



**WE Are  
Canada**  
LESSON PACKAGE

# RECONCILIATION THROUGH MUSIC

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LESSON PACKAGE FOR GRADES 9 TO 12

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THEME: RECONCILIATION | SUBJECT: MUSIC



Canada

# WE Are Canada

## RECONCILIATION THROUGH MUSIC—EXPRESSION, SHARING, REFLECTING

### WE LEARNING FRAMEWORK SKILLS LEGEND:



ARGUMENT  
FORMATION



INFORMATION  
LITERACY



LEADERSHIP  
SKILLS



ORGANIZATION



ACTION  
PLANNING



RESEARCH AND  
WRITING



CRITICAL  
THINKING



REFLECTION

**THEME:** Reconciliation

**SUBJECT:** Music

**GRADE LEVEL:** Grades 9 to 12

### LESSON PACKAGE OVERVIEW:

Students will gain an understanding of how music is used to work toward reconciliation, first by comparing and contrasting traditional and contemporary First Nations powwow music and Inuit throat singing, then by researching international examples of music. They will consider the cultural influences and significance of contemporary music and how it works toward reconciliation.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

- ▶ How is reconciliation achieved through musical expression, both traditional and contemporary?

### STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:

Students will:

- Understand how First Nations and Inuit contemporary musicians are using music for reconciliation by communicating the meaning of specific art forms
- Understand the ability of music to influence and encourage change
- Research how examples of cultural traditions, including music, are used to help people with reconciliation
- Use advocacy to increase awareness of how music helps people move toward reconciliation by making connections between the cognitive and affective domains
- Explore the various ways Indigenous cultures share their thoughts and ideas through customary celebrations within their communities
- Develop artistic, technical and critical skills as they explore musical expression
- Recognize that active participation in the arts is essential to building culture and expressing and exploring personal identity, especially with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities of Canada

### WORD BANK

**First Nations**—An Indigenous Canadian community officially recognized as an administrative unit by the federal government or functioning as such without official status.

**Indigenous**—Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native.

**Inuit**—The members of an Indigenous People of northern Canada and parts of Greenland and Alaska.

**Powwow**—A First Nations ceremony involving feasting and dancing.

**Reconciliation**—The restoration of friendly relations. The action of making one view or belief compatible with another.

**Renaissance**—A revival of or renewed interest in something.

**Throat singing**—A friendly competition or game between two women who are facing each other. One woman begins with short rhythmic patterns of husky chanting and low grunting, made through inhalations and exhalations. The second woman layers another rhythmic pattern on top. The two women continue trying to outlast the other. A single rendition usually lasts between one and three minutes.

### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Computer with Internet capabilities, speakers, projector and screen
- Library or computer lab access
- Art and Trauma in Africa: Representations of Reconciliation in Music, Visual Arts, Literature and Film Edited by: Lizelle Bisschoff, Stefanie van de Peer

### Recommended Assessment for Learning:

You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels, and knowledge. You are also best positioned to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this lesson package successful.

In this lesson package, teaching strategies include collaborative group work, class discussion and independent reflection, and suggestions for demonstration of learning include written reflection, exit tickets and student-generated discussion. Please make any accommodations or modifications that serve your students.

## LESSON 1:

# RECONCILIATION THROUGH MUSIC IN CANADA



### SUGGESTED TIME:

75 minutes

## Investigate and Learn

1.

**RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING:** On reconciliation, ask students:

- What is reconciliation?
- What does it mean to you?
- What are some examples of reasons for reconciliation (e.g., reconciliation from Indian Residential Schools, reconciliation from Apartheid in South Africa, etc.)?
- What does it mean to people in your community, in your country or around the world?

2. Tell students: Recently, Indigenous musicians have received recognition in Canada for their unique styles that mix traditional and contemporary music. A trio of DJs from Ottawa named A Tribe Called Red (image: [i.huffpost.com/gen/1238928/images/o-A-TRIBE-CALLED-RED-facebook.jpg](https://i.huffpost.com/gen/1238928/images/o-A-TRIBE-CALLED-RED-facebook.jpg)) won the 2014 Juno Award for breakthrough group of the year for their powwow step music. Additionally, throat singer Tanya Tagaq (image: [theloop.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/tanya\\_tagaq.jpg](https://theloop.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/tanya_tagaq.jpg)) from Cambridge Bay (Ikaluktuutiak), Nunavut, won the 2014 Polaris Music Prize, which honours, celebrates and rewards creativity and diversity in Canadian recorded music. Today we will listen to traditional powwow, powwow step, traditional throat singing and solo throat singing to compare and contrast their musical elements, dynamics and styles.

**EDUCATOR'S NOTE:** The next section of the lesson asks students to listen to different types of First Nations and Inuit music, both traditional and modern. To save time, consider using the jigsaw instructional method or divide students into groups and have them report back to the class.

3. Introduce students to powwow music. Tell students that traditionally, powwow music is performed only at powwows, a ceremony where food, music and dancing are shared. Each First Nation has their own distinct traditions. However, some common threads are found throughout. Four to 12 men or women sit in a circle around a large bass drum. The musicians strike the drum in unison in fixed rhythmic patterns while they sing songs that are initiated by one of them. Pitch levels fall throughout the song, which lasts about five minutes. In some First Nations, women's participation was traditionally restricted to supportive roles. They would stand in a circle behind the men and sing an octave higher than the men.
4. Divide the class into three groups and watch and listen to the top five songs on "Top 5 songs to get you in the mood for the powwow trail": [www.bandmine.com/news/95/top\\_5\\_songs\\_](http://www.bandmine.com/news/95/top_5_songs_)

[to\\_get\\_you\\_in\\_the\\_mood\\_for\\_the\\_powwow\\_trail/46022](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=to_get_you_in_the_mood_for_the_powwow_trail/46022).

(Assign one of the music examples to each group and give the link and questions. Note: any of the five videos will work as an example. However, the third example is only audio and less traditional in style. The fourth and fifth examples show how a female supports the music.)

**EDUCATOR'S NOTE:** This exercise connects/links to prior knowledge of music concepts. Ask students:

- Describe what you saw and heard.
- What instruments were used?
- How did singing complement the instrument(s)?
- What was done in unison?
- What was performed individually?
- Describe the tempo, rhythm, dynamic and pitch.

5. Now introduce students to the music of A Tribe Called Red. Show students a performance of A Tribe Called Red joined by a hoop dancer from CBC's Studio Q: [youtube.com/watch?v=mEZIUVFKHyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEZIUVFKHyk).

Ask students:

- Describe what you saw and heard.
- What instruments were used?
- Describe the tempo, rhythm, dynamic and pitch.
- What were the similarities between traditional powwow music and A Tribe Called Red's "The Road"?
- What music styles did the DJs' mix incorporate?

6. Show students CBC's The National's "Only in Canada" segment on A Tribe Called Red: [youtube.com/watch?v=zOS3wP-8Vfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOS3wP-8Vfw).
7. Take chart paper and cut it into eight pieces for students to write down their answers. Assign three of the following questions per group and ask them to record their responses on each piece of paper. Once completed, re-assemble the chart for comparison discussion.

- Who are A Tribe Called Red?
- What do they want people to get from listening to their music?
- What started electric powwow?
- Why did they want to create a space for urban Aboriginals?
- How do they push musical boundaries?
- How do they want to change how First Nations cultures are viewed?
- How does the "music speak for them"?
- Has your perspective of First Nations powwow music changed? Explain.

8. Introduce students to traditional Inuit throat singing. Throat singing is a friendly competition or game between two women who are facing each other. One woman begins with short rhythmic patterns of husky chanting and low grunting, made through inhalations and exhalations. The second woman layers another rhythmic pattern on top. The two women continue trying to outlast the other. A single rendition usually lasts between one and three minutes.

Share an example with students "Inuit Throat Singing":  
[icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/node/25](http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/node/25)

Ask students:

- a. Describe what you saw and heard.
- b. What were the instrument(s) used?
- c. What was done in unison?
- d. What was performed individually?
- e. Describe the tempo, rhythm, dynamic and pitch.

9. Introduce students to Tanya Tagaq. Play a song from Tagaq's album "Animism" [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kDHXcbQjOE&list=PLTUITwlsdIFQLzUd613E3h6MFhYictzyH](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kDHXcbQjOE&list=PLTUITwlsdIFQLzUd613E3h6MFhYictzyH) (Note: "Umingmak" and "Rabbit" are good example tracks to share with students.)

Ask students:

- a. Describe what you heard.
- b. How did Tanya Tagaq use her voice and breathing?
- c. What instruments accompanied Tagaq's throat singing?
- d. Why do you think these instruments were chosen?
- e. How do they complement and enhance Tagaq's throat singing?
- f. Describe the tempo, rhythm, dynamic and pitch.
- g. What other music styles does Tagaq incorporate?
- h. What were the similarities between traditional throat singing and Tagaq's version?
- i. How has Tagaq changed throat singing?
- j. In an interview about her music, Tagaq said "I like to live in a world that's not supposed to be." How does this come through in her music?
- k. Has your perspective of Inuit throat singing changed?

9.

**RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:** After each group completes their set of questions have students answer the question: How can this example of either traditional or contemporary music work toward reconciliation efforts taking place here in Canada?

Students may consider:

- a. What is the message in the music?
- b. What emotions does the music evoke?
- c. Why do you think it can help restore relationships?
- d. Why is music a more effective tool than another medium (e.g., book or movie)?



**ENRICHMENT:** Research and select one example of music in which the theme of reconciliation plays a role. Ask students to explain, orally or in writing, how the example is a part of a social movement that is working toward reconciliation. As with the contemporary First Nations powwow and Inuit solo throat singing examples shared, the example of music students select should honour traditional music in a new way. The example should be a recorded piece that can be shared with the class and can be from anywhere in the world. If necessary, provide students with a few examples, which may include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Hip hop lyrics as a tool for conflict resolution in the Niger Delta
- b. Moroccan music festivals as local art against global terrorism
- c. Jazz, folk, R&B and gospel during the American civil rights movement

Provide students time to research and select their example and write the explanation that links the example of music to reconciliation.

Have students share and describe their examples of reconciliation through music.

## LESSON 2:

# DISCOVERING RECONCILIATION THROUGH MUSIC AROUND THE WORLD



## SUGGESTED TIME:

75 minutes

## Action Plan

1. Begin the next class by having students reflect on their learning from the previous lessons. Return to the essential question. Ask students: How is reconciliation achieved through musical expression, both traditional and contemporary? Provide students with five to seven minutes to practise think-pair-share.
2. Ask students if they would like to further commit to being a part of moving toward reconciliation by taking the WE Are Canada Pledge. If students are interested, visit [WE.ca](http://WE.ca) for more information and to take the pledge.
3. Tell students that they will have the opportunity to celebrate and raise awareness of traditional and contemporary music by creating and implementing an advocacy-based action plan for educating others about an issue to increase visibility and follow up with an action that focuses on enacting change.
4. Ask students to brainstorm ideas for possible actions they may take as a class to promote reconciliation through an advocacy-based action. Record ideas on the front board or on chart paper.
5. The following example actions are focused on reconciliation in Canada, but the actions students take may be globally focused. Whenever possible, invite groups from the wider community. Possible actions may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Organize a dance that features contemporary Indigenous music.
  - b. Create a musical piece that fuses together traditional Indigenous music with contemporary music.
6. As a class, discuss the pros and cons of each action, narrow down the choices and select one action for the class to commit to. Complete or select multiple actions for groups to take action on.
7. Once an action has been selected, set goals for the action. Create a timeline with roles and responsibilities.

**EDUCATOR'S NOTE:** Remember to collect evidence and data of the action to use later. Collecting evidence and data also works as in-the-moment reflection, ensuring students are actively participating. Before the action takes place, review the goals set earlier and find evidence that students may collect to help them measure whether they met the goals or not. Evidence may be quantitative or qualitative.

### LESSON 3:

## TAKING ACTION THROUGH MUSIC



### SUGGESTED TIME:

75 minutes

### Take Action

1. Before interacting with members of the wider community, review classroom guidelines on etiquette and respect.
2. Using one-on-one discussion with students and by observation, ensure students are actively participating and collecting data throughout the Take Action section.

### Report and Celebrate

3. Post stories and examples of students' work toward reconciliation on social media to share the impact students are having with #WEStandTogether or focus on written stories that may be shared in community newspapers, websites or blogs. Collect completed student media release forms when necessary. Blank forms can be found at [WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/educator-resources](http://WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/educator-resources).

4. **RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:** Have students reflect on their learning and experiences. In a written, verbal or conversational reflection response, ask students to use specific examples to answer the essential question: How is reconciliation achieved through musical expression both traditional and contemporary? Encourage students to go deeper by using the following questions:
  - a. Using music as the method of reconciliation, what components of powwow step or solo throat singing help the artist(s) and listeners move toward reconciliation?
  - b. What did you take away most from listening to or experiencing reconciliation-related music?
  - c. How are stories that help move people toward reconciliation shared through music?