

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

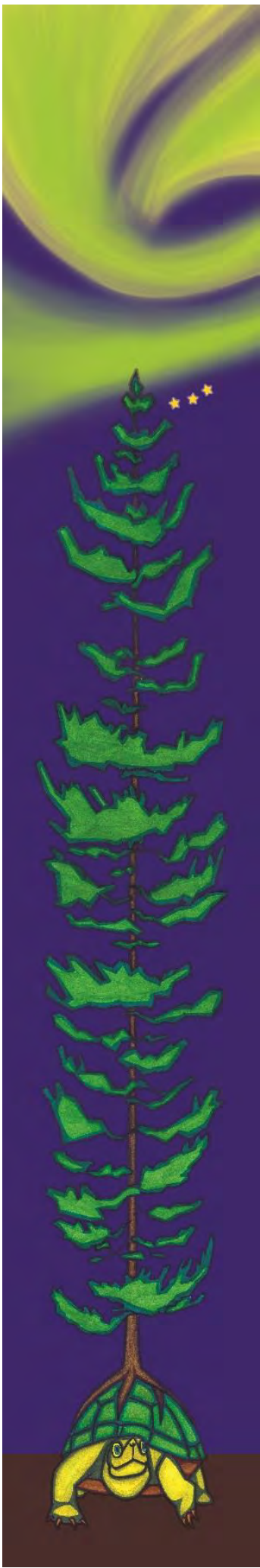
First Nations, Métis and Inuit
Growth Chart
Literacy Prompts

Grades K-8

Revised Version

January, 2017

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About the Growth Chart

The *Growth Chart* was created to provide ETFO members with a list of resources to support their instructional practice and learning about Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The bibliography highlighted by grade division, includes a variety of texts to introduce diverse worldviews, perspectives and presence of First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) experiences, histories, knowledge and philosophies. Most of these books can also be applied to a variety of grades, subjects and themes. There are many new and older books that are excellent learning tools and can be accessed through libraries or can be purchased from various book vendors. Members are encouraged to explore these resources and other FNMI books that are available both online and in print.

About the Literacy Prompt Sheets

The purpose of the literacy prompt sheets is to encourage members to utilize the FNMI texts listed in the *Growth Chart* and to support their instructional practice. The seven questions incorporate oral language, writing, reading, critical literacy and multimedia that encourage students to dig deeper in their thinking and expression. The four Enrichment Activities provide members with additional questions and activities that students can partake in to further develop their knowledge, understanding and to promote dialogue. Specific curriculum connections were intentionally excluded from each prompt sheet as the texts could easily be applied to various subjects and/or grade divisions. Members are encouraged to add or modify this resource to better suit the needs of their students.

The Revised Version

To ensure that the FNMI resources highlighted in the poster are still in print and available for educators to access, eight new books were selected and have been included in the second version of the poster (December 2016). In addition, the literacy prompts document was revised to accompany the newly revised poster (December 2016) and books. The following list includes the new books that have been included: Grade Two – *The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story*; Grade Three – *Shin-Chi's Canoe*; Grade Five – *The Red Sash* and *Fatty Legs: A True Story*; Grade Six – *These Are My Words: The Residential School Diary of Violet Pesheens*; Grade Seven – *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection*; Grade Eight – *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography* and *Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices*. In addition to updating the resources, we have also included the names of illustrators that assisted in the resource development and publication of the texts highlighted.



Note to Teachers

Read the book(s) prior to sharing with students to gain a better understanding of the content and the words or phrases within the text. Some books include words that are written in a native language, a cultural context or as synonyms (i.e., coat, parka), research and learn these words. Consider learning some other words in native language or bring in a traditional knowledge keeper to teach some vocabulary to the students. Creating word walls or word cards will help the students understand the meaning of these words. You are welcome to modify the questions or activities in this resource to meet the needs of your students.

Curriculum Links

Ontario Ministry of Education Elementary Curriculum
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/>

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connections Scope and Sequence of Expectations The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8 and Kindergarten Program (2014).

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/elementaryFNMI.pdf>

FNMI Book Vendors

Gabriel Dumont Institute <https://gdins.org/product-category/book/>

Goodminds <http://www.goodminds.com>

Irografts <http://www.irografts.com>

Kidsbooks <http://www.kidsbooks.ca>

Ningwakwe Learning Press <https://www.ningwakwe.ca>

Strong Nations <http://www.strongnations.com>

Developed By

The *Prompt Sheets* were developed by experienced literacy teachers with knowledge of Indigenous peoples, issues and histories.

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FNMI Growth Chart images designed by Nathalie Bertin.



Grades K-3



Wild Berries

By Julie Flett and Earl Cook
Simply Read Books, 2013



Book Summary

Clarence, a young Cree boy, and his grandmother spend time picking blueberries in the forest. They meet some beautiful wildlife creatures and offer gratitude. The story reflects the importance of relationships and respect for the environment.

Literacy Prompts

- What do the images in the book tell the reader about special activities between family members and tradition?
- Why do you think the author used red for some words? In what ways does the author use the colour red throughout the story? Why do you think she chose red?
- What will Clarence and his grandmother do with the blueberries after they were done picking them?
- How does Clarence show kindness/respect to the creatures he meets in the forest?
- How do you show respect to all living things?
- Who are Clarence and his grandmother saying, “thank you” to before leaving the forest? Why do they do this?
- What part of this story did you connect with and how?

Enrichment Activities

- Make blueberry jam or another recipe that includes blueberries as one of the ingredients.
- Go on a nature walk, and draw a pictures of what you see and discuss ways to take care of the environment.
- Write thank you cards to an animal, a friend or family member.
- In the book, find the words that the author uses to make sounds. Act or sound out these words and other sounds. Create a soundscape with the noises of a forest. Use the images from the story to guide you.



Lessons from Mother Earth

By Elaine McLeod and Colleen Wood
Groundwood Books, 2010



Book Summary

A young girl named Tess learns lessons about caring for the garden and Mother Earth from her grandmother. Tess learns about Mother Earth and how caring for the land will provide her with everything she needs.

Literacy Prompts

- Before reading the story, look at the title, *Lessons from Mother Earth*. What does the term “Mother Earth” mean?
- What are some of the tools Tess and her Grandmother use in the garden? What will they do with these tools?
- What does the Grandmother mean when she says, “Not everything in the garden is ready for picking just yet. Each little gift comes at its own special time.” Why do Tess and her Grandmother call the plants and fruits “gifts?”
- Tess has to follow some rules. What are those rules and why are they important?
- Why did they say “thank you?”
- Grandmother suggested saying a little prayer thanking Mother Earth as they pick. What types of things or what situations do you give thanks?
- Which character would you like to meet? What would you ask her if you met her?

Enrichment Activities

- Grandmother and Tess picked lamb’s-quarters. Research what this is, where it grows and other names it might be known as or find a recipe that includes this.
- Plant seeds in paper cups and make observations as they grow.
- Have a sharing circle and talk about the things that we are thankful for.
- Create a nature mural that represents the four seasons and the gifts that Mother Earth gives us during these times. Label the gifts.



Grandmother Ptarmigan

By Qaunaq Mikkigak, Joanne Schwartz and Qin Leng
Inhabit Media, 2013



Book Summary

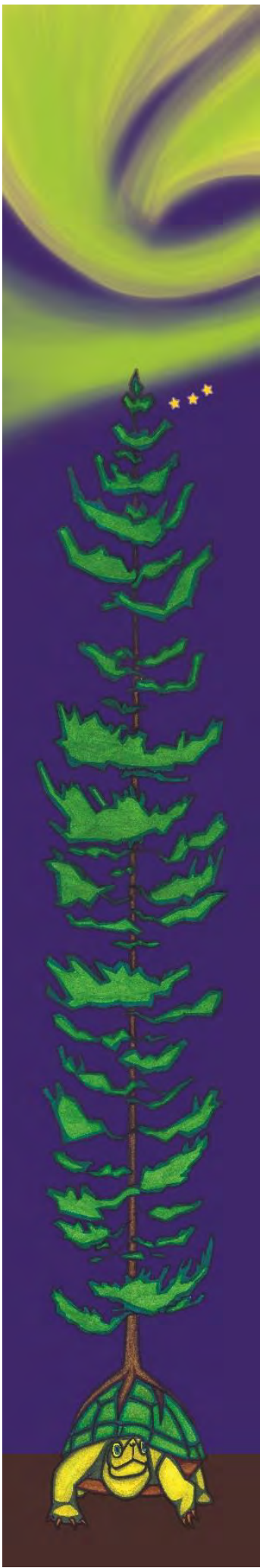
Set in Arctic Canada, a baby ptarmigan (bird) will not go to sleep. Grandmother ptarmigan tells baby a scary bedtime story. This story is inspired by a traditional Inuit story that explains why baby ptarmigan's fly so young and the cry of the female ptarmigan.

Literacy Prompts

- Look at the cover. Where do you think the story takes place? How do you know this?
- Grandmother mentions a small Arctic rodent (a lemming), what other animals might live in the Arctic?
- How does baby ptarmigan feel when Grandma tells him the story? How do you know this? What words in the story told you he was feeling that way?
- Why did he fly away? Give an example of ways you calm down when you are frightened or scared.
- Why did Grandma tell him a scary story?
- What made you squirm in this story or what things make you squirm?
- In what ways is your bedtime routine the same or different from the little bird in the story?

Enrichment Activities

- Explore what foods ptarmigans eat in the Arctic.
- Share a bedtime story you are told by someone close to you.
- Create a puppet of the birds and retell the story.
- Find out what types of shelters are used by humans and animals of the Arctic. Draw them and include the name of the shelter.



The Moccasins

By Earl Einarson and Julie Flett
Theytus Books, 2004

Book Summary

This is a story of a young Cree boy who is given a special gift by his foster mother. The story highlights familial relationships, self-esteem, acceptance and love.



Literacy Prompts

- Who makes up your family? What is a foster parent?
- What are moccasins? Why do think the moccasins make the little boy feel warm and loved? What makes you feel warmed and loved? What is something that makes you proud of who you are?
- What is the Creator? What are some words that might be used to describe this term in your culture?
- Why does the foster mother keep the box with the old moccasins for so many years?
- How did the main character feel when his foster mother gave him his old moccasins as an adult? Why did he feel this way?
- When the boy grows up and has a family of his own, how do you think his child will feel about receiving the moccasins that his dad wore when he was a little boy?
- If you could ask the boy any questions, what questions would they be?

Enrichment Activities

- Research items that are made with leather, have a piece of moose or deer hide for students to feel. Create and colour a moccasin pattern and display in the classroom.
- Show and share one special thing from your life.
- Using a piece of moose or deer hide talk about things that are made with leather.
- Draw a picture of your family use the writing prompt, "I feel loved by my family and friends because..."



Orphans in the Sky

By Jeanne Bushey and Vladyana Krykorka
Red Deer Press, 2004

Book Summary

This Inuit legend tells of how lightning and thunder came to be. It is a story that warns children about the dangers of wandering off without telling parents. The sister and brother must survive in the Arctic relying on a few tools.



Note: Sensitive content - death/afterlife/spirituality.

Literacy Prompts

- What are the strategies that you use when you come across unfamiliar words, such as: lemming, tundra, Inuit, orphan, sealskin, caribou, kayak, flint, blubber or words that are written in different languages and fonts?
- What animals might be seen and hunted in the Arctic by the Inuit family?
- What were some of the things the brother and sister did to stay safe? How would you survive if you were lost?
- Brother and Little Sister thought they were doing a good deed for their family by crossing the river to hunt for food. What could they have done differently? What would you have done in this situation?
- How do you think the adults felt when they realized that Brother and Little Sister have been left behind and are missing?
- Why do Little Sister and Brother refer to the animals as cousins?
- What is the lesson or lessons of the story?

Enrichment Activities

- Using found materials/objects in the classroom make a soundscape for thunder and lightning.
- Use your imagination or senses to explore sealskin or caribou fur (pictures or tactile).
- Read and compare another story/legend about lightning and thunder from another culture.
- Explore the science behind the formation of clouds, thunder and lightning.



SkySisters

By Jan Bourdeau Waboose and Brian Deines
Kids Can Press, 2000/2002

Book Summary

This is the story of two sisters, Alex and Ali, who go on an adventure in search of the SkySpirits (the Northern Lights). The girls learn how to be silent and experience the winter landscape in a different way. They also learn the meaning behind the phrase "Wisdom comes on silent wings."



Literacy Prompts

- "What do you think Allie means when she says "they'll be gone?"
- Why were the sisters scared? Describe a time you felt scared. What did you do to stop being scared?
- What were the SkySpirits? Why do you think they're called that in the story?
- What does it mean to be patient? How did the sisters demonstrate patience in the story while waiting for the SkySpirits? How do you stay patient?
- Nokomis (grandmother) tells the sisters that "wisdom comes on silent wings." What does she mean and how does this connect with the story?
- What is the underlying theme in this story? What does the author want you to learn from reading this book?
- Is *SkySisters* a good name for this story? Why or why not? What title would you give the book if you could rename it?

Enrichment Activities

- Go on a nature walk and be silent. Invite students to use their five senses to experience their surroundings. Students record what they experienced (by writing, re-tell orally or drawing).
- Watch videos of the northern lights to build schema for students who have never witnessed the lights. What are the northern lights and why do they occur? Research in small groups the answers these questions.
- Dance – create a dance like the movement of the northern lights.
- Rewrite the story through Allie's perspective. How will the story be told differently?



Missuk's Snow Geese

By Anne Renaud and Geneviève Côté
Simply Read Books, 2008



Book Summary

This story is about a young girl named Missuk who lives in the Arctic and dreams of being a carver like her father. This story highlights perseverance, discovering new talents and believing in one's self.

Literacy Prompts

- The setting of this story is “the Land of the Northern Lights” where do you think this is?
- What kinds of animals might you find in the Arctic?
- Missuk's mother used seal skin and caribou bone as a needle to make mittens. What other ways does Missuk's parents use seal and caribou in their daily lives?
- Why does Missuk's father need to hunt?
- Why do you think Missuk had a bad dream about her father?
- In the story it says, “the smell of spring”. Describe what spring smells and sounds like? Do the same for the other seasons.
- How do you know Missuk admired her Dad? Who do you look up to as a role model?

Enrichment Activities

- Introduce vocabulary. Include pictures and names of each of these items that are mentioned in the book. Ask students to describe what each is for (before reading the text). Provide a description of each.
- Draw a scene from the book and write in your own words what the scene is about.
- Research soap stone carvings/carvers and discuss what the carving is about and why they think the artist chose that.
- Find an image of an Inuit soap stone carving that you admire and share why you chose it.



Raven Brings the Light

By Roy Henry Vickers and Robert Budd
Harbour Publishing, 2013



Book Summary

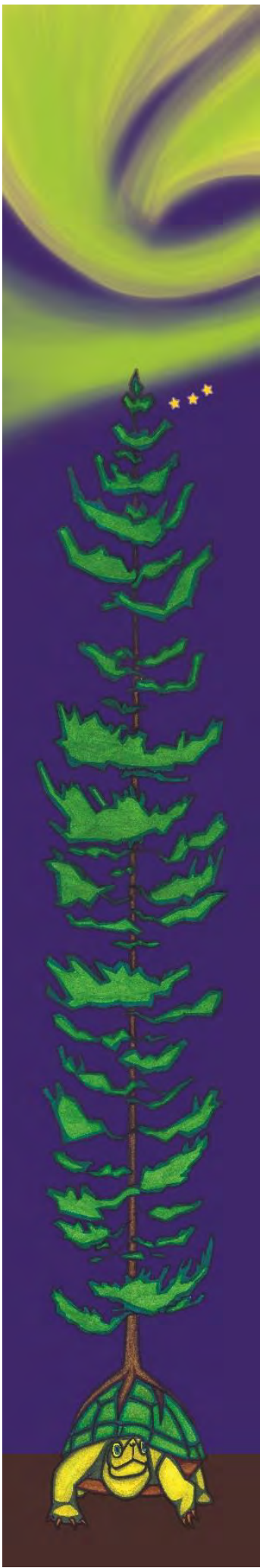
This West Coast story portrays a time when there was complete darkness. Weget is a boy who is able to transform himself into anything he wants to through the raven skin he wears. He goes on a journey and uses the special gifts presented to him. The story highlights the how things were created on the coast of British Columbia.

Literacy Prompts

- What predictions can you make from what the Chiefs told the parents about Weget?
- Tell me in your words what passing stories down from generation to generation means and why this is important in a culture?
- The Chiefs had a big treasure chest made of cedar with special gifts to give Weget. Why were these gifts important?
- How does Weget use his powers to get what he wants?
- Weget manages to retrieve the Daylight Ball. What would you do to convince the Chief of the Heavens to give you the Daylight Ball?
- What messages does the author want to share?
- What does it mean to have your “heart filled with courage?”

Enrichment Activities

- Share a story that was told to you from an older generation.
- Create an art mural depicting images from the story or produce an illustrated timeline of Weget’s journey.
- Look at art that represents the different animals of the North West Coast (raven, frog, salmon) and research what these animals might represent to the First Nations people of the west coast.
- Research why the sun is so important.



The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story

By Leah Dorion and Norman Fleury
Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2009



Book Summary

This beautifully illustrated text introduces a traditional Métis story that captures the concepts and values of generosity, cooperation and the concept of giving thanks. The story includes a grandfather telling his grandson about the “giving tree” and the importance of sharing that took place among Métis travelers. Included in the text are the Red River Cart Wheel Teachings and the meaning of the Métis symbol.

Literacy Prompts

- Who are the Métis people of Canada?
- What happens at the ‘giving tree’? Does this story remind of you of any times in your life?
- Once you take something from the tree cache, why is it important to put something back in return? What would happen overtime if no one replaced items in the hollow of the tree?
- Why did the family sprinkle an offering of tobacco at the base of the giving tree every time they visited? In what ways do you give thanks or demonstrate gratitude?
- Do you think that a giving place like the one in this story could exist today?
- What does the word generosity mean? How do you demonstrate generosity to others?
- What does it mean to make responsible choices? How can your decisions impact others?

Enrichment Activities

- Re-tell the story in a dramatic way, (i.e., through tableaux, puppetry, writing, an art piece, a video, a play, or a song).
- Invite students to gather objects such as books, clothes or toys that they no longer use and donate them to a school, a community group or shelter for someone else to use.
- Create posters and/or messages for morning announcements to promote healthy relationships with Mother Earth (i.e., recycling, preserving water, planting trees).
- Create items that will help animals in the local environment (i.e. make natural birdfeeders out of seeds and recycled materials or plant a small garden to attract birds or butterflies).



The Inuit Thought of It: Amazing Arctic Innovations

By Alootook Ipellie and David MacDonald
Annick Press, 2007



Book Summary

This book explores the relationship that the Inuit have with the Arctic land and climate, and describes the innovative contributions and cultural connection to surviving and thriving in the North.

Literacy Prompts

- Flip through the book. How do you know if this book is fiction or nonfiction? What are the text features or images that indicate this?
- Explain how the nonfiction text features help the reader to better understand the contributions of the Inuit.
- What are some of the challenges that the Inuit experienced in the past and how do they compare to the challenges that they are faced with today?
- In what ways do the Inuit show respect for the land and living things?
- How do you think the innovations highlighted in the book have changed over time (i.e., transportation, clothing, housing and food)?
- List as many ways that animals have been used by the Inuit for survival.
- In what ways will climate change affect Inuit communities and their livelihood? Why do you think that?

Enrichment Activities

- Using a Venn diagram compare different cultural groups (e.g., clothing, modes of transportation, tools).
- Watch throat-singing videos or invite a guest to come in and demonstrate and talk about the practice.
- Play Inuit string games.
- Create an Inuksuk in the school yard garden (use rocks or blocks of ice made from yogurt containers). Invite an Inuit guest to share information on the Inukshuk.



Shin-chi's Canoe

By Nicola I. Campbell and Kim LaFave
Groundwood Books, 2008

Book Summary

Shin-chi's Canoe is a story of Shin-chi, a young Salish boy, who will be attending residential school with his sister Shi-shi-etko. The children's father sends them with a small birch bark canoe that they must keep hidden. The children experience many things at residential school and anxiously wait to return home to their family. Shin-chi's Canoe is the sequel to Shi-shi-etko.



Literacy Prompts

- Discuss what residential schools were. After reading the text, compare and contrast the residential schools to schools today, and share how residential schools were unfair to Aboriginal children and families.
- Why did Shi-shi-etko tell her younger brother to always remember the trees, mountains, rivers, and all of the animals in nature? What strategies do you use to remember important things?
- When the children went to the residential school, what are some of the things the boys and girls had to do? Compare how this differs from your daily experience at school?
- How do you think the children at the residential school managed their feelings especially when it came to missing their family? How do you manage your emotions/feelings when you are sad, angry, anxious or scared?
- How do you think the parents and grandparents felt when the children had to go to residential school every year?
- Why did the father give the small birch bark canoe to Shin-chi? Why did he have to keep it hidden? Why did Shin-chi let the canoe go into the water?
- When the children return home, everyone is filled with excitement. Choose a character in the text and write from their perspective on why they are so happy.

Enrichment Activities

- Invite an Aboriginal community member to come in and talk about residential schools and reconciliation.
- Discuss what makes a good apology. Read the "Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools" (in its entirety or parts of it). The apology can be found at <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649>.



- Invite students to share the pros and cons of the apology or have students share their own ideas on what they would include in a written apology.
- Have students create a special item with materials, or write a list of things they would take with them if they had to go away. Share with the class why they chose these things and why these items are important to them.



The Métis Alphabet Book Study Prints

By Joseph Jean Fauchon and Sheldon Mauvieux
Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2007/2016

Book Summary

This resource includes a series of double-sided cards that include pictures and detailed information highlighting Métis culture, heritage and history.



Literacy Prompts

- Look at the picture cards. What can you predict and infer about a culture just by looking at the images? After you read the card explain how accurate your predictions were.
- Look at the images of the people. How do images give you information about a culture?
- Why do you think the author wants us to know about Métis culture? What is the purpose of these cards? What types of activities can we do with these cards?
- Explain the blending of two cultures. What does it mean to be Métis?
- What are some of the common cultural artifacts? What are they made from?
- The Métis flag is adorned with an infinity symbol. Why do the Métis have an infinity symbol on their flag? Are symbols, like the infinity symbol, the best way to represent a culture? Justify your answer.
- Who were some of the significant people and what evidence tells you about the positive impact that they have had in the Métis community?

Enrichment Activities

- Look at the patterns in the Métis sash. Create a sash by finger weaving or design a colourful sash pattern on graph paper.
- Research, learn and play voyageur games.
- Listen to Métis fiddle music, watch a jigging dance video or invite a Métis guest to come in and demonstrate one of these.
- Organize or group the cards and explain your reasoning for grouping them this way.



Grades 4-6



The Drum Calls Softly

By David Bouchard, Jim Poitras and Shelley Willier
Red Deer Press, 2008



Book Summary

In this beautifully written poetic text, David Bouchard invites the reader to enter into the round dance. He introduces the many aspects of Native culture through words, paintings, and songs. The author writes about the magic of the round dance and how creation is connected through the beating of the drum.

Literacy Prompts

- Who is the author talking about when he writes, “Our hearts all beat as one?”
- There are many symbols of circles depicted in this story. What does this tell us about the beliefs of the people in the story?
- At the beginning of the story, the author writes, “The magic’s here – it has begun...” What magic is the author talking about?
- Whose voices do we hear in this story? How does the font differentiate or guide you in understanding who is talking?
- How does the round dance build a sense of community among the people?
- How does the main character change throughout the story?
- How do the pictures and the words work together in the story? Why do you think that the author included some pages with no text?

Enrichment Activities

- The round dance enriches the community in this book. In a sharing circle, think about how traditions enrich your own communities (school, family, culture, town, province, country).
- Incorporate the language: Listen to the Cree reading of this story on the CD. Invite a native Cree speaker or another Native language speaker to read the text. Which Cree words can you link with the English words?
- Invite a local drum group to visit and share teachings about the drum.
- Find YouTube videos of round dances identify any similarities.



Dancing in my Bones

By Wilfred Burton, Sherry Racette, Norman Fleury and Anne Patton
Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2009



Book Summary

This story tells about a Métis New Year's celebration at which Nolin performs traditional dances for the first time. It highlights many traditions associated with Métis New Year, including spending time with family, eating traditional foods and dancing to fiddle music. In this story, dancing comes to represent personal, family and cultural history.

Literacy Prompts

- Why do you think that Moushoom tells the moose story?
- Moushoom says, "Us Michif like to start off the New Year happy." What does Nolin's family do to make this statement real?
- How does Nolin's family's New Year's celebration compare to your own?
- How does Nolin feel about performing the jig? Why does he feel this way?
- What do you think it means when Nolin says, "I have dancing in my bones?"
- What is the significance of the sash Nolin wears when he is dancing?
- What questions did this book leave you with?

Enrichment Activities

- Listen to the fiddle music on the CD (included in the book). Explore different jigs on YouTube. What does this music make you think of? How does it make you feel?
- Try making the tourtière recipe included in this book. Find or share a recipe of one your favourite home cooked meals.
- Plan a celebration party, including food, activities, invitations, decorations, etc.
- Explore how a fiddle is made and what other groups of people use the fiddle in their cultural practices.



Games of Survival: Traditional Inuit Games for Elementary Students

By Johnny Issaluk and Ed Maruyama
Inhabit Media, 2012/2013



Book Summary

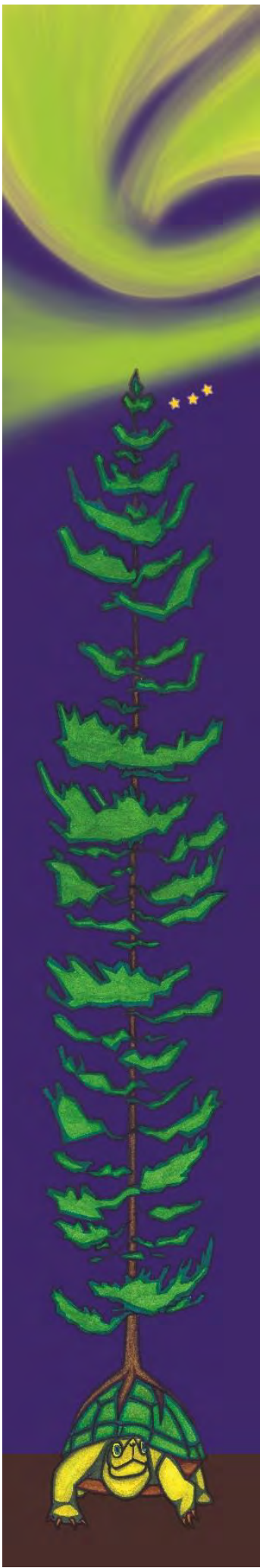
This book gives a brief history of Inuit games and the traditional role of helping hunters to survive in the Arctic. Procedural information with photos to explain how to play Inuit games that focuses on strength, endurance and agility.

Literacy Prompts

- Even though hunting practices have changed, why is it still important to carry on the traditions of Inuit games?
- What do these games tell us about the skills that the Inuit people traditionally needed in order to survive?
- This book explains in two ways how to play an activity: first it provides a paragraph telling about the whole activity and then breaks it down into individual steps with pictures. Which kind of explanation is easier for you to understand? Why do you think that the author has organized information in this way?
- How do you think that these Inuit games help to build skills in working together and building a sense of community?
- How might these games help to keep a “hunter’s mind clear?”
- Choose a game from each section and try playing it. Now write some notes about the experience. What muscles did it work? What was easy? What were some challenges?
- What are some differences between the games as they were traditionally played and the way that they are now played as international sports?

Enrichment Activities

- Using movie maker software, create a short film or commercial explaining and demonstrating how to play one of the games.
- Go online to the Canadian Heritage Information Network website and read about other Inuit games. Choose one that you would like to try and explain why.
- Organize a school play-day made up entirely of Inuit games and run each station explaining how to play the games.
- Create your own game or share a game you’ve played that includes one or all of the following: strength, endurance and agility.



Secret of the Dance

By Andrea Spalding, Darlene Gait and Alfred Scow
Orca Book Publishers, 2006

Book Summary

This book tells about the experience of Watl'kina, a young First Nation boy, whose family participates in a potlatch during the 1930s even though the Canadian law forbids First Nations, Métis and Inuit traditional practices. Watl'kina sneaks out of bed to be a part of it and is transformed by the experience. Years later, as an old man, he remembers this forbidden ceremony and is struck by how times have changed.



Literacy Prompts

- Sometimes parts of the illustrations in this story are in black and white, and sometimes they are in colour. Can you think of reasons why this might be?
- The Indian Agent says that dancing is against the law. Why do you think that a law like this existed?
- The text says that the sounds of the drums and singing were “more than I could stand.” What do you think that this means?
- In this story, there are some examples of rebellion – breaking the rules. Make a list of different examples of rebellion you can find in the story. How would the characters in this story justify their choice to break the rules?
- The family hides their belongings in parcels to take them to the potlatch because it is against the law. Why is it so important to them to hold a potlatch?
- What do the authors mean when they say, “Life makes strange circles?”
- What is the elders’ role in helping the boy to understand what is happening around him?

Enrichment Activities

- Explore the role of the Indian Agent.
- Explore more information about the First Nations, locations and traditions associated with Potlatches.
- Read a story and study examples of art from this culture. Create a mask that depicts the story.
- In a sharing circle, share something about ceremonies or celebrations you have been part of that help to teach you about your culture and family.



The Red Sash

By Jean Pendziwol and Nicolas Debon
Groundwood Books, 2005

Book Summary

The beautifully written adventure story takes place in the early 1800's in Northwestern Ontario. A young Métis boy dreams about following his father's footsteps into the vast North American wilderness as a voyageur. Those brave voyagers paddle back to Fort William with their packs of furs, while another group comes in from Montreal bringing supplies for trade. It is rendezvous - a time of feasting, dancing, and trading stories around the campfire.



Literacy Prompts

- The Métis culture contains aspects of French Canadian and First Nation cultures. Where do you see examples of both in this story?
- In the story, the little boy describes the voyageur life by saying "it is a hard life," and that someday he will be a voyageur. Even though it is a hard life, why is that something he wants to do?
- How does the author's use of both the French and Ojibwe languages help the reader understand the boy's way of life?
- What is the significance of the red sash to the little boy? Why might the author have chosen *The Red Sash* as the title for this story?
- Based on the events in this story, what are the roles that First Nations People and Europeans played in the fur trade?
- What does family mean to the young boy? How do you know?
- How is the rendezvous celebration similar to, or different from celebrations within your own family and culture?

Enrichment Activities

- Research the history of the Voyageurs in Canada and what this job entailed. Think of how this job is similar or different to another job today?
- Write a story in first-person about your adventures as a Voyageur. Include information about your role, the places you travelled, and hardships you faced.
- Read the legend of Nanibijou – "who lies sleeping on the great sea Gitchee Gumeé." Look up present day pictures of Nanibijou, the Sleeping Giant, located in Thunder Bay, Ontario.
- Research the history of the fur trade, the role of the Métis and First Nations people within it, and create a map of the canoe routes used by voyageurs.



Fatty Legs: A True Story

By Christy Jordan-Fenton, Liz Amini-Holmes and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton
Annick Press, 2010



Book Summary

Fatty Legs is an inspiring first-person account of one young Inuit girl's experience at residential school. Eight-year-old Margaret Pokiak has set her sights on learning to read, even though it means leaving her village in the high Arctic to attend residential school. At school Margaret soon encounters the Raven, a nun who immediately dislikes the strong-willed young Margaret. In the face of cruelty, Margaret refuses to be intimidated and bravely gives the Raven a lesson in the power of human dignity.

Literacy Prompts

- What do you know about residential schools? Create a short list of what you know and what you would like to know more about.
- On page 30, the author writes about the girls' hair being cut. Until it happens to her, Olemaun thought she would react differently than the other girls. How do the author's words help the reader to understand what is happening and how the girls are feeling?
- When Olemaun first tries to fall asleep at her new school, what are the things that make it challenging for her? How is this environment different than her sleeping environment at home?
- When Olemaun is given the opportunity to speak on the radio, she chooses to remain silent. How is this similar to the letter she wrote? Why did she choose not to speak?
- On page 50, the Raven says "This is no place for a willful child", what does she mean by this? How does this statement impact the way Raven treats Olemaun?
- At the beginning of the story, Rosie tells Olemaun, "They take everything." What does she mean? How do Olemaun's feelings about residential school change from the beginning of the story to the end? What are some reasons for this change?
- Olemaun names many of the nuns and priests after birds. Why does she do this? How do the names fit the personalities of each person?

Enrichment Activities

- Read the sequel to this story, *Not My Daughter*. What is it like for Olemaun as she tries to fit back in to the Inuvialuit life?
- On page 85, the author writes about the many special skills that Aboriginal children learned that allowed them to cope with the environments they lived in. For example, Margaret could command her



own dogsled team. Research other traditional skills held by Indigenous people across Canada.

- Look on a map to explore the journey Olemaun's family takes on the North Star from Banks Island to Aklavik.
- In The Schools section at the back of the book, the author writes about the healing that continues today as many survivors and their children "struggle to shed the shame of oppression and reclaim pride in their identities." Explore some current day struggles impacting Indigenous people in Canada.



These Are My Words: The Residential School Diary of Violet Pesheens

By Ruby Slipperjack
Scholastic Canada, 2016



Book Summary

This novel is about Violet Pesheens, a 12-year-old First Nation girl and her struggle to adjust to her new life at residential school in 1966. Her notebook is the one place she can record all of her worries, heartbreaks, and memories. Drawing from her own experiences at residential school, author Ruby Slipperjack creates a brave, yet heartbreaking heroine in Violet, and lets young readers glimpse into an all-too important chapter in our nation's history.

Literacy Prompts

- Before reading, look at the real life pictures from residential schools in the book. What do you notice or learn about residential schools from these pictures? Discuss these responses as well as what you already know about residential schools.
- Violet's letters are often censored or thrown out, so that she is unable to share her feelings with her family. What other parts of Violet's life at residential school are censored? How is Violet's diary writing an act of rebellion?
- How does Violet use her skills from home to help her in different situations while away at residential school?
- Why is it so important to Violet not to forget her language?
- On page 47, Violet writes "Now I am angry all the time", what are some of the things contributing to her feeling this way?
- What similarities or differences are there between what is considered important in residential school and what is valued in Violet's own family and community?
- Some people are kind to Violet during her time in residential school. Describe some of these people. What do they do that is kind? Is there more that they could do, that they do not do in this story?

Enrichment Activities

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has compiled the stories of many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who experienced Residential schools. Go to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation website (<http://nctr.ca>) and read some of these stories. What would you say to the people telling their stories?
- Explore the map of Residential Schools in Canada found in the back section of the book or consider viewing the online interactive map



available at <http://nctr.ca>. Identify 2-3 residential school sites and write a summary on what you found.

- Violet plays a string game that the other girls tell her not to play. Learn more about and/or play First Nation games. Here are a few links. Inuit Culture Online Resource - <http://icor.ottawainuitchildren.com/node/39>. The Learning Circle: Classroom Activities on First Nations in Canada - <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1316530132377/1316530184659#un5>.
- In the story Violet experiences her period for the first time. Connect this to Health & PE Curriculum expectations (understanding puberty & healthy relationships). Invite a woman Elder or community Knowledge Keeper to come and share teachings about a woman's moon time and a young woman's berry fast.



Shannen and the Dream for a School

By Janet Wilson
Second Story Press, 2011



Book Summary

This book is a true story of Shannen Koostachin from Attawapiskat First Nation (a small community in Northern Ontario). It includes non-fiction elements that capture Shannen's story and her classmates' passionate journey towards equitable education through the fight for a real school in their community.

Literacy Prompts

- How are elements of fiction and nonfiction intermingled in this book? How do they help add to your understanding of Shannen's life?
- How does the condition of the school impact how the students feel about themselves?
- What do you think Shannen's mother means when she says, "Keep walking in your moccasins?" How do these words impact Shannen?
- How might the lack of a school in Shannen's community be related to the events listed in the timeline at the back of this book?
- Community is very important to Shannen. By the end of the story, how has Shannen's sense of community grown and changed?
- In order to accomplish Shannen's dream, how does Charlie and the children help each other?
- An audience member at a speech says, "Canadians must replace passivity with action. Our citizens can't be indifferent to injustice." How does Shannen's life demonstrate this?

Enrichment Activities

- To learn more about Shannen's dream watch online videos, such as the National Film Board documentary, "Hi Ho Mistahey" https://www.nfb.ca/film/hi-ho_mistahey_en/.
- Research Attawapiskat today. Write a letter to the local, provincial or federal government highlighting the problems and what you would like to see done.
- Think about your own community and how you might be able to make a change in it for the better. What would you like to do and how could you go about it?
- Explore other examples of powerful young people who have made or are making a difference in the world. Create a slideshow highlighting this person.



Lacrosse Warrior: The Life of Mohawk Lacrosse Champion Gaylord Powless

By Wendy Lewis
J. Lorimer & Co., 2008



Book Summary

This book is a biography of Gaylord Powless, a Mohawk Lacrosse champion. The story is a remarkable combination of sportsmanship and skill, and how he paved the way for equality among Canadian athletes.

Literacy Prompts

- How do the text boxes in this story help your understanding of the topic?
- Consider the two names given to the game Gaylord loves: Tewaathon (little brother of war) and LaCrosse (the Cross). Which name do you think is more appropriate and why?
- Why did George Beers make the changes he did to the game of Lacrosse? In your opinion, were they positive, negative or both?
- Compare the discipline to which Gaylord and Ross were exposed in their childhoods. In what ways did these experiences help to shape the boys?
- “In lacrosse—as in life—all play a part.” (p. 32) What do you think this means? Do you agree?
- We learn about Gaylord’s belief (p. 66) that “The best revenge is to play well and win the game.” How did this philosophy shape Gaylord’s lacrosse career?
- If you were asked to introduce Gaylord at a special banquet in his honour, what would you say in your speech?

Enrichment Activities

- Research other recipients of the Tom Longboat Award. If another book was to be written who would you choose and why?
- Learn more about lacrosse by playing it in gym class and watching lacrosse games either live or on YouTube.
- Create a short graphic novel of this book including images (drawn or borrowed from the internet) and write captions from the text under each image.
- Create a timeline of the history of lacrosse.



Grades 7-8



Counting on Hope

By Sylvia Olsen
Sono Nis Press, 2009



Book Summary

This book is a historical fiction novel set in 1862 on Wallace Island off the coast of present day British Columbia. It is written from two girl's perspective and describes their friendship, challenges and dreams. Hope, whose story is told in prose, is an immigrant from England, and has arrived to settle on the island with her family. Letia, whose story is told in free verse, has lived all her life on the island with her Lamalcha people. It is a story of how friendship, fear, tolerance, tragic events and cultures collide.

Literacy Prompts

- How is 'fear of the unknown' weaved into this story? Give examples from both perspectives.
- The Lamalcha people have never heard of the Queen. Explain how they must be feeling when the English settlers say that the Queen of England has given them this land.
- Even though Hope and Letia are from vastly different cultures, explain how they are the same. How the parents the same despite their different cultures?
- Which character's perspective deepened your understanding of the effects of immigration on Indigenous People?
- Assess the whiskey trader's contribution to the conflicts between the cultures.
- Do you agree or disagree with the family's decision to leave Wallace Island? What was the biggest factor to sway John's decision to leave?
- Susan Olsen alternates her writing style to reflect each character. What affect does this have on the reader? How does this this impact the distinct voice of each protagonist?

Enrichment Activities

- The cover is a photograph of a young girl balancing on a log. Is this an effective image for the book cover? Why or why not?
- Compare and contrast the two protagonists. Record your thinking on a Venn diagram. Represent the similarity or difference proportionately on the Venn diagram.
- Rewrite the ending to this story... how would you change it? Happier ending? Less conflict?
- Synthesize your thinking. Use the following prompts: I used to think... and After reading I now think... (Include the quote and page number).



Tecumseh

By James Laxer and Richard Rudnicki
Groundwood Books, 2012



Book Summary

This book provides details on the rise and fall of one of the great leaders of North America's First Peoples. There is an emphasis on his campaign to unite Aboriginal people to withstand the onslaught of American colonist's infringement on native land and traditional lifestyle. Tecumseh's role in the formation of the great confederacy and his involvement in the War of 1812 are described. Rich illustrations, an epilogue, timeline, glossary, maps and further reading are also included.

Literacy Prompts

- Before reading use the following words to make a prediction about the text: Treaties, alliance, Native Confederacy, United States, Britain, and Great Shawnee Chief. What are you curious about after reading these words?
- Examine the opening illustration on pages 3 and 4 of *Tecumseh*. Describe what you see and make inferences about the lives of the Shawnee during this time period.
- Was Tecumseh an effective leader? Develop criteria for making your judgment.
- "A picture is worth a thousand words." Select an illustration. What is the implicit message the artist is conveying about people and/or events in the image?
- Identify the characteristics of a biography and provide examples from the text of each characteristic.
- Hypothesize about which events had the most impact on Tecumseh. Explain your thinking.
- Compare and contrast Tecumseh and Cheesekau. How similar or how different are they? Use a Venn diagram to record your thinking. Represent the similarities and differences proportionately on your Venn diagram.

Enrichment Activities

- Create a timeline of the most significant events in Tecumseh's life. Develop criteria for determining significance.
- The Haudenosaunee, Great Peacemaker Dekanahwideh preceded Tecumseh and helped to create the Great Law of Peace that united five (to become six) Haudenosaunee Nations. Research Great Peacemaker Dekanahwideh and compare and contrast his ideas of unity of First People's to that of Tecumseh.



- Tecumseh is quoted: “No tribe has the right to sell land, even to each other, much less to strangers. Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the great sea as well as the earth? Didn’t Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?” Research and record the present day practices of selling air, water and other natural resources.
- Research and record information about some of the political organizations representing Aboriginal People today: Assembly of First Nations, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and Métis National Council. Choose an effective form to present your information.



Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection

By Hope Nicholson and Michael Sheyahshe
A.H. Comics Inc., 2015



Book Summary

This book is a collection of diverse texts by Indigenous artists and authors that highlight the identity and heritage of Indigenous people. Many stories are presented in graphic format and are set in the past, present and future.

Literacy Prompts

- Why do you think Nicole Nicholson chose each graphic story in this graphic novel? Hypothesize about the reasoning behind the order she chose to include each story in the anthology? What is the overall effect of her choices?
- What are some of the unique characteristics of the graphic stories that helped you understand the text?
- Select a story and identify the author's message. How do the graphics convey, support or enhance the author's message?
- Explain how the stories in the anthology combine traditional and modern aspects of Indigenous culture. Is combining graphic format with traditional stories an effective way to learn about Indigenous culture?
- Who has traditionally told the story of Indigenous people in North America? In the introduction, Michael Sheyahshe insists that it is time for Indigenous people to tell their own stories. Why do you agree or disagree with him?
- One of the stories in the book, "Home," touches on the subject of respect for traditional objects and human remains. Gather research about examples of Indigenous groups advocating to have sacred elements returned to their people or safeguarded in a traditional manner. What are your thoughts on this issue?
- Do you agree with the interpretation given about the cover art? What aspects of the visual that are explained to you do you see in the same way? Are there other effective elements that you see that are not noted? Is the cover art an effective introduction to the book?

Enrichment Activities

- Hope Nicholson notes in the Forward that there is no single Indigenous culture. Before reading this collection record what your idea of Indigenous culture is. Do the same activity after reading the collection. Are there differences between your answers? Create a Venn diagram and compare the similarities and differences between mainstream Canadian culture and Indigenous cultures?



- Gather research and explain the variety of sign languages that deaf people might use to communicate. American Sign Language (ASL) and Native Sign Language are two examples to explore.
- Use the graphic format to create a story from your culture and/or identity.
- Select a text from the book and create a cover for it. Explain why you chose this story and why you chose this design for the cover.



Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids

By Deborah Ellis and Lorie Roy
Groundwood Books, 2013



Book Summary

This text includes a collection of interviews conducted with Indigenous North American youth who share their stories, interests, life experiences and describe how being Native has affected their identity and outlook on the world. Background information about the setting, historical facts, and pertinent issues relating to each interviewee are included.

Literacy Prompts

- How does the organizational structure of the text help you create meaning? Is there anything that you would change?
- On the book flap the outlook of the Indigenous youth is described as "...how being Native has affected who they are and how they see the world." What is the lens through which you view the world and how has your heritage shaped your experiences?
- In the author's note, Deborah Ellis identifies that it's important to recognize whose voice is not present or represented. Why is it important to include all viewpoints when presenting information? As a critical reader/listener, whose point of view is missing and what might this point of view contribute?
- Examine the cover and describe how the image and title reflect the narratives of the Indigenous youth in the book.
- What issue(s) presented in this book connect current issues and events with the past?
- How does the title of the book connect to the underlying theme(s) of these stories?
- Which youth had the most impact on you and why?

Enrichment Activities

- Choose one of the issues faced by Indigenous people in the book. Develop inquiry questions, research the issue and create/present a public service announcement.
- Use a media form to represent how Indigenous people are using formal and informal education to reclaim their culture and heritage.
- Create a *Heritage Minute* clip or a radio broadcast that conveys the current realities and the historical relationship between Canada and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.
- Choose an interview and write a monologue that is inspired by the key messages in the interview.



Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography

By Chester Brown
Drawn and Quarterly, 2003/2013



Book Summary

This text is a black and white graphic biography of Métis leader, Louis Riel. It describes his life in the 1860s in the Red River area of what is now Manitoba. Riel's historic actions in the Red River Rebellions as he fights for the rights of the Métis people and the consequences of his actions are highlighted.

Literacy Prompts

- Before reading, peruse the graphic novel and identify what features you predict you will find in this book? Once you have read this text, reflect on the content and explain how these features deepened your understanding of the text?
- In your option, was Louis Riel a hero or a traitor? Explain your thinking.
- Was Louis Riel justified in the actions he took? Explain your thinking.
- Was the Canadian government justified for the actions they took with Louis Riel?
- What were Louis Riel's contributions to Canadian History?
- Create a timeline of the major events in Riel's life and justify your choice of the events you included.
- After reading the author's note about his use of "historical inaccuracies" think about why an author would make this choice. Do you agree or disagree with storytelling in this way?

Enrichment Activities

- The year is 1885, and you are a reporter for the Manitoba Free Press Newspaper. You are asked to write an obituary for Louis Riel. Your obituary should include:
 - a photo of Louis Riel
 - an announcement of his death
 - biographical information
- Research the various monuments that have been created to honour Louis Riel.
- Compare and contrast the contributions of John A. MacDonald and Louis Riel to the creation of Canada.
- From the perspective of a settler or an Indigenous person, who should be considered as a Father of Confederation – John A. MacDonald or Louis Riel?



Dreaming In Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices

By Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale
Annick Press, 2014



Book Summary

This contemporary anthology by Indigenous writers and artists contains a variety of perspectives, genres and mediums. It is divided into four sections, 'Roots,' 'Battles,' 'Medicines,' and 'Dreamcatchers'. This collection addresses difficult topics in an insightful and hopeful manner.

Literacy Prompts

- Language evolves as society becomes more culturally aware and sensitive. Why might a variety of terms be used to describe Indigenous Peoples? How does the title *Dreaming in Indian* relate to the stories told in this text?
- Select a text and explain what you learned about contemporary Native Americans. How do the visuals enhance/support the prose?
- On page 61, Ryan Mahone states, "Like our languages, our stories hold the truth....and I want to share that truth to give context to the past, present, and future." Explain how one of the texts you read gave context to the past, present or future.
- Which youth's story had the most impact on you and why?
- This book is the personal reflection of contemporary artists and writers. How might bias exist in this text? How does this anthology challenge your thinking about stereotypes?
- How do the texts within a sub-section relate to the title of the section? For example, how do the authors in the "Roots" section explain their connection to their culture via food, traditions, language, etc.?
- How does the anthology demonstrate how Indigenous people define themselves?

Enrichment Activities

- Conduct a virtual tour of the McMichael Canadian Art Gallery.
- Research a First Nations, Métis and Inuit artist and create a museum page.
- Write a letter to one of the people in the book and share what you've learned or gained from their art.
- Find a piece of art in the book that you really liked and try to express your thoughts and ideas in the same style of the artist.

