

Aboriginal Perspectives Unit Guide for the Theme Cinema and Representation

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Overall Objective

Clearly there has been an evolution in how the media has portrayed Aboriginal people through the ages. The most significant advancement has been the emergence of Aboriginal filmmakers, whose work provides an authentic look at our Aboriginal peoples, cultures and issues. The suggested activities for this theme will engage students in critical thinking exercises that examine stereotypes and the role the media plays in accurately representing all people and their cultures.

Grade Levels

7-12

Content Areas

Media Studies
Language Arts
Social Studies
History
Native Studies
Computer Literacy

Films (and excerpts used)

How to Build an Igloo, 1950, excerpt 1 (1 min 24 s – 2 min 6 s)

Land of the Long Day, 1952, excerpt 1 (27 min 51 s – 29 min 17 s)

Circle of the Sun, 1960, excerpt 2 (24 min 37 s – 27 min 44 s)

Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance, 1993, excerpt 6 (1 h 19 min 19 s – 1 h 21 min 16 s)

My Village in Nunavik, 1999, excerpt 1 (10 min 4 s – 10 min 48 s)

Totem: The Return of the G'psgolox Pole, 2003, excerpt 1 (14 min 54 s – 19 min 52 s)

NB: The excerpts and related films can be viewed online free of charge at
<www.nfb.ca/aboriginalperspectives> in the Cinema and Representation theme.

Materials Required

Internet, data projector, VCR, notebook, poster paper, old magazines, markers and access to a computer lab that has some type of presentation software.

Summary

The suggested activities for this theme are intended to guide students through the critical process of analysis. An examination of the film excerpts and other visual media will be the basis for the critical analysis of stereotypes in the media.

There will also be an opportunity to examine the emergence of Aboriginal filmmakers and study their contributions to the art form. Students can be challenged to compare and contrast the documentaries made by and for Aboriginal Peoples.

Introduction Activity (10 minutes)

Aboriginal stereotypes have been a part of popular culture for over 100 years. Display an image from the resource list or any image depicting Aboriginal people in a stereotypical manner. Ask students to identify what is stereotypical about the image; have them consider the impact this portrayal has on how Aboriginal people are perceived.

ACTIVITY 1: Dispel the Myths (2 x 50-minute periods)

Step 1: View the film excerpts *How to Build an Igloo* and *Land of the Long Day*.

- Have students identify the stereotypical depictions of Aboriginal people in each film. Ask the class why they think filmmakers of each of the documentaries would have depicted their subject matter in this particular way. (See teachers' notes.)
- Brainstorm other ways in which they have seen Aboriginal people portrayed in the media.

Step 2: Students research how Aboriginal people are portrayed in the media, with a focus on print materials (old magazines). Note: The absence of representation for a group within mass media is a topic worth exploring. (See teachers' notes.)

Step 3: Have students create a poster that displays the images they have found. Displayed images must include accompanying captions that identify the stereotypes being portrayed.

Step 4: Upon completion of the posters, students will then share with their classmates their research findings as a stimulus for further discussion.

ACTIVITY 2: Dispel the Myths - *alternate format* (2 x 50-minute periods)

Step 1: View the same film excerpts listed above and engage in the same initial discussion.

- Have students conduct research using the Internet to gather information on Aboriginal stereotypes.
- The images and information gathered will be used in conjunction with a presentation software program to create a slide show.
- The purpose of the slide show is to present images that first depict a stereotype and then dispel the myth with a slide depicting the reality (be sure to have students include a reference slide citing their resources).

Step 2: Have the students share their slide show presentations with one another (see appendix for presentation evaluation rubric).

ACTIVITY 3: Aboriginal Role Models (2 x 50-minute periods)

Step 1: Discuss with students the concept of role models: what they are, who they are and what purpose they serve. Have the students identify a role model from their lives. What is important about the individuals that they connect with?

- Have students consider the following categories as a framework for exploring and researching specific Aboriginal role models: political/historical leaders, sports/entertainment figures, and community members.

- Gather information on role models from each of the categories. A number of research strategies may be used including interviews, Internet, periodicals and magazines.

Step 2: Students will compile their research findings on a computer using presentation software (teachers may opt to use a more traditional format for reporting). Encourage the use of multimedia such as audio clips, video clips and photographs in the slide shows prepared by students.

Step 3: Students share their projects with one another

Closure Activity (5 minutes)

Ask students to check billboard and television advertisements over the next few days and become aware of how different groups and individuals are depicted.

Check for Understanding

Display the same image used in the introduction. Then ask the class to identify the stereotype and comment on their understanding of the impact these portrayals can have on their views and opinions.

Evaluation rubric

[Rubric Generator](#)

References and Resources

Introductory Activity

[Cigar Store Indian Image](#)

[APTN Aboriginal Peoples Television network](#)

[Media Awareness Network](#)

[INAC WEB SITE: Role Models](#)

Appendix

PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Criteria	1	2	3	4
Content: organization, intent/purpose, analysis/ understanding, conclusion	Disorganized, confusing, incomplete; intent and purpose are vague; low level of understanding of topic and no analysis; presentation stops without a summary.	Presentation is somewhat planned, yet a bit disjointed; intent and purpose are generalized; presentation is narrative and lacks analysis; conclusion does not reflect all aspects of the presentation.	There is evidence of planning, preparation and a format being followed; purpose and position are clear; evidence of understanding but the analysis is not fully developed; confusion refocuses ideas, yet offers nothing new.	The ideas are interconnected and the presentation flows smoothly from one idea to another; captivates audience and focuses topic; critical analysis throughout which raises new perspective; student's understanding goes above and beyond topic; conclusion ties ideas together clearly and raises new questions.
Language Use: appropriate, interesting, clear	Language is ineffective, vague, or inappropriate; does not convey the intent of the presentation; inaudible, unclear and confusing.	Language used conveys main message of presentation, though somewhat generalized and non-specific; inconsistencies are evident in clarity and audibility.	Language used was effective; conveys the intent of the presentation; audible, specific and appropriate.	Language used is meaningful and thought-provoking; use of language is memorable and rich; audible, clear and concise.
Delivery Style: confidence, enthusiasm, audience, visual aids	Presenter lacked confidence and did not understand the material; presenter was stiff, uninterested, or appeared bored; audience was inattentive and uninterested in presentation; visual aids were not used.	Presentation is affected by nervousness or bravado of presenter; demonstrates a general understanding of main points of material; audience is mostly willing to listen/view; use of visual aid(s) is attempted.	Open and clear presentation with generally effective body language conveys solid understanding of material; presentation is interesting and there is a sense of audience appreciation and cooperation; visual aid(s) are effectively used.	Eye contact, effective body language; complete understanding of material; shows personal interest in material; presentation was animated and enthusiastic; aware of audience and ensured participation and interest of all; used a variety of appropriate, high quality aids.

Teachers' notes:**Dispel the Myths :**

- You may wish to view the film excerpts from *My Village in Nunavut*, *Kanehsatake* and *Totem: Return of the G'psgolox Pole* as a contrast to *How to Build an Igloo*, *Land of the Long Day*, and *Circle of the Sun* referenced earlier under this theme. This approach will help put into context the evolution of how Aboriginal people have been, currently are and will possibly be depicted in the media.
- If your students have access to the Internet, they may use this resource to find images for their projects (to get the students started, refer to Web sites in the reference and resource section).
- Under-representation of a group within the media is not exclusive to Aboriginal people. This discussion could also include visible minorities, people with disabilities and women.