

Aboriginal Perspectives Unit Guide for the Theme History and Origins

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Overall Objective

The focus of this theme on History and Origins is Strength through Diversity. Across our great country there are many different Aboriginal peoples, all with distinct cultures, languages, traditions and beliefs. The films in this unit recount some of the stories and memories of the Mi'kmaq, Wendat and Mohawk people.

Grade Levels

7-12

Content Areas

History
Language Arts
Social Studies
Native Studies

Films (and excerpts used)

Kanata: Legacy of the Children of Aataentsic, 1999

Excerpt 1 (1 min 37 s – 3 min 06 s)

Excerpt 3 (11 min 01s – 12 min 07 s)

Excerpt 6 (21 min 04 s – 23 min 27 s)

Our Nationhood, 2003 excerpt 1 (11 min 51 s – 14 min 49 s)

Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance, 1993 excerpt 3 (27 min 48 s – 33 min 11 s)

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

Materials Required

Internet, data projector, map of Canada, access to research materials.

Summary

An examination of the history and origins of the Aboriginal People in Canada is a complex undertaking. An understanding of the diversity in the country's Native population speaks to the very fabric that is Canada, a beautiful tapestry of multicultures, strongly woven under one sky, providing comfort for all. A review of some of the historic events that helped shape our country should lead to an appreciation of the sacrifice and cooperation inherent in sovereignty and nation building.

Introduction Activity (10 minutes)

View the map of Canada that shows where Native peoples lived at the time of European contact (see the map in the About this site section). This will raise awareness about the historical settlement and distribution of Aboriginal Peoples across the country. Ask students to think of place names with an Aboriginal origin. Do students know the meaning of those place names?

ACTIVITY 1: Aboriginal Place Names (50 minutes)

Step 1: View *Kanata* (selected excerpts or in its entirety).

- While watching *Kanata*, have students write the place names mentioned whose origin is believed to be Aboriginal (ex: Canada= Kanata, meaning *the village*).
- Have students compare their lists.

Step 2: Research the place names to determine their origin and for any known translations (refer to the Web addresses under References and Resources).

Step 3: Create a map of your community labelled with any Aboriginal place names and their meanings (refer to Teacher's Notes).

ACTIVITY 2: From the Eyes of a Journalist (2 X 50 minutes)

Step 1: View film excerpts from *Our Nationhood* and *Kanehsatake*.

- Assign students the role of journalists reporting on the first contact between Aboriginal people and Europeans.
- Remind students to use the *who, what, when, where* and *why* method in their investigations. Emphasize the importance of exploring the questions from *all* perspectives.

Step 2: Have students share the results of their inquiry with one another, pointing out any questions that need further research.

Step 3: Before they begin writing their news reports, students must consider the perspective they will take. Have a class discussion on why this is important. (See the Teacher's Notes for a suggestion.)

Step 4: Have the students write their articles, keeping in mind that they are objective reporters of the facts depicted in the documentaries. The article must include a catchy headline (ex: *Jacques Cartier- Explorer or Conqueror?*, or *We are the Wendat- Still here, Standing Tall and Proud*).

Step 5: (optional) Publish the articles as either a class newsletter or a Web-based one. It is important for the students to share their articles with one another to encourage dialogue on the issues.

Closure Activity (10 minutes)

- Ask students to continue to explore the origin of place names and bring to class any additional examples they may learn about. This new information could be displayed on a classroom map of Canada.
- Challenge students to continue to follow Aboriginal issues in the media. Remind them to reflect on the information from a critical viewpoint where all perspectives are considered.

Check for Understanding

Encourage students to continue their investigation into the history and origins of Aboriginal peoples by noticing how the media portrays Aboriginal people.

Have the students reflect on how the groups and cultures they are a part of are portrayed in the media. Are these depictions always accurate? Whose interests are being served by these portrayals?

Evaluation rubric

Note: No rubric is provided for the place name activity.

References and Resources

ACTIVITY 1:

[Aboriginal Place Names Web link](http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/education/native_e.php)

http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/education/native_e.php

First Contact: From the Eyes of a Journalist – link to Aboriginal Peoples Portal

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en-frames/index.html>

Journalists' Rubric

Criterion	Insufficient 1	Limited 2	Adequate 3	Proficient 4	Exceptional 5
Format (Headline, introduction, position, analysis, conclusion, sources cited)	Elements missing; minimal organization and lack of flow.	Some elements missing; regular breaks in organization; flow breaks down.	All elements present with occasional disorganization and flow interrupted.	All elements well presented; well organized and flows smoothly.	All elements thoroughly presented; extremely well organized, allowing smooth & logical flow; crisp and ready for publication.
Mechanics	Frequent errors; seriously impairs flow/meaning of article.	Regular errors; flow/meaning of article breaks down.	Errors noticeable, and on occasion, detract from flow or meaning of article.	Some errors, which are minor in nature, & don't detract from overall meaning of article.	Essentially faultless; errors may result from risk-taking and do not detract from meaning of article.
Positions	Positions incomplete; ineffective explanation (minimal information).	Positions partially presented; weak information; shows lack of relevant data.	Positions substantially presented; some imbalance in positions; some information missing or gaps in explanation.	Positions completely presented; relevant, accurate, clear and well explained.	Two or more positions thoroughly presented; comprehensive, relevant and accurate explanation of positions.
Analysis (compare and contrast, evaluate positions)	Little or no examination of data (information); lacks comparison, contrast, and evaluation.	Some examination of data (information); little comparison, contrast and evaluation.	Adequate examination of data (information); some degree of comparison, contrast & evaluation.	Skillful examination; shows strong degree of comparison, contrast & evaluation.	Demonstrates thorough examination of data (information); shows advanced degree of comparison, contrast, & evaluation.
Understanding	Little or no understanding of positions; failure to appreciate points of view.	Little understanding of positions; little appreciation for points of view.	Adequate understanding of positions; some attempts to appreciate points of view.	Reveals strong understanding of positions and an effort to appreciate points of view.	Reveals mature and insightful understanding of the positions and a solid appreciation of points of view.

Appendix

Teacher's notes

Aboriginal Place Name Maps: Teachers may want to reproduce a map for their own communities or region before students begin the research on name origins. A key or legend may also be used to identify traditional Aboriginal settlement areas that existed prior to European contact.

First Contact: From the Eyes of a Journalist: Consider inviting to class a journalist from your community. Have the person discuss investigative journalism and the challenges of reporting objectively on historical events.