

Students will be randomly given the name of another student in the class to ask a question and make a comment about that student’s work. They will be given time to think and write down their question and comment. These will be collected for credit for completion.

Comments and questions will provide a focus for a discussion of the students’ work. Continue performances, readings, and discussion during the next class.

**Poetry Interpretation Test**

**Learning Outcomes:** A3, B1, B7, B8, B9, B10

Complete presentation and discussion of students’ “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” creative assignments.
Administer the “Poetry Interpretation Test” provided at the end of this unit. This can be administered as an open book test but students must do their own work. The unit is half finished and it’s time to find out how well the students are able to interpret poetry on their own. You might use this test as a review tool to help them prepare for their unit test.

**Follow-up Poetry Test and Introduction to Poetry Writing**

**Learning Outcomes:** B1, C1, C2, C3, C5, C6

Return the poetry test along with a photocopy of two or three of the best paragraphs about mood, and sentences articulating theme. These will serve as models.

Enthusiastically, tell the students that they will have the opportunity to write their own poem during this class and the next. They may choose any type of poetry they would like to use as a form to shape their poem and the poem should be 7-15 lines in length. Many students are intimidated by poetry writing so a lot of one-on-one interaction with the teacher will be needed.

Ask the students to think about a special person, place, time, or object and begin to brainstorm descriptions, feelings, and (if called for, narrative) to suit the topic. (They might use a brainstorm web.) If they are reminded that most of the poems that they have been reading are about ordinary everyday topics, most will relax.

One-on-one, tell the students who are having difficulty writing in verse that they can start off by writing a paragraph and then delete some of the words and break it up into lines. Alternatively, these students can start off just by listing words that come to mind when they think of the topic. The lists of words can be combined or elaborated upon to create lines.

**Homework:** Ask students to write a rough draft of the poem and bring it to class next day for further work.

**Poetry Writing—Developing Imagery**

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, B1, C6, C7

Write a rough poem on the chalkboard. Tell the students that now they have the outline of their poem and today we will “flesh it out.” Go over the following checklist and play with the rough poem to illustrate the process.

This checklist might be on the board or on a handout:

- Does your poem have sensory description (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)? If not, add at least two of the senses.
- Identify verbs and try to replace them with vivid verbs: not *walk*, but *saunter, poke along, skip, shuffle*, etc.
- Add descriptive words: adjectives to describe nouns and pronouns, adverbs to describe verbs and adjectives.
- Can you hear repeated sounds in your poem? (Look at the “Poetic Devices” handout.) Include one or two of these devices.
- Have you used any other poetic devices? (Look at the “Poetic Devices” handout.) Include two or three of these devices.

Give students time to work on their poems. Again, there will likely be a need for one-on-one attention.
Pair students up to give each other feedback about their poems. Read the poem and write a few notes at the bottom. They should use the checklist to help them be specific: “I really like the simile you made up here.” “I think this verb could be stronger . . .” “Can you tell me what this poem is about?”

After making comments, ask students to talk with each other about their comments.

For homework, students are to take the comments and work on their third draft. This will be handed in next day along with the first and second drafts. The mark should reflect effort as well as aesthetic effectiveness.

**Final Poetry Projects: Focus on Themes**

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A13, B1, B6, B7, C2, C3, C4

Collect the students’ poems and tell them that they will share their poems once the teacher responds to them and they have a chance to make any final small changes. From having read them as they were being developed, ask a few students if they would be willing to read their poems aloud, or have someone else read it. The class should also decide whether they want to share their poems in an illustrated poetry book, posted on the bulletin board, or by all students doing an oral reading.

Outline the options for the final poetry assignment. Students will be given a collection of three or four poems that share similar themes. The objective of the assignment in both options is to show how a similar theme can be developed using different types of poems and poetic devices. The assignment also calls on the students to learn something about the lives of the poets and speculate about how their life experience may have influenced their poetry writing. These projects may be done individually, in pairs or in groups of three or four. If done with others, the project will be done jigsaw style, where each member of the group has specific tasks to complete so that there can be an individual mark as well as a group mark.

- **Option 1:** Students can present their understanding of the poem through a dramatic presentation such as: tableaux performance, videotaping, skits, or readers’ theatre. These presentations might include any of the following: drumming, songs, dance, costumes, masks, painted backdrops, and/or props. The presentation should be 10 minutes in length followed by a 5minute articulation of how the ideas for the presentation were inspired by the themes of the poems. A student will also talk about the poets and speculate about how their life experience influenced the themes they wrote about.

- **Option 2:** Students who want to work on their academic writing skills will have the option to write a group research essay that compares and contrasts the different styles of the poets. They will consider how the type of poem chosen for the form of the poem, and the poetic devices used influenced both the style of the poem and the effect that the poem has on a reader. The research essay will also include a section that speculates on how the lives of the poets influenced the topics and themes of their poems. Each group member will contribute a 500 word section to the essay. The essay will require citations and a “Works Cited” list.

Ask students to talk with each other for the remainder of the class and decide for next class to which project they want to make a commitment, and if they want to work alone or in a group.

**Project Organizing and Unit Review**

**Learning Outcomes:** B1, B4, B5, B6, B7, B9, B10, B12

Have students sign up in pairs or groups or indicate that they want to work alone. (Each of two sign up sheets will have a list of themes so that the students will have some idea about what they will be working on. One
sign up sheet will be for those who want to do a dramatic performance and the other will be for those who want to do an academic research essay.

Distribute collections of three to four poems that share the same themes. (The same collections might be given to both a group choosing to do a dramatic performance and a group choosing to do an academic research essay. See the list of Suggested Poems provided with this unit.) Give students a chance to read the poems in their collection and to begin brainstorming ideas for their project.

Tell the students that they will be given more time for brainstorming next class, and they will be expected to divide up the tasks if they are working in a group. Have them return to their individual seats.

Tell the students that you want to do a quick review of their handouts on “Types of Poems” and “Poetic Devices” to help them with their projects and prepare them for a unit text next class. Emphasize the types of poems and poetic devices that will be on the unit test—have the students put a check mark beside these.

**Unit Test and Project Work**

Have students write their unit test at the beginning of class so that they don’t have to be resettled after their group work.

Have students meet in groups to divide up tasks and arrange to meet outside of class for rehearsals if they are doing a performance.

**Follow-up:**
- Establish dates for performances/research essays.
- Have students decide how they want to share their own poetry.
- Return unit test and review. Again, photocopy the best two essays to provide models for the other students.
- Remind students to keep their handouts in their binders for final exam review.
**POETIC DEVICES**

**SOUND DEVICES** ~ Poems are meant to be heard.

**Alliteration:** the neighbouring words begin with the same letter or sound.

“So busy singing your songs” ~ Emma LaRocque

**Assonance:** Similarity of vowel sounds.

“Some day go back
go all can gather again” ~ Chief Dan George

**Consonance:** Repetition of consonant sounds.

“The song that brings to life
The hunt” ~ Susan Aglukark

**Onomatopoeia:** The sound of the word mimics the sound to which it refers.

“With a mighty crash,
They seethe, and boil, and bound, and splash” ~ Pauline Johnson

**Euphony:** The inherent sweetness of the sound.

“Chinook, Chinook, tender and mild
Sings a sage-brush lullaby . . . “ ~ Leonora Hayden McDowell

**Cacophony:** The harsh, discordant sound.

“gulls chatter and scream” ~ Duncan Mercredi

**Rhyme:** Similarity of sounds between words.

“West wind, blow from your prairie nest,
Blow from the mountains, blow from the west.
The sail is idle, the sailor too;
O! wind of the west, we wait for you.” ~ Pauline Johnson

**Rhythm:** The flow of the poem created by alternating stressed and unstressed syllables.

“Blow, Blow!
I have wooed you so,
But never a favor you bestow.
You rock your cradle the hills between,
But scorn to notice my white lateen.” ~ Pauline Johnson
IMAGERY ~ Poetic pictures created with the five senses and figurative language. Imagery both creates atmosphere and signifies meaning.

**Simile:** A direct comparison between two unlike things introduced by *like* or *as*.

“Red light of evening
falls like rain” ~ Buffy Sainte-Marie

**Metaphor:** A comparison between two unlike things.

“Rainbow’s my yarn
The sky is my loom” ~ Buffy Sainte-Marie

**Personification:** To give human characteristics to inanimate objects, animals, or abstract ideas.

“August is laughing across the sky.” ~ Pauline Johnson

**Hyperbole:** Exaggeration.

“The perch were shoving and swimming
shoving and swimming” ~ Trevor Cameron

**Mood:** The emotional environment of the poem, also called atmosphere. These words from “Farewell” create a quiet, reflective mood:

“What is life
It is a flash of a firefly . . . “ ~ Isapo muxika (Chief Crowfoot)

**Juxtaposition:** Two or more things are placed side by side, even though they usually aren’t associated with each other.

“Lightning and feathers mark her trail” ~ Buffy Sainte-Marie

**Oxymoron:** Two words are placed side by side even though they usually have opposite meanings.

“gorgeous beast” ~ Trevor Cameron

**Synecdoche:** A part represents the whole.

“The sail is idle.” ~ Pauline Johnson

**Metonymy:** Symbolism through association.

“the eye of the raven” ~ Wayne Keno

**Symbolism:** To represent something abstract with something concrete.

“Who hold the pens of power” ~ Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm
OTHER POETIC TECHNIQUES

Voice: A poet doesn’t always write from the point of view of his or her own personal feelings and experience as poetry is created through the imaginative powers of a poet. The voice of a poem might be that of an invented character, a loved one, an historical figure who once lived, or even a spirit of nature.

“ You know dah big fight at Batoche?
Dah one where we fight dah Anglais?” ~ Maria Campbell

Humour: When an element of surprise occurs because our assumptions about a familiar situation or perspective are challenged. Humour exposes contradictions and often relies on irony (e.g. the image of an First Peoples dancer in cowboy boots and spurs.

“it is a double-beat dance,
blows and prows of spurs” ~ Garry Gottfriedson

Irony: What is said or done takes on the opposite meaning of what is literal or expected.

“There are times when I feel that if I don’t have a circle or the number four or legend in my poetry, I am lost, just a fading urban Indian . . .” ~ Marilyn Dumont

Apostrophe: To address something animate or inanimate as an audience for one’s innermost thoughts and feelings.

“West wind, blow from your prairie nest,
Blow from the mountains,
Blow from the west.” ~ Pauline Johnson

Allusion: A reference to some well known cultural or historical person, place, or event. (It is often a subtle reference.)

“Lovely Miss Johnson
and will you have tea now?” ~ Joan Crate

Parallel Structure: Repetition of grammatical structures to create rhythm and emphasis.

“everybody everybody everybody’s lookin’ for lookin’ for sammy”
down by the river
down by the river side” ~ Gunargie O’Sullivan

Enjambment: The running on of a sentence from one line or couplet of poetry to the next, with little or no pause.

“When the bear emerges onto the bank
to dip its muzzle and drink” ~ Randy Lundy
TYPES OF POEMS

**Narrative** - Poems that tell a story with a unified plot and theme. Narrative poems can be composed with or without fixed rhyme or rhythm patterns but if they do have such patterns they may be one of the following types of poems:

- **Epic** - A long poem which relates the story of an event, or of a series of events, whether historical or imaginary, concerning heroic action by one or more individuals, usually over a relatively long period of time.

- **Ballad** - Poems that were originally transmitted by memory through song. Their stanzas consist of four lines with a regular rhyme pattern.

- **Literary Ballad** - A type of poem that was influenced by traditional songs with four-line stanzas.

**Lyrical** - Any poem that is written to express and evoke emotional response. Like narrative poems, lyrical poems can be composed with or without fixed rhyme or rhythm patterns but if they do have such patterns they could be one of the following types of poems:

- **Sonnet** - A type of lyrical poem that was brought from Italy to England by Thomas Wyatt. It has three main forms: Italian or Petrarchan/Spencerian/Elizabethan or Shakespearean

- **Ode** - A type of lyrical poem that celebrates life and contemplates its deeper meanings.

- **Elegy** - A mournful poem, a lament for the dead, a meditation upon death.

**Dramatic Monologue** - A poem with a speaker addressing a silent listener. The speaker, a fictional figure, reveals much about his/her own character traits through his/her expressions of feelings towards a subject. This type of poem can be composed with or without fixed rhyme or rhythm patterns. The speaker may be presenting a narrative.

**Free Verse** - A poem that can be about any topic and is written with experimental forms. A free verse poem doesn't follow conventional rules. It may have irregular or internal rhyme. Line length is likely to vary and spacing between words and lines is intentional for effect and meaning. Free verse might take the form of a sound poem (composed primarily of sounds) or a concrete poem, shaped to represent the topic of the poem.
ENGLISH 12 FIRST PEOPLES—POETRY INTERPRETATION

Read the poem below carefully and think about how the poet has used different poetic devices to create the mood and theme of this poem.

Morning Awakening

Duncan Mercredi

silence greets the morning awakening  
on a mist covered lake  
still as glass

slipping to the edge listening  
a loon rises from the mist  
startling the calm deep of the water

the mist that blankets the lake rises slowly  
water is cold as it envelopes my body  
I shiver at its touch

quiet in its depth I rise suddenly  
coyote jumps back startled  
not afraid but wary  
watching drinking body alert to danger

I dive into the silent depths  
rising to a cacophony of sound  
the lake begins to awaken

gentle waves slap slap the sand  
gulls chatter and scream over washed up fish  
a moose shakes the dew off its back  
gliding majestically into the trees  
ducks parade their young  
watching nervously

wind begins to rise  
as I slip away,

1) Mood - In paragraph form, write your interpretation of how you think Duncan Mercredi’s narrator feels about the experience of his early morning swim in the lake. Quote THREE images to support your interpretation. Identify any poetic devices that are used to create these images. (150 words)

2) Theme - In two to three sentences, articulate the theme of this poem. In other words, what does the poet want his readers to reflect about after reading this poem? Quote a few lines to support your interpretation.
POETRY RESEARCH

I. Contents: /20

This is the subject of the essay—a theme analysis of 36 lines (or more) of poetry by one poet. Analysis includes: a) speculation about how the poet's life experiences and values are revealed in his/her poetry, and b) interpretation of the figurative language and poetic techniques used by the poet. Length: 750 - 1,000 words (2 -1/2 - 4 pages typed double-spaced) Does the analysis explain the meanings of the poetry?

II. Organization: /10

Introduction - an overview of the contents with a thesis statement

Body - paragraphs are indented; paragraphs begin with topic sentences and are developed in a logical way; paragraphs are organized in a cohesive order with good transitions.

Conclusion - summary statements

III. Grammar and Mechanics /10

Sentence variety - simple, compound, complex

Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, neat format

IV. Referencing /10

This includes referencing within the essay (Author's last name: date, page number), and Works Cited and/or Works Consulted. References should include the source of the poet's biography, the source of the poetry, and one secondary source.

Total /50

Comments ~
GROUP POETRY PERFORMANCE

by ________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Titles of Poems with Poets’ Names:

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Originality of Presentation /10

Explanation of Type of Poem /15

Interpretation of Theme /25
(references to figurative language, poetic devices, and poet's biography)

Total /50

General Comments ~
SUGGESTED POEMS

The following pages list suggested poems for each section of the unit. These poems include works from the two core anthologies – *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology* and *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* – as well poems from a range of additional texts. Teachers are advised that they may conduct the unit successfully even if they choose to use only the poems from the two core anthologies. Note also that many of the individual poems listed for use in the unit are also available in other anthologies already found in schools, as well as online.

POEMS FOR LESSONS 1 - 5:
Types of Poems, Poetic Devices and Themes

“Hear the Drum Speak” by Skyblue Mary Morin
from *Writing the Circle: An Anthology by Native Women of Western Canada*

“The Elder’s Drum” by Molly Chisaakay
from *Writing the Circle: An Anthology by Native Women of Western Canada*

“Cowboy Fire” by Garry Gottfriedson

“Circle the Wagons” by Marilyn Dumont
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“Keep a few embers from the fire” by Chief Dan George
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“Eagle Man/Changing Woman” by Buffy Sainte-Marie

“replanting the heritage tree” by Wayne Keon
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“the eye of the raven” by Wayne Keon
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“Commitment” by Emma LaRocque
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“The Poetry Reading”: by Joan Crate
from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*

“The Song My Paddle Sings” by E. Pauline Johnson
from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*

“Everybody’s Lookin’ for Sammy” by Gunargie O’Sullivan
POEMS BY THEME

Final Projects ~ Focus on Themes

Theme: Relations with Nature

“Angoon at Low Tide” by Nora Marks Dauenhauer
from Life Woven with Song by Nora Marks Dauenhauer

“Bear” by Randy Lundy
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“Shamaya” by Susan Aglukark
on the album This Child, EMI Music Canada/EMI, 1995

“Windsong” by Leonora Hayden McDowell

“Canoe” by Wil Gorge

“Light” by Lee Maracle
from Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology

“I Have Known You” by Teswahno, Chief Dan George
from Native Poetry: in Canada A Contemporary Anthology

“Inukshuk” by Daniel David Moses
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“Fort George Island” by Margaret Orr

Theme: Relations with Elders

Old Photograph of aaanyaalahaash; “Chief of the Gaanax.adi” by Nora Marks Dauenhauer
from The Droning Shaman by Nora Marks Dauenhauer

“Kohkum’s Lullaby” by Gregory Scofield

“kiskisin (I remember)” by Duncan Mercredi
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

Theme: Relations with the Spirit World

“searching for visions” by Duncan Mercredi
from Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology

“:EAGLE POEM” by Joy Harjo
In Mad Love and War, Wesleyan University, 1990
also in : How We Become Human: New and Selected Poems 1975-2001
audio file of a reading by the author available at: http://www.hanksville.org/storytellers/joy/poems/Eagle.html
“Was It You?” by Garry Gottfriedson

“Fire Madness” by Jeannette C. Armstrong
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“Spiritual Singer” by Skyblue Mary Morin

“Celebration: Drum of Life” by Bren Kolson

**Theme: The Legacy of Colonization**

“On the Line” by Armand Garnet Ruffo
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“History Lesson” by Jeannette C. Armstrong
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“stray bullets (oka re/vision)” by Kateri Aikiwenzie-Damm

“Joseph’s Justice” by Maria Campbell
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“my sweet maize” by Wayne Keon
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“Four Songs for the Fifth Generation”: by Beth Cuthand
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“A Lament for Confederation” by Teswahno, Chief Dan George
from Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology

“The Long Dance” by David A. Groulx
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

**Theme: Lost Language—The Legacy of Residential Schools**

“I Lost My Talk” by Rita Joe
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition)

“Fine Print” by Garry Gottfriedson

“Progress” by Emma LaRocque
from Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology

“Threads of Old Memory” by Jeannette C. Armstrong
from An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English (third edition).
Unit 6: From the Heart—Poetry

**Theme: [In] Justice**

“Leonard” by Lee Maracle  
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee” by Buffy Sainte Marie  
on the album *Coincidence & Likely Stories*, Chrysalis, 1992

“SHAMAN” by Kateri Damm  

“Helen Betty Osborne” by Marilyn Dumont  
from *Native Poetry in Canada A Contemporary Anthology*

“for donald marshall” by Wayne Keon  
from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (third edition).

“New Council Old Words” by Gregory Scofield  

**Theme: Identity Quest**

“I Remember by Molly” Chisaakay  

“searching for visions II” by Duncan Mercredi  
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“I AM NOT YOUR PRINCESS“by Chrystos  

“Fog Inside Mama” by Louise Halfe  
from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (third edition)

“Too Snug” by Gregory Scofield  

“Not All Halfbreed Mothers” by Gregory Scofield  
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“Performing” by Lee Maracle  
from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*

“in dian”  
by Skyros Bruce/Mahara Allbrett  

“In the Cold October Waters” by David A. Groulx  
from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (third edition).

“Taking the Names Down from the Hill” by Philip Kevin Paul  
from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (third edition)
UNIT 7: DRAMA

OVERVIEW

This unit provides an opportunity for teachers and students to select from a mix of dramatic texts (stage plays, screenplays, films) that reflect First Peoples themes and perspectives. Opportunities for memorization (internalization) of text and for polishing of oral delivery skills are one important aspect of the unit. Students are also encouraged to reflect on the production realities associated with these types of texts.

This unit is presented as a series of discrete activities, rather than a single, continuous series of lessons. This approach allows teachers—and students—to select those activities that best suit their needs. Therefore, the time required to conduct this unit will vary considerably. At minimum, 8-10 hours is recommended for a thorough study of at least two texts, preferably one film and one play. This recommendation allows students to understand each text individually, as well as to conduct a comparative analysis of the two texts (see the Activities Using Combinations of Texts at the end of this unit).

Note also that the texts can be studied either as a whole class or in small groups, thereby allowing student choice as to which texts to select.

Depending on the time available, you may wish to assign different activities to different students, or allow for student choice (e.g., write a review for only one of the three films, create and present an artefact for only one of the two stage plays).

Texts
Stage Plays:

Screenplay:

Films:
Hank Williams First Nation. Maple Pictures, 2006. 90 minutes; rated PG
Smoke Signals. Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 1999. 89 minutes; rated PG
Whale Rider. Alliance Atlantis, 2003. 101 minutes; rated PG

ALERT
There are some occurrences of offensive language and sensitive subject matter throughout the six texts identified for this unit. These occurrences are all in context, and it can be assumed that Grade 12 students who encounter these texts will be mature enough to handle the material. However, to forestall any potential problems, each text should be used in class only under teacher direction and supervision. They should not be sent home with students, unless the text have received an authorized or recommended resource designation from the Board of the school district or local education authority.

For an itemized list of specific cautions for each text, please refer to the Text Recommendations section at the front of this Teacher Resource Guide.
LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Hank Williams First Nation
Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth
Smoke Signals
Whale Rider
The Witch of Niagara
Activities Using Combinations of Texts

Handouts and Assessment Tools

Film Review
Artefact Creation and Presentation
Learning Log

ACTIVITIES USING SINGLE TEXTS

Hank Williams First Nation

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A5, A9, A10, A11, A13, B1, B3, B6, B7, C1, C4, C8, C9, C10, C12

• Play just the opening scene of the film, stopping at the end of the first song (where Adelard goes back into the house). This scene “introduces” most of the main characters in the movie. As a class, brainstorm or web students’ initial impressions of each character. Revisit the brainstorm after viewing the film in its entirety, and compare their impressions. Discuss: Why might the filmmaker have chosen to introduce each character the way that he did?

• Jacob writes three letters home during his trip with his uncle. The first letter is shared partly as read by Sara, and partly as a voiceover by Jacob. The second letter is entirely a voiceover by Jacob. The third letter (fax) is read entirely by Sarah. Discuss the different effects of each of these treatments. What does each approach allow the viewer to see and feel?

• At the end of the scene between the social worker and Adelard, the following exchange takes place:
  Social worker: These are complicated issues, Mr. Fox.
  Adelard: No, they’re not, really.

  Post these two statements on opposite sides of the room, and have students “vote with their legs,” indicating which one they agree with the most. Have them discuss in their groups why they feel this way. Each group should then present their key arguments to the other group. Debrief as a class: Can an issue be both “complicated” and “simple” at the same time?

• Some of the underlying issues in this film are only touched on very briefly, but still play a significant role in the story and the characters’ lives. One such issue is the absence of Sarah’s and Jacob’s parents. Discuss: Why might the filmmaker have chosen to treat this so subtly, rather than make the story “about” this?

• Have students listen to the Director’s Commentary, particularly where he talks about the history of the film and how it was produced with a very small budget. Ask students to consider how this film might have been different if it had been produced as a big-budget, Hollywood film. How have Hollywood movies depicted First Peoples cultures in the past? Would any of the subtleties and authenticities of this film might have been lost in a Hollywood treatment of the story?

• Have students search online to find and read a variety of reviews for this film. Have them use their learning logs to reflect on whether or not reading others’ reviews changed their opinion of the film. Finally, have them write their own review of the film. An assessment tool for this activity is provided at the end of this unit (Film Review).

• Individually or in groups, have students write and present (either acted out or as a storyboard) a “deleted scene” for this film. Students may choose to illustrate a point of the story referred to but not depicted, or may choose to write a backstory to fill out one of the characters.
Unit 7: Drama

Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A13, B4, B5, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C5, C8, C9, C10

Pre-Reading Activities

• Before reading the full play, have three student volunteers present the following passage for the rest of the class (from pages 18-19 of the script):
  RODNEY: Hey, Barb. Take a look at this.
  BARB: What now?
  (Rodney is standing in front of a photograph on a desk.)
  RODNEY: See. She didn’t forget.
  BARB: She still has it.
  TONTO: Still has what?
  BARB: The picture Mom gave her last Christmas. Of Dad holding her.
  TONTO: I’d forgotten how big your father was. How old was Grace there?
  BARB: About three months. The C.A.S. took her a couple months later.
  RODNEY: See Barb. It may not be a wasted trip.

Discuss as a class: Based on this short scene, what themes do you think will be presented in this play?

Reading the Play

• Divide students into groups of four. Have them read the play aloud within their groups, with each student taking on one character for the entire play. After reading, have them take a few moments to create a brief character sketch of their assigned character, including elements such as
  – emotions depicted during the play
  – motivations
  – interactions with other characters
  – how the character changed or what the character learned through the story.

Next have students re-form groups with all the other students who took on the same character (i.e., all the Barbs together, all the Tontos together, etc.). Have them discuss their individual impressions, then work together to create a “body biography” of the character (a visual representation annotated with key lines of dialogue, descriptions of significant characteristics, and other insights about the character). Have them present their body biographies to the rest of the class for peer assessment.

Post-Reading Activities

• Prepare slips of paper with the following lines from the play:
  – I found it can help if you have a sound understanding of where you come from, then you’ll have a better understanding of where you’re going to.
  – So much for the saying, “Blood is thicker than water.”
  – Everybody has a choice.
  – Her whole life had been built on hope, even after you left she still hoped.
  – This is who we are. Family, friends, we stick together.
  – Some people are happy being where they are.
  – Families were created for weaknesses.
  – I wonder what I would have been like if I had grown up here.
  – Trust me, you know everything you need to know. People may learn a few facts or stories over the years, but all the real important things in life we know at birth.
  – Some are taken away but never leave. You had a whole family waiting to accept you and you ran. You took yourself away.

Distribute the lines to students, and have them write a 2-3 paragraph response, indicating how the line in question relates to the overall themes of the play.
- Tonto says “The whole difference between Native people and White people can be summed up in that one, single three letter word, Why.” Discuss: Do you agree? Is it possible to “sum up” two entire cultures in this way? Is doing so an adept philosophical theory or a blunt stereotype? Is this a useful comparison to make? Why or why not?
- The play includes a minor storyline dealing with Amelia Earhart living in Otter Lake. Discuss: Is this storyline included solely for the purposes of humour, or does it contribute something more meaningful to the overall themes of the story?
- This play introduces the topic of the “scoop up” (or “Sixties Scoop”) of First Peoples children for foster placement or adoption in non-First Peoples homes. Have students research and prepare a report on this topic, focussing on the history, the policies, the statistics, the effects on the children and on First Peoples societies, and parallels to other policies and laws of social injustice (the residential school system).
- Have students work in groups of two, three, or four to prepare a scene from the play for presentation to the rest of the class. If time allows, encourage them to workshop their scenes for other groups, and to explore different ways to interpret. Students should memorize their scenes for the presentation so that they are able to internalize the character, to engage more freely in the scene, and to demonstrate fluency with oral language.
- Have students work independently to create a single stagecraft artefact (e.g., prop, costume, set model) for the play. Their item should illustrate a significant theme or motif from the play. Have them present their work for the class, explaining why they created what they did. An assessment tool for this activity is provided at the end of this unit (Artefact Creation and Presentation).
- **Extension:** Work with a Theatre Performance 11 or 12 class to prepare the full play for a formal performance. EFP 12 students can act as directors and producers, and performers as appropriate. After the production, have them write a reflection about the process, focussing on how the performance altered or added to their understanding and interpretation of the text.
- **Extension:** This play is “a sequel of sorts,” in Drew Hayden Taylor’s words, to his earlier play, Someday. Have students read Someday. How does this add to the story of Only Drunks and Children?

**Smoke Signals**

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A9, A10, A11, A13, B1, B5, B6, B7, B8, B9, B10, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

The following activities use a combination of the screenplay and the film.

**Pre-Viewing Activities**
- Watch the film trailer on the DVD. Have students complete a prediction exercise, recording what they think the major themes and metaphors will be in the story.
- Watch a selected scene (e.g., the opening scenes of the fire and its aftermath, the car accident and its aftermath). Ask students to consider how they would describe all the elements of what they see beyond the dialogue. Read the corresponding section of the screenplay. Which elements of the story are told through dialogue and voiceover, and which elements are told through other features?
- Watch a selected scene with the sound turned off (e.g., chapter 7, beginning at 0:21:38, when they get on the bus; the opening scene showing the fire and its aftermath, from 0:1:19 to 0:4:29). Brainstorm and discuss how mood is depicted through visual elements. Ask students to suggest dialogue or voiceover that might be occurring at this point.

**Post-Viewing Activities**
- Discuss some of the differences between the screenplay and the finished film. For example:
  - Scene 9 in the screenplay appears much later in the film. Discuss the effect this has (e.g., the dramatic tension of not knowing what happens to Arnold). Then read the author’s explanation of this change in the Scene Notes at the back of the published screenplay. Ask students if they agree with this change.
  - Scene 72 in the screenplay is written as visuals of Arlene with a voiceover of Thomas. In the film (chapter 14, beginning at 0:47:00) it is depicted with visuals mostly of Thomas as he tells the story, and
only very brief visuals of Arlene. A third option would have been to show it completely as told by Thomas without Arlene appearing at all. Discuss the effects of each of these treatments.

- Scene 120: in the screenplay this scene takes place in the hospital. In the film it takes place at the police station. Discuss the dramatic effect of this simple change of location.
- Scene 147 is written with dialogue; in the film (chapter 20, 1:19:20) it is performed without dialogue. Which is more effective? Do you agree with the author’s assessment of this change as provided in the Scene Notes?

Follow up this discussion by having students write a brief argument for or against one of the significant changes or deletions. Students should refer to the author’s Scene Notes provided with the published screenplay, but should also incorporate their own interpretations and opinions. Students can submit their arguments in written form, or present them orally in a mock production meeting.

- Have students compose a written response (e.g., 2-4 paragraph) to one of the following questions:
  - Key events in this story take on or around the American Independence Day holiday. What is the significance of “Independence Day” to this story?
  - Thomas’s grandmother says to Victor’s mother at the beginning of the film that Victor is a good name because “It means he’s gonna win.” Do you think Victor is a “winner” in this story? What does he win?
  - The last line of scene 76 in the screenplay (chapter 15, 0:51:49 in the film), Arnold says “I broke three hearts, too.” Whose hearts is he referring to? How does this one line sum up Arnold’s character and his actions?
  - Scene 78 in the screenplay (chapter 15, beginning at 0:52:05 in the film) is told in “triple time”: Suzy in the present telling about Arnold in the recent past telling a story about something the further past. What effect this storytelling structure have? How does it relate to common First Peoples storytelling structures?
  - Sherman Alexie based the screenplay on selected stories from his collection, The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven. Both this title and the title Smoke Signals play on mainstream culture’s stereotypes and preconceptions about First Peoples’ cultures. How does Alexie explode these stereotypes in his writings?

- Point out standard screenplay conventions used in the text; have students research online for additional examples of these conventions. Have students take a story they have studied (e.g., short story, selection from a novel) or their own story, and write it up as a screenplay. Students can extend this activity by creating storyboards to accompany their screenplays. Look for evidence that students are able to:
  - apply standard screenplay conventions correctly
  - incorporate visual components and devices to enhance meaning and effect
  - demonstrate an understanding of the form (e.g., use dialogue or voiceover to highlight the oral component of film).

- The DVD of this film does not have a director’s commentary, although a commentary of sorts is provided by the screenwriter at the back of the published screenplay. Have students write a director’s commentary for selected scenes in the film, describing the directing and cinematography choices made. Invite students to “perform” their commentaries while playing the relevant segments of the film.
- Revisit the film’s trailer. Discuss: did the trailer give an accurate depiction of what to expect? Challenge students to outline their own trailers for the film, identifying which scenes, pieces of dialogue, and voiceovers to use.

- Have students search online to find and read a variety of reviews for this film. Have them use their learning logs to reflect on whether or not reading others’ reviews changed their opinion of the film. Finally, have them write their own review of the film. An assessment tool for this activity is provided at the end of this unit (Film Review).
**Whale Rider**

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A10, A11, A13, B1, B3, C1, C8, C9, C10, C12

**Pre-Viewing Activities**
- Play the opening sequence, with Paikea’s voiceover: “In the old days, the land felt a great emptiness. It was waiting, waiting to be filled up, waiting for someone to love it. Waiting for a leader. And he came on the back of a whale, a man to lead a new people, our ancestor, Paikea.” Ask students to use their learning logs to predict what this film will be about and the themes it will present.

**Post-Viewing Activities**
- Revisit the opening scene of Paikea’s voiceover. Discuss how this beginning relates to First Peoples oral tradition. Discuss the significance of Paikea beginning with a traditional story before telling her own story.
- Review Paikea’s closing line: “I’m not a prophet, but I know that our people will keep going forward, with all of our strength.” Discuss how this statement is reflected throughout the storyline of the film.
- Witi Ihimaera, the author of the book upon which the movie is based, said he wrote the story about Paikea in part to answer his daughters’ questions about why, in action movies, the boy was always the hero and the girl was the helpless one. Have students consider how this story would have been different if Paikea had been a boy. What type of conflict and journey would be required by the characters without the gender conflict of the existing story?
- This film incorporates several iconic cultural artefacts important to the Maori culture, including the reiputa (Koro’s whale-tooth necklace), the waka (boat), the taiaha (fighting stick), and the witiera (meeting hall). As a class or in groups, create a web of these artefacts and what they symbolize for the culture, the characters, and the story. Next, have students work in groups to discuss what icons would be used if this story had been set in the local First People community or another Canadian First Peoples culture, and to create a representation of one or more of these icons.
- Nanny Flowers says about Koro, “He has a lot of rules he has to live by.” Discuss how does this statement sums up the character of Koro. Do you think he’s a good leader? Why or why not? What other types of leadership are demonstrated in this story? In other texts they have read, listened to, or viewed? What changes does Koro make over the course of the film – does he change, or do his rules?
- The DVD contains four deleted scenes, each with a corresponding commentary. Watch each deleted scene, first without the commentary. Discuss the reasons the scene might have been deleted. Watch the scene again with the commentary, and compare the filmmakers’ reasons with the reasons students identified. Have students prepare a brief presentation (oral or written) to the film’s producers, arguing for the inclusion or exclusion of one of the scenes.
- Have students search online to find and read a variety of reviews for this film. Have them use their learning logs to reflect on whether or not reading others’ reviews changed their opinion of the film. Finally, have them write their own review of the film. An assessment tool for this activity is provided at the end of this unit (Film Review).

**The Witch of Niagara**

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A7, A10, A11, B4, B6, C3, C4

- Read the title of the play aloud, and ask students to brainstorm what they think the play might be about. Read the notes about the author (starting on page 355 of the anthology), and continue the brainstorming.
- Have students read the first scene silently, by themselves. Then read the same scene as a class in a readers’ theatre format, with selected students reading each part from the front of the room. Discuss the difference in how students understood and responded to the text. Change students and continue the readers’ theatre until the end of the play.
• Have students work in groups of two, three, or four to prepare a scene from the play for presentation to the rest of the class. If time allows, encourage them to workshop their scenes for other groups, and to explore different ways to interpret them. Students should memorize their scenes for the presentation so that they are able to internalize the character, to engage more freely in the scene, and to demonstrate fluency with oral language.

• Have students work independently to create a single stagecraft artefact (e.g., prop, costume, set model) for the play. Their item should illustrate a significant theme or motif from the play. Have them present their work for the class, explaining why they created what they did. An assessment tool for this activity is provided at the end of this unit “Artefact Creation and Presentation.”

• This play is a retelling of the “Maid of the Mist” legend of the Ongiaras peoples of the Niagara region. Have students read a prose version of this story (one version is available online at http://tuscaroras.com/traderdon/Legends/maid_of_the_mist.htm). Discuss as a class: What elements of the story are common to both tellings? What elements are different? Which story seems most authentic? Why? How does each telling affect the listener/reader? Challenge students to create their own versions of this story in another form. For example, they may choose to write a poem or song, create a dance or carving, write and illustrate a comic book, prepare an electronic slide show, etc. Provide opportunities for them to share their work for peer feedback and assessment.

• **Extension:** Work with a Theatre Performance 11 or 12 class to prepare the full play for a formal performance. EFP 12 students can act as directors and producers, and performers as appropriate. After the production, have them write a reflection about the process, focussing on how the performance altered or added to their understanding and interpretation of the text.

### ACTIVITIES USING COMBINATIONS OF TEXTS

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, A11, B5, B6, B7, B8, B9, B10, C1, C2, C3, C8, C9, C10

**Note:** the following activities are intended to be undertaken in addition to the activities based on selected single texts, as each requires students to have read or viewed the entire text in question. Note also that it is recommended that all students complete the first activity (learning log), while the remaining activities can be assigned by teachers or selected by students depending on which texts are studied and on the time available.

• Have students complete a detailed learning log entry for each text studied. At the conclusion of the unit, have students complete a final learning log entry that shows connections among each of the texts studied. Assess using criteria such as those outlined in the assessment instrument provided at the end of this unit, “Learning Log.”

• Have students identify a theme that is present in at least two of the texts (e.g., family, journey, identity, tradition). Have them prepare a presentation that incorporates quotes and extracts from the texts representing the theme, compares the treatment of the theme in each text, and that explains the significance of these quotes to each overall work.

• Review the scene in *Whale Rider* where Paikea gives the speech about her grandfather (chapter 20, beginning at approximately 1:11.00), and the scene in *Hank Williams* where Sarah gives the eulogy for her uncle (chapter 15, beginning at 1:23:30). Have students discuss the similarities and differences between these two scenes. Ask students to create and present a speech about someone important in their own lives.

• Discuss the importance of the elements of radio broadcaster as chorus/narrator in both *Hank Williams First Nation* and *Smoke Signals*. Relate this to the significance of the oral tradition in First Peoples cultures. Ask students to suggest other movies or plays that have a similar narrator/chorus role. Next, point out that, in the description of the original production of *The Witch of Niagara*, four actors are listed as having played the role of “The Chorus,” but there is no dialogue written in the script. Have students work in groups to write and present a part for the chorus for the play.

• Compare the character of Tonto in *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth* to the character of Thomas in *Smoke Signals*. Both characters fill the somewhat archetypal role of sage or teacher, but in an
unconventional way—specifically, both characters are quite young. At the same time, the two characters are also very different from each other, while each fulfills a teacher role. Have students discuss how these two characters are similar and different. Then have them extend their comparison by discussing similarities and differences with more conventional sage/teacher archetypes from other stories they have read or viewed (e.g., Keeper in *Keeper n’ Me*, Ma-ma-o in *Monkey Beach*, Koro in *Whale Rider*). Have them create a representation of these comparisons.

- During his journey in *Hank Williams First Nation*, Jacob writes a series of letters home describing his experiences and his interactions with the people he meets. Have students write comparable letters home from either Victor or Thomas in *Smoke Signals*.
- Compare the level of detail provided in the camera directions in the screenplay *Smoke Signals* to the level of stage directions provided in a stage play such as *Only Drunks and Children* or *The Witch of Niagara*. Discuss possible reasons for this. Have students select a scene from one of the stage plays and rewrite it as a screenplay, incorporating detailed directions for filming. In assessing students’ work, look for evidence that they are able to conform to the conventions of a screenplay, as well as clearly articulate their vision for how the stage play would look if filmed.
- Have students conduct biographical research on the lives of two or more of the writers of the works in this unit. Then have them create a representation that shows how the dramas reflect (or not, as the case may be) elements of each writer’s background and culture.
- Have students organize a First Peoples Film Festival, real or simulated (note: if a “real” film festival is the final product, be aware of legal restrictions associated with public broadcast of copyright material such as films). Have them select films from those studied in class, as well as other First Peoples films from around the world. Have them create a web site, program, or other promotional materials including a synopsis of each film and the themes it depicts. Alternatively, have them each prepare a brief presentation for a mock selection board for such a film festival, arguing the merits of their chosen selection and why it should be included in the festival.
- Provide an opportunity for students to work in groups to create their own dramatic work using a playbuilding process. In this process, the story and characters are developed collaboratively from students’ own experiences and ideas. Depending on the time available, the work can be short and informal, or longer and more polished.

Note: for additional approaches to using *Hank Williams First Nation* and *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*, see also Unit 10: Humour.
**ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT**
**FILM REVIEW**

Key: 3=excellent, 2=satisfactory, 1=needs improvement, 0=not evident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Self-Assessment</th>
<th>Teacher Assessment</th>
<th>Teacher Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Student:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explains opinions using reasons and evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• relates reactions and emotions to the effectiveness of the film</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identifies specific examples of visual content that affect audience response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identifies specific examples of vocal content (dialogue) that affect audience response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• makes reasoned critiques about technical aspects of the film (e.g., cinematography, sound and music, casting, costumes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstrates insights about the film</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• makes inferences about material that is implicit or absent from the film</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• makes comparisons between this film and other texts viewed or read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• incorporates ideas from personal interest, knowledge, and inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• makes comparisons, associations, or analogies to other ideas and concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• applies learned elements of film reviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explains the importance and impact of historical, social, and political contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• writes with fluency and without errors in syntax or spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional teacher comments:
### Assessment Instrument

**Artefact Creation and Presentation**

**Name:**

**Description of Artefact:**

**Assessed By:**

4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 = satisfactory, 1 = needs improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Self-Assessment</th>
<th>Peer Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• artefact is created in a form that is appropriate for the purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• visual/aesthetic devices (e.g., colour, space, texture) are used clearly and effectively to enhance meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• artefact mirrors elements of the text (e.g., themes, motifs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• artefact shows attention to detail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• artefact shows some mastery of the form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• presentation clearly explains the artefact and its significance to the story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• presentation demonstrates fluency in oral language, including diction, vocal techniques, and nonverbal techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• presentation and artefact demonstrate an insightful, personal response to the text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**
**Unit 7: Drama**

**ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT**
**LEARNING LOG**

Key: 3=excellent, 2=satisfactory, 1=needs improvement, 0=not evident, N/A = not applicable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating (0-3)</th>
<th>Criteria—To what extent do students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify the purposes of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• explain the relationship between the text and other forms of the oral tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make connections to First Peoples principles of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• analyse text-specific devices and elements of form (e.g., characters and archetypes, setting, theme, figurative language, metre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify how elements of forms influence each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify stylistic techniques used in the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• compare elements of form in oral texts to those used in other texts studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• articulate substantiated opinions about the effectiveness of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ask questions that deepen their personal response to the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• explain how visual elements (e.g., line, texture, layout, colour) create meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• apply prior knowledge to their understanding of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make inferences and draw conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reflect on predictions, connections, images, and questions made during reading, listening to, and/or viewing the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• explain the importance and impact of social, political, and historical factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify how they can apply the teachings of the texts to their own lives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
UNIT 8: RESEARCH ESSAY

OVERVIEW

Students will come to this course with a wide range of knowledge about First Peoples issues. For example some will be very aware of issues concerning water and land, social inequities, drug and alcohol struggles, and stories of triumphs of individuals and groups. Some will be more aware of the scope and purposes of First Peoples artistic expression. Some will be less informed. Most students have some knowledge of the essay form and the research process. All students will grow in awareness as the project develops.

This project is a process by which students learn about a First Peoples issue or topic and communicate their knowledge to others. Many students are unaware that their lives are inextricably linked with the lives of First Peoples all over the world. We all live on the planet, we all share in the resources of the earth, and we must all take responsibility for our actions. Nobody can live in isolation. The world will be a better place when all of us work together to make it so. By doing this research project, students will become spokespersons for an ethical, humane, and fair Earth. The range of topics covered shows the students that everybody has a role to play in making the world a wholesome and happy place to live. We all must come to understand each other.

There are no specified texts for this unit – students will select texts based on their research topic.

LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Introduction
Starting the Research Process
Features of a Persuasive Essay
Designing the Survey or Questionnaire
Evaluating the Research Essays
The Visual and Oral Presentation
Reflection

Handout:
First Nations Issues Research Project
**Unit 8: Research Essay**

**Introduction**

1 period

This lesson will introduce the extent of the research project that the students will be doing.

Tell the students that their research project will take several weeks and will comprise several different activities. Tell them that they will write a standard research essay without plagiarism, that they will conduct a survey about people’s knowledge and attitudes toward their topic. They will present their findings to others in an oral and visual presentation in a “First Peoples Issues Awareness Day.”

Ask the students to think about issues involving and concerning First Peoples and list them on the board. Possible topics the students may offer include loss of traditional cultures, poverty, addiction, lack of fresh water in First Peoples communities, loss of identity, residential schools, etc. Positive topics include increased access to education, the role of specific First Peoples individuals in politics, sports, land agreements, etc. Others may mention a specific local nation or First Peoples art and culture such as totem poles or the oral tradition. Others may know about the impact of contact with Europeans. Tell the students that their essays should be persuasive in tone and that they are trying to convince their readers the importance of their topics.

The next step is to give the students instructions on the process they will be following in writing their essays. This process involves both research processes and writing processes.

Students should be familiar with essay writing by the time they reach grade 12. If desired, distribute (or display on the overhead) the handout provided at the end of this unit, which outlines a summary of the processes and skills the students will be undertaking.

**Starting the Research Process**

**Learning Outcomes:** B5, B6, B7, C5, C6, C7, C9, C10, C12, C13, C14

This stage requires several periods of library research or on-line access. Some students may be able to do some research at their home computer. Some students will find it easy to send their findings electronically to their home computer via e-mail. Finding first hand information from Elders will also take time.

Once students have an idea of their topic and the direction of the project, it is time to take them to the library to start finding information. Computer aided research may be key to the success of this project as some of the topics the students select are specific and up to date enough that Internet research may be necessary. However, depending on the topic chosen, more traditional material may be useful. As well, students may use Elders as oral sources of information.

Tell the students that they that may be using mainly electronic sources for their research but that other sources may also be available. Tell the students to keep a paper account of their findings (web sites, books, articles) as well as an electronic account. Teach the students to click on the web site addresses of their electronic sources and paste these into a document for use later in their bibliography. Provide the students instruction in paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing information that they find so that they are not guilty of plagiarism. There are many internet sources that show students how to write without plagiarizing. Type “avoiding plagiarism” into a search engine.

Many student writing text books have exercises and examples showing students how to cite sources and how to quote, summarize and paraphrase the information they find.
Quoting: Quoting means direct quotations from published works or people. Appropriate acknowledgement of sources is required.

Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing means changing the source wording into the student’s own language. Appropriate acknowledgement of sources is still required.

Summarizing: Summarizing means reducing longer sources of information into a shorter section. Appropriate acknowledgement of sources may still be required.

Again, the Internet has information on how to quote, summarize, and paraphrase.

Instruct the students that their essay must also have a persuasive element. That is, the essay must not only be a research paper but must also persuade the reader to change thinking patterns or cause some action on the part of the reader. (See following lessons.)

The teacher-librarian will be a very helpful person as the students do their research. Many libraries have electronic search engines such as E-library and Big Chalk although students may also use commercial search engines.

Students may find it useful to see a sample of the kind of essay that they are expected to produce. These may be found in textbooks or in newspapers. Students should be thinking of an over-riding question such as:

- Why is the suicide rate so much higher in some First Nations communities?
- What should people understand about Phil Fontaine, chief of the Assembly of First Nations?
- What is the oral tradition and why should we be aware of its importance?
- What different ways of celebrating do First Nations Peoples have?
- What is the meaning and purpose of Totem Poles?

Each member of the class should offer a question such as these to the class.

**Features of a Persuasive Essay**

**Learning Outcomes:** B5, B6, B7, C5, C6, C7, C9, C10, C12, C13, C14

2-3 classes

The research essay on a First Peoples issue should be persuasive in tone. That is, students have to do more than just report on the issue. They have to attempt to change the reader’s thinking or get the reader to agree and take action. Students thus have to learn the elements and techniques of persuasion. At the same time, students need to avoid rhetorical ranting or obvious reader manipulation by the over-use of propaganda techniques. The writing has to be ethical, honest, and factual, but at the same time it had to be persuasive.

Use the following information to help students understand the nature of a persuasive essay. Keep in mind that an over-riding question is a good way to keep the persuasive aspect of the essay in mind.

- **What is a Persuasive Essay?** A persuasive essay is a non-fiction composition. Students must attempt to convince the reader to think or act in a certain way. A persuasive essay must have a strong, clearly stated thesis and a logical line of reasoning. Newspapers and magazine editorials, opinion pieces, and columns are all examples of persuasive essays.

- **Elements of a Persuasive Essay:** A persuasive essay only succeeds if it convinces its readers to share its writer’s views. A good persuasive essay has at least some of the following elements:
  - A clearly stated thesis or proposition that expresses the writer’s opinion. Words such as should and must can help make thesis statements strong.
An emotional appeal. Students should attempt to use emotion to get the readers to feel strongly about their argument. Often persuasive essays begin with an emotional appeal. For example, a description of the poverty in a particular First Peoples community may be an effective way to begin the essay.

Well-chosen examples that support the main points. Without examples, a persuasive essay can be flat and unconvincing. Students must use facts to support opinions. Examples may come from text research or from information from Elders.

Firm evidence to support the main points. The evidence should consist of facts, expert opinions, and examples.

A line of argument that answers critics in advance. Students who can anticipate and refute opposing arguments show their readers that they are knowledgeable about the other side of the issue. By answering objections in advance, these writers strengthen their own position.

An argument that depends on logic. Although persuasive essays often do appeal to their reader’s emotions, the argument should be based on logic. Logic uses examples and evidence in convincing, thoughtful ways.

Arguments presented in a logical or climactic order. Persuasive essays can be organized in a number of different ways, but many writers present their arguments in a logical progression, often in the order of importance, saving their most important point for last. Students can make choices about the ways to order their ideas.

Conclusions. Students should consider effective ways of concluding their essays. They may want to reinforce the importance of their topic or to show why people should understand what may happen if the ideas in the essay are accepted.

Persuasive essays, when they are really effective, appeal to logic and to emotions. Essays that just use facts are not likely to be effective and essays that are simply emotional rants are likely to leave audiences cold. Students must keep the following three main ideas in mind: appealing to the reader’s reason or common sense, appealing to the reader’s emotions, and dealing with objections in advance.

Emotional Appeals. Appealing to the reader’s emotions usually means providing vivid description or moving anecdotes about real people. A writer arguing that there are incredible inequities amongst peoples in Canada could begin by describing a school in a middle class subdivision and a school in a poor First Peoples community. A writer explaining the purposes of First Peoples art could start with a historical description of the carving and raising of a totem pole. Such descriptions do not add to the logic of the essay but they personalize and humanize the essay.

Dealing with Refutations. Dealing with refutations in the essay tells the reader that the writer has thought about the topic and is prepared with answers. For example, a student could refute the opinion that lack of fresh water on some First Nations reserves is not a serious problem and that the people could get fresh water if they tried. Simply providing evidence to the contrary is an effective way of defusing counter arguments.

Logical Appeals. Students must provide examples, facts, expert opinions, and personal experiences to support their thesis statements. Facts and examples are good ways to provide support. Examples may not be able to be verified but facts certainly can be. However listing a long array of statistics is not the best way to get the reader to accept the thesis. Expert opinions and personal experiences are other ways to support the thesis. Elders can provide their opinions and students themselves may have experiences that give their essay credibility.

Sources. Students must provide a works cited list at the end of the essay. The list gives authority to the essay and makes it possible for readers to verify the information. Students should not rely on just one or two sources. As well, sources should be up to date and impartial.

Assessment Strategies and Plagiarism
It is important that students understand the features of a persuasive essay before they begin writing their research essay on a First Nations issue. One way to see if the students have grasped the concepts of persuasion is to have students write an introduction to an essay that uses some of the elements of persuasion.
Other ways are to analyze a persuasive essay from an anthology of essays or to use an editorial from a local or national newspaper. Students can read editorials and columns from newspapers to see if they can identify various persuasive elements. Teachers can also ask students to think of a topic or subject that they are very familiar with and ask them to write some facts, details, personal experiences, and expert opinions about the topic.

Students must also be warned of the penalties of plagiarizing sources. Many textbooks and Internet sites have materials to teach students how to summarize, paraphrase, and use quotations. Their essays must be their own original work complete with a list of sources.

**Designing the Survey or Questionnaire**

1 class period

Students are required to include an appendix to their research essay a survey or questionnaire to gauge people’s attitudes about their topic and to find to find out how much people know about their topic. This survey is useful in designing their oral and visual presentations as well as helping the students understand that not everybody has as much knowledge about the topic as they do themselves. Part of their project is to inform and educate other people.

Have students develop a set of questions for a survey or a “Did you Know” pamphlet to gauge public opinion or attitude about their topic. Ask students what kinds of surveys they have completed. Ask what different forms the surveys can take. Provide some sample questions for a survey, for example:

- Do you know how many First Nations treaties have been signed in BC?
- Do you know who Phil Fontaine is?
- What percentage of First Nations communities do you think do not have access to clean water?

Multiple choice answers are a good way to organize people’s ideas. Have students begin to formulate their questions and the way they will go about conducting their survey. For example, students might choose to interview people in their neighbourhoods. Other students might choose to ask classmates in the school at lunch about their topic.

Teach the students how to incorporate their survey results into the appendix of their research essay. For example, ask the students about ways of showing the survey results such as pie graphs, bar graphs, etc. Have students decide the best way to show their survey results. Some students may have the computer skills to have their results shown as computer generated graphs and charts.

Since the survey is part of the research essay, its assessment may be incorporated into the overall assessment of the essay. The survey should contain sufficient questions and a reasonable sample of respondents. The results should be shown graphically and should be easy to understand.

**Evaluating the Research Essays**

The essay section of the project is persuasive in tone. The topics can be wide-ranging but all have to deal with a First Peoples issue that connects the students’ lives with the lives of other people throughout the world. **Critical thinking** is demonstrated as the students grapple with the features of persuasive writing. **Creative thinking** in the essay can be demonstrated with the survey appendix. Students often devise unusual ways to gauge, measure, and display public opinion. The criteria for the essay are as follows:
Unit 8: Research Essay

- **Standard research essay form** with introduction, body, conclusion, and appropriate use of sources. Evidence of paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting directly from sources must be shown.
- **Mechanics under control** with spelling, punctuation, manuscript form, bibliographic form, title page, and page numbering, etc. at an appropriate grade 12 level of mastery.
- **Elements of persuasion** must be evident.
- **An issue that connects**: The essay must clearly show that the issue is of concern to people in Canada and perhaps to people in other parts of the world.

The Visual and Oral Presentation

**Learning Outcomes:** B7, C4

2-3 class periods

Once the essays are submitted and marked, students then direct their attention to the visual and oral component of their project. Students have to set up a school display for one or more days on the topic of “First Peoples Issues Awareness” and talk about their projects to the students and adults who stop at their display. The display has to be visually appealing, have something for the visitors to do or read, and have a handout, prize, or something to take away to help students assess their current attitudes or behaviours. During the students’ English class period, they set up their displays and other students from other classes or schools do the rounds of the displays. Students may wish to have a copy of their essay for people to read. Inviting students from neighbouring schools to visit the displays is also a good idea.

Tell the students that their display must be eye-catching and informative. People who view the display must be able to glean a fair bit of information on the topic in a fairly short time period. Photographs, drawings, itemized bits of information, handouts, quiz questions, “did you know” fact sheets are all good ideas. Tell the students that they must also engage people in conversation about their topic and thus they must be very knowledgeable.

Taking the ideas of the research essay and turning them into a visual and verbal presentation takes a great deal of critical and creative thinking. Students must be able to synthesize their main ideas and communicate them to people who often have less knowledge about the topic. On the other hand, some people who visit their displays may have considerable knowledge and may ask the students tough questions. Students must be quick on their feet to be able to respond, but if they have already anticipated responses in their essays, the task of speaking to others becomes easier. When setting up the global issues awareness day displays for the rest of the school, students should have input into the design of the displays, the area used for the displays, traffic patterns, etc. Criteria for the visual display are as follows:

- **Colourful, eye-catching and attractive**: the display should draw people toward it.
- **Informative at a glance and at closer inspection**: people who come to the display should immediately grasp the issue and the longer they stay, the more they should be able to learn.
- **Something to take away and/or something to do while at the display**: involving people actively helps them understand.
- **A clear statement of things people can do to help**: people should leave the display with a sense of hope rather than despair. In other words, what can they do to improve the situation?

In assessing the verbal explanation, students are expected to be able to speak with knowledge and passion on their topic. The classroom teacher should visit each display and listen to the students as they explain their issue. A clipboard-checklist can be used to assess the quality of the verbal explanation. Features might include audibility, seriousness, ability to answer questions, friendliness, etc.
Reflection

Learning Outcomes: C1, C2, C110, C11

When the unit is completed, students fill out a personal reflection sheet describing their experiences and what they have learned from doing the project. This activity will help the teacher with future projects and give the students an opportunity to put the experience into perspective.

Tell the students that reflection is an important part of learning. Tell them that their comments will not affect their grade, but that they will be helpful in providing feedback to you as their teacher.

As a final part of their project, have students respond to questions such as the following, using their learning logs, portfolio reflection sheets, or in a conference approach:

- Describe your research topic. What was your issue?
- What are your thoughts and feelings about doing this research?
- What is your opinion of your essay? Is it a good piece of work? Explain.
- Describe your display.
- What are your thoughts and feelings about doing the display?
- Say something about the experience of explaining your issue to others.
- Can you offer the teacher some advice about the unit? How could it be better?
- How did you benefit from doing this unit? What did you learn?
- Do you think this unit is time well spent in English class?
- Was this unit just another assignment to you? Comment please.
- Has doing this unit changed your thinking in any way?
- Is there anything else you’d like to say?
FIRST NATIONS ISSUES RESEARCH PROJECT

The Research Process

1. Focus (deciding on a topic and asking a question)
2. Find and Filter (obtaining and selecting facts, details, quotations, etc.)
3. Work with Information (taking notes; writing drafts)
4. Communicate (producing the final copy)
5. Reflect (thinking about the process and the product)

The Writing Process

1. Pre-writing (brainstorming, listing, mapping, webbing, etc.)
2. Drafting (producing one or more drafts of the essay or its parts)
3. Revising (inserting, deleting, rewriting, improving)
4. Proofing (eliminating errors in spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.)
5. Publishing (printing and submitting the final copy)

Skill sets that will be demonstrated by doing the research essay and survey:

- Creating an Annotated Bibliography
- Understanding Bibliographic Format
- Brainstorming
- Critiquing
- Using Direct Quotations
- Evaluating Resources
- Using Graphic Organizers
- Getting Inspiration
- Using Keywords/Search Terms
- Note-taking
- Outlining
- Peer Editing
- Questioning
- Paraphrasing
- Answering Questions
- Scanning and Skimming
- Summarizing
- Creating Thesis Statements

Skill Sets that will be demonstrated by doing the oral and visual presentation:

- Using color, space, and headings effectively
- Summarizing information
- Speaking persuasively and knowledgeably about a topic
- Creating handouts, pamphlets, fact sheets, etc.
- Making an eye-catching display

Skill Sets that will be demonstrated by reflecting on the process and product:

- Seeing the big picture and the individual parts
- Making connections with others’ work
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their work
- Providing feedback
- Offering suggestions for improvement
UNIT 9: IDENTITY

OVERVIEW

Identity is a frequently explored theme in Aboriginal literature; as such, identity can easily become the focus for studying many texts. In this unit, Richard Wagamese’s novel *Keeper*n Me is the central text studied by all students in the class, using a literature circle technique. Other texts such as short stories, poetry, and essays can also be examined in order to enrich the theme of identity begun by reading the novel. In order to allow students reading time between literature circle sessions, the other literary forms are presented as parts, or strands, of the unit. The following “Scope and Sequence” chart is included as a suggested approach for conducting a thematic unit on identity using multiple texts, though all parts of the unit need not be taught.

*Primary Text: Keeper’n Me* by Richard Wagamese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Order</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Time Allotment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to “Identity” as a Thematic Unit</td>
<td>1 class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poetry on Identity—Using Scaffolding to Study Poetry</td>
<td>3-4 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book One of <em>Keeper’n Me</em></td>
<td>1-2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Short Stories on Identity—Students Become the Teachers—assign project and give some time to work</td>
<td>2-3 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book Two of <em>Keeper’n Me</em></td>
<td>1-2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Short Stories on Identity—Students Become the Teachers—presentations</td>
<td>5-8 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book Three of <em>Keeper’n Me</em></td>
<td>1-2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Essays on Identity—Bloom’s Taxonomy</td>
<td>3-4 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book Four of <em>Keeper’n Me</em></td>
<td>1-2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Synthesis—Making the Connections Interview/oral Exams for <em>Keeper’n Me</em></td>
<td>2-3 classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Identity as a Thematic Unit

Part 1: Poetry on Identity
Using Scaffolding to Study Poetry

Handout:
Role Cards A-D:

Part 2: Short Stories on Identity
Students as Teachers
Essays on Identity—Bloom’s Taxonomy
Applying Bloom’s Taxonomy: Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Pretty Like a White Boy”
Extending Bloom’s Taxonomy: Tomson Highway’s “Lover Snake”
Synthesis—Making the Connections

Handouts and Assessment Tools:
“The Last Raven” by Richard G. Green
“Swimming Upstream” by Beth Brant
“Compatriots” by Emma Lee Warrior
“A Mountain Legend” by Jordan Wheeler
“Sojourner’s Truth” by Lee Maracle
“Birthmark” by Richard Van Camp
Scoring Guide for Synthesis of Texts
Synthesis Paragraph Checklist

Part 3: Identity and the Novel
Using Literature Circles with Keeper’n Me
The Literature Circle Process—A High-level Approach
Cumulative Novel Assessment—Interview/Oral Exam

Handouts and Assessment Tools:
Reader Responses for Keeper’n Me
Reader Response Questions—Book One: Bih’Kee-yan, Bih’Kee-yan, Bih’Kee-yan
Reader Response Questions—Book Two: Beedahbun
Reader Response Questions—Book Three: Soo-wanee-quay
Reader Response Questions—Book Four: Lookin’ Jake
Reader Response Rubric
Handout for the Literature Circle Process
Literature Circle Roles
Interview/Oral Exam Questions
Criteria for Interview/Oral Exam
Identity as a Thematic Unit

1 class

**Learning Outcomes:** A3, B1, B4, B5, B12, C8.

In the centre of the board, write in large letters the word “Identity”; ask students to brainstorm the words that come to mind when they think of “identity.” Spend approximately ten minutes in the cluster-mapping brainstorming process. As it winds down, ask students to pull out their learning logs (see Unit 1). Use one colour of whiteboard marker or chalk to circle the words that apply to identity as it is seen from the outside (by other people, society, cultures, etc.). Use another colour of whiteboard marker or chalk to circle the words that apply to identity as it is seen from the inside (by the person to whom the identity belongs). Have students use their learning logs to free-write for ten to fifteen minutes about their own identities—as seen from the inside and the outside.

When students are done free-writing in their learning logs, hand out the *Keeper’n Me* novels. Give some background to the novel (see description of the novel in the learning resource section of this guide). As a class, read the first few pages, being sure to point out the dual **first-person narration** and how that is indicated to the reader.

Distribute the Literature Circle Process handout (provided with Part 3 of this unit) and reader response topics for Book One of the novel. Go over the process with the class and assign a date to be done the reading and preparation for the literature circle meeting for Book One. Be sure to explain to the class how they will be assessed for their literature circle meetings and reader responses.

If time allows, give students time to begin reading the novel, or continue reading as a class.
**PART I: POETRY ON IDENTITY**

**Using Scaffolding to Study Poetry**

3-4 classes

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, A9, A10, A11, B1, B6, B7, B8, B9, B10, B12, B13.

The scaffolding process is one in which students add to previous knowledge to create a bank of information about a certain subject. In this case, the model is being applied to studying poetry. Envision groups of three or four students (determine how many poems to examine based on how many students are in the class), each with a different poem.

Using structured group roles, each group examines its poem in depth. Role cards are included with Part 1 of this unit to give some guidance to the students. After students have an opportunity to study the poem (about thirty to forty minutes with each poem) collect the notes and ask the groups to rotate to another poem. Ultimately all students will look at all the poems and it will likely take several classes—in an eighty minute class, the groups would examine two or three poems. As groups approach each new poem, they are to look at it in as much depth as they looked at the first one. Then they look at the notes left by the first group, determine the differences between the first list and their list, and add those differences to the first list with a different coloured pen. Collect the notes, and the groups rotate again, and follow this same procedure. At the end each group will have looked at all the poems. There should be a set of notes with six or seven different colours of writing for each poem which can then be copied and given to the students for studying. Alternatively the group could present to the class the poem they are left with at the end of the rotation, so everyone can see what all the groups came up with. It is extremely important that the notes are collected each time, because students will not learn as much by simply reading the notes of the group before—they will not learn or remember if they have not thought and discussed for themselves.

Possible poems to use for this exercise are all found in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*—they are all related to the central theme of identity. When students are examining the poems, have them develop the discussion questions around this theme. While many other poems would be appropriate for this lesson, the following is a list of suggested poems:

- Rita Joe, “I Lost My Talk” (113)
- Jeannette C. Armstrong, “Indian Woman” (229)
- Beth Cuthand, “Shake ’N Bake” (243)
- Beth Cuthand, “Post-Oka Kinda Woman” (253)
- Alootook Ipellie, “Walking Both Sides of an Invisible Border” (323)
- Louise Halfe, “Body Politics” (369)
- Kateri akiwenzie-damm, “Grandmother, Grandfather” (460)
- Gregory Scofield, “Nothing Sacred” (462)

After the group process is complete, students should pick their favourite poem from among those examined and use their learning logs to expand on one of the discussion questions posed during the discussions using a reader response format.

The following are cards to use for the structured group roles—students should rotate through these roles as they rotate through the poems so all students perform each role at least once. If there are groups of only three students, collapse the Role D (Discussion Questions) so that all students in the group come up with discussion questions.
Role Card A:  Theme and Meaning

Answer the following questions and create really detailed notes on them to share with your group. When you get to the discussion portion of examining this poem, you are responsible for being the group facilitator – all members should be participating, and you should keep the discussion going.

Read the poem once. What is your first impression of its meaning? Read the poem again. How has your first impression changed? What do you think the poet is trying to say literally? What do you think the poet is trying to say figuratively? Develop a theme statement for the poem. Use quotations from the poem to support your notes.

Role Card B:  Figurative Language

Follow the instructions in the next paragraph, and create really detailed notes on each task you complete to share with your group. When you get to the discussion portion of examining this poem you are responsible for being the recorder along with the member looking at form and structure.

Read the poem a couple of times and look closely at the language used by the poet. Copy out the lines that resound with you. Look for similes, metaphors, alliteration, assonance, repetition, etc.—any examples of figurative language. You may want to use your literary terms glossary for this to help find these. Make notes on this figurative language to share with your group. Be sure to use quotations as evidence.
Role Card C: Form and Structure

Answer the following questions and create really detailed notes on them to share with your group. When you get to the discussion portion of examining this poem, you are responsible for being the recorder along with the member looking at figurative language.

Read the poem a couple of times and think about its meaning. Jot down a couple of notes about the meaning and then look closely at the physical appearance. How does the physical structure of the poem help to develop the meaning? What is the rhyme scheme (if any) of the poem? What is the meter and the rhythm? What kind of punctuation/capitalization does the poet use? Who is the speaker? What kind of poem is it? Why do you think the poet uses this form and structure? How is the form and structure effective?

Role Card D: Discussion Questions

Follow the instructions in the next paragraph, and create really detailed notes to share with your group. When you get to the discussion portion of examining this poem you are responsible for asking all group members questions to encourage everyone to help answer your discussion questions and for being the presenter (if applicable).

Read the poem a couple of times and start by writing down a few questions you would ask the poet if he/she were sitting right next to you. Then create several questions that would take a paragraph to answer fully —yes, big picture questions. Jot down some of your thoughts about how to answer these questions. Use quotations from the poem to form your questions and answers.
PART 2: SHORT STORIES ON IDENTITY

Students as Teachers

8-10 classes


In groups of four to five depending on how many students are in the class (groups should be heterogeneous and balanced in size and ability), students will present their assigned stories to the class, teaching the stories according to the accompanying handouts for each story. Each presentation must include a way of having other students read the story; suggestions for this are included on the handouts. Each presentation must also teach the plot, characterization, theme, point of view, and setting of the story and must provide an assessment tool to accompany the presentation. Suggestions for the assessment tool are also included on each handout.

Students should have a couple of days in class to prepare for their presentations and each presentation should take about one class (including reading time and the use of the assessment tool). Students should also be given the opportunity to complete a self assessment in their learning logs at the end of their presentations—how much they improved since the last presentation, contributions to the group process, what they did well, what they didn’t do well, what they need to improve upon for next time, and feedback from the group.

Students who are presenting may be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Presentation of the story itself /10
- Teaching the plot /5
- Teaching the setting /5
- Teaching the characterization /5
- Teaching the point of view /5
- Teaching the theme /5
- Assessment tool /5
- Overall presentation quality /10
- Self assessment /10

TOTAL: /60
Handout: “The Last Raven” by Richard G. Green

An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, Eds. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie

In your group, you will be teaching your assigned story (Richard G. Green’s “The Last Raven”) to the rest of the class. Remember that teaching is not simply telling the class about the story; there is a lot more involved in the process. You must come up with a way for the class to read the story and ways for the class to learn about the plot, characterization, setting, point of view and theme of the story. In addition, you must develop an assessment tool for the class so that they can demonstrate their depth of understanding of the story. Suggestions for each of these aspects are below but feel free to be creative. Remember that depth should not be sacrificed for “flashiness”. Your presentation, including reading the story and the assessment tool, should take a whole class, so be sure to be well-prepared.

Suggestions for . . .

- **Reading the story as a class**: readers’ theatre, dramatic performance with a narrator reading the story or round-robin reading.
- **Plot**: concept map representation, plot diagram on a poster (remember to think about whether the plot follows a traditional or circular path), drawing on the board.
- **Characterization**: hot-seating one of the characters from the story (one of you pretending to be the protagonist and answering questions in that persona), dressing up as the characters and giving descriptions as you present, body biographies of the main characters.
- **Setting**: diorama of the setting, geographical location on a map, discussion of connection of the setting to characterization, theme, and plot.
- **Point of view**: find a passage from the story and change the point of view, then discuss how the point of view chosen by the author is appropriate.
- **Theme**: brainstorm with the class for main ideas, create theme statements, connect theme to the other aspects.
- **Assessment tool**: learning log entry, reader response question, discussion questions for large-group or small-group discussions, short-answer questions, game show, quiz.

Be sure to focus on the following:
- Jim Silverheels (the protagonist) and his presence at Sunday School
- Reaction of the girl next to Jim at Sunday School to his touch
- Reluctance of the Sunday School leader (Dan Goupil) to accept Jim’s interpretation of the Bible story about Mary Magdalene, and how his interpretation is revisited at the end of the story (circular plot structure)
- Symbolism of the Pinball game—name and images
- Jim’s sister’s use of the Mohawk language to aggravate Jim
- Symbolism of the crows—reasons for getting rid of them, why they are being protected by law
- Colour motifs—red and black
- Jim’s feelings about killing the crows
- Significance of calling the birds “ravens” in the title
Handout: “Swimming Upstream” by Beth Brant

An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, Eds. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie

In your group, you will be teaching your assigned story (Beth Brant’s “Swimming Upstream”) to the rest of the class. Remember that teaching is not simply telling the class about the story; there is a lot more involved in the process. You must come up with a way for the class to read the story, and ways for the class to learn about the plot, characterization, setting, point of view and theme of the story. In addition, you must develop an assessment tool for the class so that they can demonstrate their depth of understanding of the story. Suggestions for each of these aspects are below but feel free to be creative. Remember that depth should not be sacrificed for “flashiness”. Your presentation, including reading the story and the assessment tool, should take a whole class, so be sure to be well-prepared.

Suggestions for . . .

- **Reading the story as a class**: readers’ theatre, dramatic performance with a narrator reading the story, or round-robin reading.
- **Plot**: concept map representation, plot diagram on a poster (remember to think about whether the plot follows a traditional or circular path), drawing on the board.
- **Characterization**: hot-seating one of the characters from the story (one of you pretending to be the protagonist and answering questions in that persona), dressing up as the characters and giving descriptions as you present, body biographies of the main characters.
- **Setting**: diorama of the setting, geographical location on a map, discussion of connection of the setting to characterization, theme and plot.
- **Point of view**: find a passage from the story and change the point of view, then discuss how the point of view chosen by the author is appropriate.
- **Theme**: brainstorm with the class for main ideas, create theme statements, connect theme to the other aspects.
- **Assessment tool**: learning log entry, reader response question, discussion questions for large group or small group discussions, short answer questions, game show, quiz.

Be sure to focus on the following:

- Significance of Anna May’s dreams about her son Simon
- Relationships between Anna May and Simon, Catherine, and Tony
- Importance of the bottle of wine symbolically and literally
- Discussions of the multiple Alcoholics Anonymous meetings
- Examination of the meaning and multiple representations of parenthood— Tony, Anna May, Charley, Anna May’s mother, Catherine
- Continual return to nature and descriptions of nature
- Connection of Torn Fin (salmon) to Simon
- Anna May’s growth, realizations
- Unresolved conclusion
Handout: “Compatriots” by Emma Lee Warrior

An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, Eds. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie

In your group, you will be teaching your assigned story (Emma Lee Warrior’s “Compatriots”) to the rest of the class. Remember that teaching is not simply telling the class about the story; there is a lot more involved in the process. You must come up with a way for the class to read the story, and ways for the class to learn about the plot, characterization, setting, point of view and theme of the story. In addition, you must develop an assessment tool for the class so that they can demonstrate their depth of understanding of the story. Suggestions for each of these aspects are below, but feel free to be creative. Remember that depth should not be sacrificed for “flashiness”. Your presentation, including reading the story and the assessment tool, should take a whole class, so be sure to be well-prepared.

Suggestions for . . .

• **Reading the story as a class:** readers’ theatre, dramatic performance with a narrator reading the story, or round-robin reading.
• **Plot:** concept map representation, plot diagram on a poster (remember to think about whether the plot follows a traditional or circular path), drawing on the board.
• **Characterization:** hot-seating one of the characters from the story (one of you pretending to be the protagonist and answering questions in that persona), dressing up as the characters and giving descriptions as you present, body biographies of the main characters.
• **Setting:** diorama of the setting, geographical location on a map, discussion of connection of the setting to characterization, theme and plot.
• **Point of view:** find a passage from the story and change the point of view, then discuss how the point of view chosen by the author is appropriate.
• **Theme:** brainstorm with the class for main ideas, create theme statements, connect theme to the other aspects.
• **Assessment tool:** learning log entry, reader response question, discussion questions for large group or small group discussions, short answer questions, game show, quiz.

Be sure to focus on the following:

• Home situation for Lucy and her children
• Confusion about the “Sun Dance”—Lucy’s perspective, Hilda’s perspective
• Lucy’s Uncle Sonny and his problems and issues, as well as Lucy’s kindness to him
• Significance of the speech by Sonny about Helmut, a German person, taking on the persona of an Aboriginal person
• Relationship between Flora and Delphine
• Description of Helmut from different perspectives within the story
• Helmut’s angry reaction to Hilda
• Hilda’s goals for her trip to Canada and her definition of a “real Indian”
Handout: “A Mountain Legend” by Jordan Wheeler

An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, Eds. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie

In your group, you will be teaching your assigned story (Jordan Wheeler’s “A Mountain Legend”) to the rest of the class. Remember that teaching is not simply telling the class about the story; there is a lot more involved in the process. You must come up with a way for the class to read the story and ways for the class to learn about the plot, characterization, setting, point of view, and theme of the story. In addition, you must develop an assessment tool for the class so that they can demonstrate their depth of understanding of the story. Suggestions for each of these aspects are below, but feel free to be creative. Remember that depth should not be sacrificed for “flashiness”. Your presentation, including reading the story and the assessment tool, should take a whole class, so be sure to be well-prepared.

Suggestions for . . .

- **Reading the story as a class**: readers’ theatre, dramatic performance with a narrator reading the story, or round-robin reading.
- **Plot**: concept map representation, plot diagram on a poster (remember to think about whether the plot follows a traditional or circular path), drawing on the board.
- **Characterization**: hot-seating one of the characters from the story (one of you pretending to be the protagonist and answering questions in that persona), dressing up as the characters and giving descriptions as you present, body biographies of the main characters.
- **Setting**: diorama of the setting, geographical location on a map, discussion of connection of the setting to characterization, theme and plot.
- **Point of view**: find a passage from the story and change the point of view, then discuss how the point of view chosen by the author is appropriate.
- **Theme**: brainstorm with the class for main ideas, create theme statements, connect theme to the other aspects.
- **Assessment tool**: learning log entry, reader response question, discussion questions for large group or small group discussions, short answer questions, game show, quiz.

Be sure to focus on the following:

- McNabb’s campfire story and how the plot circles back to it at the conclusion
- The opinions of other characters (McNabb, fellow campers, counselor) about the protagonist, Jason—the expectations about him based on his identity as they see it versus the reality
- Personification of the mountain
- Multiple levels of significance of the eagle and its symbolism and the role of the eagle in the intertwined narratives
- Sense of completion and resolution—multiple meanings of an eagle feather
- Jason’s rescue by the spirit of Muskawashee
Handout: “Sojourner’s Truth” by Lee Maracle

*An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English*, Eds. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie

In your group you will be teaching your assigned story (Lee Maracle’s “Sojourner’s Truth”) to the rest of the class. Remember that teaching is not simply telling the class about the story; there is a lot more involved in the process. You must come up with a way for the class to read the story, and ways for the class to learn about the plot, characterization, setting, point of view and theme of the story. In addition, you must develop an assessment tool for the class so that they can demonstrate their depth of understanding of the story. Suggestions for each of these aspects are below, but feel free to be creative. Remember that depth should not be sacrificed for “flashiness”. Your presentation, including reading the story and the assessment tool, should take a whole class, so be sure to be well-prepared.

Suggestions for . . .

- **Reading the story as a class**: readers’ theatre, dramatic performance with a narrator reading the story, or round-robin reading.
- **Plot**: concept map representation, plot diagram on a poster (remember to think about whether the plot follows a traditional or circular path), drawing on the board.
- **Characterization**: hot-seating one of the characters from the story (one of you pretending to be the protagonist and answering questions in that persona), dressing up as the characters and giving descriptions as you present, body biographies of the main characters.
- **Setting**: diorama of the setting, geographical location on a map, discussion of connection of the setting to characterization, theme and plot.
- **Point of view**: find a passage from the story and change the point of view, then discuss how the point of view chosen by the author is appropriate.
- **Theme**: brainstorm with the class for main ideas, create theme statements, connect theme to the other aspects.
- **Assessment tool**: learning log entry, reader response question, discussion questions for large group or small group discussions, short answer questions, game show, quiz.

Be sure to focus on the following:

- Significance of the point of view used by the author—first person narration by a dead character (never named)
- Discussion of life truths using clichés, and the truths about his own life realized at funeral and in the events following
- Relationship of the deceased to Emma, his children, Mike
- Use of italicization for thoughts
- The downtrodden throughout history—Scottsboro boys, Marx, Lenin, Sojourner Truth
- Importance of Christianity to the plot
- Journey taken by the deceased, figuratively and literally
Handout: “Birthmark” by Richard Van Camp

An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English, Eds. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie

In your group you will be teaching your assigned story (Richard Van Camp’s “Birthmark”) to the rest of the class. Remember that teaching is not simply telling the class about the story; there is a lot more involved in the process. You must come up with a way for the class to read the story and ways for the class to learn about the plot, characterization, setting, point of view, and theme of the story. In addition, you must develop an assessment tool for the class so that they can demonstrate their depth of understanding of the story. Suggestions for each of these aspects are below, but feel free to be creative. Remember that depth should not be sacrificed for “flashiness”. Your presentation, including reading the story and the assessment tool, should take a whole class, so be sure to be well-prepared.

Suggestions for . . .

- **Reading the story as a class**: readers’ theatre, dramatic performance with a narrator reading the story, or round-robin reading.
- **Plot**: concept map representation, plot diagram on a poster (remember to think about whether the plot follows a traditional or circular path), drawing on the board.
- **Characterization**: hot-seating one of the characters from the story (one of you pretending to be the protagonist and answering questions in that persona), dressing up as the characters and giving descriptions as you present, body biographies of the main characters.
- **Setting**: diorama of the setting, geographical location on a map, discussion of connection of the setting to characterization, theme and plot.
- **Point of view**: find a passage from the story and change the point of view, then discuss how the point of view chosen by the author is appropriate.
- **Theme**: brainstorm with the class for main ideas, create theme statements, connect theme to the other aspects.
- **Assessment tool**: learning log entry, reader response question, discussion questions for large group or small group discussions, short answer questions, game show, quiz.

Be sure to focus on the following:

- Refusal of narrator to tell the truth about his birthmarks and the circularity of this plot
- Double circles (two circular narratives) of the plot
- Characterization—the visitor to Mr. Twisted Finger’s house, the significance of the smell that accompanies him as well as the cow’s tail and hoof prints
- The “deal” that was made at Mr. Twisted Finger’s house
- Insistence of the narrator to hear the story from Red Kettle Woman
- Irony of narrator refusing to tell the story to his brother, and revisiting this at end, yet telling the story in written form
**Unit 9: Identity**

**Essays on Identity—Bloom’s Taxonomy**

3-4 classes

**Learning Outcomes:** A3, A5, A8, A9, A10, A11, B2, B5, B6, B7, B9, B10, B12, B15

Draw a big triangle on the board and fill in the diagram like the one below. Let students know that this is one version of Bloom’s Taxonomy, which is a hierarchy of cognitive tasks. The simpler cognitive tasks are on the bottom of the pyramid, and as you approach the top of the pyramid, the cognitive tasks become more complicated and difficult. It is important to emphasize that the more complicated cognitive tasks are inclusive of the cognitive tasks that have come before them. For example, the analysis level actually involves using the cognitive skills of the application, understanding, and knowledge levels as well. Have a short class discussion about why Bloom’s Taxonomy is useful to students in grade 12.

![Bloom's Taxonomy Diagram](image)

To help students understand the more in-depth meanings of the words used in Bloom’s Taxonomy, the following list can be used. These words are also “starters” for questions for each level of the hierarchy.

- **Knowledge:** arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce, state.
- **Comprehension:** classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select.
- **Application:** apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, explain, illustrate, interpret, practice, sketch, solve, use, write.
- **Analysis:** analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question.
- **Synthesis:** arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, organize, plan, prepare, propose, write.
- **Evaluation:** appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, select, support, value, evaluate.
Applying Bloom’s Taxonomy: 
Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Pretty Like a White Boy”

Hand out copies of Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Pretty Like a White Boy” and give students the following series of questions, each pertaining to one level of the hierarchy. If desired, leave out the classifying word for each level, and have students identify which cognitive task is being addressed in each question—most of the questions do not use the question “starters” in the list. Additionally, have students take notes as you read through the essay as a group—also give extra time to them after the reading is complete. Explain to students that these questions will not be assessed as polished responses, but rather will be used in preparation for discussions in groups of two.

**Knowledge:** What are the two cultural identities between which Drew Hayden Taylor seems to be trying to find a balance?

**Comprehension:** What is Drew Hayden Taylor’s central premise?

**Application:** Using examples from the essay, explain how Drew Hayden Taylor uses humour to discuss the very serious subject of trying to find his cultural identity.

**Analysis:** Using a T-chart, show the benefits of being Ojibway in one column, and the benefits of being Caucasian in the other column.

**Synthesis:** Think about the novel you are currently reading, Keeper’n Me—how is the struggle to find a cultural identity similar and different for the narrator in “Pretty Like A White Boy” and Garnet in Keeper’n Me? Be sure to explain your answer using examples from both texts.

**Evaluation:** Look back at the T-chart and decide for yourself to which cultural identity Drew Hayden Taylor feels more connected. Be sure to use evidence from the essay to support your decision.

When students are done taking notes, have them come up with two questions for each level of Bloom’s Taxonomy, along with responses in note form for these questions. These questions (along with their responses to the original questions) should be discussed in groups of two. All of the notes for these questions can be kept in students’ learning logs to be assessed at a later date. Come back together as a class and discuss anything that was confusing about the essay, as well as some of the more high-level responses. Have students pick one of the synthesis, analysis, or evaluation level questions to respond to in a more polished form in their learning logs.

Extending Bloom’s Taxonomy: Tomson Highway’s “Lover Snake”

Hand out copies of Tomson Highway’s “Lover Snake” to the class and instruct students to take notes on the essay as it is being read, in order to create at least two questions for each step on the hierarchy of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Read the essay as a class and give students about ten minutes to create the questions from their notes. Assemble this class into groups of four or five, and have them discuss the essay and their questions in a round-robin fashion. As groups complete their discussions, they should each respond to one of their analysis, synthesis, or evaluation level questions in their learning logs. In addition, this is an opportunity to do some reflection about the learning process. Students could discuss what they have learned about Bloom’s Taxonomy and think of ways they could use it in other classes or their lives. Their notes and questions could also be kept in their learning logs for assessment at a later date.
**Synthesis—Making the Connections**

On one wall of the classroom, create a large concept map (See Unit 10: Humour, instructional techniques). Each part of the map represents a piece of literature studied in the unit (i.e. each poem, short story, essay and book from the novel is a part). Each student can be responsible for one part of the map as well as five connections to other parts. If the class is large, two students can each complete a part on each of the novel’s books.

The following is a list of all the literature studied in this unit:

**Poems:**
- Rita Joe, “I Lost My Talk”
- Jeannette C. Armstrong, “Indian Woman”
- Beth Cuthand, “Shake ’N Bake”
- Beth Cuthand, “Post-Oka Kinda Woman”
- Alootook Ipellie, “Walking Both Sides of an Invisible Border”
- Louise Halfe, “Body Politics”
- Kateri akiwenzie-damm, “Grandmother, Grandfather”
- Gregory Scofield, “Nothing Sacred”

**Short Stories:**
- Richard G. Green, “The Last Raven”
- Beth Brant, “Swimming Upstream”
- Emma Lee Warrior, “Compatriots”
- Jordan Wheeler’s “A Mountain Legend”
- Lee Maracle’s “Sojourner’s Truth”
- Richard Van Camp, “Birthmark”

**Essays:**
- Drew Hayden Taylor, “Pretty Like a White Boy”
- Tomson Highway, “Lover Snake”

**Richard Wagamese, Keeper’n Me**
- Book One
- Book Two
- Book Three
- Book Four

After the concept map is completed, students will begin to work on a paragraph which is an examination of the “Identity” theme in a synthesis of multiple literary pieces and forms (at least two). This is a task they will be expected to perform on the provincial exam and students should become quite adept at synthesis paragraph writing through this process.

Review the structure of a paragraph with the class and hand out the rubrics with which they will be assessed (“Scoring Guide for Synthesis of Texts” as follows) and the checklists for editing the paragraphs (“Synthesis Paragraph Checklist” as follows).
Students should create their own topics and have them vetted by the teacher before beginning the writing process. Topics can follow one of the following forms, and students can choose the literary pieces they wish to use.

**Option 1:** In paragraph form and in at least 150 words, complete the following task (the mark for your answer will be based on the appropriateness of the examples you use as well as the adequacy of your explanation and the quality of your written expression): With specific reference to both texts, contrast the formation or conception of identity of the speakers in _________ and _________.

**Option 2:** In paragraph form and in at least 150 words, complete the following task (the mark for your answer will be based on the appropriateness of the examples you use as well as the adequacy of your explanation and the quality of your written expression): With specific reference to both texts, discuss the role of identity in _________ and _________.

Students may use the class concept map to help come up with ideas for their responses and should complete their planning and first drafts within a class. Have students number the drafts as opposed to putting their names on them. This seems to enable other students to be constructively critical of the drafts and to make good suggestions for improvement. Copies can be made of each of the responses and small groups of students can work with the rubrics and the checklists to edit the drafts. Emphasize to the students that suggestions for improvement should be much more than spelling and grammar; insight, structure, and references should be the focus. The groups should come up with lists for improvement for each draft and these lists can go back to the draft writers.

Students should be given the opportunity to rewrite their drafts before handing in. Then they should put their first drafts and the list of suggestions for improvement into their learning logs. They should use this as the springboard for reflection on their writing—what they did well, what they need to work on, the usefulness of the suggestions, what they learned from the process, making goals for their writing, and the mark they feel they should receive for their revised drafts with justification for that mark.

If desired, students could write another synthesis paragraph using the other topic and go through the process again.

While students work on the drafting and editing process, this is a good time to conduct the interview/oral exams on the novel.
SCORING GUIDE FOR SYNTHESIS OF TEXTS

6
This response is superior, demonstrating an insightful understanding of the texts. The response shows a sophisticated approach to synthesis, including pertinent references. The writing style is effective and demonstrates skillful control of language. Despite its clarity and precision, the response need not be error-free.

5
This response is proficient, demonstrating a clear understanding of the texts at an interpretive level. The response clearly synthesizes the concepts within the texts. References may be explicit or implicit and convincingly support the analysis. The writing is well organized and reflects a strong command of the conventions of language. Errors may be present, but are not distracting.

4
This response is competent. Understanding of the texts tends to be literal and superficial. Some synthesis is apparent. The response may rely heavily on paraphrasing. References are present and appropriate, but may be limited. The writing is organized and straightforward. Conventions of language are usually followed, but some errors are evident.

3
This response is barely adequate. Understanding of the texts may be partially flawed. An attempt at synthesis is evident. References to the texts are not clearly connected to a central idea or may be repetitive. The response may show some sense of purpose, but errors may be distracting.

2
This response is inadequate. While there is an attempt to address the topic, understanding of the texts or the task may be seriously flawed. Errors are recurring, distracting, and impede meaning.

1
This response is unacceptable. The response does not meet the purpose of the task or may be too brief to address the topic. There is a serious lack of control in the writing.

0
This response reflects a complete misunderstanding of the texts and/or the task, or is a restatement of the question.
SYNTHESIS PARAGRAPH CHECKLIST

✓ Have you engaged the reader in the first sentence?

✓ Have you identified the poet/author and the passage/poem in the first or second sentence?

✓ Have you expressed a topic sentence (in response to the question posed) in the first few sentences?

✓ Have you used at least three specific references (there should be some well integrated quotations) to support your topic sentence as proof?

✓ Have you introduced and explained your specific references, or integrated them into sentences so that your writing flows?

✓ Have you concluded your paragraph in a clear, succinct way?

✓ Is there flow to your writing as a whole?

✓ Do you have proper sentence construction (no run-on sentences or sentence fragments)?

✓ Do you have variety in sentence length?

✓ Is your spelling and grammar correct?

Notice that the conventions are near the end. Be sure to make your changes and then check through all the writing (new and old) to correct spelling and grammar.

This list is—by far—not complete. Be sure to refer to the “Scoring Guide for Synthesis of Texts” to refine your paragraph.
PART 3: IDENTITY AND THE NOVEL

Using Literature Circles with Keeper’n Me

4 half or full classes

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A4, A5, A8, A9, A10, B1, B4, B5, B6, B7, B9, B12, B13.

Keeper’n Me is the central text for this unit; however, the richness of the “Identity” theme allows for a variety of other texts to be explored. For the novel, the main instructional technique is the use of literature circles along with a series of reader responses. This unit allows for the use of recursive teaching strategies; there are a series of lessons that help to develop the exploration of identity as a theme, but the class will keep returning to the central text, and the responses allow students to return to the other texts as well.

Throughout the unit, assign days for literature circle discussions and reader responses. Depending on the specific class, it may be preferable to complete the reader responses on different days than the literature circle discussions and use full classes for each aspect. Alternatively, it may be preferable to complete them on the same days and use half classes for each aspect. Keep in mind how much reading time students will require between each of these days (roughly a quarter of the novel for each session). Use the other lessons for the days in between. For more structure, a scope and sequence chart for the lessons is included at the beginning of this unit; however, feel free to adapt the order as it suits.

Reader Responses for Keeper ’n Me

4 half or full classes

Learning Outcomes: B1, B7, B8, B9, B10, B12, B13.

The novel is split into four sections, each with a choice of four specific guided reader response questions that require the students to comment on emerging themes, the motivations of characters, the formation of identity, the importance of setting, and a personal connection to the narrative. The reader response questions give direction to the students but should in no way limit them—if the question inspires other ideas, let students know that the inspiration may be a springboard, rather than a ceiling.

At the senior level, the reader responses should be a minimum of 200 words—less than that is simply not enough to address the questions in enough depth. However, quantity of words should not be at the expense of quality—students who pad their answers to meet length requirements but who have not thought about the question with sufficient depth will not do as well as those who have thoughtful, if shorter, responses. Despite the high expectation for quality of insight, students should feel free to hand in responses that are not polished—reader response is a process of “writing to learn” rather than “learning to write”—spelling and grammar are not part of the assessment. See the Reader Responses rubric which follows.
Reader Response Questions—Book One: Bih’kee-yan, Bih’kee-yan, Bih’kee-yan

1. Read the passage below from page 16 and answer the following questions:

- Why do you think that Garnet is removed from his home?
- What feeling do you get from reading the account from Jane’s perspective?
- Discuss the symbolism of the “little red truck.” Jane gives Garnet a hug before he is taken and as soon as he returns—discuss the symbolism and circularity of the two hugs.

She said those were the last words she heard, and the last sight she had of me for twenty years was from the back window of that schoolbus. A little Ojibway boy all hunched over in the sandbox with a little red tuck with one wheel missing, growin’ smaller ’n smaller, till it looked like the land just swallowed me up. When she got home that night the sandbox was empty except for that little blue and red truck, the wind already busy burying it in the sand. When we met again twenty years later she grabbed me in that same big, warm hug and just held on for a long, long time.

2. Read the passage below from page 60 and answer the following questions in reader response form:

- What helps Garnet to feel so welcomed back home?
- Why does he find this so remarkable? Put yourself in his place—how would you feel in a similar situation? Think of the idea of “a sense of place”—how is “place” significant in this section and this passage?

. . . they just seemed to treat me like I was someone they’d always known. Like the twenty years didn’t matter to them or the way I was dressed, the Afro or anything. It was like I was already part of their lives and let’s get on with it all.

3. Read the passage below from page 85 and answer the following question:

- Keeper ‘n Me is divided into four “books”—what is the title of this book?
- In the passage you have just read, the meaning of the title is explained—what is the meaning? What are the multiple ways that Garnet is “coming home”? Discuss.
- What is the significance of Richard Wagamese including Ojibway language?

“Bih’kee-yan,” she sang, “bih’kee-yan, bih’kee-yan, bih’kee-yan.” When she finished she looked over at me and smiled, rose up, walked to me and grabbed me up into a great big hug and held on for a long time. “What does it mean, Ma?” I mumbled through tears and her hair. “My song, what does it mean?”

She breathed deeply one more time and said, “It means, come home. Come home, come home, come home.”

4. The novel is told in a fractured narrative from the perspective of two narrators. Why do you think Richard Wagamese chose to tell this story using this technique? Describe the two narrators on the basis of what you have read so far. Sometimes a first-person point of view means the narrator is unreliable because the story is not being told objectively. How is this countered by the technique of two first-person narrators?
Reader Response Questions—Book Two: Beedahbun

1. Read the passage below from page 88 and answer the following questions:

• So far in the novel, you have seen how Garnet has trouble forming a consistent identity. Describe the cultural identities he attempts to adopt before “coming home.”
• What are some of the reasons he gives for this search?
• Go a little deeper—why do you think he does this? Why do you think he finally feels comfortable “in his own skin” at White Dog?

   Anyway, I’d been back here for about four months. My ma had cut my Afro off about three days after I was home and around that time I was one scruffy-looking Indian. Funny how fate turns things around, eh? I told Ma about the Pancho Santilla gaffe I used to run on people before I became a black man and she just looked at me and laughed.
   “Good thing you don’t try that now, my boy,” she said. “People see you with no hair now they be callin’ you one a them Mexican hairlesses!”

2. Read the passage below from pages 111-112 then answer the following questions:

• Keeper was an alcoholic for many years—he explains a little about why he struggled with this addiction. Discuss those reasons.
• Why does he manage to stay sober now?
• What is the significance of the cedar smudging?
• Why does Keeper feel such a strong connection to Garnet?

   Mind kinda cleared up too but that hollow feelin’ wouldn’t go away. Made me afraid. Made me wanna run, go have a drink, feel that burnin’ in my belly instead of hollow. Told one of them counselors one day an’ se took me into her office, put a blanket on the floor, laid out a bowl and cedar. Lit up an’ said a prayer for both of us on accoun’t I was too ashamed an’ scared to say one for myself. Then she smudged me with that cedar. The smell hit something deep inside me I hadn’t felt in a long, long time an’ I cried real deep an’ long. Cried for Harold, cried for my shame, my fear, all them years. When I was done that hollow feelin’ was gone.

3. Read the passage below from page 144 and then answer the following questions:

• Discuss Garnet’s relationship with his newly found family members.
• What is stopping him and Jackie from being close?
• Why is Jackie so angry?
• How would you feel in a similar situation and why?

   “Gotta lot of the bear in him, like I said. Bear’s a good warrior. Doesn’t show fear. But the bear learns how to live with it though, an’ that’s what Jackie never learned. How to live with it.”

4. What is the meaning of beedahbun—the title of this book? Why do you think Richard Wagamese uses the Ojibway language? Why do you think he chose this word as the title for this book? How is it significant?
Reader Response Questions—Book Three: Soo-wanee-quay

1. Read the passage below from page 165 and answer the following questions. This passage is from Keeper’s point of view.

- In his opinion, what is the importance of the drum?
- What is the drum compared to?
- What do you think the drum is really about and why?
- Why is the drum so important to Keeper?

   Today, that’s why we use the drum in the morning. We hear it an’ get reminded of how we felt hearin’ it in the darkness when we were little. Reminds us too that we gotta stay joined up with Mother Earth an’ that we can feel all safe an’ protected that way too. Reminds us to stop an’ listen for the heartbeat goin’ on all around us even now. That’s why we use it. Not for our ears, for our insides. Us we gotta learn to live from the inside out.

2. Read the passage below from page 185 and answer the following questions:

- Garnet, used to the city, sometimes craves some excitement—but this section of the novel is all about finding balance. Keeper tells an exemplar story about the eagle feather. What is the balance in this story?
- Why is this story so important?
- Why is the eagle story a good exemplar?
- How is the eagle symbolic?

   “Eagle feather’s a good tool for teachin’ bout balance. Help us remember one o’ the biggest teachin’s comes from the eagle. See, bird gotta have balance to soar around like he does. Us we like seein’ him up there. Looks real free to us. Makes us wanna be like that. Trick is, though, we gotta have that same kinda balance. That’s why we admire the eagle so much. Somethin’ inside us wants to able to soar around our world like that too.”

3. Define comic relief. Then, read the passage below from page 209 and answer the following questions:

- Why does Chief Oscar, after being so angry, find the situation so funny?
- Why does everyone else find the situation funny?
- Why do you think Richard Wagamese includes this section? Why does Garnet, as narrator, say that including humour is important to good story-telling?

   He was nodding and mumbling about all sorts of things and then just as he was climbing into his pickup he burst out in great rolling waves of laughter. That’s what woke us up actually. Huge spasms of laughter that kinda echoed off the lake. When Ma’n me looked down the hill towards the townsite there was the burly shape of Chief Oscar rolling around on the dirt road by the ball diamond shrieking and shrieking with laughter.

4. What is meaning of the Cree word soo-wanee-quay—the title of this book? How is this title so significant to this book? How is soo-wanee-quay explored and found in this book? Why do you think Richard Wagamese uses a Cree word?
**Reader Response Questions—Book Four: Lookin’ Jake**

1. Read the passage below from pages 224-225 and then answer the following questions:
   
   - Discuss “connection to the land” and its significance to this book.
   - What has Garnet learned about “sense of place” throughout the novel?

   *Lose that connection you lose yourself, according to most people around here. Lose that connection you lose that feeling of being a part of something that’s bigger than everything. Kinda tapping into the great mystery. Feeling the spirit of the land that’s the spirit of the people and the spirit of yourself. That’s what I was learning all along but I needed to get a lot closer to it . . . .*

2. Read the passage below from page 245, then answer the following questions:
   
   - How does Garnet form connections?
   - To what and whom does he connect?
   - Why are these connections so significant to him?
   - How has Garnet changed throughout the novel as a whole?

   *I could hear their voices there. The ghosts of voices that filled those shriveled timbers with love and hope and happiness. The voices of an Ojibway family alive forever in a time beyond what the world could do and did not so far from them. Voices from a history that got removed. A past that never got the chance to shine in me. A glittering, magic past that was being resurrected right there in the crumpled heap of an old cabin that had given itself back to the land a long time ago. It was part of me. And there in those rotted lengths of mossy, gray-black timbers was the thing I’d been searching for all my life. The hook to hang my life on. The hook that hung on the back of a cabin door amidst the rough and tangle of the land, the past, the heritage that was my home, my future and mine alone forever. I cried.*

3. “Lookin’ Jake” is the title of this book, and it is the only title that is not in an Aboriginal dialect. What is the meaning of the term, and how is using English for this title significant? Read the following passage from page 301 and discuss why the gift is so meaningful to Garnet.

   *She hugged me again. As I unfolded the shirt the material felt familiar. It wasn’t until I had it all held out in front of me that I knew what it was. It was the balloon-sleeved yellow shirt I had on the day I arrived at White Dog. The sleeves were cut back regular, the long pointed collar was gone, and the ribbons ran across the chest and back and down the arms. It was beautiful.*

4. How does the novel end? Is it a resolved or unresolved conclusion? How so? Why is the ending significant? How is the ending, and indeed the entire story, circular? How is story-telling significant? How do you feel after reading the conclusion?
The Literature Circle Process—A High-level Approach

The students should be placed into heterogeneous groups—this keeps the socializing between friends to a minimum, and allows different people with different abilities and backgrounds to work together. The groups should be three or four students, and they may decide what roles to start with. They are rotating through the roles, so everyone will experience all of the roles. The notes they produce at each session should be kept together—possibly in a duo tang or a folder for their group—you will have to decide what works best for your classroom. It is best, however, to keep these notes in the classroom—then they are always available.

Encourage the students to keep good notes that are dated and titled because the notes will form part of the assessment for the literature circles. If students are reading a novel for their literature circles, it is advisable to conduct

- homework checks (Did they do what they were supposed to do before coming to class?)
- reading checks (Are they keeping up with the reading?)
- participation checks (Are all group members participating well in the discussion?).

These checks also form part of the assessment.

The first time you do literature circles with your class, be aware that it will take longer (as with any active learning activity because students have to get used to the process)—be sure to go through the process with your students so they know what to expect. The accompanying handout (Literature Circle Process) provides an overview of the process is included later in this unit, and it is structured so that it can be given to your students as a handout, or made into posters.

Literature Circle Roles

The Literature Circle Roles pages can be shrunk down into cards that you laminate for the students or can be blown up into posters for your wall. The pages explain each of the roles and what each student is responsible for before each class.

Cumulative Novel Assessment—Interview/Oral Exam

2-3 classes, depending on the number of students in the class, to be conducted during the Synthesis writing activity at the end of the unit

Learning Outcomes: A9, A10, B7, B8, B9, B10, B12, B13

Following good practice is an increased reliance on oral and aural language—rather than a written test or assignment to assess students understanding of the novel, consider an interview using criterion-based referencing. Two assessment resources are included with this unit to facilitate this process:

- Interview/Oral Exam Questions
- Criteria for Interview/Oral Exam
# READER RESPONSE RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Outstanding 9-10 | - personalized, innovative, and thoughtful responses make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts  
- provides specific evidence that demonstrates close familiarity with and understanding of reading selection  
- interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection |
| Very Good 8-9 | - personal and thoughtful responses make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts  
- provides specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection  
- often interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection |
| Good 6-7 | - personal and generally thoughtful responses that often make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts  
- provides some specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection  
- sometimes interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection |
| Satisfactory 5-6 | - personal and sometimes thoughtful responses that may make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts  
- may provide some evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection  
- may attempt to interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose of selection |
| Minimally Acceptable 4-5 | - personal responses that may make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts  
- limited evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection  
- little or no attempt to interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose of selection |
| In Progress/Failure 0-4 | - extremely limited and unclear responses that seldom demonstrate evidence of meeting the criteria  
- no response attempted |
Literature Circle Process

The Literature Circle Process for Long Fiction—Step by Step

1. AT HOME:
   ✓ If it has been assigned, complete your reading! Remember that it will be checked.
   ✓ Prepare your notes with your literary role, the date, your name, and the assigned reading at the top. Remember that these will also be checked.
   ✓ Don’t forget to come up with a couple of really good discussion questions, and to write them on your notes.

2. AT SCHOOL—IN YOUR GROUP:
   ✓ Using the notes, each group member will lead the discussion from the notes prepared. Be sure to allow other group members to “chime in” with comments and additions.
   ✓ The recorders should be taking turns taking notes from the discussion leader.
   ✓ Discuss themes emerging from the reading and write them down on the notes, along with evidence in quotations or point-form.

3. SHARING WITH THE CLASS
   ✓ You may have the opportunity to share what you have learned with the class—depending on the point of the exercise—be prepared to do so. Your teacher will let you know. Flag the most challenging discussion questions to pose to the class.
   ✓ Use active listening when other groups are presenting. Remember our classroom values.

4. ON YOUR OWN:
   ✓ You may have a reader response assigned after this activity. Follow the question assigned, but feel free to go off on tangents if you feel like it.
   ✓ If there is no specific question posed, and you don’t have a tangent to go off on, consider the following:
     • What understandings/insights have I taken away from this reading and/or the discussions?
     • What kind of connections have I made between the reading and/or discussions and my own life, other readings, movies, other classes, etc.?

5. BACK TO THE GROUP:
   ✓ Ensure that you are preparing for the right literary role for next time and that you know what has to be read for next time.
**Literature Circle Roles**

**Role A: The Issues**

**Group Role: Facilitator**

When you are performing this role for your group, you are responsible for looking at potential “issues” that come up . . . these issues may be small picture—only involving this particular piece of literature (you wouldn’t necessarily discuss these issues apart from the literature), or big picture—global in scope (you could discuss these issues with others because they concern humanity). Prepare notes on the small- and big-picture issues from your reading, including page references and examples. What do these issues make you think about? What can you discuss in your group?

At the top of these notes, put your name, your group’s name, and the reading you have just completed. Remember that these notes will form part of your mark!

You must create a big-picture question—at least one, but feel free to create more—for your group to discuss concerning the “issues” from your reading and bring it to class. Remember that good discussion questions promote more than simple answers, and that the answer you are thinking of is not necessarily the only one. You should add this question to the end of your notes.

As Role A, you are also the facilitator for your group. As facilitator, you ensure that all tasks are being completed, that all group members are both pulling his or her own weight and are being supported by the group. Every group member should be part of the discussion.

Next time, you will be Role B: Geography and Global Connections.
**Role B: Geographer/Global Connections**

**Group Role: Recorder**

When you are performing this role for your group, you are responsible for looking at the physical geography, time era, and atmosphere of the setting of the literature you have just finished reading. You also must relate that setting to historical accounts related to the literature. Where did this happen? When did this happen? What was/is this like for humans to live during this time? What kind of global issues related to the setting arise in your reading? For this role, you should go beyond the reading and do some actual research (the Internet is fine, but make sure you are taking information from reliable sources). Prepare notes related to these questions, including page references and examples. Bring in your research to share with your group. What does this make you think about? What can you discuss in your group?

At the top of these notes, put your name, your group’s name, and the reading you have just completed. Remember that these notes will form part of your mark!

You must create a big-picture question—at least one, but feel free to create more—for your group to discuss concerning the setting from your reading and bring it to class. Remember that good discussion questions promote more than simple answers, and that the answer you are thinking of is not necessarily the only one. You should add this question to the end of your notes.

As Role B, you are also a recorder for your group, sharing this role with the Role C. Follow your teacher’s instructions as to where you should do the recording.

Next time, you will be Role C: Character Analysis.
Role C: Character Analysis
Group Role: Recorder

As Role C, you are responsible for looking closely at the characters or people in the reading you have just completed. What kind of characters are they? What are the motivations? You may find one character more fascinating than others, so you may decide to focus on that character (yes depth is better than breadth). Use page references and examples to help to illustrate your points. Prepare notes with all of your points to help spur the group discussion. What does this make you think about? What can you discuss in your group? At the top of these notes, put your name, your group’s name, and the reading you have just completed. Remember that these notes will form part of your mark!

You must create a big-picture question—at least one, but feel free to create more—for your group to discuss concerning the characterization from your reading and bring it to class. Remember that good discussion questions promote more than simple answers, and that the answer you are thinking of is not necessarily the only one. You should add this question to the end of your notes.

As Role C, you are also a recorder for your group, sharing this role with the Role D. Follow your teacher’s instructions as to where you should do the recording. Next time, you will be the Role D: Literary Styles.
Role D: Literary Styles
Reporter/Presenter

As Role D, you are responsible for looking at the style used by the author in the reading you have just completed. What is the genre? What is the tone and how do you know? What kind of language is used? Is there any interesting or troublesome vocabulary—if so, look up definitions to share with your group—or other languages used? What literary devices are used (definitions and examples here of course, too)? Prepare notes for your group based on these questions. What does this make you think about? What can you discuss in your group?

At the top of these notes, put your name, your group’s name, and the reading you have just completed. Remember that these notes will form part of your mark!

You must create a big-picture question—at least one, but feel free to create more—for your group to discuss about style, language, or tone from your reading and bring it to class. Remember that good discussion questions promote more than simple answers, and that the answer you are thinking of is not necessarily the only one. You should add this question to the end of your notes.

As Role D, you are also the reporter/presenter for your group should your teacher insist upon it. You will be using the notes prepared by the recorders and teaching the class what you have learned.

Next time you will be Role A: The Issues.
INTERVIEW/ORAL EXAM QUESTIONS

1. Character:
   a. Who is your favourite character in the novel and why?
   b. Who is your least favourite character in the novel and why?
   c. How does the protagonist, Garnet, change as the novel progresses?
   d. How does Jackie change as the novel progresses?

2. Setting:
   a. Describe the White Dog Reserve in detail using examples from the novel.
   b. Throughout the novel the idea of a sense of place is examined. What is a “sense of place” and how is the idea developed as the novel progresses?

3. Point of View:
   a. How are the different narrators indicated in the novel?
   b. What is the significance of using two first-person narrators?

4. Theme:
   a. Identity is tied to place, culture, and connections. How is this theme developed throughout the novel? Discuss, using examples from the novel to support your points.
   b. Healing can only come about the within; then it works from the inside out. How is this theme developed throughout the novel? Discuss, using examples from the novel to support your points.

5. Plot:
   a. How does the novel end? Is the conclusion resolved or unresolved?
   b. The novel is divided into books. How is each book circular and thematic?
   c. How is the entire novel circular in structure?
CRITERIA—INTERVIEW/ORAL EXAM

Criteria for Interview/Oral Exam

Interpretation of Text 10
- Creation of ideas in relation to aspects of the text
- Identifying voice and perspective of the author/speaker/narrator
- Identifying and evaluating bias

Comprehension of Historical, Social, and Political Issues 10
- Identifying assumptions of culture implicit in text
- Examining historical, social, and political influences
- Differentiating between impact of historical, social political issues on author versus characters

Speaking Ability 10
- Use of volume, inflection and enunciation (verbal)
- Use of eye contact and stance (non-verbal)
- Use of vocabulary and expression (cognitive)

TOTAL 30
UNIT 10: HUMOUR

OVERVIEW

This unit is designed as a series of parts loosely based on literary form; there are parts for drama, film, radio, and written text. Primarily, humour is found in the performance form, hence the focus on performance; humour found in the written form is more subtle. This unit can be taught in conjunction with the Trickster Unit; however, the units exist as separate entities. The trickster figure appears in many literary forms; sometimes he is funny, sometimes not.

To link together the Humour and Trickster Units, there is a cumulative concept map assignment (see Unit 11: Trickster) to which students may add as each part is completed. The idea of a concept map can be very difficult for students to grasp however, so the idea is introduced in the Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth lessons on a smaller scale, and is revisited again on an even smaller scale as a plot outline in Humour in the Written Form.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Throughout this unit, a variety of instructional techniques is used. These techniques are described in detail below and are referred to with minimal explanation in each of the unit parts.

Cluster Mapping: Brainstorming technique in which a web or clusters of ideas form around a central prompt. This is a useful pre-writing technique to get ideas down on paper, and is also useful to visually present ideas created by a class during brainstorming. When brainstorming is complete, circles are drawn around similar ideas, “clustering” them together.

Concept Map: Concept maps are a way of visually mapping the connections between ideas or events occurring in literature. Concept maps are also a tool that students can use to plan writing assignments, or to study for tests. They may be prepared for one piece of literature, or as a way of showing the connections between many pieces of literature. The process for preparing a concept map is shown in detail in the section on Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth. Ideally, students exposed to multiple points of entry into this unit’s instructional content would prepare a concept map as a way of making connections between the multiple texts studied.

Jigsaw Activity: This interactive group activity involves the interplay of two groups, the base group and the expert group. Students in their base group assign an aspect of their discussion to each group member, and then the group members go out and meet with their expert groups—students in the expert group all are looking at the same aspect. Once they have prepared their aspect, students go back and “teach” what they have learned to their base group. The only way students in each base group can find out about all the aspects is by learning from their group members—the parts then fit together like a jigsaw.

Presentation by Students: Students prepare presentations (usually as background to a piece, or in a cumulative way) that will be presented to the whole class. For example, in the Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth section, students are placed into groups to research topics that will provide background to the play. These students become experts on their topic and provide integral information to the class.

Presentation by Teacher: This is the “sage on the stage” approach where the teacher is the expert and imparts the required information to the class or directs the class discussion.
Readers’ Theatre: In readers’ theatre, students use their voices, gestures, and faces to minimally act out the text. Readers’ theatre involves some interpretation of the characters’ motivations and personalities, but there is very little activity. The text, rather than the performance, is the focus.

Response Journal (learning log): Throughout the unit sections, students will be asked to respond in many ways, and it is useful for them to have a response journal in which to do so. Occasionally the responses are reader responses, in which students respond to a specific question regarding the text they have just examined or to make a personal connection to the piece they are examining. Students may also be asked to reflect on their learning experience—to recount their experience, evaluate their participation, and comment on what they have gained and what they still need to work on.

Texts

Hank Williams First Nation—film

LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Part 1: Humour in Dramatic Form
Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth—Introducing the Play
Readers’ Theatre
Group Assignment—Performance
Cumulative Play Assignment—Concept Map
Humour on Film: Hank Williams First Nation

Handouts and Assessment Tools:
Assessment for Group Research Project
Group Performance—Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth
Reader Responses Concept Map Assignment—Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth

Part 2: Humour in Short Story Form—Examining Lee Maracle’s Short Narrative “Yin Chin”

Part 3: Humour in Poetic Form
Marilyn Dumont’s “Circle the Wagons”
Post Oka Woman and Other Poems
Part 4: Humour in Essay Form
Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Pretty Like a White Boy”

Handouts and Assessment Tools:
Reading Journal Response Rubric
Guide to Writing a Literary Essay
Developing Thesis Statements
Transitions
Editing
Rubric for Assessing Essays

Part 5: Humour in Radio—Thomas King’s Dead Dog Café
Background Lesson on “Dead Dog Café”
Listening to “Dead Dog Café”
Responding to “Dead Dog Café”

Handouts and Assessment Tools:
Rubric for Assessing Responses to Texts
List of terms/vocabulary
PART I: HUMOUR IN DRAMATIC FORM

(Notes: for additional approaches to using Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth and Hank Williams First Nation, see also Unit 7: Drama.)

Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth—Introducing the Play

3-4 classes


Separate class into eight groups (three to four people in each group). Students will prepare a brief presentation on their assigned or chosen topic. They will be using the library or the Internet to research their presentations and should have a couple of classes to prepare. The focus for the presentation is on depth rather than presentation style. The following is a list of possible topics:

- The life and times of Drew Hayden Taylor
- Overview of prequel to this play—“Someday”
- Examination of the meaning of the title of the play
- Addressing humour through dark subject matter
- History of the Sixties/Seventies Scoop
- Drew Hayden Taylor’s commentary on this play
- The Ojibway
- The art in the play—Maxine Noel, Daphne Odjig, Roy Thomas
- Amelia Earhart

The following aspects of students’ presentations could be assessed using a weighted marking scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Speaking Skills</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Aids</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Presentation Skills</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Information Presented</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Preparation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment (Learning Log)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: /50

An outline for this project is included at the end of this section. Groups should be prepared to present at the end of two working classes, and it will take a class or two to complete the presentations.

Part of the marking scheme above is self-assessment, and this can be assessed through the use of a learning log; it is recommended that students keep a learning log throughout the year. Learning logs can be used for reflection about their personal lives, learning, reading, and performance. For this purpose, ask students to give themselves a mark out of 10 based on their participation and performance on this project. Then, they should defend their mark:
• Did they participate in the research and preparation to their best abilities?
• Did they contribute an equal amount to the group process?
• Have they improved since the last time they went through the group process or presented to the class?
• What do they have to work on for the next time they have a project like this?
• What did they learn about the topic and about themselves?

Let students know that they will only receive the mark they have assigned for themselves if they defend it well enough and reflect on their participation and performance. This reflection can be a continuous process throughout the unit.

**Readers’ Theatre**

1-2 classes

**Learning Outcomes:** A7, A8, B1, B6.

Explain to students the process of readers’ theatre (see descriptions of instructional techniques). As a large group read through the play using volunteers to read the parts – break it into sections (maybe volunteers for half an Act of reading each) – before starting go through the descriptions of each character, and encourage students to be as dramatic as possible during the first reading. As they read, break in intermittently to help clarify motivations, setting, mentions of history, etc. 

The purpose of pre-reading the play before the performance is to help students understand the plot, character motivations, themes, and tricky vocabulary before setting off on their own.

**Group Assignment—Performance**

4-5 classes

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A6, A7, A10, B3, B8, B9.

Divide class into groups, four groups total. Some of the members of each group will be performers, and some will be commentators. Each group will be responsible for half an act (the play has two acts) and will be presenting their section in chronological order. The groups should decide who will be responsible for these jobs. Typically in this play, there are four performers, but this varies depending on what part of the play is being presented. An outline for this project is at the end of this section. It will likely take students three to four classes to prepare, and 1-2 classes to perform.

**Cumulative Play Assignment—Concept Map**

2 classes

**Learning Outcomes:** B7, B10, B12, C2, C4, and C13.

Concept maps can be very useful – the focus is on the process which is creative and involves critical thinking. Students must show that they understand what happened in the literary work but also the intricacies in the connections, plot, characterization, theme, and setting. Concept mapping is a technique students can use for planning essays, studying, or just helping to understand a concept. On a large piece of paper (poster board size), each student will individually prepare a circular model of the events of the play (presented in a circular way because the plot is circular) with the connections between these events. An outline of this project, with step by step instructions and assessment information, is provided at the end of this section.
ASSessment For Group Research Project

Group Project: Researching the Background to Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth by Drew Hayden Taylor

In your assigned groups, you will be researching, putting together, and then presenting a topic that helps to provide some background to the play we will be reading—Drew Hayden Taylor’s Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth. The possible topics are listed below. Spend a few minutes with your groups, and decide which topic you would like to explore. Be the first ones to sign up on the board with your chosen topic. After that, we will be going down to the computer lab and researching the project. You will have this class and next class to prepare for the presentation. Be ready to present the next class. Be sure not to plagiarize information from books or the Internet—doing this will result in a mark of ZERO. Each group will be expected to “teach” their topic to the class, using oral speaking skills, visual aids, and interactive questions. The presentations should take not less than five minutes and no more than ten minutes to complete.

The following are possible topics for each group to explore:

1. The life and times of Drew Hayden Taylor
2. Overview of prequel to this play, “Someday”
3. Examination of the meaning of the title of the play
4. Addressing humour through dark subject matter
5. History of the Sixties/Seventies Scoop
6. Drew Hayden Taylor’s commentary on this play
7. The Ojibway
8. The art in the play—Maxine Noel, Daphne Odjig, Roy Thomas
9. Amelia Earhart

You will be marked, as a group, according to the following marking scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Speaking Skills</td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Aids</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Presentation Skills</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Information Presented</td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Preparation</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment</td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** /50
GROUP PERFORMANCE—Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth

In your groups you will be preparing a performance of your assigned section of the play—half an act. It is likely that there are not enough parts in the play for the number of people in your group. As such, those who will not be performing a part will be the commentators. However, the entire group will be part of the preparation for the performance and the commentary, and will be assessed together. Stage a realistic representation of your assigned part, complete with costumes and props. You need not memorize your part, although you may if you want to. However, you should be familiar enough with the lines that you are not stumbling over the words as you read. Be creative with your interpretation of the characters’ mannerisms and personalities. For the performance, you will be assessed according to the following marking scheme:

Performance Quality /20
Costumes/Props /10
Creativity /5
Staging/Presentation /5

TOTAL /40

Also prepare some commentary about your presentation and this section of the play. The commentary should take about five to ten minutes and include descriptions of the following areas:

• motivations of the group for how they decided to perform the assigned section
• feelings/motivations of each of the characters for that section
• how this section is significant in itself and in relation to the rest of the play

For the commentary, which will be presented immediately after the performance, you will be assessed according to the following marking scheme:

Group Motivations /5
Character Motivations /5
Significance of Section /5
Commentary Presentation Quality /5

TOTAL /20

In addition, you will be completing a self assessment learning log in which you will give yourself a mark out of 20 based on your contributions to the group process, the preparation, the performance, and the commentary. You will only be awarded the mark you give yourself if you make your case well enough. Also, comment on what you learned from this project about the play and yourself, what you improved upon compared to the last time you were part of the group process, and what you need to work on for next time. The entire project will be assessed out of 70 marks, with 40 marks going to the performance aspect, 20 marks going to the commentary aspect, and 20 marks going to the self-assessment aspect.
READER RESPONSES CONCEPT MAP ASSIGNMENT—Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A4, A5, A8, A9, A10, A11, B1, B5, B6, B7, B8, B10.

Individually you will all be creating a CONCEPT MAP; a detailed, concentrated visual picture of the intricacies of the literature you have just finished studying. Go through the steps and use a poster-board or large piece of paper to complete the assignment.

Step One: Decide for yourself the 10 most crucial events in play – make a list on a piece of paper – then look back through the play – find a really good quotation that is representative of each of these events. This provides the sequence of events.

Step Two: How does each event lead to the next, and how is each event significant and important? Make some notes on your own thoughts here and go deep!

Step Three: How does each event and connection give us, as viewers or readers, insight into the plot development, characterization, theme, and setting of the literature? Make some notes on these aspects, being sure to define these terms (each event should connect to at least one of these terms).

Step Four: Using your big piece of paper, draw a circle or an oval and space out the events (your notes from Step One) in chronological order along the line of your circle/oval. For each of the ten spaces, write a phrase that briefly details what happens at that point, and include a pertinent, supporting quotation from the play below the phrase, being sure to identify the speaker.

Step Five: Between each of the events, use your notes from Step Two to show the connections between the events (draw arrows or make a different shape to demonstrate that this commentary shows the connections). Now that you can see this in circular form, what are the connections between events that are not necessarily in chronological order? Add at least ten more connections, with commentary, between non-chronological events.

Step Six: On the blank spaces at each corner of your map, write the four terms – plot, characterization, theme, and setting – and use your notes from Step Three to make connections between the events and what insights they give us (draw arrows with commentary to the appropriate events).

Step Seven: Add the title of the literary work and the author’s name to the poster.

Step Eight: “Make it pretty!” The concept map should be as visually appealing as possible. Use colour, different writing, interesting arrows and other signs, diagrams, art, cartoons, and doodles to help make it visually appealing and easy to understand.

Criteria

Events – how crucial were the events, how well-chosen, appropriateness of chosen quotation (two marks each) 20

Connections – minimum of ten between the chronological events and an additional ten between non-chronological events – depth of commentary, quality of connection, significance (two marks each) 40

Terms (plot, characterization, theme, setting) – definitions of terms (1 mark each) and connections/insights between the events and these terms (2 marks each) 24

Visual Appeal – title, author, colour, use of graphics, art, etc. 16

TOTAL 100
Humour on Film: Hank Williams First Nation

Let students know that they will be watching a film titled *Hank Williams First Nation* and that there are activities to go along with it. Brainstorm some predictions for what the film will be about based on the title. Then give a brief synopsis of the film—set in a remote Cree community in northern Alberta, it follows dual narratives: one about Uncle Martin and Jacob Fox who set off on a pilgrimage to Nashville to see the grave of Hank Williams, the other about the family at home as they experience the trials and tribulations of everyday life in their community. The narratives begin together and diverge when Jacob and Martin leave on their trip, then come back together near the end of the movie, forming a circular structure.

Hand out the jigsaw questions and form students into heterogeneous groups of four—these are the base groups. Give groups a little time (about five minutes) to divide the questions among themselves (there are four questions, so one question each). Students should also decide at this point on group roles:

- **discussion leader:** responsible for leading the discussion and keeping everyone focused on task
- **monitor:** keeps track of group roles, makes sure everyone is participating equally, assigns each participant a mark out of five for participation, ensures that task is completed, keeps track of the time so everyone gets a chance to share
- **recorder:** takes notes from presenters, prepares any presentation materials
- **reporter:** takes part in the discussions, chooses a few key points to share with the class at the end of the session.

If this group works together again, they should alternate these roles. Once the base groups have divided up the questions and decided on group roles the film can begin. Students should be instructed to take notes for their question as the film progresses, and these notes should be detailed, with examples to support points. After viewing the film, the students will form into their expert groups (all the students in the class who are answering the same jigsaw question) to discuss their question. After some discussion time, the students will return to their base groups as the “expert” on their question, and will teach the other group members about their question. Emphasize to the students that “teaching” means engaging in a discussion about the question, not parroting the points to the group members.

These are possible jigsaw questions—choose four to do with your class:

- What is the significance of the radio being played throughout the film? How does it add to the plot? How does it help to develop themes?
- Trace the exposition of the film. How do we as viewers meet the characters, learn about the setting, and arrive at the point where the dual narratives diverge? What is the sequence of events in the exposition? Why do you think the scriptwriter and director chose to present the exposition in this way?
- Trace the plot of Jacob Fox and Uncle Martin on their trip to Nashville. How is their trip revealed, how does the narrative switch back and forth, where do they go, what interesting things happen to them, and why is it so important to Uncle Martin to make this pilgrimage? Describe in detail at least two of the far-fetched things that happen to them on their trip.
- Trace the plot of the family at home. How do their lives progress, what happens to them, what struggles do they face, and what are their values? Describe in detail at least two of the
events in this narrative that reveal important aspects of characters. How does this narrative differ from the action of the other narrative?

- Discuss the role of Adelard Fox, the grandfather. How is he significant? What place does he have in the movie? How is he symbolic as a character? How does he help to develop themes in the film? How does he add to the plot? Describe at least two really strong examples of Adelard Fox from the film that reveal details about his personality and motivations.
- Discuss the role of Huey Bigstone. How is he significant? What place does he have in the movie? How is he symbolic as a character? How does he help to develop themes in the film? How does he add to the plot? Describe at least two really strong examples of Huey Bigstone from the film that reveal details about his personality and motivations.
- Discuss the idea of Hank Williams. How is he significant? What place does he have in the movie? How is he symbolic? How does he help to develop themes in the film? How does he add to the plot? Provide at least two really strong examples of how Hank Williams is integral to this film.

About halfway through the viewing of the film, stop it, and have students pull out their learning logs and respond to the following prompt:

Imagine that you are a character in this film. Pick one of the characters and write down that character’s name at the top of your page. Think about the decisions you would make—how would the plot progress for you from this point on? How would you feel in this situation? What do you already have in common with the character? What is different in your life compared with this character?

This prompt forms part one of a personal response to the film. After the film is done, have students pull out their learning logs again to complete their response, adding to it a response to the following prompt as part two of their personal response:

Compare and contrast what actually happens in the film with your response to the previous prompt. What is the same, and what is different? Why do you think there are similarities? Why do you think there are differences? Discuss your thoughts on the significance of the image of the running moose. Why do you think the director chose to include this image as a motif throughout the film? What have you gained as a person by watching this film? What have you learned?

After completing part two of the personal response, students can assemble in their expert groups and discuss their jigsaw questions, then form with their base groups. At the end of the base group discussion, the reporter should share some really key observations with the class—deep insights into the film that came up during their discussion.

Opportunity for Extension: The official web site for Hank Williams First Nation can be found at [http://www.hwfn.com/m.php?p=home](http://www.hwfn.com/m.php?p=home). The web site has many resources that are useful for teachers and students. The following are some ideas for activities that involve exposure to the web site:

- Look at the cast and crew stories. Have students pretend to be a member of the cast or crew and to recount a story of something that happened during the filming of the movies, or their favourite part of the movie. Students can write about this in their learning logs.
- Look at the storyboards. Decide as a class on the ten most crucial events in the story, and divide the class into ten groups (groups of two or three) to create storyboards for the film, one
Unit 10: Humour

for each of the crucial events. The storyboards could include quotations from the film, representations of the characters, notes for how to stage that event, etc.

• Print out the screenplay from the link on the web site. Discuss the differences between screenplays and play scripts, have the class stage various parts of the screenplay, or team up with the theatre department and put on a production of the film as a play.

• Write letters to Aaron James Sorenson, writer and director of the film, about what students think of the film. His contact information is available on the web site as well.
PART 2: HUMOUR IN THE WRITTEN FORM

Humour in the Short Story Form—Examining Lee Maracle’s Short Narrative “Yin Chin”

2 classes

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A5, A8 A9, A10, B1, B6, B7, B8, B12, B13, C2, C4, C8, C10, C13.

Hand out copies of the text, “Yin Chin” by Lee Maracle (in An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English), and instruct students to listen carefully as it is read aloud to them. Ask them to think about what Maracle is trying to say about the human condition and human nature (leading students into forming a theme statement). Read the story aloud to the class as they follow along. In the centre of the board, write down the following question, drawing a circle around it: What can the story “Yin Chin” tell us about human nature and the human condition?

Have the class brainstorm as a large group, writing down suggestions on the board. As the brainstorming draws to an end, start drawing circles around similar ideas, clustering them together. Pick a couple groups of ideas that are the biggest, and have the class sum up with theme statements. Theme statements should be complete ideas, should apply to more than just the text that has just been read, and should make a statement about human nature, the human condition, “the way things work,” or society. An example of this from “Yin Chin” is inspired by the last line of the story—when we view the world through naïve eyes, it is easier to learn the ways of ignorance rather than the ways of wisdom.

Erase the board, or use another board to draw an enormous circle. At one point on the circle, write “introduction” and at a point right beside this, write “conclusion”—tell students that this is representative of the plot of the narrative—circular: at the conclusion, we are brought back to the introduction, undergoing a journey in the middle. Tell students that Maracle takes us on this circular journey through her memories to arrive at a realization similar to one of the theme statements. Add a few details at the points you have placed on the board; for example, at the “introduction” point, note the crowded cafeteria, meeting the narrator as an Aboriginal woman, and at the “conclusion” point, note the statement made by the narrator before she makes her way back to her car. Working in pairs, students will be completing the rest of this plot outline, filling in the events of the story—they should have at least ten events between the introduction and the conclusion, with descriptions and quotations for each event. In addition, they should co-write a response to the following prompt: Develop a definition for circular plot structure. Comment on the use of circular structure in “Yin Chin”—how the structure is appropriate, the subtlety of the argument structure, and the use of flashbacks.

When this activity is complete, bring the class back together, and ask students for examples from the story of how Lee Maracle uses irony, satire, and images to create humour in the piece (students may require definitions of these terms, along with a reminder that humour is not necessarily “laugh-out-loud” funny). Students will likely pick some of the funnier passages from the story. Ask students why Maracle includes humour in the story—lead them toward the conclusion that the humour provides contrast with the seriousness of the message, and makes it a more interesting read for the audience.
Assign the following reader response topics for students. Consult the “Reading Journal Response Rubric” for assessment.

Choose one of the following passages and discuss the use of irony, satire, and images to create humour:

_Last Saturday (seems like a hundred years later) was different. The tableload of people was Asian/Native. We laughed at ourselves and spoke very seriously about our writing. We really believe we are writers, someone had said, and the room shook with the hysteria of it all. We ran on and on about our growth and development and not once did the white man ever enter the room. It just seemed all too incredible that a dozen Hans and Natives could sit and discuss all things under heaven, including racism, and not talk about white people. It only took a half-dozen revolutions in the Third World, seventeen riots in America, one hundred demonstrations against racism in Canada, and thirty-seven dead Native youth in my life to become._

_It would have looked funny if pa’pa-yah had done it, or ol’ Mike, but I was acutely aware that this was a chinaman. Ol’ chinamen are not funny. They are serious and the words of the world echoed violently in my ears . . . ’don’t wander off or the ol’ chinamen will get you and eat you.’ I pouted about the fact that mama had never warned me about them. ‘She doesn’t care.’_

_A woman with a black car coat and a white pill-box hat disturbed the scene. Screeek, the door of her old Buick opened. Squeak, slam, it banged shut. There is something humourlessly inelegant about a white lady with spiked heels, tight skirt, and a pill-box hat cranking up a ’39 Buick. Thanx mama, for having me soon enough to have seen it._
PART 3: HUMOUR IN THE POETIC FORM

Marilyn Dumont’s “Circle the Wagons”

2 classes


Hand out copies of the poem to the class (in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*). Read the poem together then split the class into ten groups (groups of two or three students). Assign one of the following questions to each group (each group should have a different question):

1. How does the speaker in the poem both poke fun at and celebrate the idea of the circle?
2. How does the speaker feel trapped and set free by the circle?
3. What are examples of words that are from Aboriginal backgrounds that represent the circle?
4. What are examples of words in the poem that are not necessarily associated with Aboriginal people that are also representative of the circle?
5. Think about the title of the poem—to what does it refer? Discuss use of the title.
6. How is this poem in itself circular? How is that ironic?
7. What is the meaning of the word “appropriation”? Describe the connotation the word has in the poem, based on context.
8. What is the meaning of the word “canonizing”? How is its use significant in this poem? Discuss.
10. Come up with a theme statement for the poem.

Give students about ten minutes to discuss the poem in relation their question; they should select one group member to be the recorder, one to be the reporter, and if there is another member, one to be the encourager. Each group needs to come up with several strong points with examples from the poem to support their points. They should also come up with a high-level question to ask the class and be prepared to lead a short discussion on this question. When students are prepared, go through the class (questions need not be addressed in chronological order), with the reporters presenting their points to the class, and finally, asking the class their high-level question. The whole group should lead the discussion, getting responses from the rest of the class. Each group should write their high-level question on the board for the class to see, making a list.

At the end of the presentations, have each student pull out his or her learning log and choose one of the questions on the board to discuss in journal form.


**Unit 10: Humour**

**Post Oka Woman” and Other Poems**

3 classes

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, A11, A13, B1, B6, B9, B12, C2, C4, C12, C13.

Hand out copies of “Post Oka Kinda Woman” (*An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English*), or use an overhead or a projector to display the poem for the students, and read it together. It is not necessary for students to have their own copies. Tell the students that they will be completing posters, in partners, on an assigned poem, and that the technique for doing this will be demonstrated. On the board, draw a huge rectangle, saying that this will be the poster model layout idea, but students should feel free to be more creative with the layout and presentation aspects. Below is a model of the layout. They must include the title and poet of the poem, a copy of the poem and a discussion of the following qualities as they pertain to the poem: theme, structure, irony, humour, and satire. Students will be presenting the finished poster to the class to make other students aware of the range of poetry that uses humour. Use “Post-Oka Kinda Woman” to demonstrate how to complete the poster (either complete beforehand or in front of the class with students contributing).

![Poster layout example](image)

Students will be reading the poem and presenting their interpretations to the class. Remind students that it is very important to do honour to the poets, and to rehearse the poems before reading.
Students will be assessed according to the following marking scheme:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth of discussion</td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** /25

Possible (but not limited to these) poems to use (all from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*):

- “Honour Song,” Beth Brant
- “Granny Going,” Marie Annharte Baker
- “Boobstretch,” Marie Annharte Baker
- “Raced Out to Write This Up,” Marie Annharte Baker
- “Tongue in Cheek, if not Tongue in Check,” Marie Annharte Baker
- “moosonee in august,” Wayne Keon
- “i'm not in charge of this ritual,” Wayne Keon
- “History Lesson,” Jeannette C. Armstrong
- “Zen Indian,” Beth Cuthand
- “Performing,” Lee Maracle
- “Autumn Rose,” Lee Maracle
- “Der Poop,” Louise Halfe
- “Letter to John A. Macdonald,” Marilyn Dumont
- “Surely Not Warriors,” Armand Garnet Rufō
- “Not All Halfbreed Mothers,” Gregory Scofield
PART 4: HUMOUR IN THE ESSAY FORM

Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Pretty Like a White Boy”

5 classes

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, B1, B6, B7, B9, B12, B13, C3, C6, C7, C12, C14.

Ask class to “vote with their bodies”—move to the left hand side of the class if they think essays are entertaining, and to the right hand side if they think essays are boring—it is likely that most of the class will go to the right hand side. Move through the stampede to the left hand side, and make an announcement that essays can be entertaining, if they are well-written. Have students return to their desks. On left side of the board, write: “Basic Essay Structure,” and on the right side of the board, write, “Drew Hayden Taylor’s Essay Structure”. With the help of the class, fill the basic essay structure side (this should be review, but there is an outline for a basic literary essay at the end of this section if necessary).

Hand out copies of “Pretty Like a White Boy” (in An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English) by Drew Hayden Taylor. Instruct the class to pay attention to the structure of the essay, as well as the humour. Read the essay together, and explain that the essay is a narrative essay—narrative essays can either tell a story, or use stories to prove the thesis. Spend a few minutes discussing the essay and answering questions about confusing parts.

Divide the class into seven groups – each group will be discussing a different aspect of the structure of the essay and then presenting their findings to the class. The following is a list of the aspects:

1. Examine the “introduction”—the first four paragraphs of the essay. Find the “thesis statement” What is Drew Hayden Taylor attempting to prove over the course of the essay? How does he structure the introduction? How does he engage the reader? How is this structure different from that of the basic essay? How does Hayden Taylor use satire and irony to create humour in this section?

2. Examine the first narrative strand—the next five paragraphs—starting with “My pinkness . . .” and ending at “... what is better.” What words are used as a transition to provide flow from the previous section? How are the examples used melded into his point for this section? How is the structure of this section different from and similar to that of the basic essay? How does Hayden Taylor use satire and irony to create humour in the first narrative strand?

3. Examine the second narrative strand—the next three paragraphs—starting “It’s not just . . .” and ending at “... political organizations.” What words are used as a transition to provide flow from the previous section? How are the examples used melded into his point for this section? How is the structure of this section different from and similar to that of the basic essay? How does Hayden Taylor use satire and irony to create humour in the second narrative strand?

4. Examine the third narrative strand—the next three paragraphs—starting “But then again” and ending at “... brighter moves.” What words are used as a transition to provide flow from the previous section? How are the examples used melded into his point for this section? How is the structure of this section different from and similar to that of the basic essay? How does Hayden Taylor use satire and irony to create humour in the third narrative strand?
5. Examine the fourth narrative strand—the next four paragraphs—starting “But I must admit . . .” and ending at “. . . through the Reserve.” What words are used as a transition to provide flow from the previous section? How are the examples used melded into his point for this section? How is the structure of this section different from and similar to that of the basic essay? How does Hayden Taylor use satire and irony to create humour in the fourth narrative strand?

6. Examine the fifth narrative strand—the next five paragraphs—starting “It’s not just . . .” and ending at “. . . political organizations.” What words are used as a transition to provide flow from the previous section? How are the examples used melded into his point for this section? How is the structure of this section different from and similar to that of the basic essay? How does Hayden Taylor use satire and irony to create humour in the fifth narrative strand?

7. Examine the “conclusion”. How are all of the narrative strands brought together? How does Hayden Taylor use satire and irony to create humour in the conclusion? How does he refer back to the thesis statement? How is this conclusion different from and similar to a traditional conclusion?

Give students some time to prepare to present to the class, and help to facilitate the discussions by giving hints where needed. When students are done preparing, go through the numbered groups in chronological order, having them present to the class. They may make point form notes and write them on the board under the title “Drew Hayden Taylor’s Essay Structure” as well as discussing the points, or they may just present their findings orally.

Tell students that they will be taking what they have learned from examining Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Pretty Like a White Boy” to create their own humorous narrative essay. In compositions of at least five paragraphs and 500 words, students will choose to respond to one of the following topics:

1. Take a news story and turn it into political commentary. Develop your argument using a blend of basic essay structure and humorous anecdotes to make a statement about the news story in question. Be sure to use satire and irony to add humour. Also consider puns, and a “tongue-in-cheek approach.”

2. Take your own search for identity and turn it into a statement about search for identity in general. Develop your argument using a blend of basic essay structure and humorous anecdotes about your own life to create a narrative essay. Be sure to use satire and irony to add humour. Also consider puns, and a “tongue-in-cheek approach.”

3. Take a historical account and turn it into social commentary. Develop your argument using a blend of basic essay structure and a humorous take on the historical account to “retell” the story. Be sure to use satire and irony to add humour. Also consider puns, and a “tongue-in-cheek approach.”

4. Free choice—however, it must be an essay, and satire and irony must be used to make the essay humorous.

Students should have a few days in class to write their essays, and to go through the editing process with their peers. Essays should be assessed holistically, using a rubric similar to the Original Composition Rubric on the Provincial Exam. Make students aware of how they are being assessed, and encourage them to use the rubric during the editing process.
Opportunities for Extension:

- On Drew Hayden Taylor’s web site, there are large excerpts from essays or lectures he has recently completed—these excerpts change frequently. Students can work in groups to examine some of these excerpts and compare them to “Pretty Like A White Boy”. Students may also research some of the current events he discusses.
- Have students write a letter to Drew Hayden Taylor about the impact of his writing on them.
- If Drew Hayden Taylor is delivering one of his lectures nearby, arrange a field trip and take the class to hear him speak.
### Reading Journal Response Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>• personalized, innovative, and thoughtful responses make connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• specific evidence that demonstrates close familiarity with and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understanding of reading selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• shows evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>• personal and thoughtful responses make connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• specific evidence demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reading selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• may interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• usually shows evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>• personal and generally thoughtful responses often make connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• some specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understanding of reading selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sometimes interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• may show evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>• personal and sometimes thoughtful responses may make connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• may provide some evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understanding of reading selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• may attempt to interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• may show evidence of reflecting on initial responses, no revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally</td>
<td>• personal responses may make connections with previous knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>and experience as well as other texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• limited evidence demonstrates familiarity with and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• little/no attempt to interpret/analyse genre, technique, and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• generally does not revisit initial responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Progress/Failure</td>
<td>• extremely limited and unclear responses that seldom demonstrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evidence of meeting the criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• no response attempted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guide to Writing a Literary Essay

The purpose of literary essays is to argue and prove a point about literature (sometimes one piece, sometimes more than one). The argument itself is expressed in the form of a thesis statement, and the proof lies throughout the body of the essay. A typical literary essay at the English 12 level consists of five paragraphs—an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Once students become accomplished at this form, the structure can be played with. The following chart outlines a basic literary essay:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>What it should do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Introduction    | • engage the reader  
                 • give a context for your topic – state title(s) and author(s), some 
                 background to the literature and some background to the topic  
                 • express thesis statement                                              |
| Body Paragraph 1 | • transition sentence  
                 • develop the strongest set of proof, or the first in chronological order, for 
                 thesis statement; give background, state your point in a topic sentence, 
                 introduce example, integrate quotation from the piece, and relate back 
                 to the thesis statement  
                 • conclude paragraph                                                   |
| Body Paragraph 2 | • transition sentence  
                 • develop second strongest set of proof, or the second in chronological 
                 order, for thesis statement; give background, state your point in a topic 
                 sentence, introduce example, integrate quotation from the piece, and 
                 relate back to the thesis statement  
                 • conclude paragraph                                                   |
| Body Paragraph 3 | • transition sentence  
                 • develop third strongest set of proof, or the second in chronological 
                 order, for thesis statement; give background, state your point in a topic 
                 sentence, introduce example, integrate quotation from the piece, and 
                 relate back to the thesis statement  
                 • conclude paragraph                                                   |
| Conclusion      | • transition sentence  
                 • discuss the logical conclusion of the proof you have presented in the 
                 body paragraphs  
                 • tie all loose ends together  
                 • come up with a really strong concluding sentence to end the essay     |
Developing Thesis Statements

Thesis statements are integral to the essay; the better they are, the better the essay is. The following is a guide to developing thesis statements. The examples come from Richard Wagamese’s *Keeper n’ Me*.

- A thesis statement summarizes briefly the argument that you will be proving in your essay. Here is an example:

  *Richard Wagamese’s novel *Keeper n’ Me* is the story of Garnet’s struggle to create an identity for himself after growing up part from his cultural roots – he creates this identity through forging relationships with his long-lost family, finding his own history, and embracing his Ojibway culture.*

  This a thesis statement because it names the topic, presents a provable argument, and lists the main points. The following is NOT a thesis statement:

  *In this essay I will write about identity in *Keeper n’ Me*.*

  This is not a thesis statement because it simply names a topic, the word “essay” is mentioned, and no argument is broached.

- Thesis statements explain the writer’s purpose, answer questions, and provide solutions rather than posing questions.

- You may use “I” in a thesis statement (unless it is a formal essay), but you may not mention the word “essay.”

- A good thesis statement is direct and straightforward—it may be a well-developed sentence, but it is easy to understand.

- Sometimes it is easier to begin a thesis sentence with a preposition (*as, because, until, although, when, while, however, therefore*) in an introductory clause. For example,

  *While *Keeper n’ Me* seems at first glance to be purely about Garnet’s search for identity, the novel also explores our need, as human beings, to be part of a greater whole – in Garnet’s case, his Ojibway community.*

- A particularly good thesis statement takes the topic given and narrows it, making it very specific and different from other papers written on the same topic.

- Generally, a thesis statement appears at the end of the first paragraph of an essay, so that readers will have a clear idea of what to expect as they read.

- It avoids vague language (like "it seems")—be definite!

- It should pass the *So what? or Who cares? test* (Would your most honest friend respond with "But everyone knows that.")? For instance, "Garnet is a character in the novel," would be unlikely to evoke any opposition.
**Transitions**

Transitions are needed from sentence to sentence, and from paragraph to paragraph. Transitions make the flow of any written piece smooth and easy to follow, by avoiding abrupt changes in topic. Here is a list of linking words that are helpful in making transitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For . . .</th>
<th>Try these linking words:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause-effect</strong></td>
<td>as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, however, since, therefore, thus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compare/contrast</strong></td>
<td>although, by contrast, compared with (to), even though, however, in the same way, likewise, on the other hand, similarly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>finally, in short, in summary, then, therefore, to summarize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis</strong></td>
<td>again, also, equally important, furthermore, in addition, in fact, moreover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation</strong></td>
<td>because, for example, for instance, for this reason, in other words, in particular, since, specifically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance</strong></td>
<td>equally important, finally, first, second, third, lastly, most importantly, next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>after, afterward, as, at last, before, during, finally, just then, later, meanwhile, next, once, since, soon, suddenly, then, while</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Editing

Editing is an important part of the writing process, and can be completed by peers or by the students themselves. Students have a tendency to try to just fix spelling and grammar, rather than focusing on the essay as a whole—what needs more work, what is missing. This checklist can be helpful—editors can go through the checklist to find missing components, or parts that could use more work.

- Read through the completed rough draft. Look for sentence fragments, run-on sentences, spelling errors, and phrases which do not make sense.
- Look closely at your introduction. Does it begin by engaging the reader?
- What are you writing about? Be sure to let your audience know the context of your essay in the introduction. If you are writing about a poem/story/article/novel/movie, the title should be included and properly punctuated. The author/poet/director/actors should also be listed. Be sure that this information is included in complete sentences.
- Does your introduction end with a THESIS STATEMENT? Sometimes it is easier to add the thesis statement after writing the essay.
- Is your introduction 5-8 sentences in length? If not, you have not included enough detail.
- Look closely at each body paragraph. Does each body paragraph begin with a TRANSITION SENTENCE?
- Is there an example/quotation in each body paragraph? If not, include one. Be sure to explain why that example/quotation is evidence for that paragraph. (Adding examples and quotations helps especially when your paragraphs are too short.)
- Does each body paragraph include a TOPIC SENTENCE that explains the point of that paragraph?
- Look at the length of each body paragraph. Are they 5-8 sentences in length? If not, there is not enough detail.
- Look back at your THESIS STATEMENT. Does each body paragraph help to prove that it is true?
- Look at your conclusion. Does it begin with a TRANSITION SENTENCE?
- Does the conclusion end with a restatement of the THESIS in different words?
- Are there any loose ends left hanging in your essay? If so, the conclusion is the place to tie them together.
- Is the conclusion at least 5 sentences in length?
- Now, read through your essay one more time. Does it have FLOW (when you read it to yourself, does it sound nice, does the language provide a continuous message with no abrupt changes, does it seem choppy)? If not, add words and phrases to give it flow. Make sure there is some variety to your sentence length and structure.
RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING ESSAYS

6
The essay is superior and may draw upon any number of factors, such as maturity of style, depth of discussion, effectiveness of argument, use of literary and/or rhetorical devices, sophistication of wit, or quality of imagination. This composition exhibits an effective writing style and a sophisticated use of language. Despite its clarity and precision, this paper need not be error-free.

5
The essay is proficient. The composition displays some manipulation of language to achieve a desired effect and exhibits a clear sense of voice and of audience. Content is thoughtful and interesting. Vocabulary and sentence structure are varied and serve the writer’s purpose successfully. Errors may be present, but are not distracting.

4
The essay is clearly competent. The composition conveys the writer’s ideas, but without flair or strong control. Diction and syntax are usually appropriate, but lack variety. Structure, regardless of type, is predictable and relatively mechanical. The paper shows a clear sense of the writer’s purpose, but is not engaging. Conventions of language are usually followed, but some errors are evident.

3
The essay is barely adequate. The paper may feature underdeveloped or simplistic ideas. Transition[s] may be weak or absent. Support is frequently in the form of listed details. Little variety in diction and sentence structure is discernible. The composition may reflect some sense of purpose, but errors may be distracting.

2
The essay is inadequate. The ideas are underdeveloped and simply or awkwardly expressed. The composition may be excessively colloquial or reflect inadequate knowledge of the conventions of language. While meaning is apparent, errors are frequent and rudimentary.

1
The essay is unacceptable and may be compromised by its deficiency of composition, content, diction, syntax, structure, or conventions of language.

0
The essay is a complete misunderstanding of the task, is off-topic, or is simply a restatement of the topic.
PART 5: HUMOUR IN RADIO—THOMAS KING’S DEAD DOG CAFÉ

Required resources:

Computer with Internet connection and speakers (if required).

Primary Texts:

“An Indian Easter Celebration,” Dead Dog Café – radio play -

“Comic Genius or ‘Niggers in Red Face’,” article from the Globe and Mail Archives that examines Dead Dog Café, available at—

Background Lesson on “Dead Dog Café”

2 classes


Hook your class by bringing up the question, “Why is it sometimes acceptable for members of a minority group to use terms that have been historically used to denigrate that group?” Lead the class to the conclusion that the minority group is taking ownership of the offensive terms. Introduce “Dead Dog Café”—give students a brief synopsis—it is a series that played for some time on CBC Radio, and was written by Thomas King. It is set in the Dead Dog Café, a restaurant in the fictional town of Blossom, Alberta, run by Gracie Heavyhand (played by Edna Rain) who pretends to make food from dog to pander to naïve tourists. She is joined by Thomas King (played by himself), Jasper Friendly Bear (played by Floyd Favel Starr), and other visitors. The show plays with stereotypes to create political humour and social commentary in a fun, entertaining way. Words that may seem offensive if used by non-Aboriginal people are used (i.e. “Indian,” “squaw”), and topics that are politically incorrect to speak about are turned into a joke.

ALERT

Before listening to “Dead Dog Café,” be sure to discuss stereotypes, social commentary, political humour, satire, and the ideas of politically correct and politically incorrect material. In all cases, students should be discouraged from using these terms themselves outside of a controlled classroom context.

For more background on the show, read the article from The Globe and Mail, “Comic Genius or ‘Niggers in Red Face’ ” together as a class. Each student should have a copy of the article because they will be completing a jigsaw activity on it. Hand out the jigsaw questions and form students into heterogeneous groups of four—these are the base groups. Give groups a little time (about five minutes) to divide the questions among them. There are four questions, so assign one question each. Students should also decide at this point on group roles:

- discussion leader: responsible for leading the discussion and keeping everyone focused on task)
Unit 10: Humour

- **monitor:** keeps track of group roles, makes sure everyone is participating equally, assigns each participant a mark out of five for participation, ensures that task is completed, keeps track of the time so everyone gets a chance to share
- **recorder:** takes notes from presenters, prepares any presentation materials
- **reporter:** takes part in the discussions, chooses a few key points to share with the class at the end of the session.

If this group works together again, they should alternate these roles. Once the base groups have divided up the questions and decided on group roles, the students can move to their expert groups (all the students in the class who are answering the same jigsaw question) to discuss their question. After some discussion time, the students will return to their base groups as the “expert” on their question, and will teach the other group members about their question. Emphasize to the students that “teaching” means engaging in a discussion about the question, not parroting the points to the group members.

The following topics can be used for the jigsaw:

- “life and times” of each of the participants: Thomas King (writer/actor), Kathryn Flaherty (producer), Edna Rain (actor), Floyd Favel Starr
- political humour in the show, an explanation of what political humour is, and examples of some of the political humour used in the show (as discussed in the article)
- public reactions to the show, examples of public reactions from different quarter, and the feelings of the cast members about what they are accomplishing
- how stereotypes (about people and behaviour) are being used to “blow apart” those same stereotypes, and the limits of this humour

**Listening to “Dead Dog Café”**

3 classes

**Learning Outcomes:** A4, A8, A9, A10, A11, B3, B6, B8, C2

Have students pull out their learning logs. Instruct them that they will be responding to the five segments of the radio play they are about to hear. Remind them that “Dead Dog Café” is a series, and that this is just one episode, and this particular one is a special episode that was played in front of an audience. Also remind them that the characters they “met” while reading the article are the same characters they will hear on the radio play. While they are listening, have them take notes on the following: What do you hear that is funny, satiric, ironic, or tongue in cheek? What do you hear that is political or social commentary disguised as humour?

Additionally, for each segment, have students respond to the following questions:

**Segment 1:** Describe Lloyd, the “Indian Easter Bunny,” why he exists, and his “history”. Have you ever heard the tune of his “jingle” before? If so, what is it similar to? Why does Christian Easter exist? Why does “Indian Easter” exist? What statement is being made about commercialism?

**Segment 2:** What is Tom’s present? What euphemism does Jasper use to describe the present? What “present” does this present bring to Tom? What is the point of this gift?
Segment 3: Who “arrives” at the café? How is his arrival announced? What does this arrival remind you of? How is this process used as an opportunity to poke fun at the government of British Columbia? What do Gracie and Jasper suggest about attaining political power, and how is this the message of this segment?

Segment 4: This segment is a continuation of the political humour—Gracie and Jasper suggest that there is one political party. How are the five political parties that actually exist in Canada melded together? What do they suggest about the political process in Canada?

Segment 5: Why does the Easter Beaver never arrive? What was he meant to hide, and how is this similar to a Christian Easter tradition? How does this conclusion create a circular narrative structure?

Responding to “Dead Dog Café”

1-2 classes

Learning Outcomes: C2, C5, C6, C7, C9, C10, C14.

Tell students to pull out their learning logs, and to take a quick look at their notes. On the board, write down the following four topics:

- Discuss the use of characterization in “Dead Dog Café.” How are the characters both individual and stereotypes at the same time?
- Discuss the use of contrast in “Dead Dog Café.” How does the contrast add to the humour?
- Discuss the use of political commentary in “Dead Dog Café.” How are statements about the political process and practice made both directly and indirectly?
- Discuss the use of social commentary in “Dead Dog Café.” How are statements about society made both directly and indirectly.

Instruct students that they will be responding to one of these questions in a well-constructed paragraph of 125-150 words. First, they may get together with other students answering the same question to discuss their notes from while they were listening to “Dead Dog Café,” to prepare for writing. They may also listen to sections of the radio play again, since it may be difficult for students to take information in orally. Once their pre-writing is complete, they should write their paragraphs and hand them in. A rubric for assessing these paragraphs is included at the end of this section – it is similar to that used in the provincial exam for this course.

Opportunities for Extension

- Write to Thomas King, Edna Rain, or Floyd Favel Starr.
- Listen to other episodes of “Dead Dog Café” and compare and contrast with this special episode meant for performance in front of an audience.
- Have students create their own skits, complete with screenplays, in the tradition of “Dead Dog Café.”
**RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING RESPONSES TO TEXTS**

6
The response is **superior**, providing a detailed and perceptive discussion of the topic which clearly justifies the choice of works. The analysis is sophisticated and includes pertinent references. The writing style is effective and demonstrates skillful control of language. Despite its clarity and precision, the response need not be error-free.

5
The response is **proficient**, providing an accurate and thorough discussion of the topic. It demonstrates a thoughtful and justified choice of works. The analysis includes convincing references. The ideas are clearly and logically presented. The response need not be error-free.

4
The response is **competent**. It presents appropriate works to support the response, but understanding of the texts tends to be literal and superficial. The references are mostly accurate, but may be limited. Ideas are presented in a straightforward manner which may include listing. Errors may be present but are seldom distracting.

3
The response is **barely adequate**. References are present but may be inappropriate to address the topic or fulfill the requirements of the task. The understanding of the texts and/or the development of ideas may be incomplete. Errors may be distracting.

2
The response is **inadequate**. While there is an attempt to address the topic, understanding of the texts or the task may be seriously flawed. References may be irrelevant or inadequate. Errors are recurring, distracting, and impede meaning.

1
The response is **unacceptable**. The response does not meet the purpose of the task or may be too brief to address the topic. There is a serious lack of control in the writing.

0
The zero response is a complete misunderstanding of the task, or is simply a restatement of the topic.
VOCABULARY TERMS

Terms with an asterisk (*) following indicate that these vocabulary words are included in the Ministry of Education, Achievement and Assessment Department’s “English 12 Terms and Devices” document, available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/specs/grade12/efp/07_literary_terms.pdf

Character *
Characterization *
Circular structure
Circular plot structure
Commentary
Conclusion
Connotation *
Context
Euphemism *
Humour
Introduction
Irony – situational, verbal, dramatic *
Motivations
Plot *
Plot development
Sarcasm *
Satire *
Setting *
Stereotype *
Theme *
Theme Statement
“Tongue-in-cheek”
UNIT 11: TRICKSTER

OVERVIEW

Students will examine the role(s) of Trickster characters in the literature of First Peoples. Trickster characters come in a variety of forms; this unit will examine three of these Tricksters: Raven, Coyote, and Nanabush. Beginning with an introductory essay on Trickster, the students will explore literature from a variety of genres, including traditional stories, oral stories, short fiction, poetry, and film.

The central question to be answered in this unit is “What roles does Trickster play in the literature of First Peoples?” Through the examination of various texts, students will come to understand that Trickster has been used by writers to teach lessons, involve humour, act as a symbol, provide social commentary, and a variety of other purposes. Despite these various purposes, the Trickster characters maintain some essential traits.

As students develop their understanding of Trickster, and her role(s) in literature, they will produce a concept map to illustrate and clarify their understanding. At the end of the unit, students will compose an essay that compares the role of Trickster across multiple pieces of literature.

Note: The Gradual Release of Responsibility process is used to develop students’ concept mapping skills. The Gradual Release of Responsibility process follows four steps to transfer ownership of a learning strategy from the teacher to the student:
1) teacher modeling use of the strategy
2) whole group use of the strategy, with the teacher acting as a direct participant and guide
3) small group and individual practice with the strategy, as the teacher monitors and provides support as needed
4) students apply the strategy independently.

Primary Texts: Essay

Primary Texts: Short Stories

King, Thomas. “The One About Coyote Going West” (p. 197)
Armstrong, Jeanette. “Blue Against White” (p. 240)
McLeod, John. “The Shivering Tree” (p. 272)
Seesequasis, Paul. “The Republic of Tricksterism” (p.468)
Simon, Lorne Joseph. “Stones and Switches” (p. 486)
**Primary Texts: Poetry**


**Primary Texts: Film**


**Primary Texts: Oral Story** (web archived)


**Note:** The stories on this site are available as an audio download.

**Primary Texts: Non-fiction**


**Lesson Plans in This Unit:**

- Introducing Trickster
- Introducing Concept Mapping
- Trickster in Traditional Stories
- Secwepeme Coyote Stories
- Trickster as Transformer
- Local Trickster Stories
- Trickster in Film
- Trickster in Short Stories
- Trickster in Short Stories: Jigsaw Grouping
- Trickster in Poetry
- Trickster in Essays

**Handouts and Assessment Tools:**

*A Note on the Trickster*: Tomson Highway

Trickster in Short Stories: Jigsaw Group Discussion Guide

Assessment Instrument: Trickster Essay—Synthesis of Texts


Scoring Rubric for Trickster Concept Map Presentation

Scoring Rubric for “Poem Without End #3”—Group Presentation
**Introducing Trickster**

**Pre-Reading Activities**

Students will complete a focused free-write (approx. 5 minutes) based on the prompt, “First Nations literature is inhabited by fantastic creatures.” Upon completion, invite students to share their thoughts on the writing prompt.

Strategy: Free-Writing

Free-writing is a writing-to-learn technique used to allow the writer to explore his or her ideas on a topic without worrying about writing mechanics. In this unit, free-writing is utilized as a pre-reading activity that enables the student to activate prior knowledge about the topic, allowing deep connections to the literature to be studied.

Rules for Free-Writing:

• Write continuously during the brief (5-10 minutes) free-writing period. The pen / keyboard should not stop moving.
• Do not pause to consider spelling or grammar.
• Do not make corrections as you write.
• Write whatever comes into your mind, without judging its value.

**Whole Group Reading:** “A Note on the Trickster,” by Tomson Highway (from *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, 2005, p.xii.), re-printed with permission in this guide

Hand out copies of “A Note on the Trickster” to the class, and have students read the selection independently. Invite students to share examples of literature / media they have read or viewed that involved a trickster character.

**Discussion Questions**

• How is Trickster similar to characters in non-Aboriginal mythology/theology?
• How is the Trickster different from non-Aboriginal mythology/theology?
• Why does Highway use the phrase “theology if you will”? What is the difference between mythology and theology? (Help steer students away from the commonplace understanding of myth/mythology as merely “something that is false or untrue” toward a more sophisticated understanding of myth/mythology as a meaningful cultural construct that is a component of virtually all literary traditions)

**Terms and Devices** (from Provincial Exam Specifications):

• analogy
• idiom (“the worse for wear”)
A NOTE ON THE TRICKSTER
TOMSON HIGHWAY

The dream world of North American Indian mythology is inhabited by the most fantastic creatures, beings and events. Foremost among these beings is the “Trickster,” as pivotal and important a figure in our world as Christ is in the realm of Christian mythology. “Weesageechak” in Cree, “Nanabush” in Ojibway, “Raven” in others, “Coyote” in still others, this Trickster goes by many names and many guises. In fact, he can assume any guise he chooses. Essentially a comic, clownish sort of character, his role is to teach us about the nature and the meaning of existence on the planet Earth; he straddles the consciousness of man and that of God, the Great Spirit.

The most explicit distinguishing feature between the North American Indian languages and the European languages is that in Indian (e.g. Cree, Ojibway), there is no gender. In Cree, Ojibway, etc. unlike English, French, German, etc., the male-female-neuter hierarchy is entirely absent. So that by this system of thought, the central hero figure from our mythology— theology if you will—is theoretically neither exclusively male nor exclusively female, or is both simultaneously.

Some say that Weesaceechak left this continent when the white man came. We believe she/he is still here among us—albeit a little the worse for wear and tear—having assumed other guises. Without the continued presence of this extraordinary figure, the core of Indian culture would be gone forever.

_Kiss of the Fur Queen_, by Tomson Highway
Published by Anchor Canada, 2005.
Introducing Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a technique used for generating ideas and demonstrating the connections between them. A major project in the Trickster unit is for students to develop a concept map about Trickster. This lesson will introduce students to concept mapping by presenting an example from a well-known topic, then having students create a very simple concept map to demonstrate their abilities and understanding.

Introduction/Teacher Modeling
Present an example of a concept map to students. After providing time to read it, ask students to decipher the information it contains. (A sample concept map on the subject of “water” is provided toward the end of this unit.)

Guided Practice
Choose a topic that will be very familiar to students, such as graduation. Model the addition of two or three ideas to the concept map. Ask for student suggestions to add related ideas.

Model making a connection between two concepts within the map. Once the class concept map contains a variety of ideas, ask students to attempt to draw connections between concepts.

Independent Practice
Students will begin creating a concept map on the subject of Trickster. Provide students with materials to begin the concept map (large paper, sticky notes (optional)). Instruct students to place the central concept—Trickster—in the centre of the concept map, and then add in ideas based on their background knowledge and previously read materials (including Highway’s “A Note on Trickster”).

Be sure to check on student progress frequently, particularly as students are in the early stages of concept mapping. Ask for student volunteers to share their beginning-stage concept maps.

Trickster in Traditional Stories

In this lesson, students will examine the role of trickster characters in traditional stories. Trickster stories from Ontario, British Columbia, and local sources will be examined.

Pre-Reading Activities
Students will complete a focused free-write on the following prompt: “Mythology is what we call someone else’s religion” (Joseph Campbell). After students have completed their free-writes, invite volunteers to share their ideas.

Introduce students to the Trickster character Nanabozho (a.k.a. Nanabush). Nanabozho is a trickster character of the Anishinaabe people, who often takes the form of a rabbit or hare.

Listening to the Legend
Listen to the Nanabozho tale as spoken by Alanis Obomsawin, available from the web site http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-69-1462-9703/life_society/myths_and_legends/clip4 (approximately ten minutes in length). Instruct the students to listen to the tale first as a listener to a story, second as a critical listener of oral literature.
**Post Listening Activities**

Discuss the story. In this discussion, be sure to guide the conversation to touch on the content of the story, as well as the storyteller’s purpose and techniques. Possible discussion questions include the following:

- According to Obamsawin, what is the purpose of telling this story?
- What does Obamsawin say about traditional Ojibwe child-raising practices/beliefs?
- What characteristics of Trickster are evident in this tale?
- What do you think the listener learns by listening to the story?
- How would you describe the way the storyteller uses her voice when telling the story?

**Concept Map—Teacher Modeling**

Model how to add a new concept to the concept map. Students will add to their own concept maps after observing the teacher.

Teachers interested in using software applications to create concept maps may wish to investigate programs such as Freemind, an open-source concept mapping application, or Inspiration Software (free thirty-day trials are available for Inspiration).

**Secwepemc Coyote Stories**

**Pre-Reading Activities**

Have students spend five minutes of focused free-writing on the following prompt: “Stories can teach valuable lessons.” Invite volunteers to share their writing with the class.

**Reading**

Whole Class: Direct students to the Stseptekwle—Stories of the Secwepemc web site: (http://landoftheshuswap.com/msite/legend.php)

Have students read the introductory page. Discuss the explanation of the role of stories that is presented. Discuss Coyote’s role in the stories as presented on the site.

Concept Map: Whole Group

Using the teacher’s concept map, discuss with students – “What have we learned about Trickster that can be added? Are there any connections we can draw to previous concepts?” Add relevant student suggestions.

Individual Reading

Students will now read the short tales “Coyote and the Grizzly Bear Make the Seasons and Night and Day,”,” and “Coyote and the Salmon.” Before they read, remind students that they should read the stories for enjoyment, but also with a purpose (to learn more about the role of Trickster). Tell the students that they will be independently adding information to their concept maps on the basis of what they have learned, after reading these stories.

Concept Maps: Individual Practice

Students will independently add their own ideas to the concept maps that they have generated individually. As students work independently, circulate around the room to offer scaffolding as needed. Once finished, ask students to share their additions to their concept maps.
Unit 11: Trickster

**Trickster as Transformer**

In this lesson, students will read a brief description of the Transformer role that Trickster often plays in traditional stories. After reading the non-fiction exposition, the students will reflect on the traditional stories read in previous lessons, identifying examples of Trickster characters acting as Transformers.

**Pre-reading Activity**

Display a large image of Bill Reid’s sculpture *Raven and the First Men* (online at http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Haida/java/english/art/image_art68.html, or create an overhead from pg. 214 of *B.C. First Nations Studies*). Have students complete a ten-minute focused free-write on the following topic: “What story is *Raven and the First Men* trying to tell?”

After writing, invite students to share their ideas about the sculpture.

**Reading**

Have students read *In the Time of the Transformers* and *The Trickster* (pp. 214-218 in *B.C. First Nations Studies*).

**Discussion Questions:**

- What is a Transformer character?
- Why are Transformer characters significant?
- What are some differences between European and First Nations creation stories?
- How is Trickster related to Transformer characters?
- Has Trickster been a Transformer in any literature that we have studied so far?

**Concept Mapping: Small Group Practice**

Organize students into small groups. In each group, ask students to discuss how the new information about Trickster as a Transformer can be added to the concept maps. The stories “Why the Flint-Rock Cannot Fight Back” and “Origin Myth of the Snutali” can be added, as well as Bill Reid’s sculpture “Raven and the First Men.” Circulate amongst the groups to provide support as needed.

**Local Trickster Stories**

Invite a storyteller from a local First Nation to tell a Trickster tale. Prior to the guest’s arrival, brainstorm questions with the class to ask the storyteller, ways to thank a guest for sharing his or her knowledge, and techniques for respectful, active listening. After the story and questions, arrange for a student to thank the guest and offer a gift.

**Note:** If teachers are unsure about how to find a local storyteller, consult the Aboriginal Education department of your school district. Many school districts have established honoraria for First Nations guests in the school; the Aboriginal Education contact in your district will have information about local arrangements.
**Trickster in Film**

Students will examine a modern adaptation of a tradition Trickster story as they view the animated feature *Raven Tales: How Raven Stole the Sun* (approx. 25 min.).

Play the DVD *Raven Tales: How Raven Stole the Sun*. Watch the film in its entirety, then lead a class discussion.

**Discussion Questions**
- What are some characteristics of Trickster characters?
- Which of those Trickster characteristics are most evident in the Raven character from the film?
- How is Raven similar/different to the characters of Eagle and Frog?
- What do Raven and Eagle think about the subject of “change”?
- What techniques does the filmmaker use to make the story entertaining?
- What lessons does this tale impart?

**Concept Mapping: Individual Practice**

After viewing the film and class discussion, students will add new information to their concept maps. Monitor students’ use of concept mapping, and provide support as necessary.

**Trickster in Short Stories**

Students will further their understanding of the roles of Trickster through the examination of a variety of short fiction. The whole class will share in a humorous Trickster story from Thomas King, then divide into groups for a cooperative learning experience examining a variety of other stories. Students will then work cooperatively to expand their Trickster concept maps.

**Pre-Reading Activities**

Read the following list of words/phrases from the story to students. After presenting the list, ask students to predict what the story might be about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jacques Columbus</th>
<th>ducks</th>
<th>What’s that bad smell?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>probably that Coyote’s fault</td>
<td>Christopher Cartier</td>
<td>Psssst Psssst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fix this world</td>
<td>Mistake</td>
<td>world is getting bent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading the Short Story (Whole Class)**

Read the short story “The One About Coyote Going West,” by Thomas King (*Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, p. 197).

**Note:** The story, despite its deceptively simple language, has a complex narrative structure. The narrator is having a conversation with the character Coyote; however, on page 198, the narrator begins to tell Coyote (modern) a story about Coyote (historical). Throughout the story, the
narrator switches between telling a story about Coyote (historical), and talking with/about Coyote (modern). Students may require support differentiating between Coyote characters.

**ALERT**
The story makes a number of fart jokes and refers to Coyote’s “butt-hole.” Preview and put into context for students as required.

**Post-Reading Activities**
After reading the story, guide a class discussion about the role of Trickster, as well as the author’s technique and writing style.

**Discussion Questions**
- What characteristics of Trickster are described in the story? How are these characteristics similar or different from the characteristics displayed in previously studied literature?
- What does the narrator mean when she states that Coyote discovered First Peoples?
- Trickster stories are often meant to help the listener/reader learn a lesson. What lesson might be learned from this story?
- What techniques does the author use to write this story?

**Trickster in Short Stories: Jigsaw Grouping**

**Pre-Reading Activities**
Have students complete a free-write on the following prompt:

“I will tell you something about stories … They aren’t just entertainment.” – Leslie Silko (found in King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories*, p. 92).

After writing, invite volunteers to share their writing with the rest of the class.

Divide students into jigsaw groups (4 students per group). Assign each student in each group a letter, A to D. Students are assigned one short story from *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*:

- A: “Blue Against White,” Jeanette Armstrong (p. 240)
- B: “The Shivering Tree,” John McLeod (p. 272)
- C: “The Republic of Tricksterism,” Paul Seesequasis (p. 468)
- D: “Stones and Switches,” Lorne Joseph Simon (p. 486)

**Post-Reading Activities**
After reading their assigned story, have students meet in “expert groups” (e.g., all students who read “Blue Against White” will meet as Expert Group A). In these expert groups, students will discuss the story, with emphasis on the portrayal of Trickster in the literature. Each student is responsible for knowing the story well enough to report back to the original jigsaw group the significance of the story. Circulate between expert groups, prompting the conversations as necessary.

As a guide for the expert group discussions, hand out copies of the “Trickster in Short Stories Jigsaw Discussion Guide”. Students may use these to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of their assigned story.

After the expert group discussions, students will meet back in their original jigsaw groups. At the jigsaw groups, each member will take a turn describing their story and Trickster’s portrayal within the story to the rest of the group.
Concept Maps: Small Group Practice
While students are in their jigsaw groups, have them work cooperatively to add to their concept maps of Trickster.
Unit 11: Trickster

TRICKSTER IN SHORT STORIES: JIGSAW GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1) Provide a summary of the story that you read.

2) Describe the Trickster character that was presented in your story (appearance, characteristics, actions, etc.).

3) What effect did Trickster have on the other characters in the story?

4) How did this portrayal of Trickster compare to other Trickster characters that have been studied in class?
**Trickster in Poetry**

This examination of two Trickster poems will illustrate the role Trickster plays in the poems’ treatment of emotionally difficult subjects. After examining one poem together as a whole class, students will be split into groups to look at metaphors and symbolism in a second poem. Small group oral presentations will follow.

**Pre-Reading Activities**

Students will complete a free-write (approx. five minutes) on the following prompt: “You have to know the past to understand the present.” (Dr. Carl Sagan)

After continuous writing for five minutes, ask for volunteers to share their ideas on the prompt.

**Whole Class Poem: “The Long Dance” by David A. Groulx**

Hand out copies of “The Long Dance” to the class. Read the poem aloud. After the initial reading, a second oral reading is recommended. Discuss the poem with the class, prompting students to provide evidence for their opinions/answers.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What is the speaker’s attitude to the past?
- What historical events are depicted in the poem?
- Which Tricksters appear in the poem?
- What is symbolized when Raven is shot or Coyote is caught in a trap?
- The phrase “dancing with rage” is repeated throughout the poem. What is the significance of this phrase?

**Terms and Devices**

symbolism
historical reference

**Small Group Reading: “poem without end #3”**

Hand out copies of “poem without end #3”. Read the poem aloud to the class, or have students volunteer to read the poem. After reading, instruct the students that this poem frequently makes use of metaphor, comparing the Trickster Nanabush to a variety of characters (e.g., English professor in stanza one, trapper in stanza five). Divide students into five groups, and assign each group a stanza from the poem (do not use the final, one-line stanza).

Each group is responsible for understanding the Nanabush metaphor from their stanza, then presenting that understanding to the rest of the class, both orally and visually. For this group work, the teacher may choose to have students take on formal roles within the group (facilitator, recorder, presenter(s), artist(s)).

Each group should begin by re-reading the entire poem, then their stanza in particular. After reading, they should discuss as a group the meaning of the metaphor contained in their stanza.

The students should be able to explain to the class the answers to the following questions:

- What is the comparison being made in the metaphor?
- What actions does Nanabush take in the stanza? What might these actions represent?
Unit 11: Trickster

- What types of imagery are present in the stanza?
- What point is the poet trying to make by using this metaphor?

Each group is also responsible for creating a visual representation of their stanza (cartoon, image, drawing, etc.). It may help students to know that Nanabush is often depicted as a rabbit.

After discussion, each group will present its stanza to the rest of the class. Students should read the stanza aloud, then explain their understanding of the metaphor and present their visual representation.

**Concept Maps: Independent Application**

Students should expand their Trickster concept maps by adding ideas gathered from the poems studied.

**Trickster in Essays**

This lesson will utilize Thomas King’s essay “What is it About Us That You Don’t Like?” from *The Truth About Stories*. Because students will need to refer to the piece to add to their concept maps, the text version is recommended over the audio version for this lesson.

**Pre-Reading Activities**

Have students complete a free write (five minutes) on the following prompt: “One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early along the way” (Ben Okri, from *The Truth About Stories*, p. 153).

After writing, invite volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

Have students read the essay “What is it About Us That You Don’t Like?”. Once the essay has been read, point out to students that King uses a Trickster story to help illustrate historical events. In an interesting twist from other literature involving Trickster, Coyote in this case is not used as a symbol for First Peoples (as in “The Long Dance”). Rather, Coyote’s actions mirror those of the governments of Canada and the United States, while First Peoples are represented by the Ducks.

**Discussion Questions**

- What is the author’s thesis/main point in this essay?
- What is the purpose of the Coyote story told by King? Why does he include this story?
- How does the story of Coyote and the Ducks relate to King’s discussion of government legislation?
- How does this portrayal of Coyote compare to Coyote from “The One About Coyote Going West”? How does this Coyote compare to the Tricksters in “The Long Dance?”

**Terms and Devices**

analogy
allegory
didactic

**Concept Maps: Independent Application**

Have students expand upon their concept maps. Emphasize creating links to previous ideas, through comparison/contrast.
ASSessment Instrument
Trickster Essay—Synthesis of Texts

Essay topic: Compare and contrast the portrayal of Trickster in three pieces of literature.

Instructions

For this assignment, you will create a multi-paragraph essay that draws on three pieces of literature studied in this unit. Choose only one piece from each of the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Stories</th>
<th>Short Fiction/Essay</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Legend of Nanbohzo</td>
<td>“The One About Coyote Going West”</td>
<td>“poem without end #3”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stseptekwle—Stories of the Secwepemc</td>
<td>“Blue Against White”</td>
<td>“The Long Dance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven Tales: How Raven Stole the Sun</td>
<td>“The Shivering Tree”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why the Flint-Rock Cannot Fight Back</td>
<td>“The Republic of Tricksterism”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin Myth of the Snutali</td>
<td>“Stones and Switches”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What is it About Us You Don’t Like?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the concept map you created in this unit to help choose your pieces of literature and plan your writing.

Steps:

1) Plan your essay, using the concept map.
2) Write a first draft.
3) Exchange first drafts with a partner for peer editing.
4) Revise your essay.
5) Hand in completed essay, with peer editing checklist attached.

Due Date:________________
ASSessment Instrument
ScoRing Guide for Synthesis of Texts

6
The response is superior, demonstrating an insightful understanding of the texts. It shows a sophisticated approach to synthesis, including pertinent references. The writing style is effective and demonstrates skillful control of language. Despite its clarity and precision, the response need not be error-free.

5
The response is proficient, demonstrating a clear understanding of the texts at an interpretive level. It clearly synthesizes the concepts within the texts. References may be explicit or implicit and convincingly support the analysis. The writing is well organized and reflects a strong command of the conventions of language. Errors may be present, but are not distracting.

4
The response is competent. Understanding of the texts tends to be literal and superficial. Some synthesis is apparent. The response may rely heavily on paraphrasing. References are present and appropriate, but may be limited. The writing is organized and straightforward. Conventions of language are usually followed, but some errors are evident.

3
The response is barely adequate. Understanding of the texts may be partially flawed. An attempt at synthesis is evident. References to the texts are not clearly connected to a central idea or may be repetitive. The response may show some sense of purpose, but errors may be distracting.

2
The response is inadequate. While there is an attempt to address the topic, understanding of the texts or the task may be seriously flawed. Errors are recurring, distracting, and impede meaning.

1
The response is unacceptable. It does not meet the purpose of the task or may be too brief to address the topic. There is a serious lack of control in the writing.

0
The response reflects a complete misunderstanding of the texts and/or the task, or is a restatement of the question.
### Scoring Rubric for Trickster Concept Map Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts and Ideas</strong></td>
<td>Very few relevant ideas are presented. Ideas are dealt with superficially. Concept map may contain multiple errors.</td>
<td>Few relevant ideas are presented. Some ideas may be superficial. Concept map may contain some errors/omissions.</td>
<td>Many relevant ideas and concepts are presented and explored in depth. There are few errors or omissions.</td>
<td>Many ideas are presented, Ideas are explored with insight and depth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary Sources</strong></td>
<td>Ideas may not be connected to literary sources studied; student may be relying on previous knowledge.</td>
<td>Some ideas may be connected to literary sources studied. References may be limited to a few sources.</td>
<td>Many references are included, referring to a variety of texts.</td>
<td>Ideas are directly connected to literary sources, representing all genres and major works studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connections Between Ideas</strong></td>
<td>There are no relevant connections between ideas.</td>
<td>There are few relevant connections between ideas. Connections may be superficial.</td>
<td>Relevant connections are drawn between many ideas.</td>
<td>Insightful connections are made between ideas. Varied connections are made between many ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Stanza</td>
<td>No evidence of analysis of metaphor and/or imagery.</td>
<td>Analysis of metaphor may be brief or inaccurate.</td>
<td>Metaphor is presented and thoroughly analyzed.</td>
<td>Analysis of metaphor shows insight. Imagery is thoroughly described and analyzed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May be a simple re-reading of stanza.</td>
<td>Imagery may be listed, but not analyzed; or analysis is inaccurate.</td>
<td>Imagery is described and analyzed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Representation</td>
<td>Image has no connection to the stanza.</td>
<td>Image may relate to aspects of stanza, but does not capture main idea.</td>
<td>Image summarizes the stanza.</td>
<td>Image is an insightful representation of the stanza’s key idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Presentation in incomprehensible or off-topic.</td>
<td>Presentation may be brief, lack eye contact, inaudible voice, or inappropriate pacing.</td>
<td>Presentation is appropriate in length, and may include minor lapses (inaudible voice, lack of eye contact, etc.)</td>
<td>Clear voice, eye contact, and pacing. Ideas are clearly explained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>