

# Unit 3

## Honouring the Children

### Overview

In 2021 many Canadians were shocked to learn about the confirmation of unmarked graves of children at a number of sites of Indian Residential Schools. Most Indigenous people, however, were not surprised. They knew through their oral histories of missing children. Many Survivors have carried the stories of classmates who were at school one day and gone the next with no explanation of what happened. Many had lived with the loss of children in their families who never came home. They bore witness to their missing children at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings.

The TRC Final Report delivered in 2016 included 94 Calls to Action. They include specific calls to address the issues around honouring the missing children and their burials. However responses to these calls, in terms of action, have been slow.

This unit is not intended to introduce or discuss the full impact of Indian Residential Schools. Many teachers will already have developed such lessons, and there are many excellent resources available to build on. The intent of this unit is to provide context and give suggestions for activities that will help students understand recent developments in the on-going story of the impacts of the residential schools.

### *Essential Understandings*

- There has always been evidence that children went missing from Indian Residential Schools, both in oral histories and in public hearings.
- First Peoples have had to lead the way in taking action to recognize the injustices of the residential school system, including honouring the missing children.
- Despite measures being taken to improve the lives of Indigenous children, inequities continue to exist for them.

### *Guiding Questions*

- How has the news of unmarked graves impacted First Peoples, and where are they going with the information?
- How have First Peoples continued to advocate for action to honour the missing children?
- What does “Every Child Matters” mean now and in the future?
- How are the children missing from Indian Residential Schools being honoured?
- What do the findings and public reactions say about Canada?

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### Teaching About Indian Residential Schools and Truth and Reconciliation

The topic of Indian Residential Schools, and particularly the unmarked burials, as well as many of the suggested resources, can trigger strong reactions and emotions from students. Using any of these activities requires a sensitive understanding of your students' ability to deal with the material.

Here are some important considerations when studying this unit:

- It is important to talk about the Truth of what happened in the schools, and what continues to impact Survivors and their families.
- It is important to talk about healing and the responsibility for all of us to take actionable steps that help us to move forward on the path to Reconciliation in a good way.
- Where possible, emphasize the inherent strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples in the past and in ongoing actions dealing with unmarked burials.
- It is important to note that the information or activities in this unit are not intended to blame or shame Non-Indigenous people.
- Teachers are not expected to be experts on the history and legacies of Indian Residential School or the topic of Truth and Reconciliation. Rather their role is as guides and facilitators.
- Be aware of students' reactions to the injustices discussed. It is important to convey to them that the purpose for understanding the past is to be part of a more positive future.

Particular consideration will be needed for Indigenous learners and schools in the geographic areas where unmarked graves have been confirmed.

#### Dealing Sensitive with the Topic

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It is important to deal with the topic of residential schools, and the unmarked graves, with sensitivity. A great deal will depend on the age, maturity and family background of students, and teachers will be the best judge of how to approach the material.

For some students the topics discussed will be sensitive, especially if they have personal connections with residential school survivors. Also, in some schools with new Canadians, teachers will need to be aware that some topics may echo feelings that are part of the immigrant experience.

Some considerations for making sure the topic is presented fairly and with sensitivity include the following\*:

- These topics may be best taught through discussion rather than instruction.
- A teacher is responsible for ensuring that any discussion promotes understanding and is not merely an exchange of intolerance.
- Allow time to deal with students' concerns and questions.

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\* Adapted from *BC First Nations Studies Teachers Guide*, BC Ministry of Education, 2004.

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- Be aware of issues that may arise for students both in formal discussions and informal conversations in and around the classroom; bring closure to conversations appropriately; play a role in ensuring potential conflict is dealt with in the context of the classroom.
- Try to give students the tools and skills to discuss these topics in the school *and* community

### Setting Ground Rules

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When discussing sensitive and controversial topics such as the Indian Residential School System, it is important to set ground rules to ensure a safe environment for sharing ideas and opinion:

- Always respect and value what others bring to the discussion.
- It is okay to feel discomfort.

### Going Further For Support

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Much of the content will elicit emotional responses from students. Teachers should be prepared to help students deal with the difficult emotions that may arise. Find people who are knowledgeable about the issue or who are trained to counsel students, such as school counselors or Indigenous resources available in the community.

Also, it might be helpful to let other educators in the school (i.e. counsellors) know that this topic will be discussed in the class.

In certain circumstances teachers may wish to refer students to a crisis line for confidential support:

- Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line. Their mandate is to support residential school survivors and their families but their policy is not to turn anyone away. 1-866-925-4419
- Kids Help Phone, an anonymous and confidential phone and on-line professional counselling service for youth. 1-800-668-6868

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### Learning Goals Focus

While many or all the First Peoples Principles of Learning and BC Learning Standards may be relevant, the following are suggested as a focus in this Theme Unit.

#### ***First Peoples Principles of Learning***

*Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.*

Studying about the impacts of finding of unmarked burials, and the importance of “Every Child Matters,” provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on issues of responsibility and accountability, both in personal and collective actions.

#### ***BC Learning Standards***

Content Learning Standards

##### **BC First Peoples 12**

- Role of Oral Tradition for B.C. First Peoples
- Provincial and federal government policies and practices that have affected, and continue to affect, the responses of B.C. First Peoples to colonialism
- Resistance of B.C. First Peoples to colonialism
- Contemporary challenges facing B.C. First Peoples, including legacies of colonialism

#### ***Required Resources***

Please Note: It will be important for teachers and students to add to these suggested Investigations to understand and interpret actions by all groups as they unfold.

This is an overview of the required resources for the activities in each Investigation. Additional optional sources are mentioned in the activities.

##### **Investigation 1**

- Line Master 3-1, page 126, *What Do You Know About Indian Residential Schools?*
- Line Master 3-2, page 127, *Indian Residential Word Sorter*.
- *Indian Residential Schools & Reconciliation Gr. 5, 10, and 11/12 Teacher Resource Guides*. FNEsc/FNSA, 2015. Online at <http://www.fnesc.ca/irsr/>
- Gladys We Never Knew (BCTF)  
Online at <https://issuu.com/teachernewsmag/docs/ebookr>
- “Further Steps toward Reconciliation – Understanding Residential Schools through Text,” *English First Peoples 10, 11, and 12 TRG*, pages 265 to 285.  
Online at <http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/efp/>
- Calls to Action, Truth and Reconciliation website. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc735>.

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### Investigation 2

- Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc news release, May 27, 2021: <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc777>
- Line Master 3-3, page 128 *Protocols and Technology*
- “Remote sensing and grave detection: How it works.” Canadian Archaeological Society backgrounder: [https://tjcentre.uwo.ca/documents/caa\\_remote\\_sensing\\_faq\\_v1.pdf](https://tjcentre.uwo.ca/documents/caa_remote_sensing_faq_v1.pdf)
- “‘We’ve always known’: Kuper Island residential school survivor not surprised by discovery of remains.” *CityNews*, July 13, 2021. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc778>
- Michael Redhead Champagne’s blog: <https://www.michaelredheadchampagne.com/blog/if-every-child-mattered>
- “At least 160 undocumented graves found at B.C. residential school,” *CityNews* 2021, 2:43 min. <https://youtu.be/KC7X0JLfhJg>
- *Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. Truth and Reconciliation Final Reports, Volume 45.* <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>
- Line Master 3-4, page 129, TRC Calls to Action 71 to 76
- Syilx journalist shares how she’ll report on Kamloops Indian Residential School.” *Toronto Star*, June 11, 2021. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc743>.
- “IndigiNews Reporter Kelsie Kilawna develops trauma-informed reporting resource.” CFNR Network, June 16, 2021. Audio, 32:45 min. linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc744>

### Investigation 3

- Line Master 3-5, page 130, *Telling the Whole Story*.
- Line Master 3-6, page 131, *The Protocols of Witnessing*.
- Witness Blanket project resources:
  - Witness Blanket website, <http://witnessblanket.ca>.
  - *Witness Blanket Trailer 2015*, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 2015. 3:25 min. <https://youtu.be/eNJ0a5P9YDo>
  - Carey Newman and Kirstie Hudson, *Picking up the Pieces. Residential School Memories and the Making of the Witness Blanket*, Orca, 2019.

### Investigation 4

- Indigenous Watchdog website, <https://indigenouwatchdog.org/>
- Examples of community healing memorials and projects:
  - “Hearts fill with emotion as children’s spirits return from Kamloops to Splatsin.” *Vernon Morning Star*, September 12, 2021. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc752>
  - “Kukwstép-kucw— Walking the Spirits Home.” Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc website, June 16, 2021. <https://tkemlups.ca/kukwstep-kucw-walking-the-spirits-home/>
  - Armstrong students plant 215 trees in honour of children. *Vernon Morning Star*, October 6, 2021. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc749>
- National Student Memorial Register, <https://nctr.ca/memorial/>

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### Investigation 5

- Orange Shirt Day website, <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html>
- Orange Shirt Day books:
  - *The Orange Shirt Story*. Phyllis Webstad (Picture book)
  - *Beyond the Orange Shirt Story*
  - *Orange Shirt Day*. Orange Shirt Society
- “How survivors fought to create Canada’s first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.” (CBC Sept 30 2021) <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc779>
- Line Master 3-7, page 132, *Creation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*

### Investigation 6

- Jordan’s Principle *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2020.  
<https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jordan-s-principle>
- Canadian Human Rights Tribunal suggested sites:
  - Indigenous Watchdog update on Call to Action 3.  
<https://indigenouwatchdog.org/call-to-action-3/#more-1978>
  - Jordan’s Principle, Ensuring First Nations Children Receive the Services They Need When They Need Them. Search for “Jordan’s Principle Information Sheet” at <https://fncaringsociety.com>
- Alanis Obomsawin’s documentary *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger* (National Film Board 2019, 1h 15 min.)  
<https://www.nfb.ca/film/jordan-river-anderson-the-messenger/>
- “What Can You Do,” Caring Society website.  
<https://fncaringsociety.com/what-you-can-do>.

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### ***Overview of Investigations***

These Investigations have more activities 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. The activities are intended to be adapted to fit the needs of your students and classroom.

The activities are intended to inspire ways that you can respectfully include relevant First Peoples' knowledge and perspectives in your course. For more information, see *Using The BC First Peoples 12 Teacher Resource Guide*, page 6.

1. Background to Indian Residential Schools
  - a. What Do You Know About Indian Residential Schools?
  - b. Building Knowledge about Indian Residential Schools
  - c. It Happened Anyway
  - d. Understanding the Calls to Action.
2. We Always Knew
  - a. Shocking Evidence at Kamloops
  - b. Protocols and Technology
  - c. Examining the TRC Calls to Action
  - d. Reporting the News
  - e. Examining Reactions
3. Leading the Way
  - a. Telling the Whole Story
  - b. Bearing Witness
  - c. Who Has the Responsibility?
4. Honouring and Healing
  - a. Indigenous Watchdog
  - b. Ongoing Work of Verification
  - c. Communities Healing
  - d. National Student Memorial Register
5. National Day For Truth and Reconciliation
  - a. Orange Shirt Day
  - b. How the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Came to Be
  - c. The Meaning of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
  - d. How to Commemorate This Day in a Meaningful Way.
  - e. Who Are You Buying Your Orange Shirts From?
6. Every Child Matters
  - a. Does Every Child Matter?
  - b. Child Welfare
  - c. Jordan's Principle.
  - d. BC First Nations Health Authority
  - e. Advocates for Indigenous Children
7. Truth-Telling: Accountability and Action
  - a. Confronting Genocide
  - b. Coming to Terms with Canada's History
  - c. Direct Action
8. Give Back, Carry Forward
  - a. What Did You Learn?
  - b. Documenting Learning

### Investigation 1 Background to Indian Residential Schools

The Investigations in the unit will require an understanding of the context of Indian Residential Schools and their impacts. They assume an understanding of what the residential schools were, their stated purposes, and First Peoples' responses to them. Therefore, it will be important to assess students' base of understanding about Indian Residential Schools.


#### *Questions for Inquiry*


- How have the impacts of Indian Residential Schools affected multiple generations of First Peoples?
- How do the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action provide a guide for Reconciliation in Canada?

#### a. What Do You Know About Indian Residential Schools?

Students can use one or more of these activities to assess their knowledge and understanding about what Indian Residential Schools were, and their impact on First Peoples and Canadian society in general.

- Students can use the quiz on Line Master 3-1, page 126, *What Do You Know About Indian Residential Schools?* to assess their basic knowledge about the schools. After they have responded individually to the questions, they can discuss them in groups or as a whole class. Alternatively, students could work in groups to create their own questions, and test each other's knowledge.
- Discuss the use of the term "Indian" when referring to the schools. Ask questions such as "Why is "Indian" still used, or why don't we just say "Residential Schools."
  - Explain that it is a historical term. At first these residential schools were specifically targeted at children who were "status Indians" under the Indian Act. (They later included Inuit and some Métis children.)
  - It is important to recognize that these schools were vastly different from other types of residential or boarding schools where parents send their children by choice.
- Students should be able to identify Indian Residential Schools that operated in your region, if any, and what schools local Indigenous students were sent to. For a map of schools in BC see *Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation, Grade 10*, page 26.
- Use the word list on Line Master 3-2, page 127, *Indian Residential Word Sorter*. Students could cut out the words and sort them into groups, create a word web that connects words together, or they could write sentences using two of the words together.
- 3-Way Summary strategy. Students can work individually or in groups to summarize the impacts of the Indian Residential Schools by writing three summaries of different lengths:
  - First write a summary of 75-100 words
  - Then write your summary using 30-50 words
  - Finally write it using only 10-15 words

 Line Master 3-1,  
page 126, *What Do  
You Know About Indian  
Residential Schools?*

 Line Master 3-2, page  
127, *Indian Residential  
Word Sorter*



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### b. Building Knowledge about Indian Residential Schools

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For students who don't have a full understanding of the key topics related to Indian Residential Schools, you may need to introduce or review them. Here are some suggested resources that may be useful:

- *Indian Residential Schools & Reconciliation Gr. 5, 10, and 11/12 Teacher Resource Guides*. FNESC/FNSA, 2015. Online at <http://www.fnesc.ca/irsr/>

These guides were developed in response to the call by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada for education bodies to develop age-appropriate educational materials about Indian Residential Schools. They provide a variety of activities and resources at a variety of levels. Many can be adapted for use in BC First Peoples 12.

- *Gladys We Never Knew* (BCTF) Online at <https://issuu.com/teachernewsmag/docs/ebookr>

This learning resource looks at the residential school experience focussing on one girl, Gladys Chapman, who went to Kamloops Indian Residential School. It may be particularly appropriate for setting the context of the unit, as she died at the school. The resource is directed at elementary school children, but many of the documents and activities can be adapted for secondary classes.

- *English First Peoples 10, 11, and 12 TRG*. See the unit "Further Steps toward Reconciliation – Understanding Residential Schools through Text," pages 265 to 285. Teachers may be able to develop a cross-curricular unit to build understandings about the background to Indian Residential Schools. Online at <http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/efp/>.

### c. It Happened Anyway

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Students should be familiar with the efforts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who protested about the effects of the Indian Residential Schools on the children. Despite repeated warnings and statistical evidence of high death rates in the schools, the government and churches did little to make changes or improvements.

- The Bryce Report. Students may be familiar with the reports by Chief Medical Officer Peter Bryce in the early 1900s. They can review or learn about how his reports of high death rates in Indian Residential Schools were largely ignored by governments and churches. You can use the resources in the FNESC/FNSA guide *Indian Residential Schools & Reconciliation 11/12*, Books 1 and 2. Pages 26–27 in Book 1 give background for teachers. Students can study the primary source documents on pages 13 to 17 in Book 2. Access at <http://www.fnesc.ca/grade-11-12-indian-residential-schools-and-reconciliation/>
  - Ask students to read the documents to identify what the various commentators suggested could be done to reduce the death rate of students.
  - Students may want to explore Bryce's reports in more detail. They are available online:
    - Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories (1907), <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/3024.html>

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- The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada (1922).  
<http://archive.org/details/storyofnationalc00brycuoft>
- Additional information is available at the First Nations Caring Society website, <https://fncaringsociety.com/people-history>. See also Investigation 6e below.
- For more activities, see *Indian Residential Schools & Reconciliation Grade 10*, Part Three, Resistance and Change. These resources deal with ways that First Nations families and others protested the schools and raised warnings about their disastrous effects on the children.

### d. Understanding the Calls to Action.

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Review what the Calls to Action are, and how they came about.

- Discuss questions such as the following to assess students' understandings.
  - Who created the Calls to Action? (Truth and Reconciliation Commission)
  - How did the Calls to Action come to be? (The result of many years of gathering testimony and hearing witnesses.)
  - What is the purpose of the Calls to Action? (To make clear what needs to be done to work towards Reconciliation in Canada)
  - Who are the Calls to Action for? (All Canadians, but particularly governments and churches.)
  - Have any Calls to Action been acted upon? This will depend on students' knowledge. They may know that National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was created in response to Call to Action 80. Another example is Call to Action 43 which calls on governments to adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. BC adopted UNDRIP in 2020 through the passing of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.
- You may want students to look at the scope of the 94 Calls to Action to build their understanding of the types of concerns they deal with. They can be found at the TRC website at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc735>. Students may also be interested to view the Calls to Action written for younger students <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc754>, at the First Nations Caring Society website.
- Students should also be familiar with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, which is housed in Winnipeg. It hold all the records from the TRC and continues the work of the Commission. Students can look at the website to see they types of records are housed there, and the work it does. <https://nctr.ca/>

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### Investigation 2 We Always Knew

Students can connect the responses to the identification of unmarked burials at the Kamloops Indian Residential School grounds with the understanding that there was plenty of evidence that many children did not come home from the residential schools.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- What evidence is there that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have always known about the missing children from Indian Residential School?
- How have First Nations used both traditional knowledge and Western technology to locate evidence of unmarked burials?
- How can you characterize different reactions to the news of the unmarked burials?

#### a. Shocking Evidence at Kamloops

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Introduce the Investigation by discussing or sharing understandings about the identification of the unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc.

- One way to begin is to share one or more images of the memorials placed in significant locations following the announcement of the findings by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. If possible, find an image from the local area. There are numerous sources on line, but here are a few suggestions:
  - Memorial outside former Kamloops Indian Residential School. *Chilliwack Progress*, linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc748>.
  - Witness gathering at BC Legislature. *Surrey Now-Leader*, linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc747>.
  - Memorial at Centennial Flame, Parliament Hill. *Ottawa Citizen*, linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc746>
- Students may have memories of their own and other people's reactions to the news. Students could discuss what they recall, or reflect on it in a personal way.
- Share with students the first news release by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. Link to the news release of May 27, 2021: <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc777> Have students identify some of the key phrases that stand out to them. Ask questions such as:
  - What aspects of the news release reflect Oral Traditions?
  - Why does Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc feel a responsibility towards the missing children and their home communities?
  - How were Protocols followed in releasing the news?
- After the news about the findings at Kamloops, other First Nations did similar examinations of the areas around residential schools in their areas. Students could research up-to-date information about these findings, particularly if there is a site near your school. The Wikipedia page "Canadian Indian residential school grave sites" has a summary of reported grave sites. Students should check that the information is current and accurate.


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- Note that the table includes data from the identification of graves that occurred before the Kamloops findings. This adds to the evidence that people have known about unmarked graves prior to the Kamloops announcements.

### b. Protocols and Technology

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Students can learn the importance of using Protocols and traditional knowledge along with modern scientific technology when investigating unmarked burials.

 Line Master 3-3, page 128, *Protocols and Technology*

- Read with students the article on Line Master 3-3, page 128, *Protocols and Technology* to learn about how both perspectives are being used in the search for unmarked burials.
- If students are interested to learn about ground penetrating radar and how it is used, they can read this backgrounder. It was written specifically for First Nations considering the use of the technology.
  - “Remote sensing and grave detection: How it works.” Canadian Archaeological Society backgrounder:  
[https://tjcentre.uwo.ca/documents/caa\\_remote\\_sensing\\_faq\\_v1.pdf](https://tjcentre.uwo.ca/documents/caa_remote_sensing_faq_v1.pdf)
- Students can learn about the further steps that will be needed to fully honour the missing children, identify who they are, and if possible return their remains to their homes. This will include excavating sites, identifying the remains where possible using oral histories, archaeology and forensics, and returning the remains to their home communities. In your discussions, ask students how Traditional Knowledge and Protocols as well as technology are being or will be used.
- Look for current reports on what is happening to confirm and identify the missing children. This article from 2021 can be used to begin investigations.
  - “This is what it will take to identify hundreds of remains in unmarked graves at residential schools.” CTV News web site, June 24, 2021, linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc745>

### c. Examining the TRC Calls to Action

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Students examine the Calls to Action about missing children and unmarked graves to learn what they contain, and what action is being taken.

- Consider introducing the topic with this news report from July 2021. It reports on the finding of unmarked graves at the former Kuper Island Indian Residential School. It includes both text and video, as well as a poem, “If Every Child Mattered,” by Michael Redhead Champagne. In the video Steve Sxwithul’txw, former student at the school, speaks about his experiences, his reactions to the news, and what action he wants taken. Champagne, a community leader in Winnipeg, speaks about his frustrations with public reaction and actions taken since The TRC report.


The items can be accessed in several ways:

- The entire news report: “We’ve always known’: Kuper Island residential school survivor not surprised by discovery of remains.” *CityNews*, July 13, 2021. <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2021/07/13/kuper-island-residential-school-survivor/>
- Video and poem at Michael Redhead Champagne’s blog: <https://>

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[www.michaelredheadchampagne.com/blog/if-every-child-mattered](http://www.michaelredheadchampagne.com/blog/if-every-child-mattered)

- Video at YouTube: CityNews 2021, 2:43 min. <https://youtu.be/KC7X0JLfJg>
- As they view the video, ask students to listen for what the two speakers want as a result of the findings of unmarked burials. (For example, accountability, a Special Prosecutor to look into the deaths; listen to the Survivors; each person do what they can; follow the TRC Calls to Action.)  
Have students discuss what they feel are the most significant points made by the speakers in the video. Some points of note are:
  - The knowledge of Survivors that some children didn't survive.
  - The question, what do these findings say about this country?
  - The question, is Canada's dealing with the evidence a road to Reconciliation?
  - Answers to questions, why this was done, and who's going to be accountable?
- The news report mentioned Volume 4 of the TRC's Final Report, *Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*. If students weren't aware of it, they can examine the document online. It may be useful to share or read the Executive Summary on pages 1 and 2.
  - *Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*. Find the report at the NCTR page <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>. Scroll down to "Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports."
- Examining the TRC Calls to Action. Calls to Action 71 to 76 arose out of this report. Have students summarize them in their own words. Calls to Action 71 to 76 are given on Line Master 3-4, page 129.  
Sample responses:
  - 71: Make all records on deaths of children available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
  - 72: Sufficiently fund the National Residential School Student Death Register.
  - 73: Maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries.
  - 74: Inform families of burial locations of children who died at the schools, and follow families wishes for commemoration and reburial.
  - 75: Identify, protect and commemorate burial sites where residential school children were buried.
  - When doing this work follow three principles: Action led by First Nations community most affected; consult Survivors and Knowledge Keepers; respect protocols when investigating burial sites.

 Line Master 3-4, page 129, *Calls to Action, Missing Children and Burial Information*

### d. Reporting the News

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Students can consider how the news regarding missing children and unmarked burials has been reported, and the broader issues around reporting traumatic events such as these.

To learn about culturally sensitive reporting by exploring the work of Syilx and Secwépemc journalist Kelsie Kilawna. Partially in reaction to the ways that the news about unmarked graves was being reported, she began developing a guide for trauma-informed reporting. The class can find out if this guide is complete, and available for them to refer to.

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- Discuss the impacts that the news about the unmarked graves may have had on Indigenous individuals and families. Be sensitive to the possibility that this topic could be triggering for some students. Discuss how the news could trigger memories and emotions, particularly for Survivors and families of Survivors.
- Share with students this personal essay by Kelsie Kilawna about her commitment to raising the ethical standards of news reporting. “Syilx journalist shares how she’ll report on Kamloops Indian Residential School.” *Toronto Star*, June 11, 2021. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc743>. Discuss questions such as:
  - What were her reactions to the news?
  - What responsibilities did Kelsie Kilawna take as a First Nations person, and as a journalist?
  - What are some features of trauma-informed ethical reporting mentioned in the essay? (taking time and care, self-location, transparency and safety care plans for those who share stories.)
- Students can further explore Kelsie Kilawna’s calls for trauma-informed and culturally sensitive reporting by listening to a radio interview she gave. “IndigiNews Reporter Kelsie Kilawna develops trauma-informed reporting resource.” CFNR Network, June 16, 2021. Audio, 32:45 min. linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc744>
  - Ask students to listen to find out what she has to say about protocols, particularly around reporting on traumatic events and interviewing Survivors in ethical ways.
- Have students find and analyse a variety of print and video news reports about this and other traumatic issues such as the Missing and Murdered Women and Girls. They can work in groups to examine the perspectives, and judge how ethically they think the issues were reported.
- Discuss the issues of accountability of journalists and news media when reporting Indigenous events. This could be part of a broader discussion about the importance of informed, authentic coverage of Indigenous topics in the media. For more information, see Duncan McCue’s website, Reporting in Indigenous Communities. <http://riic.ca/>

#### e. Examining Reactions

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Students can draw conclusions from various reactions to the news of the location of unmarked graves.

- Discuss with students the outpouring of responses when Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc announced they had located the unmarked graves of around 200 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. You may want them to find evidence of the way responses were reported or expressed in the media.
- Many people seem to be taking this topic seriously for the first time. Ask student why they think that is so, given the evidence that was there before this news. What might have changed? What is there about the finding of unmarked graves of children that caused such a response? (For example, one possible reason that the news of the unmarked graves resonates with the public is because they have an actual emotional connection to it; for whatever reason, stories and reports of the many effects of colonization, racism and oppression of Indigenous people did not connect with the general public in the same way.)

## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

- Questioning the ignorance. Ask students to think of some words that could be used to describe how Canadian governments and society in general have responded to the high death rates at Indian Residential Schools over time.
  - Some words could be: amnesia, apathy, dismissive, indifference, ignorance, parsimonious (stingy), powerless, racist, uncaring.

### Investigation 3 Leading the Way

Students consider various ways that First Nations have had to be the ones to advocate for change, particularly in the case of Indian Residential Schools and searching for evidence of missing children.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- What are protocols for witnessing in Indigenous cultures?
- Whose responsibility is it to make right the injustices of the past?
- In what ways have First Nations and others been leading the way for working towards justice?

#### a. Telling the Whole Story


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The TRC Final Report makes it clear that it was only through the actions of Survivors and other Indigenous people that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed.

In this activity students consider an excerpt from the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report to learn how the actions of First Peoples led to the formation of the TRC.

Students should have an understanding of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (2006) before reading the suggested text. You may want to review or teach the significance of the Agreement in the creation of the TRC. See Foundations, page 18, and the Glossary, page 321.

- Students can read and discuss an excerpt from the TRC Final Report, found on Line Master 3-5, page 130, *Telling the Whole Story*.
- Ask students to discuss the question, “What are the big ideas in this excerpt?” Ask them to highlight one or two sentences that express one of the big ideas.
- Ask student to identify specific undertakings mentioned in the text that were the results of actions taken by First Peoples. (For example, Survivor court cases, Settlement Agreement, creating the TRC, receiving a national apology.)
- Students can suggest other actions or undertakings that First Nations and others have taken the lead on. (For example, Day School and 60s Scoop survivors are reaching settlements through class action lawsuits. For more examples, see Unit 9, Taking Action.)

 Line Master 3-5, page 130, *Telling the Whole Story*


## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

### b. Bearing Witness

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#### Cross-curricular Connection

See *English First Peoples 10, 11, and 12 TRG*, Further Steps toward Reconciliation – Understanding Residential Schools through Text. Lesson 13, How Do We Witness? (p 275)

 Line Master 3-6, page 131, *The Protocols of Witnessing*

The act of witnessing is an important part of most Indigenous societies, and is a key part of Oral Traditions. In this activity students relate the traditional role of witnessing to the role it played in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings.

- Discuss the role of witnessing in First People's cultures. Ask students if they know of examples where witnessing is an important part of cultural practices. (For example, public ceremonies such as feasts and potlatches, name giving ceremonies)
- Have students read Line Master 3-6, page 131, *The Protocols of Witnessing*, to find out how the act of witnessing is part of the Oral Tradition, and how Protocols were followed in the TRC hearings.
- For a further discussion about Honorary Witnesses, see *Speaking Our Truth* (Monique Gray Smith, Orca 2017), pages 94 and 95.
- Students can reflect on questions relating to the personal strength required by Elders, Survivors and others to give evidence at hearings like the TRC. Ask questions such as:
  - What kind of strength do you think it takes for Indigenous people to bear witness at public hearings?
  - Was giving public testimony an invasion of privacy?
  - What may have motivated people to share their experiences?
  - How are they honoured?
  - What is being done with their testimony?
- Witness Blanket. Students can examine artist Carey Newman's project. Discuss how his project approaches witnessing from a different perspective.
  - Students can view an online version of the Witness Blanket at <http://witnessblanket.ca>.
  - Students can search online for videos about Carey Newman and the Witness Blanket project. One suggested video that gives an overview of the project is *Witness Blanket Trailer 2015*, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 2015. 3:25 min. <https://youtu.be/eNJ0a5P9YDo>
  - Get a copy of the book by Carey Newman and Kirstie Hudson. *Picking up the Pieces. Residential School Memories and the Making of the Witness Blanket*. Orca, 2019. 180 pages.

### c. Who Has the Responsibility?

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Students can reflect on issues of responsibility when dealing with the Calls to Action relating to Missing Children and Burial Information.

- Ask students to consider the fact that First Nations have had to take the lead in the search for the graves of their own children. Should it be their responsibility?
- Students can work in groups to discuss one or more questions regarding who has the responsibility for identifying and returning the missing children home?
  - Who should be dealing with these issues?
  - What discrepancies and inequalities are there in doing this work towards justice?
  - What are governments and churches doing to further the work of honouring the missing children?



## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

- Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have called on an independent criminal investigation to be made into the missing children and unmarked burials, and the appointment of a Special Prosecutor.
  - Students can do research to find out what action, if any, has been taken on independent investigations.
  - Discuss why it may be important for the investigation to be independent, with a Special Prosecutor overseeing it.

### Investigation 4 Honouring and Healing

Students examine what actions have been, and are being, taken following the first findings at Kamloops and other Indian Residential School sites since 2021.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- What progress are governments and churches making in achieving TRC Calls to Action 71 to 76?
- How are Indigenous communities working towards healing and honouring the missing children?
- In what ways are Indigenous people being supported in their quest for justice and honouring the missing children?

#### a. Indigenous Watchdog

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It may be useful for students to become familiar with the website Indigenous Watchdog, which tracks the progress that has or has not been made on implementing the TRC Calls to Action. They can use it to find up-to-date information about what is happening for each of the 94 Calls to Action. Find the Indigenous Watchdog at <https://indigenouwatchdog.org/>.

- Students can assess the credibility of the website. Discuss the importance of verifying the reliability of information found on the Internet. One way is to find out who creates it. Are they knowledgeable or experienced in the topics presented? What is their motivation for creating the website? Students can find answers to these by going to the About tab on the website. What do they conclude about the reliability of the website?
- Students can examine an overview of the progress or lack of it in graphic format. On the Calls to Action tab, scroll down to the “94 Calls To Action List.” Students can compare the number of Calls to Action that are Complete, In Progress, Stalled, or Not Started. Click on each group of Calls to learn more.
- Have students examine in more detail the update reports on the Calls to Action relating to Missing Children and Burials. This is found under the Reconciliation Calls to Action tab, <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc742>. Scroll down the page to find links to each of the Calls to Action to find out details about progress or lack of it.
- Have students give a summary of the progress on the Calls to Action relating to the Missing Children and Burials.

## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

### b. Ongoing Work of Verification

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Students can research to learn what is happening currently with residential school sites and the verification of the missing children's remains. They could work in groups to report on one of the schools.

- An example of plans for investigation in 2021 can be found in this article: Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations Announce Investigation at Former St. Paul's Indian Residential School Site. NationTalk, August 10, 2021. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc741>. This web page also has a link to the Preliminary Workplan for the St. Paul's Indian Residential School Investigation: <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc740>.
- Students can find out what groups have been taking responsibilities for doing the work. How have bodies like churches and schools been supporting the First Nations groups?

### c. Communities Healing

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Students can find out what First Nations communities are doing for healing and to honour the spirits of the young people who never made it home. As this is an on-going process it will be important to find current information, particularly from local communities.

- Students could work in pairs or groups to find one example of community healing through memorials, commemorations, events and actions like commemorative walks. They could give a short report on their findings, or create a class gallery of posters that present the information.
- Ask students to look for ways that individuals and communities demonstrated commitment and strength as they carried out the activities of healing. For example, in the article from the *Vernon Morning Star* below, students may note the commitment and physical strength required to make the five day journey, and the emotional strength it would take to carry on.
- Some examples:
  - "Hearts fill with emotion as children's spirits return from Kamloops to Splatsin." *Vernon Morning Star*, September 12, 2021. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc752>
  - "Kukwstép-kucw— Walking the Spirits Home." Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc website, June 16, 2021. <https://tkemlups.ca/kukwstep-kucw-walking-the-spirits-home/>
  - Armstrong students plant 215 trees in honour of children. *Vernon Morning Star*, October 6, 2021. <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc749>

### d. National Student Memorial Register.

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TRC Call to Action 72 called for a national Residential School Student Death Register to be established and funded. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has created a National Student Memorial Register online at <https://nctr.ca/memorial/>

- Depending on the students, you may want them to look at how the National Student Memorial Register has been created, how it is presented online, and what types of information is provided.

## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

- Students can see what the Indigenous Watchdog website has to say about the progress made on Call to Action 72. <https://indigenouwatchdog.org/call-to-action-72/>

### Investigation 5 National Day For Truth and Reconciliation

In 2021, the federal government declared September 30 as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Students consider the significance of this national holiday, how it was created, and how it is recognized.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- How does a day like this receive official recognition?
- How did the evidence of unmarked burials impact the creation of the day?
- How can this day be commemorated in meaningful ways?

#### a. Orange Shirt Day

Students learn about the impact of the Orange Shirt Day in creating a national awareness of Indian Residential Schools.

- Discuss with students their experiences around Orange Shirt Day. Ask them if they know how this special day came to be. See the Orange Shirt Day website, <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html>. Ask students to find out about the roles played by Phyllis Webstad and Fred Robbins.
- Students can read about Phyllis Webstad's experience going to residential school, and the importance of the orange shirt. See <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/phyllis-story.html>
- Ask students to find out why September 30 was chosen as Orange Shirt Day. (See the Orange Shirt Day website, <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html>.)
- Students can research the growth of the original Orange Shirt Day in Williams Lake to the nation-wide recognition of the day.
- You may want to have copies of books about Orange Shirt Day on hand for students to read:
  - *The Orange Shirt Story*. Phyllis Webstad (Picture book)
  - *Beyond the Orange Shirt Story*
  - *Orange Shirt Day*. Orange Shirt Society

#### b. How the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Came to Be

Students investigate how this national day of commemoration came to be created. They can connect its history with ideas developed in Investigation 3, Carrying the Load.


- Use this article to begin the investigation: “How survivors fought to create Canada’s first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.” (CBC Sept 30 2021) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/national-day-survivors-reflections-1.6191553>
  - Discuss the quote by Phyllis Webstad: “The ancestors are behind this. The children are behind it.”

#### **Cross-Curricular Connections**

This activity supports the following Content Learning Standards

Law Studies 12: Canadian legislation concerning First Peoples  
Political Studies 12: Structure and function of Canadian and First Peoples political institutions

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 Line Master 3-7, page 132, *Creation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*

- Ask student to summarize the different perspectives of Eddy Charlie and Phyllis Webstad about the way the National Day came about. (Charlie was sad that it took the tragedy of locating the graves to make it happen; Webstad felt it was the ancestors and children who pushed it through.)
- Have students examine the creation of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation using the timeline on Line Master 3-7, page 132, *Creation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*.
  - Point out that it was the advocacy of Georgina Jolibois, an Indigenous Member of Parliament, whose private member's bills initiated the creation of the statutory holiday.
- Students can discuss the connection between the Kamloops announcement and the creation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Ask, How do you think the finding of the unmarked graves affected the creation of the National Day?
- Ask students to reflect on the creation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in terms of Indigenous people “carrying the load,” as discussed in Investigation 3. They could discuss verbally or reflect in a journal entry.

### c. The Meaning of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Ask students to discuss their understanding about the importance of the day. Students can examine the significance of this national day for different segments of Canadian society.

- Conduct a survey. Students can conduct a survey to find out how different people respond to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. As a class, discuss the types of questions that might be relevant or interesting to find out about.
- Who is recognizing this day and who isn't? The Federal government has made it a statutory holiday. What are provinces doing?
- Discuss the fact that some people view the day as a “holiday” without understanding its purpose. Have students develop a way to explain to these people its purpose and significance. This could be in a paragraph, through group discussion, a poster, or as a role play activity.

### d. How To Commemorate This Day In A Meaningful Way.

Students can suggest ways that their school and community could commemorate National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. They can refer to numerous sources that give examples of both Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

- Discuss with students what makes a meaningful way of commemorating the day. What types of activities might not be really meaningful, but are just gestures of acknowledgement.
- Student can list some features of meaningful commemorations.

### e. Who Are You Buying Your Orange Shirts From?

Discuss how some companies may sell orange shirts and use the logo “Every Child Matters” for profit, or appropriate artists’ designs. Students may have some related experiences of their own.

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- Students can look at on-line sites that sell Every Child Matters shirts to see if the retailers are ethically selling the shirts, and if designs have been appropriated. Students can look for information such as the brand name, manufacturer, country it is shipped from.
- This could be part of a large discussion about cultural appropriation.

### Investigation 6 Every Child Matters

Students examine how the rights and needs of Indigenous children are being met today, and ways that they are not being met.

Note that this topic may bring up sensitive or personal issues to some students. Teachers will need to be aware of possible triggering effects on their students.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- What does “Every Child Matters” mean in today’s context?
- What are some significant struggles that many Indigenous children and families face today?
- What individuals and groups are advocates for Indigenous children?

#### a. Does Every Child Matter?

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Discuss with students how they interpret the words “Every Child Matters.” Ask, is it just about the past, or is it important for today and tomorrow?

- Discussion will depend on students’ experiences. Guide the discussion with questions such as:
  - Do you think there are differences in the way Indigenous and non-Indigenous children are treated today?
  - What inequities continue to exist?
  - What barriers and struggles are present?
  - What are the hopes and goals for Indigenous families and communities?
- You may want to introduce or review the poem “If Every Child Mattered” by Michael Redhead Champagne. (See Investigation 2b). Linked at <https://www.michaelredheadchampagne.com/blog/if-every-child-mattered>
- Students can reflect on what “Every Child Matters” means to them. They can represent their ideas through a creative expression such as poem, art work or creative writing, or they could discuss it with a partner or group.

#### b. Child Welfare

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One of the most telling indicators of how Indigenous children are treated in Canada is are the statistics about the over-representation of Indigenous children in foster care. Students can investigate the connections between the impact of Indian Residential Schools and the number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system.

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- Students can refer to the Indigenous Watchdog website to see the latest statistics and updates on what action if any is being taken. <https://indigenouwatchdog.org>
- Students can read this article and if possible follow up on the study that links residential schools and youth in care. “Study shows ‘empirical’ link between residential schools and Indigenous youth in care: researcher.” CBC News, July 4, 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/study-links-trauma-from-residential-schools-to-overrepresentation-of-indigenous-youth-in-care-1.5199421>

#### c. Jordan’s Principle.

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Students can find out about Jordan’s Principle: what it is, how it came to be, and what it means for First Nations children.

- What is Jordan’s Principle? Some students in the class may be familiar with it. If students are not aware of Jordan’s Principle, they can research to find out.
  - Jordan’s Principle ensures First Nations children get the services and support they need, when they need them. Any service available to other children must be made available to First Nations children without delay or denial. Questions about what agency will pay for the services should not get in the way of their delivery. A Private Members motion in support of Jordan’s Principle passed unanimously in the House of Commons in 2007. However, it’s legal status was unclear.
  - This resource gives background to the history and issues around the implementation of Jordan’s Principle: Jordan’s Principle. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2020. <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jordan-s-principle>
- Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Students can learn about why First Nations groups took the federal government to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal over Jordan’s Principle in 2016, and what the results were. (It ruled that the government’s interpretation of the Principle was too limited and discriminated against First Nations children.)
  - Students can investigate what changes, if any, the Canadian government has made to fully implementing Jordan’s Principle. They can refer to these sites:
    - Indigenous Watchdog update on Call to Action 3. <https://indigenouwatchdog.org/call-to-action-3/#more-1978>
    - Jordan’s Principle, Ensuring First Nations Children Receive the Services They Need When They Need Them. Search for the current Jordan’s Principle Information Sheet at <https://fncaringsociety.com>.
- For a deeper exploration, students can view Alanis Obomsawin’s documentary *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger* (National Film Board 2019, 1h 15 min.) <https://www.nfb.ca/film/jordan-river-anderson-the-messenger/>

## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

### d. BC First Nations Health Authority

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Students can investigate some of the work done by the BC First Nations Health Authority to promote children's health and wellness. For more about the FNHA, see Unit 6 Food, Health and Wellness, page 220.

- Students can explore the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve program. Find out the goals and features of the program here: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/maternal-child-and-family-health/aboriginal-head-start-on-reserve>
  - If there is an Aboriginal Head Start Program in your community you may be able to arrange a visit to learn more about what they do there.

### e. Advocates for Indigenous Children

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Students can investigate what advocacy work is being done to meet the rights and needs of Indigenous children today.

- They can learn about people who have been agents of change, such as Cindy Blackstock and Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond
- Students can investigate the work of the First Nations Caring Society. It is an advocate for children and families in dealing with governments, and also provides reconciliation-based educational resources. See the website at <https://fncaringsociety.com/>
  - Students can be advocates by going to the Caring Society's "What Can You Do" page to find seven ways to make a difference. <https://fncaringsociety.com/what-you-can-do>. These link to ways to support special projects such as "I am a witness," Jordan's Principle, and Shannen's Dream.
- Peter Henderson Bryce Award. Students may be interested to find out about the recognition in recent years of Dr. Peter Bryce as a hero and advocate for Indigenous children.
  - In 2015 a monument to celebrate his work and legacy was erected at his grave site in Ottawa. See the CBC article, "Dear Dr. Bryce: Letters to late residential school whistleblower express gratitude, pledge action" linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc755>.
  - The First Nations Caring Society has created the Peter Henderson Bryce Award to recognize people who are advocates for Indigenous children. For details, see <https://fncaringsociety.com/ph-bryce-award>
  - Have students find out about past winners of the award. What types of action did they take on behalf on Indigenous children?
  - Students can consider who they might nominate for this award, either from their community, or from someone in the news.

## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

### Investigation 7 Truth-Telling: Accountability and Action

Coming to terms as a country with topics such as the unmarked graves of Indigenous children is about truth-telling. It is essential to moving forward with Reconciliation.

Students can use what they have learned in this unit to reflect on the impact of the evidence of the unmarked graves in a broader context.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- What does the evidence of the unmarked graves mean for Canada as a whole, and for Canada's relationships with First Peoples?
- How can Canada take real ownership and responsibility of this part of its past?

#### a. Confronting Genocide

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The term “genocide” is often controversial when discussing colonial actions such as the Indian Act and Indian Residential Schools. Students can discuss or debate the use of the term in the context of the missing children and unmarked graves.

Have students assess the use of terms such as genocide and cultural genocide in these documents:

- Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. (TRC summary report.) Students can do a word search on the Summary Report to find instances of the use of genocide and cultural genocide.
  - Access at [https://web.archive.org/web/20200717145159/http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Executive\\_Summary\\_English\\_Web.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20200717145159/http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf)
- “Canada’s top judge says country committed ‘cultural genocide’ against Indigenous peoples.” This article on the APTN News site reports on remarks made by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin in 2015. Linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc756>
- “Genocide and Indigenous Peoples in Canada.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2020. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/genocide-and-indigenous-peoples-in-canada>
- United Nations definition of genocide. See, for example, <https://genocide.mhmc.ca/en/genocide-definition>.

Students can discuss the differences between the terms assimilation, genocide and cultural genocide. Ask, What evidence is there to support the understanding that the way First Peoples have been treated by Canada is cultural genocide?

#### b. Coming to Terms with Canada’s History

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Canada has an international reputation as peacekeepers and champions of human rights. How can we reconcile this view of Canada with its colonial history?

- Ask students to consider questions about Canada’s colonial history. They can choose one to write a response to, or they can work in groups to discuss several questions.



## Unit 3 Honouring the Children

- What does the evidence of the unmarked graves mean for Canada as a whole?
- How important is it that Canadians know the truth about the country's past?
- Why might some people resist efforts to discuss or come to terms with difficult histories?
- What aspects of Canada's history are most important to face?
- How can Canada take responsibility for past injustices?
- Ask students to think about how finding the evidence of unmarked graves can change Canada.

### c. Direct Action

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Ask students to consider what types of direct action can be taken to deal truthfully with Canada's past, and move forward as a nation.

- Discuss what meaningful or direct action might look like. Ask students to consider the question from personal, school, community and national perspectives. They can illustrate their responses in graphic form, such as posters, infographics, or flow charts.
- Students can research examples of ways that Canadians are acknowledging and confronting the country's colonial past, and working positively towards Reconciliation.
- Students can work in groups or as a class to develop a plan of action that their class or their school could undertake. (See, for example, actions taken by students at Dr. Charles Best Secondary School in Coquitlam during Red Dress Day in 2021. See Unit 9, Investigation 6a, page 301.)

## Investigation 8

### Give Back, Carry Forward

Students reflect on the important things they have learned in this unit, and consider how they can give back and carry their learning forward.

Refer to the Major Project outline, page 51.

### a. What Did You Learn?

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Students can consider these questions:

- What is one new thing you learned in this unit that you would consider a gift?
- What is one thing growing out of your learning that you can take action on?
- What are some new things you learned about where you live?
- What did you learn about yourself?

### b. Documenting Learning

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- Students can discuss or share ideas for documenting their learning.
- Students can begin to come up with ways that they can showcase their learning in this course, while connecting to both “giving back” and “carrying forward” what they have learned.

## What Do You Know About Indian Residential Schools?

See what you know about Indian Residential Schools before we learn more about them.

1. What were Indian Residential Schools?
2. Why were First Nations, Inuit and Métis children sent to Indian Residential Schools?
3. Who paid for the schools?
4. Who ran the schools?
5. What were some of the experiences of children at these schools?
6. What was the closest Indian Residential School to your community?
7. What were some of the effects of Indian Residential Schools on First Nations, Inuit and Métis?
8. Why do you think it is important to learn about the impacts of Indian Residential Schools?

## Indian Residential Schools Word Sorter

These are all words and phrases that relate to the Indian Residential Schools and its impact on First Nations. Cut out the words and phrases and sort them in a way that makes sense to you.

Explain your sorting to a partner. Are there other ways you can sort them?

colonialism	loss
language	trauma
church	control
power	money
assimilation	family
racism	identity

## Protocols and Technology

“This past weekend, with the help of a ground penetrating radar specialist, the stark truth of the preliminary findings came to light – the confirmation of the remains of 215 children who were students of the Kamloops Indian Residential School.” [Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc news release, May 27, 2021]

Long before the evidence was recovered by technology, Indigenous people were well aware that there were unmarked burials at Indian Residential Schools across Canada. Families passed on knowledge of children who never came home and whose deaths were unexplained. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimated at least 4000 children died and were unreported.

So when the Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc brought in the technology of ground penetrating radar (GRP), it confirmed the “unthinkable loss that was spoken about but never documented.”

It was important for Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc to respectfully use the technology so it would honour and respect the missing children.

The process was guided by a concept the Secwépemc know as Walking on Two Legs. Based on ancient teachings, this concept involves “respecting and incorporating both Indigenous and Western ways of being and knowing.” (<https://www.qwelmintec.ca/governance>) This meant using the Western technology of GPR, but guided by Secwépemc knowledge and Protocols.

The stories of Elders and Knowledge Keepers led the investigators to choose the location for the first GPR surveys. Community members were involved in the design and process of the surveys, and also the interpretation of the results.

The use of GPR is only the first step in confirming the burials. They are being called “targets of interest” and “probably burials.” To know for sure, the sites will need to be excavated. This will take a great deal of time and money. It will also require the work to be done with respect, dignity and according to Protocol.

“This is a long process that will take significant time and resources. They were children, robbed of their families and their childhood. We need to now give them the dignity that they never had. Those are our next steps.” (Dr Sarah Beaulieu, GPR expert)

## Calls to Action

### Missing Children and Burial Information

71. We call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

72. We call upon the federal government to allocate sufficient resources to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to allow it to develop and maintain the National Residential School Student Death Register established by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

73. We call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.

74. We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child's burial location, and to respond to families' wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.

75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.

76. We call upon the parties engaged in the work of documenting, maintaining, commemorating, and protecting residential school cemeteries to adopt strategies in accordance with the following principles:

- i. The Aboriginal community most affected shall lead the development of such strategies.
- ii. Information shall be sought from residential school Survivors and other Knowledge Keepers in the development of such strategies.
- iii. Aboriginal protocols shall be respected before any potentially invasive technical inspection and investigation of a cemetery site.

## Line Master 3-5

# Telling the Whole Story

In its final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) made it clear that it was the actions of Indian Residential School Survivors and other First Peoples who pushed forward the work of receiving recognition and justice for the effects of the Indian Residential School system. This text is a portion of the Final Report of the TRC.

The Commission believes that Survivors, who took action to bring the history and legacy of the residential schools to light, who went to court to confront their abusers, and who ratified the Settlement Agreement, have made a significant contribution to reconciliation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was not established because of any widespread public outcry, demanding justice for residential school Survivors. Neither did the Settlement Agreement, including the TRC, come about only because government and church defendants, faced with huge class-action lawsuits, decided it was preferable to litigation.

Focusing only on the motivations of the defendants does not tell the whole story. It is important not to lose sight of the many ways in which Aboriginal peoples have succeeded in pushing the boundaries of reconciliation in Canada.

From the early 1990s onward, Aboriginal people and their supporters had been calling for a public inquiry into the residential school system. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples made this same recommendation in 1996.

The majority of Survivors ratified the Settlement Agreement, in part because they were dissatisfied with the litigation process. Survivors wanted a public forum such as a truth and reconciliation commission so that Canada could hear their unvarnished truths about the residential schools. Survivors also wanted a formal apology from Canada that acknowledged the country's wrongdoing. Due in large part to their efforts, the prime minister delivered a national apology to Survivors on behalf of the government and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

*The Honourable Stephen Point, speaking as TRC Honorary Witness*

We got here to this place, to this time, because Aboriginal Survivors brought this [residential schools] to the Supreme Court of Canada. The churches and the governments didn't come one day and say, "Hey, you know, we did something wrong and we're sorry. Can you forgive us?" Elders had to bring this matter to the Supreme Court of Canada. It's very like the situation we have with Aboriginal rights, where nation after nation continues to seek the recognition of their Aboriginal title to their own homelands.

(Source: *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 2015, page 208)

## The Protocols of Witnessing

“The term witness is in reference to the Aboriginal principle of witnessing, which varies among First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Generally speaking, witnesses are called to be the keepers of history when an event of historic significance occurs. Through witnessing, the event or work that is undertaken is validated and provided legitimacy. The work could not take place without honoured and respected guests to witness it. Witnesses are asked to store and care for the history they witness and to share it with their own people when they return home. For Aboriginal peoples, the act of witnessing these events comes with a great responsibility to remember all the details and be able to recount them accurately as the foundation of oral histories.”

(TRC, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, 2015, page 442)

“To witness” has multiple meanings, but they all have to do with experiencing. A person can be witness to an event, a moment in time that they have experienced. Sometimes a person may be called on to be a witness in court, where their experiences and observations take on a legal significance.

For First Peoples, the act of witnessing is an important Cultural Protocol. It is a feature of Oral Traditions as a way of formalizing and recording matters of social importance. Often this takes place in formal situations such as feasts and potlatches, where invited guests witness actions and events, and have responsibilities tied to their witnessing.

For First Peoples, in more contemporary contexts, witnessing by giving testimony has been an essential part of major public inquiries, including The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

In these events, often in very difficult circumstances, many First Peoples have shared their personal experiences to help bring about awareness and change.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard from more than 6,000 witnesses, most of whom survived the experience of living in the schools as students. These public testimonies form a new oral history record based on Indigenous legal traditions and the practice of witnessing.

Each meeting of the TRC also had Honorary Witnesses. Their role was to be the official witnesses to the testimonies given by Survivors, their families and others. They represented Canadians as a whole. They also took on the responsibility of carrying the work of Reconciliation forward after the hearings.

# Creation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

