

■ GRADE 12: HISTORY

HISTORY OF CANADIAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Purpose: For students to explore the challenges and events faced by Aboriginal People throughout history. Students will examine the social, political and economic forces that have shaped Aboriginal People from the pre-contact period to the present. Students will use their critical-thinking and research skills to consider events and ideas in a historical context and present their own views.

Estimated time: 120 minutes

Resources required:

- Computer and internet
- Resources for research (e.g.: book, encyclopedias, etc.)

Activity:

1. Tell students that they are going to take a look into the past and learn about significant moments in the history of Aboriginal People.
2. Explain that students will be given a series of topics, they must choose one and write a historical research paper that accomplishes the following:
 - Asks a good historical question.
 - Offers a well-organized and persuasive thesis.
 - Uses quotes, facts and statistics from scholars to support its interpretation.
3. Present the following topics to students:
 - Aboriginal Peoples' connection to the land.
 - Pre-contact lifestyle.
 - The creation of residential schools.
 - Aboriginal involvement in the War of 1812.
 - The spread of disease following early European settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries.
 - The Royal Proclamation of 1763.
 - Territorial relocation.
 - The emergence of the Métis People.
 - Treaties.
 - Land claims.
 - The Riel Rebellion.
 - The movement towards self-government.
 - Aboriginal People sharing of environmental knowledge with European settlers.
 - Introduction of new weapons and technologies by European settlers.
4. Once students have selected their topic, begin instruction around how to write an interesting historical research paper
5. Begin by explaining how to ask a good historical question:

- A good historical question is narrow and allows one to find a persuasive answer.
- Explain that the above topics are broad so students must use their research to narrow it down.
- Encourage students to put limitations on their question's range by choosing a particular area of Canada (e.g.: the Plains), a particular Aboriginal People (e.g.: Blackfoot First Nations) and a particular time limitation (e.g.: 1812 – 1814).
- Tell students that good historical questions demand deep thought and cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." How, why and comparative questions allow you to stay away from this problem.

6. Following these guidelines, brainstorm possible historical questions around the above topics:
 - What is the setting of the story?
 - Who are the characters in the story?
 - What events take place in the story?
 - What do the characters learn in the story?
7. Tell students that the next step is to formulate a well-organized and persuasive thesis:
 - A good thesis for a historical essay must answer the historical question posed in a concise yet impactful manner.
 - The thesis must cover the following three items: the subject of your paper, your argument about the topic and the evidence you'll be using to argue your thesis.
8. Brainstorm possible thesis ideas as a class.
9. Explain that the next step is for students to connect their topic to work by other scholars:
 - Students must read work by other scholars. This will help to place their paper in perspective.
 - Students must use quotes, facts and evidence to support their thesis and answer their historical question
10. Discuss how evidence from scholarly writers can help to strengthen a historical essay.
11. When students are familiar with the process of writing a historical essay, allow the class to begin their research and eventually their writing.
12. Completed essays will be handed in.