

Unit 3

Shaping First Nations Governance

Grades 7-9

Overview

The study of the historical development of world civilizations taught in Grades 7, 8 and 9 provides an excellent opportunity for students to learn about the traditional or ancestral form of First Nations laws and governance, in Canada specifically, and to appreciate what has changed and what has stayed the same over this long time period.

In Grades 7 and 8, the Learning Standards specifically focus on understanding social, political and economic systems of an Indigenous society. Ideally students will be able to engage in activities that help them come to a deeper understanding of the local First Nations, and explore some historical roots of present day governance systems. In Grade 9 the Learning Standards focus on the contact and post-contact periods. These resources will add to other resources to help investigate and achieve a deeper understanding of the wide-ranging and profound impacts of colonization on First Nations.

Essential Understandings

- British Columbia's diverse physical features have helped to shaped diverse First Nations cultures and societies.
- From Time Immemorial, BC First Nations have been self-governing, with diverse systems of laws and government to take care of the land, resources and their citizens.
- The imposition of colonial laws and policies has disrupted First Nations societies in ways that have impacted their powers to govern and look after their traditional territories.
- Despite the impacts of colonialism, First Nations societies have persisted and are rebuilding governance systems in diverse ways in modern contexts.

Guiding Questions

- How has geography helped shape traditional First Nations societies?
- How were traditional systems of governance used to organize First Nations?
- What are the historical and present day impacts of colonization on First Peoples governance?
- How do contemporary First Nations government systems operate, and what services do they provide?

Relevant BC Learning Standards for Social Studies 7-9

Grade	Content Standard	Sample Topics (from Curriculum)	Curricular Competencies
7 Ancient World to 7th century	Features and characteristics of civilizations and factors that lead to their rise and fall	Components that are common to cultures around the world and throughout time, e.g. government	Characterize different time periods in history, including periods of progress and decline, and identify key turning points that marked periods of change (Continuity and Change)
	Social, political, legal, governmental and economic systems and structures, including at least one indigenous to the Americas	List and describe aspects of current laws and government structure that have evolved from ancient civilizations	Explain different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events, and compare the values, worldviews, and beliefs of human cultures and societies in different times and places (Perspective)
8 7th Century to 1750	Social, political, and economic systems and structures, including at least one indigenous civilization	How were political decisions made during this period of history?	What would have been the impacts [on governance] if the Indigenous peoples of the Americas had been immune to smallpox and other diseases? (Cause and Consequence)
	Exploration, expansion and colonization	Contact and conflict	What lessons can we learn from the loss of languages due to Imperialism?
9 1750-1919	The continuing effects of imperialism and colonialism on indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world.	Impacts of the Indian Act	Compare and contrast the events considered by English-Canadian, French-Canadian, and First Peoples scholars to be the most significant during this period. (Significance)
	Discriminatory policies, attitudes and historical wrongs	Discriminatory policies towards First Peoples such as the Indian Act, potlatch ban, residential schools	In what ways has the colonization of Canada made life better or worse? And for whom? (Continuity and Change)
	Physiographic features of Canada and geological processes	Connections between Canada's natural resources and major economic activities	

Resources

For further information on these resources, see the annotations in the Bibliography, beginning on page 255.

Blackline Masters

1. First Nations Governance Profile
7. Two Forms of First Nations Government
13. First Nations Governments
19. Families, Clans and the Land
20. Language, Story and the Land
21. Traditional Laws and Governance
22. The Indian Act and the Indian Agent
24. Band Council Powers, 1886
25. Changes to Control of Lands and Resources
26. Geographical Features

Backgrounders

2. Traditional First Nations Societies
3. Traditional Laws and Governance
5. Traditional Leadership
6. Public Witness: Feasts and Potlatches
7. The Indian Act
8. Indian Reserves
9. Citizenship
10. Band Council

Recommended Resources

- *People of the Land: Legends of the Four Host First Nations*. Theytus Books 2009
- Joseph, Bob. *21 Things You May No Know About The Indian Act*. Port Coquitlam BC: Indigenous Relations Press 2018.
- *People of the Grizzly: Government by the People* (video). *People of the Grizzly: Government by the People*. 21 min 47 sec. 2011. Produced by the Kitselas First Nations. <https://vimeo.com/21621109>

Feast and Potlatch Resources

- Beynon, William. *Potlatch at Gitsegukla: William Beynon's 1945 Field Notebooks*. UBC Press 2000.
- Carrier Sekani Family Services. *Culture and Diversity*. PDF booklet, 7 pages. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc923>
- Gray, Lynda. *First Nations 101*. Adaawx Publishing 2011.
- Nelson, Nella. *Welcome Family and Friends to Our Bighouse. Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch*. Union Bay BC: Raven Publishing 2017.

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- *Living Tradition. The Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch of the Northwest Coast.* Virtual Museum Website. <https://umistapotlatch.ca>
- Lutz, John. *Makúk*, John Sutton Lutz, UBC Press, 2008.
- Mann, Marlaena Mann and Warner Adam, *Nowh Guna' Our Way: Carrier Culture, Knowledge and Traditions*, pages 87-98.
- Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. "Potlatch: What I Learned as a Guest." <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc925>.
- Nuxalk Nation. "Potlatch." Nuxalk Nation website. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc926>.
- Ts'msyen Nation. *Persistence and Change*, SD 52 Prince Rupert, pages 42-44.
- Ts'msyen Nation. *Luutigm Hoon, Honouring the Salmon*, SD 52 Prince Rupert, pages 89-90.
- U'mista Cultural Centre. *The History of the Potlatch Collection*. U'mista Centre, Alert Bay. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc950>

Additional Resources

- Indian Act and Elected Chief and Band Council System. Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. 2015. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc958>
- First Nations participating in the First Nations Elections Act. Government of Canada Justice Laws website. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc960>

Outline of Activities

1. Geography and Governance Connections
 - a. Knowing the Land
 - b. People and the Land
 - c. Land and Society
2. Traditional Governance Systems
 - a. Local First Nations Governance
 - b. Comparing Types of Traditional Governance System
3. Understanding Feasts and Potlatches
 - a. What are Feasts and Potlatches?
 - b. Feasts and Potlatches in First Nations Societies
4. Impacts of Colonization
 - a. Pass It On Game
 - b. Indian Act
 - c. Band Councils
 - d. Citizenship and Status
 - e. Lands and Resources
5. Rebuilding Self-Government
 - a. Kitselas Case Study
 - b. Core Institutions of Governance
 - c. Rebuilding and Strengthening Self-Government
 - d. How Will Self-Governance Affect First Nations People?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Note: There are more activities here than most teachers will incorporate into their units. It is not expected that you will use all of the activities, or follow the sequence as it is described. These activities are intended to be adapted to fit the needs of your students and classroom, as well as inspire ways that you can respectfully include relevant First Nations knowledge and perspectives in your course.

1. Geography and Governance Connections

These activities relate to the SS 7 Big Idea: Geographic conditions shaped the emergence of civilizations and the SS 9 Big Idea: The physical environment influences the nature of political, social, and economic change.

Students investigate to find out if there are any connections between the geography and traditional First Nations governance systems, and if so, what they are. First they identify significant features in the geography of one or more regions of BC. Then they determine ways that geography helped shape BC First Nations societies. Using this knowledge, they infer ways that the land affected traditional laws and governance systems. Ideally students will investigate the connections between the geography of the local area and governance systems of the local First Nations, then compare it with a different region of the province.

a. Knowing the Land

Students will identify significant geographical features in the local region.

- Identify a region to focus the investigation on. It could be a small area such as the school district boundaries, the traditional territories of the local First Nations community, or broader territories of a larger First Nations language group.
 - Provide students with a map that shows the region under discussion.
- Have students generate a list of natural geographical features of the region where your school is located.
 - Review with students what a geographical feature is (e.g. physical features or landforms, latitude and altitude, bodies of water, climate, geology, ecosystems).
 - They could work in groups then share their ideas with the class to make a collective list of features.
- Students can work together to create a gallery of images that illustrate the local geography. They may be able to take digital pictures themselves, download image from the Internet or create their own illustrations.
- Find out the First Nations names of some significant physical features in the region. If possible find their English translations so students can see the

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connections between the people and the land.

- Traditional names for features often describe the physical feature, or connect with an important oral history.
- Seek the assistance of First Nations language teachers or other resources to find names that the local community is comfortable with sharing.

b. People and the Land

Students will explore ways that the geographical features affected the lives of First Nations in the past, and consider how they still impact their lives today.

- Begin with a narrative that demonstrates a connection between people and the land. If possible, include local origin stories. One possible source is the book *People of the Land: Legends of the Four Host First Nations*. Theytus Books, 2009. It includes stories from the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. See the annotations in the Bibliography, page 261, for an outline of the narratives included.
- Have students work in groups to suggest ways that the geographical features they have identified would impact the lives of First Nations people in the past. Depending on your school situation and the prior knowledge of students, this may begin as a hypothetical exploration, or students could make links between the features and local First Nations societies that they are familiar with.
 - Before they begin work in groups, ask the class for one or two suggestions. Ask questions such as, "How might the climate influence what types of houses people live in?" "How might living in a mountainous area be different from living in flat areas?"
 - As they work in the groups, guide students to consider different aspects of the geography that they have not thought of. Some important areas are how people travelled in the past, what resources they used, how they used the land to gather resources, where they lived at different times of the year, and how they travelled.
 - Provide students access to some published and online resources about the local region that can help them identify connections between the land and the people who lived on it.
 - If students need more structure, they could use Blackline Master 26, page 137, *Geographical Features*, to guide their research.
- Discuss how the geography of the region affects the lives of First Nations and others who live in the region today. What factors are similar, and which have changed? (For example, climate still affects the types of houses and transportation we use, but the technologies used today are different.)

 Blackline Master
26, page 137,
Geographical Features

c. Land and Society

Students will explore ways that the land can influence how people organize themselves in societies, focusing on the local region.

- Teach or review some of the main types of systems in a society, including social, political, legal and governmental. Ask students to suggest examples of those systems in British Columbia today.
- Discuss with students how these systems can be connected to the land in traditional First Nations societies. Students can use predicting skills to suggest general connections unless they have a firm understanding of aspects of the local First Nations society. Some possible ideas to discuss include:
 - Social: how do people organize themselves into groups to take care of the land? For example, what might the role of the family be? Could there be other ways of organizing?
 - Political: How do people choose their leaders to make sure everyone can share the resources of the land?
 - Legal: What kinds of laws would need to be followed to live healthy and happy lives on the land?
 - Governmental: How type of government systems might develop to see that the land is protected and the laws are followed?

2. Traditional Governance Systems

Students focus on the local First Nations community to understand what laws and governance systems they had in place before colonization.

As well as the activities below, you may want to use some of the ideas in the Social Studies 4-6 resources above, which include introductory activities about traditional governance and its connections with social organization and the land.

You can also bring in Oral Treaties between First Nations, discussed in Unit 5, Settling Land Claims: Treaty and Alternatives.

a. Local First Nations Governance

- Have students find out about the traditional governance systems of the local First Nations. Help students gather resources to learn about these systems of government. Some suggestions for resources are:
 - Gather and share information using page 103 *First Nations Governance Profile*.
 - View the websites of the local First Nations and other groups they may be members of, such as Tribal Councils.
 - Invite Elders or other knowledge-keepers to speak to the class about traditional government systems in the community.
 - Find publications, website and videos specific to the local First Nation(s).
- Have students create a way to illustrate the traditional governance with a poster, flow chart, or other graphic representation.

 Blackline Master 1, page 103, *First Nations Governance Profile*

b. Comparing Types of Traditional Governance Systems

Students can explore the similarities and differences of two different systems of governance, such as one with a structured hierarchical society from the coast, and a more egalitarian society from the interior.

- Depending on reading abilities, students can read text on Blackline Masters or Backgrounders that discuss traditional First Nations societies, laws and governance.
 - Blackline Master 13, First Nations Governments, Blackline Master 13, page 117
 - Blackline Master 19, Families, Clans and the Land, Blackline Master 19, page 126
 - Blackline Master 20, Language, Story and the Land, Blackline Master 20, page 128
 - Blackline Master 21, Traditional Laws and Governance, Blackline Master 21, page 129
 - Backgrounder 2, Traditional First Nations Societies, page 237
 - Backgrounder 3, Traditional Laws and Governance, page 238
 - Backgrounder 5, Traditional Leadership, page 240.
- Discuss what differences in government systems these readings talk about.
- Ask students what might be some reasons for the differences. Ask them to think back to the geographical connections discussed in Activity 1.
- Students can explore two different First Nations to compare their governments. Help students select two First Nations.
 - For the most distinct comparisons, students could choose from two geographically distinctive areas. For example, students could pick one First Nation on the Coast, and one First Nation in the Interior or the North.
 - Ideally they will select the local First Nation as one of their choices.
 - Some students may want to choose two similar First Nations, such as Haisla on the north coast and Stó:lo on the south coast. If students have family connections or an interest in other First Nations in Canada, they could choose one BC First Nation, and one outside of BC.
- Students can research to find similarities and differences in various aspects of government, including:
 - The roles and responsibilities of the citizens and the leadership
 - How leaders are chosen
 - What different types of leaders there are
 - Words in the First Nations languages for important words and phrases such as leaders, laws, land
 - How decisions are made, such as councils, consensus decision making
 - The types of public ceremonies such as feasts and potlatches that were held.
 - Inter-tribal relationships between First Nations societies e.g. knowledge transfer, trading

- Students can create a table or poster to show the similarities and differences between the two Nations. They can present their findings to the rest of the class.
- Have students suggest reasons why there are so many differences in the types of governance among First Nations.

3. Understanding Feasts and Potlatches

Students can use a study of feasts and potlatches to examine the changes in First Nations governance over time.

A full study of feasts and potlatches is beyond the scope of this resource guide. Here the focus is on their roles in First Nations governance, and their suppression by colonial forces.

In the past, feasts, potlatches and other cultural institutions connected the social, political, legal and economic parts of First Nations societies in the past. The feast halls where they took place were like a combination of the courthouse, legislature, courthouse, land registry, insurance office and bank of today.

After Confederation, the Canadian government made feasts and potlatches illegal. This had a severe impact on the governance in First Nations communities. However, feasts and potlatches have survived and today they are a significant part of social, cultural and political fabric of many First Nations.

Students can consider four major questions about feasts and potlatches:

1. What are feasts and potlatches?
2. How were they important to First Nations governments in the past?
3. How were feasts and potlatches attacked by outside forces?
4. How are feasts and potlatches practiced today?

Resources

There are many books and websites available that discuss feasts and potlatches.

Some suggested resources are:

- Backgrounder 6, *Public Witness: Feasts and Potlatches* page 241.
- Beynon, William. *Potlatch at Gitsegukla: William Beynon's 1945 Field Notebooks*. UBC Press, 2000.
- Carrier Sekani Family Services. *Culture and Diversity*. PDF booklet, 7 pages. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc923>
- Gray, Lynda. *First Nations 101*. Adaawx Publishing 2011.
- Nelson, Nella. *Welcome Family and Friends to Our Bighouse. Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch*. Union Bay BC: Raven Publishing 2017.
- *Living Tradition. The Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch of the Northwest Coast*. Virtual Museum Website. <https://umistapotlatch.ca>

Backgrounders
See Backgrounder 6,
Public Witness: Feasts and Potlatches, page 241.

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- Lutz, John. *Makúk*, John Sutton Lutz, UBC Press, 2008.
- Mann, Marlaena Mann and Warner Adam, *Nowh Guna' Our Way: Carrier Culture, Knowledge and Traditions*, pages 87-98.
- "Potlatch: What I Learned as a Guest." Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc925>.
- Nuxalk Nation. "Potlatch." Nuxalk Nation website. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc926>.
- Ts'msyen Nation. *Persistence and Change*, SD 52 Prince Rupert, pages 42-44.
- Ts'msyen Nation. *Luutigm Hoon, Honouring the Salmon*, SD 52 Prince Rupert, pages 89-90.

a. What are Feasts and Potlatches?

Students build an understanding of some characteristics of feasts and potlatches.

- Determine if feasts or potlatches are practiced by First Nations communities in your region. If possible, find the traditional names for feasts or potlatches in the local First Nations language.
- If your school is in or near a First Nations community that holds feasts or potlatches, some students may be able to share their experiences or memories of attending a feast or potlatch.
 - If possible, students could meet with an Elder or knowledge-keeper who could explain the importance of the feast or potlatch to the local First Nations community. Depending on your community, they may be able to make a field trip to a feast hall.
- Provide students opportunities to learn about the purposes and the parts of a feast or potlatch using a variety of resources. See the list of Feasts and Potlatches resources above for suggested sources of information.
 - If students search online for websites and videos, use it as an opportunity for critical thinking and assessing the validity of sources. Some items that turn up are of questionable authenticity.
- Have students work in groups to outline some of the major components of a feast or potlatch, using the resources they have researched. Ideally students will be able to focus on the local First Nations communities.

b. Feasts and Potlatches in First Nations Societies

Students will examine how feasts and potlatches are connected with social, economic, political and governance aspects of First Nations societies.

- Teach or review the terms: social, economic, political, legal, governmental aspects of a society. Ask students to give examples of each from their own lives.
- Have students use a variety of resources to explore the history of feasts and potlatches: Government institutions in traditional societies; attacks by colonialism; revitalization of feasts and potlatches today.
 - Identify social, economic, political, legal, governmental features of a potlatch or feast.

- Have students examine how the feast or potlatch serves as an important institution of governance in many First Nations communities.
- Investigate why the Canadian government banned them, and how the banning impacted First Nations.
- Feasts and Potlatches Today. Students can find out how feasts and potlatches have survived and how they are interpreted today.

4. Impacts of Colonization

Students can examine different aspects of the impact of colonization on First Nations governance.

See also the activities about the impacts of colonization in Unit 2 for Grades 4-6, which can be adapted for grades 7 to 9.

a. Pass It On Game

Students engage in a game that may evoke emotions of being treated arbitrarily or unfairly. First Nations who faced the changing and arbitrary rules of colonization over many decades, rules over which they had little or no control.

- Play the Pass It On game to simulate an arbitrary and unfair experiences.
 - Have the class sit in a circle. Explain that they are going to play a game, but you are not going to explain the rules.
 - Choose an object to be passed from person to person, such as a pen, stapler, scissors or book.
 - Give the object to one person. Ask them to start the game by passing the selected object to the next person.
 - As soon as the object is passed, announce that the person has broken a rule. Explain what that rule is.
 - The broken rules should be simple and arbitrary. They can be about how the object was passed, who it was passed to, or passing without doing some arbitrary action or saying a code word. For example:
 - holding the object by the wrong end
 - passing with the right hand
 - giving it to someone wearing blue
 - not saying "gimme" when passing
 - Students continue to pass the object, following the rules that have been given.
 - Every so often, interrupt the flow and announce another arbitrary broken rule.
 - Continue the game until there are so many rules it breaks down.
- Have students reflect on their experiences playing the Pass It On game. Ask questions such as:
 - What are some words that describe your feelings during the game?

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- How does this game give insight to the experiences of First Nations? (For example, it is unfair and unjust; there is no consultation with the participants.)

b. Indian Act

Students suggest various ways that the Indian Act impacts First Nations and First Nations people.

- Ask students what they know about the Indian Act from their previous studies. Ask questions such as:
 - What is the Indian Act?
 - Who does it affect?
 - Why was it created in the first place?
 - Is it still in effect today?
- Students can read Blackline Master 22, page 131, *The Indian Act and the Indian Agent*, or for older students, Backgrounder 7, page 242, *The Indian Act*.
- Students can work in pairs or small groups to examine how the Indian Act has impacted the lives and the governments of First Nations people.
- Students can write a reflection or journal entry to record their thoughts and feelings about the fact that our country has a law like the Indian Act.

 Blackline Master 22, page 131, *The Indian Act and the Indian Agent*

 Backgrounder 7, page 242, *The Indian Act*

c. Band Councils

Students can compare the Band Council system with traditional First Nations governance systems.

- Have students read Backgrounder 10, *Band Council*, page 245. They can annotate the text as they read.
- After reading, discuss using questions such as,
 - Why do you think the Canadian government imposed the Band Council system on First Nations?
 - How did the imposition of the Band Council system impact traditional governance systems?
 - In what ways did the Band Council system discriminate against First Nations?
- Students can find additional information in the article "Indian Act and Elected Chief and Band Council System," Indigenous Corporate Training, 2015. Online at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc909>.
- Use Blackline Master 24, page 133, *Band Council Powers, 1886*, to discuss the few areas of governance that the Bands Council had control over when the Indian Act was first made law. Students can work on their own or in pairs to paraphrase or re-write the powers in their own words.
 - Have students discuss these powers in small groups. Ask questions such as:
 - Which of these powers do you think were most significant to First Nations communities?

 Backgrounder 10, *Band Council*, page 245

 Blackline Master 24, page 133, *Band Council Powers, 1886*

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- Which powers do you think were most significant to the government of Canada?
- Do any of the powers reflect the worldviews of First Nations?
- If possible, have students engage in some way with the local Band Council. For example, they could:
 - Visit the Band Council office.
 - Invite a council member or staff member to speak to the class.
 - View the First Nations website to see who the council members are and what services the Band Council provides.
- Students can find out what powers Band Councils have today. Compare them with the powers that the first Band Councils had in the 1886.
- Determine if your local First Nations community is still governed under the Indian Act, or if they exercise a form of self-government outside of the Act. Ask students to think of different ways they could find out the answer.
- Have students work individually or in small groups to compare traditional forms of governance with the Band Council. They could use Blackline Master 7, page 110, *Two Forms of First Nations Government*, as a graphic organizer.

 Blackline Master 7, page 110, *Two Forms of First Nations Government*

Formative Assessment Strategy

Use the activity on Blackline Master 7 to assess students' understanding of traditional and contemporary First Nations governance models.

 Backgrounder 9, *Citizenship*, page 244

d. Citizenship and Status

Students will examine how the Indian Act has impacted First Nation people's citizenship and the concept of "Indian status."

- Have students read Backgrounder 9, *Citizenship* to find out what is meant by "Indian Status."
 - Students can learn more about Indian Status at the Indigenous Foundations website, <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc910>.
- Discuss the impact that the Indian Act's membership rules had on families and communities.
- Point out that the Indian Act is based on paternalistic worldviews. Ask students how its rules have affected First Nations communities which are based on matrilineal inheritance, or which value the role of matriarchs in their governance system.
- Have students investigate the Membership Rules or Code of a local First Nations community. Many community websites post their membership codes.
- Students can investigate deeper into the impacts of the Indian Act on women, and the discrimination they faced around their citizenship and status.
 - Recent court cases have confirmed this discrimination and directed the Canadian government to change the Act to remove this discrimination.
 - For more information, see *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*, especially pages 19 to 23.
 - Another resource related to Bill C31 is the article at the Indigenous Corporate Training site, "Indian Act and Women's Status Discrimination via Bill C31 and Bill C3." Online at <https://bit.ly/2nASBtt>.

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- Students can create a time line of changes to citizenship from a First Nations perspective.
- Have students reflect on the idea of citizenship. Ask them what citizenship means personally to them. How might other people living in Canada have different ideas about citizenship? Is citizenship important?
 - Ask students how they would describe their identity. Is this the same as governments might identify them?

e. Lands and Resources

Students will examine how colonization has affected First Nations governance of their lands and resources, and how this is changing today.

- Review with students how traditional First Nations government systems managed the lands and resources in their territories. Ask how groups such as families and clans were used to govern the land. If they haven't already read it, students can read Backgrounder 2, *Traditional First Nations Societies*, page 237.
- Review or teach how the Indian Reserve system impacted First Nations control of their traditional territories. Students can read Backgrounder 8, *Indian Reserves*, page 243.
 - For more activities about reserves, see Unit 2, Activity 4c, page 62.
- Students can read Blackline Master 25, page 135, *Changes to Control of Lands and Resources* to find out how First Nations lost access to their resources.
- Have students track the changes in who benefits from the resources over time.
 - Students could pick one resource, such as salmon, gold, forests or moose and create a diagram or illustration to show how the benefits have changed.
 - Students can compare the benefits for three groups: First Nations before contact; newcomers or settlers; contemporary First Nations communities.
- Have students research one or more landmark court cases that have clarified through Canadian law the relationship between First Nations and their lands and resources. In particular, students could examine the *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*, [2014] and the *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)*, [2004]
 - For a list of significant Supreme Court of Canada cases, see "Supreme Court Cases of Canada cases involving Indigenous peoples," Simon Fraser University Library website, at <https://bit.ly/2V5Gt1v>
- Students can study the website of local First Nations communities to find out how they are managing and governing their lands and resources today.

 Blackline Master 25, page 135, *Changes to Control of Lands and Resources*

 **Backgrounder**
 For information see
 Backgrounder 11, Self
 Government, page 246.

 **Video**
People of the Grizzly:
Government by the People
<https://vimeo.com/21621109>

5. Rebuilding Self-Government

Students build an understanding of how and why First Nations are becoming increasingly self-governing again and resuming control over lands, resources and their own lives.

a. Kitselas Case Study

- Students can view the video *People of the Grizzly: Government by the People*. (21 min 47 sec. 2011.)
 - This video was produced by the Kitselas First Nations for its community, but it gives an overview of the history and goals of self-governance. It also highlights the differences between the Nisga'a Lisiims government and the Westbank First Nation self-government.
 - Ask students to watch the video to learn the Kitselas leadership's views on the importance of self-government for their community.
- Students can use the 4-2-1 strategy to reflect on the ideas in the video *People of the Grizzly: Government by the People*.
 - Ask students to think of 4 words or phrases that tell about the most important ideas in the video.
 - Students then share their words with a partner or a small group. They identify words or phrases that two or more people thought of.
 - From the list of words they have in common, students choose 2 words or phrases that they agree are the most important to explain the ideas in the video.
 - Then students decide on 1 word or phrase that best represents the most important idea or learning that they took away from the video.
 - Students can share their lists with the rest of the class. Discuss how the words and phrases connect with the ideas in the video.

b. Core Institutions of Governance

- Introduce or review four core institutions of governance.
- It should be noted that these are English terms. Generally speaking, First Nations have highly complex systems and language to describe those systems. Many of their Indigenous words cannot be translated directly into English.
- The four core institutions are:
 - Constitution
 - Governing Structures
 - Law Making Authority
 - Citizenship
- Students can use Blackline Master 32, page 143, *Core Institutions of Governance* to organize their understandings about the core institutions.

 Blackline Master 32,
 page 143, *Core
 Institutions of Governance*

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- Have students examine examples of constitutions of BC First Nations that are exercising self-government. Students can find the constitutions on the websites of the First Nations:
 - Nisga'a Nation
 - shishálh Nation
 - Westbank First Nation
 - Tsawwassen First Nation
 - Maa-nulth Treaty First Nations: each Nation in this treaty has its own constitution:
 - Huu-ay-aht First Nations
 - Ka:'yu:'k't'h/Che:k:tes7et'h' First Nations
 - Toquaht Nation
 - Uchucklesaht Tribe
 - Ucluelet First Nation
 - Tla'amin Nation
- Have students work in groups to examine one of the constitutions to see how the other core institutions (Governing Structures, Law Making Authority, and Citizenship) are described.
 - Ask them to create a graphic representation that outlines these core institutions.
- Students can identify parts of the constitution that relate to important topics to the First Nation, such as:
 - Lands and resources.
 - Traditional governance
 - Relationships with other governments
 - Statements of values and goals of the Nation
- Ask students to consider how a self-governing First Nation with their own constitution is different from a Band Council government under the Indian Act.

c. Rebuilding and Strengthening Self-Government

Students identify different ways that First Nations are working to rebuild and strengthen their systems of self-government.

- Ask students to study Blackline Master 31, page 142, *Building Strong First Nations Governments* and Blackline Master 34, page 147, *Moving Forward to Self-Government* to find out three ways that First Nations communities are taking steps to increasingly exercise self-government.
- Explore with students ways that self-government is used in BC First Nations communities. They can research examples of how self-government is being put into practice, including at the Nation level and at the community level. For example:
 - Identifying and entrenching traditional laws
 - Self-government under a treaty

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- Self-government under sectoral agreements
- Working together in tribal associations
- Provincial bodies, including health (First Nations Health Authority) and education (First Nations Education Authority).

d. How Will Self-Governance Affect First Nations People?

Students will explore ways that self-government impacts the lives of First Nations people now and in the future.

- Ask students to consider the question, Why is self-government important to First Nations?
 - Have them work in groups to find quotes or statements from a variety of First Nations people that give different answers to the question.
- The groups can present their quotes or statements to the class. Then students can summarize the main reasons they found.
- Have students compare traditional laws and governance with new forms of self-governance.
 - Find examples of ways that First Nations are adapting ancestral laws and governance to modern day self-government.
 - Discuss why Nations would not just use the old systems in today's world.