

## PART ONE

# The Purpose of Indian Residential Schools

### Summary

Part one begins by building a basic understanding of what Indian Residential Schools were, who operated them, and where they were located in British Columbia. Next, students review their knowledge of traditional First Nations values, life and culture, particularly the role of education, to build an understanding of what was lost through colonization. (Note: If it fits better with your curriculum structure you may want to follow a chronological progression and use Lesson 1.2 before introducing Indian Residential Schools with Lesson 1.1)

Next, the reasons behind the imposition of Indian Residential Schools are examined – the intent “to civilize and Christianize” – while recognizing that the residential school system was only part of the cultural loss faced by First Nations. Finally, the question of why we should learn about Indian Residential Schools is looked at with reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Interim Report.

Part One is designed to be used as a self-contained unit where time is limited, as it spans the historical context of the Indian Residential Schools and the contemporary topic of Reconciliation.

### Enduring Understandings

- Both church and state used Indian Residential Schools to promote their goals to destroy traditional culture and assimilate First Nations people into Western culture.
- All Canadians can help the reconciliation process by learning about and understanding the truths about the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools.

### Essential Questions

#### *Big Question*

Why is it important to learn about Indian Residential Schools?

#### *Focus Questions*

1. What were the purposes behind Indian Residential Schools?
2. What did First Nations societies lose as a result of the imposition of Indian Residential Schools?
3. What are the lasting impacts of the Indian Residential School system?

**LESSON 1.1****What Were  
Indian  
Residential  
Schools?*****Key Concepts***

- Indian Residential Schools were total institutions in which all aspects of a student's life were controlled and regulated.
- The institutional, highly disciplined nature of Indian Residential Schools was foreign to First Nations students.
- Missionary influence which infiltrated many aspects of First Nations community life, including education, was partitioned geographically according to religious denomination.

***Learning Outcomes***

Students will be able to:

- List the main characteristics of the Indian Residential School that made it a “total institution”
- Describe the relationships between First Nations communities, missionaries and schooling

***Vocabulary***

Christianize, day school, denomination, Indian Residential School

***Resources***

- Blackline Master 1, What do You Know About Indian Residential Schools? page 24
- They Came For the Children, Introduction (pages 1-3)
- Blackline Master 2, Map of BC with residential school locations, page 25
- Atlas, internet or maps of Indian Residential School locations
- Historical pictures of local community

***Suggested Activities*****1. Activating Prior Knowledge**

Discuss with students what they know about Indian Residential Schools. You may want students to use Blackline Master 1 to record their knowledge, or you may want to have a class discussion based on the questions given in the handout.

- Discuss with students where their information came from. (*For example, from family, learned in school, on the news, on the internet.*)
- Ask students to generate further questions about things they would like to know, or need to know, to understand more about Indian Residential Schools. This could be done individually, in small groups or as a whole class. Record the questions for future reference.

**2. Missionaries and Schooling**

Explain to students that during BC's early settlement period Christian missionaries carried out what they saw as their goal to Christianize the First Nations. They established churches in many reserves or First Nations communities. The four main denominations were Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist (which later became part of the United Church) and Presbyterian. Most First Nations groups became affiliated with one of

these denominations and many people developed a strong Christian faith. The churches divided up the province into their own territories which did not overlap. Children were usually sent only to an Indian Residential School operated by their religious affiliation.

- Explain to students that not all First Nations children were sent away to residential schools. Many reserves had what were called “day schools” which were local schools located on the reserve. Teachers were usually the local minister, priest or nun. These schools were usually segregated, even if the children were near a public school. From the 1950s on, there was more integration into the public school system.
- Explore with students the history of the local First Nations community in terms of church affiliation and day schools. Which was the principal denomination historically? Find historical pictures of the early church and school, if possible.

### 3. Where Were the Indian Residential Schools in British Columbia?

Mapping Activity. Use Blackline Master 2 to locate the Indian Residential Schools that existed in BC.

- Ask students to conduct research using the internet or other sources to find the location of the schools and label the map with the number on the list. An answer key is on page 26.
- Additionally (or alternatively using the map on page 26) you may want to ask students to colour code the schools depending on their church affiliation, to illustrate the distribution of denominations in BC Indian Residential Schools.
- Ask students to find out what Indian Residential School or Schools people from the local community attended.
- Use these discussion questions to investigate more about the schools:
  - Which was the first school to operate? (*St. Mary’s at Mission*)
  - Which were the last three to operate? (*St. Mary’s at Mission; Kakawis at Tofino; St. Joseph’s at Williams Lake, all in the 1980s*)
  - Which school operated for the longest time? (*St. Mary’s at Mission*)
  - Which denomination operated the most schools? (*Catholic*)

### 4. Invite a Speaker Into the Class

A classroom visit or a presentation by an Indian Residential School survivor, an elder or other knowledgeable community member can be a powerful learning experience for students. If you have the opportunity to invite a speaker, ensure adequate preparations are made with both the invited guest and the class. Follow community and school protocols to show appropriate respect. For additional suggestions, see *100 Years of Loss* teacher’s guide, page 97, “Invite a Survivor to Speak to Your Class.”

**LESSON 1.2****Traditional  
First Nations  
Societies and  
Education*****Key Concepts***

- First Nations people lived in successful, dynamic and diverse societies for countless generations.
- Education was integrated into daily, ceremonial and spiritual realms of life.
- Education focussed on respect and the relationship with the ancestors and the land.
- Elders and other knowledgeable community members passed on knowledge through oral history and storytelling.

***Learning Outcomes***

Students will be able to:

- List some of the major features of traditional First Nations societies before colonization, with respect to connection with the land, spirituality, technology and values
- Describe the role of children in First Nations societies
- Explain how living and learning were integrated in First Nations daily life
- Show how children learned through storytelling

***Vocabulary***

integrated, personal autonomy

***Resources***

- Aboriginal Peoples and Education (*They Came For the Children*, pages 7-9)
- Appropriate resources about traditional culture and social life of local First Nations, as suggested in Activity 1

***Suggested Activities*****1. Traditional Culture and Education**

Review with students significant factors of traditional First Nations culture and education. This will depend on your local situation and previous course work. Identify and use resources relevant to the local First Nations. Topics to discuss include:

- examples of connections with the land, through language, particularly personal and place names;
- ceremonial and spiritual life, which includes passing knowledge to younger generations;
- health and medicine: how specialised knowledge of medicinal plants was passed on;
- resource harvesting and utilization: what unique skills and technologies were used, and how were these skills learned?

**2. Elder Visit**

Arrange for a local elder or knowledgeable First Nations resource person to speak to the class about storytelling and the integration of learning and living in daily life. Find out the local protocols for inviting and hosting community members in the classroom. Some elders might prefer not to be the sole speaker at the front of the class, but prefer to sit with the class and join in the discussion.

### 3. Learning Integrated into Daily Life

Ask students to read the section “Aboriginal Peoples and Education” (*They Came for the Children* pages 7-9) to find out how learning was integrated into daily life.

- Ask students to summarize the types of things children typically learned, and what methods were used to teach them. (*Possible responses:*

*Types of learnings: Creation stories, identity, history, traditions, beliefs, correct behaviour; knowledge of plants and animals and how to harvest them.*

*Methods: mixture of teachings, ceremonies and daily activities; teaching through storytelling, participation in festivals and celebrations.)*

**LESSON 1.3****Why were Residential Schools Imposed?*****Key Concepts***

- First Nations people have faced, and in many cases still face, cultural, social and economic loss as a result of colonialism and the beliefs and policies of Western government.
- Indian Residential Schools were established to intentionally remove children from the educational, cultural and spiritual influences of their families and communities.
- Indian Residential Schools were established to “civilize” and “Christianize” First Nations by replacing traditional values with Euro-Canadian values.
- Indian Residential Schools were part of a broader policy to assimilate First Nations people into mainstream Canadian society.

***Learning Outcomes***

Students will be able to:

- Apply critical thinking skills, including questioning and drawing conclusions and corroborating inferences about the content, origins, purposes and context of a primary source
- Analyze the perspective of the Indian Agents and their role in the lives of First Nations communities
- Describe the loss of children to Indian Residential Schools as part of the broader range of losses suffered under colonialism

***Vocabulary***

colonialism, Indian Act, Indian Agent

***Resources***

- Blackline Master 3, The Problem with Day Schools, page 27
- *They Came For the Children*, pages 9-16
- Blackline Master 4, The Goals of Indian Residential Schools, page 29
- Blackline Master 5, The Indian Act, page 31
- Blackline Master 6, Consequences of Colonization, page 33

***Suggested Activities*****1. Colonial World View**

Use the document “The Problem with Day Schools” (Blackline Master 3) to introduce the colonial world view that led to the establishment of Indian Residential Schools.

**Background**

This document is an excerpt from a report sent by Indian Agent Thomas Deasy of the Queen Charlotte Agency to his superiors in the Department of Indian Affairs. It was published in the Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, in the 1912 Sessional Papers for the year ending March 1911. It was probably written in 1911 shortly after Deasy was appointed as Indian Agent in the newly formed

Queen Charlotte Agency, with headquarters at Masset, Haida Gwaii.

Thomas Deasy (1857-1936), born in Portsmouth England, came to the colony of British Columbia with his father, who was one of the Royal Engineers who were stationed at New Westminster. His family later moved to Victoria where he worked as a printer and fire chief. He took the position of Indian Agent at the age of 53, from 1910 to 1924. He had a forceful personality and strong Christian principles. He was known to consult frequently with chiefs and elders, but maintained his perspective of protecting and correcting the First Nations people in his agency. He wrote “The Indians must have a guiding hand with them. The duties of an Indian agent shows that they cannot progress unless under the strictest of discipline.”

Deasy’s full report can be found online at: <https://archive.org/details/n20sessionalpaper46canauoft>. See pages 388-391. For a fuller biography of Deasy and the role he played in the lives of the Haida, see *Haida Culture in Custody: The Masset Band*, Mary Lee Stearns, University of Washington Press, 1981.

#### Historical context

At the same time as this was written, both the Anglican Church and some Haida people were agitating the government for boarding schools within their territories. As well as reflecting a paternalistic view of First Nations people, Deasy also shows the unabashed racist views of Asian immigrants that were widely held at that period.

Note that at this time the term “Residential School” was not used. Such schools were referred to as Boarding Schools and Industrial Schools. For more on the definitions of these schools, see the Glossary on page 97.

A. Ask students to read the document to find statements that show the writer’s attitude towards First Nations people. You may want to use discussion points such as the following to help students read critically:

- What are some of the assumptions Deasy makes about First Nations society?
- What are some words and phrases that reveal his bias?
- What are his arguments against day schools?

B. After their first reading, ask students to dig deeper into the historical context of this document by considering the following questions. Some questions will require you to provide background information.

- Who was Thomas Deasy and what was his job? (*Indian Agent for the Queen Charlotte Indian Agency; administer the Indian Act and mediate all interaction between First Nations people in his agency and the federal government.*)
- What type of primary source is this? (*Official government report.*)
- Where and when was the document created? (*In Masset BC, 1911.*)
- What was the intended audience for this document? (*Government officials in the Department of Indian Affairs and Members of Parliament.*)

- Why did Thomas Deasy create this document? (*Part of his annual report on education in his agency, but he took it as an opportunity to express his opinions about day schools.*)

C. Ask student to use evidence from the document to make inferences about the writer's attitudes, beliefs and motivations towards First Nations people. The following questions will help students make evidence-based inferences about the author's views:

- What are his goals for First Nations people in Canadian society? (*"Advancement" in order to "compete with the thousands now flocking to our shores."*)
- In his view, what are the barriers to progress? (*Barriers include: day schools, limited school attendance, not learning English, lack of farming education.*)
- Give two or three words to describe this Indian Agent's perspective, values and worldview? Find evidence in the document that supports your inferences. (e.g. *paternalistic, racist, nationalistic, patriotic, Euro-centric, anti-Asian; appropriate evidence for these should be given from the document.*)
- What evidence exists in the document that suggests his views reflect the views of mainstream Canadian society at that time? (*Aligns his beliefs with those of the missionaries; points to the industrial and boarding schools as the best form of education for First Nations; has an agricultural bias as indicator of "civilized" society; anti-Asian sentiments aligned with widespread societal beliefs; the fact that he is not afraid to express his opinion – would probably not express them if he thought they would be negatively received.*)

## 2. Davin Report

Ask students to find out how N. F. Davin came to make recommendations for residential schools, and what his main recommendations were. Use pages 9 and 10 in *They Came for the Children*.

- Discuss why Davin recommend a partnership with the churches in the operation of the schools? (*For moral and economic reasons: morally the government would have to replace traditional beliefs with Christian beliefs, and by using religious teachers the government would save money.*)

## 3. Goals of Indian Residential Schools

Ask students to inquire into the goals for Indian Residential Schools. Why did the government impose them? How were they designed?

### Background

The goals for Indian Residential schools can be summarized as "To Christianize and Civilize" or "To remove the Indian from the child." However, the originators had some specific goals in mind. These are discussed in *They Came for the Children* on pages 9 to 16. The comments on Blackline Master 4 include excerpts from these pages, as well as newspaper editorials and a statement by Duncan Campbell Scott.

Some goals that are commonly suggested for the creation of Indian Residential Schools are:

- To prepare Aboriginal people to fit into the changing world in Canada.
- To remove Aboriginal children from the influences of their parents.
- To replace traditional beliefs and values with Euro-Canadian beliefs and values



- To encourage Aboriginal people to give up their traditional rights and assimilate into Canadian society
  - To train Aboriginal men to be farmers and women to be housewives
  - To prepare Aboriginal people to be working class labourers in Canadian society
  - To remove threats to Canadian security and safety by controlling potentially dangerous or defiant people
- Invite students to use Blackline Master 4 to read a series of quotes from different sources that suggest a number of goals for Indian Residential Schools.
  - Ask students to work individually or in groups to make a list of 3 or 4 goals suggested by the comments and excerpts.
  - Have students share their goals with the class, and decide which are the most significant.
  - Ask students to suggest, from what they know of Indian Residential Schools so far, ways that these goals were implemented.

#### 4. The Indian Act and the Indian Agent

Investigate the roles of the Indian Act and the Indian Agent on the lives of First Nations people, particularly in relation to education. For background on these topics, see the Glossary, page 97.

##### *A. The Indian Act*

Refer to the discussion of the Indian Act on pages 11-12 of *They Came for the Children*. Ask students to find out what the major goals of the Indian Act were. (*To control the lives of First Nations people and encourage them to assimilate into mainstream Canadian society by giving up all status and traditional rights.*)

- Use Blackline Master 5 to investigate some of the specific clauses in the Indian Act. Classify them according to the area of control they held in the lives of First Nations people.
- Ask students to predict which of these clauses are still in effect today, and which have been removed from the act. Use the key on page 32 to discuss the answers.
- Discuss students' reactions to the power of the Indian Act to influence the lives of First Nations people. What does this say about the relationship between First Nations and Canadian society?

##### *B. The Indian Agent*

Discuss the role of the Indian Agent in the lives of First Nations people.

- Explain to students that the Indian Agent was the hand of the Indian Act in the local area. He had the power to enforce any and all terms of the Indian Act as it applied to their daily life.
- Indian Agencies. Explain that each Indian Agent had a large area that he was responsible for. Refer to a map of BC showing the agencies. For example, see a map of Indian agencies in 1916: <http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/gallery/maps/index.html>
- Ask students to find out what agency their local community was part of in 1916. They may want to do further research to see if this changed during periods of reorganization.

### 5. Only Part of What was Lost

Discuss with students how the loss of children to Indian Residential Schools was only one part of the loss First Nations communities experienced as a result of colonization. Some other losses that had to be dealt with were:

- loss of life due to unknown diseases brought with European contact;
- loss of land and resources which were the foundations of First Nations life;
- loss of spiritual and sacred places on the land, which were not only taken away, but desecrated;
- loss of language and cultural traditions through legislation;
- loss of self-reliance and independence;
- loss of opportunity and potential due to racism, socioeconomic factors, limited education.

Ask students to work in pairs or groups to explain what caused each of these losses. You may want to use Blackline Master 6, Consequences of Colonization, to facilitate the discussion.

- First discuss the main factors responsible for these losses: colonization; racism; settlement; Indian Act; Indian Residential Schools
- Ask students in their groups to write down specific ways these factors brought about the losses.

## LESSON 1.4

## Why Study Residential Schools?

**Key Concepts**

- The cumulative effects of the cultural and societal disruption caused by the Indian Residential Schools resulted in cycles of abuse that continue to have an impact of First Nations families and communities.
- Canadians have not been provided a full understanding of the historical relationship between First Nations and other Canadians.
- The abuses of the Indian Residential Schools are part of the history of all Canadians, not just First Nations.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

- Identify the lasting effects of Indian Residential Schools on individuals and communities
- Explain the role of the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Explain the significance of Indian Residential Schools by showing what they reveal about important issues facing First Nations and all Canadians today

**Vocabulary**

humility, reconciliation, resilience, Truth and Reconciliation Commission

**Resources**

- *They Came For the Children*, Introduction pages 1-3
- Video: The Truth in the Classroom. Access at [www.ictj.org/news/canada-truth-commissions-youth-classroom](http://www.ictj.org/news/canada-truth-commissions-youth-classroom)
- Video: What is Reconciliation, TRC. [vimeo.com/25389165](https://vimeo.com/25389165)
- Video: Educating Our Youth: Vancouver event student responses, TRC. [vimeo.com/75812900](https://vimeo.com/75812900).
- *First Nations 101* by Lynda Gray. “Residential Schools” pages 61-64
- Blackline Master 7, *The Story of Indian Residential Schools*, page 34

**Suggested Activities****1. Truth in the Classroom**

View the video *The Truth in the Classroom*, which shows secondary students discussing why it is important for everyone to understand the history of Indian Residential Schools and why it should be taught in schools.

**2. Impacts of Indian Residential Schools**

In small groups or as a class, brainstorm some of the effects that Indian Residential Schools must have had on First Nations people and communities. (Note: this is an activity to set the stage. A more detailed examination of the effects follows in Part Two.) Refer to *First Nations 101* page 61 for a good summary.

- Ask students to summarize two or three major effects of the residential school system.

### 3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Ask students to read the Introduction to *They Came for the Children* (pages 1-3) to learn what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified as important to know about Indian Residential Schools.

- Provide students some background to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada if you haven't already discussed it. See the Commission's web site [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca). You may want students to view the video "What is Reconciliation." In it, Murray Sinclair discusses what it means to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- View the video "Educating Our Youth: Vancouver event student responses" to hear student reactions to the TRC even in Vancouver.
- Use Blackline Master 7 for a double journal entry activity. This is a listing of the main headings in the Introduction to the TRC Interim Report. Ask students to refer back to the text and write their reactions and responses to the statements.

### 4. Visual Representation

Have students create a visual interpretation of the headings in the Introduction (on Blackline Master 7).

- Divide students into 12 groups, with each group taking one of the statements. Students discuss their statement and re-read the text accompanying it in *They Came for the Children*. They then decide on a way to represent the key element visually.
- You may want to have the class work together on a cohesive format, such as equal-sized pieces of a quilt or blanket, or a row of banners. Alternatively, students may want to choose the media and format that best suits their topic, and display the results in a gallery format.

## Part One Assessment Activities

### ***1. Comparing Education Systems***

Ask students to compare traditional First Nations education, education under the Indian Residential School system, and their own education today.

- You may have students use a chart format, or an essay format.
- Before beginning, discuss possible topics to report on, such as: where education took place; who the students were; who the teachers were; what teaching methods were used; and what learning materials were used.

Suggested criteria for assessment:

- responses fully represent each time period in all topics;
- responses demonstrate an understanding of cultural and social beliefs and values of each education system;
- responses demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental differences in each of the education system.

### ***2. Responding to the Indian Agent***

Ask students to write a response to Indian Agent Thomas Deasy's report on day schools. They may choose to write the response in a specific format, such as a letter to Deasy, a letter to his superior, an editorial, or as a blog entry. Allow students flexibility in how they respond, but their response should show an understanding of the concepts studied in this section.

Suggested criteria for assessment:

- response has a focused purpose and point of view;
- response reflects an understanding of the original argument in the Indian Agent's report;
- response includes references to traditional culture and education;
- responses demonstrate an understanding of the intentions of the church and government in education First Nations children;
- response is well organized and sustains the chosen writing format.

### ***3. Why is it important to learn about Indian Residential Schools?***

Ask students to create a persuasive rant, a spoken word poem, a poster, a video, a song, or a short essay to convince others why it is important for all Canadians to understand what happened in the Residential School System.

Suggested criteria for assessment:

- response shows evidence of self-reflection;
- response demonstrates an understanding of the historical relationship between First Nations and other Canadians;
- response includes supporting sources, facts and details.