

GRADE 6

EDUCATION KIT

BIG IDEAS:

Significant events in different communities have contributed to the development of the identities of those communities and of Canada.

Different groups may experience the same development or event in different ways.

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS:

Language Overall Expectation

A3. Applications, Connections, and Contributions

Social Studies (Strand A)

Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate different perspectives on the historical and/or contemporary experiences of a few distinct communities, including First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit communities, in Canada (FOCUS ON: Perspective)

Understanding Context: demonstrate an understanding of significant experiences of, and major changes and aspects of life in, various historical and contemporary communities, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, in Canada (FOCUS ON: Significance; Continuity and Change)

LEARNING GOALS:

- Students explore and understand the short- and long-term impacts of the Residential School System.
- Students understand the Canadian government's goal in the creation of the Residential School System.

Notes about lessons: It is important that these activities are completed in order, as they scaffold one another. While they are titled as "lessons," 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 may arise.

Because self-identification is confidential, you may not know who the Indigenous students in your classroom are. It is important to create an environment that is mindful of, and responsive to, student well-being when learning sensitive content, which includes respecting Indigenous students' right to opt out. Informing all students and families about the upcoming subject matter can support learners in the classroom. Accommodations may need to be made in order to avoid placing racialized students in uncomfortable, or traumatizing situations. For guidance as to how to navigate this respectfully, please contact your Board First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Team, or review the following from Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres: [Trauma Informed Schools](#)

It is highly recommended that teachers supplement the lessons provided with some of these detailed units/lessons available online to support the learning necessary to build understanding and empathy for the long-term impacts on our communities.

Resources to build knowledge with respect to Residential Schools:

[Residential Schools and Reconciliation](#): lessons

[Mohawk Indian Residential School - The Mush Hole](#)

[Woodland Cultural Centre](#): Virtual Field Trips (in-person, soon to come)

[What Can I Contribute to Meaningful Reconciliation?](#)

[Map of Residential Schools in Canada](#)

[Legacy of Hope Foundation](#): Review materials for age appropriateness





LESSON 1: IDENTITY WEBS

Resources:

The Secret Pocket by Peggy Janicki

[*I am Not a Number*](#) by Jenny Dupuis

[*The Train*](#) by Jodie Callaghan

[*Senator Murray Sinclair on Reconciliation*](#)

Materials needed:

Paper

Writing Utensils

This lesson asks students to brainstorm things that have shaped them into the people they are today.

- Ask students to write their names in the centre of a piece of paper, creating a mind map connecting their name to all of the things that have shaped them into the person they are (e.g., parents, music, sports, hobbies, being outside, friends, family friends, pets). It is important that students provide examples that are as specific as possible. (What sports? What hobbies? Where do you like to go outside?)
- After students have had enough time to work on their individual mind maps, draw a figure of a person on the board and ask students for examples of what makes each of them who they are. Write the words around the drawing, creating a class mind map. If students do not come up with these examples, it is important that the teacher includes the following concepts: language, family, friends, peers, stories, songs, music, food, teachings, elders, grandparents.
- When the class is satisfied that they have enough examples, draw a line around the person, separating them from all of the examples provided by the students. "This was the intent of residential schools: to remove children from the things that made them who they are - specifically their families and their language. By doing this, they attempted to sever the link between a child and their community."

As a class, read aloud one of the resource books listed above. Invite students into a [*Knowledge Building Circle \(KBC\)*](#), with the expectations for communication and listening established. Ask the following questions, and probe students for their thinking, comprehension and critical inquiry.

- **Provocation #1:** "Why was destroying Indigenous languages a goal of the residential school system?"

Teacher Note: *Language contains a worldview - we express our understanding of the world using the language that is given to us. The language you speak affects how you express your understanding of the world around you. Remove a language and you remove a worldview.*

- **Provocation #2:** Watch the [*Senator Murray Sinclair video*](#).

"Why do you think Senator Murray Sinclair says, 'It was education that got us into this mess and it will be education that gets us out of it?'"

Many Treaties in Canada committed to providing First Nations with schools on reserve. However, this is not what happened. The Canadian government instead used this Treaty commitment as a colonizing tool through an elaborate residential school system, supported by United, Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic churches, to take children away from home, often at very far distances at very young ages.



LESSON 2: FOUND POETRY

Resources:

[*I Lost My Talk, by Rita Joe*](#)

[*Choral speaking*](#)

Materials:

Strips of Paper

Model Lesson:

[*I Lost My Talk, by Rita Joe*](#)

This lesson can be executed with any texts related to residential schools. It is very important that the texts and books are vetted for authenticity of voice and age appropriateness.

- Place a variety of texts related to residential schools around the room. Picture books, excerpts from novels and non-fiction texts all work well.
- Give students three strips of chart paper each.
- Encourage students to explore the residential schools texts that have been laid out around the room.
- Students choose three strips of text (i.e., three phrases or sentences) that resonate with them in explaining the experience or impact of the Residential School System. They write these on the provided strips of chart paper.
- Divide the students into groups of four or five, and ask them to arrange all their strips into a found poem.
- Students rehearse the reading of their found poem, focusing on choral speaking.
- Follow up by inviting students into a KBC to share and discuss choral poem presentations.



LESSON 3: I SEE, I WONDER, I HOPE...

Resources:

[Canada's Residential Schools](#) - Google Earth resource

Materials:

Paper

Pencil

[Graphic Organizer](#)

- **Display** the class mind map image from Lesson 1, which students shared questions and ideas about
- **Distribute** graphic organizers for "Bird's Eye View" - three paragraphs or stanzas, where the first section begins with "I See", the second begins with "I Wonder" and the third begins with "I Hope."
- **Present** students with the [Canada's Residential Schools website](#) that shows a residential school from the perspective of a bird, observing from above. (It is important that students frame their notes from an observer's perspective.)
- **Guide** students through an individual brainstorming activity. Encourage students to record their ideas using [dot jots](#), using the images to help trigger ideas. They should also reflect on everything they have learned about residential schools through reading aloud and discussions.
- This activity works best if students work independently to explore. Consider playing some quiet music.
- **Invite** students to work on the section that speaks to them first, using dot jots.
- **Encourage** students to have at least 2-3 items in each column.

Assessment check-in: Students can submit their organizer for feedback.

- An option for teachers is to work with the ideas students have generated and arrange ideas into freeform poetry, a written response, a piece or art or drama/song.
- Possibly illustrate with symbols and images or photography.

Additional Resources:

Fatty Legs: A True Story

Authors: Christy Jordan-Fenton, Margaret Pokiak-Fenton

Publisher: Annick Press

<https://goodminds.com/products/fatty-legs-a-true-story-10th-anniversary-edition-hc>



LESSON 4: THE MOCASSIN IDENTIFIER MARKING THE CLASSROOM AS AN ACT OF RESILIENCE

Resources:

[Moccasin Identifier](#)

Materials:

Moccasin Identifier Kit
Colouring Utensils

Watch this [video from Carolyn King, founder of the Moccasin Identifier](#) (start at 11:55 minute timestamp), which tells her story of driving to Toronto from New Credit and “not seeing herself in her own territory” and how the Moccasin Identifier Project was born out of this.

After watching Carolyn King’s video, pose these question to students:

- *“How does the Moccasin Identifier resist the intended purpose of residential schools?”* This question is intentionally broad, and can be explored through various lenses, including land, identity, connection to territory, education, etc.
- *“How can marking our classroom with a Moccasin Identifier highlight resilience in the face of Canada’s residential school program?”*

As a class, **stencil the Moccasin Identifier** to ground your learning. Consider creative ways to stencil with layering colours to add dimension and depth.