

### BIG IDEAS:

- Not all people in Canada enjoyed the same rights and privileges in the new nation.
- This was an era of major political and economic change, which affected various groups in Canada in different ways.
- The struggles of individuals and groups in Canada at this time laid the groundwork for some of the rights we have today.

---

### OVERALL EXPECTATIONS:

#### History:

**Inquiry:** use the historical inquiry process to investigate perspectives of different groups and communities, including First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit communities, on some significant events, developments, and/or issues that affected Canada and/or people in Canada between 1850 and 1890 (FOCUS ON: Historical Significance; Historical Perspective)

**Understanding Historical Context:** describe various significant people, events, and developments in Canada between 1850 and 1890, including the Indian Act, Treaties between Indigenous nations and the Crown, and the residential school system, and explain their impact (FOCUS ON: Historical Significance; Cause and Consequence)

*There are also connections within this framework to Language, Arts and Drama*

---

### LEARNING GOALS:

- Through guided inquiry, students will investigate and begin to understand the short and long term impacts of the Indian Act;
- Students will explore how the federal government systematically dehumanizes Indigenous Peoples through oppressive and racist legislation;
- Students will understand the role that the Indian Act plays in colonization and how it continues to impact the lives of Indigenous Peoples to this day.
- Students will explore the definition of “reconciliation” (as offered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) and understand that such an act is an active one that necessitates the establishment of a relationship with their Treaty partners.

**Notes about lessons:** It is important that these activities are completed in order, as they scaffold one another. They are titled as ‘lessons’ however, the explorations may end up unfolding over several periods or days. They may also serve as starting points for deeper inquiry and knowledge building. Although the activities are written up as “lesson plans” it is important to be responsive to student ideas, questions, insights, and *misconceptions* as you move through the learning. It is best to position yourself as a co-learner, but understand your power and responsibility as the educator in the classroom to disrupt racist/oppressive ideas, language and internalized biases that arise.

\*It is important that, before beginning this series of lessons, the teacher has [communicated](#) (p.91) with families/guardians, informing them about the upcoming subject matter (e.g., Residential Schools, The Indian Act, racism, colonial structures). This allows the students' support network to prepare to support the student and themselves should their own life situation be impacted and/or triggered by these on-going systemic issues. It also allows families to be a part of the process if they wish to contribute to the class discussions in an age-appropriate manner. Accommodations may need to be made at the request of the family/guardians. For further information please refer to: [Trauma Informed Schools](#)

## LESSON 1: REFLECTION

### Resources:

[The Indian Act](#)

[Sharing Circles explained](#)

[Sharing Circles](#)

[Grand Erie Talking Circle Video](#)

[Oral Traditions/Storytelling](#)

[Do I need permission to share this story?](#)

If you are unfamiliar with Sharing Circles, please see resources provided.

### Materials:

Chart Paper

Markers

Sticky Notes

Digital Device

### *Be aware of students who may be triggered by this activity*

- In a [Sharing Circle](#) ask students, "What is a person?". Students can google if they want to be specific, or legal. It is ok to be general as well.
- Write on a piece of chart paper: The term "[person](#)" is defined as an individual other than a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
- Have students imagine a part of their own identity in that blank spot (e.g., someone with brown eyes, girl, boy, basketball player, etc.,) *it is important that this activity is done in a space where students feel safe, and where their own identities are valued, seen and central to the learning - [culturally relevant pedagogy and anti-oppressive teaching at the centre, the activity needs to be properly discussed and deconstructed.](#)*
- **Reflection:** "How would you feel/respond if you were told you were not a person?"
- Ask students, "What if it was legislated that you were not a person because of \_\_\_\_\_?"
- At the end of the lesson - fill in the blank with "Indian" and cite the Indian Act, 1876 beneath it. Add student responses to the chart to inform teacher questioning, build on student insights, and refer back for reference to as the guided inquiry unfolds.
- Follow the activity with a group discussion. How might this statement and ideology impact a person?
- Students can respond to this prompt in a variety of ways, some suggestions:
  - Journal reflection
  - Sketching/art reflection
  - Building with loose parts (e.g., sculpture from playdough, blocks, rocks, anything to represent metaphorical thought)
  - Individual or group tableau
  - Recorded audio response
- Students can share their pieces, or a piece of their reflection.



**Assessment Check-in:** Capture student thinking around what is resonating most about the activity on a sticky note exit pass.

## LESSON 2: EXPLORING THE INDIAN ACT THROUGH DRAMATIC ARTS

\*This exploration may take a series of instructional periods\*

### Resources

[Terminology](#)

[The Pass System](#)

[The Pass System Documentary](#)

[Vocabulary](#)

### Materials:

[Document](#)

Scissors

*Before this activity it is important to deconstruct and put into context the use of the word “Indian” in this text. Explain the historical context of [terminology](#) to students. The term “Indian” is a legal term, still used today. However, used out of context can be experienced as racist and hurtful.*

*Be aware this activity may be triggering for some students.*

- Make copies of this [document](#) and cut up the 7 pieces of text.
- Pass out the text strips, ensuring that at least 3 (or more) students receive each piece of text (based on the number of students, you may have to take out one or more of the strips of text— as these will dictate their groups later in the lesson).
- Give students some context for the text strips - explaining that they are connected to the quote you explored together in Lesson One (refer to the anchor chart of student thinking and the quote from the Indian Act - you may want to highlight some student reflections, insights, or questions here as a way to propel the group forward in the guided inquiry, ensuring you are building the knowledge together).
- Ask students to read their strips of text quietly to themselves - put students at ease by letting them know that they may not understand every word, as the reading is quite advanced.
- Prompt students to choose one word or short phrase that resonates from their small text and directly relates to the ideas of [dehumanization](#) that were uncovered and discussed in the previous exploration. Instruct students to underline their words or phrases. For example, students might decide to pick phrases or words like:
  - “Renaming of each person”
  - “Separation”
  - “Kill the Indian in the child”
  - “Over 6000 children died”
  - “Loss of culture”
  - “controlling and containing”
  - “undermine the collective worldview of the people”
- Lead students in a dramatic exploration of the material. Instruct students to spread out and practise reading their selected piece aloud (all together).
- Encourage students to play around with how they are delivering the line and settle on a way that best gets across what they think is the meaning and intention behind the text (it is important as you guide students through this to remind them of the serious nature of the material).

- Have students walk around the room on their own, rehearsing the delivery of their selected line.
- Instruct all students to pause and find/stand in their own space in the room
- Move around the room, as the 'director' - instruct students to say their line when you point at them or tap them on the shoulder. Go fluidly from person to person - some can even be repeated if you find they are quite powerful.
- Follow up the activity with a debrief about the big ideas that came across as students performed the text.
- Instruct students to find the other people in the class who were given the same strip of text.
- At this point explain to students that all of these strips of text explain elements of legislation that were included in the Indian Act of 1876 (once again refer back to the direct quote from the Indian Act that students explored in the previous lesson).
- Prompt students to read closely and analyze their strip of text. The goal here is for groups to engage in discussion around the meaning of the text, connecting their learning to prior knowledge.
- This is a good time to begin a co-constructed anchor chart of key **vocabulary** associated with the intentions of the Indian Act. The following words and phrases will need to be defined:
  - assimilation
  - reserve
  - residential schools
  - pass system
  - enfranchisement
  - worldview

*you can choose to continue to build on the vocabulary wall throughout history explorations*

- Check in with groups to see that they understand the text they are working with.
- Instruct groups to work with their piece of text to develop at least two **tableaux** that 'lifts their text off the page'. Groups may decide to do more than two.
  - Tableau 1 should show the information in the piece of text.
  - Tableau 2 should be a response to the question "What is one impact of this legislation?"
- Arrange groups to present their tableau in a large circle formation - so that they can stand from where they are, perform, and be seen by the entire class. As groups present, read their strip of text for the class to hear. Transition from one group to the next.
- Debrief the activity with the class, focusing on building more knowledge around how the Indian Act was used as a tool of forced assimilation, wiping out of culture, and leading to **cultural genocide**.
- Give students the following prompt for an exit pass:
  - I used to think...
  - Now I think...

*This will show how students' thinking has changed and is developing, it will also provide insight into questions, misconceptions and understanding of big ideas. Continue to document the learning process by adding student responses - making some common themes and insights visible for students - to the anchor chart from the previous lesson.*



## LESSON 3: SMALL GROUP GUIDED INQUIRY

### Resources:

[\*21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act\* by Bob Joseph](#)

[\*Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples\* Blog](#)

[\*Indigenous Peoples Atlas\*](#)

[\*Understanding Canadian Government and Citizenship: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Governance\*](#)

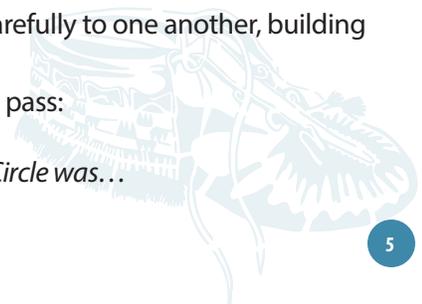
### Materials:

Digital Device

Internet

*This lesson will use the resource “21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act”; however, depending on your learners, you may have to provide a variety of texts. When selecting texts, ensure authentic voice of Indigenous peoples, and screen content carefully for perspective (be cautious of resources that are written from a colonial, Eurocentric perspective).*

- Select small pieces of Bob Joseph’s book to assign to students - it works best for each group to have a different section
- Pages 15 to 82 lay out 21 truths about the Indian Act. Select sections for each group to look at - be mindful about the amount of text. Further discussion and use of technology to find additional information and definitions will be needed. Now would also be a good time to do a lesson about [\*research skills\*](#) and [\*examining difficult texts\*](#) - to give students some strategies to be successful.
- This is also a good time to add to the vocabulary chart started in Lesson 2. It is not necessary to cover all 21 things, and you might decide to only give students part of the section (based on professional judgement and knowledge of your students). The following sections are recommended to choose from:
  - 2: Denied women status
  - 3: Created reserves
  - 4: Encouraged voluntary and enforced enfranchisement
  - 6: Renamed individuals with European names
  - 10: Declared Potlach and other cultural ceremonies illegal
  - 11: Restricted Indians from leaving their reserve without permission of an Indian agent
  - 12: Created Residential Schools with often enforced enrollment
  - 13: Forbade Indian students from speaking their own language
  - 20: Denied Indians the right to vote
- Give each group a piece of chart paper divided into 2 sections. Each of the sections should have a guiding question at the top:
  - What elements were embedded in the Indian Act to systematically [\*oppress\*](#) Indigenous People?
  - What short and long term impacts do you think this systematic oppression had and continues to have on Indigenous People?
- Instruct students to use these questions as guides, jotting down information and thinking related to these questions on the chart paper as they move through the text collaboratively.
- Invite students to a [\*Sharing Circle\*](#). While students discuss and share, document their thinking by taking notes.
- Using the guiding questions share their learning by listening carefully to one another, building on one another’s ideas and asking questions.
- Give students the following prompts to choose from for an exit pass:
  - *One thing I wanted to say during the Sharing Circle was...*
  - *One thing I was thinking about/ wondering during the Sharing Circle was...*
  - *One thing that is resonating with me is...*



*This will show how students' thinking has changed and is developing, it will also provide insight into questions, misconceptions and the understanding of big ideas. Continue to document the learning process by adding student responses and work from the explorations.*

## LESSON 4: VISUALIZING THE INDIAN ACT

### Resources:

[\*The Secret Life of Canada Teaching Guide\*](#)

### Materials:

Notepaper

Pencils

### Activities:

Additional resources to support this lesson can be found on The Secret Life of Canada Teaching Guide.

- Display the following guiding questions on the board or chart paper:
  - What elements were embedded in the Indian Act to systematically oppress Indigenous People?
  - What short and long term impacts do you think this systematic oppression had/and still has on Indigenous People?
  - How do you think the federal government and settlers in Canada benefited and continue to benefit from the oppression of Indigenous Peoples?
- Students will build on their knowledge from the previous lessons by listening to the [\*Secret Life of Canada Podcast: The Indian Act\*](#). **Note:** *There is an accompanying slideshow for this podcast in the Teacher's guide, found above. It is important that knowing your class, you pick the sessions that you think would benefit your students the most, based on where they have gone with the guided inquiry, perhaps the entire podcast.*
- Prompt students to take notes or sketchnote their learning as they listen, using the driving questions listed above as a guide for their thinking and notetaking. It will be important to stop and start the podcast to provide context, and support students in understanding and drawing connections. Highlighting big ideas and key information on the board will be helpful for many students.
- As a consolidation of the guided inquiry over the past lessons, provide students with the following prompt to assess their understanding of the big ideas and guiding questions you have explored together:
  - **Pick one colour that explains the essence of what the Indian Act has done and continues to do today.**
  - **Create a symbol that shows how the Indian Act systematically oppressed and continues to oppress Indigenous People today.**
  - **Create an image or sketch that shows what you think is a long term impact of the Indian Act.**

### Activity from [\*Making Thinking Visible\*](#)

- Students can either write explanations about their work, or conference with the teacher to explain the thinking and ideas behind their work



## LESSON 5: THE MOCCASIN IDENTIFIER PROJECT MARKING THE CLASSROOM AS AN ACT OF RECONCILIATION

### Resources:

[\*The Moccasin Identifier\*](#)

### Materials:

Moccasin Identifier Kit

Stenciling utensils

Colouring tools

### Activities:

- As a class, stencil the Moccasin Identifier as a group exercise to ground your learning. Consider creative ways to stencil with layering colours, to add dimension and depth.
- After watching Carolyn King's [video](#) (start at 11:55 minute timestamp) the teacher can pose the question to students ***“How does the Moccasin Identifier resist the intended purpose of the Indian Act?”*** This question is intentionally broad, and can be explored through various lenses including: land, identity, connection to territory, education, etc.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission defined reconciliation as:   
*... as an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change.*
- With this in mind, a second question can be posed to the class: ***“How can marking our classroom with a Moccasin Identifier become an act of reconciliation?”*** The intent of this question is to get students thinking about the responsibilities they are undertaking in marking their classroom with an image linking it to their Indigenous Treaty partners - emphasizing that this activity does not end with the act of marking the room, rather it is the beginning of a relationship.

