The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom. In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. The activity is structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Students are encouraged to further reflect on the issues.

Core Skill Sets:
These icons identify the most relevant core skills students will develop using this resource. Learn more about the WE Learning Framework at www.we.org/we-at-school/we-schools/learning-framework/.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- According to the most recent census, roughly 850,000 people identify as First Nations, 450,000 as Métis and 59,000 as Inuit in Canada. (Statistics Canada)
- There are over 600 First Nations governments in Canada (also known as bands) that speak over 60 Indigenous languages (Statistics Canada)
- Indigenous food is an umbrella term that refers to a wide variety of localized traditions reflecting distinct cultures (Government of Ontario Food and Nutrition Toolkit for Residential Care Settings)
- Pre-contact Indigenous food changed following the arrival of and colonization by Europeans as communities lost traditional lands, were forced onto reservations and were supplied with staples such as flower and lard to replace traditionally hunted and gathered meat and plants (University of Victoria)
- Bannock is an example of the process whereby European foods replaced traditional ones – it originated with Scottish settlers but was eventually adopted by many Indigenous people and is now commonly understood as a traditional Indigenous food (University of Toronto)
- Many foods we eat on a daily basis have their origins in Indigenous cuisine from across North America, including wild rice, corn, maple syrup and potatoes (Aboriginal Multimedia Society)
- There is a revival of Indigenous cuisine in Canada and the United States as a means not only of reconnecting with Indigenous culture but of combatting the epidemics of obesity and diabetes among the communities (The Atlantic and National Post)
- Residential schools, also referred to as Indian Residential Schools, were a network of schools funded by the government and run by churches that forcibly removed Indigenous children from their family and homes in an attempt to assimilate them. In all, 150,000 Indigenous children passed through residential schools; thousands died as a result and entire generations were scarred. The final residential school was closed in 1996 and the Federal government has since apologized.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

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KEY TERMS

Indigenous—A collective noun for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada. The collective name has evolved over the years, from Indian to Native, aboriginal and now Indigenous, showing a growing understanding and respect.

Colonialism—A political-economic practice where European countries explored, conquered, settled and exploited areas of the world.

Intergenerational trauma—Negative consequences of oppression passed down through generations. Intergenerational trauma can affect the health and well-being of entire communities.

Reconciliation—The establishment of a new relationship based on respect and equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.
To begin the class, ask students:

sometimes used for but cherries, currants, chokeberries and blueberries were berries; cranberries and Saskatoon berries were most common, meat was available Pemmican was a very practical food; it was made of whatever every year to fuel the fur trade. Buying 200,000 pounds of the Records show that by 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company was the European settlers they shared it with, it was invaluable. Eating pemmican, a high-energy food, for hundreds of years. For and Native Americans in the United States have been making and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit People of Canadathem a food that fuelled the fur trade. Further student discovery of Indigenous cuisine by sharing with

**SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS AND LEARNING GOALS**

Students will:

- Explore the benefits of pemmican to First Nations, Métis and Inuit as well as the fur traders who immigrated from Europe
- Understand that reconciliation is a process of healing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians
- Create positive connections with food and history, culture and community

**DISCUSS**

1. What are the connections between food and culture Chef David Wolfman describes in the Global Voices article “A path to reconciliation through the kitchen”? How is food and culture connected for you?
2. How can food help someone reconnect with their heritage?
3. The article states that “breaking bread together might seem like a small thing, but it’s something.” What is this statement referring to? What is the significance of “breaking bread together”? How do you “break bread” at home?
4. What is reconciliation? How does the article describe food as a tool for reconciliation?
5. How can we use food to help people find a sense of history, culture and identity while still being respectful to the culture (if it is not our own)?

**DIVE DEEPER**

Further student discovery of Indigenous cuisine by sharing with them a food that fuelled the fur trade. Tell students, the First Nations, Métis and Inuit People of Canada and Native Americans in the United States have been making and eating pemmican, a high-energy food, for hundreds of years. For the European settlers they shared it with, it was invaluable. Records show that by 1870, the Hudson’s Bay Company was buying 200,000 pounds of the dried meat and berry mixture every year to fuel the fur trade.

Pemmican was a very practical food; it was made of whatever meat was available—usually buffalo, moose, elk or deer, and berries; cranberries and Saskatoon berries were most common, but cherries, currants, chokeberries and blueberries were sometimes used for pemmican at feasts.

To begin the class, ask students:

a. Have you eaten an energy, protein or granola bar recently
b. What was in it?
c. Why did you eat it?
d. What did it taste like?
e. Do you think your grandparents ate energy bars?

Tell students that they will be taking a look into the past and learning about the original energy bar: pemmican.

Show students “CreeFoodTV: Pemmican” to demonstrate how to make pemmican www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHkl8i97Mq0 (7:09). After showing the clip, ask students:

a. Do you think pemmican was made like this in the past? Why or why not?
b. Why do you think pemmican was eaten by so many people?
c. What are the benefits of pemmican?

Divide the class into three groups. Tell students they will be examining different perspectives of the fur trade by reading an article. Each group will read a different article: “Life in the Wilderness,” “Aboriginal Peoples” and “Coureurs de Bois.” After reading the articles, students will share and explain the content of each article with the rest of the class. Encourage those who did not read the article being presented to ask questions.

Next, have each student read the article “Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site of Canada: Cultural Treasures.” Instruct students to answer the following questions while reading:

a. What role did pemmican play in their communities?
b. How did First Nations, Métis and Inuit make pemmican?
c. How did pemmican support the fur traders?
d. How did pemmican bring together Indigenous Canadians and the new fur traders?

When students are finished, discuss the answers as a class. Explain to students that pemmican has been adapted by individuals to their own liking and tastes.

For homework, encourage students to make their own pemmican creations and bring it into the following class. While meat is traditionally the main ingredient, students may omit it from their recipes. Ensure students bring in a list of ingredients with their pemmican and do not use ingredients their classmates may be allergic to.

Celebrate the history of pemmican by sharing pemmican.

**RESOURCES**

- Parks Canada, “Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site of Canada” www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/ab/rockymountain/natcul2/06.aspx
- “Life in the Wilderness” www.canadiana.ca/hbc/stories/wilderness1_e.html
- “Aboriginal Peoples” www.canadiana.ca/hbc/stories/aboriginals1_e.html
- “Coureurs de Bois” article: www.canadiana.ca/hbc/stories/coureurs1_e.html
- WE Schools WE Stand Together campaign helps strengthen ties between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians in the community through learning and dialogue. Check out classroom resources and lesson plans at www.WE.org/weandtogether

**THEMES AND COURSE CONNECTIONS**

- **Themes:** Canada’s Indigenous Peoples, Local Issues, Reconciliation, Community
- **Course Connections:** English, Canadian and World Studies

**MATERIALS**

- Front board
- Paper and writing utensils

**WE**