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# *English 12 First Peoples* Teacher Resource Guide

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A PUBLICATION OF



First Nations Education Steering Committee

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# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

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## *English 12 First Peoples*

APRIL 2008



first nations education  
steering committee

[www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)

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This document has been developed under the supervision of project managers Christa Williams (2006-2007) and Karmen Brillon (2007-2008), First Nations Education Steering Committee.

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This document is designed to provide support for teachers of English 12 First Peoples. It has been developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee, as an extension of the curriculum development process for English 12 First Peoples. This development process – undertaken pursuant to a jurisdictional agreement between the Province of British Columbia and the First Nations Education Steering Committee – represents a departure from past practice with respect to both the development of provincially prescribed curriculum and the provision of resource documentation to support for provincially prescribed curriculum. This distinctive development process is intended to ensure that

- teaching and learning with respect to First Peoples in British Columbia’s school system is based on authentic knowledge and understanding, as articulated by Elders, educators, and other content experts from within British Columbia’s First Nations and Métis communities
- decisions affecting teaching and learning with respect to First Peoples in British Columbia’s school system take appropriate account of the advice and opinion of community leaders from within the province’s First Nations and Métis communities.

Questions concerning material in this document should accordingly be directed to the First Nations Education Steering Committee, which is solely responsible for its content.

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## ABOUT ENGLISH 12 FIRST PEOPLES

English 12 First Peoples is one of three provincial courses available for students to satisfy the grade 12 English Language Arts graduation program requirement in British Columbia. It is designated as a four-credit course, and has a Graduation Program examination (worth 40% of the final course mark), which all students must write in order to receive credit for this course.

Like English 12, English 12 First Peoples (EFP 12) is designed to satisfy the entrance requirements for the full range of postsecondary educational programs. Students are expected to demonstrate understanding of sophisticated texts of recognized literary merit and complete challenging assignments to rigorous academic standards.

What makes this course different from the existing English 12 course (apart from the unique development process described in the preceding section, About this Guide) is that it

- is based entirely on the study of “texts” representing authentic First Peoples voices (“texts” is here understood to refer to oral, audio, visual, cinematic, and electronic media works as well written works)
- incorporates First Peoples principles of learning in the curriculum content and espouses their application in the teaching of the course (pedagogical approaches promoted include direct learning, learning outside of the classroom environment, and incorporating a recursive approach to texts)
- places increased emphasis on the study and command of oral language and on First Peoples oral tradition
- recognizes the value of First Peoples worldview, and the importance of culture in language and communication (e.g., the participation of guest speakers from local First Nations or Métis communities in learning is encouraged)
- promotes teaching the curriculum through a focus on themes, issues, and topics important to First Peoples (as identified by the Advisory Team).

## OVERVIEW

Further details on these attributes of the course are provided in the front matter of the *English 12 First Peoples Integrated Resource Package 2007* (the curriculum document) under Key Features of the Course. Teachers are urged to review this material.

Teachers are also encouraged to review the material included under Considerations for Program Delivery in the *English 12 First Peoples Integrated Resource Package 2007* (e.g., the sections on Addressing Local Contexts, on Working with the First Peoples Community, and on Establishing a Positive Classroom Climate).

**NOTE:** Activities and discussion related to some of the topics in this course (e.g., Residential Schooling) may evoke an emotional response from individual students. Inform an administrator or counsellor when any concern arises, and ensure students know where to go for help and support.

## SELECTION AND USE OF LEARNING RESOURCES

With English 12 First Peoples, as with any other English Language Arts course K-12, selection of texts for student use is to a considerable extent a matter for the professional judgment of teachers. At the same time, teachers are expected to keep the intent of the course firmly in mind when making their choices. Thus, although First Peoples and their cultures are sometimes the focus of creative works by non-Aboriginal writers, filmmakers, etc., **only texts that present authentic First Peoples voices (i.e., works created by or through the substantive contribution of First Peoples “authors”) should be chosen for study in this course.**

### *Caution!*

Very few of the titles from within the rich body of First Peoples literature potentially available for students to study have been designated as Recommended Resources by the BC Ministry of Education. In part, this results from the fact that very few of the texts currently taught in K-12 English Language Arts classes present authentic First Peoples voices. In part it results from the unique development process that has been followed to develop the course.

The lack of provincial Recommended Resource designation means that teachers should consider some or all of the following measures:

- carefully reviewing “texts” in their entirety (i.e., read the novels/poems, view the films, etc.) before teaching them
- exercising particular discretion when selecting texts for study, as many works considered worthy of study on the basis of literary merit may also contain material that raise concerns on a Ministry “Social Considerations” review
- acquiring a sense of community expectations and sensitivities with respect to the use of difficult or challenging material with Grade 12 students
- communicating proactively with students and parents about the material to be studied (see the ensuing section, Communicating with Parents, for further detail)
- adapting their teaching approaches to obviate the need for sending potentially controversial materials home for students to read or view independently as assigned homework
- seeking local board/authority approval of resources they might wish to have students read or view as assigned homework.

To assist teachers in choosing and using texts, FNEC has

- conducted reviews and prepared preliminary, point-form annotations for a number of works that the English 12 First Peoples IRP Development Team and the English 12 First Peoples Advisory Team consider usable, in whole or in part, for teaching English 12 First Peoples (this material is provided here in the section on Text Recommendations)
- provided advice as needed in each of the instruction and assessment units presented in this document concerning specific approaches that should be followed to ensure successful learning for students; this advice includes the provision of specific alerts such as the following in some of the units:

**ALERT**

This unit relies on the use of excerpts from both *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and *Three Day Road*, among other texts. Tomson Highway's novel, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* is a work of adult fiction. As such, it contains challenging material that makes it inadvisable to use in its entirety with a class of Grade 12 students. The challenges lie not only in the novel's literary difficulty and emotionally charged content, but also in its unvarnished portrayals of the lives of its characters (including use of coarse language, sometimes graphic descriptions of sex and violence, and depictions of thought and behaviour that clearly qualify as racist, sexist, and/or "classist"). To a lesser degree, *Three Day Road* contains these elements as well.

Accordingly this unit recommends the use of a read-aloud strategy in combination with limited reproduction of carefully identified extracts. Acquisition and use of class sets of these novels is also possible, but any such copies should be used **in class only** under teacher direction and supervision. They should **not be sent home with students**, unless the novels have received an authorized or recommended resource designation from the Board of the school district or local education authority.

**COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

As suggested in the preceding section on Selection and Use of Learning Resources, proactive communication with parents can help forestall any problems associated with the use of adult material in the Grade 12 classroom. When this material is taught as part of an English 12 First Peoples course, the course description and information provided to students by school personnel who help them with their course decisions can make this clear. If the units contained in this document are used as part of an English 12 class, however (as is the case for pilot teachers), it is advisable to communicate with parents directly. The following sample letter to parents illustrates how this might be done:

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

As in other subject areas, the study of English Language Arts can involve dealing with issues and topics that may be a source of special concern for some students and their parents. An upcoming unit of study from the English First Peoples Language Arts 12 course may include some emotionally challenging references and graphic language that you consider to be sensitive content. The references and language found in the learning resources for this unit of study portray the life experiences of the First Peoples and provide a realistic context for this portrayal.

All readings for this unit have been reviewed by the teacher prior to presenting them to the students. The students and teacher will be studying the material in a guided reading environment ensuring that the students will have an opportunity to discuss the content with the teacher in class prior to and following each reading.

We are making you aware of this upcoming unit of study in advance to ensure that you and your child are comfortable with the content to be studied. If you and your child are uncomfortable with addressing this type of content within the classroom setting, it is acceptable for your student to address this learning in another manner. If you have concerns in this regard, we encourage you to meet with the teacher of the English Language Arts 12 course to discuss alternative opportunities which the teacher will provide for your student to meet the learning in this unit of study. Should you have additional concerns regarding this matter, please consult with the teacher or the principal to address these concerns.

Sincerely,

## LEARNING ABOUT AND USING FIRST PEOPLES PEDAGOGY

The Introduction to the *English 12 First Peoples Integrated Resource Package 2007* (the curriculum document, or IRP) sets out several principles of learning, which are affirmed within First Peoples societies and are reflected in the course curriculum. These principles help define a pedagogical approach that students in this course will ideally not only learn about, but actually experience through making connections with the local First Peoples community and exposure to instructional strategies such as

- shared reading (e.g., having students share the experience of reading aloud and discussing together)
- “writing to learn” (e.g., to develop students’ thinking skills, encouraging them to write as a response to experience, then discuss orally, rather than using the opposite approach exclusively)
- representing their knowledge in varied ways.

Because the principles of learning as set out in the IRP represent an attempt to identify common elements in the varied teaching and learning approaches that prevail within particular First Peoples societies, it must be recognized that they do not capture the full reality of the approach used in any single First Peoples society. When making connections with the local First Peoples community, teachers (or students) may therefore find it helpful to investigate how pedagogy is articulated and actually practiced within that community, so as to expand upon or qualify the principles identified in the IRP. This investigation is likely to happen incrementally over time, as the pedagogical approach articulated and practiced within the local communities will not necessarily be set out in an easy-to-summarize form. Ultimately, one important conclusion for students to draw is that pedagogy in First Peoples societies, like pedagogy practiced in non-Aboriginal societies, is both dynamic and culturally specific (i.e., grounded in a distinctive language and way of looking at the world). The following is an example of principles of teaching and learning as specific to the Lil’wat peoples.

### LIL’WAT PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Cwelelep** – being in a place of dissonance, uncertainty in anticipation of new learning, to spin like a dust storm

**Kamucwkalha** – the felt energy indicating group attunement and the emergence of a common group purpose, group is ready to work together, to listen to one another and speak without fear

**Celhcelh** – each person is responsible for her or his learning. The concept means finding and taking advantage of all opportunities to learn, and maintain openness to learning. Each person must take the initiative to become part of the learning community by finding his or her own place and fitting into the community. It means offering what knowledge and expertise you have to benefit the communal work being carried out.

**Emhaka7** – each person does the best she or he can at whatever the task, and keeps an eye on others to be helpful. The concept also means to work respectfully and with good thoughts and good hands.

**Responsibility** – each person is responsible for helping the team and the learning community to accomplish the task at hand in a good way, entering the work clear of anger and impatience.

**Relationship** – throughout the course each person will be conscious of developing and maintaining relationships – with the people, the task, the teachers and guides, and the communities beyond the learning community. It also means relating what you are experiencing to your past knowledge and to what you will do with what you are learning.

**Watchful listening** – an openness to listening beyond our own personal thoughts and assumptions, being aware and conscious of everything around you as you focus on the task at hand

**A7xekcal** – how teachers help us to locate the infinite capacity we all have as learners. Developing one’s own personal gifts and expertise in a holistic, respectful and balanced manner.

**Kat’il’a** – finding stillness and quietness amidst our busyness and the need to know

## THEMES AND TOPICS

An effective implementation of English 12 First Peoples will draw attention to recurring themes that are characteristically part of the worldview of many First Peoples. The following list, though not finite, identifies a range of these themes and topics:

- seasonal cycle (relationship to seasons)
- place and relationship to the natural world
- relationality (interdependence) & connectedness
- language & world view
- holistic
- family (extended family)
- geneology & lineage
- spirit, relationship with spirit world, & spirituality
- dreams & visions
- sacred secrets
- sustainability & continuity
- rites of passage
- citizenship & service
- vitality
- resilience & healing
- well-being
- addiction
- identity (incl. biculturalism)
- history and colonization (impact of Christianity, institutionalization)
- politicization
- conflict & conflict resolution
- peace, war, harmony
- community and collectivity
- racism, stereotypes, negative labelling
- romanticization
- humour
- respect
- responsibility
- protocol
- balance
- rights & justice
- learning (how to learn; roles of teacher & learner); schooling vs. education
- nurturing
- sharing & generosity
- culture, tradition, and ceremony
- performance (song, dance, etc.)
- transformation
- transitions (with loss, gain)
- diversity
- technology (trad. technology, hi-tech)
- art & functional art
- collaboration and cooperation
- roles, inclusivity, & belonging
- competition
- decision making
- governance
- diverse social structures
- structure and hierarchy
- time and place
- home
- wisdom
- reflective listening
- reciprocity
- ownership
- anger, rage
- grief & loss
- self-reliance
- love, hate
- knowledges (oral, vision, spirit world)
- tradition vs. modernity

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

To ensure consistency when using certain terms within the context of English 12 First Peoples, the following definitions have been provided:

**metacognition/metacognitive strategies:** Metacognition is “thinking about thinking,” which results in students’ individual knowledge of their own learning processes. In the English Language Arts curriculum, the successful use of metcognitive strategies involves reflection, self-assessment, setting goals and creating a plan for achieving those goals.

**oral language:** For the purposes of English Language Arts, oral language refers to speaking and listening (i.e., it has a fairly broad/general meaning). The following excerpt from the introduction to the ELA K-7 IRP provides detail about the curriculum organizer of the same name:

Oral Language (Speaking and Listening)

“Oral language is the foundation of literacy learning. Talk is the bridge that helps students make connections between what they know and what they are coming to know” (Booth, 1994, p. 254). Students

## OVERVIEW

use language to monitor and reflect on experiences and to reason, plan, predict and make connections both orally and in print.

The Oral Language section of the curriculum focusses on

Purposes – providing students opportunities to develop their capacity to interact effectively with peers and adults, to present material orally, and to listen attentively, respectfully and with purpose

Strategies – increasing students’ awareness of and engagement in the processes, skills, and techniques they can use to be more successful in their oral interactions and presentations

Thinking – extending students’ capacity to use oral language to make connections to text, develop ideas, increase vocabulary repertoire, and use metacognition to assess their strengths and set goals to scaffold improvement

Features – increasing students’ knowledge of the forms of oral expression and the expectations of various audiences, as well as their capacity to control syntax, diction, and other aspects of their oral communication

**oral tradition:** Oral tradition is the means by which cultural transmission occurs over generations, other than through written records. Among First Peoples it may consist of told stories, songs and/or other types of distilled wisdom or information, often complemented by dance or various forms of visual representation such as carvings or masks. In addition to expressing spiritual and emotional truth (e.g., via symbol and metaphor), it provides a record of literal truth (e.g., regarding events and/or situations).

**text, texts:** For the purposes of English Language Arts, the term “text” denotes any piece of spoken, written, or visual communication (e.g., a particular speech, essay, poem, story, poster, play, film). A text may combine oral, written, and/or visual components.



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# TEXT RECOMMENDATIONS

## *English 12 First Peoples*





## TEXT RECOMMENDATIONS

### OVERVIEW

All of the texts (books, plays, films) listed here have been reviewed by FNEC and identified as suitable – in whole or in part – for teaching English 12 First Peoples, given appropriate teacher supervision and guidance as suggested in the Instruction and Assessment Units provided in this teacher guide. Each text has been selected as one that

- represents an authentic First Peoples voice (created by and with First Peoples, tells an important and authentic First Peoples story)
- depicts themes and issues important to First Peoples cultures (e.g., loss of identity and affirmation of identity, tradition, healing, role of family, importance of Elders, connection to the land, the nature and place of spirituality as an aspect of wisdom in First Peoples cultures, the relationships between individual and community, the importance of oral tradition, the experience of colonization and decolonization)
- incorporates techniques and features of First Peoples storytelling (e.g., circular structure, repetition, weaving in of spirituality, humour)
- demonstrates a high level of literary/artistic merit
- is age-appropriate (e.g., re: reading level) for grade 12 students

The following pages cite specific cautions associated with each resource. The EFP 12 Teacher Resource Guide Development Team feels strongly that each of these texts is appropriate for use despite the cautions listed. Any text that represents an authentic First Peoples story and voice will deal with the lived experiences of First Peoples, and may contain language and images that are difficult to read or hear (e.g., consequences of colonialism including the residential school experience, violence and abuse, experiences of racism, substance abuse, criticisms of Christianity and church practices). In this connection, however, it must be noted that many texts traditionally studied in secondary school English classes (e.g., various Shakespeare works, *The Lord of the Flies*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Crucible*) contain “sensitive” topics, including violence, racism, sexual content, and a critique of religious beliefs.

The resources identified here fall into two broad categories:

- student resources (suitable for use by students, subject to appropriate instruction and context-setting by the teacher)
- teacher resources (suitable for students only in the form of carefully selected extracts and under the direct guidance or supervision of the teacher).

### STUDENT RESOURCES



*An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (by Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed)  
anthology of poetry, short stories, essays, and plays

Note: two works in this anthology include material of serious concerns, and are **not** recommended for use with students:

526 – Cycle of the black lizard (violence, child abuse, connection of Christian imagery to abuse, profanity)  
541 – Terminal Avenue (violence, sexual content, profanity)

The remaining works can be used with students, at the discretion of teachers and with the appropriate context-setting and cautions in relation to the following selections:

148 – A Long Story (sexual content)  
179 – Penumbra (reference to violence)  
180 – Raced Out to Write This Up (sexual imagery)

## TEXT RECOMMENDATIONS

189 – Exercises in Lip Pointing (profanity)  
195 – Me Tonto Along (sexual content, domestic violence)  
231 – Sketches (sexual content, profanity)  
255 – Post-Oka Kinda Woman (profanity)  
259 – From Trickster Beyond 1992 (profanity)  
294 – Yin Chin (profanity, racial slurs)  
297 – Sojourner’s Truth (profanity)  
307 – Aria (violence, sexual content, profanity)  
324 – Summit with Sedna (sexual abuse)  
349 – could be anyone but I call him syd (drug use, violence, theft, profanity)  
352 – god shrugged and turned his back (prostitution, drug use)  
364-380 – The Witch of Niagara (some verbal abuse, mild sexual innuendo, a reference to cannibalism)  
391 – Heirlooms (racial slurs)  
401 – Stones (sexual content)  
405 – The Heat of My Grandmothers (profanity, sexual content)  
484 – when you (sexual content)  
531 – Unhinged (sexual content)  
533 – September the Autumn Moon (sexual content)  
548 – Wouldn’t We Be Fucked (profanity)  
558 – Mermaid (profanity, drug references)



***Half-Breed.* Maria Campbell**

**novel/biography**

cautions:

68 – graphic and morbid description of a corpse

162 – attempted suicide/infanticide



***Hank Williams First Nation***

**film – PG; 1:30**

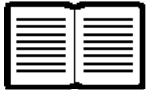
cautions: mild vulgarity (public urination), occasional mild profanity



***Keeper N’ Me.* Richard Wagamese**

**novel**

cautions: some profanity, drug use, mild sexual innuendo; reading level is approximately grade 10



***Monkey Beach.* Eden Robinson.**

**novel**

cautions:

throughout – underage smoking, profanity, fighting and violence

specific:

52 – drug use, violence

65 – violence (fight)

93 – underage drinking

108 – recalling experiences in a residential school

127-128 – verbal abuse

144 – disturbing imagery (describing a death)

156 – fighting

157 – joyriding

204 – drug use

210-211 – adultery, murder

220-221 – mockery and stereotypes of voodoo and witchcraft

230 – use of an Ouija board in a joking manner

251-251 – use of racial slurs and verbal abuse

255 – reference to abuse occurring in residential schools

258 – rape scene

272 – sexual content, disturbing imagery

286 – sexual content

293 – disturbing description of dead body

296 – drinking and drug use

365 – disturbing reference to an abortion

368-69 – disturbing imagery

369 – violence (murder)



***Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology* (eds. Jeannette Armstrong & Lally Grauer)**

**poetry anthology**

Note: four poems in this anthology include material of serious concerns, and are **not** recommended for use with students:

48 – Her Name is Helen (racial stereotypes, explicit sexual content)

179 – In the Bath (sexual content)

335 – Cycle of the black lizard (violence, child abuse, connection of Christian imagery to abuse, profanity)

337 – Unhinged (sexual content)

The remaining poems can be used with students, at the discretion of teachers and with the appropriate context-setting and cautions in relation to the following selections:

51 – Telling (implicit and explicit references to child abuse, violence, graphic descriptions)

68 – Boob Stretch (graphic language)

89 – Kirkland Lake (mild profanity – Lord's name in vain)

101 – Creased Clinic (profanity)

104 – Justice in Williams Lake (violence – rape and murder)

## TEXT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 112 – Dark Forest (mention of drug use)
- 119 – Apples (suggested sexual imagery)
- 132 – Post-Oka Kinda Woman (profanity)
- 141 – New Image (symbolic violence and morbid imagery)
- 203 – Betty (violence – rape and murder)
- 204 – He Likes to Dance (prostitution, drug use)
- 206 – born again indian (imagery of abuse by priests)
- 228 – Poetry Reading (reference to suicide)
- 247 – In the Name of Da Fadda (domestic violence, racial stereotypes, criticizing Christian beliefs and practices)
- 261 – Letter to Sir John A. Macdonald (mild profanity)
- 278 – Bear (sexual content)
- 283 – Wiles of Girlhood: Enchantment (child abuse)
- 285 – The Shard (references to suicide attempts)
- 287 – Manitoba Pastoral (profanity, violence – gang rape)
- 331 – hummingbirds (sexual content)
- 345 – True North, Blue Compass Heart (profanity, pejorative language)



***Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth.* Drew Hayden Taylor**

**play**

cautions: occasional profanity, one instance of sibling violence, scenes of drunkenness



***Rabbit-Proof Fence***

**film – PG; 1:34**

cautions: mild vulgar language, scenes of disturbing content (residential schools, family separation, child abuse, self-beating, racism, colonial attitudes)



***Smoke Signals.* Sherman Alexie**

**screenplay**

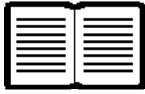
same content as film (see below)



***Smoke Signals***

**film – PG; 1:29**

cautions: some disturbing images, mild violence, mild obscenities, depiction of drinking and driving



***The Truth about Stories.* Thomas King**  
essays (both the print version and the audio CD version are recommended)

cautions: none

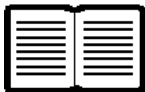


***Whale Rider***  
film – PG; 1:41

cautions: some mild profanity and vulgarity, brief conversation about sexual content, some fist-fighting, brief implied reference to drug use

## TEACHER RESOURCES

The following two texts are recommended as teacher resources only. They are both adult books, containing content and writing that is too sophisticated for the majority of grade 12 students. However, as teacher resources, the teacher can read aloud selected passages (e.g., as identified in the Instruction and Assessment Units provided in this document).



***Kiss of the Fur Queen.* Tomson Highway**  
novel

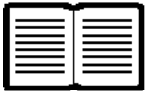
general cautions: explicit sex, extensive profanity, sensitive and disturbing content (residential school experiences, scenes of child sexual abuse, gang rape, murder), substance abuse, descriptions of “real life” on the street, unsafe sex practices, brutality; mixing Christian iconography with profanity, sexuality, and cannibalism

Specific cautions:

- 78, 79 – child sexual abuse by a priest
- 85 – physical abuse / corporal punishment
- 105 – crude, violent, and profanity-strewn street scene
- 106 – disturbing image of a woman object raped and murdered
- 116 – description of prostitution
- 118-120 – story with scatological references
- 124-125 – sexual fantasies involving Christian iconography and corpses
- 128 – sexual imagery involving Christian symbology
- 131-132 – description of a woman object raped and murdered
- 132 – sexual content
- 144 – violent sexual imagery
- 165 – sexual content
- 166 – use of homophobic language
- 168 – drug-induced orgy
- 184-185 – violent sexual content
- 200-202 – sexual content
- 203 – drug use
- 204 – sexual content involving Christian imagery
- 207 – violence (fight)

## TEXT RECOMMENDATIONS

216 – reference to rape-murders  
216 – use of homophobic language  
221 – graphic and disturbing sexual description  
232 – drug use  
250 – use of homophobic and racist language  
250-251 – drug use  
259-260 – violent sexual content  
271 – reference to child sexual abuse  
282 – act of prostitution and unsafe sexual behaviour  
287 – graphic and disturbing description of child abuse (by a priest)



***Three-Day Road.* Joseph Boyden.**

**novel**

cautions: deals heavily with the horrors of war, including death and killing, dismemberment, mutilation; drug addition; graphic scenes of murder; sexual content/prostitution; graphic and violent sexual content; some profanity; racial slurs and racism; sexual abuse by a nun in a residential school; attempted murder



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# INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT UNITS

## *English 12 First Peoples*





## PREAMBLE

This section of the Teacher Resource Guide outlines a series of instruction and assessment units for English 12 First Peoples. These units have been structured a number of different ways, including

- by type of text (e.g., novel, film, poetry)
- by theme or topic (e.g., residential schools)
- by process (e.g., oral tradition, research).

Collectively the units address all of the prescribed learning outcomes for the course, and provide one suggested means of organizing, ordering, and delivering the required content. The following units are provided here:

- Unit 1: Introduction to English 12 First Peoples
- Unit 2: The Oral Tradition
- Unit 3: Storytelling
- Unit 4: Lost People
- Unit 5: Residential Schooling – A Recurring Theme in Varied Texts
- Unit 6: From the Heart – Poetry
- Unit 7: Drama
- Unit 8: Research Essay
- Unit 9: Identity
- Unit 10: Humour
- Unit 11: Trickster
- Unit 12: Métis Literature

## ORGANIZATION AND INTENT

The various units in this Teacher Resource Guide represent an array of overlapping possibilities and varied approaches (not necessarily all complementary). *It is certainly not intended that all of these units be completed in one year.*

Units are numbered for ease of reference only. This organization is not meant to prescribe a linear means of delivery (although teachers are strongly encouraged to begin with the Introduction unit). Teachers have the flexibility to select, ignore, adapt, modify, organize, and expand on the units to meet the needs of their students, to respond to local requirements, and to incorporate additional relevant learning resources as applicable.

The beginning of each instructional unit contains a unit overview, which summarizes the main themes addressed within. Primary and secondary resources (in both print and web-based formats) are also identified at the beginning of each unit. In addition, an outline is provided listing lesson suggestions, as well as assessment tools and handouts to help facilitate lesson implementation.

The learning outcomes referenced at the beginning of each lesson description are found in the B.C. Ministry of Education's "English 12 First Peoples Integrated Resource Package 2007", available via:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/>

## UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH 12 FIRST PEOPLES

### OVERVIEW

The introductory unit sets the context for the course, with a particular emphasis on establishing awareness of First Peoples pedagogy and of the key features that make this course unique. Given the unique nature of this course, it is important for the teacher to establish a classroom environment that is welcoming and supportive. This unit includes a variety of activities for teachers to work with, including opportunities for

- **community building** (a vital component of First Peoples' cultures)
- **establishing the ground rules for respectful contribution and handling conflict**
- **assessing what students are bringing to the course** (in terms of personal, experiential, and academic background)
- understanding and beginning to work with First Peoples' pedagogical approaches
- **incorporating relevant practices/protocol** from the local First Peoples community (e.g., for talking circles)
- **setting the purpose and context for the course** – looking at the traditional and contemporary realities of First Peoples through a study of authentic texts
- **incorporating experiential learning by** participating in field trips (such as visits to a friendship centre, band office, etc.)
- **building a positive environment** that allows for a free, frank, and safe study of subjects such as racism and colonialism
- **looking at the place and treatment of First Peoples in Canada** both historically and in the present, as a starting point for talking about the literature that students will examine in the course.

The teacher will need to establish connections with the local First Peoples community, or Aboriginal organizations such as Friendship Houses or Learning Centres in order to facilitate further authentic learning experiences. The connections the local Aboriginal communities or organizations are also important, in that this can help the teacher and students become familiar with local First Peoples protocol.

The assessments for these activities are necessarily informal, as the goal is to begin to develop a sense of community and belonging in the classroom. Much of the work of this unit involves students participating in small and large group discussion, as well personal response writing. The use of a Learning Log for students' to record their learning is advisable for the introductory activities. Assessment tools for learning logs and participation are included at the end of this unit.

### Resources

There are no required resources for this unit.

Time: 5–6 hours

### LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Field Trip  
Ice Breaker  
Talking Circles  
“Stories of Who I Am”  
Guidelines for Respectful Interaction/Communication  
Informal Debate on Canada-First Peoples Issues

### Handouts and Assessment Tools

Learning Log and Criteria for Assessing Learning Log Entries”  
Participation in Group Discussions and Activities

## ***Field Trip***

As soon as possible in the course, bring students to a First Nations Friendship Centre, learning place, or other First Peoples meeting/gathering place. Have food available for students to share.

Introduce the class to the place or space. Ask them to think about why they are there, and what they can learn from the place. Also ask them to think about why they are sharing food together. Ask them to think about what role the sharing of food has in cultures. Let them know that they will be asked to share their learning at a future time.

In that setting have a class discussion about the different types of learning. Ask students to do the following task: Think about a time in your life, outside of school, that you learned something. How did you learn it? Provide examples for students such as learning how to ride a bicycle, learning that a stove element is too hot to touch when it is on, learning where the best fishing spot is etc. Ask students to talk about the learning experience with a partner. As a class debrief what these learning experiences were, and what they have in common. Introduce the term “experiential learning” (learning by doing) and “modelling” (learning by listening and watching). Discuss how these types of learning are different from, or similar to, various types of learning found in the current school system. Ask students to identify how they learn best.

If possible, have an Elder talk with the class about traditional ways of teaching and learning in First Peoples communities.

Ask students to think about what they learned during this experience and write about it in their learning logs.

*Optional Extension:* use discretion with this next activity, as it may be difficult for some students to do. If it is possible though, it can be an effective classroom community builder. During the class following the field trip, ask students to sign up to bring food to the class. Create a schedule that has, once a week, a few students bringing nourishing food items to share with the class. (Caution: determine whether any students have food allergies or dietary restrictions.)

## ***Ice Breaker***

Prepare the physical space of the classroom in a manner that is inviting to students. If possible, bring students outside. Ask students to participate in a “People Search” ice breaker to help them to get to know each other (see the handout provided with this unit for sample questions; space has been left on the handout to add questions relevant for your class).

## ***Talking Circles***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2

Discuss with the class what “protocol” means, and how protocols are used in all cultures in various forms. Ask students to form small groups and brainstorm explicit and implicit protocol expectations for various scenarios (i.e., protocols used in school settings, in formal situations, etc.). Explain that First Peoples cultures also have protocols for different situations, and that these protocols can be different for different groups of people.

Introduce the students to the various uses of talking circles. If possible have an Elder talk with the class about the protocols for the use of talking circles (recognizing the various uses of talking circles and respecting that different peoples have different protocols). Explain to the students that the class will be regularly using

## ***Unit 1: Introduction to English 12 First Peoples***

talking circles for various purposes during the class (e.g., debriefing a learning experience, dealing with conflict or sensitive issues).

Ask students to arrange themselves into a circle for the purpose of debriefing the field trip. Ask students to share at least one thing they learned from the experience. Explain that in this type of activity, students are to listen respectfully, only speak when it is their turn, and that each student does have the right to pass.

### ***“Stories of Who I Am”***

#### **Learning Outcomes: A2, C4**

Ask students to bring in four artefacts:

- one to represent them as an individual
- one that represents their familial belonging
- one that represents their peer group belonging
- one that represents other cultural identity.

Discuss with students the terms “identity” and “culture.” Have students form pairs. Have students orally present each artefact to their partners, explaining the artefact’s significance. After students have had the opportunity to share with a partner, ask students (and other adults in the classroom) to choose one of their artefacts and explain its significance to the class.

Ask students to think about how the people in the classroom are both individuals and members of various groups at the same time. Ask the students to think about how we are simultaneously different and the same. Ask students to find a way to represent what they have learned about everyone in the classroom (e.g., drama, dance, song, video, poster, model, cartoon, carving, mobile, weaving, storyboard, web site, verbal-visual essay).

As an additional, optional assessment for this activity, have students complete a self-assessment of their representations. Criteria for assessment could include

- elements of form to enhance meaning and artistry (e.g., organization of ideas and information, text features and visual/aesthetic devices)
- elements of style to enhance meaning and artistry
- appropriateness to purpose and audience.

### ***Guidelines for Respectful Interaction/Communication***

Ask students to think about what respectful communication looks and sounds like. Provide students with brief scenarios, and have students create mini-roles illustrating examples of both.

Ask students to think about what kind of communication is most effective for them in their learning environment. Have them work in small groups to brainstorm their endings to the sentence stem “Everyone in this classroom has the right to...” Provide examples such as the following:

- Everyone in this classroom has the right to be heard.
- Everyone in this classroom has the right to pass.
- Everyone in this classroom has the right to be treated with respect.

Once they have completed this task, ask them to brainstorm a corresponding list that ends the stem, “Everyone in this classroom has the responsibility to...,” noting that, for each right, there needs to be a related responsibility. Provide examples such as the following (which do not all correlate with the previous examples):

- Everyone in this classroom has the responsibility to listen respectfully to others.
- Everyone in this classroom has the responsibility to use “I” statements, not “you” statements.
- Everyone in this classroom has the responsibility to be patient, and not interrupt others.

Once this is done have each group join with another to combine their lists, eliminating duplicate points and merging similar ones. Repeat the merging of groups until the class has one complete list. Have this list printed up and ask each student to sign the Class Guidelines for Respectful Communication.

## ***Informal Debate on Canada-First Peoples Issues***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A6, A10

Informally poll students (e.g., via show of hands) for their opinions on the history of relations between governments in Canada and First Peoples. Ask, “How many think the history of relations between governments in Canada and First Peoples has been generally positive?” and “How many think the history of relations between governments in Canada and First Peoples has been generally negative or unhappy?” Take note of the divide on this question that exists within your class. It may indicate how you can best approach subsequent texts that you study (i.e., what the predisposition and levels of background knowledge might be within your class).

Propose to explore the question in a bit more depth using a modified debate or moderated discussion (the choice will depend on how confident you are that your students are able at this stage to conduct the discussion in a respectful way, avoiding *ad hominem* argument or inflammatory rhetoric). To narrow the focus somewhat, use a resolution such as “the justice system in Canada (lawmakers, police, courts) has on balance worked to ensure fair treatment of First Peoples over the past 200 years.”

Assign students to either the pro or con side of the debate/discussion (you may wish to base the assignment of group on the position students took when you asked for an earlier show of hands – or deliberately alter the mix). Ask students to conduct some discussion as a team and some research (e.g., using the Internet, texts, or interviews) to identify specific cases, events, or situations that support their assigned position. The actual debate or discussion can be conducted in an ensuing class. Your goals with this activity are to

- acquire a better sense of the range of opinions, attitudes, and knowledge that exist among your students, in order to assess their learning needs when subsequently approaching texts
- reinforce the ground rules for respectful discussion in a situation where there are differing opinions
- sensitize students (especially non-Aboriginal students) to the degree of oppression or discrimination that First Peoples have experienced in this land, without making the situation seem all negative or in any way hopeless (this may help prepare some students for challenging content in some of the texts they will be looking at throughout the course).

Moderate the debate or discussion to ensure that both points of view are appropriately represented, the discourse remains respectful and evidence-focused, and the activity can be brought to a close within the allotted time (e.g., one class). You may be able to summarize by suggesting that the record on balance has been mixed – neither all negative, nor all positive.

Have students use their learning logs to conduct a self-assessment of their contributions to the group discussions, based on criteria such as

- consideration of the extent to which students cite specific evidence to support the position they are advancing (arguments in favour might include references to things such as Delgamuuxw and the actions of the then BC Provincial Police in relation to the lynching of Louie Sam; arguments against might include references to things such as the enactment of anti-potlatch regulations in the *Indian Act* and the actions of the RCMP in enforcing some of the scoop-ups associated with residential schooling or of particular police officers in mistreating First Peoples detainees).

### ***Unit 1: Introduction to English 12 First Peoples***

- consideration of the extent to which students keep their focus on the justice system as opposed to the entire apparatus of government (recognizing that some events, such as the confrontations at Oka, Gustafson Lake, and Ipperwash, involve the enforcement arm of the justice system, although the issues in play may not be exclusively legal)
- consideration of the way in which students express themselves orally.

## ICE BREAKER

Instructions: Talk to people in the class, asking if they fit any of the descriptions in the boxes. If a person fits the description, ask for her or his name and one detail to add to the description.

### Find a person who...

Speaks more than one language. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Knows how to bake. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Knows exactly what career he or she wants. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Plays a musical instrument. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Has travelled outside of Canada. Name: _____ Detail: _____
Knows who Thomas King is. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Has recently moved to this area. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Loves to read. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Is an artist. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Is a part of a team or club outside of school. Name: _____ Detail: _____
Has ever sang or danced in public. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Has an unusual or uncommon hobby. Name: _____ Details: _____	Grew up in a town of fewer than 500 people. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Loves to write. Name: _____ Details: _____	Has a favourite author. Name: _____ Detail: _____
Is a good cook. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Is a sports enthusiast. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Can speak a First Peoples language. Name: _____ Details: _____	Has more than three siblings. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Knows who Eden Robinson is. Name: _____ Detail: _____
Knows how to operate a boat. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Has ever read poetry for enjoyment. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Has had an unusual pet. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Can name 10 First Nations groups in BC. Name: _____ Detail: _____	Has more than one heritage. Name: _____ Detail: _____
Name: _____ Detail: _____	Name: _____ Detail: _____	Name: _____ Detail: _____	Name: _____ Detail: _____	Name: _____ Detail: _____



## LEARNING LOG

One way to facilitate your learning is to provide opportunities for you to reflect on (think about) what you are learning. This learning log is going to be written evidence of what you are learning about. The purpose of this log is to help you respond thoughtfully to learning experiences in and out of the classroom. These learning experiences will include small and large group discussions, readings, listening to people speak, and field trips.

Writing about what you are learning is not just recording “we learned about... today.” You need to share as much as you can about what you have learned, and how you learned it. You can explain what your understanding was before a class/experience, whether or not your understanding has shifted, and if so, how. You can also use this opportunity to write about what is challenging for you in your learning. In some cases this learning log will be the only evidence to assess your learning, so it needs to be as thoughtful and as complete as possible. Make as many connections as possible between what you are learning and your own experiences, values, and ideas.

Some sentence starters to help you get started could be

- I found this class/experience interesting because \_\_\_\_\_
- This makes me question/think about \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_
- Some questions that this raises for me are \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ has helped me understand that \_\_\_\_\_
- I can now see the link between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

## ASSESSMENT

The assessment of your log will be based on two things: the number of entries, and the quality of entries. A quality entry is one that thoughtfully responds to the assigned prompt or question, and shows thoughtful reflection on your learning. Each entry will be marked out of 4 marks. You will not be graded on spelling, grammar etc, but you are expected to show some effort to write as well as you can. There is no length requirement for the entries, but the entries should be long enough to adequately develop your ideas.

### Criteria for Assessing Learning Log Entries

<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• response fully relates to day’s activity, experience or question</li><li>• response is fully developed and shows evidence of new understanding of experience or reading</li><li>• response fully links experience or reading to previous learning</li><li>• response shows insight, and contains fully developed relevant details or examples</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• response fully relates to day’s activity, experience or question</li><li>• response is fully developed and shows evidence of understanding of experience/reading</li><li>• response links activity, experience or reading to previous learning</li><li>• response contains relevant details or examples</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• response just barely relates to day’s activity/experience or question</li><li>• response shows that some evidence of understanding or thinking about the activity, reading or experience, but the development of response is minimal</li><li>• response tries to link activity, experience or reading to previous learning</li><li>• response contains details or examples</li></ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• minimal response that does not relate to the day’s activity, experience, or question</li></ul>

## PARTICIPATION IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

<b>1</b> <b>Not Yet Within</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Minimally Meets</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Fully Meets</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Exceeds</b> <b>Expectations</b>
Does not contribute to conversation, or contributes in an inappropriate manner.	Contributes to discussion occasionally.	Contributes to discussion regularly.	Contributes to discussion regularly and thoughtfully.
Dominates conversation. Does not encourage others to speak	Talks too much at times. Sometimes encourages others to speak.	Does not dominate conversation. Encourages others to speak.	Does not dominate conversation. Encourages others to speak, often through asking questions.
Is disrespectful of others' opinions.	Is usually respectful of others' opinions.	Is always respectful of others' opinions.	Responds to others' opinions in a thoughtful manner.
Does not attempt to understand other group members' contributions.	Understands others' contributions.	Understands others' contributions, and is able to modify own thinking.	Reflects on others' contributions, and is able to modify own thinking.
Does not express any ideas.	Expresses ideas clearly. Contributes ideas, experiences and information that the group is able to use.	Expresses ideas clearly. Contributes ideas, experiences and information that the group is able to use.	Expresses own ideas clearly. Contributes ideas, experiences and information that the group is able to use.
Tries to express ideas clearly, but has some difficulties.	Tries to elaborate or extend ideas when prompted.	Elaborates or extends own ideas as needed. Provides examples to illustrate a point.	Offers clarification, explanation, or elaboration as needed to extend ideas. May use comparisons, analogies, or examples to illustrate a point. Synthesizes and extends others' ideas or opinions.
Does not participate or work co-operatively in group activity.	Needs reminding to participate or work co-operatively with others.	Participates and works co-operatively with others.	Participates and works co-operatively with all others, and often takes on extra responsibilities.
Creates conflict within a group. Is not able to recognize when conflict disrupts a group's process.	Recognizes when conflict arises and tries to deal with it.	Recognizes when conflict arises and deals with it appropriately.	Recognizes when conflict may arise, and uses strategies to avert it.

## **UNIT 2: ORAL TRADITION**

“For countless centuries, First Nations knowledge, traditions, and cultures have been passed down from one generation to another in stories, and narratives, as well as through songs, dances and ceremonial artefacts. Before Europeans arrived in B.C., First Nations had oral cultures: their languages had no written form. The oral tradition was integrated into every facet of life and was the basis of the education system. The education system in an oral tradition is very precise and procedural: the information is taught to the next generation exactly as it was taught to the one before. Stories are used because they are easier to remember: you learn by listening closely and remembering. The oral tradition passed on the spiritual beliefs of the people and the lineage of families. It recorded ownership of property and territory, political issues, legal proceedings and survival skills. The oral tradition also mapped the geography of an area, and it recorded history.”

from *B.C. First Nations Studies* course textbook

### **OVERVIEW**

The oral tradition includes oral narratives (or stories) that are used to teach skills, transmit cultural values and mores, convey news, record family and community histories, and explain our natural world. Along with narratives, the oral tradition also includes oratory (formal speech) and song. In recent history many oral narratives have been recorded in audio or visual recordings, which have then been transcribed into writing. For this unit, it is important that the students be exposed to the oral versions of the narratives, oratories, and songs whenever possible. In order to do this and to facilitate authentic learning experiences, you will need to establish connections with the local First Peoples community, or Aboriginal organizations such as Friendship Houses or Learning Centres. The connections to local Aboriginal communities or organizations are also important, in that this can help you and your students become familiar with local First Peoples protocol (as protocol can vary from nation to nation).

A vital aspect of this unit is the inclusion of First Peoples in the teaching of the curriculum. This is facilitated by bringing First Peoples guests skilled in various aspects of the oral tradition into the classroom, and by bringing the students outside the classroom to participate in events in Aboriginal communities, or with Aboriginal organizations.

This unit provides opportunities for students to examine traditional and contemporary applications of oral tradition in First Peoples cultures and to gain an understanding of why the oral tradition is important to humanity.

It also provides opportunities for students to practice aspects of the oral tradition, in small and large groups, and in informal and formal settings, to develop their sense of voice and facilitate their sense of social and personal agency.

Much of the work of this unit involves students participating in small and large group discussion, as well as personal response writing in a Learning Log (see attached). In addition, students will create a variety of oral assignments, individually and with partners. For assignments other than the Learning Log and the Self-Assessments (see assessment tools provided at the end of this unit), you and the students together will generate criteria with which you will evaluate the assignments.

### **Primary Text**

King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (recorded version and/or print version; recorded version preferred)

**Supplementary Texts**

BC Ministry of Education. *BC First Nations Studies* (course textbook) Victoria: Government Publication Services, 2003

BC Ministry of Education. *Shared Learnings*. Victoria: 2007

“The Ts’mshen and Nisga’a Chiefs Visit Victoria, 1887” from *Persistence and Change*, p. 156

Chief Dan George. “Lament for Confederation” (audio version or written transcript)

local and non-local First Peoples narratives including origin or creation stories, teaching stories, or family or community histories that can be used in the classroom

**Web sites**

British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF). <http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6284>

Centennial Celebrations <http://www.vancouverhistory.ca/chronology1967.htm>

Time: 18-25 classes

**LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:**

- Oral and Written “Story”
- What does “Story” Mean?
- Guest Speaker or Field Experience
- Components of Oral Tradition
- Visual Organization of Information
- The Relationship between Cultures and Their Stories
- Using Narratives to Teach
- Elder Interview
- Land Use Stories
- Speech Making 1`
- Speech Making 2
- Extension Activity/Enrichment Experience
- Personal or Family Story
- Our Stories
- Formal Speeches and Interview Presentations

**Handouts and Assessment Tools**

- Learning Log Entries
- Participation in Group Discussions and Activities
- Response Questions: “You’ll Never Believe What Happened’ Is Always a Great Way To Start”

## ***Oral and Written “Story”***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, C2, C9, C10

Begin the class by telling the students a story from memory. The narrative could be a personal learning story, a family story, or a historical event. Afterward, discuss with students the differences between hearing and reading. Then discuss how learning about something in a narrative form helps people remember information.

Introduce students to the unit. Ask, and post, the following opening discussion questions:

- What is oral language?
- What are some examples of oral forms of communication?
- Think about the differences between written and oral language. How do we put language together if we are speaking it as opposed to writing it?
- How is the reader engaged differently?
- What other non-verbal components of communication come into play in oral communication? Do we value one form more than the other? Why or why not?
- What do you perceive as some of the advantages and drawbacks of each form of communication?

Ask students to quietly think about the questions; then have them share their answers with a partner. Ask partners to then form groups of four and share their answers. Ask each group to put its answers on chart paper to post in the room. Have students do a gallery walk to read each group’s answers. Debrief as a class the answers on the posters.

Advise students that they will be keeping a Learning Log for the lessons that involve the First Nations oral tradition. Explain that much of the work they will do will involve talking to classmates, and that they will be self-assessing their participation in small and large group discussion. The Learning Log will be their written record of what they are learning. Review the Learning Log criteria and the criteria for participation in discussions and activities (see the assessment tools provided at the end of this unit). Ask students to respond to the following questions in their learning logs: What do they already know about the First Peoples oral tradition? Did their ideas about oral communication remain the same or change after talking with their classmates and hearing or seeing others’ answers to the questions?

## ***What does “Story” Mean?***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, B13, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

Introduce Thomas King, giving some biographical information about him and his works. Play the audio version of Chapter 1 “‘You’ll Never Believe What Happened’ Is Always a Great Way to Start” from *The Truth About Stories* from Thomas King’s Massey lectures. If the audio version is not available, read aloud from the written version.

Ask students to record in their learning logs their first impressions of what they heard.

Discuss what “story” means. Stretch students’ concept of “story” to move away from the concept of short story as fiction.

Review the term “irony.” Provide students with questions (sample questions are included at the end of this unit) to think about before listening to “You Never Believe What Happened....” After listening to King’s piece a second time, provide students with the written version of the reading. Ask students to work in small groups to discuss the questions. Then have students individually write their own answers and submit them for assessment.

## ***Guest Speaker or Field Experience***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5

Invite an Elder or other guest from local First Nations community or First Peoples organization to speak with the class to discuss the traditional and current application of First Nations oral tradition. **If possible, take the class to visit a First Peoples community or organization to meet with a speaker.**

Before the visit, ask students to brainstorm in small groups what they know about the First Nations oral tradition. Ask students to prepare at least one question each regarding something they would like to know about, know more about, or would like clarified. If necessary, provide some questions for students to ask such as the following:

- What are the purposes of narratives?
- Are there protocols for sharing stories?
- What are the local terms for specific types of stories?

Students are to record responses to these questions in their learning logs. At the end of the visit, ask each student to share aloud with the guest, and the class, one thing he or she learned from the speaker.

## ***Components of Oral Tradition***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A5

Let students know that they will be continuing to examine various aspects of oral tradition, this time adding print or other resources to what they learned in previous lessons. Ask students to form small groups. Assign one of the following aspects of the First Peoples oral tradition to each group:

- life lessons
- individual and community responsibilities and obligations
- rites of passage
- family histories
- songs
- creation stories
- formal speeches

Provide a variety of print resources for students to access (such as the *BC First Nations Studies 12* textbook, *Shared Learnings*, and any locally developed First Peoples material regarding the oral tradition), as well as opportunities for students to access the Internet. Remind students they can also use what they learned from the speaker, and what they may have already known.

Let students know that they will be doing a “jigsaw” activity where each group will be responsible for learning about their assigned aspect of the oral tradition, and then teaching what they have learned with others in the class. Re-form groups so that each of the new groups now has at least one member of each of the previously formed groups. Ask students to now share with their new group what they had learned in their previous groups. Encourage them to find creative ways to ensure that the other students in their new groups have learned this new information. Have students complete a self evaluation of their performance.

## ***Visual Organization of Information***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, C4

Review what students learned in the previous lesson. Ask students to work with a partner to create a visual organizer (such as poster, diagram, collage, chart etc.) that illustrates what aspects of the oral tradition remain the same from pre-colonialism to contemporary times, and which aspects have changed. As a class determine the criteria that will be used to evaluate the visual organizer. Let students know that the organizer will be both self-evaluated and peer-evaluated.

Students will be asked to present their visual organizers to the class explaining why they chose the format they used and how that format was appropriate to the information they were showing.

## ***The Relationship between Cultures and Their Stories***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B13, C4, C10

Post and read the following quote (from *The Truth About Stories*) to the class: "... contained within creation stories are relationships that help define the nature of the universe and how cultures understand the world in which they exist (103)."

Ask students to listen to "You'll Never Believe What Happened" again, focussing on the part of the narrative dealing with the creation stories. Provide students with a variety of First Nations origin or creation stories, including stories that are local, stories from other geographical regions of the province, stories that involve the trickster archetype. **If possible, have oral versions available for students to listen to.**

Introduce and familiarize students with the concept of archetypes, especially the trickster. Discuss the "Trickster" archetype found in the stories.

Ask students to form small discussion groups. Ask the students to compare and contrast the stories, identifying the similarities and difference between stories from different nations. Also ask students to identify geographical influence on creation stories (e.g. Raven as the trickster for coastal peoples, Coyote as the trickster for peoples more inland). Remind students that First Nations stories are often rooted in place. Several stories make people think of landmarks of the area (such as interesting rock formations, the shape of an island, or a narrow valley) which draws the listener into deeper into the story.

Address the blending of the natural and supernatural world. Discuss how this relates to First Peoples views about the relationship between people and their environment. Connect the discussion to the human/animal hierarchy of the Christian anthropocentric point of view compared to traditional First Peoples worldviews with humans as part of the interdependent natural world (as talked about by Thomas King).

Ask students to work in small groups to create a representation that shows their understanding of First Peoples views about the interconnectedness between people and their environments. Encourage the students to be creative in how they choose to represent (i.e. dramatization, tableau, music piece, painting, collage, sculpture, dance, diorama, poetry etc.). As a class, generate criteria with which the representation will be evaluated.

Have students summarize their group discussion and what they've learned in their learning logs.

## ***Using Narratives to Teach***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, C10

Provide students with a variety of **local** and non-local First Nations teaching narratives (life lessons, community responsibilities, rites of passage, land use). Have students work in partners to read aloud and listen to some of the stories. Ask how learning from a story (narrative) compares to other ways of learning, and why stories are powerful ways of teaching and learning. Have students share their ideas orally with a partner and then write their ideas in their learning logs.

Review the use of “metaphor” to communicate. Provide students with transcripts of historical meetings in which First Nations people spoke with non-Europeans (such as “The Ts’msyen and Nisga’a Chiefs Visit Victoria” from *Persistence and Change: A History of the Ts’msyen Nation*, School District No. 52). Ask students to work in partners and examine the narratives and transcripts to identify examples of literary devices they can find, including metaphor. Ask students to explain, in their learning logs how using metaphors can help people to communicate.

Discuss how people of different ages can hear the same story, or see the same movie and enjoy it for different reasons. Ask them to think about a time when they have seen a movie for a second time, or re-read a story after a period of time and have come to understand something new from it the second time around. Ask students to choose one of the narratives. Ask them to identify in their learning logs how lessons a young child might learn from that story, and what lessons a young adult might gain from that story. Ask them to reflect, in their learning logs, on how a story holds different meaning for people hearing at various stages of their lives.

## ***Across Cultures***

**Learning Outcomes:** B13, C10

**Note:** This lesson requires a teacher who can facilitate the BAFA/BAFA Cross-Cultural Simulation Game. Training for teachers has been, and continues to be, provided free of charge to teachers around the province from the BCTF. For further information, consult the BCTF web site:  
<http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6284>

Introduce the term “ethnographer.” Discuss how the early transcription of oral stories could have varied depending on the cultural background of the ethnographer who recorded them.

Let students know that they will be participating in a cultural simulation game to help them understand how difficult it can be to comprehend different cultures, and how we often interpret others’ action according to our own belief system or world view.

Have students participate in the game. Afterward, debrief the experience.

Ask students to use their learning logs to reflect on the experience of the BAFA game.

## ***Elder Interview***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A5, A6, A7, A11, C10

**Note:** In advance of interviewing an Elder, have students prepare questions and review them to ensure that they are respectful and appropriate. Give a copy of the questions in advance of the Elder being interviewed, so that he or she can think of how to reply ahead of time.



## Unit 2: Oral Tradition

Have students each interview an Elder from a local First Peoples community or organization to discuss how traditional stories have been, and are currently used in the traditional territory the students are in (or in the traditional territory of the student's family if they wish). Before the assignment, as a class, brainstorm ways of showing respect to the interviewee, ways to show thanks to the person, and some questions they can ask.

If the Elders are willing, ask students to audio or video tape the interview rather than take notes. Have students then present to the class what they have learned from the process. They can choose to create an oral presentation, or create an alternate visual presentation that they then explain to the class. For the oral presentation option, students can choose to create a video or audio tape of themselves to play for the class.

As a class, co-create criteria by which the presentation will be evaluated, allowing for the different forms of presentation. After the presentations, ask students to reflect on the process of interviewing, the process of presenting, and what they've learned in their learning logs.

### Land Use Stories

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, C10

As a class, discuss the tension between the modern North American views of oral communication as an "unreliable" form of communication (e.g., information can change as it passes orally from one person to another). Then discuss how stories were traditionally passed from one generation to the next generation, or from person to person in First Nations cultures. Students should by now have been exposed to the concept that stories have to be memorized by the receiver of the story before the story can be passed down. Ask students to think about the skill involved in being able to learn stories word for word without having them written down, and about the cognitive capacity required for people to store their histories in this way.

Ask students to work with a partner. Ask students to think of a familiar short story from their lives (perhaps a distant or recent meaningful event), and give them five minutes to jot down the events in the story in bullet form, to help them sequence and retain information. Then ask them to then tell the story to their partners without consulting their notes. Have their partners try to retell the story back to them. Ask students to see how many times they think they would need to hear the story to learn it. Ask students to think about why this skill has been lost in modern North America. Have students reflect on this experience in their learning logs.

Introduce the Delgamuuxw case to the class. Provide students with information from pages 144-146 in *B.C. First Nations Studies 12* course textbook. Ask students to do further in-class research on the recognition of Canadian courts of First Nations oral history. Provide students with access to the internet and/or further readings on the subject. Ask students to use their research to answer the following question: How has Delgamuuxw served to "validate" the First Peoples oral tradition in contemporary Canadian society? This question can be answered in their learning logs.

### Speech Making 1

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, A11, B13, C10

Review the use of *metaphor* in language. Familiarize students with the terms *rhetorical structure*, *flow*, *rhythm*, *weaving narratives*, and *cyclical nature*. Discuss with students how these are often components of formal First Peoples speech making. Let students know that they will be listening to the words of two men who made powerful speeches in different places in the latter half of this century. Discuss the concept of involuntary vs. voluntary minorities (First Peoples and African-American slaves have a shared history of oppression. Though Aboriginal people were invaded by their oppressors and the slaves were brought to this

continent, they have similar experiences of racism and lack of autonomy. See David Corson's work for more information).

Introduce students to Chief Dan George, giving some biographical information about his life and his works. Provide some context for what was happening in Canada in 1967 (centennial celebrations). See Internet site [www.vancouverhistory.ca/chronology1967.htm](http://www.vancouverhistory.ca/chronology1967.htm) for brief information about the context within which Chief Dan George gave his "Lament for Confederation."

Play an audio version of Chief Dan George's "Lament for Confederation" (If an audio version is not available, have the transcript pre-recorded.) Have students listen once through. Then ask them to listen again and try to identify some of the components introduced to them at the beginning of the lesson. Let them know that this task will be difficult, but it is a worthwhile exercise to stretch their listening capacity. Ask students to form small groups and provide them with a written transcript of "Lament for Confederation." Ask students to work together to identify specific examples of the speech-making components. Let them know that they will have to work together to come to agreement about what to write.

Following this, introduce students to Martin Luther King Jr., giving some biographical information about his life and his works. Provide students with a context of what was happening in the southern United States in 1963 and the American civil rights movement. Play an audio version of "I Have A Dream." Repeat the previous exercise with this speech.

Ask students to work in small groups to examine other components of both the speeches. Ask them first to explore sense of voice and social agency, and discuss what motivated these speakers. Ask them to also discuss the political climate and the risks these speakers took saying what they did, when they said it. Ask them to also comment on the use of repetition and other literary devices the speakers used to communicate their ideas. After the discussion, ask students to then summarize their group's discussion in their learning logs. They must ensure that they record their thoughts on each of the discussion issues.

## ***Speech Making 2***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A6, A7, B12, C1, C2, C10

As a class, brainstorm authentic reasons for making a speech (other than class requirement). Brainstorm what motivates people to make speeches (passion about something, acknowledging a formal occasion, trying to share ideas we think are important etc.)

Post and ask students the following questions:

- What is important for us to change in our society?
- What are you passionate about? What do you want people to know about you?
- What problems do youth face? How should schools change to better address your needs?
- What outrages you about your school, your community, or your world?
- What do you think is important for younger people to know before they reach the age you are now?
- What do you wish adults really understood about who you are, or what you need at this point in your lives?

Ask students to respond to one or two of the questions in their learning logs.

Ask students to each choose a reason to make a speech (based on what motivated them from the above list of questions). As a class brainstorm where, and to whom, they could make speeches for authentic reasons (i.e., to younger students, to a Parent Advisory Committee, at a formal occasion, to school administrators, to a band council, to other students, etc.). Let students know that they will be required over a set period of time to make

## ***Unit 2: Oral Tradition***

a speech in an authentic setting. If the intended audience is other youth, then the classroom can be considered an authentic setting.

Let students know that they will be provided with ample time to create and practice their speeches before making them (ideally, the speeches will be made after the rest of the lessons in the unit are completed, and students will be provided with time to practice their speeches with partners). For any speeches that will be made outside of the classroom, students will pre-record themselves on video for assessment purposes.

Discuss with students the benefits of listening to, or revisiting a text multiple times, for different reasons. Re-play audio version of Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* from Thomas King's Massey lectures and have students identify literary devices Thomas King uses to enhance his communication. Ask students to also pay attention to how King weaves his personal narratives through his piece. As a class, review the effective components of speech-making (drawing also on the speeches of Chief Dan George and Martin Luther King Jr.)

Brainstorm the non-verbal qualities of effective speech-making. Using the brainstormed material, as a class co-create a set of criteria by which the speeches will be evaluated. It may be helpful to ask students to create short examples of non-effective speech-making components (verbal and nonverbal).

Have students use their learning logs to reflect on the experience of listening to a text multiple times for different purposes. Ask them to identify what "new" things they hear or understand with each additional hearing of the text, and write about how it affected their interaction with the story King tells to hear his narratives woven throughout the story.

### ***Extension Activity/Enrichment Experience***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, C2, C10

If possible, have the students attend a First Peoples event to listen to a speech. Have them record and reflect on that experience in their learning logs.

### ***Personal or Family Story***

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

Ask students to think about a personal or family story to share with the class. It can be a funny or serious story. It can also be a description of an event that caused them to learn something about themselves. If it is a family story, or a story that is owned by someone else, ask them to make sure they have permission to tell the story. Create small to medium sized groups for students to tell their stories in.

### ***Our Stories***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, C1, C2, C5, C6, C7

Provide students with the following quote from *The Truth About Stories*:

One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves. We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness (153).

Ask students the following questions:

- What are some stories told about you or to you that colour who you believe yourself to be? Provide examples that may have to do with gender, place in your family (e.g. “I am a middle child, therefore I am .....,” “I am the youngest child, therefore I am .....,” “I am a male, therefore I have to be .....,”).
- What are some stories about your families that affect how you feel about your family? Provide some examples that may have to do with a family’s economic or social status (community leader, doctor, sanitation worker). Provide examples that may have to do with labels such as personal characteristics, group affiliations, ethnic heritage...

Review the components of a narrative essay. Review the 6 point holistic marking scale. Ask students to write a multi-paragraph (approximately 250 words) narrative composition addressing one of the above questions.

### ***Formal Speeches and Interview Presentations***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A7, A13

Have students present their Interview Assignment presentations to the class. Have students who have chosen other teens as their audience, present their speeches to the class. Provide opportunities for peer assessment of students’ presentations.

## LEARNING LOG ENTRIES

<b>1</b> <b>Does not Meet</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Minimally Meets</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Fully Meets</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Exceeds</b> <b>Expectations</b>
Minimal response that does not relate to the day's activity, experience, or question.	Response just barely relates to day's activity/experience or question.	Response fully relates to day's activity, experience or question.	Response fully relates to day's activity, experience or question.
	Response shows that some evidence of understanding or thinking about the activity, reading or experience, but the development of response is minimal.	Response is fully developed and shows evidence of understanding of experience/reading.	Response is fully developed and shows evidence of new understanding of experience or reading.
	Response tries to link activity, experience or reading to previous learning.	Response links activity, experience or reading to previous learning.	Response fully links experience or reading to previous learning.
	Response contains details or examples.	Response contains relevant details or examples.	Response shows insight, and contains fully developed relevant details or examples.

## PARTICIPATION IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

<b>1</b> <b>Not Yet Within</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Minimally Meets</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Fully Meets</b> <b>Expectations</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Exceeds</b> <b>Expectations</b>
Does not contribute to conversation, or contributes in an inappropriate manner.	Contributes to discussion occasionally.	Contributes to discussion regularly.	Contributes to discussion regularly and thoughtfully.
Dominates conversation. Does not encourage others to speak	Talks too much at times. Sometimes encourages others to speak.	Does not dominate conversation. Encourages others to speak.	Does not dominate conversation. Encourages others to speak, often through asking questions.
Is disrespectful of others' opinions.	Is usually respectful of others' opinions.	Is always respectful of others' opinions.	Responds to others' opinions in a thoughtful manner.
Does not attempt to understand other group members' contributions.	Understands others' contributions.	Understands others' contributions, and is able to modify own thinking.	Reflects on others' contributions, and is able to modify own thinking.
Does not express any ideas.	Expresses ideas clearly. Contributes ideas, experiences and information that the group is able to use.	Expresses ideas clearly. Contributes ideas, experiences and information that the group is able to use.	Expresses own ideas clearly. Contributes ideas, experiences and information that the group is able to use.
Tries to express ideas clearly, but has some difficulties.	Tries to elaborate or extend ideas when prompted.	Elaborates or extends own ideas as needed. Provides examples to illustrate a point.	Offers clarification, explanation, or elaboration as needed to extend ideas. May use comparisons, analogies, or examples to illustrate a point. Synthesizes and extends others' ideas or opinions.
Does not participate or work co-operatively in group activity.	Needs reminding to participate or work co-operatively with others.	Participates and works co-operatively with others.	Participates and works co-operatively with all others, and often takes on extra responsibilities.
Creates conflict within a group. Is not able to recognize when conflict disrupts a group's process.	Recognizes when conflict arises and tries to deal with it.	Recognizes when conflict arises and deals with it appropriately.	Recognizes when conflict may arise, and uses strategies to avert it.

**RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**“‘YOU’LL NEVER BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED’  
IS ALWAYS A GREAT WAY TO START”**

**by Thomas King**

*Please answer all the following questions as fully as you can. Make sure your answers are clear, thoughtful, and free from grammatical error. Provide examples from the story to support what you say.*

1. What does King mean when he writes “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (2)?
2. King introduces his mother by telling a story about her. What does the reader learn about the kind of person she is through this story? What does the reader learn about the world in which she lived?
3. King also tells the reader a story about his father. Through this story, what does the reader learn about the kind of person King’s father was? What does the reader learn about the relationship between King and his father?
4. Explain the irony found in King’s aunt’s search for King’s father.
5. What does King mean when he says “stories control our lives” (9)?
6. On page 17 King “interrupts” his story with a comment to the reader. What is the effect of this technique?
7. King writes “contained within creation stories are relationships that help to define the nature of the universe and how cultures understand the world in which they exist” (10). What does King mean by this? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
8. What does King have to say about using different strategies for different stories (22-23)? Do you agree or disagree?
9. How would you answer the King’s question “Do the stories we tell reflect the world as it truly is” (26)?

## UNIT 3: STORYTELLING

### OVERVIEW

This unit provides opportunities for students to develop

- an understanding of the uniqueness of stories by First Peoples authors, including
  - role of narrator
  - recursive, circular structures
  - symbols and motifs (e.g., shape-shifter, trickster)
  - the importance of humour
- an understanding of the role that stories play in traditional and contemporary First Peoples cultures (e.g., oral tradition, contemporary social and political issues)
- an understanding of literary elements and devices as evidenced in stories by First Peoples authors (e.g., point of view, irony, imagery, epiphany, hyperbole, allusion, paradox, understatement)
- the ability to respond to aspects of stories (literary, social, ethical) in oral and written communications.

### Primary Texts

King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories*, Chapter #1: “‘You’ll Never Believe What Happened’ is Always a Great Way to Start” and Chapter #5 “What is it about us that You Don’t Like?” Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2003.

From *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, edited by Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2005:

- "Captive in an English Circus" as told by Harry Robinson, pp. 60-80
- "A Story of Starvation" as told by Marion Tuu'luq, pp. 81-85
- Beth Brant. "A Long Story" pp.145-150
- Thomas King, "The One About Coyote Going West," pp. 201-204
- John McLeod, "The Shimmering Tree" pp. 272-279
- Ruby Slipperjack, "Blueberry Days" pp. 381-386
- Jordan Wheeler, "A Mountain Legend" pp. 511-516
- Richard Van Camp, "Mermaids," pp. 557-565

These stories represent a variety of styles and forms:

- **oral tradition stories:**  
“Captive in an English Circus” and “A Story of Starvation” – both of these are stories as told to a recorder; “Captive in an English Circus” is written in verse in an attempt to capture nuances of oral telling
- **stories that explain aspects of natural world:**  
“The One About Coyote Going West” and “A Shivering Tree”
- **memoir:**  
“Blueberry Days”
- **conventional short story:**  
“A Mountain Legend”
- **unconventional short stories:**  
“A Long Story” (two stories separated by 100 years juxtaposed)  
“Mermaids,” a very modern story composed in a non-linear narrative form, with fragments or separate panels interspersing background information.



#### ALERT

There are some occurrences of offensive language and sensitive subject matter throughout the stories 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 texts have received an authorized or recommended resource designation from the Board of the school district or local education authority.

This caution exists particularly for *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, which contains some material not recommended for classroom use. 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.

The following stories can be used as extensions for this unit:

Erdrich, Louise. “Fleur” from *Tracks*. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.

Hayden Taylor, Drew. “The Boy in the Ditch” from *Fearless Warriors*. Burnaby: Talon Books, 1998.

Lindley, Roxanne. “The Gift” from *Gatherings Volume 13*. Penticton: Theytus Books, Ltd., 2002.

Maracle, Lee. “Bertha” from *Sojourners and Sundogs*. Victoria: Press Gang Publishers, 1999.

#### LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Core Questions to Introduce the Unit

The Truth About Stories

“Captive in an English Circus” as told by Harry Robinson

“A Story of Starvation” as told by Marion Tuu’luq

“A Long Story” by Beth Brant

“The One About Coyote Going West” by Thomas King

“The Shivering Tree” by John McLeod

“Blueberry Days” by Ruby Slipperjack

“A Mountain Legend” by Jordan Wheeler

“Mermaids” by Richard Van Camp

#### Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Unit Projects

Pre- and Post-Unit Reflection

## ***Core Questions to Introduce the Unit***

The following questions could be posted on chart paper at the start of the unit, revisited and added to throughout the unit.

- How do stories by First Peoples writers reveal/respond to the “shared experiences of Aboriginal people?”
- How are the stories written by First Peoples writers unique in terms of voice, narrative structure, subject matter, symbolism, use of language?
- What are the purposes of stories written by First Peoples writers (e.g., entertain, enlighten, inform, escape, etc.)?
- How are stories written by First Peoples writers similar/different from stories written by non-Aboriginal authors?
- How do conventional tools for understanding short stories (e.g., plot diagram, character development, point of view) apply to the study of stories written by First Peoples writers?

An effective strategy is to have students use sticky notes and attach them to the appropriate question following discussion (exit slips). Alternatively, the questions can be used as part of a literature circle approach with students referencing these core questions along with other aspects typically dealt with in literature circles (plot summary, vocabulary, literary elements, etc.).

## **Ways to Support and Encourage Oral Language**

**Note:** The EFP 12 curriculum places a major emphasis on the use of oral language – to develop and demonstrate understanding. Many of the suggested questions for each of the stories would lend themselves to small-group and whole-group discussions. Teachers frequently use writing-to-learn strategies, such as learning logs and reader response journals, or they can offer students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their thinking through oral language. Sample assessment instruments for learning logs and reader response journals have been included with this unit. The same rubrics used for written responses could easily be modified for assessing oral language.

It is essential that students expand their concept of “story” in two distinct ways: to move away from the concept of story as fiction, and to move away from the concept that a written story is inherently superior to or more valid than one told orally. To this end, invite an Elder or other guest from local First Nations community or First Peoples organization to share an oral story. Ideally, this would be a story that conveys local traditions or explains aspects of the local environment. Students could reflect on their experience of listening to an oral story and compare its impact to that of reading a story. Possible points of comparison could include ways of engaging audience, maintaining interest, values and important traditions conveyed, etc.

To ensure a positive experience for both the guest and the students, it is important that the teacher prepare the students before the guest arrives. This should include some information-sharing about the purpose of the guest’s visit, in particular, understanding and appreciating oral tradition.

Also, depending on the topic/presentation, the teacher could lead the students in various pre-presentation activities (in the same way that students are taught to do pre-reading activities before engaging a written text). These activities could include creating a Know/Wonder/Learn chart. The “know” portion of the chart would establish the students’ background knowledge of the topic, and the “wonder” portion of the chart would be an effective way of generating questions to ask the guest. Following the presentation, students could then ask some of the questions not answered by the presentation, engage in a discussion with the guest, and then add their newfound knowledge in the “learn” portion of the chart.

Another effective post-presentation activity could be a closing circle activity led by the guest. This might go something like this. Let’s say that the guest’s topic of discussion was something non-controversial like the

### *Unit 3: Storytelling*

diminishing fish stocks due to environmental change. Once the teacher has the students arranged in circle format, the guest could put the question "From your perspective, what might you as an individual do to try to improve the environment so that the fish may no longer be in danger?" Students would be allowed to close their eyes for one minute and think about what it is they could do, and then each within the circle would have the opportunity to respond (refer to the lesson on Talking Circles on page 7 of the Introductory Unit). There could be opportunities for small group discussions on the significance of the message from the guest followed up with a group summary thank you note that could be mailed to the guest.

The two follow-up activities would engage the students and the presenter, thereby allowing the students to "learn" something directly from an individual and then having the opportunity at some point to apply this learning. This would address the point of oral tradition – learning from storytelling.

In Thomas King's " 'You'll Never Believe What Happened' Is Always a Great Way to Start," he includes a personal narrative of his mother working her way through the aerospace industry. He details how she fought against gender discrimination and racism. Discuss with the students the importance of this story for King and what it suggests about what he values. Have the students consider a story that is told within their family and what it suggests about the individual family member. It can be a funny or serious story. It could also be a description of an event that caused them to learn something about themselves. If it is a family story, or a story that is owned by someone else, ask them to make sure they have permission to tell the story. Have the students pay particular attention to how they will organize the story for oral presentation. Create small groups for students to tell their stories in.

**Assessment:** Participation in telling a story, and listening respectfully to another's story.

## Unit Projects

	Core Tasks (50% of total)
30	<p>1. In a formal literary essay, choose one or more of the stories from this unit and <b>analyze</b> one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the story reflects or conveys unique aspects of First Peoples culture, history, or values</li> <li>• how the story reflects/conveys unique aspects of Aboriginal storytelling (structure, voice, role of narrator, symbols &amp; motifs, humour)</li> </ul> <p>The essay should be structured as a formal academic essay of about 500 words long. Include a “Works Cited” page listing the story information in a consistent style (e.g., MLA, APA).</p>
15	<p>2. In a chart or in slide show format, <b>identify</b> instances of literary devices such as <i>metaphor</i>, <i>simile</i>, <i>repetition</i>, <i>imagery</i>, <i>symbolism</i>, <i>allusion</i>, <i>narrative point of view</i>, and <i>irony</i> where they occur in any of the short stories. <b>Explain</b> how the example displays the particular literary device.</p>
5	<p>3. Invite a classmate to <b>edit</b> your literary essay. Fill out your “My Writing Progress Chart” accordingly. <b>Revise</b> your work to reflect their suggestions. <b>Include</b> your original draft with their edit marks and your revised draft in your final portfolio.</p>
5	<p>4. <b>Complete</b> a <i>pre</i> and <i>post unit reflection sheet</i>.</p>

%	Choice Tasks ( Choose various assignments for a maximum of 50%)
20	<p>1. <b>Imagine</b> that one of the stories will be read aloud on a podcast and it is your job to select accompanying music. <b>Locate</b> three or more appropriate vocal or instrumental selections to be played as an introduction, interlude, and fade-out to the reading. <b>Prepare</b> a pitch (written or oral) you would present to the producer of the program, explaining how your musical choices would contribute to the listeners’ enjoyment and understanding of the narrative. <b>Include</b> a “Works Cited” page listing the story and the musical selections’ information in accordance with MLA Style.</p>
20	<p>2. <b>Create</b> a “Readers’ Theatre” script for a significant scene from one of the stories. Limit the narrator’s scripts to the bare essentials. Present to the class.</p>
20	<p>3. <b>Write</b> an original short story that exemplifies a distinctive feature of First Peoples storytelling, such as <i>recursive narrative structure</i>, <i>voice</i>, <i>social issues &amp; values</i>, <i>use of symbols &amp; motifs</i>, <i>humour</i>, <i>irony</i>.</p>
10	<p>4. <b>Design</b> a visually appealing plot graph that shows the unique narrative structure of one of the assigned stories.</p>
10	<p>5. On one side of an 8.5” by 11” paper, <b>present</b> 3 images that connect to one of the assigned stories. Beside, underneath, or above each image include a quote from the text that <b>enhances</b> the corresponding image. <b>Defend</b> the depth of images’ connections in a paragraph on the flip side of the paper.</p>
10	<p>6. <b>Find</b> an image not obviously related to one of the short stories. Photocopy it onto an overhead transparency. Make sure to use color or black and white to match the original. <b>Present</b> the transparency to the class explaining how it connects with the story.</p>
10	<p>7. <b>Create</b> and <b>tape</b> a monologue from the point of view of a character from one of the stories in which you provide the prequel or the back-story.</p>
10	<p>8. <b>Write</b> an epilogue to one of the stories that continues the plot or life of one of the main characters.</p>
10	<p>9. <b>Take quotes</b> from a story and <b>connect</b> them to aspects of First Peoples history or experience in Canada. In paragraph, Power Point, or poster format, identify and develop the specific connections.</p>
10	<p>10. In a poster format, <b>compare &amp; contrast</b> two stories on a thematic or other basis. Include a short paragraph (can be done in point form) explaining the connections.</p>
10	<p>11. In a poster format, <b>show</b> the connections between one of the short stories from the unit to another text (poem, song, novel, movie, newspaper or magazine article, etc.). Include a short paragraph (can be done in point form) explaining the connections.</p>
10	<p>12. <b>Identify</b> and <b>illustrate</b> three symbols from any of the stories. Provide quotes from the text. Provide a brief written or oral explanation of how the symbolism is unique from an First Peoples perspective.</p>

### **PRE- AND POST-UNIT REFLECTION**

Have students respond to the following statements at the start of the unit by colouring in either a green, yellow, or red circle.

- Green = full understanding and ability to demonstrate understanding
  - Yellow = some level of understanding and ability to demonstrate understanding
  - Red = no understanding nor ability to demonstrate understanding
1. I understand what is meant by “oral tradition” in stories written by First Peoples authors.
  2. I understand the role of humour in stories written by First Peoples authors.
  3. I understand the role of the narrator in stories written by First Peoples authors.
  4. I understand what is meant by recursive, circular structures in stories written by First Peoples authors.
  5. I understand the role that stories play in traditional and contemporary First Peoples cultures.
  6. I understand all three types of irony (verbal, situational, dramatic).
  7. I understand \_\_\_\_\_ (insert the literary element appropriate to the texts studied)
  8. I understand the limitations of applying conventional tools for analyzing short stories (e.g., plot diagram) to stories written by First Peoples authors.
  9. I understand the unique symbols and motifs in stories written by First Peoples authors:
    - Coyote, Raven (tricksters)
    - Shapeshifters (Nanabush)
    - Natural elements such as fire.
  10. I understand how stories written by First Peoples authors reveal/respond to the “shared experiences of Aboriginal peoples.”
  11. I understand the unique characteristics of stories written by First Peoples authors.
  12. I understand how the historical experiences of First Peoples in Canada is reflected in stories written by First Peoples authors.

In the post-unit reflection, students revisit these questions and fill in the circles that apply to their new level of understanding. Space could be provided on the post-unit reflection sheet for students to note examples or other ways of showing new understanding.

The post-unit reflection could be used as a study guide prior to a summative assessment. It would also serve to inform the teacher where additional instruction is required.

## ***The Truth About Stories***

### **Chapter 1: “‘You’ll Never Believe What Happened’ Is Always a Great Way to Start”**

#### ***Prereading Focus:***

Ask the students to retell the key elements of the Judeo-Christian creation story. Ask the students to retell a First Peoples creation story. Ask the students to point out similarities and differences between the two creation stories.

#### ***During Reading Focus:***

Ask the students to add to and/or amend the list of differences between the First Peoples and Judeo-Christian creation stories.

*Post-Reading Focus:*

Ask the students to respond to the quote on page 27 (referring to God's banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden): "I love you, God could have said, but I'm not happy with your behaviour. Let's talk this over. Try to do better next time. "What kind of world might we have created with that kind of story?"

Jeannette Armstrong quote: "Through my language I understand I am being spoken to, I'm not the one speaking. The words are coming from many tongues and mouths of Okanagan people and the land around them. I am a listener to the language's stories, and when my words form I am merely retelling the same stories in different patterns." (2)

- Story as a vehicle of people
- Language speaks through the storyteller, which conveys a sense of the role of the storyteller

Thomas King's personal narrative of his mother working her way through the aerospace industry. She fought against gender discrimination and racism. Have the students consider a story that is told within their family and what it suggests about the individual family member.

Creation story of the woman who fell from the sky:

- Charm enlists the support of numerous animals in trying to get some mud from the bottom of the ocean
- Otter finally succeeds and this forms the land
- Two twins (summer & winter)
- Dichotomies of sunshine & shadow (20)
- Dualities and complementary nature of opposites

Compares First Nations and Christian creation stories (22)

- Notes the ways in which the Judeo-Christian story influenced the development of that society
- Numerous "what ifs" for Genesis ("What if the animals had decided on their own names? What if Adam and Eve had simply been admonished for their foolishness?") (27)

**Chapter 5: "What Is it About Us that You Don't Like"**

**Note:** First paragraph repeats same pattern as previous chapters.

- Coyote/duck stories
- Coyote gets feathers from ducks by spreading fear of humans
- This works as a lead-in to this point that Indians are like ducks who gave up their "feathers" (land and resources) to whites
- Good example of verbal irony: "I'm not going to talk about it..." (128)
- Allegory: ducks losing feathers to coyotes as Indians losing land through treaty process to Canadian government

Deer Culler Story

- Starts on page 134 and is written in various sections or "panels" that are interspersed with discussion of Canadian government legislation affecting relations with First Peoples.

*Prereading Activity:*

Ask students to identify stories that have a didactic purpose (e.g., "Midas' Touch," "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Tortoise and the Hare") Ask them to consider the important lessons that these stories are meant to teach.

### ***Unit 3: Storytelling***

#### *During Reading Focus:*

- Have students note the recursive narrative structure of the chapter. In particular, how the coyote/duck & the deer culler stories lead to a “political” point and then back to the stories.
- Have students note the distinctions between the use of “Native” and “Indian” to refer to First Peoples in Canada. Who uses these terms and how are they different?
- Note the history of government legislation and policy affecting First Peoples in Canada. This could be done in a timeline.
- Note the various analogies within chapter, such as:
  - Duck/coyote – Coyote separates ducks from their feathers
  - Indians/government – government separates First Peoples from assets (land and resources) and rights
  - Quebecois and Indians – French can keep their identity despite whom they marry, while Indians cannot (under bill C-31).

#### *Post-Reading Activity:*

- Have students construct a T-chart in which they show points of comparison between the coyote/duck story and the Indian/government relationships. This could also be done in a timeline for the historical events and a corresponding plot diagram for the stories.
- Decide whether the use of story is effective in setting up and reinforcing the “political” points about the government’s treatment of First Peoples in Canada.

### ***“Captive in an English Circus” as told by Harry Robinson***

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

#### *Prereading Activity:*

Discuss with the students Wendy Wickwire’s rationale for writing the story down in verse rather than prose form.

I searched for a presentational style to capture the nuance of the oral tradition—the emphasis on certain phrases, intentional repetition, and dramatic rhythms and pauses. I have, therefore, set the stories in lines which mirror as closely as possible Harry’s rhythms of speech. Harry’s stories are really performed events, rather than fixed objects on a page.

Discuss with students ways in which First Peoples have been lied to, misled, or otherwise deceived by government authorities in Canada.

#### *During Reading Focus:*

Have the students note examples of where the recorder (Wendy Wickwire) was successful in using poetic form (line and stanza breaks) “to capture the nuance of the oral tradition—the emphasis on certain phrases, intentional repetition, and dramatic rhythms and pauses.”

Have the students note examples of how the authorities deceive Jim and his family while he is in captivity.

#### *Post-Reading Activity:*

- Consider to what extent the oral nature of this story either adds to or detracts from the veracity (truthfulness) of the account of what happened to George Jim.
- Research examples of First Peoples having to fight with authorities to recover the remains of ancestors.
- Discuss how Jim’s family had to contend with language and bureaucracy in their attempts to find him.

#### **Teacher Notes:**

- George Jim severely beats a white man, then figures he needs to kill him.
- Indian community tries to protect the white man by telling Jim the man is already dead

- Indian community helps Jim escape capture by providing him with food
- Jim is tricked into entering work camp, where he is clubbed and cuffed
- Jim receives a seven-year sentence. After three years, police and guards take him and put him on a train to Halifax. From there he is taken to England and Europe where he is put on display (lines 578-92).
- Jim meets another Indian named Charlie from Enderby, BC
- Charlie returns to BC and later contacts Jim's family
- Jim's family can't make sense of what has happened to Jim and ends up going to Westminster for answers
- They are told he died in prison, and twice they are given bodies to bury that are not Jim's
- Years later the family finds out that Jim is alive in England
- Story ends abruptly, "So, that's the end of that story."

### ***"A Story of Starvation" as told by Marion Tuu'luq***

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

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A5, A9, A10, A11

#### **Teacher Notes:**

- P. 81 Story is told in a very direct manner and each short paragraph contains large sweeps of story.
- P. 81 Family is reduced to eating their dogs.
- P. 81 Father, who is lame, refuses to eat and strangles himself.
- P. 82 Voice of girl's father tells her a rock indicates a cache of food. Brother does not believe her. Others keep digging and find cache and avoid starvation.
- P. 82 Voice of girl's father tells her not to eat heart or liver of caribou. She forgets and is temporarily unable to open her eyes the following morning. She is okay after saying "sorry" to father.
- P. 83-84 Saga of family as it avoid starvation.
- P. 85 Hunters from other group kill caribou and share it with the family.
- P. 85 Telling of stories after feasting. Reference to laughter even in the face of such hardship.

#### *Questions for Discussion:*

- Discuss the importance of this kind of story and its role in recording First Peoples history.
- Comment on the voice of the storyteller and the sense of veracity and authority it conveys.
- Discuss whether or not the word "story" is appropriate or inappropriate.
- Identify and discuss some of the "signatures" or markers for this as an oral story (e.g., structure, repetition).
- Discuss the idea of being endowed with a unique gift by ancestors (e.g., the ability to see what others cannot).

### ***"A Long Story" by Beth Brant***

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

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A5, A9, A10, A11

**Note of caution:** this story contains some fairly explicit sexuality, (148-49)

This is a rich story that begins with two contrasting quotes dealing with removing children from the care of their parents.



### ***Unit 3: Storytelling***

The story contains two narrators, one for each of the two time periods: the first woman from the 1890's who loses her children to the residential school system; the second woman from the 1970's who loses her children due to her lesbian relationship.

#### *Prereading Activity:*

Ask students the following questions:

- Under what circumstances is it justified to remove children from the care of their biological parents?
- Discuss the problematic nature of intervening in another person's life because it was in their best interests. Text note for modern setting: "They said it was in her [the child's] best interests." (146)

Ask the students to share their understanding of how same-sex partnerships have been discriminated against in Canada.

If need be, ask student to share what they know about the residential school system. When did it begin? When did it end?

#### *During Reading Focus:*

Find/make note of the many ways in which the two stories are interconnected.

- braids of the children in both eras, those of the two lovers; Annie (mother in 1890's) cuts hers off and burns it
- mothers losing children to the "system"
- legal covers for removing children
- role of others in assisting and preventing abuse
- letters from children
- resistance
- anger/destructive responses in face of powerlessness
- purification rituals
- dangerous women ("crazy" and lesbian)

Note examples of powerful imagery in both stories.

#### *Post-Reading Activity:*

Discuss the similarities and differences between the two cases of women fighting to keep their children. Discuss the ways that laws are used to control and punish the "other" (First Peoples and lesbian couples). Discuss the effect of juxtaposing the two stories. How is the modern example of injustice affected by comparing/contrasting it with the injustice of the residential school system? Is this a fair comparison?

### ***"The One About Coyote Going West" by Thomas King***

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

#### *Prereading Activity:*

What role does Coyote play in First Peoples stories? Have students recall or provide a brief introduction. Refer back to Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories* Chapter 5: "What Is it About Us that You Don't Like" and have students recall Coyote's role as a trickster:

- Coyote gets feathers from ducks by spreading fear of humans.
- This works as a lead-in to this point that Indians are like ducks who gave up their "feathers" (land and resources) to whites.
- Allegory: ducks losing feathers to coyotes as Indians losing land through treaty process to Canadian government.

*During Reading Focus:*

Discussion questions (**Note:** Each of these lenses for recording impressions while reading is quite involved and would suit being assigned to individual students as part of a literature circle approach.)

- What are some of the ways that King puts a “spin” on Coyote in this story?
- How does this story explain “All about who found us Indians”? (197)
- What are some of the ways that King creates a feeling for the oral tradition?
- What are some of the ways that King uses humour?
- Identify some of the recursive, repeated aspects within the story (e.g. mistake returns, Coyote gets stomped flat, Coyote not learning lessons).

*Post-Reading Activity:*

- What important ideas or lessons is King trying to convey in this Coyote story?
- What is the mistake in the story? What is the effect of giving it a physical form?
- How does this story compare/contrast to the Coyote story from *The Truth About Stories*?
- How does this story counter the Eurocentric ideas about Cartier and Columbus discovering Indians?

**Teacher Notes:**

- p. 197 Purpose of the story is to explain “All about who found us Indians.”
- p. 198 Christopher Cartier and Jacques Columbus. Names are crossed for comic effect?
- p. 198 Coyote tricks the listener (who is alternately referred to as grandmother and grandfather) into telling Coyote the story of how Coyote discovered Indians.
- p. 198 Coyote tries to take credit for making clouds, rainbows, the moon but the story teller says Mink and Otter already made them.
- p. 198 “First thing Coyote makes, I tell Coyote, is a mistake.” Irony of human story teller deflating the ego of Coyote.
- p. 199 Humour of Coyote trying to sing a song to make the mistake smaller, but the mistake rips her mouth/nose off and stomps her flat. Coyote has to learn to sing a healing song out of butt-hole.
- p. 200 Ducks make themselves because they get tired of waiting for Coyote to do it.
- p. 200 Coyote discovers lots of “mischief” (ducks asking if Coyote is looking for Indians, rivers that don’t run in one direction, mountains that are round and smooth).
- p. 201 Coyote goes looking for source of mischief and finds in the west “a big mistake sitting on a portable gas barbecue reading a book. Big book. Department store catalogue.”
- p. 202 Absurdity of consumer goods.
- p. 202 Ducks offer to help Coyote make Indians.
- p. 202-03 Ducks, Coyote, and mistake do a dance to try and make Indians. Coyote tries to eat the ducks but gets caught each time. Coyote comes up with clever excuses each time.
- p. 203-04 Ducks finally get tired of Coyote for messing up the dance and transform into Indians – Get angry at Coyote because their beautiful feathers have been transformed into ugly skin and black hair.
- p. 204 Duck-Indians stomp Coyote flat.
- p. 204 Story teller tells Coyote “This world is pretty good all by itself. Best to leave it alone. Stop messing around with it.”
- p. 204 Coyote ignores advice and goes off to tell Raven this story. “We going to fix this world for sure. We know how to do it now. We know how to do it right.”
- p. 204 Story ends with teller waiting for things to start falling out of the sky. “Coyote’s wandering around looking to fix things, nobody in this world is safe.”

## ***“The Shivering Tree” by John McLeod***

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

### *Prereading Activity:*

- Explain the concept of “shape shifting” and provide examples of shape shifting in other stories.
- Provide background information to students about Nanabush.

### *During Reading Focus:*

- Note examples of Nanabush’s ability to change form.
- Note the role of the “I” as narrator in story. What is unique about the narration of this story?
- Identify examples of how the story weaves in explanations for aspects of the natural order, such as owl’s night vision and poplar tree’s “shivering” appearance in a breeze.

### *Post-Reading Activity:*

- Compare/contrast the qualities of Nanabush and the Juggler (vanity and pride blinds each of them to unscrupulous behaviour of the other.)
- Discuss this story as a cautionary tale (i.e., negative personal qualities that undermine or harm us).
- How does Nanabush learn from his humbling experiences?

### **Teacher Notes:**

- p. 272 Nanabush very self-congratulatory “Goodness me but I’m a bright fellow.”
- p. 272-73 Nanabush encounters the Juggler, who dazzles Nanabush with the trick of removing his own eyes and juggling them.
- p. 274 The Juggler tricks Nanabush into removing his eyes and juggling them. The Juggler snatches Nanabush’s eyes and runs off with them.
- p. 274 Nanabush admits: “I’ve been a fool, a vain, yes ... even a blind fool. With both my eyes in my head, I was blind.” (good example of irony)
- p. 275 Nanabush realizes his vulnerability. “If a friend finds me, may he truly be a friend,” Nanabush said. “If an enemy should come upon me, may he act with honour. If my enemy should save me, I will gladly be in his debt. If my enemy finds me and chooses to kill me, then fine, I will still owe him something, if only a good fight.”
- p. 275 Owl comes across Nanabush in his blindness. Nanabush expects this “very old enemy” to take advantage of him.
- p. 276 Owl “I’m an old warrior, not an old fool.” Owl said. “There’s a thousand eyes in these woods. If I fought you and if I slew you in the condition which you are in the whole of Creation would hear of it. You’d be honoured. I’d be disgraced.”
- p. 276 Owl gives Nanabush his set of eyes for day vision. Nanabush rewards Owl: “From this day and for all time, you will be the Bird of the Night. ...At night your vision will be sure and your flight safe and clear. You will be to night as the Eagle and the Falcon are to the daylight. You’ll rule the night skies....”
- p. 277-9 Nanabush encounters the Juggler. Nanabush changes into the form of an old man. Old man flatters Juggler. Nanabush reveals himself and makes Juggler a wager: “I’ll toss my eyes to you and you catch them.... If you catch them, you get to keep them. If you miss you won’t owe me a thing. All or nothing. Fair enough.”
- p. 279 Nanabush tells Juggler that he will toss the eyes from “the very rim of the world.” Juggler is so confident of his powers that he is willing to wait as long as it takes.
- p. 279 Nanabush simply walks away. The Juggler, also known as Restless as the Wind, takes the form of a poplar tree to pass the time.

## **“Blueberry Days” by Ruby Slipperjack**

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

This story has a very easy, casual feel to it. It is comprised mainly of a series of anecdotes about how the family would spend its summers. It has the intimate feel of a memoir.

### **Discussion Questions**

- In what ways is this story different or unique when compared to other stories?
- How is humour present and how does it add to the story?
- Define the concept of “literature” and argue for or against this story’s inclusion.
- Identify examples of where the author makes effective use of imagery to establish aspects of mood and setting.

### **Teacher Notes:**

- p. 381 details of life in camp (mosquitoes)
- p. 381 matter of fact (and humorous) retelling of how the family chopped six inches off the tail of their dog
- p. 382 C.O.D. joke shared by narrator and mother (refers to the bird call “cee-oh-dee”)
- p. 383 canoe trip to summer portage; narrator usually walks with other siblings along railroad tracks to blueberry picking area
- p. 383-84 habitual killing of snakes they encounter because they are bad omens
- p. 384 first of two humorous incidents of people disturbing ant hills; railway men suggest Annie “Take your pants off and give it a shake!”
- p. 385 Jane sits her behind on an ant hill when the dog’s tail smacks her in the face
- p. 385 mother and narrator are good at holding in laughter so as not to add to the person’s humiliation
- p. 386 mother recalls how one of the narrator’s brothers would stuff the bottom of his berry picking cup with moss to make it appear that he was working hard at picking berries; mother discovers this when “he tripped in front of me and out rolled a wad of moss he had been using to stuff his cup over halfway full.”

## **“A Mountain Legend” by Jordan Wheeler**

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

### *Prereading Activity:*

Discuss the concept of a *rite of passage*. What are some examples of rites of passage?

Discuss the reasons why people accept dares. Encourage the students to share their experiences.

### *During Reading Focus:*

Identify how the two boys (Jason and Muskawashee) are both connected and separated.

Note examples of personification within the story; “The mountain saw the boy encroaching and whispered a warning to the wind....” (514). How is the use of this common literary device unique in this story?

### *Post-Reading Activity:*

Discuss how this story reflects First Peoples concepts of time and reality.

Discuss the importance of Jason’s climb as a rite of passage in the context of a young First Peoples boy disconnected from his culture.

#### Teacher Notes:

- p. 511 Stories within stories. Young campers hear stories around campfire. Caretaker, McNabb, tells campers a story “There is a legend about this mountain once told by the mountain itself...” McNabb tells a very condensed version of the story to the campers.
- p. 512 Example of external conflict: Jason, a young First Peoples boy, is goaded/dared by non-Aboriginal boys to climb mountain to prove himself (“And there was another challenge in Ralph’s voice, unsaid, but Jason heard it. Ralph was daring him to prove himself an Indian.”)
- p. 513 Example of internal conflict: Jason wanting to prove to himself that he was a warrior.
- p. 513 McNabb aware that Jason is attempting climb but does not attempt to intervene.
- p. 514-16 Very suspenseful
- p. 514 Jason climbs up onto ledge, but an eagle startles him and he jumps backwards. “Both feet stepped out into air as he grabbed the rock.”
- p. 515 As Jason clings to rock, there is a transition to the story of Muskawashee.
- Time is suspended while Muskawashee’s story is told in greater detail than when McNabb introduced it around the camp fire.
- p. 516 Muskawashee’s climb is similar to that of Jason’s. Both of them startled by eagle and stepped off of ledge.
- p. 516 Muskawashee falls to his death and “released a loud terrifying scream that echoed from the mountain, far out across the land, and down through time.”
- p. 516 Transition back to Jason’s story. Upon hearing the scream, he “looked down into the eyes of Muskawashee as he fell.
- p. 516. “Suddenly, [Jason] saw Muskawashee standing on the ledge, extending a hand down to him.”
- Counsellor and McNabb witness the rescue. “Who was that other kid up there?” asked the counsellor in disbelief.” McNabb explains to counsellor.

### “Mermaids” by Richard Van Camp

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

In response to this story, have students discuss and/or write about how any or all of the following contribute to the overall effect and meaning of the story.

**Style:** Note effective use of sentence fragments in opening section of story – helps convey the confused state of the narrator.

#### Complex Narrative Structure

This story weaves together a number of distinct yet interconnected stories:

- Torchy (how he won and then lost \$80,000)
- Torchy’s brother Sfen (dying of AIDS)
- Grandfather (Snowbird) & Torchy
- Stephanie
- The embedded story of the mermaids, and the sailors who fell in love with both women and men. Torchy starts telling Stephanie this story, passes out, and then finally finishes it: “God killed the mermaids because they were more beautiful than God. Men worshipped the mermaids and mermen. They forgot about God and anytime men forget about God, He reminds them that He’s still there. [plenty of Old Testament wrath to research] That’s why he brought AIDS. Because we forgot.” (p. 5)

#### Social Issues

- AIDS
- Homosexuality
- Child neglect/abuse
- Drugs

- Gambling
- Suicide

**Themes**

- how we can redeem ourselves
- mixing of First Peoples spirituality and Christianity – “Jesus was a medicine man.” “I wish someone were to visit me and read to me the Bible. It is such a beautiful song sung with so many voices.”

**Symbolism**

- use of fire for cleansing (Torchy burns the last four one-hundred dollar bills before returning to see his grandfather)
- Torchy’s hands turn to claws after he misuses “magic” from grandfather

## UNIT 4: LOST PEOPLE

### OVERVIEW

Using Eden Robinson's novel *Monkey Beach* as a primary text, the students will explore the issue of lost people that is so resonant in First Peoples communities; beyond the novel, students will have the opportunity to examine other texts such as short stories, poetry, and essays that complement this theme. When studying the novel, the instructional methods will focus on literature circles (small-group, student-centred approach to the novel that allows all students in the class to have a voice) and reader response (writing to learn, not always as a finished, polished draft). When studying the other texts, the instructional methods will be a mixture of large-group and small-group activities that invite student voice for interpretation.

### Primary Text

Robinson, Eden. *Monkey Beach*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2000.

### Supplementary Texts

Armstrong, Jeannette C. "Blue Against White." From *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*.

Baker, Marie Annharte. "His Kitchen," From *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*.

Brant, Beth. "A Long Story." From *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*.

Fife, Connie. "Communications Class," From *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*.

Mercredi, Duncan. "racing across the land," From *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*.

Taylor, Drew Hayden "Pretty Like a White Boy." From *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*.

Wagamese, Richard. Excerpt from *Keeper 'n Me*. From *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*.

**Time:** 19 classes

This unit is based on eighty minute classes with time for silent reading at the beginning of each class.

### ALERT

Throughout the novel *Monkey Beach*, there are numerous occurrences of offensive language and sensitive subject matter. However, given the fact that this text is being recommended for English 12 First Peoples, it can be assumed that all students who will read the novel will be mature enough to be exposed to the offensive language and subject matter in this book.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to communicate directly with parents and students prior to undertaking the unit in order to forestall any potential problems.

For an itemized list of cautions by page number, please refer to the "Text Recommendations" section at the front of this Teacher Resource Guide.

Additionally, there are a few scenes in the novel that should be approached with some guidance from the teacher. Be aware that there are many references to spiritual guides for the Haisla people. Students who are unfamiliar with this should be guided through these references with an open-minded attitude (e.g., where applicable, the teacher could point out to students that, in reading a novel full of references to Christian angels and the holy spirit, they would take it for granted that the protagonist believes in these entities completely). The same philosophy should be applied to this novel; the protagonist, Lisamarie, believes in *b'gwus* (sasquatches) and repeatedly sees a spiritual guide and helps her to foretell the future. This belief is as valid as any religious belief, and should be approached in this manner.

**LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:**

Researching Background Information—Assigning Groups  
Library/Computer Lab Research  
    Research Presentation  
Reader Response  
Jigsaw Discussion on “Pretty Like a White Boy”  
Identity in “Pretty Like a White Boy”  
The Little Red Man  
Lost People and Poetry  
Responding to “Communication Class” or “racing across the land”  
Responding to Reading Section Three  
Blue Against White  
Comparing “In His Kitchen” and “Blue Against White”  
Responding to Reading Section Four  
Lost and Found  
Responding to Keeper’n Me  
Responding to Reading Section Five  
Literary Essay on Monkey Beach

**Handouts and Assessment Tools:**

Assessment for Group Research Project  
Reader Response Journal—Monkey Beach  
    Reading Section One (1-73)  
    Reading Section Two (73-138)  
    Reading Section Three (139-232)  
    Reading Section Four (232-294)  
    Reading Section Five (295-374)  
Scoring Guide for Poetry Reader Response  
Scoring Guide for Prose Reader Response



## ***Researching Background Information—Assigning Groups***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, B4, B5

Hand out *Monkey Beach* novels to the class and assign reading (Reading section 1, pp. 1-73), which should be completed in four classes (the date that lesson 5 falls on—students should have completed the reading by this time). Begin each class with fifteen minutes of silent reading in order to facilitate students completing the assigned reading; however, they will be expected to do some reading outside of class. A reading check will be done at the deadline in the form of a reader response question.

Separate class into five or six groups (group size should be approximately three or four and should match with their book groups so they become used to working together). Each group will be researching and presenting on their assigned topic (in order to give background information about the novel). Possible topics for each group to explore are

- geography of the area—Kitamaat, Kitimat, Northern Coast of British Columbia
- Haisla people—brief history, cultural background
- Sasquatch story in British Columbia
- Haisla language used in the novel (with translation)
- oolichan—making grease, catching the fish
- American Indian Movement history
- literary criticism of the novel.

In their groups, students should prepare a ten minute group presentation on their topic that is comprehensive enough to give the class background on the novel. Possible research venues are the Internet, library, Elders, oral histories, etc. Students should meet in their groups and discuss what they know already about their assigned topic, and should decide how they will present their information. Assessment criteria for this assignment are provided at the end of this unit.

## ***Library/Computer Lab Research***

**Learning Outcomes:** A6, A7, A8, B5

Take students to the library/computer lab to research their topics. They should spend these two classes researching and preparing for their presentations.

## ***Research Presentation***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5

Have students present their topics to the class.

## ***Reader Response***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A13, B6, B7, B8, C8, C9, C10

This is the first segment of time dedicated to a reader response. Students should have read their assigned pages by this date, and may spend the class writing a reader response for this section. Some time should be spent explaining the process to the students. Reader response is a process of writing to learn, rather than proving what they have learned through writing. Reader responses are useful because they give readers an

opportunity to approach the novel in a very informal way that allows them to examine their own thoughts, feelings, connections, and interactions. The response may ask students to read a passage and relate it back to their own lives, or it may be an examination of the irony in the section they last read. Depending on the novel, the questions may run the whole gamut of Bloom's taxonomy, challenging their thought processes. Ultimately, reader responses are a process of writing to learn, and they should be assessed as such—more an assessment of risk-taking than polished writing. Minimum length for this grade level should be 200 words. Shorter than that would not be enough to adequately develop the ideas.

For assessment, use holistic assessment and refer to the Reading Journal Response Rubric. To help students understand the expectations for their reader responses, go over the Reader Response Handout and rubric with the students. Possible (but not limited to these options) topics for this first reader response are as follows:

- Read the following passage from page 44 of the novel. Relate its significance to what you have read so far. What do you know so far about the characters of Lisamarie, the narrator, and Jimmy, her brother, who is discussed in the passage? How does the passage develop the characters of Lisamarie and Jimmy?

*I turned. Jimmy was waving to me from the breakwater logs, thirty feet from the dock. I could see him slick and shiny with water, and watched him help pull his friends up. They ran to the edge of the breakwater, leaping across the space between the logs, the space that opened and closed with the waves and the length of the chains that held the logs together. Every time they jumped, I imagined Jimmy falling. When they reached the end, they turned and ran all the way back. Jimmy saw me still watching him. While he and his friends dived in, he waved to me again. I waved back. He shouted something. Probably "Bonzai!"*

- Pick your favourite passage from what you have read so far. How does the passage you have chosen relate to the plot of the novel up to page 73? What themes do you see emerging? Discuss.
- How do you relate to the character of Lisamarie? How do you relate to the character of Jimmy? Are there any other characters in the novel so far to whom you relate? Why? Discuss, using specific examples from the novel to illustrate your points.

Halfway through the class, interrupt the students to allow them to meet with their groups. Only Reading Section one (7-73) need be discussed during this time. Students should bring their reader responses to the session to help fuel the discussion. Students in the senior grades are mature enough to discuss literature without being assigned specific roles as is the custom with lower level grades. Literature circles in the senior grades can assume a book club atmosphere—students should discuss:

- the plot
- characters (who is the protagonist/antagonist, supporting characters, development)
- setting
- point of view
- emerging themes
- likes/dislikes
- discussion questions (big and small picture)
- predictions
- lessons
- vocabulary
- facts, history and background of the people,
- outside information
- connections to their lives or other things they know
- passages that are particularly interesting, compelling, eye-opening, or liked
- figurative language.

The teacher should be facilitating discussion and checking in with each group to see how they are doing.

## Unit 4: Lost People

A facilitator for the discussion should be appointed (perhaps a different leader each time), who ensures that all members of the group are participating and who comes up with discussion questions in case the talks are faltering. Depending on the length of class, students may add to their reader responses with new perspectives after the literature circle meeting.

This unit is specifically structured so that a number of classes fall in between each reader response to allow students to read the next Reading Section. Reading section 2 should be read by the beginning of the eighth Lesson in this Unit Plan.

### ***Jigsaw Discussion on “Pretty Like a White Boy”***

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

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A9, A10, A11, B12, B13

Hook the students by having a short discussion of stereotypes surrounding First Peoples. Discuss how damaging stereotypes can be in the context of racism. Then, as a class, read Drew Hayden Taylor’s “Pretty Like a White Boy.” Split class up into literature circle groups and hand out a different discussion question (from the following list) to each group. In their groups, they should answer their question using evidence from the essay to support their responses. At the end of the class, they will be presenting their responses to the rest of the class. This jigsaw method is useful in covering a piece of literature in great depth, by the students coming up with the answers and discussing them with the class. Questions that could be used in the jigsaw include but are not limited to the following:

- Look up the definition of *stereotype*. How does the speaker in “Pretty Like a White Boy” face problems caused by stereotypes about First Peoples when he is in the presence of Aboriginal people?
- Look up the definition of *stereotype*. How does the speaker in “Pretty Like a White Boy” face problems caused by stereotypes about First Peoples when he is in the presence of non-Aboriginal people?
- Look up the definition of *satire*. How does the speaker in “Pretty Like a White Boy” use satire to poke fun at the overt racism he frequently experiences?
- Look up the definition of *satire*. How does the speaker in “Pretty Like a White Boy” use satire to poke fun at his own search for identity?
- Drew Hayden Taylor manipulates language frequently in this piece to be humorous in a dark way. Find two examples of how he manipulates language in this way, and discuss.
- How does the speaker use the title of the essay as one of the themes he develops?
- How is the speaker in the essay “lost” in the figurative sense of the word?

### ***Identity in “Pretty Like a White Boy”***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A9, A10, A11, B4, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

Put up the following topic for reader response on the board:

Discuss how Drew Hayden Taylor struggles with his identity. Focus specifically on the passage in which the narrator takes out his Status card and shows it to a Status Indian girl who is only nine years old, and doesn’t even know what the card is. Use additional evidence from the rest of the essay to help develop your points.

Students should have twenty minutes or so to write their responses, then they should re-form into their groups to discuss their responses to the question, using the text. Post discussion, they should write again in their reader response, adding to it before handing it in.

## ***The Little Red Man***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, B4, B8, B9, B10, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

Half of this class is dedicated to a reader response for the second Reading Section of the novel (73-138). Possible topics for students to discuss include but are not limited to the following:

- Read the following passage from pages 131-132 and relate its significance to anything that has happened so far in the novel. Who do you think the little red man is? Why does he visit Lisamarie? What is his significance? Why does she wish he wouldn't appear? Why does she experience emotional pain in his presence?

*The little man woke me before dawn, his eyes glittering and black. The Winnie the Pooh stories end with Christopher Robin saying he's too old to play with Pooh Bear. Little Jackie Piper leaves Puff the Magic Dragon. Childhood ends and you grow up and all your imaginary friends disappear. I'd convinced myself that the little man was a dream brought on by eating dinner too late—Mom had told me she always dreamed of earthquakes if she ate too much lasagna. Sometimes he came dressed like a leprechaun, but that night he had on his strange cedar tunic with little amulets dangling around his neck and waist. His hair was standing up like a troll doll's, a wild, electric red. He did a tap dance on my dresser. Then he slipped, fell into my laundry basket and pulled my sweaters and T-shirts over his head. The basket tipped over and rolled beneath the window. I watched it warily, my chest aching so hard I couldn't catch my breath.*

- Read the following passage from page 93 and relate its significance to the novel so far. How is the oolichan important to the Haisla people? Discuss the analogy made between Dom Perignon and oolichan grease.

*Oolichans spawn in other rivers on the northwest coast like the Chilcat, Nass, Skeena, Kimsquit, Bella Coola, Oweenkeno, Kingcome, and Fraser rivers. Each place has its own way of spelling and pronouncing "oolichans," so the fish are also known as eulachons, ooligans, ulicans, hollikans, and oulachens. Other people make oolichan grease too, but Mom always said, "Ours is the Dom Perignon of grease."*

*When I was a kid, I always assumed Dom Perignon was another kind of fish oil. I was very disappointed when I found out it was just a champagne, like Baby Duck, which I'd snuck a sip of one New Year's Eve and hated. I coughed, spitting and sneezing as the bubbles tingled sharply up my nose.*

- Pick your favourite passage from what you have read so far. How does the passage you have chosen relate to the plot of the novel up to page 138? What kinds of identity issues do you see emerging? Discuss.

After students complete their reader responses, give them the rest of the class to discuss the novel in their groups. Students should discuss the second section of the novel according to the structure they used last time, but possibly appointing another group leader.

## ***Lost People and Poetry***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, B12, C5

Begin the class by reading Connie Fife's "Communications Class" to the students. (from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*, pp. 302-303)

Then, hand out the poem and read it again. Discuss as a whole class the following issues:

- One of the major themes explored in this poem is ownership of language. Discuss how the language can be an instrument of power.

## Unit 4: Lost People

- Who are the “lost people” in this poem? Who sees them as lost? Where do you think they have gone, and why?
- As presented in this poem, what is the outcome of the “lost people”?
- Discuss the symbolic use of “white squares”—what are the multiple meanings of these words?
- Discuss the disparity between using struggling to use language effectively in the classroom, and using that same language as a tool outside the classroom.
- Why do you think that Fife uses only lower case letters and almost no punctuation in this poem?

Go over how to write a paragraph response to poetry. Discuss the following topic in terms of how students might formulate a paragraph response to the poem: The technique of juxtaposition is used throughout this poem in order to show contrast. Discuss how Connie Fife achieves this contrast through the use of juxtaposition in “Communications Class.”

Hand out Duncan Mercredi’s “racing across the land” and read it as a class. (from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*, p. 209)

Discuss the following as a whole class:

- The use of symbolism is essential to this poem. Discuss how the following images are used as symbols: spruce and muskeg, dust of white civilization, four directions, buffalo, dancing, pounding, prairie grass/wind/everything natural lasting while man-made legacies fall through time.
- Duncan Mercredi has also decided to use all lower-case letters and almost no punctuation, similar to Connie Fife in “Communications class”. Why have they both decided to structure their poems this way?
- The lost people in this poem are the oppressors. Why is this significant?
- How is the issue of identity explored in this poem?
- Both poems are quite empowering; how do the poets achieve this?
- Discuss connotations of words chosen by the poets.

After studying the poems, discuss the following topic in terms of how students might formulate a paragraph response to the poem: Line breaks are frequently used by poets in order to provide specific points at which to pause. Discuss, using Duncan Mercredi’s “racing across the land.”

Hand out copies of the poetry response rubric and go over it as a class. Let students know that for next class, they will be writing a response on one of the two poems—they may choose.

### ***Responding to “Communications Class” or “racing across the land”***

**Learning Outcomes:** B4, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

Put both topics on the board and give students thirty minutes or so to write their responses on one of the topics. After they are done writing, teach them how to integrate quotations from the poems into their responses. Have them add at least one appropriate integrated quotation to their drafts. Then go over the poetry paragraph checklist with them, and review the rubric. If time allows, they should trade their responses with a partner who may edit them using the checklist and the rubric to make suggestions for improvement. They may spend the rest of their class revising their responses to be handed in at the beginning of the next class.

#### **Poetry Paragraph Checklist**

- Have you engaged the reader in the first sentence?
- Have you identified the poet and the poem in the first or second sentence?
- Have you expressed a topic sentence (answering the question posed) in the first few sentences?
- Have you used two or three specific references (there should be at least one quotation included) to support your topic sentence as proof?

- Have you introduced and explained your specific references?
- Have you concluded your paragraph in a clear, succinct way?
- Is there flow to your writing?
- Do you have proper sentence construction (no run-ons or fragments)?
- Do you have variety in sentence length?
- Are your spelling and grammar correct?

Refer to the Poetry Response assessment tool (provided at the end of this unit) to refine the criteria for assessing students' work.

## ***Responding to Reading Section Three***

**Learning Outcomes:** B4, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

This segment of time is dedicated to a reader response for the third Reading Section of the novel. Possible response topics may include but are not limited to the following options:

- Read the following passage from pages 152-153, and respond discussing what you now think of the little red man, and how Lisamarie must feel after having this discussion with Ma-ma-oo. Then, look at your novel, and read the couple of pages that follow. Why do you think that Gladys (Lisamarie's mother) has been dismissive of Lisamarie's visions? Why was her "gift" never discussed?

*"What do the spirits look like?"*

*She paused, looking up into the top of the cedar tree. "I don't know. Never seen one. The chief trees—the biggest, strongest, oldest ones—had a spirit, a little man with red hair. Olden days, they'd lead medicine men to the best trees to make canoes with."*

*"Oh," I said shaking. All the air left my lungs for a moment and it felt like I couldn't catch my next breath. "Oh."*

*Ma-ma-oo glanced at me curiously, then began walking again. She picked another tree and offered tobacco.*

*I made my voice very casual. "What would it mean if you saw a little man?"*

- Read the following passage from page 160, and discuss why passages like this are so important to the novel as a whole:

*"No, no, just these blueberries. See they have white stuff on them. Pipxs'm means 'berries with mould on them.' "*

*"Mmm, tasty."*

*"They are." As if to prove it, she popped a few in her mouth and chewed with her eyes closed. I tried one, and it was so sweet that it was almost piercing. I had never noticed that there were different types of blueberry bushes. If it was blue and on a bush, you picked it. Ma-ma-oo pointed out the contrast in the leaves and stems, but it was easier to see the distinctions in the berries themselves. We found the other kind, sya'k°nalh, "the real blueberry," shiny bluish-black berries, prettier, but not as sweet as pipxs'm. We drove around, going higher up the mountains until we found the third type, pear-shaped and plump and sweet. Their Haisla name is mimayus, which, loosely translated, means "pain in the ass," because although they taste wonderful, they're hard to find and pick.*

- So far in the novel (up to page 232), Lisamarie and her family have had to deal with a lot of loss. Discuss how they do this, using specific references to the novel.

After the students have had approximately half the class to write their responses, have them assemble into their literature circle groups. Students should discuss the third section of the novel according to the structure they used last time, but possibly appointing another group leader.

## ***Blue Against White***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, B13

Hook the students by discussing the concept of *imagery*. Have them come up with a few phrases that depict very strong images, such as the ones used in the poems they covered recently. Then have students read Jeannette Armstrong's story, "Blue Against White," found in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*. Discuss briefly the title—what kind of image is suggested by that title?

Read the story together. Use the jigsaw discussion method to cover the following important points in the story:

- At the beginning of the story, the protagonist, Lena, remembers how she used to feel about the blue door on her parents' house. How did she feel when she was younger? Why did she feel that way? How is this significant to the rest of the story?
- At the end of the story, Lena feels differently about the blue door. How does she feel at the end? Why does she feel this way? How is this significant to the rest of the story?
- Lena mentions that "she had always thought of it as her mother's house rather than her father's house, though it had been his idea to paint the door a bright blue." Why do you think she feels this way? Use evidence from the story to support your response.
- Lena sees a crow as she is walking toward the door. Why is she so moved by the image of the crow? How is the crow symbolic to her?
- Describe the dream Lena has. How are doors important in this story? Why do you think that there is nothing behind the doors other than a patch of sky in her dream?
- Lena hears a coyote as she is walking toward the door. She remembers another story about coyotes. What is the significance of mentioning coyotes in this story? Why do you think she develops this image so thoroughly?

Students should spend the rest of the class discussing their question, to be presented to the class the next day.

## ***Comparing "In His Kitchen" and "Blue Against White"***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A8, A10, A11, B4, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10, C11

In their groups, students should present their responses to the class. Encourage the class members to become involved in the discussion. Then, hand out the poem by Marie Annharte Baker, "In His Kitchen" (from *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*, p. 70).

Read the poem to the class and discuss it briefly (the absence of the mother and its small impact—only the effect of the father taking over, image of the paint scraper among the kitchen utensils—very masculine) as a reminder that it is his kitchen—traditionally feminine, questioning why they went out for dinner for a short time, welcoming her friends to the kitchen, role reversal). Give the students the following reader response topic:

In Jeannette Armstrong's short story, "Blue Against White," how is Lena both literally and figuratively lost? Use specific examples from the story to help develop your answer. Compare and contrast the story with Marie Annharte Baker's poem.

## Responding to Reading Section Four

**Learning Outcomes:** B4, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

This segment of time is dedicated to a reader response for the fourth Reading Section of the novel. Possible response topics may include but are not limited to the following options:

- Read the following passage from page 255, and discuss whether or not you agree with Aunt Trudy's belief that the men would have "got off scot-free" for raping or killing Lisamarie, if it had happened. Be sure to support your position with connections to real life and the novel.

*"Lisa," Aunt Trudy said, "you got to be more careful."  
 "About what?"  
 "Those guys could've killed you."  
 "It was broad daylight," I said. "And there were tons of witnesses. They wouldn't have done anything."  
 "Honey," she said, "if you were some little white girl, that would be true. But you're a mouthy Indian, and everyone thinks we're born sluts. Those guys would have said you were asking for it and got off scot-free."*

- Read the following passage from pages 288-289 and discuss why Lisamarie is encouraging Jimmy to talk to Karaoke. How does she deal with her own "love" issues?

*"She's so pretty," he said.  
 "You aren't dog food yourself," I said. "Look, this is silly. Go over to her. Say hi. As her if she wants a pop or something. Life is short, Jim."  
 "You think she'd go out with me?"  
 "You'll never know until you try."  
 He stayed beside me, taking deep breaths. He stood, gave me a nervous smile, made it to the bottom of the bleachers, paused and turned around, annoying the anxious fans who hissed at him as he pushed his way through them back to me. Maybe it was better this way, I thought as he sheepishly sat beside me. If you never fall in love, you never get your heart broken.*

- At the end of this section, Ma-ma-oo dies. Discuss why Lisamarie has so much guilt connected to this. How does she deal with this loss?

Give students approximately half the class to complete their responses, and then have them assemble into their literature circle groups. Students should discuss the fourth section of the novel according to the structure they used last time, but possibly appointing another group leader.

## Lost and Found

**Learning Outcomes:** B4, B13

Give a brief synopsis of Richard Wagamese's novel, *Keeper 'n Me* (the protagonist is removed from his home and grew up in a series of foster homes, identity is explored, the protagonist is lost to the foster home system then found again by his brother and returns to his home community to reclaim his culture) and then have student read the excerpt from the novel, found in *An Anthology of Native Literature in English*. Have students spend the rest of the class reading the excerpt silently or read it together. After they are done reading, discuss the following literary terms: **diction**, **dialect**, **tone**, and **mood**. Define these terms, and then discuss, as a whole class, how the author uses diction and dialect of the two narrators (Garnet and Keeper) in the excerpt to create tone and mood with language.



## ***Responding to Keeper'n Me***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, B4, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

Put the two following reader response passages on the board:

- Garnet, the protagonist and one of the narrators, has gone through a process of seeking his racial identity. Keeping in mind that this is just an excerpt from the novel as a whole, discuss how this issue is explored in the passage we have just read. Comment on how being lost contributed to his loss of identity. How do you think it felt to be found? Be sure to use details from this reading as well as from outside readings or sources.
- Keeper, the other narrator in the novel (his words are indicated by the use of italics), has his own theory on how identity is developed or lost. Discuss this theory using specific references from the passage, and comment on your opinions about this theory. How, according to Keeper, can this loss of identity be healed? Why is it necessary for the healing to occur this way?

Number off the students in the class (1 and 2); assign the students who are number one to complete the first reader response, and the students who are number two to complete the second response. Give students half the class to complete their responses, and then tell them to find a partner who is the opposite number (a number one would have to find a number two). Then, they should spend about twenty minutes discussing their responses. After the partner discussions, have a whole-class discussion on the response topics.

## ***Responding to Reading Section Five***

**Learning Outcomes:** B4, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

This segment of time is dedicated to a reader response for the fifth reading section of the novel. Possible response topics may include but are not limited to the following options:

- Read the following passage from pages 295-296, and discuss the fusion of story and the modern world that Eden Robinson is exploring. How is this passage indicative of themes from this novel?

*Weegit the raven has mellowed in his old age. He's still a confirmed bachelor, but he's not the womanizer he once was. Playing the stock market—instead of spending his time being a trickster—has paid off and he has a comfortable condo downtown. He plays up the angle about creating the world and humans, conveniently forgetting he did it out of boredom. Yes, he admits, he did steal the sun and the moon, but he insists he did it to bring light to humankind even though he did it so that it would be easier for him to find food. After doing some spin control on the crazy pranks of his youth, he's become respectable. As he sips his low-fat mocha and reads yet another sanitized version of his earlier exploits, only his small, sly smile reveals how much he's enjoying pulling the wool over everyone else's eyes.*

- Read the following passage from pages 332-333. Compare the story of T'sonoqua to that of B'gwus. Why is Lisamarie discussing this story? Why is it significant to the rest of the novel?

*T'sonoqua is not as famous as B'gwus. She covers herself in a cloak and pretends to be an old woman. She will ask for your help, feigning a helpless shake in her hands as she leans on her cane. If you are moved to go close enough for her to see you with her poor vision, she will straighten to her true height, and the hands that grip you will be as strong as a man's. She is an ogress, and she won't let go because, to her, human flesh is the ultimate delicacy and young flesh is especially sweet. But discredited scientists and amateur sleuths aren't hunting her. There are no conferences debating her existence. She doesn't have her own beer*

*commercials. She has a few amusing notes in some anthropology books. She is remembered in scattered campfire tales. But she is, by and large, a dim memory.*

- Read the following passage from pages 368-369 and discuss Lisamarie's experiences in "the land of the dead"—both literal and figurative. Why do you think Eden Robinson chose to end the novel in this way?

*I wake. The moss is soft and wet against my back. There is a dull aching pain in my hand. I lift it, and the cut is raw, but it has stopped bleeding, and all the blood has been licked away. Its tongue was scratchy, like a cat's.*

*"You said you would help me!" I yell, but my voice cracks, and I don't know if they heard me, so I yell it again.*

*They snigger.*

*I push myself up with my right hand, cradling my left hand against my chest. The bushes rustle.*

*"More," a voice says from the shadows.*

*I stand. "You tell me where Jimmy is first."*

- This novel, like many novels by First Peoples authors, has an **unresolved conclusion**. Look up the definition of this literary term. Why do you think that Eden Robinson decided to have an unresolved conclusion? Predict what could happen after the conclusion. Why do you think this could have happened? Use specific details from the novel to support your response.

After students have had about half the class to write their responses, have them assemble into their literature circle groups. Students should discuss the fifth section of the novel according to the structure they used last time, but possibly appointing another group leader. This is the last literature circle meeting for the novel.

## Literary Essay on *Monkey Beach*

**Learning Outcomes:** A9, A10, A11, C5, C6, C7, C12, C13, C14

To end this unit, have students individually write literary essays about *Monkey Beach* and the other readings we have looked at throughout the unit. Possible essay topics may include but are not limited to the following:

- The protagonist, Lisamarie, experiences flashbacks as she struggles with the possible loss of her brother, Jimmy. Discuss three events from Lisamarie's past that help her to deal with her present.
- Jimmy is not the only "lost" character in this novel; however, he becomes symbolic of all the other figuratively or literally lost characters, such as Uncle Mick, Ma-ma-oo, Ba-ba-oo, Aunt Trudy, etc. Agree or disagree with this statement and develop an argument to support your thesis.
- "Lost people" is a frequently used theme in First Peoples literature. Discuss this theme, using *Monkey Beach* and at least two other sources we have studied during this unit to support your thesis.
- "Search for identity" is a frequently used theme in First Peoples literature. Discuss this theme, using *Monkey Beach* and at least two other sources we have studied during this unit to support your thesis.
- Legend is sometimes so intertwined with the narrative in First Peoples literature that the two are impossible to separate. Discuss this statement using *Monkey Beach* and at least two other sources we have studied during this unit to prove your thesis.

To assess, make students aware of, and use the prose response rubric.

### Opportunities for Extension:

- If you live near the Pacific Northwest, plan field trips to the local museum or other sites mentioned in *Monkey Beach*.
- Have a community member visit the class to discuss stories of visitors who portend the future.
- Depending on the class, you may wish to spend more time on the reader responses and the literature circle discussions (a class on each rather than half a class on each).

**ASSESSMENT FOR GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT****Group Project:****Researching the Background to *Monkey Beach* by Eden Robinson****Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11

In your assigned groups, you will be researching, putting together, and then presenting a topic that helps to provide some background to the novel we will be reading—Eden Robinson’s *Monkey Beach*.

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 get ready 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.

Possible topics for each group to explore are:

- geography of the area—Kitamaat, Kitimat, Northern Coast of British Columbia
- Haisla people—brief history, cultural background
- Sasquatch story in British Columbia
- Haisla language used in the novel (with translation)
- oolichan—making grease, catching the fish
- American Indian Movement history
- literary criticism of the novel
- Eden Robinson

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

Oral Speaking Skills	/10
Visual Aids	/5
Interactive Presentation Skills	/5
Value of Information Presented	/10
Creativity	/5
Evidence of Preparation	/5
<b>Total</b>	<b>/40</b>

## READER RESPONSE JOURNAL—*MONKEY BEACH*

Reader response is a process of writing to learn, rather than proving what you have learned through writing. Reader responses are useful because they give readers an opportunity to approach the novel in a very informal way that allows them to examine their own thoughts, feelings, connections, and interactions. Ultimately, because reader responses are a process of writing to learn, they should be assessed as such—more an assessment of risk-taking than polished writing. Minimum length for this grade level is 200 words (but please spend more time writing than counting your words—the number is less important than the quality of the response). Shorter than that would not be enough to adequately develop the ideas.

You will be marked according to the Reading Journal Response Rubric. Note that spelling and grammar are NOT a part of this rubric, but higher level thinking is.

Reading Journal Response Rubric	
Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personalized, innovative, and thoughtful responses that make connections with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</li> <li>provides specific evidence that demonstrates close familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection</li> <li>shows evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</li> </ul>
Very Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal and thoughtful responses that make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li> <li>provides specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>may interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>usually shows evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</li> </ul>
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal and generally thoughtful responses that often make connections with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</li> <li>provides some specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>sometimes interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>may show evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</li> </ul>
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal and sometimes thoughtful responses that may make connections with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</li> <li>may provide some evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>may attempt to interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>may show evidence of reflecting on initial responses, no revision</li> </ul>
Minimally Acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal responses that may make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li> <li>limited evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of text</li> <li>little/no attempt to interpret/analyse genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>generally does not revisit initial responses</li> </ul>
In Progress/Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extremely limited and unclear responses that seldom demonstrate evidence of meeting the criteria</li> <li>no response attempted</li> </ul>

**READING SECTION ONE (1-73)**

Because this is the deadline for the assigned reading, you should have read the section. Choose one of the following topics, and write on it according to the instructions and rubric on the first page.

1. Read the following passage from page 44 of the novel. Relate its significance to what you have read so far. What do you know so far about the characters of Lisamarie, the narrator, and Jimmy, her brother, who is discussed in the passage? How does the passage develop the characters of Lisamarie and Jimmy?

*I turned. Jimmy was waving to me from the breakwater logs, thirty feet from the dock. I could see him slick and shiny with water, and watched him help pull his friends up. They ran to the edge of the breakwater, leaping across the space between the logs, the space that opened and closed with the waves and the length of the chains that held the logs together. Every time they jumped, I imagined Jimmy falling. When they reached the end, they turned and ran all the way back. Jimmy saw me still watching him. While he and his friends dived in, he waved to me again. I waved back. He shouted something. Probably "Bonzai!"*

2. Pick your favourite passage from what you have read so far. How does the passage you have chosen relate to the plot of the novel up to page 73? What themes do you see emerging? Discuss.
3. How do you relate to the character of Lisamarie? How do you relate to the character of Jimmy? Are there any other characters in the novel so far to whom you relate? Why? Discuss, using specific examples from the novel to illustrate your points.

## READING SECTION TWO (73-138)

Because this is the deadline for the assigned reading, you should have read the section. Choose one of the following topics, and write on it according to the instructions and rubric on the first page.

1. Read the following passage from page 131-132 and relate its significance to anything that has happened so far in the novel. Who do you think the little red man is? Why does he visit Lisamarie? What is his significance? Why does she wish he wouldn't appear? Why does she experience emotional pain in his presence?

*The little man woke me before dawn, his eyes glittering and black. The Winnie the Pooh stories end with Christopher Robin saying he's too old to play with Pooh Bear. Little Jackie Piper leaves Puff the Magic Dragon. Childhood ends and you grow up and all your imaginary friends disappear. I'd convinced myself that the little man was a dream brought on by eating dinner too late—Mom had told me she always dreamed of earthquakes if she ate too much lasagna. Sometimes he came dressed like a leprechaun, but that night he had on his strange cedar tunic with little amulets dangling around his neck and waist. His hair was standing up like a troll doll's, a wild, electric red. He did a tap dance on my dresser. Then he slipped, fell into my laundry basket and pulled my sweaters and T-shirts over his head. The basket tipped over and rolled beneath the window. I watched it warily, my chest aching so hard I couldn't catch my breath.*

2. Read the following passage from page 93 and relate its significance to the novel so far. How is the oolichan important to the Haisla people? Discuss the analogy made between Dom Perignon and oolichan grease.

*Oolichans spawn in other rivers on the northwest coast like the Chilcat, Nass, Skeena, Kimsquit, Bella Coola, Oweenkeno, Kingcome, and Fraser rivers. Each place has its own way of spelling and pronouncing "oolichans," so the fish are also known as eulachons, ooligans, ulicans, hollikans, and oulachens. Other people make oolichan grease too, but Mom always said, "Ours is the Dom Perignon of grease."*

*When I was a kid, I always assumed Dom Perignon was another kind of fish oil. I was very disappointed when I found out it was just a champagne, like Baby Duck, which I'd snuck a sip of one New Year's Eve and hated. I coughed, spitting and sneezing as the bubbles tingled sharply up my nose.*

3. Pick your favourite passage from what you have read so far. How does the passage you have chosen relate to the plot of the novel up to page 138? What kinds of identity issues do you see emerging? Discuss.

**READING SECTION THREE (139-232)**

Because this is the deadline for the assigned reading, you should have read the section. Choose one of the following topics, and write on it according to the instructions and rubric on the first page.

1. Read the following passage from pages 152-153, and respond discussing what you now think of the little red man, and how Lisamarie must feel after having this discussion with Ma-ma-oo. Then, look at your novel, and read the couple of pages that follow. Why do you think that Gladys (Lisamarie's mother) has been dismissive of Lisamarie's visions? Why was her "gift" never discussed?

*"What do the spirits look like?"*

*She paused, looking up into the top of the cedar tree. "I don't know. Never seen one. The chief trees—the biggest, strongest, oldest ones—had a spirit, a little man with red hair. Olden days, they'd lead medicine men to the best trees to make canoes with."*

*"Oh," I said shaking. All the air left my lungs for a moment and it felt like I couldn't catch my next breath. "Oh."*

*Ma-ma-oo glanced at me curiously, then began walking again. She picked another tree and offered tobacco.*

*I made my voice very casual. "What would it mean if you saw a little man?"*

2. Read the following passage from page 160, and discuss why passages like this are so important to the novel as a whole:

*"No, no, just these blueberries. See they have white stuff on them. Pipxs'm means 'berries with mould on them.' "*

*"Mmm, tasty."*

*"They are." As if to prove it, she popped a few in her mouth and chewed with her eyes closed. I tried one, and it was so sweet that it was almost piercing. I had never noticed that there were different types of blueberry bushes. If it was blue and on a bush, you picked it. Ma-ma-oo pointed out the contrast in the leaves and stems, but it was easier to see the distinctions in the berries themselves. We found the other kind, sya'k°nalh, "the real blueberry," shiny bluish-black berries, prettier, but not as sweet as pipxs'm. We drove around, going higher up the mountains until we found the third type, pear-shaped and plump and sweet. Their Haisla name is mimayus, which, loosely translated, means "pain in the ass," because although they taste wonderful, they're hard to find and pick.*

3. So far in the novel (up to page 232), Lisamarie and her family have had to deal with a lot of loss. Discuss how they do this, using specific references to the novel.

**READING SECTION FOUR (232-294)**

Because this is the deadline for the assigned reading, you should have read the section. Choose one of the following topics, and write on it according to the instructions and rubric on the first page.

1. Read the following passage from page 255, and discuss whether or not you agree with Aunt Trudy's belief that the men would have "got off scot-free" for raping or killing Lisamarie, if it had happened. Be sure to support your position with connections to real life and the novel.

*"Lisa," Aunt Trudy said, "you got to be more careful."*

*"About what?"*

*"Those guys could've killed you."*

*"It was broad daylight," I said. "And there were tons of witnesses. They wouldn't have done anything."*

*"Honey," she said, "if you were some little white girl, that would be true. But you're a mouthy Indian, and everyone thinks we're born sluts. Those guys would have said you were asking for it and got off scot-free."*

2. Read the following passage from pages 288-289 and discuss why Lisamarie is encouraging Jimmy to talk to Karaoke. How does she deal with her own "love" issues?

*"She's so pretty," he said.*

*"You aren't dog food yourself," I said. "Look, this is silly. Go over to her. Say hi. As her if she wants a pop or something. Life is short, Jim."*

*"You think she'd go out with me?"*

*"You'll never know until you try."*

*He stayed beside me, taking deep breaths. He stood, gave me a nervous smile, made it to the bottom of the bleachers, paused and turned around, annoying the anxious fans who hissed at him as he pushed his way through them back to me. Maybe it was better this way, I thought as he sheepishly sat beside me. If you never fall in love, you never get your heart broken.*

3. At the end of this section, Ma-ma-oo dies. Discuss why Lisamarie has so much guilt connected to this. How does she deal with this loss?



**READING SECTION FIVE (295-374)**

Because this is the deadline for the assigned reading, you should have read the section. Choose one of the following topics, and write on it according to the instructions and rubric on the first page.

1. Read the following passage from pages 295-296, and discuss the fusion of story and the modern world that Eden Robinson is exploring. How is this passage indicative of themes from this novel?

*Weegit the raven has mellowed in his old age. He's still a confirmed bachelor, but he's not the womanizer he once was. Plying the stock market—instead of spending his time being a trickster—has paid off and he has a comfortable condo downtown. He plays up the angle about creating the world and humans, conveniently forgetting he did it out of boredom. Yes, he admits, he did steal the sun and the moon, but he insists he did it to bring light to humankind even though he did it so that it would be easier for him to find food. After doing some spin control on the crazy pranks of his youth, he's become respectable. As he sips his low-fat mocha and reads yet another sanitized version of his earlier exploits, only his small, sly smile reveals how much he's enjoying pulling the wool over everyone else's eyes.*

2. Read the following passage from pages 332-333. Compare the story of T'sonoqua to that of B'gwus. Why is this significant to the rest of the novel?

*T'sonoqua is not as famous as B'gwus. She covers herself in a cloak and pretends to be an old woman. She will ask for your help, feigning a helpless shake in her hands as she leans on her cane. If you are moved to go close enough for her to see you with her poor vision, she will straighten to her true height, and the hands that grip you will be as strong as a man's. She is an ogress, and she won't let go because, to her, human flesh is the ultimate delicacy and young flesh is especially sweet. But discredited scientists and amateur sleuths aren't hunting her. There are no conferences debating her existence. She doesn't have her own beer commercials. She has a few amusing notes in some anthropology books. She is remembered in scattered campfire tales. But she is, by and large, a dim memory.*

3. Read the following passage from pages 368-369 and discuss Lisamarie's experiences in "the land of the dead"—both literal and figurative. Why do you think Eden Robinson chose to end the novel in this way?

*I wake. The moss is soft and wet against my back. There is a dull aching pain in my hand. I lift it, and the cut is raw, but it has stopped bleeding, and all the blood has been licked away. Its tongue was scratchy, like a cat's.*

*"You said you would help me!" I yell, but my voice cracks, and I don't know if they heard me, so I yell it again.*

*They snigger.*

*I push myself up with my right hand, cradling my left hand against my chest. The bushes rustle.*

*"More," a voice says from the shadows.*

*I stand. "You tell me where Jimmy is first."*

4. This novel, like many novels by First Peoples authors, has an **unresolved conclusion**. Look up the definition of this literary term. Why do you think that Eden Robinson decided to have an unresolved conclusion? Predict what could happen after the conclusion. Why do you think this could have happened? Use specific details from the novel to support your response.

### SCORING GUIDE FOR POETRY READER RESPONSE

**This is a first draft response and should be assessed as such. The use of paragraph structure is assessed holistically with reference to the clarity of expression and organization.**

<b>6</b>	The level six response is superior and may draw upon any number of factors, such as an appreciation of the poem and an insightful discussion of the topic. The writing style is effective and demonstrates a sophisticated use of language. Despite its clarity and precision, the response need not be error-free.
<b>5</b>	The level five response is proficient and reflects a strong grasp of the topic and the poem. The references to the poem may be explicit or implicit and convincingly support the discussion. The writing is well organized and reflects a strong command of the conventions of language. Errors may be present, but are not distracting.
<b>4</b>	The level four response is competent. Understanding of the poem tends to be literal but rather superficial. The response may rely heavily on paraphrasing of the poem. References are present and appropriate, but may be limited to only part of the poem. The writing is organized and straightforward. Conventions of language are usually followed, but some errors are evident.
<b>3</b>	The level three response is barely adequate. Understanding of the poem may be partially flawed or incomplete. Support may consist of long references to the poem which are not clearly connected to a central idea or may be meagre or repetitive. The response may show some sense of purpose, but errors may impede meaning.
<b>2</b>	The level two response is inadequate. While there is an attempt to address the topic, there may be a misunderstanding of the task. Understanding of the poem is seriously flawed. Errors are recurring, distracting, and impede meaning.
<b>1</b>	The level one 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 which renders the paper, at times, unintelligible.

**SCORING GUIDE FOR PROSE READER RESPONSE**

**This is a first draft response and should be assessed as such. The use of paragraph structure is assessed holistically with reference to the clarity of expression and organization.**

<b>6</b>	The level six essay is superior and may draw upon any number of factors
<b>5</b>	The level five essay is proficient and reflects a strong grasp of the topic and the text. The references to the text may be explicit or implicit and convincingly support a thesis. The writing is well organized and demonstrates a strong command of the conventions of language. Errors may be present.
<b>4</b>	The level four essay is competent. The assertions in the level four essay tend to be simplistic; there are no significant errors in understanding. References are present and appropriate.
<b>3</b>	The level three essay is barely adequate. Understanding of the topic and/or the text may be partially flawed. Support may consist of long references to the text which are not clearly connected to a central idea or may be meagre or repetitive. The essay may show some sense of purpose.
<b>2</b>	The level two essay is inadequate. Understanding of the topic or the text is seriously flawed. There may be a misunderstanding of the task. Errors are recurring.
<b>1</b>	The level one essay 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 which renders the paper, at times, unintelligible.

## UNIT 5: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLING—A RECURRING THEME IN VARIED TEXTS

### OVERVIEW

Using extracts from Tomson Highway’s novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, students will explore many issues relating to Aboriginal people, including spirituality, relationship with the land, family, and determination. The main focus, however, will be on the topic or theme of residential schooling as reflected in this novel and various other types of texts by Aboriginal authors including poets and filmmakers. The film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and sections of the novel *Three Day Road* will also be examined in relation to this topic. Instructional methods will

- focus on collaborative approaches and “doing” rather than merely discussing
- encourage oral and auditory engagement with texts rather than silent reading exclusively
- emphasize awareness of self and other in group process and consensus building
- include the use of “writing to learn” strategies to enhance students’ writing skills
- provide opportunities to use varied forms of representation to demonstrate understanding of text through use of drama, art, media, dance, song, music, etc.

The subject of Residential Schooling is a difficult one for many Aboriginal survivors. Aboriginal community representatives know that this will be a focus in EFP 12 and should be prepared for some possible fallout from this subject matter—it helps to be sensitive to the fact that this remains an emotionally charged subject. At the same time, an appreciation of the nature and impact of residential schooling is important if students are to have a full understanding of many contemporary creative texts by Aboriginal authors that deal with this subject, either as a main focus or incidentally.

### *Primary Text*

Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998) Anchor Canada edition 2005

### *Supplementary Texts*

Australian Film Commission. *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. 2002 (based on the book *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence* by Doris Nugi Garimara Pilkington, 1996)

Boyden, Joseph. *Three Day Road* Toronto: Penguin Group, 2005

### **ALERT:**

This unit relies on the use of excerpts from both *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and *Three Day Road*, among other texts. Tomson Highway’s novel, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* is a work of adult fiction. As such, it contains challenging material that makes it inadvisable to use in its entirety with a class of Grade 12 students. The challenges lie not only in the novel’s literary difficulty and emotionally charged content, but also in its unvarnished portrayals of the lives of its characters (including use of profanity and coarse language, sometimes graphic descriptions of sex, violence, sexual abuse, and depictions of thought and behaviour that clearly qualify as racist, sexist, and/or classist). To a lesser degree, *Three Day Road* contains these elements as well.

Accordingly this unit recommends the use of a read-aloud strategy in combination with limited reproduction of carefully identified extracts. Acquisition and use of class sets of these novels is also possible, but any such copies should be used **in class only** under teacher direction and supervision. They should **not be sent home with students**, unless the novels have received an authorized or recommended resource designation from the Board of the school district or local education authority.

## Unit 5: Residential Schooling

### Teacher Preparation

Although you will naturally want to read this unit plan and the novels, *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and *Three Day Road* in their entirety before undertaking this unit, students will be expected to read excerpts only from the novels. A class set of these excerpts, along with a class set of an information handout and two short poems that have been included as part of this unit can be produced before starting the unit and distributed either during the lesson in which they are examined, or right at the beginning of the unit, if you wish to let students begin reading them as they consider how to approach their unit assignment. In either case, you will require

- class copies of Chapters 3, 4, (pp. 23-48) and 10 (pp. 88-92) from *Kiss of the Fur Queen*
- class copies of Residential Schooling Background Information (supplied with this unit)
- class copies of the poems “I Lost My Talk” by Rita Joe (*An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*) and “I’m So Sorry” by Louise Bernice Halfe, Sky Dancer (*Native Poetry in Canada: An Anthology*); both supplied with this unit.
- class copies of the Chapter “Kipwahakan – Captive” (pp. 89-95) from *Three Day Road*

You will also find it useful to visit and explore some web sites, notably the Residential School site, <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/history.html> for information about residential school history, time line, residential school locations by province, and a photo gallery of residential school attendees. Material from this site will be used during this unit on residential schools (i.e., in Lessons 4-5 *et al*). You will also have occasion to use material from <http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/English.html> (in Lesson 10). Ideally, you will be able to present web-based material by having an Internet-connected computer with display system set up in the classroom. If this proves impossible, you can also print site material in advance to share with students.

Depending on the time required for the activities suggested here and on the time scheduled for classes, it may be possible to cover each of the lessons in this unit in a single class. Some, however, may require additional time (i.e., a second class). Please adapt these materials as necessary.

### LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

Establishing Context  
Unit Assessment  
Kiss of the Fur Queen Chapters 1 and 2  
Kiss of the Fur Queen Chapters 3 and 4  
Introduction to Residential Schooling  
Kiss of the Fur Queen Chapters 5-8—the Residential School  
Differing Responses to Residential Schooling  
Rabbit-Proof Fence  
The Long-Term Impact of Residential Schooling  
Acknowledgement and Remediation?  
Residential School Survivor Guest Speaker

### Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Pre-Unit Assessment: What Do You Know About Canada’s First Peoples?  
I Lost My Talk by Rita Joe  
I’m So Sorry by Louise Bernice Halfe, Sky Dancer

## ***Establishing Context***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A4

### **Preview of the unit (5-10 minutes)**

Introduce the unit for students by

- identifying the main theme (residential schooling) and the texts that will be used to explore it
- providing an indication of the rationale for focusing on the theme of residential schooling (e.g., see the unit overview; also point out how a focus on this issue as evident in texts created by First Peoples authors can provide an opportunity to gain insights and to challenge stereotypes about Aboriginal people)
- reiterating expectations that you have of them with respect to their participation in learning activities associated with the unit (e.g., that they will promote and support respect for individual and group points of view; that they will encourage and support group discussion, cooperation, and collaboration; that they will recognize the importance of First Peoples knowledge and voice)

### **Discussion about First Peoples “Voice” (10 minutes)**

Generate a whole-class discussion by advancing some “big-picture” questions to begin the unit:

- What do you think might be the purpose of the First Peoples novel (or film, or poem)?
- How might work by First Peoples “authors” and other creators (e.g., film-makers) differ from work by non-Aboriginal authors? (“What kinds of distinctive features/characteristics might you expect to find in the work of First Peoples authors?” ...with respect to both content and use of techniques such as imagery or symbolism.)
- Why might stories about Aboriginal people by First Peoples authors differ from the same stories about Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal authors? (“Why do you think it might be important to use work by First Peoples creators as a basis for learning about Aboriginal people?”)

Record students’ initial responses on a flipchart or section of chalkboard that can be left on display or easily revisited throughout the unit.

### **Eliciting Prior Knowledge**

Use a pre-test to elicit from students what they already know from their previous learning (e.g., Social Studies 11, Civic Studies 11, BC First Nations Studies 12) about the historical injustices imposed on indigenous peoples through the colonization process and assimilation ideology (reflected in the *Indian Act* as well as in residential schooling).

Distribute the pre-test (provided at the end of this unit) and explain the objective—to check the students’ knowledge about some First Peoples issues. Have the students answer as many questions as they can. When they have completed this assignment, have the students place their papers in an envelope. Have them sign and date the envelope. Tell the students that they will receive the envelope at the end of the unit at which time they will have the opportunity to once again answer these questions.

**UNIT ASSIGNMENT****Learning Outcomes:**

Written assignment:	C2, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C12, C13, C14
Oral presentation:	A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11
Performance piece:	A7, A8, A9, A10, C4, C13
Visual representation:	C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C12, C13

Introduce the main performance task that you will use for assessing student achievement in relation to this unit—students are to create a “text” that represents their learning associated with this unit. The “text” must specifically address the following three requirements:

Requirement #1—one of the following presentation forms:

- a written piece 1500-2500 words in length
- an oral presentation 1000-1200 words in length (to be memorized and delivered)
- a performance piece lasting between 12 and 15 minutes (e.g., dance, mime, song) accompanied by a written rationale that clarifies how the performance piece addresses Requirements #2 and #3
- a visual representation containing at least three identifiable elements from a First Nations or Métis “artistic” tradition (e.g., use of distinctive techniques, materials, imagery), accompanied by a written rationale that clarifies how the visual representation addresses Requirements #2 and #3

Requirement #2—The representation will address **at least one** of the following questions:

- What purposes are associated with the creation of First Peoples novels, films, or poetry?
- What distinctive features/characteristics mark the work of First Peoples authors?
- What has been the intergenerational impact of Residential Schooling on Aboriginal people?
- How appropriate is the Residential School Settlement Agreement as a response to the harm done to Canada’s First Peoples by residential schooling?

Requirement #3—The representation will also incorporate a meaningful reference to **at least two** of the texts examined as part of the unit.

Assessment criteria can be discussed with students and amended on the basis of student input, but should include some or all of the following:

...for a **written piece**, consideration of the extent to which

- the three requirements have been met
- the conception (e.g., the choice of form) shows evidence of creativity and awareness of audience
- opinions or claims are supported by appropriate elaboration (e.g., detailed examples, reasons, or other supporting evidence)
- the organization of information or argument is clear and readily intelligible
- the thinking is coherent and persuasive
- mechanical conventions of usage have been observed.

...for an **oral presentation**, consideration of the extent to which

- the three requirements have been met
- the choice of words used shows evidence of creativity (e.g., the speaker displays awareness of rhythm and the sound effects created by combinations of words)
- opinions or claims are supported by appropriate elaboration (e.g., detailed examples, reasons, or other supporting evidence)
- the organization of information or argument is clear and readily intelligible
- the thinking is coherent and persuasive
- the delivery is polished and shows awareness of audience (e.g., with respect to pacing).

... for a **performance piece**, consideration of the extent to which

- the three requirements have been met
- the Rationale identifies clear and convincing connections between the piece and Requirements #2 and #3 (i.e., the thinking is coherent and persuasive)
- the sequencing of “content” shows evidence of considered decision-making and editing
- production values have been considered and appropriately integrated into the piece
- the delivery is polished and rehearsed and shows awareness of audience (e.g., with respect to pacing).

... for a **visual representation**, consideration of the extent to which

- the three requirements have been met
- the Rationale identifies clear and convincing connections between the piece and Requirements #2 and #3 (i.e., the thinking is coherent and persuasive)
- the traditional elements are clearly identifiable
- the choice of materials and processes has been considered and appropriately integrated into the piece
- the execution is polished and effective.

Spend a bit of time discussing timelines including interim stage deadlines (e.g., students will have defined or chosen their project by...). Periodically check on student progress.

## ***Kiss of the Fur Queen Chapters 1 and 2***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A4, A8, B13

### **Author Background** (2-3 min)

Provide a brief biographical sketch of the author, Tomson Highway, using information from the dust jacket flyleaf (e.g., of the hardcover edition) or from online sources.

### **Oral Reading** (25-30 min)

Let the class know that in keeping with the focus on oracy and the oral tradition among First Peoples, they will be listening to excerpts of the book read aloud (including the first two chapters and another from later in the novel. Some sections (three chapters) will be copied and distributed for student reading. The remaining information about the novel will be provided in the form of synopsis.

Before beginning to read the first two chapters, give students a focus for listening. Have students listen for and record (i.e., by means of quick note-taking), examples of

- **“poetic” diction** (i.e., any language that resonates or appears especially poetic to them); you could briefly review the concept of onomatopoeia (in this case, “adaptation of the sound to the sense for rhetorical effect) and have them look especially for examples of this;
- **other surprising or unusual elements** (e.g., unexpected departures from linear narrative focused on orderly telling of sequentially linked events)

As an alternative to unrelieved teacher oral reading, you could have particular sections read by students. As a caution, however, note that Chapter 2 contains a reference to a ribald Cree ditty, “kimoosoom chimasoo” (p.17, first 4 lines – see Glossary at the end of the novel for a translation) and a scene in which sexual intercourse occurs (top half of p.18).

### **Follow-Up Discussion** (15 min)

Follow-up discussion can be based on the focus for listening given to the students. Note students’ perceptiveness in responding to the challenges they were given. Gauge the extent to which they listened carefully by considering the relevance of examples they bring forward.



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- Examples of onomatopoeia throughout the opening section include the following:
  - “his right snapping moose-hide whip above his head” (p. 3, opening paragraph)
  - “prying, babbling in this language of the Englishman, hard, filled with sharp, jagged angles.” (p. 6).Examples of alliterative language are also quite evident (though not strict alliteration, which is repetition of the same first sound in a group of words):
  - “all she could see was showers of stars” (p. 8, last and 2<sup>nd</sup> last paragraphs, also p. 9)
  - “ripples of warm air redolent...” (p. 11).
- A striking feature of this opening section, which recurs throughout the novel, is the back and forth shift between discursive narrative (omniscient narrator describing scenes and events) and impressionistic narrative (looking at things from within the mind of a character, as in Abraham’s stream-of-“semi”-conscious perceptions following the completion of the dog-sled race). Another striking feature is the introduction of characters from the spirit world into the narrative in Chapter 2.

This discussion can be tied back to the discussion about First Peoples voice in Lesson 1 and “characteristics of creative work by First Peoples authors.”

### ***Kiss of the Fur Queen Chapters 3 and 4***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, B1, B4, B12, B13, C2, C8, C9, C10

#### **Review of Chapters 1 & 2 (20 min)**

Have students in small groups discuss the two chapters that were read the previous day to

- identify some Cree cultural aspects they have gleaned from Chapters 1-4 of the novel
- describe the Okimasis lifestyle from what they experienced in Chapters 1-4 of the novel
- what is it about Okimasis family that appeals to them.

Following 10 minutes of discussion give the groups a chance to briefly report out to the whole class.

Student reading of Chapters 3 and 4 (assigned as homework, or done as in-class silent reading)

Distribute photocopies of chapters 3 and 4, pp 23-48 for individual reading. As a follow-up to their previous listening work, encourage them to “read with their ears” by remaining attuned to the aural potential of the writing.

#### **Follow-up Reflection (35-40 min)**

In pairs, have students complete the following tasks: (15 min)

- Identify one example of event (i.e., incident or plot development) within the passage you have read that evokes the Cree relationship with the land, the animals, or other aspects of the natural world.
- Identify one example of metaphor within the passage you have read that evokes the Cree relationship with the land, the animals, or other aspects of the natural world.
- Identify one descriptive detail within the passage you have read that evokes the Cree relationship with the land, the animals, or other aspects of the natural world.
- Explain what the literary “ingredients” you have identified (metaphor, plot incident, and descriptive detail) say about the Cree relationship with the land, the animals, or other aspects of the natural world.
- Why do you think the author includes several Cree-language words or expressions in the story? Can you suggest from context what these words mean?
- Give some examples of humour within the sections you have read and explain your choices.
- What do you see as the significance of the two appearances of the caribou herd (at the beginning of Chapter 3 and end of Chapter 4)?

In a whole-class discussion, elicit from various students their answers to the questions. Give feedback on the extent to which students

- give appropriate examples and explanations to support their responses (e.g., correctly identify examples of metaphor, suggest how juxtaposition and exaggeration contribute to humour)
- develop a rich sense of the connection between the characters in Eemanapiteepitat and both the natural and spiritual worlds
- recognize the strong and varied associations between the caribou and the concept/theme/motif of survival; suggest other plausible symbolic significance of the caribou.

In addition, you can contribute to the discussion of Cree words and their meanings by providing translations as supplied in the *Glossary of Cree Terms* at the end of the novel. As an ongoing motif, you can also contribute to students' aural/oral appreciation of Tomson Highway's prose by pointing out any uses of poetic technique that you would like to bring forward (e.g., techniques such as *sibilance*, composition of sentences and phrases that create rhythmic effects, and uses of *imagery*—especially imagery that evokes an intimate and balanced relationship with the natural world or otherwise contributes to the distinctively First Peoples voice that is represented in the novel).

**Journal activity: (15 min in-class or homework assignment)**

Have students write in their journals on the following topic: Why is think Mariesis is worried about Champion going off to school? Ask students to be prepared to share this with the class.

## ***Introduction to Residential Schooling***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, B4, B12, B13

**Anticipatory Reflection and Initial Student Knowledge Base (5 min)**

In a whole-class setting, ask students to share thoughts from the journal entry in Lesson 3 they created to imagine why Mariesis is worried about Champion going away to residential school. Record student ideas. Ask the following question to extend the discussion to what students already know about the purpose and residential schooling:

- At the beginning of Chapter 4, in answer to Mariesis' concerns, Abraham Okimasis explains why Champion had to go away for his schooling: "*Sooni-eye-gimow*'s orders, Father Bouchard says, It is the law." Why did the government enact such a law?

Again, record student answers, which will provide an indication of their background knowledge about residential schooling.

**Reading and Discussion of Handout – “Quotes and Summary Information about Residential Schooling” (20 min)**

Distribute and have students read the handout, “Quotes and Summary Information about Residential Schooling,” provided with this unit. As an alternative to making photocopies, this reading can also be provided to students as an overhead.

Once students have had a chance to complete the reading, revisit their answers to the question, Why did the government enact law requiring residential schooling for First Peoples children? Extend the earlier list to add anything that the students feel they left out before. Discuss the terms *colonialism* and *paternalism*, and have students identify portions of the quotes that could be characterized as racist (define terms as necessary).

## Unit 5: Residential Schooling

### Reading and Analysis of the Poem, “I Lost My Talk” (20 min)

Distribute the poem, “I Lost My Talk” by Rita Joe. It is reproduced here and can also be found in the following two anthologies:

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Grauer, Lally (ed). *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Broadview Press, 2001, p. 17.

Moses, Daniel David and Goldie, Terry (ed). *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 107.

To introduce the poem, explain that Rita Joe is a widely recognized Mi’kmaq poet. Note that the fourth line of the poem contains a reference to Shubenacadie school, which was an Indian residential school that operated in Nova Scotia from 1922 – 1968. Have students read the poem silently. Then read it (or have a student read it) aloud. Conduct a discussion about the poem focusing on aspects such as the following:

- Who is the “you” referred to in the poem?
- What is the “talk” referred to in the poem? (Mi’kmaq language, but also by extension the poet’s sense of identity – the last line of the poem suggests that awareness/ knowledge of First Peoples identity is at issue)
- Elicit observations from the students concerning the form of the poem:
  - the non-conventional punctuation (e.g., sentence fragments punctuated as sentences; stand-alone principal clauses not punctuated at all)
  - the reference to “the scrambled ballad, about my word” (Is this really a ballad?)

What conclusions might be drawn from these observations? Does the form actually reflect the theme in any way?

- What tone does the speaker in the poem adopt? (e.g., lines 1-9, with short declarative statements, feels accusatory; in lines 10-12 the tone shifts toward the closing request/plea, expressed in relatively gentle terms) What other types of emotion might one expect from someone who has had his/her talk “snatched away”?
- Do you think that Shubenacadie Residential School has achieved Duncan Campbell Scott’s intent with respect to this speaker (see “Quotes and Summary Information About Residential Schooling” at the end of this lesson)? What makes you think so (or not)?
- What do you think is the purpose of this poem? (relate this question to the general questions about First Peoples voice posed in Lesson 1; look for students to recognize how this poem might contribute to teaching, to processing of difficult emotions – *catharsis*, to affirmation, ...)

Assess student participation in the discussion, considering the extent to which they contribute pertinent responses, supported with examples and/or elaboration that makes meaningful connections with prior discussions from this unit (e.g., Do students exhibit a sense of how this poem links to the situation of Gabriel or Jeremiah situation in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*?).

### Quotes and Summary Information about Residential Schooling

- The following quotes are from Duncan Campbell Scott, appointed Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs by the government of Canada from 1913 to 1932, and one of Scott’s successors at the Federal Department of Indian Affairs, P.G Anderson. Scott was responsible for making it compulsory for Indian children to attend residential schools and was determined to “take the Indian out of the Indian” through residential schools

*I want to get rid of the Indian problem. Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian*

*question and no Indian Department.” ... “They are a weird and waning race...ready to break out at any moment in savage dances; in wild and desperate orgies.*

statement by Duncan Campbell Scott, 1920, cited at  
[http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/residential\\_schools.htm](http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/residential_schools.htm)

*It is observed with alarm that the holding of dances by the Indians on their reserves is on the increase, and that these practices tend to disorganize the efforts which the Department of Indian Affairs is putting forth to make them self-supporting. I have, therefore, to direct you to use your utmost endeavours to dissuade the Indians from excessive indulgence in the practice of dancing.*

excerpt from a letter written December 15, 1921  
by Duncan Campbell Scott as a circular to staff, cited at  
<http://www.redskyperformance.com/redsky.surface.html>

*You will not give up your idle, roving habits to enable your children to receive instruction. It has therefore been determined that your children shall be sent to schools where they will forget their Indian habits and be instructed in all the necessary arts of the civilized life and become one with your white brethren.*

Indian Superintendent, P.G. Anderson, 1946 cited at  
[http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/residential\\_schools.htm](http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/residential_schools.htm)

From 1830 to 1996 Indian children were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to residential schools operated by religious orders (Catholic, Methodist, United, Anglican, Baptist and Presbyterian). Some of these schools were situated right on reserves but most of the schools were far away from the schools' drawing area. Many children had to travel a day's journey, often being treated like cattle, to get to these schools. Even though some residential schools were on reserves, the children attending these schools were not allowed to see their parents, relatives or community members that lived on the reserve. The intent was to civilize the savages so that they could be assimilated into white society.

At residential schools the children were often subjected to cruelty to make them subordinate to the teachings of the church and ways of the white society. These children were denied, under threat of strict punishment, the use of their languages and cultures and ways of life. They were isolated from their families for at least ten months of the year and forced to do labour to maintain the schools. Their schooling was often substandard since many of the teachers were untrained and the curriculum was mainly religious in content. The food and living conditions in the residential schools was foreign and detached for the students. Abuses (physical, mental, sexual) were generally accepted as common practice and unreported because of the elevated stature of the religious clerics. Many Indian children died in these schools because of health problems associated with poor living conditions. The majority of deaths were from tuberculosis which spread rapidly through close living quarters and poor living conditions in these schools.

It is estimated that 100,000 children attended these schools and very few have indicated that this was a good thing. Most attendees have very bad stories to tell about their experience at these schools.

In attempts to redress the racism associated with residential schools and through leadership of the Assembly of First Nations, the government is now financially compensating residential school survivors for the loss of culture and language. Measures are in place for residential school survivors to sue the government for severe physical and sexual abuses they experienced in these schools.

## ***Kiss of the Fur Queen Chapters 5-8—the Residential School***

### **Learning Outcomes: A4, A8**

Re-establish the context created in previous lessons (Champion is off to residential school in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*; the intended role and purpose of the Indian Residential Schools is to uproot and assimilate them).

Using the History of Residential School site (<http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/history.html#>), click on Photos at top of page and go to Saskatchewan photos. Click on the Thomas Moore double photo:



Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan in 1874.  
Library and Archives Canada / NL-022474

Have students talk about the before and after photo of Thomas Moore: How does this photo link with the mission of Duncan Campbell Scott?

Read Chapters 5 to 8, pp. 51- 82 aloud to students. To pace the reading, provide a focus for listening as follows before beginning each chapter, and pause to briefly discuss the focus for listening at the end of each chapter.

- Chapter 5: Describe how the Birch Lake Indian Residential School set about fulfilling Duncan Campbell Scott's mission. Give examples of Father LaFleur's inappropriate behaviour.
- Chapter 6: Can you see any evidence of racism in this chapter (representing the good in heaven and the bad in hell)? How was the use of the Cree language discouraged?
- Chapter 7: Jeremiah says that his hair is gone and therefore he has no power. What did he mean by this? What did Mariesis say the picture of the fur queen was supposed to do for Gabriel and Jeremiah? Did it work?
- Chapter 8: What does Jeremiah witness in this chapter? What metaphor is used to describe what Jeremiah witnesses (i.e., the beast)? How do Gabriel and Jeremiah respond to what has occurred?

Debrief and extend the discussion of the sexual abuse that occurs in Chapter 8 to help students recognize how the portrayal in this chapter captures the dynamics that are common in such situations. This can be done by focusing on the following aspects:

- the sense of guilt and shame that are attached to any admission of or any discussion about sexual abuse
- the power and authority of the adults who perpetrate the abuse, which makes it probable that their denials would outweigh any accusation levelled by "mere" children

- the mixed feelings that make the abuse difficult for young children to recognize (i.e., in the Chapter, pp. 77-79, the experience of abuse is portrayed as at once pleasurable and monstrous/disgusting)
- the fact that many children fear telling their parents because they think they will be in trouble or be blamed for these abuses (belief that they are somehow responsible)
- the manner in which extended silence about the occurrence of abuse reinforces the likelihood that it will never be discussed.

These points can be developed through discussion arising from student responses to questioning such as the following:

- *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* means “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” (pp. 80-81) What did this phrase mean to Jeremiah and Gabriel? How did the teachings of the church facilitate the activities of abusers within the residential schools?

Provide photocopies of Chapter 10 (pp. 88-92) from *Kiss of the Fur Queen* and of the Chapter “Kipwahakan – Captive” (pp. 89-95) from *Three Day Road*. Have students read both of these excerpts as homework prior to the next lesson.

## Differing Responses to Residential Schooling

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

Conduct a whole-class discussion on Chapter 10 from *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, using questions such as the following to focus conversation:

- What adjectives would you use to describe the scene in which the Okimasis family is journeying to Kamamagoos Island? (Look for students to support their answers with detail from the text – e.g., the reference to Winken, Blinken, and Nod and the reference to *machipoowamoowin* reinforce the “dreamlike” quality; the wolf howl, the mysterious fire, and the use of words such as “spell” reinforce the “eerie” quality; connect qualities of writing in this chapter with characteristic features of First Peoples fiction.)
- Is there anything in this chapter that reflects (or reminds you of) the First Peoples’ principles of learning? (e.g., ... “Why not?” Gabriel asked, not moving his gaze from the sight. No response. Gabriel decided to be patient. // Mariesis’s answer finally broke the spell....)
- Who is Chachagathoo? What do you think she represents? (Guide student speculation on this point by drawing upon your knowledge of what is revealed later in the novel about Chachagathoo.)
- How has the boys’ experience of residential schooling distanced them from their home and family? (e.g., their ability to speak English, which their parents don’t understand, the silence about the sexual abuse that took place).
- What is meant by the Jeremiah’s statement “Even if we told them they would side with Father Lafleur”? How might this situation been dealt with differently so as to empower the boys to deal with their sexual abuse? Do you think that Jeremiah and Gabriel will be silent about their abuse until they die?

**Journal activity:** Have students write about what they think will become of Jeremiah when he moves to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

### Setting the Context for the *Three Day Road* Excerpt

Students will have noticed that the first paragraph of the Chapter “Kipwahakan – Captive” (pp. 89-95) from *Three Day Road* is not part of the residential school story told by the narrator of this chapter, a character named Niska, who is aunt to Xavier. Explain to students that this paragraph ties to a point in the novel at which Niska is paddling her nephew to their home in northern Ontario, he having returned broken, sick in body and spirit from his service as a Canadian soldier in WWI. With reference to this “frame” for the story

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that Niska tells, ask students, “What is Niska’s purpose in telling the story of her residential school experience?” (Students should recognize the role of the story as *medicine*, for this is explicitly affirmed. They may also recognize the story as a *record* of actual events and an attempted *transmission* of the will to resist—assimilation, death, extinction, .... Tie this back to the Lesson 1 discussion about the purposes and characteristics of the First Peoples story/novel/poem/film).

Using once again the Residential School site, <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/history.html>, click on Ontario and view the location of province’s 22 residential schools. Encourage discussion/comments from the students about the schools: their location, the church denominations, the years of operation, etc. to give students an idea of the numbers of schools and the impact these schools had on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. Have students decide which school they think that Niska might have attended.

Divide the class into four or five groups. Have each of the groups compare (or analyze as applicable)

- Niska’s and Jeremiah’s or Gabriel’s “leaving home” for residential school experience
- Niska’s and Jeremiah’s first haircut at the residential school
- Niska’s and Jeremiah’s early encounters with the nuns and priests at their respective residential schools
- The attitudes of Niska’s and Jeremiah’s mothers about residential schooling for their children
- The strength of character of Niska and Jeremiah.

Have groups report out on their deliberations, to compile a class list of the major differences between the Jeremiah and Niska’s residential school experiences.

Have the students respond to one of the following questions in their journals:

- Which of the two characters (Jeremiah and Niska) do you think came out of the school more unscathed by his or her experience at the school?
- How do you think your parents might respond to having you forcibly removed from your home into a residential school that was contrary to your parents’ values, practices, and beliefs?

Criteria for assessing the journal entry will depend somewhat on which question you choose to assign. In either case, however, consider the extent to which students support their answers with reasons, details, examples, or other pertinent elaboration.

## Rabbit-Proof Fence

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, B1, B3, B4, B7, B8, B9, B10, B12, C1, C2, C8, C9, C10

The film and activities may take place over two to three classes.

Introduce the 94 minute film. Let the students know that some of the scenes may be disturbing. Because of its length, the film may be shown at one, two or three viewings or selected snippets for a specific purpose. After each viewing, debrief the film with discussion questions such as the following:

- How did this make you feel?
- What scenes did you find disturbing? Why?
- What did you learn about the function and characteristics of this First Peoples story?

At the completion of the film, pose the following questions for students to individually or collaboratively address. (Jigsaw activity possibility: You may decide to assign specific questions to small groups to discuss and report on.)

- How did you react to the film? Discuss your views with a partner.
- How would you describe the “genre” of the film?
- Very early in the film, we see the eagle, Molly’s totem, her spirit bird. Her mother tells her the eagle will look after her. When does the bird appear again in the film and why?
- In your own words, describe the scene when the children are taken and how the tension is built up.

- Comment on your feelings, the music, the reactions of the women and the children.
- Write a description of the scene through the eyes of Molly, one of the mothers or Riggs, the police officer.
- What did you learn from *Rabbit-Proof Fence* that you did not know before?
- How does this information help you understand First Peoples today?

Have students complete a journal entry in response to one of the following challenges:

- Australia's Chief Protector, A.O. Neville states: "...our human duty by the outcast is to take the children young and bring them up in a way that will establish their self-respect, make them useful units in the community, and fit to live in it according to its standards." Why would people today say that Neville's policies were racist? Provide evidence from the film. What evidence is there that Neville is a product of Australian society and its values at that time?
- Compare the Australian policy of "breeding out" aboriginality with Canada's assimilation policy through residential schooling (e.g., "What kinds of activities were the children involved in to 'civilize' them according to the portrayals in *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and *Kiss of the Fur Queen*?"")
- How does the use of First Peoples language in *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and *Kiss of the Fur Queen* enhance or detract from the story (stories)?
- Compare the "home leaving" of the main characters from the three texts: *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, and *Three Day Road*.

Once again, criteria for assessing the journal entry will depend somewhat on which question you choose to assign (or the students choose to complete). In all cases, however, consider the extent to which support their answers with reasons, details, examples, or other pertinent elaboration.

## ***The Long-Term Impact of Residential Schooling***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A5, A8,

### **Oral Reading and Debrief of Chapters 47, 48, 49, *Kiss of the Fur Queen***

Chapters 47, 48, and 49 of *Kiss of the Fur Queen* are the concluding chapters of the novel. As such, they draw together many of the threads established in earlier chapters, including some in chapters the students have studied. Consisting of 14 pages in total, these three chapters can be read aloud to students.

#### **ALERT**

Some passages in these chapters contain definite adult content (e.g., Gabriel's Weetigo nightmare scene on pp. 299-300; Gabriel's casual sexual encounter for cash, on p. 295). If you feel that you or your students would be uncomfortable with this material, feel free to omit it from your reading.

As a focus for listening, point out (or remind students) that Tomson Highway comes to novel writing as an established playwright. He is accordingly adept at sudden scene changes, juxtaposing stream of consciousness memory sequences with conventional narrative, and jumping from one place and time to another, with only an extra line space to indicate the shift. Challenge them to see if they can

- identify when scene changes have happened (e.g., by raising their hands)
- piece together some of what has transpired since Chapter 10 on the basis of the reading; conclusions they might be able to draw include the following:
  - Gabriel has found his identity as a gay man and a performer in the world of dance, and his promiscuous behaviour has led him to become infected with AIDS, which is now killing him.
  - Although the brothers have been through painful conflict, there has been a reconciliation.
  - Their father, Abraham, has died within the church "fold," though with some deathbed reconnection to his own pre-Christian First Peoples identity.
  - The brothers (Jeremiah especially) have connected with their spiritual and cultural identity as Aboriginal people, finding the support of a like-minded community (i.e., the Ojibway women, Amanda



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Clear Sky and her grandmother Ann-Adele Ghost rider), They are working together to achieve artistic success with the creation of musical drama/dance work grounded in their heritage as First People.

- Chachagathoo (the “evil woman” evoked in Chapter 10) proves to have been a Cree shaman whom the priests recognized as a threat to their cultural/spiritual agenda, and consequently demonized; the brothers have, however, recognized who she truly was and made her a central character in one of their works.
- The gulf between the boys and their mother has become profound and irreconcilable, as she has remained committed to the Catholic faith.

Use a follow-up discussion to clarify these details, and add whatever additional information you feel would be helpful. Points to incorporate in any synopsis of the unread chapters might include the following:

- Jeremiah continues his schooling, takes classical piano lessons, practicing endlessly to eventually become a great concert pianist.
- Gabriel joins his brother in Winnipeg and takes up ballet. Jeremiah and Gabriel’s talents take them into the European way of expressing dance and music but this is in contrast to music and dance that is part of Cree culture.
- Both brothers experience identity crises and strive to fit into mainstream society. Both have difficulty finding happiness in this urban environment where they are exposed to the street life that has consumed many First Peoples individuals.

On the basis of this discussion, have the students identify what the Okimasis brothers

- lost while attending the residential school
- gained from their schooling
- were able to subsequently regain
- cannot regain (i.e., what the residential school experience cost them in perpetuity).

By way of conclusion to this lesson, you might explain that sexual abuse was commonplace in residential schools. To this day, many First Peoples continue to be haunted and traumatized by their experiences of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. It is said that abuse begets abuse and the abused can become abusers. Whether or not this is fact, many First Peoples who were sexually abused have become socially dysfunctional.

### ***Acknowledgment and Remediation?***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, A13, C2, C10

The poem, “I’m So Sorry” by Louise Bernice Halfe, Sky Dancer is included at the end of this unit and can also be found in *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*, Jeannette C Armstrong and Lally Grauer (eds).. Broadview Press, 2001, p 246.

Reproduce and distribute copies of the poem as necessary. Have students sit in a circle. To introduce the poem, explain that Louise Bernice Halfe, Sky Dancer is a Cree poet from Alberta. Instruct one student to read the first line of the poem; the next student will read the next line of the poem, the next will read another line, and so on until the entire poem has been read.

While in the circle have students answer in a word or phrase what they think the Okimasis brothers or other First Peoples would think of this apology and how they themselves feel about this apology.

Extend the discussion about apologies by introducing the Residential School Settlement, whereby the Government of Canada and the various Christian denominations that operated the Residential Schools have agreed to address the legacy of harm perpetrated by the schools. Visit the residential school settlement site to learn about the settlement (<http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/English.html>).

Within the class, informally debate the pros and cons of this settlement for residential school survivors, taking account of

- the legacy of harm (the intergenerational impact of the abuse perpetrated in Residential Schools)
- the financial compensation for individuals
- the provision for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- the provisions with respect to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation

Students can be asked to record their personal opinion in favour or against the settlement in their journals, along with reasons for their choice of stand.

This would be an appropriate point to take stock of students' progress with respect to their unit assignments, and to schedule presentation opportunities for those that require them.

### ***Residential School Survivor Guest Speaker***

#### **Learning Outcomes: A2**

In preparation for the guest speaker, contact the district Aboriginal Education representative for protocols on First Peoples speakers. Meet with the speaker and be very clear about what the expectation is. Let the speaker know

- the purpose of this engagement
- the length of his or her presentation
- the kind of class being addressed
- what the students have learned up to now about residential schools (perhaps tell about some of the activities that have taken place) so that the speaker knows the awareness level of his or her audience
- that there will be an opportunity for questions at the end of his or her presentation.

Prepare your class for the visit by having students

- discuss ways to show respect for guests and fellow students
- prepare questions to ask the guest (e.g., how far from home, what kind of school, what religious order, impact of religion on community, language issues, cultural identity struggles, things that have been a source of personal strength, opinion about the Residential School settlement agreement)
- be prepared for possible emotional release from either the speaker or fellow students in reaction to the speaker's story.

Invite and introduce a Residential School survivor to tell his or her residential school experience to the class. Have students interact with the speaker after the presentation. Have the students present questions that have been prepared prior to the visit.

Select a student to thank the speaker and present an appropriate gift (check with the district First Peoples Education Principal about this). Make sure the guest has someone to accompany her/him home.

Spend some time following the guest speaker's visit to debrief it with the class, using questions such as the following:

- How does guest's story affect you?
- What new learning do you have about residential schools that was not identified in previous texts we have studied?
- What common messages have you been given from each of the texts and the guest?

Remind students about the pre-unit assessment that they took at the beginning of the unit. Return the assessment to each student. Have the students re-take the assessment to see how much more they know about the issues from their work in this unit.

**PRE-UNIT ASSESSMENT: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CANADA’S FIRST PEOPLES?**

What do you know about ...

- the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, and United Churches and their relationships with Canada’s First Peoples?
- First Peoples languages?
- the *Indian Act*?
- Indian Residential Schools?
- First Peoples storytelling?
- the significance of First Peoples Elders?
- the social problems and issues facing First Peoples people?
- colonization and First Peoples?

**I Lost My Talk**

Rita Joe

I lost my talk  
The talk you took away.  
When I was a little girl  
At Shubenacadie school.

You snatched it away:  
I speak like you  
I think like you  
I create like you  
The scrambled ballad, about my word.  
Two ways I talk  
Both ways I say,  
Your way is more powerful.

So gently I offer my hand and ask,  
Let me find my talk  
So I can teach you about me.

**I'm So Sorry**

Louise Bernice Halfe, Sky Dancer

I'm so sorry the pope said  
I thought you were just gathering  
to lift your legs, thump your chest  
around that tree of old men.  
I didn't know the rock and twig  
you smoked.  
Blueberries, and sweetgrass  
were your offerings.  
I wouldn't have taken your babies  
and fed them wafers and wine.

I'm so sorry, I just thought  
we could borrow land for a little  
to plant our seeds,  
raise sheep and build churches, schools.  
I really didn't know how you survived  
for centuries on buffalo and teepees,  
praying in medicine wheels.

I'm so sorry, I should have told  
the settlers to quit their scalping,  
selling hair at two bits for each Indian  
I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.  
Maybe I could build healing churches  
chapels full of sweetgrass and drums  
chase the spirits out and fill sweatlodges  
full of armed angels

## 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 poets and their imagery is distinctly different.

### Primary Texts

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Grauer, Lally (Eds). *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology* Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001.

Moses, Daniel David and Goldie, Terry (Eds). *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3rd edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Sainte-Marie, Buffy. “Eagle Man/Changing Woman” (on the album *Up Where We Belong*, EMI Records, 1996; also on the album *Changing Woman*, MCA, 1975)

### 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)

Chrystos. *Not Vanishing*. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1988.

Dauenhauer, Nora Marks. *Life Woven with Song*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000.

Gottfriedson, Garry. *Whiskey bullets: Cowboy and Indian Heritage Poems*. Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2006.

## Unit 6: From the Heart—Poetry

- Hodgson, Heather (ed). *Seventh Generation: Contemporary Native Writing*. Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd., 1989.
- Olson, Karen W. (ed). *Gatherings: The En'owkin Journal of First North American Peoples*, volume 14. Penticton: Theytus Books Ltd., 2003.
- Perreault, Jeanne and Vance, Sylvia (eds). *Writing the Circle: An Anthology by Native Women of Western Canada*. Edmonton: NeWest Publishers, Ltd., 1990.
- Robertson, Robbie. "Ghost Dance." (on the album *Music for the Native Americans*, Capitol, 1994)
- 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)
- Scofield, Gregory. *The Gathering: Stones For The Medicine Wheel*. Vancouver: Polestar Publishers, 1993.
- Wickwire, Wendy (ed). *Harry Robinson: Write It On Your Heart: The Epic World of An Okanagan Storyteller*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1989.

**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



## Unit 6: From the Heart—Poetry

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*
- "replanting 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.

## ***Unit 6: From the Heart—Poetry***

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

## ***Unit 6: From the Heart—Poetry***

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 test 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  
so 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 prowls 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.

(Student's Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Block) \_\_\_\_\_

## 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.

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**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 as 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  
from *whiskey bullets: Cowboy and Indian Heritage Poems*, Garry Gottfriedson. Vancouver, B.C.: Ronsdale Press, 2006.

“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  
from *Gatherings: The En’owkin Journal of First North American Peoples*, volume 14, edited by Karen W. Olson. Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books Ltd., 2003.

## 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  
from *Writing The Circle: An Anthology: Native Women of Western Canada*. NeWest Publishers, Ltd., Edmonton, 1990.

“Canoe” by Wil Gorge  
from *Gatherings: The En’owkin Journal of First North American Peoples*, vol. 14. Edited by Karen W. Olson. Theytus Books Ltd., Penticton, B.C. Fall 2003.

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

“I Have Known You” by Teswahnno, 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  
from *Gatherings: The En’owkin Journal of First North American Peoples*, vol. 14. Edited by Karen W. Olson. Theytus Books Ltd., Penticton, B.C. Fall 2003.

#### ***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  
from *The Gathering ~ Stones for the Medicine Wheel* by Gregory Scofield. Polestar Publishers, Vancouver. 1996.

“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>

## ***Unit 6: From the Heart—Poetry***

“Was It You?” by Garry Gottfriedson  
from *Whiskey Bullets: Cowboy and Indian Heritage Poems* by Garry Gottfriedson. Vancouver, B.C.: Ronsdale Press, 2006.

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

“Spiritual Singer” by Skyblue Mary Morin  
from *Writing The Circle: An Anthology: Native Women of Western Canada*. NeWest Publishers, Ltd., Edmonton, 1990.

“Celebration: Drum of Life” by Bren Kolson  
from *Writing The Circle: An Anthology: Native Women of Western Canada*. NeWest Publishers, Ltd., Edmonton, 1990.

### ***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  
from *Contemporary Native Writing: Seventh Generation*. Edited and compiled by Heather Hodgson. Theytus Books Ltd., Penticton, B.C. 1989.

“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  
from *whiskey bullets: Cowboy and Indian Heritage Poems* by Garry Gottfriedson. Vancouver, B.C.: Ronsdale Press, 2006.

“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).

**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  
from *Contemporary Native Writing: Seventh Generation*. Edited and compiled by Heather Hodgson. Theytus Books Ltd., Penticton, B.C. 1989.

“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  
from *The Gathering ~ Stones for the Medicine Wheel* by Gregory Scofield. Polestar Publishers, Vancouver. 1996.

**Theme: Identity Quest**

“I Remember by Molly” Chisaakay  
from *Writing The Circle: An Anthology: Native Women of Western Canada*. NeWest Publishers, Ltd., Edmonton, 1990.

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

“I AM NOT YOUR PRINCESS” by Chrystos  
published in *Not Vanishing*, a collection of poems by Chrystos. Published by Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver, 1988.

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

“Too Snug” by Gregory Scofield  
from *The Gathering ~ Stones for the Medicine Wheel* by Gregory Scofield. Polestar Publishers, Vancouver. 1996.

“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  
from *Kalala Poems* under the imprint of Daylight Press in 1973.

“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:**

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*. Talonbooks, 1998.

Moses, Daniel David. *The Witch of Niagara*. in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3rd edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2005.

##### **Screenplay:**

Alexie, Sherman. *Smoke Signals: A Screenplay*. Miramax Books, 1998.

##### **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 Sarah, 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.

## ***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.  
TONTTO: Still has what?  
BARB: The picture Mom gave her last Christmas. Of Dad holding her.  
TONTTO: 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 Tonttos 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 sum 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](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-oo 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

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

## ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

### ARTEFACT CREATION AND PRESENTATION

Name:

Description of Artefact:

Assessed By:

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

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

**ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT  
LEARNING LOG**

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

<b>Rating (0-3)</b>	<b>Criteria—To what extent do students</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify the purposes of the text</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• explain the relationship between the text and other forms of the oral tradition</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make connections to First Peoples principles of learning</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• analyse text-specific devices and elements of form (e.g., characters and archetypes, setting, theme, figurative language, metre)</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify how elements of forms influence each other</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify stylistic techniques used in the text</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• compare elements of form in oral texts to those used in other texts studied</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• articulate substantiated opinions about the effectiveness of the text</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ask questions that deepen their personal response to the text</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• explain how visual elements (e.g., line, texture, layout, colour) create meaning</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• apply prior knowledge to their understanding of the text</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make inferences and draw conclusions</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reflect on predictions, connections, images, and questions made during reading, listening to, and/or viewing the text</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• explain the importance and impact of social, political, and historical factors</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify how they can apply the teachings of the texts to their own lives</li></ul>
<b>Comments:</b>	

## **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

## ***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 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 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:



- **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 change 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 | • Note-taking                |
| • Understanding Bibliographic Format | • Outlining                  |
| • Brainstorming                      | • Peer Editing               |
| • Critiquing                         | • Questioning                |
| • Using Direct Quotations            | • Paraphrasing               |
| • Evaluating Resources               | • Answering Questions        |
| • Using Graphic Organizers           | • Scanning and Skimming      |
| • Getting Inspiration                | • Summarizing                |
| • Using Keywords/Search Terms        | • 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

Identity – Suggested Scope and Sequence		
Lesson Order	Lesson	Time Allotment
1	Introduction to "Identity" as a Thematic Unit	1 class
2	Poetry on Identity—Using Scaffolding to Study Poetry	3-4 classes
3	Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book One of <i>Keeper 'n Me</i>	1-2 classes
4	Short Stories on Identity—Students Become the Teachers—assign project and give some time to work	2-3 classes
5	Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book Two of <i>Keeper 'n Me</i>	1-2 classes
6	Short Stories on Identity—Students Become the Teachers—presentations	5-8 classes
7	Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book Three of <i>Keeper 'n Me</i>	1-2 classes
8	Essays on Identity—Bloom's Taxonomy	3-4 classes
9	Reader Response and Literature Circle Meeting for Book Four of <i>Keeper 'n Me</i>	1-2 classes
10	Synthesis—Making the Connections Interview/Oral Exams for <i>Keeper 'n Me</i>	2-3 classes

**LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:**

Identity as a Thematic Unit

**Part I: 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)
- Alooook 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

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, B1, B6, B7, B8, B12, B13.

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.
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- **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.
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- **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.
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- **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.
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- **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 re-visiting this at end, yet telling the story in written form

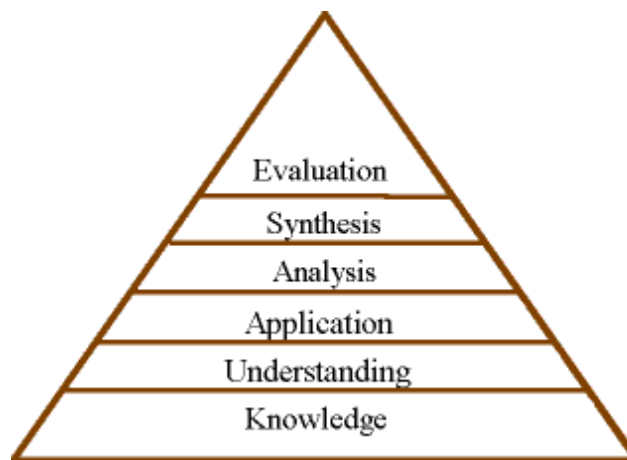


## *Essays on Identity—Bloom’s Taxonomy*

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.



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 truck 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 a 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 accounta 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**

<b>Reading Journal Response Rubric</b>	
<b>Outstanding</b> 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>personalized, innovative, and thoughtful responses make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li><li>provides specific evidence that demonstrates close familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li><li>interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection</li></ul>
<b>Very Good</b> 8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>personal and thoughtful responses make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li><li>provides specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li><li>often interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection</li></ul>
<b>Good</b> 6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>personal and generally thoughtful responses that often make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li><li>provides some specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li><li>sometimes interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection</li></ul>
<b>Satisfactory</b> 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>personal and sometimes thoughtful responses that may make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li><li>may provide some evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li><li>may attempt to interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose of selection</li></ul>
<b>Minimally Acceptable</b> 4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>personal responses that may make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li><li>limited evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li><li>little or no attempt to interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose of selection</li></ul>
<b>In Progress/Failure</b> 0-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>extremely limited and unclear responses that seldom demonstrate evidence of meeting the criteria</li><li>no response attempted</li></ul>

## **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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of ideas in relation to aspects of the text</li> <li>• Identifying voice and perspective of the author/speaker/narrator</li> <li>• Identifying and evaluating bias</li> </ul>	
Comprehension of Historical, Social, and Political Issues	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying assumptions of culture implicit in text</li> <li>• Examining historical, social, and political influences</li> <li>• Differentiating between impact of historical, social political issues on author versus characters</li> </ul>	
Speaking Ability	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of volume, inflection and enunciation (verbal)</li> <li>• Use of eye contact and stance (non-verbal)</li> <li>• Use of vocabulary and expression (cognitive)</li> </ul>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>

## 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**

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*. Talonbooks, 1998.

Goldie, Terry and Daniel David Moses (eds). *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Lally Grauer (eds). *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001.

*Hank Williams First Nation*—film

*Hank Williams First Nation*—screenplay - <http://www.hwfn.com/files/script.pdf>

“An Indian Easter Celebration,” Dead Dog Café – radio play - [http://www.cbchomedelivery.com/archives/Issue\\_12\\_2003\\_05\\_05/issue.html](http://www.cbchomedelivery.com/archives/Issue_12_2003_05_05/issue.html)

“Comic Genius or ‘Niggers in Red Face’,” article from the Globe and Mail Archives that examines Dead Dog Café, available at – <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/series/apartheid/stories/20011109-1.html>

## **LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:**

### **Part I: 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

(Note: 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

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A5, A6, A7, A12.

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:

Oral Speaking Skills	/10
Visual Aids	/5
Interactive Presentation Skills	/5
Value of Information Presented	/10
Creativity	/5
Evidence of Preparation	/5
Self-Assessment (Learning Log)	/10
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>/50</b>

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

Oral Speaking Skills	/10
Visual Aids	/5
Interactive Presentation Skills	/5
Value of Information Presented	/10
Creativity	/5
Evidence of Preparation	/5
Self-Assessment	/10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/50</b>

**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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/40</b>

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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/20</b>

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

<b>Events</b> – how crucial were the events, how well-chosen, appropriateness of chosen quotation (two marks each)	20
<b>Connections</b> – 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
<b>Terms</b> (plot, characterization, theme, setting) – definitions of terms (1 mark each) and connections/insights between the events and these terms (2 marks each)	24
<b>Visual Appeal</b> – title, author, colour, use of graphics, art, etc.	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

## *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>. 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

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.



## Unit 10: Humour

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-y-ah 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

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, A9, A10, A11, B1, B7, B8, B12.

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.
9. What stereotypes does Dumont explore? 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.

## 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).

POST-OKA KINDA WOMAN		BETH CUTHAND
Theme Discussion	Copy of poem _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Irony Discussion
Structure Discussion		
Satire Discussion		Humour Discussion

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:

Depth of discussion	/10
Appearance	/5
Presentation	/10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/25</b>

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 Ruffo
- “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	
Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personalized, innovative, and thoughtful responses make connections with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</li> <li>specific evidence that demonstrates close familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose of selection</li> <li>shows evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</li> </ul>
Very Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal and thoughtful responses make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li> <li>specific evidence demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>may interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>usually shows evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</li> </ul>
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal and generally thoughtful responses often make connections with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</li> <li>some specific evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>sometimes interprets and analyses genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>may show evidence of reflecting on and revising initial responses</li> </ul>
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal and sometimes thoughtful responses may make connections with previous knowledge and experience and other texts</li> <li>may provide some evidence that demonstrates familiarity with and understanding of reading selection</li> <li>may attempt to interpret and analyse genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>may show evidence of reflecting on initial responses, no revision</li> </ul>
Minimally Acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personal responses may make connections with previous knowledge and experience as well as other texts</li> <li>limited evidence demonstrates familiarity with and understanding</li> <li>little/no attempt to interpret/analyse genre, technique, and purpose</li> <li>generally does not revisit initial responses</li> </ul>
In Progress/Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extremely limited and unclear responses that seldom demonstrate evidence of meeting the criteria</li> <li>no response attempted</li> </ul>



## ***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:

<b>Paragraph</b>	<b>What it should do</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• engage the reader</li><li>• give a context for your topic – state title(s) and author(s), some background to the literature and some background to the topic</li><li>• express thesis statement</li></ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• transition sentence</li><li>• 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</li><li>• conclude paragraph</li></ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• transition sentence</li><li>• 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</li><li>• conclude paragraph</li></ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• transition sentence</li><li>• 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</li><li>• conclude paragraph</li></ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• transition sentence</li><li>• discuss the logical conclusion of the proof you have presented in the body paragraphs</li><li>• tie all loose ends together</li><li>• come up with a really strong concluding sentence to end the essay</li></ul>

## 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 is 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:

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

## 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. Also be sure to punctuate your quotations properly and to integrate them smoothly into the 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 -  
[http://www.cbchomedelivery.com/archives/Issue\\_12\\_2003\\_05\\_05/issue.html](http://www.cbchomedelivery.com/archives/Issue_12_2003_05_05/issue.html)

“Comic Genius or ‘Niggers in Red Face’,” article from the *Globe and Mail* Archives that examines *Dead Dog Café*, available at –  
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/series/apartheid/stories/20011109-1.html>

### Background Lesson on “*Dead Dog Café*”

2 classes

**Learning outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, B5.

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](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**

King, Thomas. “What is it About Us That You Don’t Like?” *The Truth About Stories*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003.

Highway, Tomson. “A Note on the Trickster,” from *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Anchor Canada, 2005.

### **Primary Texts: Short Stories**

From *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* Moses, D.D. and Goldie, T. eds. Don Mills Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2005:

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**

Groulx, David A. "The Long Dance." From *Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Moses, D.D. and Goldie, T. eds. Don Mills Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2005 (p. 549)

Akiwenzi-Damm, Kateri. "poem without end #3". *From Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*, Armstrong & Grauer, eds. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001. (p. 323)

**Primary Texts: Film**

*Raven Tales: How Raven Stole the Sun*. (2004, 23 min. Animation) Director: Chris Kientz and Simon James. <http://www.raventales.ca>

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

Obamsawin, Aalanis. *The Legend of Nanabozho*. Retrieved Dec. 21, 2007 from [http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-69-1462-9703/life\\_society/myths\\_and\\_legends/clip4](http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-69-1462-9703/life_society/myths_and_legends/clip4)

**Primary Texts: Traditional Stories** (web archived). Retrieved Dec. 21, 2007 from

*Stseptekwle – Stories of the Secwepemc*. <http://landoftheshuswap.com/msite/legend.php>

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

**Primary Texts: Non-fiction**

Campbell, K., Menzies, C., and Peacock, B. *B.C. First Nations Studies*. Victoria: British Columbia Ministry of Education (2003). pp. 214-218.

**LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:**

Introducing Trickster  
Introducing Concept Mapping  
Trickster in Traditional Stories  
Secwepemc 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  
Assessment Instrument: Scoring Guide for 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 Weesageechak 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 Obamsawin, available from the web site [http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-69-1462-9703/life\\_society/myths\\_and\\_legends/clip4](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.



## ***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](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

- (Review) 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.

Jacques Columbus	ducks	What’s that bad smell?
probably that Coyote’s fault	Christopher Cartier	Psssst Psssst
fix this world	Mistake	world is getting bent

### 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.

**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:

#### Traditional Stories

- ☐ *The Legend of Nanbohzo*
- ☐ *Stseptekwle—Stories of the Secwepemc*
- ☐ *Raven Tales: How Raven Stole the Sun*
- ☐ *Why the Flint-Rock Cannot Fight Back*
- ☐ *Origin Myth of the Snutali*

#### Short Fiction/Essay

- ☐ “*The One About Coyote Going West*”
- ☐ “Blue Against White”
- ☐ “The Shivering Tree”
- ☐ “The Republic of Tricksterism”
- ☐ “Stones and Switches”
- ☐ “What is it About Us You Don’t Like?”

#### Poetry

- ☐ “poem without end #3”
- ☐ “The Long Dance”

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**

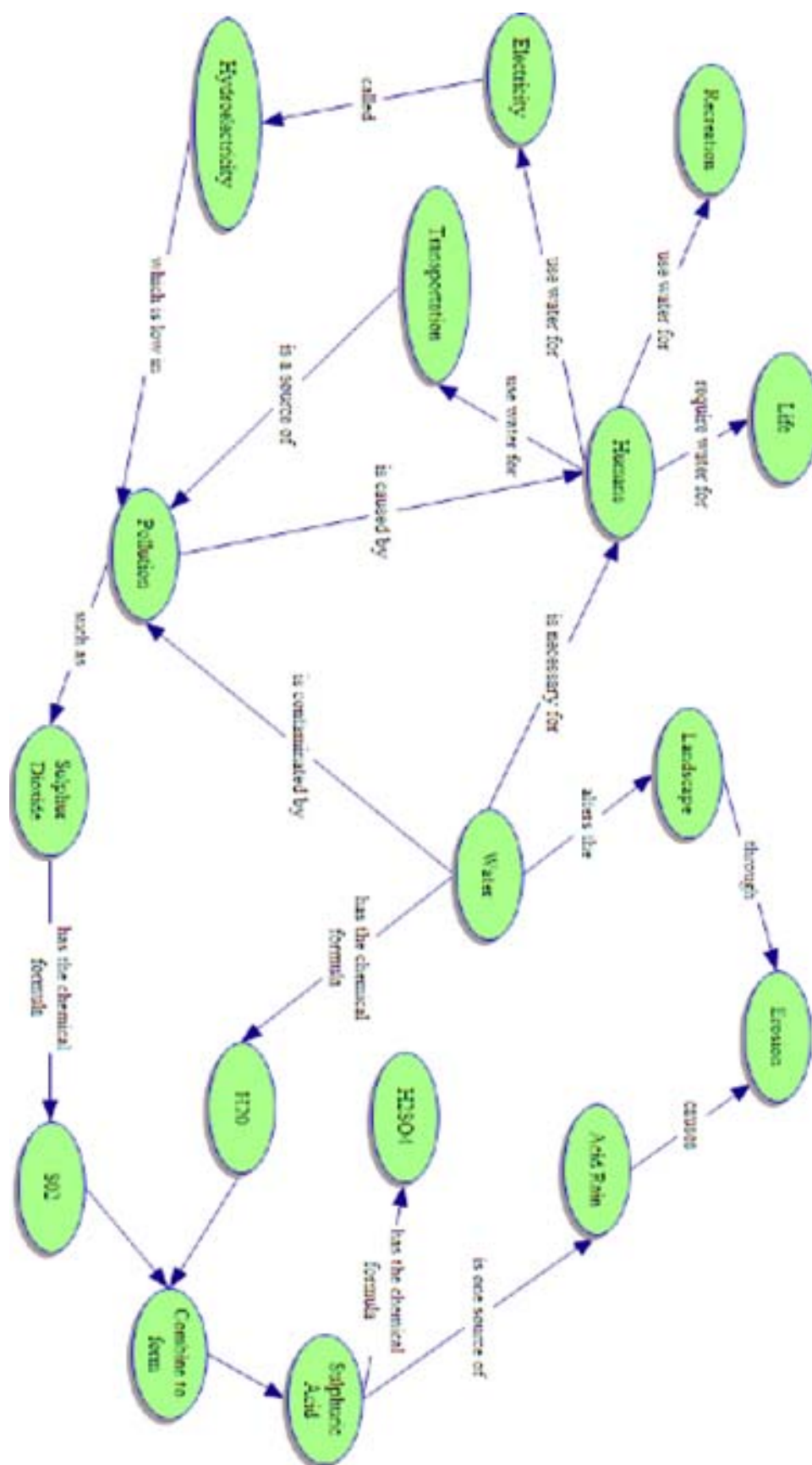
The response is **inadequate**. While there is an attempt to address the topic, understanding of the texts or the task may be seriously flawed. Errors are recurring, distracting, and impede meaning.

**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**

	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Concepts and Ideas</b>	Very few relevant ideas are presented. Ideas are dealt with superficially. Concept map may contain multiple errors.	Few relevant ideas are presented. Some ideas may be superficial. Concept map may contain some errors/omissions.	Many relevant ideas and concepts are presented and explored in depth. There are few errors or omissions.	Many ideas are presented, Ideas are explored with insight and depth.
<b>Literary Sources</b>	Ideas may not be connected to literary sources studied; student may be relying on previous knowledge.	Some ideas may be connected to literary sources studied. References may be limited to a few sources.	Many references are included, referring to a variety of texts.	Ideas are directly connected to literary sources, representing all genres and major works studied.
<b>Connections Between Ideas</b>	There are no relevant connections between ideas.	There are few relevant connections between ideas. Connections may be superficial.	Relevant connections are drawn between many ideas.	Insightful connections are made between ideas. Varied connections are made between many ideas.

## SCORING RUBRIC FOR “POEM WITHOUT END #3”—GROUP PRESENTATION

	0	1	2	3
<b>Analysis of Stanza</b>	<p>No evidence of analysis of metaphor and/or imagery.</p> <p>May be a simple re-reading of stanza.</p>	<p>Analysis of metaphor may be brief or inaccurate.</p> <p>Imagery may be listed, but not analyzed; or analysis is inaccurate.</p>	<p>Metaphor is presented and thoroughly analyzed.</p> <p>Imagery is described and analyzed.</p>	<p>Analysis of metaphor shows insight.</p> <p>Imagery is thoroughly described and analyzed.</p>
<b>Visual Representation</b>	<p>Image has no connection to the stanza.</p>	<p>Image may relate to aspects of stanza, but does not capture main idea.</p>	<p>Image summarizes the stanza.</p>	<p>Image is an insightful representation of the stanza’s key idea.</p>
<b>Presentation</b>	<p>Presentation is incomprehensible or off-topic.</p>	<p>Presentation may be brief, lack eye contact, inaudible voice, or inappropriate pacing.</p>	<p>Presentation is appropriate in length, and may include minor lapses (inaudible voice, lack of eye contact, etc.)</p>	<p>Clear voice, eye contact, and pacing. Ideas are clearly explained.</p>

## UNIT 12: MÉTIS LITERATURE

### OVERVIEW

This unit on Métis literature is presented in six parts: Introduction, Novel Study I, Novel Study II, Poetry, Drama, and Humour.

The introduction will give students and teachers a sense of Métis history and culture from the historic fur trading days to contemporary times as well as raise broader questions about nationhood and personal identity. Teachers may wish to use part or all of this section.

The extensive novel study introduces students to Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*, a groundbreaking work not only for the Métis, but also in terms of raising awareness of issues for all Canadian Aboriginal peoples. Questions of identity in the novel link to history and family, and in more contemporary times to extended social community.

The third part looks at selections from *In Search of April Raintree* by Beatrice Culleton Mosionier, and examines how Métis people establish identity when their ties to history, family, and community have been cut by foster care and alienation. This part also examines the tragedies that occur when identity is lost.

The poetry study looks at how Métis poets tackle the question of identity in many different ways. Poems that have similar stylistic or formal characteristics have been paired for study. Poets Emma LaRocque, Joanne Arnott, Joan Crate, Marilyn Dumont, and Gregory Scofield are featured. The question of two-spiritedness is examined with regard to Scofield's work.

The drama study features selections from *Age of Iron*. Playwright Marie Clements has been described as using cutting-edge and unusual theatrical techniques in her plays. This avant-garde play crosses time and history to link Aboriginal people to world themes without losing sight of their particular struggles.

This final section examines humour in Ian Ross's *Joe from Winnipeg* series that allows for a gentle and personal criticism of social conditions.

### LESSON PLANS IN THIS UNIT:

#### Part I: Introduction – Métis History and Culture

Who are the Métis?  
What is a Nation? Group Research Assignments  
Research Time (may be extended to two classes)  
Research Presentations and Summary (may be extended to two classes) Introduction  
Reflection (80 marks)  
Cultural Day or Guest Speaker

#### Handouts and Assessment Tools:

Research Evaluation  
Métis Contributions to Canada  
The Métis People of Canada  
Time Line – Métis History, Early Years

#### Part II: Novel Study: *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell

A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History

A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History: Chapter Questions  
Summary of Novel Study and Section Assignment

**Handouts and Assessment Tools:**  
Ancestral Chart

**Part III: Novel Study: Selections, In Search of April Raintree by Beatrice Culleton Mosionier**

Concepts of Métis Identity, Lost Identity, and History  
Themes in the Novel  
Presentation of Oral Assignments

**Part IV: Poetry Study: Métis Poets**

Emma LaRocque and Joanne Arnott  
Joan Crate and Marilyn Dumont  
Gregory Scofield

**Handouts and Assessment Tools:**  
Poetry Poster Assignment–“Can You Hear Me?” and “Leather and Naughahyde”  
Two-Spiritedness

**Part V: Drama Study: *Age of Iron* by Marie Clements**

Aboriginal Connections, Avant-garde  
Presentation of Theatre Assignments

**Handouts and Assessment Tools:**  
Humour: Performance Piece

**Part VI: Humour: *Joe from Winnipeg* by Ian Ross**

Student Presentations

**Handouts and Assessment Tools:**  
Cold and Sorries by Ian Ross  
Global Warming by Ian Ross

**Bibliography and Further Resources**

Special thanks to Aboriginal Education, School District 68 Nanaimo Ladysmith and the Mid Island Métis Nation for permitting the use of materials developed by Donna Elwood Flett when she served as Métis Liaison 1999-2001.

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION—MÉTIS HISTORY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW**

The Métis have often been called *The Forgotten People* because they have been marginalized in history through exclusion from the governmental financial structures that feature in First Nations communities, and from broad treaty-land claims processes. Often there is a lot of confusion about who the Métis were and are.

The purpose of the introductory lessons is to give students a historical understanding of the Métis people so that they will have sufficient background knowledge to appreciate the literature in these terms. Many Métis writers refer to events in Métis history and to Métis historic figures. Teachers may choose to shorten this section in whatever way suits their purpose depending on their time, needs, and the prior knowledge of their students.

Teachers may wish to review ahead of time the “Timeline,” “Métis Contributions to Canada,” and “The Métis People of Canada” documents in the Resources folder/file.

### *The Importance of Identity*

The Métis are a people who have long wrestled with the concept of identity. This has occurred in part because of government-required definitions with regard to rights of Métis citizens as they become enshrined in government charters and as part of government funding arrangements and potential land claims settlements. In addition, many people in the general Canadian population are confused as to whether children of more contemporary marriages between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are Métis simply because they are mixed-blood. The situation is made more complex because of the American definition of Métis as people of mixed blood who are French, not Aboriginal. Some Métis social and community agencies will accept people as Métis who simply self-identify as such and join in. The situation of identity confusion was further complicated before Bill C-31 Indians regained their status, and had identified as Métis in the meantime ([http://www.Métis.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=8](http://www.Métis.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=8)).

One definition of Métis was made in 2003 by the Supreme Court of Canada: “The Supreme Court of Canada upheld in the Powley case this constitutional definition by saying that: ‘Métis community is a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, living together in the same geographical area and sharing a common way of life.’” (faculty.law.ubc.ca/mccue/files/320D/submissions/The%20Métis%20National%20Council%20Submission.doc)

The Métis National Council accepts the following definition for citizenship: Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation” (<http://www.Métisnation.ca/who/definition.html>).

This is the definition currently accepted by most Métis communities and peoples. The Métis Nation of B.C. definition is very close to that of the national governing body: “Métis/Michif/Apeetha’kosian” means a person who self identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of Historic Métis Nation ancestry and, is accepted by the Métis Nation British Columbia” ([http://mpcbc.ca/pdf/citizenship\\_rg.pdf](http://mpcbc.ca/pdf/citizenship_rg.pdf)).

On a more personal level, Métis people often struggle with questions of identity in terms of what it means to them in their lifetime, what Métis means to their concept of themselves as human beings, and to their feelings. This is a theme that recurs, and recurs strongly, in Métis literature. Let us borrow for a moment a quote from David Ipinia, a Yurok Indian Artist: “Being Indian is mainly in your heart. It's a way of walking with the earth instead of upon it.” For Métis, this

means finding out in your heart what it means to be Métis. The question is a complex and personal one, but it begins with history.

## Who are the Métis?

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A3, A4, A5; A9, A11, B5, B8, B9, C1, C2, C6, C8, C9, C11

### Suggested Activity Sequence

**Supplies:** flip chart, roll of newsprint, felts, scissors, tape or glue. Prepare the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** sheets of newsprint ahead of time (see below) and post them around room, or have them ready for posting.

1. Introduce the fact that this is a special unit in English 12 First Peoples, which has to do with Métis people. Say that the class will begin with a “What I Know” activity, since one of the nicknames for the Métis is *The Forgotten People* and you would like them to remember everything they might know about the Métis instead. Say the lesson will rely on discussion and group-work. Display the “Participation in Group Discussions and Activities” rubric on an overhead or hand out copies and explain that there will be a teacher evaluation and a self-evaluation at the end of the lesson (found on page Unit 1 of the Teacher Resource Guide).
2. Ask for a volunteer class recorder, or several who can take turns recording. Ask what students know about the Métis. Have the recorders write each idea down in a box with a space between ideas so that the ideas can be cut apart later.
3. When students have exhausted their ideas/suggestions of *everything and anything* they know about the Métis (which may include just names of Métis people, such as Louis Riel) inform the students that they will now review the list of statements/suggestions and divide them into **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists based on how probable/improbable or true/false the class as a whole believes each statement to be with regard to the Métis.

Assign your class to do this task in whichever way works best for you and your students. One method is very active: You might assign some students to cut up the idea lists in preparation for the whole-class activity while the rest of the students discuss the idea lists with their neighbours, or let the students themselves cut apart the ideas as they decide which list to put them on. Whichever method you use to separate the idea statements, student should take one statement at a time and go tape it onto the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** list where he or she believes it belongs until all the ideas are used up. You may wish to set a time limit on this portion of the activity. Have all students return to their seats and have the entire class review each of the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists, re-allocating statements when the class as a whole thinks the statement belongs on a different list. This will encourage collaboration and discussions amongst students and it will get students out of their desks, physically participating. It also ensures that students who are shy or retiring will be able to participate without feeling they are in a spotlight. In addition, this strategy stimulates more sharing of knowledge and elevates the group knowledge pool. Another method is to have the teacher read out each idea statement and, after a class discussion about where it belongs, tape it on one of the sort lists.

4. Once the **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists are complete and have been reviewed, discuss the results and proceed to activity step #5.



5. Have the class as a whole make up a “What We Need to Know About the Métis” chart through class discussion or Q-A (whatever works best for your class). Leave that chart up in a corner of your classroom for reference throughout the unit whenever the occasion presents itself. Take down the original **YES**, **MAYBE**, and **NO** lists and let students know that they will be used again near the end of the unit.
6. Leave time for student self-evaluation and journal assignment.

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

1. **Teacher checklist for student participation (5 marks):** This is simply a class list with space or boxes beside each student’s name for checks when the student participates by questions, suggestions, discussion, comments, enthusiasm in making up lists, etc. However, it is based on the rubric. One extra point will be given for overall performance.
2. **Student self evaluation (5 marks):** Students should submit self evaluation sheets (or, a copy of the rubric) on which they have given themselves a mark out of 4 for their participation. They should write down at least two good, short reasons (that are not simply copied from the rubric) that explain why they believe they deserve this mark. One extra point will be given by the teacher for the reasons if they show accurate and serious reflection.
3. **Students should do a quick journal entry on the class activity (10 marks).** Journal entries will be marked and used frequently as a reflection strategy. Students might ask themselves if they agreed with all of the statement sorts and give reasons why they thought a statement might belong somewhere else. They might reflect on the success or failure of the activity process (physical participation, individualism within group work). They might disclose in their journal some thoughts they had about the Métis but did not wish to share in class. Students should submit their entries for marking prior to leaving the class.

**TOTAL: 20 marks**

## ***What is a Nation? Group Research Assignments***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A12, B2, B8, B9, B11, C1, C2, C8, C9

**Supplies:** flip chart or roll of newsprint, felts, “Timeline,” “Métis Contributions to Canada,” and “The Métis People of Canada” documents in the Resources section at the end of Part I of this unit.

### **Introduction**

A sense of history and historical events feature strongly in Métis identity and literature.

In this lesson, students will explore what makes up a community’s sense of identity or nationhood, and how that contributes to an individual’s sense of identity.

Teachers will then break their students up into groups for a small research project that will be a class jigsaw in order to facilitate speedy acquisition of a number of key Métis historical facts and stories.

### **Suggested Activity Sequence**

1. Introduce the lesson as one that will deal with the idea of nationhood and identity. Say the lesson will rely on discussion and group work. Display the “Participation in Group Discussions and Activities” rubric on an overhead or hand out copies, and explain there will be a teacher evaluation and a self-evaluation at the end of the lesson.
2. Ask students to think of all the things that make a people feel like a community and nation. What do people need to become a nation? Think of what countries and peoples *use* or *do* in order to identify as a community or a people. Record all responses on a flip chart, or have students do this. This activity can also be done by first breaking the class into smaller groups to brainstorm and then asking each group to report out later to the entire class when it reconvenes. If this latter strategy is used the teacher can circulate amongst the small groups to help facilitate discussion, to draw in quiet students, and to mark for participation. This approach might be less threatening to students who are shy.
3. After the groups report out, or at the end of the whole class discussion, the list will most likely include some if not all of these items:
  - a land base
  - a language
  - a flag
  - arts and culture
  - a government and laws
  - heroes and heroines
  - a shared history that extends from the past to the present
4. Once the class has devised its list and has filled in any blank spots through discussion, distribute the resource documents and give the students time to read them. Go over the documents with the class. Discuss any comments from students; facilitate discussion. Ask if they think there is enough information from the documents to qualify the Métis as a nation of people. Discuss. Why or why not?

**NOTE:** Some students might express the opinion that the Métis are not a nation, others may adamantly assert that they are a nation with full rights to make their own laws, etc. Some students might wish to see the Métis as a nation but without any rights. Some students might even suggest that the Métis are not an Aboriginal people. All ideas should be accepted, respected, and explored. However, students should be prepared to defend their decisions with sound reasoning and debate in a non-personal, non-confrontational style. Teachers may wish to host a horseshoe debate on this issue if there is enough diverse opinion in the class and enough time; this debate would require moderation.
5. Following this discussion, students should write a journal entry about what makes a nation; they should examine their own opinions about the Métis as a nation and as an Aboriginal people. See below for evaluation. Collect in journals for marking.
6. Break the class into groups (in the method which suits you best) to prepare for and assign small-group research projects. This will be a jigsaw, information-sharing project. Each group will pick (or be assigned) a topic on one aspect of nationhood to research and

report on. This will accelerate the class's acquisition of a deeper understanding of Métis history and culture. Teachers should ensure that student groups don't all gravitate to one theme or subject (e.g., culture), so that there is a good balance of research. Students can do their presentations in any way they see fit; for example, someone presenting on Arts and Culture might want to give the class a mini Red River Jig lesson. Students researching Michif might want to present an online introductory lesson for a few minutes using a computer and Internet hookup, if available. Students in groups may wish to divide their task up so that each group constitutes a jigsaw in itself; this is easily done for the Métis personages or for historical events where each student can research and/or present one. Students may also wish to present as a group. Whichever method is chosen, each student should be prepared to be part of the actual group presentation to the class (i.e. to speak or demonstrate, etc.). Research groups might break down according to topic groupings such as:

- Major personalities from the past: Riel, Dumont, Grant, Potts
  - Modern day personalities: Cardinal, Brady and Norris, Bethune, Campbell
  - Language, flags
  - Music, dance, beadwork, Métis sash, moose hair tufting, silk embroidery
  - Buffalo laws and governance in historic Métis communities; Lists of Métis Rights during historic struggles at Red River and in the Northwest
  - Modern Métis rights, modern court cases, rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms 1982
  - Key historic events in Métis history prior to 1900 (e.g., Battle of Seven Oaks, Selkirk Settlement, Red River Resistance, Northwest Insurgence)
  - Modern Métis land settlements, The Road Allowance People, Métis Veterans, Richard Cardinal and the change in family law in Alberta
7. Establish the criteria for the research assignment and discuss. It might be a good idea to give students copies of the evaluation sheet (at the end of the lesson) to help guide their work. Students will be marked independently, and all will have a chance to present to the class. A cohesive group presentation is required. Research may take one or two classes; presentations may take one or two classes. Many good online resources exist. Assuming a group of four, each *group* presentation will probably be approximately 15 minutes, or as the teacher determines.

Evaluation time for this lesson's in-class activity: Teachers might do their evaluation while circulating through the class listening to the groups discuss how they will do their projects, or how they will break down individual topics and still keep a unified thematic presentation.

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

1. For the in-class activity, using the "Participation in Group Discussions and Activities" rubric: **5 marks** from the teacher; **5 marks** for student self-evaluation; same procedure as outlined for Lesson One so that the mark becomes out of 5 instead of out of four in each case.

**10 marks**

2. Journal entry assignment. See step #5 in the Suggested Activity Sequence.

**10 marks**

**TOTAL: 20 marks**

**Online resource suggestions**

- See The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture for audio, video, photo, and text information on a huge variety of topics: [http://www.Métis\\_museum.ca/](http://www.Métis_museum.ca/)
- See the Métis Nation of B.C. web site for links to all sorts of material: <http://www.mpcbc.bc.ca/>
- For Michif audio and lessons see the web site above and link from the bottom right of the home page: <http://www.learnmichif.com/>.
- For culture, see the Michif page above, which has a culture link (<http://www.learnmichif.com/Métis-culture>) that has many more Métis links at the bottom of its page. From the Michif home page you can click on the video files and find a young Métis fiddle player speaking about Métis music, hear some storytelling and an autobiography, get a lesson in making bannock, listen to a contemporary musician/video artist, etc.
- The Métis Nation of Ontario also has a good Culture and History page—make sure to check the top toolbar, not just the left quicklinks: <http://www.Métisnation.org/>
- The Métis Culture & Heritage Resource Centre Inc. is a treasure trove of information with its rich menu on the left: <http://www.Métisresourcecentre.mb.ca/>
- Wikipedia is a good starting point for many topics pertaining to the Métis.
- Jigging videos can be found on Google Videos with the search “Métis Jigging,” but teachers should screen them beforehand as some are not appropriate or instructive and the posted videos can change. The jigging videos that come from competition celebrations are generally better quality and more instructive. Teachers can also find an excellent Métis fiddle video called “Kelly Atcheynum-Fiddle Medley” on YouTube.
- <http://www.ualberta.ca/~walld/ab2intro.html> has some excellent information on the Métis lands settlements issues in Alberta, with references. See also: [http://www.albertasource.ca/metis/eng/people\\_and\\_communities/issues\\_betterment.htm](http://www.albertasource.ca/metis/eng/people_and_communities/issues_betterment.htm) .

**RESEARCH EVALUATION****OVERALL VALUE: 50 marks****NAME:****GROUP TOPIC:****INDIVIDUAL TOPIC:**

You will be marked on your individual contribution to the group topic but also evaluated according to group cooperation. This last mark will be peer awarded by others in your group.

<b>Oral Speaking Skills</b>	<b>Visual Aids</b>	<b>Interactive Presentation Skills</b>	<b>Value of Information Presented to foster class understanding</b>	<b>Creativity</b>	<b>Evidence of Strong Research &amp; Preparation</b>	<b>Cooperation with group in overall presentation (peer evaluation included)</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

## ***Research Time***

**Learning Outcomes:** A2, A6, B2, B3, B4

### **Introduction**

This class will be in a computer lab and/or library. Depending on how complicated student projects get, research may be extended to two classes. Remind students about the overall group presentation time.

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

Remind students of the evaluation sheet and the criteria you established as they do their research. No marks for this class unless the teacher is recording cooperation, attentiveness to task, etc.

## ***Research Presentations and Summary***

**Learning Outcomes:** A6, A7, A13

### **Introduction**

Teachers should remind students of the criteria for evaluation and the evaluation sheet, and that there will be a peer mark out of five (which can be averaged later) for each presenter that is part of the group. Peer evaluations should have the evaluator's name on them in addition to the student being evaluated. Peer evaluations should be done immediately following a group's presentation or they may be quietly and unobtrusively done by a group student who is not presenting, and handed in immediately.

### **Suggested Activity Sequence**

Schedule the presentations as you see fit and find convenient. The presentations may go longer than one class.

### **Summary/Concluding Activity**

The class as a whole might have a short discussion on the presentations and refer to their "What We Need to Know About the Métis" list from Lesson One. Did they get all their questions answered or are there still a few holes? If there are pieces missing, some volunteer students could acquire extra marks by bringing the answers to the next class.

### **Important questions to pose as a retrospective of the introductory activities so far:**

- Are the Métis People of Canada a nation? An Aboriginal people?
- How strongly do you think Métis history and culture influences the identity of Métis individuals today?
- What key events do you think might feature strongly in a sense of a Métis individual's identity? Why? How do you think this history might make a Métis individual feel?

It is important to emphasize that while the Métis are proud of their early history and the strong sense of culture that arose out of that time, there is a deep sense of betrayal and hurt in the events of the latter part of the 1800s and the early to mid-1900s when Métis suffered from traumas of racism, government land policies, residential schools, addictions, and community violence.

Students might consider how this would affect a Métis individual's sense of identity in today's world as part of their journal response.

Presentations are never a sure fit into schedules. If possible, a small part of the last presentation day might be spent on deciding if the class wishes to have a Métis Cultural Day or guest speakers. If the class wishes to have speakers, a few students might be designated to contact a local Métis organization to arrange details. This visit may not directly follow these introductory lessons, depending on time commitments of individuals.

## **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

### **1. Presentation Assignment**

See rubric provided for this assignment in the lesson "What is a Nation?" As students present, their group peers should quickly make a comment and give a mark out of 5 on a small piece of paper that the teacher can collect at the end of each group's presentation. Remind evaluators that they should have their name and the name of the student they are evaluating on their peer assessment.

**50 marks**

### **2. Take Home Assignment—Two page essay in journal**

Students should reflect about the introductory activities and summary discussion, and answer the questions that were posed in their own way. Those questions, again, were:

- Are the Métis People of Canada a nation?
- An Aboriginal people?
- How strongly do you think Métis history and culture influences the identity of Métis individuals today?
- What key events do you think might feature strongly in a sense of a Métis individual's identity? Why? How do you think this history might make a Métis individual feel?

This essay will be in the form of personal journal reflection, but all the rules of grammar and good writing will apply. Students should have clear topic sentences for each part of the essay that begins to discuss the questions. Opinions should be backed by sound argument.

**30 marks**

**Total: 80 marks**

### ***Cultural Day or Guest Speaker***

As mentioned in an earlier lesson, this can be a day when guest speakers come in or when the class decides to have a mini cultural day of its own. To find local Métis people who may be available for presentations, contact your local Métis association, or the provincial office. Provincial local associations are listed at: <http://www.mnbc.ca/contact/locals.html>.



**MÉTIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANADA**

Not all of the events listed here were positive for the Métis; however, they did contribute to the development of the country we now know as Canada.

<b>Person, Invention, or Event</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Red River Cart	Allowed long distance travel over prairie with heavy loads, can convert to barge for river crossing.
York Boat (adapted)	Allowed for even heavier loads to be transported via water routes as distances between forts/settlements increased.
Pemmican	Canada's first 'survival' food. Allowed winter and long-distance travel without the need to restock supplies along the way. Contained all the essential nutrients. Whether you regard this as a culinary delight depends on your personal taste.
Bannock	Culinary delight.
Saskatoon Berry Jam	Culinary delight.
Flower beadwork	Art/beauty that endures to this day.
Silk embroidery in Métis style	Art/beauty that endures to this day.
Moose Hair tufting	Art/beauty that endures to this day.
Michif language	Cultural richness and diversity.
Multi-lingual talents	Broadened the language of the fur trade, thus the areas of trade. Métis became translators, guides, and negotiators.
Talent for adaptation in careers	Allowed for settlement west. Métis were guides, translators, outfitters, and negotiators between Europeans, others moving west, and First Nations peoples.
Music, especially fiddle music	Cultural richness and diversity.
Stories	Cultural richness and diversity.
Dance, especially the Red River Jig	Cultural richness and diversity.
Interlocking corners on log cabins	Saved time in construction; stronger structure. (Prior to this innovation, corners were constructed using a corner post joint with slots into which notched planks were dropped to build up a wall; this involved time-consuming, accurate woodwork.)
Modern road and highway routes	Many of our modern highways and roads travel over the Red River cart trails from earlier days.
Mapping	Exploration, travel.
Settlements of the prairies	Occupied land, opened the way for Canada to claim it as part of the new, growing country.
Farming of the prairies	Broke the land, attracted more settlement.

Person, Invention, or Event	Significance
Securing of the West Coast for Canada	Many Métis were sent by the Hudson's Bay as traders to establish forts and settlements and prevent the United States and others from claiming lands on what is now Canada's West Coast. In the late 1800s Métis were in the current-day U.S. states of Washington and Oregon.
Cowboys	Métis became expert ranch hands and accurate sharpshooters.
Tourism	As early as the mid-1800s, Europeans collected Métis beadwork embroidery, weaving, clothing, etc. to take back with them to Europe. Tourism of the cowboy west/guest ranch and stampede events owes something to Métis contributions.
CPR	In a rather backhanded way, the Métis uprising in the Northwest hastened the building of the trans-Canada railway. The work was completed with the aim of quickly transporting Canadian troops to fight the Métis in what is now Saskatchewan and to make the region "safe" by making communication and travel faster between the west and the rest of Canada in the east.
Hudson's Bay Company	Many of the Chief Factors, wintering partners, and working men of the HBC were Métis. They were especially well positioned for their jobs, having kindred connections with First Nations peoples, being knowledgeable about the land, and being hardy and able to adapt to new situations as they found them on the trail.
World War I and II, Korea	Métis were known as sharpshooters and were often employed as snipers in the world wars. Henry Nor'West is a famous example.
Cuthbert Grant	Renowned hunter, horseman, and warrior respected for his quick actions; leader of the Métis at Seven Oaks; founder of Grantown (now Saint Francois-Xavier) in Manitoba; Warden of the Plains for the Hudson's Bay Company after it merged with the Northwest Company. Contentious relations with Métis community later.
Jerry Potts	Guide, interpreter, scout, often for the Northwest Mounted Police; frontier personality; accepted by his First Nations relatives as First Nations.

<b>Person, Invention, or Event</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Louis Riel	Leader of the Métis struggles for land and citizenship rights in what is now Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This list of Métis rights was adopted almost without change by the Canadian government as the Manitoba Act, May 1870, but not until the Métis had been defeated and driven off many of their lands in Manitoba. Métis defended the prairie lands against Fenian raids from the U.S. during the mid and late 1800s. Responsible for ensuring French was entrenched as an official accepted language of Canada (in what became Manitoba Act).
Gabriel Dumont	Military leader of the Métis, especially in Saskatchewan settlements. Sharpshooter and expert horseman; worked for a period in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show. Established a ferry crossing of the South Saskatchewan River, called Gabriel's Crossing, now the site of the Dumont Bridge. Spoke six languages and was an accomplished guide, interpreter, and hunter.
John Norquay	Premier of Manitoba, 1878 to 1887; first Métis to serve as a premier of a Canadian province.
Amelia Douglas	Wife of B.C.'s first governor, James Douglas. Their children married into, and were a part of, the dynamic community of settlers of Victoria and B.C. Cecilia married pioneer physician J.S. Helmcken; James Douglas Jr. married the daughter of S.C. Elliot, premier of B.C. 1876-1878; Jane married Alexander Grant Dallas, Chief Factor of the west-of-the-Rockies portion of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Governor of Rupert's Land.
Josette Work	Wife of Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor John Work; their daughter Jane married physician/fur trader William Fraser Tolmie.
Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris	Métis political activists in the prairie provinces and north in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s who fought for Métis rights.
Norman Bethune	Famous doctor who worked internationally; well known in China.
Peter Lougheed	Former premier of Alberta.
Richard Cardinal	This young boy, by his unfortunate suicide in the mid 1980s while in foster care and the resulting publicity prompted significant change of the Child and Family Act of Alberta for the better. Other provinces followed suit.

Person, Invention, or Event	Significance
Douglas Cardinal	World famous Métis architect, designed the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa and pioneered the use of computers in architectural design. See: <a href="http://www.djcarchitect.com/">http://www.djcarchitect.com/</a> and also the video “The Warrior From Within.”
Brian Trottier	Hockey legend.
Maria Campbell	Métis writer, broadcaster, film producer; brought the story of the Métis to Canada with her 1973 book <i>Halfbreed</i> ; kept alive the sense of history of the Métis from the later 1800s into modern day through her memories of her family; political and community activist.

## THE MÉTIS PEOPLE OF CANADA

The Métis are one of Canada's three Aboriginal peoples, and a relatively new people in the world. The Métis were born from the fur trade and the early exploration days of what is now modern-day Canada. European men venturing to explore the land and to work the fur trade took First Nations women as their wives. The children of those first mixed marriages were the first Métis people.

The Métis as a people remained distinct from both their European and First Nations roots, borrowing a little from one culture and a little from the other to create their own unique culture and to establish a unique race. The Métis have their own language, flag, art, music and songs, national anthem, heroes, claim for a homeland, and, most importantly, a strong sense of identity and history.

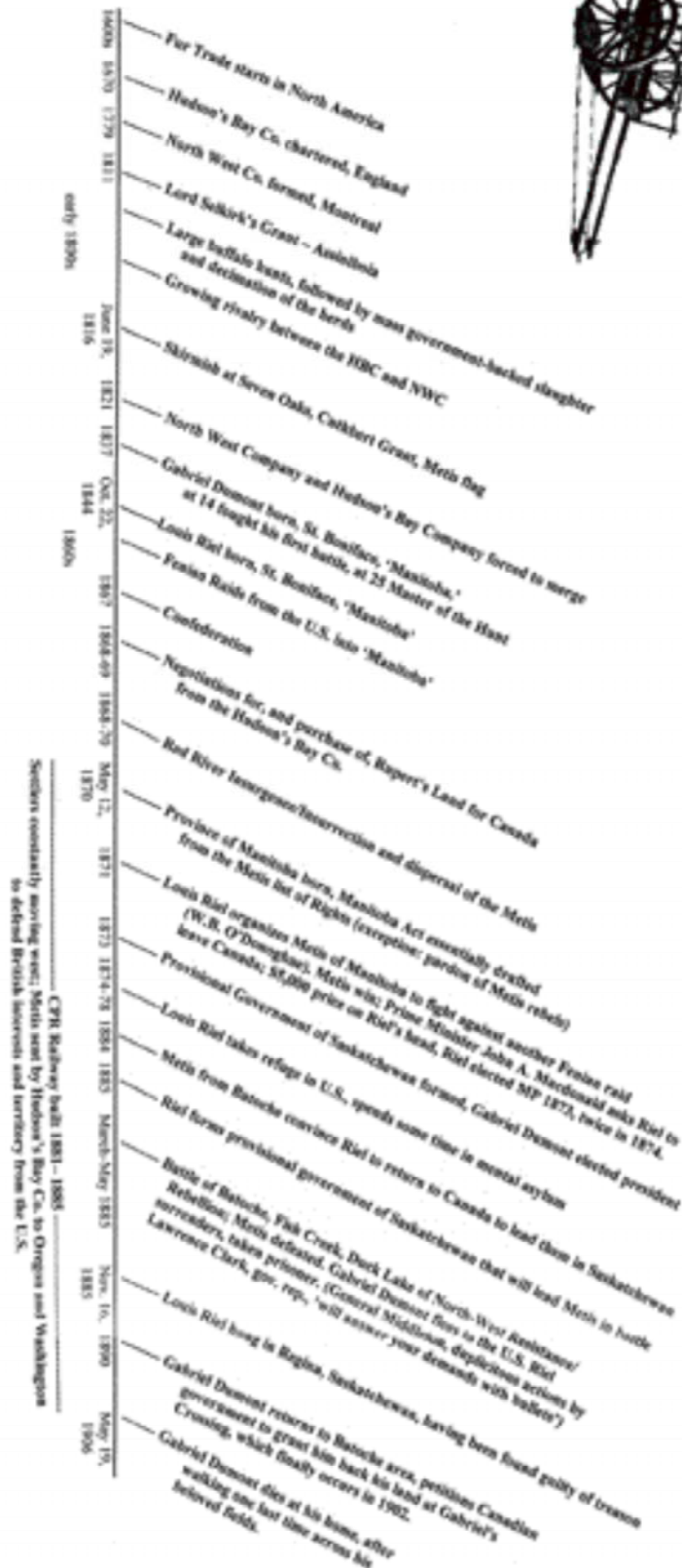
Métis were once known as Métis Indians. They have also been called *Bois Brulé*, *Half-Burnt Woodmen*, *Canadiens*, *Flower-Beadwork People*, *Black Scots*, *Half Breeds*, *Breeds*, and *Country Born*. Some of the names have a distinctly racist connotation. The Métis were also called *Otipemisiwak* by their First Nations cousins; the name means “the people who have their own mind.” The Métis people have always been independent-minded, and remain so today.

The Métis language—Michif—is a blend of predominantly Cree, French, and English. Even so, words from the contributing languages are pronounced differently in Michif. There are now only a few thousand fluent native speakers across Canada, but you may still hear Michif if you visit Métis communities in such places as the St. Paul area of Alberta, the Qu'Appelle valley of Saskatchewan, or the Red River settlement of Manitoba.

Many people will know of Métis leaders Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, who helped lead the Métis in their battles with the government of Canada for rights of citizenship and land titles. Today you will find the Métis everywhere. Some modern and well-known Métis include Norman Bethune, former premier of Alberta Peter Lougheed, hockey legend Brian Trottier, and world-famous architect Douglas Cardinal.

Donna Wilford, Métis Liaison 1999-2001  
School District 68, Nanaimo-Ladysmith Mid Island Métis Nation

## TIME LINE -- METIS HISTORY, Early Years



**PART II: NOVEL STUDY: *HALFBREED* BY MARIA CAMPBELL**

***A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1-5, A9-12, B2, B5, B8-11, C1, C2, C9-11

**Resources**

Campbell, Maria. *Halfbreed*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. [There are later editions; this is the first edition.]

**Teacher Information**

Maria Campbell's 1973 novel *Halfbreed* is a short autobiographical novel (157 pages in 25 segments—an introduction and 24 chapters) that can easily be read in class. Readings can be in literature circles, with each student taking a turn reading out loud to his/her co-students. Alternately, you might purchase enough books for a class set or read to the students. *Halfbreed* is important in Métis literary history and in the history of Canadian Aboriginal literature as well.

In his article "Métis Writers," Darren R. Préfontaine acknowledges Maria Campbell as being the first Métis woman to face and write about the more difficult issues in Métis life and specifically in Métis women's lives. He credits her with being a pioneer in doing so:

Métis women themselves, through their writing, began in the 1970s to challenge their marginalization as Métis and as Métis women. The first author to address the hard issues surrounding the life and times of Métis women was Maria Campbell in her book *Halfbreed*. After its release in 1973, Campbell paved the way for a new generation of Métis women writers.  
(from <http://www.Métis.museum.ca/resource.php/00733>, the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture)

Campbell's novel is steeped in history, and family and personal testimony.

**Background on Maria Campbell**

Here are some Internet links for short, authoritative articles about Maria Campbell:

"Maria Campbell" from a University of British Columbia education site:

[http://research2.csci.educ.ubc.ca/indigenation/Indian\\_ReACTions/Indian\\_ReACTions/MariaCampbell.htm](http://research2.csci.educ.ubc.ca/indigenation/Indian_ReACTions/Indian_ReACTions/MariaCampbell.htm)

"Western Women's Autobiographies Database" on Professor Catherine Lavender's web site, College of Staten Island, City University of New York; see Maria Campbell's biography, third from the top on the left-hand list:

<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/389/>

National Aboriginal Achievement Awards; "Maria Campbell, Arts and Culture":

[http://www.naaf.ca/html/m\\_campbell\\_e.html](http://www.naaf.ca/html/m_campbell_e.html)

University of Regina Campus News, "Maria Campbell receives Distinguished Canadian Award":

[http://www.uregina.ca/news/releases/2006/may/16\(b\).shtml](http://www.uregina.ca/news/releases/2006/may/16(b).shtml)

**Pre-reading discussion**

Preparation was done already in the introductory activities and journal entries about Métis history and identity. Students might wish to share their entries as a segue into this novel study and further discussion.

Teachers may also wish to begin this novel study with a discussion about the various names attributed to the Métis that were listed in “The Métis People of Canada” document. Two good questions for discussion are:

- What names have negative and racist connotations and why?
- Why would Maria Campbell choose a racist slur about her people as the title of her book?

Teachers may wish to break the class into small groups to brainstorm what the various names for the Métis people mean and to decide whether they are racist or not, positive or negative. The class could then reconvene, share their information, and discuss their different interpretations before their journal entry assignment.

Students should also know what an *autobiography* is and be clear about its purpose. Teachers might want to break down the word into “auto,” “bio” and “graphy” to give students an sense of word formation and connections to other words (autonomous, biology, photography, etc.) “Auto” means self or one’s own; “bio” means of life or living things; “graphy” refers to a thing written or drawn in a specific way.

It would be helpful and instructive for the class to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of reading an autobiography. For example, a benefit is that the author can or might reveal more personal events and feelings about his/her life than if the book were written by a researcher (a biographer). On the other hand, a person writing his/her autobiography can just as easily “mythologize” his/her life by omissions and by altering events and experiences. Teachers may wish their students to make notes of this discussion for reference during the chapter readings and questions, or may make notes on a flip chart for the class to refer to from time to time.

The second lesson contains chapter-by-chapter questions for discussion or journal entries. The third lesson will outline an assignment at the end of the novel study that offers students choices in presenting their summary response to the work.

**Assessment/Evaluation**

Students should write a journal entry about the various names given to the Métis people and specifically answer the questions below. Entries should be written in an essay style with topic sentences and correct punctuation and grammar.

- Why would Maria Campbell choose a racist slur about her people as the title of her book?
- Would you choose to give a book about your life a self-deprecatory racist title? Why or why not?
- What do you think this said about the attitudes of people at the time Maria Campbell wrote her book?
- How strongly do you think Métis history will feature in the formation of Maria Campbell’s personal identity?

**50 marks**



## ***A Living, Personal Sense of Métis History—Chapter Questions***

**Learning Outcomes:** Depending on how many ways the teacher organizes reading, responding, and recording, the following can be met: A1-13, B1, B2, B4-13, C1, C2, C8-12, C14. B3 and C4, C13 may also be met in the final assignment for this novel study depending on the form of the assignment.

### **Teacher Information**

Humour plays a huge role in Campbell's *Halfbreed*. Several of the chapter questions have to do with Campbell's use of humour. Here is an internet link to a complete, but short, scholarly article entitled "Anecdotal Humour in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* (1973)," by A.E. Jannetta, which appeared in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* (Summer 1996):

[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3683/is\\_199607/ai\\_n8755080](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3683/is_199607/ai_n8755080). This essay offers some good ideas for a class discussion about humour and its many faces, and humour and its role as mediator in tragedy and despair.

Many of the chapter questions have to do with social justice, and self-awareness and discovery. These can be facilitated class or small group discussions or horseshoe debates. For the more sensitive issues, teachers should moderate and facilitate class discussion before any individual or small group work is done.

These topics will form the body of suggested essay topics in Lesson Three.

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

Teachers are free to use the following chapter questions as guides for discussion, journal entries, debates, horseshoe debates/discussions, research assignments, etc. Students might be encouraged to choose one of the chapter questions before reading to use as a method of focussing their reading, and later as the topic for their journal entry to demonstrate comprehension and in order to make personal connections.

Teachers might also use the questions as a class jigsaw where each reading group of students (perhaps four to a group) gets one of the chapter questions before reading to focus their reading and facilitate small group discussion, about which they will later report to the class.

Suggested mark for each journal entry for the 25 segments (introduction and 24 chapters) is **10 marks**.

**TOTAL: 250 marks**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. What is the tone or atmosphere of the short introduction? What words and images give you those impressions? You might wish to sort these words into adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs and try to determine which produce the most powerful emotional effect in Campbell's writing and why. You might wish to sort the words into groups that support the kind of tone or atmosphere you felt the introduction evoked.

**Answer:** The tone is wistful, sad, a sense of a time that will never come again, a sense of time that once was happier than the present, that might disappear forever. Words and images: tumbled down, overgrown, dried, withered, good-bye, left home, graveyard, tangle, thistle,

crosses, falling down, sunken graves, needs repainting, poverty, long since, torn down, old, forgotten, once stood, old, lonely, merely exists, dead, gone, were never there, gone, squatted, welfare hand-outs, booze, escape, old, died, rough, dirt, broken, old, never find, had changed, gone, sorrows, oppressing poverty, frustration.

2. What do you think Campbell means when she says: "...if I was to know peace I would have to search within myself"?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary, but should show a sense of understanding that each individual must come to terms with his/her past before he/she can move forward in life.

3. Why do you think Campbell says: "...so perhaps some day, when I too am a grannie, I will write more"?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but should show an understanding that Campbell feels she has seen a lot of history go by in spite of her relatively young age, and also that she still has a lot to experience.

## CHAPTER ONE

1. Why do you think Campbell devotes her whole first chapter to these historical details?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary, but should show some understanding of the relatively recent nature of the events in Métis memory (late 1800s), the importance to Campbell personally (or she would not have bothered writing about them), and a personal interpretation (not everyone agrees that the First Nations participants were willing collaborators or that the Métis and settlers were as unified a group to start (in fact the story is much more complex than would appear in Campbell's explanation).

2. Not everything Campbell wrote about in the history is accurate. For example, Big Bear did not want to fight; he was arrested because he was the leader of his band, a small renegade group of which broke away and did fight. Why do you think Campbell might not be telling the truth in her historical account?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but should show some understanding of selected memory being passed down, the creation of historical myths (of which there are many in the histories of all nations and peoples). Answers should also show that Campbell felt an intimate bond with these Métis who had stood up for their rights and had been beaten down.

3. Why do you think Campbell says "The history books say that the Halfbreeds were defeated at Batoche in 1884" and then includes the list of statistics and accurate historical information at the end?

**Answer:** Students may note that Campbell obviously does not believe the "Halfbreeds" were defeated in spite of the terrible cost in lives, jail sentences, and money. The effect of mentioning the statistics is that they *should* indicate a defeat, but because Campbell is implying the Métis were not defeated, she shows the great odds that her people overcame just in order to survive.

## CHAPTER TWO

Students may wish to draw up a family genealogy for Campbell, so they can easily keep track of who is who during the rest of the novel. An Adobe version of an ancestor tree is included in this

section; this tree is available free directly from  
<http://www.ancestry.com/trees/charts/ancchart.aspx>.

1. How does the description of the settlements and land occupation that forced the Métis to become Road Allowance People make you feel? How do you think Campbell felt? Find some evidence in the text to support your statement about Campbell's feelings. Do you think the manner of handling the land settlement reflected a racist policy by the Canadian government of the time?

**Answer:** Student answers will be personal. However, they should note that Campbell feels a deep sense of wounded pride: "Fearless men who could brave sub-zero weather and all the dangers associated with living in the bush gave up, frustrated and discouraged." Campbell is also hurting because she knew some of the pioneer Métis who had once had everything and were reduced to nothing: "I hurt because in my childhood I saw glimpses of a proud and happy people. I heard their laughter, saw them dance, and felt their love."

2. Campbell breaks her narrative voice by bringing in the voice of her friend and discussing her thoughts about writing her book: "A close friend of mine said....I only want to say...But I am ahead of myself...." Up until that point Campbell had been narrating the past with a consistent voice; the break brings the reader into a more recent time and a change in perspective as Campbell speaks about her thoughts about writing instead of simply writing about the past. What effect does this jarring break in voice and time have on the reader?

**Answer:** Answers will vary but students should note that such a question might have been in their minds at this point, and in a sense Campbell is anticipating the question and explaining herself. Such a direct response to the question also relieves some anxiety readers may have about the difficult issues in the story because Campbell is candid with her readers here. It also explains Campbell's motive in clear terms so her readers cannot misinterpret her.

3. What do you think of Campbell's candid disclosure of her family's history of violence and poverty? What things does Campbell talk about that provide a counterpoint to the violence and poverty?

**Answer:** Students will have different answers to the first question, but should touch on the fact that Campbell wanted to tell the truth: "I only want to say: this is what it was like; this is what it is still like." Campbell recounts many good things about her family to counterpoint the violence and poverty including: the independence and bravery of her great grandmother Cheechum (reporting on the anti-Métis activities at her husband's meetings, stealing ammunition and supplies for the Métis, fending off the RCMP from her home); the hope Cheechum displays (in her belief that things will get better for the Métis); the kindness and gentleness of Cheechum's son, Campbell's grandfather; Grannie Campbell's independence and self-reliance (she wouldn't let her son, Campbell's father, take care of her but instead continued to work to support herself); the story about Campbell's father and mother courting by dancing; her mother's industriousness and beauty; the fun Campbell and her siblings had re-enacting historic stories, etc.

4. Campbell demonstrates a keen sense of ironic humour in this chapter as well as a gentle sense of humour of the everyday. Find some examples and explain which humour the examples demonstrate and explain the irony in those examples.

**Answer:** Answers will vary, but include the following:

Irony	Gentle Humour
The viciousness and meanness of her great grandfather contrasted with the comical image invoked by his Métis nickname Chee-pie-hoos, meaning “Evil-spirit-jumping-up-and-down.” --seriousness contrasted with comic	The story of Campbell’s father nearly falling off his wagon when he first saw his wife-to-be because she was so pretty.
Great-grandmother Cheechum Campbell being forced by her husband “Evil-spirit” to attend the anti-Métis meetings during the Northwest Insurrection, where she steals ammunition and supplies for the Métis. --GG Campbell taking his wife to the meetings to keep an eye on her, where she still manages to steal right under his nose. --GG Campbell supporting the meetings and plotting against the Métis; Cheechum taking all that information back to the Métis to help them.	Campbell’s father dancing as hard as he could to impress his wife-to-be .
Cheechum stopping the RCMP when they try to make her leave her home in the park by shooting over their heads. --a little woman fending off the big, powerful policemen.	Maria being born on the trap line, which disappointed her mother’s father after he had already been disappointed that his daughter had married Maria’s father. (This could also be a mild example of irony.)
Cheechum refusing to become a Christian because she said she’d married one and if there was a Hell, she’d already lived in it in her marriage so nothing after death could be worse. --marriage and Christian people are supposed to be good things; Cheechum equated them with Hell and by implication the Devil.	
Maria and her brothers acting out historic stories from ancient Rome, etc. where Maria had to be Caesar because she was so dark coloured. --Aboriginal people pretending to be Westerners/Europeans (a reverse of the cowboys/Indians game children used to play).	

### CHAPTER THREE

1. Why do you think Campbell describes her home and the family activities in such detail? In what kind of Métis community did Campbell grow up?

**Answer:** Campbell does this to ensure the history is recorded and not forgotten. Student answers will vary concerning the kind of community, but they should note cooperation, love for the children, self-reliance, knowledge about the land, cleanliness, passing down of knowledge from one generation to the next by teaching through participation.

2. What do you make of Campbell's stories about her great grandmother Cheechum's spiritual beliefs concerning little people and second sight? What do you think most people today might say about such things and why?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary. This is a question about Aboriginal beliefs in the spirit world and will test students' ability to accept the beliefs of another people or person without passing severe judgement about the quality of that person based on spiritual beliefs that may differ from their own.

3. Campbell says, "I grew up with some really funny, wonderful, fantastic people ....How I love them and miss them." Examine the character portraits Campbell paints of her aunt Qua Chich, the two war brides, Old Cadieux, Chi-Georges, and Grannie Dubuque's brother. What makes these people funny, wonderful, and fantastic? What literary devices does Campbell use to paint them "larger than life" to make them stick in your mind? Give specific examples.

**Answer:** The people Campbell describes appear as "characters" that we can easily remember. Campbell uses techniques of selected details and events (to detail everything about the people would make them dull whereas selected strong details grow in significance); she uses irony in her descriptions; she embellishes stories with pithy details and commentary; she embeds in each story a sort of mini-lesson or moral; she adds dialogue; she makes us laugh. Students should select examples from the text to illustrate these techniques.

**ALERT**

The following question may be one to put to the entire class for a guided and facilitated discussion, as it may touch on issues that are of a very sensitive nature to the student population.

4. What do you make of Campbell's description of the relations between the First Nations neighbours and the Métis community? Why do you think this relationship existed? Do you know of any examples of such "lateral violence" between groups or communities of Aboriginal peoples today? Why do you think such situations might exist? Do you agree with Campbell's distinction between the personality styles of the two peoples (First Nations reserved and quiet; Métis noisy and disorderly)?

**Answer:** Students will have many different suggestions and thoughts about this subject. In the text, students should be able to identify the love-hate relationship, the jealousy, the one-upmanship, and the complications that arise from drinking in such situations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

1. What kind of feelings did Campbell's father have when the immigrants dropped off the Christmas box of donations and food at their house? Think of as many reasons as you can that *might* explain his feelings and reaction.

**Answer:** Campbell's father was angry; his pride was hurt; his dignity was insulted. Campbell's father may have felt like this because he could not provide enough for his own family. He may have resented the settlers holding onto land that the Métis had lost. He also might have felt that the immigrants looked down on the Métis as people to be pitied. It appears from Campbell's descriptions, that the immigrants had more money and livestock than the Métis to start their farming. The immigrants probably took over farmland that had already been partly cleared and worked by Métis homesteaders who had failed to keep the land because of government development regulations, so the immigrant's job of clearing would be much easier and faster

because the Métis had already done a lot of the basic and hard work; the immigrants would therefore more easily fulfill government regulations regarding homesteading.

2. Campbell again comments on Christians and religion in this chapter. What impression do you get from the image of Christians and old clothes? Do the stories that Campbell tells about religious people and churches support or discredit Cheechum's opinion about Christians?

**Answer:** The image of the Christians and old clothes together is comical in spite of Campbell's strong anti-Christian feelings. It shows that humour can be used to lighten one's load or to make things easier to live with when life is hard. The stories about the religious people support Cheechum's opinion and do so humorously, which makes the stories stronger.

**ALERT**

The following question may be one to put to the entire class for a guided and facilitated discussion, as it may touch on issues that are of a very sensitive nature to the student population.

3. After Campbell has criticized religion so much, why do you think that the Métis were nonetheless Christians (Roman Catholics), especially when they had negative experiences with their own priests and churches? Do you see any correlation to contemporary situations for Aboriginal people who choose to be Christian?

**Answer:** Students will have different answers as to why the Métis were Roman Catholic when their experiences with other Christians tended to be negative, and even their experiences with their own chosen church were negative. Students should make connections between residential schools and the churches that ran them and the fact that many Aboriginal people remain loyal to those churches in spite of traumatic residential school experiences.

4. Campbell uses humour again throughout this chapter in discussing religious beliefs and experiences. How does Campbell use humour in the story of the Evangelist minister and Old Ha-shoo? In the story of the Father, the Sundance Pole, and the strawberry patch? These are serious actions; what does the humour do?

**Answer:** Old Ha-shoo was only responding, so he thought, to the invitation by the minister to come and make music; the minister did not mean Aboriginal drumming. The Father stole from the Sundance Pole and ate the strawberries he would not allow the Métis to eat; he did not see anything wrong with his actions. The children tripped him, and by doing so, declared in an indirect way that they had witnessed his hypocrisy. Campbell's parents, quite aware of this, had a mixed reaction to the children's trick. The humour lets us see the human side of bad, unfair, or unjust behaviour and allows us to forgive transgressions. As Campbell said earlier in the book: the Métis were quick to get angry and quick to forgive.

5. What is so funny about Campbell's attitude towards the Church of England, Henry VIII, the nun's comments, and her disappointment that King Henry VIII "belonged to the Indians instead of the Halfbreeds"? What literary device is Campbell using here?

**Answer:** This is another good example of Campbell's use of irony. As a young girl, Campbell was excited to learn that the Church of England was apparently founded on sin, and that Henry VIII created it so he could divorce some wives and marry new ones. This appeals to her sense of drama, even though the church and God are supposed to be pure, holy, and serious subjects. It is even more ironic that she sees the "ownership" of the church as a competition between the 'Indian and Halfbreed' people.

6. How do you think Campbell's treatment at the hands of her father changed her character?

**Answer:** Students will have different answers but should be able to reason them through. Campbell probably became a tougher person as a result of the physical punishment and her father's edict that "Campbells never cry," but also an honest one because she would not want to risk physical punishment again.

**ALERT**

The following question may be one to put to the entire class for a guided and facilitated discussion, as it may touch on issues that are of a very sensitive nature to the student population.

7. Why do you think the men behaved the way they did in town after the berry and root camping trips? Why do you think they attacked their own women when it was the white men who had insulted them? What does this do to an individual's sense of identity?

**Answer:** Students will have their own answers; the purpose of the question is to look at identity, shame, and misdirected and misplaced violence.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

1. Look over the vivid details of Campbell's road trip as an 8-year-old in the Model T convertible to the Trapper's Convention. Do you ever recall a similar event in your childhood filled with such vivid memories (a trip of discovery and fun)?

**Answer:** Personal student answer; the purpose is to have the student attempt to recall vivid details through reminiscing.

2. What do you think about the method of holding a convention, having families attend, and the methods of dispute settlement?

**Answer:** Personal student answer; the purpose is to have the student do evaluative thinking.

3. Campbell has already mentioned little people and monsters in her autobiography. What are your thoughts about Campbell's stories of the bad medicine at Montreal Lake? Do you believe in such powers? Why or why not? If you do not believe in such things, can you accept that another person might without ridiculing their beliefs?

**Answer:** Personal answer.

4. Compare the two kinds of punishment Campbell received at the hands of her father (being switched) and at the hands of the residential school staff (being locked in a dark, small closet for hours. What kinds of punishment are they? Which do you think is worst and why?

**Answer:** Students should be able to distinguish between physical punishment that is over quickly and psychological punishment that may last forever. The rest of answer will vary with each student.

**CHAPTER SIX**

**ALERT**

This chapter contains one incident of swearing with regard to a food recipe; please preview and put into context for students.

1. What do you think of Alex Vandal's performance on the opening day of school and the Métis reaction? What do you think was the lasting impression on the non-Métis children and parents? Is this a humorous incident? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary. Some might say Alex did his people further harm; others might argue that Alex was insulting the white people through his performance, participating in reverse racism. Some students might think the incident is actually funny. Students should be able to defend their opinion with a good argument.

2. What are your thoughts about Cheechum's method of teaching Campbell to stand up for herself and her people?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary, but should address the issue of physical violence.

3. Why do you think Campbell and her brothers picked on the two Seventh-Day Adventist children?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary; the purpose of the question is to help students understand displaced and misplaced violence, bullying, "big fish eat little fish" syndrome, etc.

4. What do you think of Campbell's story about the dance and fight, and her statement that "We never had a dance without a good fight and we enjoyed and looked forward to it as much as the dancing"?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary; perhaps some might also include the school children's fights and conclude that fighting and physical violence was an everyday part of Métis life in Campbell's community. Other students will have different answers. The object of the question is to have students think about why violence appears (possible alcohol connections) in what otherwise seems to be a happy, healthy group of people.

5. What are the key characteristics of Campbell's descriptions of Métis community life?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but should include: laughter; sharing; periods of poverty/want next to periods of comparative luxury; importance of family and communication; music; dance; "old-fashioned," country aspects (such as horse riding, sleighs, etc.); community events (weddings, Christmas); church, etc. Students should be able to generalize and comment on the active presence of culture and a cohesive sense of sharing and community.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

1. Why did Campbell's father laugh when she revealed the illegal meat stash in exchange for a chocolate bar?

**Answer:** Students will give different answers, but should indicate some awareness of the humour of the situation. Campbell's father understood how Campbell had fallen for the temptation of something she would not be able to acquire otherwise.

2. Interpret Campbell's statements that "The important thing is that a man broke a law. He has a choice, and shouldn't break that law again. Instead, he can go on relief and become a living shell, to be scorned and ridiculed even more." What literary device is Campbell using?



**Answer:** Students should realize that Campbell does not believe what she says here. She is showing the inhumanity of the law by using sarcasm. Students should be able to relate sarcasm to satire and make a connection to Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, if they have studied it in other English classes. Here is a link to Swift's text: <http://art-bin.com/art/omodest.html>.

3. Campbell's uncle and father go through quite a bit of trouble to play their pranks in the graveyard with regard to the story of Wolverine. Why do you think they do that? What do you think happens to this story afterwards?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary, but students should be able to understand that oral traditions are living traditions in which Aboriginal people participate. The story about Campbell, her uncle and father will probably become a Campbell family story appended to the original Wolverine stories.

4. The reactions Campbell's parents have to her various adventures show what a complex loving relationship they have with her. How is this demonstrated in the story about Campbell running away?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but should detail parent reactions that show they were worried, upset, anxious, angry, amused, relieved, loving, scolding, forgiving.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

1. Campbell details the political activism of her Métis community. What qualities of Métis identity and history support this activism?

**Answer:** Students should note Métis pride in their political history (Riel, Red River, the Northwest), Métis passion and enthusiasm, Métis enjoyment in discussions and talking, Métis independence.

2. Explain the significance of Campbell's visit to the political meeting, her meeting with Jim Brady, and her reaction.

**Answer:** Students should note that even at her young age, Campbell was aware that there was a possibility of doing something to better her people's condition. Students should also note the pride Campbell feels in her people's political actions.

3. Why do you think the Métis political activism of Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris failed, broke men like Campbell's father, and divided the Métis community?

**Answer:** Students will have different answers, but should mention emotional and financial investment in political activities that is unrewarded; fear and retaliation by Métis who do not want change or will not fight for it; the destruction of a community through divisiveness of opinion and bitterness; isolation by those involved in the unsuccessful political activity (shunning). Some students might make connections to modern day Aboriginal political or social disputes or "lateral violence." Students should also realize the huge personal investment an individual makes when he/she decides to fight for a cause he/she believes in, even if the outcome is positive (see *Spirit Dance at Meziadin: Chief Joseph Gosnell and the Nisga'a Treaty* by Alex Rose).

4. In this chapter Campbell ends with the sad story of her mother's death. Why do you think Campbell does not use humour here in recounting the foibles of religion and religious people

as she has in the past? What literary device is used to heighten the effect of this religious story compared to the others? What is the overall effect?

**Answer:** The device used is juxtaposition; even though the religious stories are separated by others, the subject matter joins them. The serious and cruel treatment detailed with regard to the death of Campbell's mother is heightened when readers recall the foolish and comic behaviour of the religious people in earlier stories. In the earlier stories readers forgive the people involved for their foolishness and pettiness; in this story readers cannot forgive the prejudice and cruelty.

## CHAPTER NINE

1. Campbell's comment that "Everything seemed to go wrong after Momma left us" is actually just the straw that broke the camel's back. There were many other signs beforehand that things were changing for the worse not only for the Campbell family, but also for the Métis community. List some of these changes.

**Answer:** Students should note some of the following and may have other observations of their own: Campbell's father's drinking and depression, the growing and desperate poverty of the family and community; the inability and lack of desire for community members to help each other any more; the failure of the fur industry; the encroaching settlers (though this is never mentioned outright, there are growing numbers of references as time passes); the failure of the Métis political actions; Campbell herself growing up and having to take life more seriously.

2. Many people think, as Campbell did in her introduction, that by revisiting old places that once were happy a person can recapture that happiness. Why can this never work?

**Answer:** Students will have different answers, but note that people and times change forever through experience. Some students may go on to point out that people can only become happy again (if they are saddened) through their own actions and choices. This is called a "narrative" perspective of life. (In contemporary psychological terms, individuals explore and identify their 'essential selves' as they change in life, over time, by using either in a 'narrative' or 'essentialist' method of self-description. A narrative self says, 'I am not the same person as I once was because I have changed due to my experiences and the choices I have made in having those experiences.' An individual with a narrative self is both forward and backward looking, accepting ownership of past behaviour while investing a sense of self as active in the future. An essentialist says, 'Deep down I am the same person, just doing things differently. I used to be aggressive and fight, now I am aggressive in studies and am successful.' From a presentation by Dr. Chris Lalonde, Caneuel series, University of Victoria, 28 Nov. 2007)

## CHAPTER TEN

1. At first glance, it appears life will be better for the Campbell family at the Grey farm. What makes it hard for the family to succeed?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but may include: the attitude of the teacher, the fear of the "relief man" coming to take the children that prevents the family from asking for help, the unrelenting harshness of constant work, the lack of extended family and community support, loneliness. (This question is meant, by contrast, to make students think about what a person needs to succeed and feel good in life.)

2. What qualities and characteristics does Grannie Dubuque bring to the family when she arrives?

**Answer:** Students might note any of the following: Grannie Dubuque brings a motherly love to the family, a sense of humour and fun, her storytelling abilities, and a connectedness with the family's past and the history of the Métis people.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

1. Why do you think Campbell includes the very private story about her imagined pregnancy and periods?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary. The story helps young readers identify with Campbell. Readers know that in an autobiography about a young person growing up the important maturation process will have to occur; students/readers may feel that to omit details about these important identity-forming events would be a major oversight.

2. Cheechum plays a key role in Campbell's life story. Her advice to Campbell at the end of the chapter seems like good advice. What do you think Cheechum meant when she said, "Now I know that you belong to me"? Did Cheechum follow her own advice in her lifetime? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but may include information about the change in the historic times that makes Campbell's task harder, and the limitations on Cheechum because of her education. However, students should also recall that Cheechum was the woman who refused to belong to the church when everyone else was a believer, who went to the anti-Métis meetings of her former husband "Evil-spirit" and stole ammunition and supplies for the Métis fighters, who drove the RCMP away by firing a gun over their heads when they tried to remove her from her home in the park. Cheechum says Campbell belongs to her because she shows the same independent, fighting spirit.

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

1. Campbell's stories of events have a sense of humour about them again. Why do you think humour has re-entered the stories, even though the family is still poor and life is hard?

**Answer:** Students might point out that life is hard, but is bearable and stable; there do not appear to be any threats to the family security. Humour is a way of making a hard life bearable and looking forward to tomorrow. Humour in a truly tragic situation, such as existed at the time of Campbell's mother's death, would be inappropriate and unfeeling.

2. Share some of your thoughts about the way Campbell treated Sophie in the dance story, and what Sophie said years later to Campbell as she was near death.

**Answer:** Student's personal answer. The nuances of the interaction are complex and this prompt challenges the student's ability to use language to describe those nuances. Students might note that Campbell's reaction belies her feelings, that she has conflicting feelings, that she feels she betrayed Cheechum by behaving badly, etc.

## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

1. Why was it impossible for Campbell's father to accept the help of neighbours so that Campbell could stay in school? How does this relate to his comment: "We are poor but there is no way they are going to make my children poorer."

**Answer:** Student's personal answer. Some students may note that too much pride is destructive and/or counterproductive and relate this to the incidents described earlier in which the family deceived everyone about how poor they were.

2. The movie Campbell describes about the Northwest Rebellion painted the Métis as clowns and fools. Think of how Aboriginal people have been represented in recent movies. Have things changed? How? What do you think happened that resulted in the changes? How recently do you think these significant changes occurred?

**Answer:** Answers will vary but should show significant attempts by students to give serious thought to the issues raised. This question is designed to make students think about representations of Aboriginal people in the popular film media and the causes of changes in media representation.

3. Discuss the fight between Campbell and her father over the dance and Smoky. Was either of them in the right? Why or why not? While it is impossible to change how Campbell and her father actually behaved, can you think of another way they *could* have behaved that might have solved their argument so that they did not "drift apart"?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary. Suggested solutions might include taking a time-out to calm down, admitting mistakes, agreeing to change behaviours that are harmful to the family (such as Campbell's father going to the dances, drinking, and fighting), agreeing to continue to work out the problems until both parties are satisfied. This question is designed to give students the opportunity to discuss non-confrontational dispute resolution.

4. Why do you think Campbell cannot think of her people without thinking of them as fighting and drinking? She writes: "I hated all of it as much as I loved it." What do you think she means? How do you think people can keep the healthy part of their culture and change the unhealthy part?

**Answer:** This question is meant to stimulate discussion and make students think about the bigger picture.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. What is your sense of justice regarding the relief man saying that widows could receive help, but that a single father could not? What is your sense of justice when you learn that Sarah leaves and Campbell must quit school because Campbell's father would not marry Sarah, saying that Campbell's mother was the only woman he'd loved? What would you feel and do in the second situation (as a male, as a female)?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary, but should discuss the discrimination involved in relief supporting a woman but not a man as a single head of the family. Student answers to the second question will involve differing senses of moral right, but should nonetheless reveal that Campbell's father used Sarah, at least in part.

2. Discuss your thoughts and feelings about Campbell's marriage to Darrel and the events around that marriage. Who do you think is taking responsibility for all the smaller children in the Campbell family? Justify any statements or opinions you make.

**Answer:** This question is designed to get students to identify the complexities in such a situation and to justify their choices and opinions, but answers will vary. Some observations might be: Campbell would not have done this if her father had protected the family by

marrying Sarah; Campbell was (in part/all right or wrong) in refusing to marry in a church; Campbell was (in part/all right or wrong) in making up her own mind about marriage; the family was (in part/all right or wrong) in trying to get Campbell to marry in a church; Cheechum and Campbell's father were (in part/all right or wrong) in choosing Smoky for Campbell; Campbell/her father/the new husband Darrel/the aunties and other members of Campbell's extended family were/were not taking responsibility for the family.

3. What are your thoughts about Campbell saying, "I had no choice but to go home with the baby to Darrel." Why do you think Campbell felt she had no choice? Could she have done something different?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but could note that Smoky had told her she could come back to him; Campbell could have returned to her father; Campbell could have asked for help from her extended family. It was clear Darrel did not want Campbell, and had told her to leave. Further, Campbell was in a dangerous physically and emotionally abusive relationship that was not a good model for the younger Campbell children she said she wanted to protect.

4. The issue of shame lies heavily on the Campbell family members' inability to make choices that are better for them in the long term. Do you agree with this statement or disagree? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary, but should include justifications for opinions.

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

1. Why do you think Campbell can confess her feelings and situation to the Chinese people running the café, and accept their help, but is unable to do the same with her own people?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary; this question is designed to help students examine Campbell's feelings, empathize, and make emotional connections to their own understanding of feelings.

2. What is it in Campbell that makes her refuse to see or go out with Bob any more, but allows her to return to Darrel?

**Answer:** This question is to get students to discuss motives behind choices and to allow them to "map out" what makes a good choice as opposed to a bad or destructive one in relationships.

## **CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

1. Explain what is so telling about Campbell's comment: "The store windows were full of beautiful displays, lots of food, clothes and all the things a person could possibly need to be happy." Discuss whether Campbell's priorities have changed over time. Why might she be so interested in material wealth? What does it represent?

**Answer:** Student responses will vary, but should note the following: Campbell's sense of what a person needs to be happy has shifted from community and family, as it was at the start of the book, to material goods. This reflects her desire to have what she never could have as a child because of poverty; it also reflects her concept of "success" at the same time as the hidden fear of "not having" that resulted in the relief people taking away her younger brothers and sisters. Campbell now stresses and values what is on the outside of a person as opposed to what is on the inside.

2. Why do you think Darrel brought Campbell and Lisa to Vancouver?

**Answer:** Student's personal answers. The question is designed to get students to think about motivation for people's behaviours, and to realize that what one person wants is not necessarily good for any other person involved in the relationship. Further, students may recognize that the person involved in such an unhealthy relationship must make choices for him/herself.

3. Where do you think Campbell's dreams went "wrong"? Explain why you think she says, "I feel an overwhelming compassion and understanding for another human being caught in a situation where the way out is so obvious to others but not to him."

**Answer:** Student answers will vary, but the discussion is aimed at getting students to note choices and turning points in the "narrative" of a life. ("Narrative" was mentioned earlier in the Chapter questions.) Campbell's comment is one made in hindsight; she is implying that she can now, later in her life, see how she could have avoided becoming a prostitute, but at the time could not see any escape for herself. She is asking for our (the reader's) compassion and understanding. Students should also recall how young Campbell was at this point in her life, and how difficult it is to make informed decisions at a young age because emotions tend to rule.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. Record your thoughts about Campbell's comment on powerful, rich people: "When I think back to that time and those people, I realize now that poor people, both white and Native, who are trapped within a certain kind of life, can never look to the business and political leaders of this country for help. Regardless of what they promise, they'll never change things, because they are involved in and perpetuate in private the very things that they condemn in public."

**Answer:** This question is designed to stimulate student discussion about power and politics, democracy and representation, justice and injustice. A horseshoe debate may be revealing and enlightening. Some students may be able to make connections to contemporary historical events. Details about many Canadian government scandals can be found at the following web sites below. Students should be asked to note and think about the veracity of the sources of the material as part of their critical thinking skills:

The Canadian Encyclopedia Web site, "Corruption:"

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001941>

Wikipedia, "List of Canadian political scandals:"

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian\\_political\\_scandals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_political_scandals)

World Socialist Web Site, "Canada: Martin and Chrétien testify in corruption scandal:"

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/feb2005/cana-f19.shtml>

2. What do you think about Ray, the help he gave Campbell to get off drugs and regain her baby Lisa, and the job he asked her to perform?

**Answer:** Student's personal answer, but students should note that Ray was involved in illegal and violent activities that destroyed people in spite of his help to Campbell.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. What are your thoughts about Campbell blaming the “drunken Indian men” for all the ills she suffered and the other “girls” suffered?

**Answer:** Student’s personal answer; should show depth of thought and understanding of anger, frustration, futility, loss of hope, desire for change in spite of everything (because she can still feel).

2. Campbell invites Ray back into her life with her request for help. Again, he helps her out without any demands, but also provides her with money illegally gained. What are your thoughts and feelings about the “rightness” of Campbell accepting his help?

**Answer:** This question, combined with the earlier one about Ray, might be a good one for a class discussion on “moral and immoral” behaviour, ends versus means, etc.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. Evaluate Campbell’s behaviour at the ranch. Did she make healthy choices for herself and her baby? What finally resulted in her being fired? Was that just?

**Answer:** Students might note that Campbell drank, gambled, drove quickly, spent her time in the company of young men, and that her behaviour encouraged gossip. However, students should also note she worked hard and changed some of her behaviour when she realized it was giving her a bad reputation. Students should justify their decision as to whether or not Campbell made healthy choices. It would appear that Campbell’s firing was an unjust act by the boss, that it was “guilt by association,” and retaliation because Campbell had befriended Shawn.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

1. Can you answer Campbell’s question to herself: “I remember sitting there with her and thinking, ‘Here we are, the two of us, and we weren’t any different from any other women. What happened anyway? Why do we have to fight so damn hard for so little?’”

**Answer:** Student answers will vary and will depend on the depth and breadth of their discussions or thoughts about earlier questions on the same theme.

2. Why is Campbell so appalled at the idea of selling Native culture at the Stampede when she was not, at that point, opposed to selling her body (and spirit) on the streets?

**Answer:** Student’s personal answer, but it should be supported by sound reasoning. Students may make connections between the activities as different forms of ‘prostitution.’

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. Can you think of any contemporary equivalents in Aboriginal history that might qualify in supporting Cheechum’s comment: “...when the government gives you something, they take all that you have in return—your pride, your dignity, all the things that make you a living soul. When they are sure they have everything, they give you a blanket to cover your shame”?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but might include such historical examples as the forced location of First Nations people onto reserves, the refusal by the government to recognize land claims, the legal repression of Aboriginal culture and theft of cultural artefacts, and the

residential school experiences. There may also be more contentious debate or discussion about the misuse and abuse of government funding to Aboriginal organizations and groups. These topics should most certainly be explored, but the discussion should be moderated and students should be willing and able to supply specific examples as evidence to support their views.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1. Campbell seems to have left a trail of men behind her. What do you think made her believe each time that a man could straighten out her life for her?

**Answer:** This question is meant to stimulate critical thinking in students with regard to the novel's themes of personal identity and strength; it should also extend into more general observations and refer back to the 'narrative' style of describing life that allows people to rethink their behaviour choices and to change.

2. What are your thoughts about Campbell's descriptions of the insane hospital wards? What philosophy (belief about people, guiding principle) would allow for mentally ill patients to be treated in such a way? Do you believe that such circumstances might still exist?

**Answer:** Students might recognize that in order to treat people so badly, those in power have to believe that the people are less than human. Similar contemporary circumstances exist in any contemporary situation where there is prejudice, hatred as a result of religious beliefs, attempts by one culture, people, or nation to dominate and repress another, etc.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### ALERT

Teachers should preview the use of the expressions "fucked up" and "kick his ass" in this chapter and prepare students by contextualizing the comments.

1. Campbell comments that Stan Daniels "...was bitter about what the white system had done to our men..." Do you think there are victims who truly cannot do anything about their situation and who have no choices? If so, who might they be and why are they true victims?

**Answer:** Students might or might not agree with the concept of victimhood, but they should be able to argue their case. The situation of captive peoples (First Nations on reserves, children in residential schools, prisoners of war, those so poor that they are desperate for money, for food, etc.) as victims should be discussed. Students may also wish to discuss the concept of a "captive" people, what that means, and how the situation for those people can be changed.

2. When Campbell describes the scene in town with the drunks, the abandoned children, the fights, etc., how is it different from the same scene when she was younger and a participant?

**Answer:** Students should be able to note that the scene has not changed, but Campbell has. She now knows where such behaviour leads and realizes that she does not want to be part of it.

3. Why is it that Campbell can tell her hurtful life story to Cheechum, but not her father? Why can she do this now, when earlier in the novel she would not return home because of her shame about what she was doing and her fear about what Cheechum would think?

**Answer:** Student responses will vary but may note that Campbell has changed through her breakdown, hospitalization, and AA meetings. Campbell also needed at least one close family member to know all about her and yet still accept and love her, and that person was Cheechum.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1. Comment on Campbell's observation that "Listening to her [Marie Smallface] talk, it seemed to me that here was a whole new breed of Native people who would make changes and give leadership." How had this come about?

**Answer:** Student responses will differ. Students might note, however, that there were enough angry young Aboriginal people who wanted to make positive changes for their people, and who funnelled that anger into positive, constructive behaviours instead of destructive ones. Larger political organizations were formed by and for Aboriginal people, and issues began to be made public on a broad scale. Aboriginal media, such as newspapers and radio stations, were founded.

2. How do you think things have changed for Aboriginal people since Campbell's book first came out in 1973? Make sure to back up your statements of opinion.

**Answer:** Student answers will vary depending on their prior knowledge and thought, but might include the proliferation of Aboriginal media, the newer interest by non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal culture (some may see this as negative), increased control by Aboriginal peoples over conditions that affect Aboriginal people, an increase in the level of education and opportunities for Aboriginal people, redressing of past wrongs by the government and church (some students may disagree with part or all of this statement), proliferation of scholarships, internships and other programs to help Aboriginal people with education, jobs and businesses, etc.

3. Study of this novel began with a look at how Métis history and culture gave Campbell a sense of self. She lost her identity, but by the end of her autobiography had regained a new sense of self. How is Campbell's identity connected to her Métis people both at the beginning and end of the novel? How are the connections different? What kind of "family" does Campbell identify with at the beginning and at the end of her book?

**Answer:** Students should note that at the beginning of the novel, Campbell's sense of self is strongly rooted in her biological family and its direct connection to Métis history and cultural tradition. At the end of the novel, Campbell's self-identity is still based in her biological family, but has extended to a group of friends and political colleagues who are now her "family," including the prisoners she has inspired. Campbell herself has moved through history, from the "olden days" of Métis history that were connected to Riel, Dumont, and the 1800s rebellions to the more modern political movements of the Métis.

### *Summary of Novel Study and Section Assignment*

**Learning Outcomes:** C1-C14, with the possible exception of C3 and C4 depending on students' choice of form of expression.

#### **Introduction**

The teacher may wish the class to have a group discussion about the overarching themes and issues raised in Campbell's *Halfbreed*. This will act as a 'stimulating prior knowledge' activity in preparation for the student assignment.

Some of the recurrent themes and/or features of *Halfbreed* are

- identity
- healthy/unhealthy choices, motives that drive people to make those choices, steps to making healthy, positive choices
- the relationship between (Aboriginal/Métis) men and women
- the role of Elders in traditional Métis communities and how that has changed
- the relationship between First Nations and Métis peoples, both historically and in contemporary times
- humour, types of humour, and its ability to “mediate” experience
- government corruption, abandonment of those in need
- church inability and unwillingness to help those in need and how this may/may not have changed over time
- social justice: the treatment of people who are in positions of less power and need help; human rights movements, their structure, objectives and effectiveness.

See Unit 8 in this Teacher Resource Guide with regard to research essays.

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

Students should write an essay, make a presentation (video, audio, digital slideshow, poster) or perform a creative piece to demonstrate their knowledge and response to a topic that arises from the novel study. Areas for essay projects and some topic suggestions are included above in the Teacher Information section. Essays must be complete and demonstrate good style, grammar, and reference citations. For MLA style guide, comments on plagiarism, etc. see: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html>. Students should also turn in draft outlines, writers’ webs, or notes with their assignment as examples of their writing/representation strategies. If students choose to do a creative piece, they should submit a small one-page written essay detailing how the creative piece specifically addresses and informs the student’s chosen topic.

### **50 marks**

Assessment rubric on the following page.

<b>NAME:</b> <b>PROJECT:</b> <b>TOPIC:</b>		
MARK	CRITERIA	PROJECT EVALUATION AND COMMENT
50 marks	Student project shows depth of understanding, a strong use of evidence to support student findings and opinion. Creative or written skills are superior, almost no errors or incidents of sloppiness. Topic is compelling and strong. Presentation is strong and compelling. Student has chosen a challenging subject to address. Pre-writing work is outstanding and thorough.	
40 marks	Student project shows a good grasp of the topic and a sincere attempt to deal with any opposing evidence or views. Arguments are good, and show only a few errors of logic/argument or omissions. Production skills are good, showing some errors that may be unusual. Presentation is consistent. Student has chosen an interesting, though not challenging topic. Pre-writing work is complete but not outstanding.	
30 marks	Student project shows a moderate grasp of the topic and an average attempt to deal with the issues raised. There may be a few omissions of argument or evidence. Production skills are average, showing errors that are typical but not common. Work is clean. Student has chosen an average topic that inspires some debate. Pre-writing work is submitted, but may be slightly incomplete.	
20 marks	Student project shows some grasp of topic with partial preparatory work. Major arguments are addressed, but depth of argument and comprehensive coverage of issues is missing. Production skills are below expectations, showing common errors. Presentation shows signs of sloppiness. Student topic is somewhat shallow and not well defined. Pre-writing work is present, but shows several areas incomplete.	
10 marks	Student project shows under-developed grasp of topic with an inadequate amount of preparatory work. Only one or two arguments are presented and dealt with. Production skills are riddled with inaccuracies, errors, sloppiness. Topic is ill-defined. Pre-writing work is minimal.	
0 marks	Student has failed to turn in a project.	

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**PART III: NOVEL STUDY: SELECTIONS FROM *IN SEARCH OF APRIL RAINTREE*  
BY BEATRICE MOSIONIER**

***Concepts of Métis Identity, Lost Identity, and History***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1-5, possibly A6 & 7 in activity 2, A9-13, possibly B3, B5, B8, B9, B11, C1, C2, possibly C4, C8, C10, C11

**Resources**

Préfontaine, Darren R. “Métis Writers.” The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research.  
<http://www.Métismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00733.pdf>

**Teacher Information**

Selections from *In Search of April Raintree* are found on pages 280-291 of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

Here is what Darren R. Préfontaine wrote in his article entitled “Métis Writers” about Mosionier and *In Search of April Raintree*:

**Beatrice Culleton**

*White Man, when you first came, most of our tribes began with peace and trust in dealing with you, strange white intruders. We showed you how to survive in our homelands. We were willing to share with you are our vast wealth. Instead of repaying us with gratitude, you, White Man, turned on us, your friends. You turned on us with your advanced weapons and your cunning trickery.  
As Long As the Sun Shall Rise...*

Beatrice Culleton, a Manitoba Métis author, playwright and novelist, was born on 27 August 1949 in St. Boniface Manitoba, to Louis and Mary Clara Mosionier. Beatrice was the youngest of four children in a dysfunctional and broken home. At age three she was taken away from her parents and raised in a series of foster homes, and away from her family and Métis heritage. Taunted and increasingly abused, she began denying her Aboriginal heritage after she was ten and wholeheartedly embraced Euro-Canadian values. This odyssey wrecked havoc on her personal identity and she went from foster home to foster home and it eventually destroyed two of her sisters: they committed suicide. She eventually settled in Toronto, where she currently resides. As a trained accountant, Ms. Culleton never envisioned that she would become a writer. However, the suicide of her sister in 1980 spurred her to write about her and her family's inner torment.

Ms. Culleton[’s] first novel *In Search of April Raintree*, which was published in 1983, was given the new title *April Raintree* in 1984. The novel, which is highly psychological, was largely auto-biographical and dealt with the painful experiences which many young Aboriginal people face trying to discover who they really are. The theme of the book articulated the necessity of community and self-healing, and as such it was given wide acclaim by both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population.

*April Raintree* is set in Winnipeg and it tells the story of two sisters who have alcoholic parents who are oblivious to the destruction of their family, and this led to tragic consequences when the family's baby dies and the two sisters are sent to a number of foster homes. The two sisters grow apart and become gradually estranged from the other: the one sister grows up hating and denying her Métis heritage and the other sister embraces it. Later the two sisters meet when they are adults and the older sister, who looks white, tells the younger sister, who looks more visibly Aboriginal:

*I am ashamed... I can't accept being Métis. That's the hardest thing that I've ever said to you, Cheryl. And I'm glad you don't feel the same way I do. I'm so proud of what you are trying to do. But to me, being Métis means that I'm one of the have-nots. And I want so much. I'm selfish. I know it, but that's the way I am. I want what white society can give me.*

The two sisters go their separate ways and the Métis-hating sister, April, moves to Toronto and becomes successful and married, while the pro-Métis sister, Cheryl, becomes radical, sullen, inward-looking, and withdrawn from society. Eventually, the lives of the two sisters turn for the worst: April's marriage falls apart and she moves back to Winnipeg and she is brutally assaulted. Cheryl commits suicide, as her mother had. These tragic circumstances force April to come to terms with her Métis heritage. Written in a lamentable but emotional prose, the story is a poignant reminder of the inner pain and struggle, and self hate, which many Métis face when analyzing their heritage. It has become widely read in Europe and elsewhere as "Native" and not "Canadian" literature, and like Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* is a scathing indictment of an uncaring society which allows its children to suffer and of the colonization of its Aboriginal peoples.

### Suggested Activity Sequence

#### Pre-Reading Activities

1. Introduce the new work to be studied and read the selection from Préfontaine's essay.
2. The class can discuss some of the statements Préfontaine makes in light of the search for identity that students examined and explored in *Halfbreed*. Campbell had a very direct connection to her history, people, and culture, whereas the Raintree sisters did not. This raises several questions about how important history and culture are in identity formation. How does Cheryl Raintree rediscover her history, and was it enough for her? If not, why not? If modern Métis individuals are now separated by time and space from their traditional culture and history, how are their identities as Métis formed? It is often interesting to form a physical "opinion line or graph" concerning such questions that gets students on their feet and gives a quick visual image of class opinions. An opinion line is simply a line of students where those with one opinion stand at one end and those with the opposite stand at the other end and those with opinions that vary or depend on different influences situate themselves in between. A physical opinion "graph" is similar except that the poles are on opposite sides of the classroom and allow for accurate visual representation where students hold stronger and more diametrically opposed opinions because those students bunch at opposite sides of the room. Students with opinions that depend on influences and circumstances will locate themselves somewhere between the two sides of the room. Both activities require students to physically move and to talk to each other.

## ***Unit 12: Métis Literature***

3. Préfontaine says *In Search of April Raintree* "...is a poignant reminder of the inner pain and struggle, and self hate, which many Métis face when analyzing their heritage." Students should discuss this statement. "Self hate" is a very powerful and condemning description. If any Métis students are in the class, they might have strong opinions about this statement. Is it accurate or too broad a generalization? Why or why not?

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

#### **Journal**

Students should write a journal entry to demonstrate their understanding of the complexities and difficulties an individual faces in trying to form an identity when there is no direct connection to culture and history. Students can be asked to make connections to other Aboriginal situations and circumstances in which formation of an identity would be similarly difficult. Students might think about

- residential school children
- children put in foster care in non-Aboriginal families that do not allow cultural education
- the Aboriginal individuals jailed at the beginning of the 1900s for continuing to practise their culture after laws had been passed making that illegal (Potlatch Laws)
- Aboriginal children whose parents or grandparents pretended they were not Aboriginal or who refused to pass on the culture, etc.

Students might also wish to tackle Préfontaine's opinion that Métis feels self-hate when analyzing their history; students might ask why Préfontaine might wish to make such a statement and speak for all modern Métis.

**10 marks**

#### **Home Assignment**

Ask students to write or create a poster or to use another method of expression that shows how their identity has been influenced by family, family history, and culture. It is important to note that many students may not identify their biological family members as the strongest influences involved in identity-formation, and may identify individuals to whom they are not biologically related as family members. Students may identify negatively with some or all family members and/or their family history, and others may be in the process of struggling with identity issues for any number of reasons. Teachers will need to exercise professional judgment with regard to how to handle any or all of these scenarios. Some students may wish to show these or perform at next class if their work is performance. Students who do a creative piece should be able to explain orally or in writing how their work demonstrates their identity formation.

**10 marks**

**TOTAL: 20 marks**

### ***Themes in In Search of April Raintree***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1-13, B1, B3-5, B7-9, B11, B12, C1-4, C8-12, C13

#### **Resources**

Moses, Daniel David and Terry Goldie, eds. *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Mosionier, Beatrice Culleton. *In Search of April Raintree*. Critical Edition ed. Cheryl Suzack. Winnipeg: Portage & Main P, 1999.

### **Teacher Information**

Selections from *In Search of April Raintree* are found on pages 280-291 of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*.

It is helpful to use some of the essay ideas from the Critical Edition of *In Search of April Raintree* for hints about the overall themes and motifs in the novel, and to help students focus on topics for their discussions and section assignment.

In her introductory essay, editor Cheryl Suzack documents what an important impact the novel has had for and on its readers: “The novel owes its success as much to its ability to emotionally engage readers as to its consideration of familiar themes, values, and ideas....It is a novel that crosses disciplinary boundaries to engage with issues of racism and the socialization of Native children, ‘truth-telling’ and the representation of social discourse, and First Nations literary history and the quest for identity.” (2)

Suzack details the publication history of the book, which when the critical edition was published in 1999, had seen continuous and consistent sales, and circulation in three languages.

### **THEMES AND OVERARCHING IDEAS**

#### **Missing Identity, Missing Culture, Missing History**

Margery Fee’s essay “Deploying Identity in the Face of Racism” claims that *In Search of April Raintree* “rejects whiteness or Nativeness as simple, clearcut identities.” (2-3)

Janice Acoose’s essay “The Problem of ‘Searching’ for April Raintree” “demonstrates how the novel thematizes the absence of positive narratives of Métis culture and history in her exploration of the Raintree sisters’ quests to recover a sense of self and community.” (3) Acoose says the novel resists readers’ attempts to find within the novel the presence and definition of Métis culture and history and so opens up the possibility for discussion about what constitutes history and culture.

#### **Social Justice Issues**

Jeanne Perreault’s “In Search of Cheryl Raintree, and Her Mother” considers social and physical realities facing many people of Native heritage: illness, infant mortality, foster care, alcoholism, rape, domestic violence against women, prostitution, and suicide. (4)

#### **Cultural Dislocation and Affirmation of Aboriginal Identity**

Jo-Ann Thom in “The Effect of Readers’ Responses on the Development of Aboriginal Literature in Canada: A Study of Maria Campbell’s *Halfbreed*, Beatrice Culleton’s *In Search of April Raintree*, and Richard Wagamese’s *Keeper’n Me*” claims that contemporary writers (Richard Wagamese for example) reimagine truths of systematic racism and cultural dislocation as narratives of cultural healing. Thom argues that contemporary authors recognize and extend the



work of previous Aboriginal authors, and transform racist discourse into narratives that affirm Aboriginal culture and identity. (6)

### **Sisterhood, Feminism, and Solidarity**

Heather Zwicker's "The Limits of Sisterhood" examines sisterhood in order to conceptualize community among women. She poses the following question: How do we celebrate difference without giving up on possibility of solidarity? She argues that disintegration between sisters demonstrates the disintegration of a feminism that fails to respond to a community founded on mutual responsibility and recognition of difference. (6)

[There is an interesting, short essay comparing *April Raintree* and *The Color Purple* for students who are interested in this topic: <http://www.reneemattila.com/A%20Comparison.htm>.]

There is a huge collection of young people's responses to *In Search of April Raintree* as part of an English course, which teachers may find helpful and informative at:

[http://pwmartin.blog.uvm.edu/182/archives/discussion\\_topic\\_for\\_in\\_search\\_of\\_april\\_raintree.php](http://pwmartin.blog.uvm.edu/182/archives/discussion_topic_for_in_search_of_april_raintree.php)

Teachers can find a wider selection from the book on Google books, should they wish students to do further reading of the text.

### **Suggested Activity Sequence**

1. If students have presentations from the first lesson, it is a good idea to have them at the start of this class before new material is introduced.
  2. Teachers can share the information from the critical edition essays and use the themes identified as focus for student readings. It would be a good idea to allow class discussion or questions related to each theme idea as it is introduced. Students can then read independently, thinking of the theme that appeals most to them, and which can guide their own response to the reading. The selection is short.
  3. Teachers can use the questions and answers below in whichever way best suits their purpose: for comprehension, discussion, journals entries, or projects, etc.
1. Mosionier uses humour in a terrifying situation when the Mother Superior greeted April and Cheryl at the orphanage, much like Campbell used humour in *Halfbreed*. Why do you think Mosionier did this?

**Answer:** Students might have different suggestions. The belief the nuns were "boogeywoman" strongly reminds readers that the children were very young, as does Cheryl's nickname of "Apple" for April.

2. In the second selection, April is obviously older. Compare Mosionier's statements about what the Métis were and how April was going to be different with the way Campbell portrayed the Métis later in *Halfbreed* and her personal goals.

**Answer:** Both described the Métis as drunks, weak, dirty and poor; both want to be rich and *not* like the Métis.

3. In the third selection, Cheryl has already committed suicide. Describe how April comes to her Métis self awareness and identity in comparison to Maria's awakening in *Halfbreed*.

**Answer:** April has an epiphany of sorts and comes to her awareness in the midst of feelings of rage, responsibility, and despair when she seizes the whiskey bottle in Cheryl's room and smashes it. She suddenly cries out her hatred of alcohol, all it represents, and all it has done to not only her family but also to the Métis: "I hate you for what you've done to my sister! I hate you for what you've done to my parents! I hate you for what you've done to my people! Our people!" Maria had a nervous breakdown, having repressed all her feelings; her healing came through the detox program at the hospital, and through the help of friends and the AA.

4. In her journal entry, Cheryl identifies the street Métis as empty, but she also identifies the "white" life she thinks April is living as empty. What is it that gives fulfillment to people in life? Why does Cheryl appear to have such difficulty finding that? Why is it that she has "made" her father into something he cannot be and which she cannot accept?

**Answer:** Students will have different answers. Some might say riches bring fulfillment; students must back up their opinion and examine what it is that Cheryl sees as empty in a rich person's life. Cheryl, in spite of her philosophy, had wanted her father to be someone other than who he was, though she does not even tell readers if her father was happy in the life he was leading between Josie Pohequitas's house and the bush because she never bothers to find out for herself. It would appear that Cheryl had tied her Métis identity, and the likelihood of living a different life, to her father's identity and life. She had mythologized her past and discovered that it did not exist. See the comment by April later in this section: "That meeting with Dad, maybe it destroyed her self-image....I wondered what sort of image she had built up about our parents?"

5. Does it appear that Cheryl understands that her parents were hurt after losing their children to foster care? Why do you think she appears to blame them for the hurt she and April suffered in foster homes?

**Answer:** Students should recognize that this is a displaced anger, blame, and guilt for what went wrong. It is what happens when people place responsibility on someone else instead accepting responsibility themselves and trying to change things.

6. What kind of choices does Cheryl make that cause her to end up in skid row, living like the Métis people she criticized and hated? What do you think made her do this? In the novel, Cheryl had been to university and was active in the Native community.

**Answer:** Students will have to hypothesize here, because they do not know the entire story, but they might rely on their study of *Halfbreed* and Cheryl's reaction to her father's lifestyle. Students might raise issues of despair, constant striving without rest, exhaustion, isolation, a failure to build a strong sense of inner self and worth (self-esteem), etc.

7. Campbell as well as Cheryl and April have trouble talking about their problems and feelings. Do you think it is important to be able to talk about feelings and problems? Why or why not? What do you think can help people get past that barrier?

**Answer:** Students will have different answers; it is the process of self-examination that is important here in terms of self-identity.

8. At the end of this selection, April seems to have found some sense of identity as a Métis person. What do you think forms that identity?

**Answer:** Student answers will vary but may include family (her nephew as well as all her lost family members); a sense that there is a community of people to which she belongs.

9. Novels that are constructed using letters and diary entries are called *epistolary* novels. The word “epistolary” comes from “epistle” meaning a letter, often a long one on a serious subject. Not all of *In Search of April Raintree* is epistolary, but key parts from Cheryl’s diary and letters are included. What do you think these epistolary entries tell us that we could not otherwise learn through April’s narrative? What are the benefits and drawbacks of epistolary selections in novels?

**Answer:** Students should note that Cheryl’s diary entries and letters let us see her true thoughts and feelings, and not just the ones she expressed publicly. They show a hidden, perhaps more real, side of a person. The benefit of such a stylistic device is that it allows us inside a character and shows the more complex personality, the feelings and thoughts that motivate the character. The drawbacks are that letters are often written for effect and when we read them we must try to figure out if there is an ulterior motive the writer had in writing the letter. Diary entries tend to be “true” displays of a person’s inner self; however, a diary left behind for others to find might lead us to ask why it was not destroyed, since it was personal and private.

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

In the critical edition of the novel, Mosionier’s own essay “The Special Time” explores the personal events that have shaped her continuing exploration of issues of racism and suicide. Many of the themes and events in the novel mirror those in Mosionier’s life. In her essay, Mosionier said: “Of the two sisters, Cheryl Raintree was the character whom I most wanted readers to love” (4). Write a one-page essay or a creative piece (poem, monologue, rap poem, song, dance, etc.) that explores the reasons why you think Mosionier said that. Be prepared to orally share your work in the next class.

OR

Write a one-page essay or a creative piece (poem, monologue, rap poem, song, dance, etc.) that explores one of the novel’s themes. Be prepared to orally share your work in the next class.

**25 marks**

### ***Presentation of Oral Assignments***

**Learning Outcomes:** A6, A7, A13

Teachers may wish to address any outstanding issues or questions with regard to *April Raintree* before proceeding to the assignment presentations. Presentations may take more than one lesson.

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OR

Write a one-page essay or a creative piece (poem, monologue, rap poem, song, dance, etc.) that explores one of the novel’s themes.

**25 marks**

## **PART IV: POETRY STUDY: MÉTIS POETS**

### ***Emma LaRocque’s “The Beggar” & Joanne Arnott’s “The Shard”***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1-13, B1, B3, B6-13, C2, C4, C11-14

#### **Resources**

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Lally Grauer, eds. *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview P, 2001.

#### **Teacher Information**

In her introduction in the anthology Emma LaRocque says that the influence of her Métis/Cree heritage in her poetry is subtle and is to be found in nuances. The anthology introduction for Joanne Arnott says her poetry is like the featured poem “The Shard”—vulnerable and tough, fragile and enduring. Arnott often uses “choruses” in her poems.

Métis poetry, like Métis prose, is often concerned with issues of identity.

#### **Featured Poems**

“The Beggar,” page 151 and “The Shard,” pages 285-6

#### **Suggested Activity Sequence**

1. Introduce the poetry section for study, and identify the Métis poets found in the anthology: Joanne Arnott, Joan Crate, Marilyn Dumont, Emma LaRocque, and Gregory Scofield.
2. It is assumed students have already covered the types of poems, and poetic devices and literary techniques outlined on pages 106-109 of the Teacher Resource Guide, and that students have already done some work with Aboriginal writers’ poems.
3. If enough groundwork has been done, have the students begin working with the poems selected for this lesson without further introduction. Let students know their group activity for today will be marked. Have the class form groups (whichever method suits the teacher) and give out photocopies of the two featured poems. Half of the groups should get one poem and half of the groups should get the second poem. All students should have a copy of a poem. Ask each group of students to read their featured poem, decide voice emphasis in order to prepare to present the poem orally (as poetry originally was presented), decide what type of poem it is, look for poetic devices and literary techniques and write them down, and note anything else that particularly impresses them about the poem. Students can mark up and make notes on their poems. Encourage students to be as creative as possible in their poem presentations while still covering all the information. Let students know that while you do not expect a “polished” group performance, students should all try their best and support others in their group. Let students know they can “play” with the oral presentation, repeating lines, using vocalizations other than words, using drumming on knees, etc. to enhance their presentation, but that they should be able to explain why they made particular creative interpretations in delivery style. Students may choose simply to read the poem with

different word stresses. Let students know the criteria for marking (see rubric below) so they can be sure their presentations will be complete.

4. Give students approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete their assignment, and tell students that at the end of the preparation time each group will: 1) orally present the poem in the manner the group decided upon 2) identify type of poem, identify rhyme (or lack thereof), and rhythm 3) identify key poetic devices and 4) speak about the point of view, the voice of narrator(s). All students in each group should participate in the presentation, and the groups should decide how they will divide up the presentation tasks amongst their members.
5. “Whip-around” presentations in whichever group/poem order works best for the class and teacher.

Below are some characteristics about the poems, most of which the students should be able to recognize:

### “The Beggar”

- free verse
- first person singular narrator
- no rhyme
- rhythm dependent upon word stress in reading except that the last two lines are isolated, and therefore insist on a pause of breath before reading
- both stereotyped and realistic portrait of “boozed-up, begging Indian”
- “proverbial mainstreet” ties reference closer to stereotyped image
- short lines chop up speech when reading aloud, like dialogue, like telling a story to someone else, like a confession
- “mainstreet” as one word makes Main Street a universal
- lack of punctuation and vagueness of time make it hard to decide which lines belong to which regarding “ten years ago” and “today” in relation to neighbouring lines. Do the lines “when i had no money/i would have fed him” refer to the incident 10 years ago? Or, does the line “i would have fed him” belong with “today” and the lines that follow (“i slinked off/in my unfaded blue jeans/harry rosen plaids/and turquoise rings”) refer back to the incident 10 years ago, when the writer claimed to have no money?
- irony of “no money” statement compared to the rich clothing and jewellery the person wears, especially if the poem is read as describing the money-less person in the incident 10 years ago as being the well-dressed one
- irony even if the well-dressed person is the contemporary one because that well-heeled person then slinks away and steals (the poem)
- pause before last two lines, created by line space, turns the last two lines into a confession of guilt, of a crime. The crime is stealing a poem. Could this also be stealing a story, which in Aboriginal literary protocol is not supposed to be done?
- note the complications surrounding the absence of specific identification of poet/narrator as Aboriginal/Métis. What does that say about the feelings this contemporary Métis in the poem (narrator/poet) has surrounding issues of identification with the Métis-First Nations bloodlines as embodied in the “boozed-up, begging Indian” of the poem? Or, is the narrator given an Aboriginal identification at all? Does this (should this) matter with regard to the impact or meaning of the poem? Is there a connection to reactions Maria Campbell had in *Halfbreed* or Cheryl had in *In Search of April Raintree*?

### “The Shard”

- free verse
- first person singular narrator
- narrator is not identified as Aboriginal
- no rhyme
- rhythm dependent upon word stress in reading except for the repeated “chorus” of three lines
- contrast of images: the bright, glittering brilliance of the glass shard, the memories of the slashed wrists of friends in unsuccessful suicide attempts that the glass shard evokes, the grey sidewalk
- consonance in the repeated “d” of “dull, pedestrian” sounds plodding
- repeated use of sharp consonant sounds to describe glass: glittered, bright, brilliance, fragment, shard
- repetition: use of three lines as a “chorus”
- contrasting images in the three lines of the chorus: “sharply glowing” implying a fascination with; “magic triangle” implying charm and seduction, possibly dangerous; “hopeless one” referring back to the images of despair of those who tried to take their lives
- alliteration: “sturdy stare”
- word length contrast: short words referring to the glass leaping from the sidewalk: “leapt out” and longer, plodding ones describing the pavement around the glass: “sidewalk surrounded...pedestrian”
- repetition of chorus creates echoes that hint of many stories behind the simple shard of glass

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

Teachers can evaluate each group and individual students as each group performs using the following criteria:

- oral presentation of poem
- identify type of poem, identify rhyme (or lack thereof), and rhythm
- identify key poetic devices
- speak about the point of view, the voice of narrator(s)
- overall creativity and enthusiasm.

Presentations will be marked out of 25 (five points for each criterion), with individual students getting marks that more or less mirror that of the group mark, depending on their individual contributions.

### **Closing Discussion**

Ask students what, in general, the poems have in common, and what is different. Any of the following might be suggested:

- both poems have to do with “found” things on the street—in one poem it is a person, in the second a piece of glass that reminds the writer of people
- both poems use first person singular narrator
- neither poem identifies the poet/narrator as an Aboriginal person
- neither poem addresses Métis identity directly (this is the “open space” LaRocque mentioned in her anthology introduction that allows discussion of this topic)
- both poems use contrast to build strong images: poverty/wealth in “The Beggar” and glittering glass/shattered lives in “The Shard”
- both poems link tragedy to life on the streets; in “The Beggar” the connection is direct but in “The Shard” it is implied

## Joan Crate's "Can you hear me?" and Marilyn Dumont's "Leather and Naughahyde"

**Learning Outcomes:** A2-5, A8, A10-12, B1, B2, B4, B5-13, C2, C4, C9-C14

### Resources

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Lally Grauer, eds. *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview P, 2001.

### Supplies

Newsprint rolls, tape, felt pens of many colours (but any printing using colours should be able to be easily read, so no yellow pens for example), white card poster paper (small/large)

### Teacher Information

As in the first lesson, these poems deal with Aboriginal/Métis identity, but in a more direct manner. Both poems struggle with images of exteriority versus interiority and opposition to another person's concepts/reaction. This other person can be seen as the "Other," a trope that students will encounter in literary criticism and analysis if they continue to study English in college and university.

Joan Crate says, in the introduction to her poetry in the anthology, "I'm middle class now, but still can't figure out a lot of middle class assumptions."

### Featured Poems

"Can you hear me?" page 229 and "Leather and Naughahyde," page 262-3

### Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Introduce these poems as discussing the question of identity through opposition—there is another person—the Other—in the poems. Have a quick class discussion on what it might mean to have your identity defined by someone else. Students should be able to extend their observations to the definitions of "Indians" in the Indian Act and various other government documents, where it is the government that finally defines who is First Nations, who is Métis and who is Inuit. Students might also see this mirrored in various Métis associations, political and social, that have done the same thing in terms of defining who their constituents are. Some students may reflect back to the two poems in the first lesson and feel that the Other in those poems consisted of the Aboriginal people on the street (in "The Beggar" it was the drunk and in "The Shard" it was the missing street girls) and argue that there too, identity was formed in opposition.
2. Teachers might like to try a silent class cooperative critical reading activity. In this, the poems are printed in black, large letters on newsprint sheets taped up at the front and side of the class. It might take several sheets of newsprint per poem where a stanza can go on one sheet. Make sure the title is clear and bold. It might be a good idea visually and for practical purposes to have one poem at the front of the class and one poem at the side. The teacher may wish to have a separate sheet of newsprint for each poem entitled



- “Issues and questions raised by the poem” that will help students sort their responses into categories of form/content and themes. The teacher, or students with good oral skills, should first read through the poems without commentary or annotation and ask if there are any questions regarding comprehension/vocabulary (only those questions; no comments or observations from students). The teacher should then outline the task for the students and give them approximately 20 minutes to complete it. Teachers should let the students know that their contributions will be part of this section’s marks as outlined below.
3. The whole class works at the same time on the task. There is absolutely no talking or discussion. All students should come up to the area where the poems are posted and, when they have a comment, observation, identify a literary device, etc., should pick up a felt pen and make a “note” on the poem. Students should add their names or initials to their comments. Students should post only one comment/observation at a time and then allow others their turn. Students can post comments/observations that are different from other comments/observations, but cannot scratch-out or criticize other student postings. The comments should be clearly printed and allow space for other students’ comments that may be posted later. Students can underline words in the poem, print near the words, etc. but the overall poem should still be legible after all the work is done. Student comments do not have to be read from the back of the room. Students can move from one poem to the other and may have more to add after reading another student’s posting. A good organizing strategy would be to have bins of coloured pens located on desks far enough away from the poem posters that students have to pick up and return them; this allows for a turnover of students in the “commentary space” near the poems and encouraged students who have added comments and returned their felts to become part of the observing audience for a while.
  4. When the allotted time is over, collect up the pens and give students approximately 10 minutes to read all the postings on both poems before they return to their seats. Students should be encouraged to discuss the postings amongst themselves in a respectful and productive manner during this time.

Below are some characteristics about the poems, most of which the students should be able to recognize:

**“Can you hear me?”**

- free verse
- line length determines rhythm, rhythm is conversational
- first person singular narrative voice
- narrator identified as Aboriginal
- fictionalized narrator is almost certainly E. Pauline Johnson (“Miss Johnson” and Crate’s abiding interest in the Mohawk poetess)
- narrator identified as Aboriginal by reference to history and experience, not by direct declaration (supports observation that narrator is Johnson)
- irony concerning the setting and two women in four senses:
  - the discomfort of a ‘tea’ speech/presentation that is veiled in middle-class conventions and avoidance of controversy/important issues set against the poet’s participation in the tea presentation and her dress (furs)
  - identification of the uncomfortable ‘tea’ and fur collar as middle class set against Crate’s comment: “I’m middle class now, but still can’t figure out a lot of middle class assumptions.”

- tragic irony of the relationship between the two women in the poem: a woman who has come to hear the poet speak about Aboriginal issues, who is possibly even the hostess or facilitator of the event (“you rise”), and the speaker who is never really asked about the speech material or her experiences, but instead is simply given a superficial compliment and then dismissed by being asked if she will take tea: “Lovely Miss Johnson. And will you have tea now? One lump or two?”
- Johnson herself used to often perform in split-identity costumes, appearing in the first half of her presentation in “Indian” costume and in the second half in the typical Victorian dress for women at the time.
- consonance: plosive “p” in “powdered” and “plucked” to describe the woman in the front row. Plosive consonants tend to be found in strong, angry, aggressive, or powerful words. Students should examine what effect this has on their first impression of that woman. Is this impression a fair and just one? Why do you think her eyebrows are “creased with concern”?
- description of Aboriginal speaker encompasses all history, is universal, makes her a trope for all Aboriginal people (lines 3-8, 11-17) and the suffering of all Aboriginal people
- consonance: plosive “b” in blood, beats, barred
- symbolism: “jigsaw of flesh/torn from dumb tongues” referring to the decimation of Aboriginal people over history as well as to the death and repression (residential schools) of so many Aboriginal languages (“tongues”)
- visceral imagery produced by visually-graphic words: scarred, seeping, smothered
- imagery powerful through use of active verbs (pieced, torn, beats, barred) and adjectives formed from verbs (scarred, seeping)
- imagery: DO NOT ENTER in capitals helps reader to visualize an actual sign (a sort of mini-concrete poem)
- irony and juxtaposition of questions posed in the poem: “Do you hear me?” and “...will you have tea now? One lump or two?”
- tragic irony and juxtaposition of unanswered question “Do you hear me?” set against the tea questions when compared to the speaker’s final silence as she merely “sip[s] tea from fine bone china.”
- identity question concerning what the speaker has become: she is speaking out about Aboriginal rights, but is dressed in middle-class, western garb and is participating in middle-class activities.
- question about social justice issues: Is what the speaker in this poem doing productive? What are the alternatives in presenting to the public and educating? How can Aboriginal people reach a broad audience without alienating that audience?
- imagery: “hands twitter” evokes birds, elderly or nervous behaviours, perhaps anxiety at the speech content
- imagery using details for impact: “dust biscuit from the corner/of your mouth”
- symbolism: space separating the two women: speaker is “onstage” as an entertainer or performer, the non-Aboriginal woman appears to be forever her audience, never a “sister in the struggle”
- symbolism and juxtaposition: “pelts hanging from my shoulder,/and sip from fine bone china” exterior images of attempting to blend, fit in when interiority of person is different: Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal worlds, emphasized by use of the word “pelts” instead of “furs”
- juxtaposition: speaker declares she “will not return to silence./Do you hear me?” only to return to silence at the end of the poem.

Is there any possibility within the poem for a move towards understanding if more work is done? What is the concept of “identity” here given the opposition of the two women

### “Leather and Naughahyde”

- free verse
- no line length whatsoever—written in prose form. Is this poetry?
- rhythm: sentences are run-on (if seen from perspective of prose-form analysis), gives the impression at the beginning of intense and enthusiastic dialogue between two people, they are flirting with each other in the “underground” way
- narrative voice: stylistic device, conversational, informal, invites reader in; narrator is talking directly to reader, it is *her* story
- juxtaposition: both individuals in story have the same perspective about the “mooniyaw” in the city, both appear in harmony with regard to disposition and status until the “treaty guy from up north” asks about the ‘status’ of the narrator. Once she declares she’s Métis, she becomes someone in opposition to him and he to her. She is the Other, and an outsider. Why? How does this relate to the relations between First Nations and Métis that Maria Campbell described in *Halfbreed*? Recall the term “lateral violence.”
- symbolism in speech: she says “Métis” like it is an apology or confession (of wrongness), he says “mmh’ like he forgives me.” These set up the opposition more strongly and “sanctify” the separation of the two; this is not merely a personal opposition, it is a historical one.
- symbolism: “big heart” is symbol of man’s Aboriginal authenticity, generosity; “diluted blood” is symbol of the diseased or flawed Aboriginal status of the Métis woman. This opposition is from the man’s perspective, but the woman reads it through the non-verbal signs.
- imagery, symbolism: imagery/symbolism is non-verbal, images of heart and blood extended to the man’s voice: it goes from being “well-fed” (“big heart”) to being “thin” (“diluted” or contaminated by association with the Métis woman)
- oral tradition in relation to non-oral (symbolic) tradition: orality uses symbols much as non-oral communication does: depth of understanding depends on an individual’s ability to ‘read’ the symbols
- symbolism: non-oral: the man’s voice changes, he gets “this look”
- symbolism: leather versus naughahyde (fake leather) symbolic of the authentic Aboriginal (status, man) versus the non-authentic, pretend Aboriginal (Métis, woman). Some students might make connections to the issues around Bill C-31.
- humour and tone of voice: through the humour in the tone of voice of the narrator we know she does not accept the man’s evaluation of her as an Aboriginal person
- narrative voice as usurper; instead of woman being the inauthentic pretender/fool in the poem, the man becomes the fool through the use of humour to point out his snobbishness

## **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

Teacher can use the annotated class poem posters as an evaluation of student contribution to the class activity. This evaluation will be worth 5 marks.

### **5 marks**

The class homework assignment is a collage poster that visually shows two positions of opposition revealed in one of the two poems studies this class. Students can choose which poem they wish to use. Students should also show a “middle ground” where there might be the possibility for a resolution of differences or an understanding of differences. Encourage students to be creative in what they use to put on their poster: magazine cut outs, 3-D materials, materials with texture, paint, pop-outs, etc. It would be helpful for the students to have the rubric to take home with them and to turn in with their assignment for marking. Teachers may wish to have students present their work in a “gallery walk” at next class; this helps students wishing to produce better work to see work of their peers and to situate themselves in overall performance.

### **20 marks**

**TOTAL MARKS: 25**

**Poetry Poster Assignment – “Can you hear me?” and “Leather and Naughahyde”**

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

Value	Criteria	Student mark
<b>20</b>	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>states the name of the poem chosen</li> <li>clearly shows two oppositions, middle ground</li> <li>is well-illustrated with good visuals (magazine images, personal art, 3D objects)</li> <li>is exceptionally well-executed (neat)</li> <li>is very visually appealing and attractive; creative use of any white space</li> <li>shows excellent grasp of the issues involved in opposition and understanding (middle ground)</li> <li>is very creative</li> </ul>	
<b>16</b>	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>states the name of the poem chosen</li> <li>shows two oppositions, middle ground</li> <li>is completely illustrated</li> <li>is neat</li> <li>is visually appealing and attractive</li> <li>shows good understanding of the issues involved</li> <li>is moderately creative, good effort has been made</li> </ul>	
<b>12</b>	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>states the name of the poem chosen</li> <li>shows two oppositions, middle ground</li> <li>may not have all fields well illustrated, but illustrations chosen are appropriate</li> <li>is moderately neat</li> <li>visually complete, though not all interesting</li> <li>student has basic grasp of issues of opposition</li> <li>some creativity</li> </ul>	
<b>8</b>	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>states the name of the poem chosen</li> <li>shows two oppositions, may lack some of illustration of middle ground</li> <li>is illustrated, but not all illustrations are appropriate and there may be “holes” in the illustrations</li> <li>lacks neatness</li> <li>may not have all areas illustrated</li> <li>some understanding of issues</li> <li>not much creativity or effort into creative expression</li> </ul>	
<b>1 or less</b>	Poster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>student has failed to submit a poster or the poster is of poor and incomplete quality</li> </ul>	

### Closing Discussion

Students may have found the humour in a silent introductory activity where they must be quiet, but the poems are about being heard: one of the poems is entitled “Can you hear me?” and both are about having a voice.

The teacher may guide students through a discussion about the broader thematic questions noted on the “theme” newsprint sheets that were posted next to the poem posters for the class activity, or in the poem breakdowns above. This would help students solidify their ideas for their poster assignments. Teachers may decide if students will be allowed to partner up for this activity; if so, teachers should clearly state team expectations for a joint mark (students might be required to produce a larger poster, for example).

### Gregory Scofield’s “Unhinged”

**Learning Outcomes:** A4, A5, A10-12, B1-3, B4-13, C1-3, C5-14

#### ALERT

This lesson includes a discussion about two-spirited Aboriginal individuals and the role this plays in Scofield’s poetry. (In western terminology, “two-spirited” usually means gay, lesbian, or homosexual, but see the article listed in the resources and included at the end of this lesson for a deeper interpretation.)

Not all teachers will be comfortable with this topic and these teachers have the right to present other poems by Scofield. Two of Scofield’s poems which address identity, family, and community in addition to the other issues surrounding identity that have been examined thus far in the Métis Literature unit are: “Not All Halfbreed Mothers” (page 343-4) and “I’ve Been Told” (page 346-7). See the Bibliography and Resource Section for another book of Scofield’s that deals more with his search for his identity as a Métis.

Teachers who wish to present the two-spirited theme, but not deal with specific sexual images are encouraged to examine “Pawâcakinâsis-pîsim December—The Frost Exploding Moon” (pages 338-9) for possible use.

Teachers who present the two-spirited theme should instruct students on respect for differences and possibly alert school councillors in the event a student chooses to disclose personal gender identity and needs support. Teachers should also consult their school district with regard to the use of the selected poem and material containing explicit sexual images. Teachers may wish to give students the option to work on another of Scofield’s poems if students are uncomfortable; with this in mind, teachers may wish to send a note home to parents about the subject of the poem and give parents the option of having their child work on a different poem.

### Resources

Armstrong, Jeannette C. and Lally Grauer, eds. *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview P, 2001.

Deschamps, Gilbert, and Sheila Wahsquonaikezhik. *Two-spiritedness*.  
educ.queensu.ca/equity\_and\_exceptionality/Aboriginal/2spirit%20def.doc

Moses, Daniel David and Terry Goldie, eds. *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Don Mills: Oxford U P, 2005.

### **Featured Poem**

“Unhinged,” pages 337-8

### **Suggested Activity Sequence**

1. Teachers may wish, at the start of their class to have students display their posters done for the take-home assignment in the second lesson, and to do a “gallery walk.” Teachers may wish to have peer evaluation be part of this process with comment sheets next to each student’s poster. Students should be coached on supportive, respectful criticism and evaluation. Teachers may wish to have this work, or selections from the class (needs student permission), displayed in a school display area.
2. Give some background information about Gregory Scofield as the poet whose work will be featured in this lesson. Enough information is found in the introduction in the poetry anthology (page 333) and in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (page 523), though teachers may wish to expand. Teachers may also wish students to read these two introductory pieces on their own.
3. Present the issues dealt with in the article about two-spiritedness listed in the Resources section of this lesson. Have a class discussion about two-spiritedness, based on the article. Students should also discuss how two-spiritedness might feature in the formation of a Métis/Aboriginal person’s identity. Depending on the students in the class, a teacher might have a horseshoe discussion (not debate) about contemporary young peoples’ attitudes towards two-spiritedness. Teachers might wish to use a “pop-up” strategy in order to address this topic. In a “pop-up” activity students stay in their seats and address their comment/observation to the teacher. An individual student who wishes to make a contribution simply stands and makes a short statement, then sits down. Nobody comments on it or expresses their opinion on another student statement. All respectful and productive statements are accepted, but students should be aware of the difference between opinion and a statement that contributes towards the topic. Teachers may wish to record the contributions on a flip chart along with the name of the student who contributed.
4. Have the students read the poem independently. Since students are by now familiar with poetic and literary devices, they should be able to list all the features and characteristics of the poem. Let students know they should keep their notes to turn in as part of their assignment for this lesson. The notes should be clear and well-expressed, but do not have to be in complete sentences. The notes will be worth 5 marks of the 25 total. Students who are working on a different Scofield poem can still work in the class.
5. Explain the lesson assignment and rubric and allow students to begin planning their project. This will be a take-home assignment.

Below are some characteristics about “Unhinged,” most of which the students should be able to recognize:

**“Unhinged”**

- free verse
- line length determines rhythm, rhythm is one that mimics short, random thoughts and memories
- first person singular narrative voice
- narrator not identified as Aboriginal except that readers know Scofield as a Métis writer and that the poem is personal
- imagery: “unkempt soldier” literally meaning untidy, neglected soldier. Is the soldier the lover in the battle of love, the battle to keep a relationship from falling apart?
- metaphorical imagery: “pulling up all your heated secrets/coming unglued” refers to masturbation
- imagery and humour: (not all will agree with this) “like the dovetail joints/of my antique dresser” refers to the shaking it would take to dislodge dovetail joints, the frenzy of love-making and orgasm
- imagery: “pure milkweed,/opalescent” evokes a pale, shining whiteness (of skin), making Scofield’s lover Caucasian
- trope: the “Other” as lover is the other side of a person
- evocation and symbolism: the white “other” here whispers of Scofield’s mixed blood heritage: part First Nations, part Caucasian
- trope: by using sexual imagery, could Scofield also be describing the turmoil of self-discovery both of his Métis heritage, his mixed bloodlines, and his two-spiritedness?
- repetition and double-entendre: “Sure” claims the lover as Scofield’s own based on the meaning of sure as “for certain” not “sure” as a simple conversational expression (as in, “Yep, sure”)
- alluded metaphor: “sing me” meaning ‘make love to me’
- alluded metaphor: “anoint me,” “navel dew” refers to ejaculation and semen
- second to last stanza: Scofield imagines not only the sexual part of a lover relationship, but also the companionship
- imagery and allusion: “travelling somewhere so solitary/the landscape has no memory” referring perhaps to the racism that may be intruding into their relationship and Scofield’s wish that that did not exist; it appears to be a racism that is socially based (i.e. in the public arena) since the wish is to go somewhere ‘solitary where there is no memory’ of racism (implied)
- sustained metaphor: “unkempt soldier” is in throes of sexual ecstasy and ejaculation with Scofield as partner, where “my death” is “le petit mort” of sexual orgasm, “fading pulse” the recovery, ‘cool down’ period following orgasm
- simile: “seed exploding like a bullet”
- double entendre: the last stanza could also mean that the lover’s rejection has so affected Scofield, that a part of him has died



**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

Assign students to write a poem about something for which they have cared very deeply, or about someone for whom they have cared deeply. This need not be a romantic love poem. Ask students to include poetic devices learned through their study in this Poetry section. Scofield's poem is filled with particularly complex imagery, devices, and allusions. Ask students to keep a copy of their draft poem for submission as part of their mark, as well as the notes made about "Unhinged." Poems should be approximately one page in length. Ask students to submit a clean copy. Provide rubric for poetry assignment.

**25 marks**

<b>Poetry Assignment – Lesson Three</b>		<b>Total Mark: 25</b>
<b>Name:</b> _____		
<b>Poem studied:</b> _____		
<b>Value</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Student mark</b>
5	Notes from class on Scofield's poem: complete, extensive and showing a depth of understanding of poetic devices and themes	
5	Draft poem and any notes from home assignment; show pre-thinking (e.g. webs, mind-maps, draft outline, whatever device the student used to help organize his/her thoughts) and depth of preparation	
15	Final, clean copy of poem shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate treatment of appropriate subject matter</li> <li>• an ability to clearly express feelings</li> <li>• an ability to clearly express ideas</li> <li>• use of powerful and strong imagery</li> <li>• correct spelling</li> <li>• good vocabulary</li> <li>• use of poetic devices such as double-entendre, metaphor, simile, mood, tone, juxtaposition, rhythm, rhyme, irony, allusion, etc.</li> <li>• awareness of the 'form' and visual layout of a poem</li> </ul>	

**Closing Discussion**

Students should discuss some of the general themes around identity and two-spiritedness, being Aboriginal and two-spirited, and the double-prejudice that might be present in such circumstances. How does Scofield struggle and negotiate his Aboriginality and two-spiritedness? How do artists like Scofield contribute to Aboriginal identity and Aboriginal gender identity?

From: [educ.queensu.ca/equity\\_and\\_exceptionality/Aboriginal/2spirit%20def.doc](http://educ.queensu.ca/equity_and_exceptionality/Aboriginal/2spirit%20def.doc)

## TWO-SPIRITEDNESS

The term, “*two-spirited*,” has a number of meanings within several different contexts. For instance, in contemporary times, with the advent of lesbian and gay liberation, “two-spirited” means Aboriginal people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. The terms, “gay” and “lesbian,” are European in origin. Therefore, “two-spirited” is preferred because it is more culturally relevant to Aboriginal lesbians and gay men.

When the Europeans came to Turtle Island they brought with them their religions, their values and their way of looking at the world, which adversely affected Aboriginal communities including our sexual expression. We have come to believe that two-spirited First Nations people are disgusting and perverse. We learned that before colonization that to be “two-spirited” was a gift, which had promise and potential. Two-spirited people were respected and honoured, and were visionaries and healers in our communities. We have rediscovered that we continue to have a spiritual place in our world.


Aboriginal culture is recognized for its emphasis on balance and harmony in all of creation. No one element, force, or impulse dominates the others. The term “Two-Spirited” originates from the First Nations recognition of the traditions and sacredness of people who maintain a balance by housing both the male and female spirit.

Some of our Elders teach us that two-spirited people have special place in our communities. We believe that two-spirited people have specific duties and responsibilities to perform. These include counselling, healing, being pipe carriers, visionaries (seers), and conducting oneself in accordance to our belief, which states to respect all life.

A white man wrote of the Crow Indians in 1859, “... males assume the dress and perform the duties of females, while women turn men and mate with their own sex.”<sup>1</sup> Most and likely every Aboriginal nation on Turtle Island exhibited same-sex behaviour. Sue-Ellen Jacobs (University of Washington) studied written records from the last few centuries for references to gays and lesbians in American Indian tribes. Based on historical evidence that comes from recorded material; out of ninety-nine tribes, there were references to Gay culture in eighty-eight of them, of which twenty made specific references to Lesbianism. “Eleven tribes denied any homosexuality to the anthropologists and other writers. All the denials of gay presence came from East Coast tribes located in the areas of heaviest and longest contact with those segments of white Christian culture that severely punish people who admit to Gayness.”<sup>2</sup>

Jacobs found twenty-one tribes that mention exact offices held by gay persons. In twelve of the twenty-one, gay transvestites were the medicine people or shamans of the tribe. Among the Illinois, Cheyenne, Crow and Dakota, they were essential for high spiritual ceremonies, in three they served a special function at funerals, and among the Winnebago, they were oracles. Among the Crow two-spirited men were responsible for cutting down the tree which is used for the Sun Dance ceremony. This is a respected and vital position to hold in the ceremony.

Jonathon Katz, author of *Gay American History*, has collected the names Aboriginal people have used to designate their gay members. Each tribe had or continues to have special names for gay

 Written by Deschamps, Gilbert, & Sheila Wahsquaikaizhik, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations

<sup>1</sup> Denig, Edwin T., “Biography of Woman Chief,” in *Gay American History*, ed. Jonathon Katz (New York: Crowell, 1976), p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> Grahn, Judy, ed.; *Another Mother Tongue*; (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); p. 54.

men and lesbians, that refer to cross-dressing and special tribal offices rather than to casual homosexual relations. The Navajo call their gay priesthood Nadle, the Winnebago say Siange, the Oglala Sioux call gay magic men Winkte, the Omaha and Ponca both say Mingu-ga, the Zuni say Ko'thlama, the Ojibwe use A-go-kwa, The Inuit say Choupan, the Kodiaks call theirs Ke'yev, the Absaroke of Montana use Bo-te, which means “not-man, not-woman.” These are just a few of the scores of names for two-spirited people among various Aboriginal nations.

Coming together in the urban setting has allowed us to look at our sexuality from political perspectives, which allows for the empowerment of two-spirited people. Organizations such as *2-Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations* have been founded and give validity to the vital role, which two-spirited people have within Aboriginal communities. Through the decolonization process, we as two-spirited people are striving to reclaim our traditional positions within our Nations and are taking our rightful place. . . .

## **TWO-SPIRITED IN TWO WORLDS** ✓

“Berdache was never used in any Native communities!” says Wesley Thomas (Diné), a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Washington. “I get irate when I hear Native Americans use the B-world to describe themselves. The *berdache* concept is not of Native cultures. It gives no meaning to our histories.” In fact *Berdache* derives from an Arabic word, *berdadj*, which was used to describe male slaves who served as (anally receptive) prostitutes. Anthropologists popularized the term to represent a transvestite Native American man who functioned in a feminine role.

These roles varied within each Nation, for example, We’wha (1849-1896) lived his life as a female member of the Zuni Nation and was accepted by his peoples as a *lhamana*. It is not clear whether We’wha was sexually active or merely took on the social roles (and look) of a woman. Thomas describes himself as *n’dleeh*-like, which is Diné (a.k.a. Navajo) for “being in a constant state of change.” When he is in the greater Native American circle, Thomas identifies himself as Two-Spirit[ed], while in Western society, he calls himself gay—but momentarily—in order to be understood.

The original meaning of these words has been lost to our Nations. Homophobia was taught to us as a component of Western education and religion. We were presented with an entirely new set of taboos, which did not correspond to our own models, and which focused on sexual behaviour rather than the intricate roles Two-Spirit[ed] people played. As a result of this misrepresentation, our Nations no longer accepted us as they once had. Many Native Americans had to come to terms with their sexuality in urban settings separate from our cultures. We had to “come out” in the Western world. But the journey into the mainstream left many of us lonesome for our homes.

In 1988, contemporary Natives coined the term *Two-Spirit*. It refers to “a Native American who is of two spirits, both male and female.” The term doesn’t necessarily have a sexual meaning; some transgendered heterosexuals identify themselves as Two-Spirit but not as gay. Naming ourselves distanced us from colonial words like *berdache*. Based on histories from anthropologists and elders, we were able to gather stories of our roles in the indigenous cultures as healers, teachers, and leaders. . . .

Excerpts from Deschamps, G. (1998). *We Are Part of a Tradition: A Guide on Two-Spirited People for First Nations Communities*. Toronto: 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, pp. 10-11, 20-21.

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✍ C. Thomas Edwards (Cree)

## PART IV: MÉTIS DRAMA STUDY: *AGE OF IRON* BY MARIE CLEMENTS

### OVERVIEW

*Age of Iron* is experimental or avant-garde theatre. Act One of the *Age of Iron* blends Aboriginal connections to the earth with the story of Troy, and alludes to the current street life of many Aboriginal people while it makes cross-over references to fairy tales, aboriginal astronomy and legends, and juxtaposes Shakespearean-style language with street vulgarities and colloquialisms. Act Two focuses more on the social services scoop of Aboriginal Children, residential schools, sexual crimes by religious personnel, and in spite of all those horrors, a continued hope for Aboriginal people to transcend the past. See the four selections from the *Age of Iron* at the end of the lesson.

One of Clements' plays has recently been made into a film. On Google videos, teachers can link to a short clip from the 2006 film *Unnatural and Accidental*, a movie version of Clements' 1997 play *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*. The clip shows a stalker and some violence. The play and the movie are about Aboriginal women missing from skid row streets. The screenplay was written by Clements. The film is directed by Carl Bessani, and stars Carmen Moore, Callum Keith Rennie, and Tantoo Cardinal.

<http://video.google.ca/videoplay?docid=-4030812068919775493&q=Marie+Clements&total=3&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=0>

Clements won the Canada Council's 2004 Canada-Japan Literary Award for her 2003 play, *Burning Vision*. The play traces the destruction caused on both sides of the Pacific as a result of the atomic bombs the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima during World War II; the uranium used to make the bombs came from mines on Dene land in the Northwest Territories.

*Age of Iron* may be difficult material for some students. Because the play is avant-garde, it may not immediately make sense. Students must reach for understanding and be willing to take risks in their interpretations. The reading activities, therefore, are not assessed but instead are structured to help students comprehend and explore. There are extensive notes on the text in the Suggested Activity Sequence section.

### *Aboriginal Connections to the Avant-garde*

**Learning Outcomes:** A2-5, A8-11, B1, B3 (possible), B5-12

### Resources

Four selections included at end of this lesson from *Age of Iron*

Clements, Marie, Greg Daniels, and Margo Kane. *DraMétis: Three Métis Plays*. Penticton, B.C.: Theytus, 2001.

**Suggested Activity Sequence**

1. Teachers can give marks for participation in discussions based on the willingness of students to take risks with interpretations and understanding. The participation mark is out of 5. Teachers should let students know they will be using this method of evaluation for the lesson.
2. As a pre-reading activity, it might be helpful to have a class discussion about how Aboriginal communities and people can extend their boundaries to join the community of Canada and the world, or if that is even necessary or desired. Students will ask themselves if Aboriginal peoples share any qualities, characteristics, histories, and/or stories with other world peoples, and what the benefits might be by making connections.
3. Have students break into groups and read through the play selections, taking different parts. A narrator can read stage directions. Ask students to think about how they might stage or envision the songs and choreography of the play—How might they get the wall to breathe and then come to life? What might the songs sound like? How can they create the illusion on stage of the children playing on top of a mountain? Suggest that some students might like to actually perform the song when they report back to class. Determine a time limit to this activity, possibly 20 minutes.
4. Reconvene the class, and ask each group to report out to the class. Student groups will report on features they examined in step 3 or perform song-speeches from the play. Teachers may request students in the audience to make constructive comments and give constructive feedback.
5. Ask students to read the play selections again to discover literary characteristics, allusions, imagery, etc. Students might wish to do this in their groups or with a partner. Since the material is difficult it would be preferable to have all students working in groups of some sort to help facilitate discussion and stimulate connections.
6. Reconvene the class and have the student groups share the discoveries they made through their closer reading. Rather than having groups report out one-at-a-time, teachers might wish to do a “script walk-through” as per step 7, soliciting student input from various groups, and adding comments and making observations that students have not made.
7. In order to facilitate understanding of avant-garde theatre and this particular play, teachers may wish to work through the text with the students using the observations below.

Students may have observed and noted the following:

**First selected section (opening of the play, street warriors), pages 194-202:**

- Mars the planet; Mars the god of war.
- Troy (ancient Greece) is compared to Aboriginal history; the playwright is making connections across time and peoples to appeal to the bigger stories of humankind’s history, and to also assert that the street life of Aboriginal people is a life of war, a battle.
- Role usurpation: As Wiseguy steps forward to take his place as Warrior (god of war), Mars fades.

- Historical allusion: Wiseguy summons the four elements of the medicine wheel, which were also the four elements that the medieval world thought were scientific elementals: earth, air, fire, and water.
- Age of Iron, allusions to iron-hearted, iron-fisted.
- The wall (of contemporary Aboriginal urban street people) is confused about its origins. Wiseguy also acknowledges confusion about his sources, roots. Perhaps the question might refer back to that posed by Maria Campbell in *Halfbreed* about Aboriginal women ending up poor and/or on the streets: ‘How did we get here?’
- Wiseguy notes that confusion about roots, origins, is associated with fighting and war. It appears that his comments cross cultures and time to apply to all history of humankind.
- Wiseguy says people have to wake up to become knowledgeable and then chides and teases by saying, “Just kidding.” He is more or less tossing aside the rather “heavy,” symbolic beginning of the play and suddenly becomes much more human by lying down and looking at the sky. He isn’t the warrior, he’s just an ordinary guy, he’s the Trickster, too. Puts a human face to soldiers.
- The moon and stars are personified (grandmother and sisters).
- The seven sisters can refer to a number of different things: the Seven Dancing Princesses (though sometimes there are 12), the seven directions (the seven points of prayer—north, south, east, west, grandfather sky above, grandmother earth below, self-heart-soul in the middle), the seven deadly sins (fatal to spiritual progress) indicating the opposite side of humankind’s good side, the seven days of the week (measuring our time on earth).
- The six sisters (there is one missing throughout the play; seven stars form the constellation) form the constellation Pleiades. So the missing sister is Cassandra, who is the “lost” one—lost to the residential school, lost to the insane asylum, lost to the street, lost to herself—but who at the end is restored or reclaimed. She says, “As long as there have been stars. As long as I could hear them. As long as I have breathed I have known. The sky will be falling to take me back up.” The Pleiades have been known to Aboriginal peoples around the world since antiquity. Hindu mythology sees the six stars as the six mothers of the war god Skanda; this can connect the constellation to the themes of war, Earth Mother, and the universality of human experience.
- Allusion and irony: Wiseguy says maybe the seventh sister has found him handsome and come down to find him. Instead, he helps her (the seventh sister, Cassandra) to find herself.
- Humour in Wiseguy’s soliloquy to the moon and stars.
- Wiseguy and Cassandra (as the voice from the wall) are suddenly speaking in what resembles Shakespearean dialogue. Juxtaposition for humour, as only a while ago, Wiseguy was speaking colloquially, and at the start of the play symbolically.
- Humour: Wiseguy calls an end to the Shakespearean-like chat by saying he needs a dictionary to understand, and pulls Cassandra from the wall. The speech goes back to being colloquial.
- Wiseguy asks how Cassandra has “got him”; she says “it” has always been inside him and is passionately returned by “her.” Allusion to Mother Earth, though the “her” could be Cassandra speaking of herself in third person.
- Juxtaposition of symbolism: Wiseguy immediately runs over to where Mother Earth is struggling to free herself and is “christened” by her as she smears him with dirt. The Christian symbolic act is reframed in Aboriginal terms.
- Extended humour; irony, running joke and return to Shakespearean speech:  
Wiseguy speaks eloquently but returns to moving cement blocks: the proverbial rock pile of prison, an unrewarding chore, pedestrian activity compared with his style of speech. Alludes to the Greek myth of Sisyphus, who, because of his disrespect to Zeus, was condemned to push a heavy rock up to the top of a hill, only to have it roll down again; Sisyphus was known for his cunning—refers back to Wiseguy being Trickster.
  - Wiseguy says he shouldn’t complain about his fortune, then complains.

- Wiseguy turns the whole thing into an unlikely game by tossing a piece of heavy concrete into a garbage can like it is a light basketball, and shouting, “FIVE POINTS!” Visual metaphor.
- Allegory: Wiseguy talks about inside/outside of Troy, city, the dirt on the outside and beauty on the inside once the grime is cleaned away. He is also speaking of Aboriginal people (street people) who may appear to be one thing, but are another. This will prove especially apt at the end of the play when we are asked to accept and forgive various characters (especially Cassandra) who have been “besmirched” by harsh experiences.
- Wiseguy engages audience members by speaking directly to them (this is a technique of experimental, avant-garde theatre); he is speaking to those who directly repressed Aboriginal people, but he is also speaking more broadly about any nation or people that represses another.
- Irony: Wiseguy says his people have had everything taken from them and yet they are still rich.
- Irony: Wiseguy says he would like to meet Seventh sister, yet she is right there talking to him—it is Cassandra, who tells him to be quiet

**Second selected section (Raven rapes Cassandra), pages 220-1:**

- It is important for students to take note of the information in the square brackets.
- Students should try to play with the Sisters’ speech/song/chant and decide how they might present it.
- Raven says he doesn’t believe Cassandra; what he is probably referring to here is that he does not believe her claim that the (residential school) priest Apollo raped her. This is a profound reference to the authenticity of oral testimony and (child) witness testimony regarding the residential school crimes; the witness testimony was not accepted as “truth” for many years but instead was just regarded as ‘stories,’ exaggerations. Justice was delayed because of this. Even though Raven says he doesn’t believe Cassandra’s story, he regards her as sexually violated (which means he must believe her story to some extent) and therefore fair game for his sexual attack on her. He perpetuates stereotypes (sexual victims can continue to be sexual victims) and violence. Raven also says he does not believe Cassandra when she is in one of her insane fits; this alludes to the historical sexual abuse of other “captive” victims in mental hospitals.
- Metaphor and symbol: Cassandra says the chariot is coming, referring to the priest Apollo driving/arriving in a chariot, meaning that she is about to be raped (but this time by Raven).
- Double entendre: Raven says, “She knows what it is to come... and come,” and then laughs. “Come” referring to three things: the arrival of a vehicle (chariot), what is about to happen next (sexual assault), and physical orgasm.

**Third selected section (seizure of children for residential school), pages 252-3:**

- Tragic irony: Cassandra says she wants to go to residential school. She sees only what she imagines are the benefits that we now know rarely existed.
- Tragic irony: Cassandra says she wants to learn about Apollo and maybe even become a priestess. “To know” in the biblical sense was to have carnal knowledge; to become Apollo’s priestess then would be to become his whore. Cassandra appears to be speaking about the brighter world of teacher/student; what happens is the sexual violation.
- Juxtaposition, contrast for irony: Children playing happily on the mountain when the residential school authorities arrive to seize them and take them to the school where they will not be able to play, not be able to play with each other, and in which they will be very unhappy (if we predict based on most residential school experiences).

- Symbolism: Cassandra thinks the car is just a car; Eileen sees it for what it is—the symbol of the residential school authorities, or at the very least, a threat.
- Symbolism: White car and black wheels symbolize the appearance of purity and goodness on a base of vileness and evil.
- Symbolism: White light that traps Cassandra is the control of the residential schools and the control of Apollo (priest); highlights Cassandra's lack of control over her own life because of the rape by the priest.

#### Fourth selected section (end of the play), pages 272-3:

- Cassandra's lines reveal she is the Seventh Sister and that she has been redeemed in some sense; she is going home to Father Sky. She is going back to the sky sisters to take her rightful place, go back to her roots. Could this possibly allude to her dying and ascending to 'heaven'?
- All the characters admit their own weaknesses and beg our forgiveness and understanding. Students should remember a similar appeal by Maria Campbell in *Halfbreed*.
- Oxymoron of sorts: Wiseguy says opposites are in each of us (knowledge and ignorance, shame and boldness, shameless and ashamed, strength and fear, war and peace), and warns us to understand ourselves. Again, students might refer back to similar comments by Maria Campbell.
- Blessing: request by Raven and Wiseguy for a blessing at the end of the play, the end of the meeting (of audience and players); traditional Aboriginal way of ending an event or gathering.
- Cyclical nature of play: By referring again to the sky, greetings, request for a blessing, it is a return in one sense, to the beginning of the play. May refer to the cyclical nature of humankind's history through periods of war-peace, understanding-ignorance. Blessings and good manners at the end are also attempts to soothe any ill feelings, negotiate any offences, help audience readjust to going back out into life, to re-establish balance. This is a less clearly verbalized version of the speech by Shakespeare's Puck at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "And if we shadows have offended,/ Think but this, and all is mended,—/ ....Gentles, do not reprehend:/ If you pardon, we will mend."

### ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Student willingness to take part in discussions and risk interpretations.

**5 marks**

#### Take Home Assignment

**Free choice;** representation of themes.

Students should think about something in these script selections that impressed them and to which they had strong reactions. Students may choose to express their thoughts, feelings, and reactions in whichever form they feel would best represent their perspective: song, dance, rap, poster, poem, monologue, soliloquy, 3D model, costume, created object that might have been on the set, etc. Students may also get together in teams and practise either one of the last two short selections with the idea of doing a good dramatic performance. Students will be expected to display their projects or perform at next class and to be able to explain the connection of their assignment to the *Age of Iron*. Teachers can orally outline criteria for students to remember as they work on their assignments.

**20 marks**

#### Closing Discussion



Teachers may wish to have a five or 10-minute wrap up of any questions or comments from students. Here is one question the class might wish to address: How is this play specifically Métis, or is it? Is this question relevant given that one of Clements's objectives is to broaden the connections between Aboriginal people and the rest of the world?

## SELECTIONS FROM *AGE OF IRON*

[Below is a substantial portion of the opening act showing characteristics of experimental theatre found in the set, plot, dialogue, and character interactions. Following that are some shorter selections to show Clements's handling of some of the central themes found in the play, and finally, the ending of the play is presented.]

### **First selected section (opening of the play, street warriors), pages 194-202:**

**Trojan War:** A war waged by the Greeks against Troy that lasted ten years. In the ten years, the usually proud and festive Trojans lost much of their passion for their traditions and living ways, having to concentrate instead on fighting an unrelenting war that continued to wage on them. Eventually the long battle subjected them to plagues and seizures that sacrificed them, or forced them into captivity.

**The Urban Troy:** The urban streets of the inner city where street warriors battle for survival.

**Age of Iron:** The blending of Trojan Warriors with the historical reality of the First Nations people of the Americas, the blending of Greek and Native myths, of classical and colloquial languages. Age of Iron – a loss of a way for all peoples. An age of war but also of transition, bravery and courage.

### **Cast of Characters:**

Wiseguy: Veteran Trojan Street Warrior/Elder

Cassandra: Trojan Street Warrior/Daughter of Hecuba/A See-er/Prostitute/7th Sister

Hecuba: Trojan Street Warrior/Queen of Mothers

Earth woman: An earth woman beneath the cement

Raven: Trojan Street Warrior/Half-bird/Half-boy/Half-man/Trickster

Eileen: Childhood sister of Cassandra

Alfred: Childhood brother of Cassandra

The Sister Chorus: Three earthly sisters of the streets that eventually join the star constellation of the Pleiades to make the six stars, or sisters in the night sky who watch from above.

The System Chorus: Detective Agammemnon, a cop (previously a messenger of Troy), a social worker, the watchman, a judge and workers at the mental institution. They are the voices of social, law and governmental bodies which govern the urban Troy.

Apollo: A Christian priest of a residential school symbolized by the shining God of Light, Apollo, known for his power of healing and light.

The Muse Chorus: Muse Manifestations of Apollo the priest who does his bidding and uses the beautiful choir music of Christianity to manipulate.

## ACT I

The annual re-telling of a legend, a story. Not a new story but one known to all and re-enacted in an Urban Troy Drama. The characters regard this as a custom, a sureness of movement, a festival, a showing off of dance and song, an unfolding of a great drama.

Darkness.

The Planet Mars fades up on the backdrop of the stage. It is pale red and looks to be made of exposed muscles and arteries. It grows redder and more exposed.

Native drumming rises up and as it does it awakens movement from a great breathing city wall. As lights fade up the exterior of the wall is made up of street debris that begins to breathe as one and move slightly to the call of the drum. As the living wall awakens the sound of breath increases to form vocals that meet the drumming. As the sound increases the movement on the wall begins to clatter as the wall reveals human shapes of warriors dressed in the iron street armour of shields and masks. Wiseguy emerges from the wall fierce and war-like. As Wiseguy talks, the wall comes alive. Mars begins to fade.

**WISEGUY:** The discovery of the first metals and first attempt at civilization thus the earth arose from her confusion. (*SFX: Sound of rain*) Water from her terror, air from the consolidation of her grief, while fire was essential in all these elements as our ignorance lay concealed in these three suffering in the contemporary age, our Age...the Age of Iron.

The stage lights up with different hues of earth. In the centre a red and glowing fire burns.

**THE WALL OF TROY:** If I do not understand how the fire came to be, I will burn in it because I will not know my own roots.

**WISEGUY:** Ignorance brought about anguish and terror. And the anguish grew like a fog, so that no one was able to see, but a few.

**THE WALL OF TROY:** If I do not first understand the water, I will not know anything.

**WISEGUY:** So we all lived as if we were sunk in sleep and found ourselves in disturbing dreams. Either there is a place to which we are fleeing; or, without strength, we come from having chased after others; or we are involved in striking blows ourselves; or we are receiving blows, or we have fallen from high places; or we take off into the air, though we do not even have wings.

**THE WALL OF TROY:** If I do not understand how the wind that blows came to be, I will run with it.

**WISEGUY:** Again sometimes it is as if people were murdering us, though we cannot see who or what is killing us; or who or what is pursuing us; or if we ourselves are killing our neighbour, for we have been stained with their blood. When we, who are going through all these things, wake up. We see nothing. We, who were in the midst of these disturbances, see nothing; for we too would seem to be nothings. And you too would seem to be nothings. We have all cast ignorance aside as sleep, leaving its chaotic works behind like a bad dream in the night.

The Wall of Troy [figures] begin to disappear in to the wall from where they came.

**THE WALL OF TROY:** If I do not understand how the body that I wear came to be, I will perish with it. If I do not understand how I came, I will not understand how I will go, how we will go.

**WISEGUY:** This is the way everyone has acted, as though asleep at the time when we were ignorant. And this is the way we must come to a knowledge, as if we had been awakened. (*turns around*) Haaa!...just kidding. (*he laughs and stretches out on the ground and looks up*)

*SFX: The rain ceases.*

*The sky becomes blue and shines with stars that appear one by one as human shadows carrying a white light.*

**WISEGUY:** Grandmother Moon... I see you and your Seven Sisters How are you fine ladies tonight? Me? (*gestures to himself*) I am fine thank you for asking... I could be better and I could be worse ... So, yes I am just fine. Wait a minute, where is that Seventh Sister? She's so faint and dim, though it could be these ol' eyes. Don't see like I use to you know, which sometimes is just as well. (*looks up again squinting at the sky*) Let me see here... (*starts to count Star Sisters*) One... two... three... four... five... six. Where are you Seven? Where might that Sister be? Maybe she saw me and thought what a handsome fellow I was and decided to come down and take a closer look. Not likely eh? Well I was quite a looker when I was younger you know. (*he gets up and starts to look around. Picks up garbage lid and looks in garbage*) Are you in there Sister? So you are hiding on this ol' man... I bet you wouldn't have hid on me when I was a young man. Geez, I was good lookin' if I don't say so myself. You probably would've taken a fancy to me coming down from the skies. I would've caught you dancing, not at the Number 5 Orange Nightclub or anythin' like that, just kiddin', but somewhere out in the bush where a walker can feel the earth beneath his feet and in him at the same time. I would have seen all you pretty Sisters dancing in secret and I would have just sat and watched, that's all. I wouldn't have scared anybody. Or at least you wouldn't have been scared of me. Nope. You would have looked at this fine red warrior and said, "I'll have to stay here now." That's it. "I'll have to stay her and marry this man." End of story. Except you'd probably miss your Sisters and we'd have to go and visit them once in a while. (*acting like an old woman*) Only problem now is look at me, talking like an ol' woman on her wedding day. Oh well, always a bridesmaid, as they say, never a bride... haha.

*SFX: sound of door opening and music escapes out, footsteps leaving.*

*MUSIC: "A Tear in my Beer"*

*Wiseguy listens and then stiffens. The door shuts. Silence. The spell is broken he sits down and stares at the cement beneath his feet.*

**WISEGUY:** Earth beneath my feet. Poor ol' Mother, suffocating with this heavy load. (*He starts to peel the slabs of cement off the Earth revealing a crust of soil and body like pieces of earth.*) Don't cry. It's okay, Wiseguy's here now. Shhh.. it's alright.

Wiseguy's tearing up as many slabs of cement as he can. He hears a rustle behind him. He stops. Rustle. He stops. He puts his head in his hands and pretends to cry. Cassandra is about to talk to him but as of now she is still part of the Wall. The six human Star Sisters disappear.

**VOICE:** Why all this crying? This melancholy?

Wiseguy jumps up to catch the Voice. He looks to find the body of the voice.

**VOICE:** Have you longed a very long time for your native Troy? With a torturing love?

**WISEGUY:** Aye... so that for joy my eyes weep tears upon it.

**VOICE:** Then learn that it is a sweet languishing you have taken.

**WISEGUY:** (puzzled) How so? How do you know? I need a dictionary to master your sayings.

He gets closer and closer to wall. He listens for a breath, reaches in and roughly pulls her out.

**WISEGUY:** I should have known it was you my little witch. Cassandra, alright you've got me, how so?

She kisses him affectionately on the cheek and points to the opening of cement. Earth woman is moving cement off her body.

**CASSANDRA:** It is a passion which has stuck inside you and is as passionately returned by her.

Wiseguy runs to Earth Woman and digs his hands in the dirt surrounding her. Earth woman rubs her earth hands on his face as a caress.

**WISEGUY:** (returning picking off cement from the earth) A man must speak well of his fortune, though this part is not so good. (He picks a piece off and throws it toward an open garbage can.)

**FIVE POINTS!** (They laugh. Wiseguy sets in to tell a legend-like story all the time working at the task of tearing the cement off.)

You have only seen this Land of Troy from the outside. The walls and floors are thick and grim with the wars and plagues and now hardened. But inside it is a beautiful woman, alive with happiness and living. The ancient ones talk to us.

(to audience) You envy that. You have no such land because you have covered it with an unyielding surface. You call us barbarians. But that is what we call you. You attacked our people and keep attacking, because we are truly rich and powerful. And our roots are red from the earth. But most of our treasure is gone. So what do you hope to gain? Glory perhaps? But is it glorious to destroy? Yes, you believe it is. But I am not so stupid.

(gazing up at the stars) All the lovely things the ancient ones have made and still stay with us, despite ourselves.

(points upward to each star as they appear) One sister... two... three... four... five... six. Six Sisters I would like to meet the seventh one before it is too late.

(angry and loud, struggles with slabs of cement throwing pieces) We are civilized, and the wise among us know that we are doomed.

**CASSANDRA:** You should be quiet now.

.....

**Second selected section (Raven rapes Cassandra), pages 220-1:**

**ALERT**

The selection below contains vulgar language and in somewhat symbolic language describes a rape. Cassandra has been raped by the priest Apollo and this is alluded to here, although the timelines in the plot are not presented chronologically and readers do not clearly discover this until Act II.

**CASSANDRA:** Shhhh.... The Sisters are coming.

**RAVEN:** I don't believe you. I'm no fool. I don't believe a word that spits out of your mouth in fits of epileptic orgasms, or words that sing at me all soft and spent. Isn't that cute? I don't believe you. I don't believe anybody.

**CASSANDRA:** The Sisters are coming.

**RAVEN:** The Sisters, my feathery ass.

Cassandra is on the floor. Shaking in an epileptic fit. She struggles to speak. Cassandra spits onto her words as a song filters down from her Star Sisters.

**SISTERS:**

There's a song in the flame	(weh ya hehy)
still burning	(weh ya hey)
an emerging Troy	(weh yo hey yo)
from within and out from	(oh yo ho hiya)
the ignorance and fear	(yo ho hi ya)
to find the songs left by the trail	(yo ho hi ya)
a rekindling of voices	(yo ho hi ya)

**RAVEN:** I don't believe you... not one word... don't believe you Cassandra. Always got to talk, talk, talk, never letting a guy get half a chance.

**CASSANDRA:** The chariot is coming.

**RAVEN:** She wears a laurel wreath and her hair runs free and wild. (he spreads his wings over her) She'll whirl into a frenzy alright. She knows what it is to come... and come. (laughs) No one will believe what she says, because she is cursed in the ol' head. Aren't you Cassandra? Dance in a frenzy for me Cassandra? I never did a bitch when she was having a seizure. Dance Cassandra. Dance. I don't believe you. I don't believe you. I don't believe you, Cassandra.

.....

**ACT II****Third selected section (seizure of children for residential school), pages 252-3:**

[Alfred and Eileen have asked Cassandra to tell them a story. She tells them a story about going away to residential school. The two children tell Cassandra they don't want to go, that they don't want to leave their mother and father. At the end of the selection, the children are seized by authorities.]

**CASSANDRA:** I want to go to school. I want to read and write. I want to wear new clothes and learn about Apollo, maybe I'll even be a priestess if I want to.

**ALFRED:** It's a stupid story.

**EILEEN:** Really dumb.

SFX: sound of organ notes stop.

They start to get up. Cassandra shoves them.

**CASSANDRA:** I'll race yah up to the top of the hill.

They race toward the top of an imaginary hill.

**CASSANDRA:** I'm the King of the castle and you're the dirty rascal.

The other two pull her down.

**EILEEN:** I'm the King of the castle and you're the dirty rascal.

Cassandra and Alfred pull her down.

**ALFRED:** I'm the King...

Cassandra and Eileen pull Alfred down and they wrestle and laugh on the mountain top.

**ALFRED:** Look!

SFX: Sound of a car travelling on gravel road.

*They watch as a car makes its way down a road.*

**ALFRED:** Run...!

**EILEEN:** It's the chariot... Run!

**CASSANDRA:** It's just a car. A white car with black wheels, that's all.

Alfred and Eileen run frantically around stage looking for a hiding place. They rest, huddled in the darkness on stage right and left. They start singing a Native song, childlike and softly as if to comfort themselves.

**CASSANDRA:** Eileeeeen.. Alfred... come back! I promise you it will be alright. Nobody's gonna hurt you. I'll always be with you, I promise we'll be together... I promise. (*Cassandra reaches out towards them*) Eileennnn... Alfreeeeddd.

Just as she's about to go towards the children's voices, lights click on. A pure white light defines an area around her in which she freezes. She joins in with the other children's voices, slowly rocking herself.

.....

***Fourth selected section (end of the play), pages 272-3:***

*[Below are the final lines of the play.]*

Song: (Begins)

**CASSANDRA:** As long as there have been stars. As long as I could hear them. As long as I have breathed I have known. The sky will be falling to take me back up.

Blueness gets brighter, stars appear.

*Movement into dance either traditional and/or a mixture of Trojan warrior movements similar to prologue but less fierce and more beautiful, flowing.*

**WISEGUY:** Look upon me, you who reflect upon me, and you hearers, hear me.

**HECUBA:** Do not banish me from your sight.

**RAVEN:** In my weakness, do not forsake me, and do not be afraid of my power.

**SISTERS:** I am the members of the Great Mother.

**CASSANDRA:** I am she who exists in all fears and strength in the trembling.

**HECUBA:** I am the solace of my labour pains.

**WISEGUY:** We are the knowledge and the ignorance. We are shame and boldness. We are shameless and we are ashamed. We are strength and we are fear. We are war and we are peace. Give heed to yourselves. We are all disgraced and the great one.

*Final drum beat, music stops, movements stop.*

**RAVEN:** How you doing, sky?

**SISTERS:** Fine, thank you.

**RAVEN:** How are you Mother today?

Earth Woman points to him.

**RAVEN:** Me? Just fine, thanks for asking.

**WISEGUY:** Grandmother Moon. Kiss us, please.

**END OF PLAY.**



## ***Student Projects for Age of Iron***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1-13; B1-3; B6-12; C3, C4 or C8 depending on presentation form; C13

### **Supplies**

Video equipment if teachers and students wish to video presentations.

### **Teacher Information**

See the first lesson in this unit, “Aboriginal Connections to the Avant-Garde”: This class is for student presentations. There will be, or should be, a wide variety of presentation forms.

### **Suggested Activity Sequence**

presentation procedures as best suits teacher

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

Criteria were orally given to students. Refer to the assignment instructions at the end of the last lesson. Teachers will have set their own criteria for this assignment; students will be expected to have remembered them as part of the oral tradition methodology.

**20 marks**

### **Closing Discussion**

If time allows, teachers may call for constructive criticism from the class on the various presentations. Students may also have a discussion about experimental theatre in general and make connections to experimental music, film, etc. Students may wish to consider the question of whether experimental theatre is a good medium for expressing Aboriginal themes.

## PART V: HUMOUR STUDY: *JOE FROM WINNIPEG* BY IAN ROSS

### OVERVIEW

Ian Ross was born in McCreary, Manitoba, in 1968. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film and Theatre from the University of Manitoba. Ross has worked at a wide variety of jobs, but in more recent years has focused on writing, acting, and stand-up comedy. His first professional theatre production, *fareWell*, won the 1997 Governor General's Award for Drama. Ross's popular "Joe from Winnipeg" commentaries were written for CBC radio and television, and have been collected and published in a book series.

In his "Joe" series, Ross deals in a light-hearted but insightful way with such issues as moose on the road, little dogs wearing nail polish, Batman and band-aids, Christmas cake, letter glue, odometer checks, immunization, and springrolls. Joe represents Everyman, and this universal appeal is what has made the "Joe" series a success.

The selections for use in this lesson are at the end: "Cold and Sorries" and "Global Warming."

Ross said some people told him the Joe in "Cold and Sorries" was too political. Ross feels that being native is inherently political and he says he doesn't understand people when they tell him there are different Joes. Ross said, "I like this one though, because Joe's speaking up about an issue that isn't always heard that way." He felt Joe's gentle approach was a counterpoint to the often antagonistic discussions about Native people's grievances.

### *Stand Up, Broadcast Humour*

**Learning Outcomes:** A2-11, B1, B4-13, C7, C9, C10, C12-14

### Resources

Ross, Ian. *Joe from Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, Man.: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 1999.

**Note:** There is a new collection out, which selects from the best of Ross's Joe series:

Ross, Ian. *All My Best (Joe from Winnipeg Series)* Winnipeg, Man.: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 2004. Selections used in this unit plan refer to the 1999 publication pages 53-4 (Global Warming), 64-5 (Cold and Sorries).

### Supplies

Flip charts, felts, possibly recording devices from school media lab (if available)

### Suggested Activity Sequence

1. Teachers should share some of the biographical information about Ian Ross from the Teacher Information.
2. Have the class brainstorm what makes humour and specifically what makes Aboriginal or Métis humour. Let students know their participation will be part of the class mark. Ask

- students what the “techniques” of humour are (e.g. language use, persona, etc.). This is an exploratory activity and may include suggestions that students may remove at the summary activity at the end of the lesson. Use flipcharts to record the responses on two different sheets (Humour/Aboriginal-Métis Humour). Write the names of students who contribute next to their suggestions to use for evaluation. Once the lists are complete, ask students if they would remove or change any of the comments; changes must be a class consensus though the suggestion for a change can be made by an individual. See the information on humour at the end of the lesson.
3. Divide the class into two large groups (or smaller ones if that works best with the class) and give out photocopies of “Cold and Sorries” to one group and “Global Warming” to the other. Every student should have a “Joe” piece. Go over the objections people made to Ross’s “Cold and Sorries” as outlined in the Overview section. Ask students to discuss the pieces and identify the humour and techniques of humour in them. Student groups should have a recorder to write on flip charts or rolls of newsprint in printing that is large enough to display to the class, and a speaker(s) who will report to the class. Recorders should note which students contribute which comments by writing their names next to their comments, which teachers can later use for evaluation with regard to participation. Allow approximately 15 minutes for this activity. See the list of characteristics of Joe humour at the end of the lesson.
  4. Have the student groups report out. After the reporting out, have students revisit the lists they developed in Step 2 and further refine those lists. Student recorders should turn in their flip chart lists to the teacher for marking.
  5. The last in-class activity is for each student to “edit” his or her “Joe” piece and turn “Joe” into correct, grammatical English. Remind students to mark colloquialisms as well as slang. Teachers might want to copy the “Joes” onto overheads and mark them up to display to the class at the next lesson. Teachers may wish students to use correct editing marks. An excellent summary with great visual examples is at:  
[http://wadsworth.com/english\\_d/templates/student\\_resources/1413001890\\_burnett/UsageHandbook/edit\\_marks.htm](http://wadsworth.com/english_d/templates/student_resources/1413001890_burnett/UsageHandbook/edit_marks.htm).

Students should turn their edited Joes in at the end of the lesson as part of this lesson’s mark; it is worth 15 marks. Teachers might want to ask their students if they found the edited, grammatically-correct English “Joes” as funny as the original “Joes,” and discuss.

### **Characteristics of Humour and Humour Theories**

There is no consensus on what makes something humorous, though theories of humour have often been tied to laughter (though people laugh for other reasons than responding to something funny, e.g. when inhaling “laughing gas” or when being tickled).

There are several main theories about what makes something humorous: incongruity (ambiguity, logical impossibility, irrelevance, inappropriateness); superiority (the sudden glory of the self over others); relief (release of energy caused by repression); and play (enjoyment of laughter, tickling, etc.).

Students will have their own ideas and hence develop their own list. The suggested theories above can help stimulate discussion. Teachers can find out more about humour theories at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/humor.htm>.

### **Joe Humour**

Students should be able to identify the following qualities and characteristics about “Joe” humour, and they may find more:

- Persona: Joe is a created character that appears real and appeals to a wide cross-section of people; the humorist uses him as a “mask” through which he can speak.
- Gently self-deprecatory: Joe’s un-pretty ears in “Cold and Sorries;” Joe washing his hands in public washrooms only when another man was watching.
- Gently self-critical of community: drunkenness etc., “Cold and Sorries;” failure of Canadians to understand their fellow Aboriginal citizens, “Cold and Sorries;” loopholes in treaties in “Global Warming;” French being scratched off hand dryers in “Global Warming”
- Language: street slang, colloquialisms, conversational, “gonna,” “eh?” “Hey you guys”
- Language of ethnic group: dropping of “g” in “-ing” endings by Aboriginal people, and often as well by others who do not enunciate
- Story-oriented: personal tales, observations, much like conversation except that we don’t hear the listener’s part
- Personal relation to listener: “Hey you guys, this is me, Joe from Winnipeg.” “What’s up with that eh?” “This is Joe from/in Winnipeg.” “Meegwetch.” Fuses relationship between speaker and listener.
- Humour in everyday: street name in “Cold and Sorries;” washroom stories in “Global Warming”
- Playing on personal ignorance: “rems, whatever that is” in “Cold and Sorries;” dispensing machines for condoms in women’s washrooms in “Global Warming”
- Social criticism: about treatment of Aboriginal peoples in “Cold and Sorries” and world abuse of natural resources and failure to respect Mother Earth in “Global Warming”

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

Participation in the class and group activity regarding definitions of humour: class lists regarding Humour and Aboriginal-Métis Humour (5 marks); group lists for the specific “Joe” pieces (5 marks).

#### **10 marks**

Edited, marked-up “Joe” piece.

#### **15 marks**

#### **TOTAL: 25**

### **Take Home Assignment**

Students will write their own humour piece for stand-up comedy or radio broadcast. The pieces should be no longer than a few minutes at most, just about as long as Joe’s pieces. Remind students about appropriate language and subject matter. This assignment will be presented at the next class OR students have the option of recording their assignments. The assignment is worth 25 marks. See the rubric below. It would be helpful for students to have a copy of the rubric while they work on their assignments. Teachers may want to request that draft outlines/notes be submitted as well to show student planning and original work



Humour: Performance Piece		Total Possible Mark: 25
Name: _____		
Mark	Criteria	Student Mark
21-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate subject matter</li> <li>• length is good; short and snappy</li> <li>• wide-ranging focus</li> <li>• uses many different types of humour</li> <li>• uses a personalized style or persona</li> <li>• language is appropriate</li> <li>• projection and oral presentation is clear</li> <li>• audience finds work appealing</li> </ul>	
16-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate subject matter</li> <li>• length is good; short and snappy</li> <li>• focus shows a few good selected subjects</li> <li>• uses a good selection of types of humour</li> <li>• shows personalized style or persona that needs some development</li> <li>• language is appropriate</li> <li>• projection and oral presentation may need some polishing</li> <li>• audience finds work mostly appealing</li> </ul>	
11-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some of the subject matter is not appropriate or not developed</li> <li>• length is showing signs of being too short or too long</li> <li>• focus needs broadening</li> <li>• a moderate selection of types of humour</li> <li>• personalized style or persona needs more development; it is in the 'draft' mode</li> <li>• language is appropriate</li> <li>• projection and oral presentation need work</li> <li>• audience finds some of the work appealing</li> </ul>	
6-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subject matter not appropriate</li> <li>• length too short or too long</li> <li>• focus is narrow</li> <li>• only a few types of humour used</li> <li>• personalized style or persona is thin</li> <li>• language is not appropriate</li> <li>• poor projection and oral presentation</li> <li>• audience finds very little appealing</li> </ul>	
5 or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subject matter, length, focus, types of humour, style/persona, language, projection/presentation absent or poorly developed</li> <li>• audience finds nothing amusing</li> </ul>	

**Closing Discussion**

Students may wish to express their opinions about whether or not they like Joe's sense of humour. Some may find it too obtuse or gentle. Others may find it appeals to their storytelling nature.

As a class, students may wish to brainstorm topics for their humour take home assignment; this discussion will help those who struggle with these kinds of creative assignments. Some students may wish to sign out recording devices.

## COLD AND SORRIES

by Ian Ross

Hey you guys, this is me, Joe from Winnipeg. Today I'm gonna be talkin' to you about cold an' sorries. Now the weather, what's with that? Enough said about that. I was walkin' down McGee Street the other day an, boy, was it cold. My ole ears were jus tinglin'. An you know what happens when yer ears get real cold. They stop hurtin'. But when that happens, I get kine of scared 'cause even though they're not the prettiest lookin' ears, I still need 'em and when you can't feel 'em no more, that's not good. So anyways, oh yeah, another thing. You know that street McGee? Like in the song, "Bobby an McGee." You guys ever been on that street? It's funny. It's half back lane. Half front of the street. Kine of like when you're tryin' to match wallpaper or else wrappin' on a present. The pattern doesn't fit so you jus put it on there anyways. I think that's what Winnipeg did with McGee Street. But I like that eh? Somethin' honest about it. Kine of like when you see someone's tummy when they pick somethin' up off a shelf. It's like a reminder that we got skin under our clothes. So anyways, I walked home an went to bed, but boy, I got woked up about three in the morning eh? I didn't even get my rem sleeps whatever those things are, but I know I need 'em. An my cousin woked me up by playin' the TV loud eh? Really loud. An I said, "Hey, what's up with that?" An I seen that my cousin was drunk. An we started arguin'. An then we pretended we was sleepin'. An I'll tell you somethin'. I even cried there after we argued. For lots of reasons. Drunkenness. TV too loud. No rems, whatever that is, but I know I need 'em. An it wasn't till the next night that we apologized to each other. A real long time. We shoulda said sorry right away. But at least we said our sorries. An that made me think about how our government's apologized to the 'Nishnawbe eh? An that's a good thing. That's a first step an there's even the promise of money there too. But that's not the important part. That word sorry can warm a lot of cold boy. An I'm glad somethin's happenin' finely. I know there's more that has to be done, but I believe that's gonna happen. An I gotta say, I was pretty sad when I heard someone say that that thing the government's doin' is too much. Too much money. We're wastin' enough on Native people as it is. An normally I would say, "OK fine," an ignore them. But this time I got to say somethin'. Now you think about what this country's worth. An what the land's worth. An the air. An the water. All the things we shouldn't be puttin' a money value on there, but we do. An some people are complainin' that they're givin' the 'Nishnawbe too much? What's up with that? An hey, maybe the 'Nishnawbe don't need money. Maybe we jus need more moose and whitefish an a place to sleep. But then I guess we got reserves for that eh? I have to say sorry for talkin' like this. 'Cause it's not the way I wanna be. I'm just sayin' these things because they're very heavy in my heart eh? There's a great pain there when I think of my cousin who abuses substances. An alcohol. An I'll tell you somethin' else. I don't know a single 'Nishnawbe who hasn't been hurt by that alcohol through their family or themselves. Not one. An I know a lot of people boy. An I also don't know one single 'Nishnawbe who's what we would call material wealthy. An these things aren't important. 'Cept when it comes to decent standard of livin'. There's lots of my friends who should eat better an sleep in better places. Accordin' to the Stats Canada we're the fastest growin' community in the country. So it seems to me, we gotta look harder to fine a way to include Native people in the wealth an potential of this country. I know people are good. I see it ev'ry day. An even though some people may think the 'Nishnawbe are askin' for lots we're not. This is Joe from Winnipeg. Meegwetch.



**GLOBAL WARMING**  
**by Ian Ross**

Hey you guys this is me, Jo from Winnipeg. Today I'm gonna be talkin' to you about the global warming treaty that they're signing there in Japan. Boy, right away people are sayin' some of those countries aren't bein' fair. Tryin' to find loopholes an stuff. Hey you guys, it's a treaty. What do you expect? But I'll get back to that later. You know, the other day I was in a res'traunt, an so I happened to go to the bathroom eh? I know you don't want to hear that part, but anyways, I was washin' my hans. Not 'cause there was another guy in there, but because it's sanitary. But boy, I tell you, there used to be a time that I would only wash my hans if there was another guy in there, so that he wouldn't think I was a pig. I think a lot of guys do that eh? Anyways, I was using the han dryer, kine of thinkin' about how ole Madonna used one of these things in one of her movies to dry under her arm. I doan know about you guys, but I never dry any other part of my body with those things. That's too much like stickin' yer head out of a car goin' fast. Anyways, I look at the directions on the han dryer. Not that I need them, or any of us do for that matter. But I look on there an somebody's scratched off the French part of the instructions. Now what's up with that? Who has got time to do this? An how come nobody's ever caught the guy who's doin' this? 'Cause I realized every time I use a han dryer, the French is scratched out. Sometimes the English on there too. Does this guy think he's gonna trick us? Oh good, now the people won't know how to use this hand dryer thing. An they'll never figure out to push that big shiny button. An if they do, they won't know that they're s'posed to shake the excess water off their hans before they use that thing. Maybe it's just a guy thing. An how come in the ladies' can they got machines that dispense stuff ladies need on the one side and the other dispenses something for men? What's up with that? You women know what I'm talkin' 'bout here. An the only reason I know about this is 'cause I used to clean toilets, men's an ladies, for a livin'. But anyways, I think han dryers are a good thing 'cause it means we use less paper. I know, I know, some people say that han dryers have bacteria an stuff. But hey, what doesn't? Paper does too. An you know, we all have to think in diff'rent ways when it comes to conservin' stuff. An recyclin'. 'Member the seventies an the gas shortage? That can happen again real soon. We never seem to learn eh? Jus like disco. I hear that music all over again an I thought disco was s'posed to be dead. But I guess it's like that Sigourney Weaver in Alien. She jus keeps comin' back. As long as there's money to be made, someone or some ole fad'll be there. But you know what's not gonna always be there if we're not careful. Our trees. Our air. All the stuff we don't even think about eh? An right now they're arguin' over this stuff in Japan. How they can get around not doin' their part, some of them. Even Canada. What's up with that? This environment stuff is like teeth. We only got one set. So you better take good are of it. 'Cause when it's gone, you doan want false ones in there, boy. I doan know about you guys, but I like real Christmas trees. So the last thing I'm gonna say about this is, "Come on you guys. Stop actin' like you own what's not even yours. An remember, when you breathe out, that little bit of breath goes into everybody else. An vice versus." This is Joe from Winnipeg. Meegwetch.

## ***Joe From Winnipeg: Student Presentations***

**Learning Outcomes:** A1-13, B2, B3, C1-4, C11, C13

### **Supplies**

Possible video equipment and/or recording devices

### **Teacher Information**

Teachers may wish to use the first few minutes of this class for a review of the editing take home assignment.

The rest of the class will be devoted to those who are going to personally perform their humour pieces. It might be an idea to video these presentations and view them as part of another class on oral work. Students should remember to turn in their rubrics with their work or before their performance.

If there are outstanding pieces, teachers may wish to submit them (with student permission), or help students submit them, to an Aboriginal radio station and/or to the school radio station.

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

**25 marks**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR UNIT 12: MÉTIS LITERATURE**

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- Mosionier, Beatrice Culleton. *In Search of April Raintree*. Critical Edition, ed. Cheryl Suzack. Winnipeg: Portage & Main P, 1999.
- Préfontaine, Darren R. “Métis Writers.” The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research.  
<http://www.Métismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00733.pdf>

**Further Resources**

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis Literatures and Cultures  
<http://compcanlit.usherbrooke.ca/links.html#Inuit>
- This is an informative site with links to an extensive list of Aboriginal authors, publishers, etc.:
- Borgerson, Lon and Suntep Theatre. *A Thousand Supperless Babes: The Story of the Métis*. Prince Albert, Sask.: Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI).
- This multimedia theatre work, with both a book and a CD, reveals Métis history through story, song, and dance. Included in the package are the play’s script, sheet music, musical score, and a media presentation of historical images.