

Colonization Road Study Guide: Activities for Five Class Periods

DAY 1: CHOOSE ONE

Activity A:

Colonization Road

Students take notes with a graphic organizer based on different ideas in the film. After watching, students take a closer look at four important quotes from the film and discuss or write their answers to a series of 10 questions.

Activity 1:

Canada's History of Colonialism

In this activity, students explore the perception that many Canadians hold (including former Prime Minister Stephen Harper) that Canada has "no history of colonialism".

Activity 2

Settler Colonialism

This activity helps students understand the ways in which settler colonialism continues to be an ongoing issue in Canada.

DAY 2: Activity 3 Land Grants and Land Grabs

In this activity, students will examine how the idea of 'dominion' and nationhood allowed the British crown and successive Canadian governments to grant land to some while grabbing it from others.

DAY 3: Activity 4 The Law of the Land

This activity examines the changes in the nature of the relationship between First Nations and the Crown through a Socratic Seminar using primary source documents such as the Royal Proclamation, the Indian Act, and the Treaty of Niagara.

DAY 4: Activity 6 Land and Reconciliation

In this activity, students discuss the ways in which colonization continues to push Indigenous peoples off the land "to make way for the Canadian economy," including a short case study on Shoal Lake.

DAY 5: Activity 7

Culture and Assimilation

Using one quote from Sir John A. Macdonald and a series of others from the film, this activity asks students to examine the reasons for and effects of cultural assimilation while also considering some future ways forward.

All instructions, resources and handouts included

Activity A: *Colonization Road*

Before the film: Distribute the graphic organizer below and encourage students to take a look at some of the ideas the film will be addressing.

During the film: Encourage students to take notes in the graphic organizer. Their notes can include analysis, questions, and comments. Students can use the back of the handout if they need more space for additional comments.

After watching

Distribute the Activity A Quotes and Questions Handout. The quotes are from the film. Give students a little time read and/or discuss the quotes. After reading and/or discussion, direct students to answer the questions from the handout. They should incorporate the quotes and their notes from the film in their responses to the questions below.

Options:

- Students can work on different questions in smaller groups and share out in a whole group discussion.
- Students can choose one or two questions to focus on and share as a smaller group.
- Students can answer all the questions individually and hand in their answers so that you get a better understanding of student understanding of these important issues.

Activity A: Graphic Organizer Handout

Quote/Idea	Notes
The perception of colonialism in Canada as "benevolent and kind" (Hayden King)	
Colonialism as "a structure and not an event" (Jeffrey Denis)	
They wanted our land for the settlers and they gave them our land for free (Ryan McMahon)	
Colonization Road as a metaphor	
Indigenous peoples are accepted on an individual basis in daily life as long as they don't rock the boat.(Jeffrey Denis)	
Connection from Canada's past to Canada's present and future	
The concept of the Wampum Belt	
Talking about Reconciliation, but not about land	
Shoal Lake	
Canada's resource economy	

Activity A: Quotes Handout

"I don't know if Stephen Harper thinks there's no history of colonization. I think that he thinks that colonization was benign, was benevolent. So, we didn't have this awful, violent, bloody colonization. We had this peaceful colonization, where very nice European settlers came and made agreements with very nice but savage native peoples. And we helped them out, through Christianity and religion, and we taught them how to farm, and we paid for their school. So, that has been colonization, and it's been a very benevolent one." (Hayden King)

"All of our rights are inherent, that means they were here before anyone else came here. And we had those rights, because we were nations, and we had our own laws and our own territories, and these things all belonged to us before anyone else came here. So all the Royal Proclamation did was recognize that." (Pam Palmater)

"Well, I would forgive anybody for standing on my feet if they ----in' got off... Y'know what I mean?...and stopped doing it. But it doesn't end." (Lee Maracle)

"Colonization, you don't win... You lose. Indigenous peoples and Canadians, we can live the two row Wampum, each in our own canoe. We will honour the treaties in their full, original spirit and intent. We will affirm our place in our traditional territories with the return of our lands. We will speak our languages. We will share our stories. We will respect the land, the water, and the air that we all share. We will find strength in our communities again. We can even change the names of these roads... Because, in spite of everything we've gone through as a peoples, through the strength and the love of our Elders and our ancestors, we are still alive... We are still fighting... We are still here." (Ryan McMahon)

Use your graphic organizers and the quotes above to answer the following questions:

1. What does it mean that "colonization is a structure not an event"? (Patrick Wolff)
2. In what ways can roads and railways be seen as being "like an infection"? (Pam Palmater)
3. In what ways is Colonization Road a "really powerful metaphor"? (Leanne Simpson)
4. What does it mean that "the past and the present and future are actually alive"? (Al Hunter)
5. How can the "Wampum Belt concept" help us move forward in reconciliation? (Pam Palmater)

6. Why are we “talking about reconciliation, but not about land”? (Leanne Simpson)
7. In what ways does the Freedom Road, Shoal Lake story fit in with the movie? What can we learn and what can we do about this issue?
8. What might Al Hunter mean when he says that the resource economy is “short term gain for long-term pain”? What connections can you make to current issues in Canada?
9. In what ways is the government of Canada still “standing on” the feet of indigenous peoples? (Lee Maracle)
10. What does Ryan McMahon’s quote at the end of the film mean to you?

Activity 1: Canada's History of Colonialism

Introduction to the Lesson

The film includes an excerpt of the 2009 speech (at 00:28) by then Prime Minister Stephen Harper in which he asserts that Canada has “no history of colonialism”. In this activity, students will analyze and deconstruct Harper’s quote while also looking at two primary source documents in order to better understand what he likely meant and what it reveals about common attitudes about Canada’s history.

Instructions

1. If necessary replay the clip from the film (at 00:28) showing Harper’s speech or give students the text of the quote (Resource 1, below).
2. Give students a copy of the 1910 map of Africa (Resource 2) showing the division of the continent by the colonial powers of Africa. As an alternative, project a copy of the map from Wikimedia Commons on the board for all students to see
(<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19624839>).
3. Give students the “Indian and Reserve Land Base in Canada” chart (Resource 3) published by the Ministry of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.
4. Once they have all the materials, ask students to examine them independently for about 2 minutes, noting anything they might have questions or comments about.
5. If students do not notice the statistic about the portion of land in Canada designated as reserve land (0.2% of the total land area of the country), write the following statistic on the board.
 - a. Land for indigenous reserves = 2,600,000 hectares
 - b. Total land mass of Canada = 998,467,000 hectares
6. Present students with the following discussion questions either as a handout or on the board. Ask students to read them and then prepare some notes about things they would like to say in a group discussion.
 - a. How is it that many people might not view Canada as having a history of colonialism? That is, what factors might make them believe that?
 - b. Is Harper’s view of colonialism common today? Why? What would make them believe that?
 - c. What are the differences between what happened in Africa and what happened in Canada? What is the reason for those differences?
 - d. What other countries or parts of the world have experienced the type of colonialism that took place in Canada? What do they have in common with Canada? What is different?

7. In a moderated discussion, ask students to answer the questions above.
8. At the end of the discussion, introduce the term 'settler colonialism'. Working in small groups, ask students to try and find evidence of settler colonialism from the film. Students can also use examples from outside sources.

Optional extensions

1. Either as a graded or ungraded writing assignment, ask students to write a response to any of the questions above using examples and evidence.
2. Ask students to take 3-5 photos of objects or places that might perpetuate the idea that Canada did not engage in colonialism. Each photo should have a caption that describes the photo and explains the student's thinking.
3. Ask students to take 3-5 photos of objects or places that are evidence of settlers colonizing Canada. Each photo should have a caption that describes the photo and explains the student's thinking.

Activity 1: Resources and Handouts

Quote (Resource 1)

"We are one of the most stable regimes in history. There are very few countries that can say for nearly 150 years they've had the same political system without any social breakdown, political upheaval or invasion. We are unique in that regard. We also have no history of colonialism." (then Prime Minister Stephen Harper, 2009)

Map (Resource 2)



Activity 1: Resources and Handouts

Table (Resource 3)

The inventory comprises geoscientific information on 2267 Indian reserves. Total land base of these Indian reserves is approximately 2.6 million hectares or 0.2 percent of the total land area of Canada. The table below summarizes the Indian reserve and land statistics contained in this inventory:

Region	BANDS	RESERVES	LAND BASE (ha)	AVE AREA (ha)
Atlantic	32	68	29,561.6	434
Quebec	26	31	77,131.5	2488
Ontario	113	189	709,985.8	3756
Manitoba	53	104	214,803.7	2065
Sask.	69	143	616,815.9	4313
Alberta	40	100	668,880.1	6688
B.C.	200	1606	353,324.2	217
NWT	1	2	562.1	281
Yukon	7	24	499.6	83
TOTALS	551	2267	2,671,564.5	1176

Activity 2: Settler Colonialism

Introduction to the Lesson

The first lesson introduced the term settler colonialism. This lesson introduces students to a formal definition of settler colonialism and seeks to develop an understanding of the ways in which settler colonialism continues to be an ongoing issue. Since many students may view colonization as something that happened a long time ago, they may feel like they have no part in it (especially if their families have only been in Canada for a relatively short time). As part of the lesson, students will explore the differences and similarities between settler colonialism in Canada and colonialist policies in other parts of the world.

Instructions

1. Either give students the definitions and descriptions of settler colonialism (Resources 1 and 2) or put them on the board for students to see.
2. Have students form small groups (2-3 is ideal) to discuss them. They should consider their meaning and also note questions or comments that arise from the discussion.
3. After a few minutes, start a whole class discussion about what the two quotes mean. Consider using the following questions to draw attention to key elements of what the term 'settler colonialism' means. If students are unfamiliar with some of the terms, explain them.
 - a. In the context of Canada, what does/did it mean to "engineer the disappearance" of Indigenous people?
 - b. What does it mean that settler colonialism is "more of an imposed structure than an historical event"?
 - c. Using evidence from the film (or other sources they might be familiar with), what are some examples of things that happened in Canada that support the definition of settler colonialism?
4. Have students read the 'traditional' description of colonialism (also known as 'metropole colonialism') from Resource 3. [Note: this is 'traditional' in that it is what many people think of when they think of the colonial era.] Briefly discuss what this type of colonialism entails.
5. After a brief discussion of the definition, have students complete the chart (Resource 4) about the differences between the two types of colonialism and answer the accompanying questions either in discussion or in writing.

Activity 2: Resources and Handouts

Resource 1

"Settler Colonialism: Large numbers of settlers claim land and become the majority. Employing a "logic of elimination," as Patrick Wolfe put it in the *American Historical Review*, they attempt to engineer the disappearance of the original inhabitants everywhere except in nostalgia."

Resource 2

"Settler colonialism has best been defined as more of an imposed structure than an historical event. This structure is characterized by relationships of domination and subjugation that become woven throughout the fabric of society, and even becomes disguised as paternalistic benevolence. The objective of settler colonialism is always the acquisition of indigenous territories and resources, which means the native must be eliminated."

[Note: *Paternalistic benevolence* describes an attitude that is similar to a father taking care of children. What examples of this exist in Canada?]

Resource 3

"Colonialism as a concept has its roots in European expansionism and the founding of the so-called New World. The European powers of the British, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and others established colonies in new places they "discovered" from which to facilitate trade and extract resources, in what can be thought of as the earliest stages of what we now call globalization. The mother country (known as the metropole) would come to dominate indigenous populations through their colonial governments, even when the indigenous population remained in the majority for the duration of colonial control."

Activity 2: Resources and Handouts

Resource 4

Complete the chart noting the characteristics of the two types of colonialism.

	Settler colonialism	'Traditional' colonialism
Local population		
Local culture		
Land ownership		
Examples of countries or regions where each occurred		

Answer the following questions.

1. Did First Nations experience **both types** of colonialism? Explain.
2. How is settler colonialism continuing today? How are almost all of us settlers?

Activity 3: Land Grabs and Land Grants

Introduction

In the first part of the movie, the narrator, Ryan McMahon, visits Lang Pioneer Village in Peterborough County and speaks with Adam Hough about land grants. In this lesson, students will dig deeper into their understanding of Land Grants by analyzing primary source documents. These documents include the text of the land grants themselves and of some posters the Canadian government used to advertise those grants to people living in Eastern Canada, the United States, and Europe.

Instructions

1. Divide students into groups of 3 - 5 (or pairs).
2. Distribute copies of the posters (3) shown in the film (or make access available to them online). You can do a Google search for vintage Canadian posters or vintage Canadian immigration posters.
3. Have students look at the posters and fill out the analysis tables making sure that they observe before interpreting. Walk around and check in with groups.
4. When a group is ready, distribute the rest of the resources and have students fill out the document-based table as a group.
5. Distribute or post one or more of the quotes from *Colonization Road* and lead a class discussion. These quotes will help in starting the discussion; encourage students to use evidence from the posters and the documents to support their interpretation and opinions of the quotes.

Optional Extensions - If you have more time, get more posters - there are many examples..

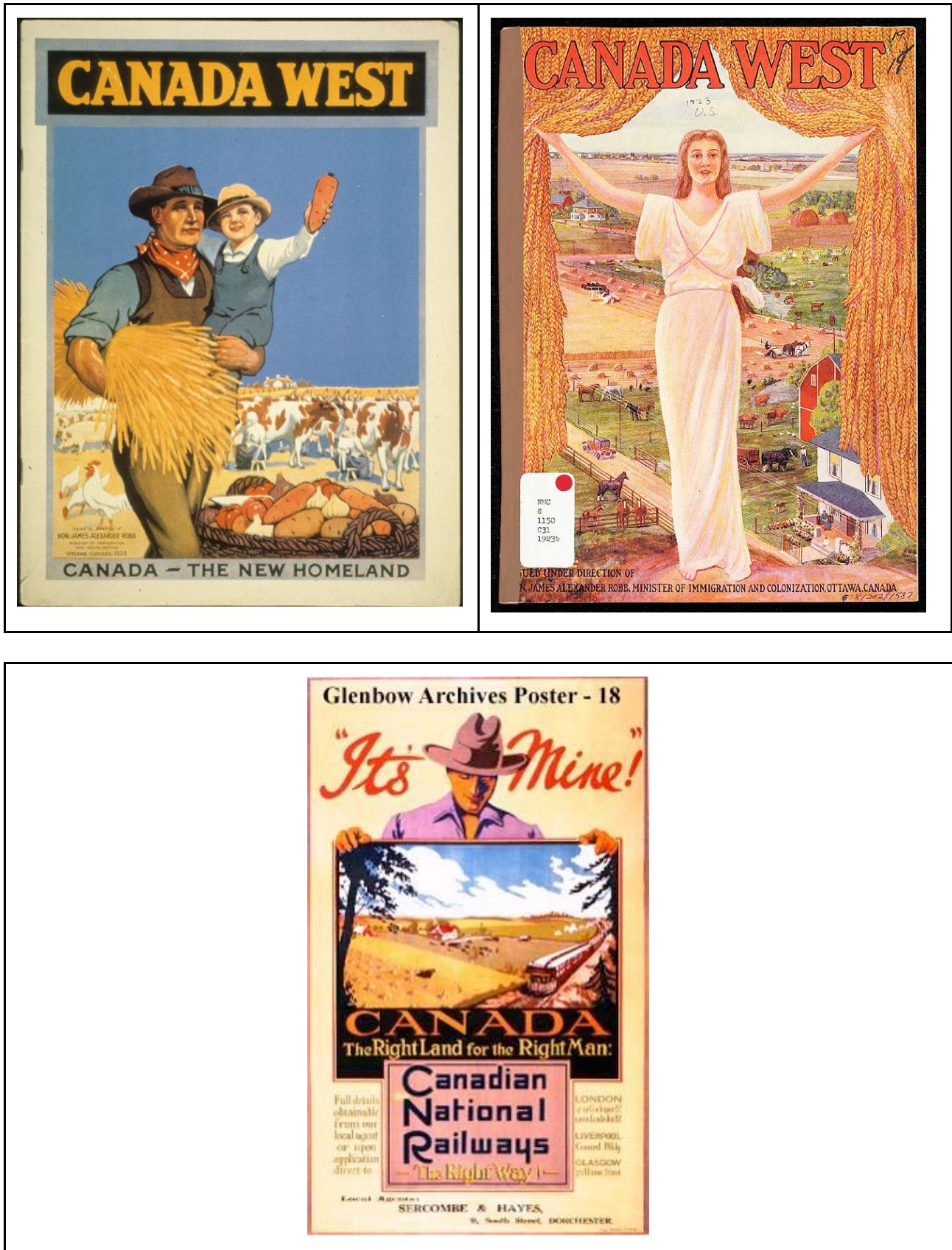
- Give each group two different posters and have them present their interpretations to each other (whole class or jigsaw).

Resources (in addition to the film)

- 3 graphic posters
- 3 documents
- 1 handout
- 4 quotes from *Colonization Road*

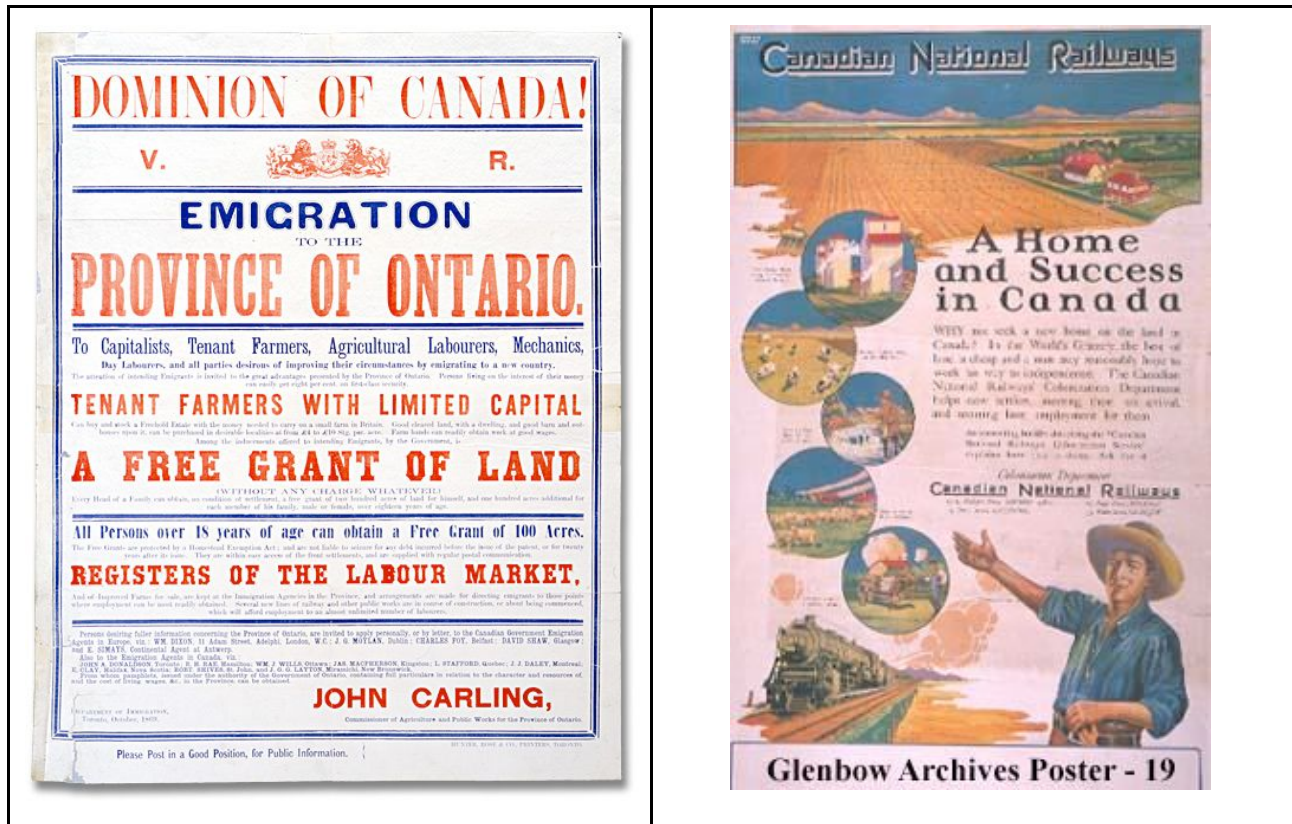
Activity 3: Resources and Handouts

Posters



Activity 3: Resources and Handouts

Documents and Quotes



Text from the Land Grant Acts (Ontario, Northwest and/or The West)

"Any person, male or female, who is the sole head of a family, or any male who has attained the age of eighteen years, shall be entitled to be entered for one hundred and sixty acres, or for a less quantity, of unappropriated Dominion lands, for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof."

Excerpt from the Canadian Encyclopedia

The Dominion of Canada (Canada's full legal name)

"New Brunswick's [Sir Leonard Tilley](#) suggested "Dominion of Canada." According to the popular story handed down through history, Tilley was inspired by the passage in the Bible from Psalm 72:8, referring to God's dominion: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

Activity 3: Deconstructing Design Handout

	Poster 1	Poster 2	Poster 3
Text Design, headings, font choices, colours, location			
Text Content What is being said? What is being promised?			
Background Borders and spaces (colour, layout, etc.)			
Images (symbols, colours, layout, size, etc.)			
How do all elements work together? How do you interpret these posters?			

Document	What is the text saying?	Poster Connections: What does it mean?
Dominion Quote		
Land Act		
Dominion of Canada Emigration Poster		

Activity 3: Land Grabs Handout

Quotes from *Colonization Road*

"To me, roads, railways, they're like an infection. Not just metaphorically, but actually. It was a way of invading our territories, without legal authorities, without consent, and what are roads used for now? They literally bleed our territories dry, of people, of resources, everything that matters to us, and they pose a hazard." Pam Palmater

"In 1914, my dad's family was forcibly relocated from one of the seven Anishinaabe communities along the Rainy River, to form Manitou Rapids First Nation. This was an illegal amalgamation by the province of Ontario. Because they wanted the land for settlers, and they gave them our land for free." Ryan McMahon

"When the land grants were starting to happen, they were giving away our old camps, and our shorelines and our islands, and the river mouths and all this, we had to move. In fact, we were being shot at. It's a history, which started with conflict, so we had to move. We had to move." Doug Williams

"They wanted the land, we were on the land, and so dispossession and then erasure became the primary way over and over and over again, through policy, through informal relationship, through violence, through...every mechanism possible, really." - Leanne Simpson

Activity 4: The Law of the Land

Introduction

This lesson examines the changing nature of the relationship between the Crown (the British colonial government and the Canadian federal government) since the defeat of the French in the Seven Years War. Students will examine a number of excerpts from key historical documents - including the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Treaty of Niagara (1764), and the Indian Act, the federal legislation first introduced in 1876 that continues to shape the relationship between Canada and First Nations - as well as modern references to the nature of Canada's relationship to First Nations. The Royal Proclamation, issued by King George III, not only established British governance of the territories ceded by France in the Treaty of Paris after the Seven Years War, but also established the basis for treaties and land use for First Nations.

The Indian Act, which has been revised several times since 1876, has defined official government policies towards Indigenous people. The 1876 Act consolidated a number of previous laws pertaining to Indigenous people including the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857. The Indian Act has, among other things, given the federal government tremendous power to determine policy over governance, political structures, cultural practices, education, and even the definition of who is and is not indigenous. For example, the powers of the Act enabled the government to require First Nations children to attend residential schools, separating them from their families, language, and culture.

Together the resources for this lesson show the changes in the nature of the relationship between First Nations and the Crown. The lesson culminates in a Socratic seminar in which students discuss both how and why this relationship changed so fundamentally. Instructions for the Socratic seminar are included.

Instructions

1. Tell students that they will be participating in a Socratic seminar (instructions follow) in which they will have to use the resources provided as evidence to answer a series of open-ended questions. Give them the questions (Resource 1) to review and then the readings (Resources 2-12).
2. Provide students with printed copies of all the resources for this activity. In their first reading, they should make notes about any comprehension-related questions. The style and formality of the language of some of the documents will likely be unfamiliar to students, so questions should be encouraged.
3. Talk through any questions students have and, if necessary, provide them with the following questions to guide comprehension of key content. These questions

are intended to help students decipher the language of the excerpts to arrive at their meanings.

- a. What were key requirements of the Royal Proclamation regarding British subjects/settlers?
 - b. What guarantees were made to First Nations in the Royal Proclamation?
 - c. After the Indian Act was adopted, who began to decide who was an 'Indian'?
 - d. Who controlled First Nations' government after the passage of the Indian Act?
4. Once students seem to understand the excerpts, have them re-read and annotate, taking notes about potential answers to the questions provided in Resource 1.
5. Hold a Socratic seminar for 25-50 minutes. During the seminar, students should follow these guidelines.
 - a. Each student should speak two times (no more, no less). Additional speaking time should only be given once all students have participated twice. Use a tally or roll sheet to keep track of student speaking.
 - b. Participation can be in the form of comments/responses (to provided questions or to new ones), new questions, or new issues that arise.
 - c. Students should address each other directly (rather than the teacher).
 - d. No interruptions should occur.
 - e. The teacher should ideally only participate if the conversation gets bogged down or students are reluctant to speak.
6. There is also a scoring guide available with this guide if you want to make the Socratic seminar a graded activity.
7. The questions in the Socratic Seminar Handout are the questions students should use as the springboard for their discussion. If other related topics arise, that is absolutely appropriate, but these can be the starting point to begin discussion.

Activity 4: Socratic Seminar Handout

Questions For the Seminar

How does the Royal Proclamation of 1763 differ in tone or attitude from the Indian Act and related laws? How does the language in the documents about the treaties differ?

- a. What could have happened that caused attitudes to change?
- b. How is First Nations culture viewed?
- c. How does the power dynamic shift between First Nations and the British/Canadian governments? Why would it shift?
- d. What expectations did/do First Nations have of their relationship to Canada? What are the historical reasons and evidence for those expectations?
- e. What does assimilation mean in the context of First Nations in Canada?
- f. Resource 12 is from 2014. How have things changed? How have they not?

Readings

1. *And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to Our Interest and the Security of Our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians, with whom We are connected, and who live under Our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds; We do therefore, with the Advice of Our Privy Council, declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure, that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of Our Colonies of Quebec, East Florida, or West Florida, do presume, upon any Pretence whatever, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass any Patents for Lands beyond the Bounds of their respective Governments, as described in their Commissions; as also, that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of Our other Colonies or Plantations in America, do presume, for the present, and until Our further Pleasure be known, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass Patents for any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the Atlantick Ocean from the West and North-West, or upon any Lands whatever, which, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us as aforesaid, are reserved to the said Indians, or any of them.* (Excerpt from the Royal Proclamation) [Note: The power to grant 'Warrants of Survey' or 'Patents for Lands' refer to the power of representatives of the government to allow for:
 - a. A land survey that could determine boundaries for things like ownership or for planning construction.
 - b. Grants of land ownership.

The Proclamation prohibited surveys and land grants in any lands not already ceded to or purchased by the British.]

Activity 4: Socratic Seminar Handout

2. *And We do further declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure...to reserve under Our Sovereignty, Protection, and Dominion, for the Use of the said Indians, all the Lands and Territories not included within the Limits of Our said Three New Governments, or within the Limits of the Territory granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, as also all the Lands and Territories lying to the Westward of the Sources of the Rivers which fall into the Sea from the West and North West, as aforesaid; and We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of Our Displeasure, all Our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved, without Our especial Leave and Licence for that Purpose first obtained. (Excerpt from the Royal Proclamation)*
3. *And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever, who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described, or upon any other Lands, which, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said Indians as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements. (Excerpt from the Royal Proclamation)*
4. *"Englishman, although you have conquered the French you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods, and mountains were left us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance; and we will part with them to none..." (Excerpt from a speech by Ojibwe Chief Minavavana in 1763)*
5. *At this gathering a nation-to-nation relationship between settler and First Nation peoples was renewed and extended, and the Covenant Chain of Friendship, a multination alliance in which no member gave up their sovereignty, was affirmed. The Royal Proclamation became a treaty at Niagara because it was presented by the colonialists for affirmation, and was accepted by the First Nations. However, when presenting the Proclamation, both parties made representations and promises through methods other than the written word, such as oral statements and belts of wampum. (John Borrows, "Wampum at Niagara") [Note: Wampum are cylindrical shell beads and were often strung on belts. These belts were used for different important purposes including the marking of treaties.]*
6. *The whole Wampum Belt concept of we'll work together, we'll share this place, but I will steer my boat and you will steer yours, and never will we try to interfere with one another[...]Recognizing, however whatever English word you want to use, nationhood, sovereignty, self determination, it's we will take care of ourselves and govern ourselves, you do your business, and we'll work along cooperatively in the areas that we have to. (Pam Palmater, Colonization Road)*

7. [...]if such Commissioners shall report in writing to the Governor that any such Indian of the male sex, and not under twenty-one years of age, is able to speak, read and write either the English or the French language readily and well, and is sufficiently advanced in the elementary branches of education and is of good moral character and free from debt, then [...] such Indian is enfranchised under this Act; and the provisions of the third section of the Act aforesaid, and all other enactments making any distinction between the legal rights and liabilities of Indians and those of Her Majesty's other subjects, shall cease to apply to any Indian so declared to be enfranchised, who shall no longer be deemed an Indian within the meaning thereof. (Excerpt from the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857) [Note: The term 'enfranchised' literally means given the right to vote. In the context of the Indian Act, it meant that someone not only gained the right to vote but also ceased to be an 'Indian' (Indigenous).]
8. At the election of a chief or chiefs, or the granting of any ordinary consent required of a band of Indians under this Act, those entitled to vote at the council or meeting thereof shall be the male members of the band of the full age of twenty-one years; and the vote of a majority of such members at a council or meeting of the band summoned according to their rules, and held in the presence of the Superintendent-General, or an agent acting under his instructions, 20 shall be sufficient to determine such election, or grant such consent... (Excerpt from the Indian Act of 1876)
9. "Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or in the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than six nor less than two months..." (Excerpt from the 1884 amendment to the Indian Act)
10. David Rosenberg, who was part of the Tsilhqot'in legal team, said the court found aboriginal title does not just apply to specific sites where First Nations lived or used intensively. "It's territorial. It goes from mountaintop to mountaintop in some places; it covers valleys and vast tracts of land," he said. The decision places a greater burden on governments to justify economic development on aboriginal land. Title, however, is not absolute. Economic development can still go ahead on titled land without consent in cases where development is pressing, substantial and meets the Crown's fiduciary duty, the high court ruled. (News story on the 2014 Tsilhqot'in court victory to gain title over their historic territories)

Activity 5: Colonization Roads

Introduction

As Canada sought more and more settlers from Europe, road building was instrumental in the spread of agriculture, the spread of towns and cities, the extraction of resources, and the displacement of Indigenous people. Roads facilitated the movement of people and goods, opened up markets and brought valuable resources within reach of newly developing industries.

As evidenced by the advertisements used in Activity 3, the policy was supported by governments in North America (the U.S. had similar policies) and Europe (which saw significant emigration to both Canada and the United States). There was little if any questioning of the negative impact these policies had on First Nations; instead, the bigger issue was the utility of the policies in boosting population and facilitating development.

Today, in many parts of the world, road construction is often viewed as the precursor to environmental degradation and the loss of cultures and languages. In this lesson, students will examine the shifting views and the reasons for them.

Instructions

1. For this activity, use the images from Activity 3 and 4. The images from Activity 4 are headlines from different media and news sites from North America and Europe and deal with developing countries like Brazil.
2. Print the resources (or project them on the board) and distribute to students to examine in small groups (table groupings or groups of 3-5 students).
3. Have students discuss the images and consider the following two questions:
 - a. What issues are shared in common between the modern headlines and the posters from Canada?
 - b. What differences stand out between the modern headlines and the historical posters?
4. Have students read the article ["As Roads Spread in Rainforests, the Environmental Toll Grows"](#) (also available as a pdf). This article describes the phenomenon of road construction in a variety of countries and, primarily, its environmental impacts.
5. Ask students to write a response to one of the following questions using evidence from their own research, *Colonization Road*, and/or the resources from Activities 3 and 4.
 - a. Option 1: Is it hypocritical that groups in countries like Canada, the United States, and Britain are urging changes to the development and use of land in developing countries? Explain.
 - b. Option 2: Have attitudes changed/improved since the time in which the posters urging settlers to come to parts of Canada were created? Or is it

- because of other factors that the media is expressing so much concern for indigenous lands in other countries?
- c. Option 3: How would you apply the same concerns for land rights and the environment in **other countries** to lands in Canada that were/are occupied by settlers?
 - d. In what ways does settler colonialism continue to exist in Canada and other countries?
 - e. How are roads linked to settler colonialism?

Activity 5: News Handouts

Resource 1

Roads are encroaching deeper into the Amazon rainforest, study says

Oil and gas access roads in western Amazon could open up 'Pandora's box' of environmental impacts

Resource 2

Roads lead to Amazon 'destruction'



"Illegal logging and land clearing are rampant"

Resource 3



In the heart of the Brazilian rainforest, the **Trans Amazonian Highway**, a 2,000-mile paved road bisects the lush Amazon. Intending to connect important cities and move commodities to urban markets, highway construction is an ongoing project that is causing great deforestation. **MILLENNIAL** spoke with Rhett Butler, the founder of **Mongabay**, a website that publishes environmental news and statistics specifically about rainforest deforestation resulting from the construction of roads.

As Roads Spread in Rainforests, The Environmental Toll Grows

From Brazil to Borneo, new roads are being built into tropical forests at a dizzying pace, putting previously intact wilderness at risk. If we hope to preserve rainforests, a leading researcher says, new strategies must be adopted to limit the number of roads and reduce their impacts.

Resource 4

The Uncontacted Indians of Brazil

At risk of extinction from disease and land loss

In the depths of the Amazon rainforest in Brazil live tribes who have no contact with the outside world.

Illegal loggers and cattle ranchers are invading their land and bringing disease. They won't survive unless this stops.

Activity 6: Land and Reconciliation

Introduction:

In *Colonization Road*, several speakers address the issue of land in Canada and the ways in which colonization continues to push Indigenous peoples off the land “to make way for the Canadian economy.” (Hayden King - 33:45). Land was key, not only for resource extraction (lumber, minerals, oil, gas, water, etc.) but also as a way to transport goods across the country and to transport workers in and out of resource extraction areas like mines, forests, lakes and rivers. The resource economy is “a bust-boom and bust economy. It's short-term gain for long-term pain, to use an old cliché.” (Al Hunter).

In order to understand the relationship between Canada’s history of violence towards Indigenous peoples in order to develop the economy and reconciliation, read the following excerpts from Leanne Simpson’s article in *Electric City Magazine* from March 2016.

After reading, students should work in small groups to talk about different ways that governments of First Nations and municipalities and provinces, can “better share the land”. What ideas do students have to begin to solve the problems in the Pigeon Lake community in terms of meaningful engagement with reconciliation?

Activity 6: Land and Reconciliation Handout

Land & Reconciliation, Having the Right Conversations

In summer 2017, a conflict occurred between cottagers and Mississauga Nishnaabeg wild rice harvesters on Pigeon Lake when folks from the “Save Pigeon Lake” group were issued permits from the Trent-Severn Waterway and Parks Canada to hire a contractor to remove wild rice from the lake.

Curve Lake First Nation member James Whetung was at the centre of the controversy, as a harvester who sells Black Duck Wild Rice regularly at the Peterborough Farmers’ Market and who has been reseeding Pigeon Lake for the past few years.

James is an important person in Mississauga Nishnaabeg communities because he is an expert on wild rice. He has spent years refining the complicated processing of the rice, nurturing the beds back to life, and teaching others how to do the same. He also provides local Nishnaabe communities, my community, and the broader Peterborough community with a local, sustainably harvested source of wild rice, so we don’t have to rely on commercially produced rice from Minnesota.

Minomiin, or wild rice, has grown in our territory since time immemorial and it used to cover many of the lakes in this area, including Pimadashkodeyong (Rice Lake) and Chemong. Curve Lake Elder Doug Williams recounts stories of a tiny canoe path up the centre of Chemong because the rice was so thick and healthy. Our families lived good lives with a beautiful sustainable food system because of wild rice.

Minomiin is a cornerstone of Mississauga Nishnaabeg governance, economy, and well-being. As a food, it is high in protein, and through a complex drying and curing process, it can last through the winter as a staple food, when hunting and fishing are more difficult. Mississauga Nishnaabeg families gather in ricing areas in the fall to pick and process rice – which involves drying, roasting, dancing, and winnowing. Songs, stories, and ceremonies were interwoven with each step. Large amounts of *minomiin* were cached for the winter.

In November, wild rice harvesters from Curve Lake First Nation (Doug Williams and James Whetung) and Alderville First Nation (Dave Mowat and myself) came together with a supportive audience in the Peterborough Public Library to talk about minomiin and reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a word that we’ve heard a lot lately in the media. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recently concluded its work and has released its final report with 93 recommendations, which Prime Minister Trudeau has promised to implement “in order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation”.

Land is not mentioned in any of the recommendations, in part because the commission was set up to focus on individual suffering in residential schools. Yet, residential schools were a strategy used by Canada to break the connection between Indigenous peoples and our lands, so the state could access the land for settlement and for natural resources. Residential schools were just one part of an ugly and ongoing strategy to destroy Indigenous nations that included policies such as the *Indian Act*, fraudulent treaty processes and land theft, the criminalization of Indigenous dissent and resistance, gender violence, and racism.

The past two hundred years have not been kind or fair to the Mississauga Nishnaabeg or our rice. We have been dispossessed, often violently, of virtually all of our territory, which spans the north shore of Lake Ontario. This makes it very difficult for us to live as Nishnaabeg in our homeland.

Wild rice beds have been catastrophically destroyed through construction of the Trent Severn Waterway and fluctuating water levels, the decline of water quality in the lakes, boat traffic, and cottagers actively removing the beds from the waterfront. Our sacred sites, our cemeteries, our hunting grounds, trap lines, fishing spots, ceremonial places, camping places, trails, medicine gathering spots, and wild rice beds are very difficult to access because they are on private land, in provincial parks, or under the control of municipalities and cities.

This presents a tremendous problem for people like me who are raising Nishnaabeg children and who want my kids to fall in love with their land, know their stories and language, and live in the world as Nishnaabeg. I want them to be able to icefish in the winter, fast at the *Kinomaage-Waapkong* (the Peterborough Petroglyphs), make maple sugar and trap muskrats in the spring, hunt bullfrogs in the summer, and hunt deer, ducks and geese and of course harvest *minomiin* in the fall.

How can we “advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” without talking about land? Local First Nations are currently engaged in several battles to protect land: the ability to harvest rice; the burial mounds on “private land” in Hastings, Ontario; the Fraser property, a tract of land set for condo development in Burleigh Falls; and the protection of our beloved *Chi’Minis/Boyd Island*.

There are very few places left where we can be Nishnaabeg on our own terms. The federal and provincial governments, after years of court battles, have finally recognized hunting and fishing rights for the Williams Treaty communities. This is a tremendous victory for us, as we have very few places we can hunt. Giving these places back is an excellent start to an ongoing process of reconciliation that is more than just apologies and superficial changes.

Land is an important conversation for Indigenous peoples and Canada to have because land is at the root of our conflicts. Far from asking settler Canadians to pack up and leave, it is critical that we think about how we can better share land. That’s a

conversation we're not having, except when conflict escalates to the level it did last summer on Pigeon Lake.

I get asked "What do you people want anyway?" a lot in my travels. During Idle No More, I decided to think about that question in a deep way and commit to clearly articulating what I want as an Nishnaabekwe. At the end of my presentation that night at the library, I read my vision for the first time in the city I live in:

I want my great-grandchildren to be able to fall in love with every piece of our territory. I want their bodies to carry with them every story, every song, every piece of poetry hidden in our Nishnaabeg language. I want them to be able to dance through their lives with joy. I want them to live without fear because they know respect, because they know in their bones what respect feels like. I want them to live without fear because they have a pristine environment with clean waterways that will provide them with the physical and emotional sustenance to uphold their responsibilities to the land, their families, their communities, and their nations. I want them to be valued, heard, and cherished by our communities and by Canada no matter their skin colour, their physical and mental abilities, their sexual orientation, or their gender orientation. I want my great-great-grandchildren and their great-great-grandchildren to be able to live as Mississauga Nishnaabeg unharassed and undeterred in our homeland.

Our nationhood is based on the idea that the earth is our first mother, that "natural resources" are not "natural resources" at all, but gifts from our mother. Our nationhood is based on the foundational concept that we should give up what we can to support the integrity of our homelands for the coming generations. We should give more than we take.

It is nationhood based on a series of radiating responsibilities.

This is what I understand our diplomats were negotiating when settlers first arrived in our territory. This was the impetus for those very first treaties – Nishnaabe freedom, protection for the land and the environment, a space – an intellectual, political, spiritual, artistic, creative, and physical space where we could live as Nishnaabe and where our *Kobade* could do the same.

This is what my Ancestors wanted for me, for us. They wanted for our generation to practice Nishnaabe governance over our homeland, to partner with other governments over shared lands, to have the ability to make decisions about how the gifts of our mother would be used for the benefit of our people and in a manner to promote her sanctity for coming generations. I believe my ancestors expected the settler state to recognize my nation, our lands and the political and cultural norms in our territory.

If reconciliation is to be meaningful, we need to be willing to dismantle settler colonialism as a system. Our current government needs to move beyond window dressing and begin to tackle the root causes of Indigenous oppression in Canada. This means respecting when Indigenous peoples say no to development on our lands. It

means dismantling land claims and self government processes that require us to terminate our Aboriginal and treaty rights to sit at the table. It means repealing the most damaging aspects of the *Indian Act* and respecting First Nations political systems, governance, and ability to determine who belongs in our communities. It means being accountable about the collective damage that has been done and is being done, and supporting the regeneration of languages, cultures, and political systems. It means stop fighting us in court. It means giving back land, so we can rebuild and recover from the losses of the last four centuries and truly enter into a new relationship with Canada and Canadians. (Leanne Simpson, *Electric City Magazine*, March 2016)

Activity 6 Case Study: Freedom Road and Shoal Lake 40

UPDATE on Shoal Lake: There have been major breakthroughs in the community of Shoal Lake 40 in regards to road construction and access to clean drinking water. This case study will be updated as soon as a definitive description of progress is available. While these changes are welcomed, it is important to note that Shoal Lake 40 is the best known case of a problem plaguing Indigenous communities across Canada.

A CBC report from 2014 noted that between 2004 and 2014, fully two-thirds of First Nations communities had at least one incident of unsafe drinking water. Some of those communities have not had access to clean water for years with Indigenous Services Canada noting that there are still 73 communities with long term (those lasting a year or more) water safety issues. According to the federal government's own plans, ensuring access to drinking water in First Nation communities will be accomplished by March 2021.

Instructions:

This activity deals with the lack of access to clean drinking water faced by many First Nations across Canada. Students should read through the six resources provided and choose one of the two activities that follow, exploring either the current water situation or its historical roots.

Resource 1: Quotes from the Film, *Colonization Road*

In 1914, the city of Winnipeg expropriated 3,500 acres of land from an Anishinaabe community on the border of Ontario and Manitoba to accommodate Winnipeg's population with clean drinking water.

The community of Shoal Lake 40 was literally cut off from the mainland-- cut off by the very resource they are providing Winnipeg. (Ryan McMahon)

In the end, they got 3,500 acres of land. They displaced the community. They built a diversion canal that cut that community off from the mainland, so they no longer had access. It meant that it didn't matter which way that community turned, they were gonna have to-- In order to get off that island, they're gonna have to trespass on somebody else's land. (Cuyler Cotton)

Basically Canada took our land, the best land we had, and gave it to the City Of Winnipeg, the city waterworks. And through that process, they, uh... they built this manmade dyke here, and they stuck a "No trespassing" sign here. So we're unable to access different parts of our reserve. (Chief Erwin Redsky)

Resource 2: [Excerpt from the CBC article](#)

The reserve was cut off from the mainland a century ago when an aqueduct was built to supply Winnipeg with fresh water. While clean water flows down the aqueduct,

murky water is diverted to the First Nation. It has been under a boil-water advisory for 17 years and has no all-weather road connecting it to the mainland.

The community's problems got worse earlier this year when its aging ferry didn't pass federal inspection. The reserve — with no way for people to get groceries, water or immediate medical attention — declared a state of emergency. The ferry has since been patched up but the community remains vulnerable.

Resource 3: Map of Shoal Lake



Resource 4: [Excerpt, CTV News Story](#)

Every year, people trying to get home fall through the ice. Paramedics and home-care workers won't come into the community for safety reasons. An all-weather road, named Freedom Road by residents, would cost an estimated \$30 million split between three levels of government.

Tap water on the reserve is drawn directly from the polluted lake and treated with chlorine.

But Gavin Redsky, who has been treating the water for 12 years, said there is no filtration system so sediment and weeds often come out the taps.

"We're not even supposed to brush our teeth with the water," he said.

Resource 5: [APTN News](#)

For years, it's been known as "Freedom Road" an all-weather road that would finally connect Shoal Lake 40 to the outside world. The road got its name in 2003 courtesy of elder Bobby Blackhawk who described living on the man-made island like being imprisoned.

"It's like being in Alcatraz," he said. "The only way out is to the west. We need a road to the west a road to freedom."

"For the people of Shoal Lake 40, building Freedom Road has been a declaration of our right to exist – a right to be included in Canada that we began asserting in 2003.

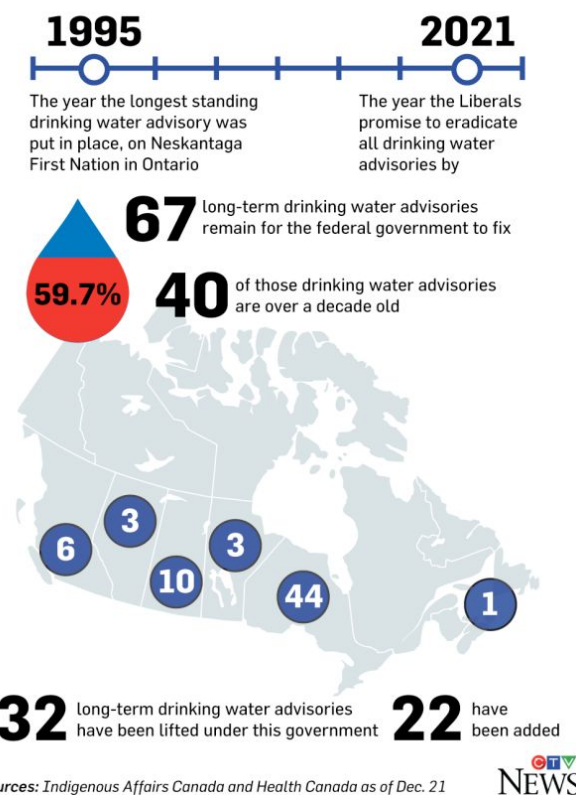
Without safe access, our community could not survive physically nor economically," said Redsky. "Winnipeg's water diversion took away our access so it's fitting that Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada are part of our shared solution.

Resource 6: Infographic, Government of Canada
Types of Drinking Water Advisories

- Boil Water
- Do Not Consume
- Do Not Use

The Shoal Lake 40 First Nation is one of over 67 first nations communities with long term drinking water advisories.

By the numbers: Drinking water advisories in First Nations communities



Further Reading:

Human Rights Watch: *Canada's Obligation to End the First Nations Water Crisis.*

David Suzuki Foundation *Reconciling Promises and Reality: Clean Drinking Water*

Council of Canadians *The Price of Water: Shoal Lake 40.*

Activity Options:

- Research the history of the Shoal Lake 40 and the Winnipeg water situation in more detail and write their own 'news' articles including updates.
- Research the current state of water advisories in First Nations in Canada and create a public awareness campaign to educate people on this issue.

Activity 7: Culture and Assimilation

Introduction

Using one quote from Sir John A. Macdonald and a series of others from the film, this activity asks students to examine the reasons for and effects of cultural assimilation. Settler colonialism not only stripped First Nations of land but also, through policies various and practices, of many aspects of their cultures. In this activity, students reflect on the impact of assimilation and future ways forward.

Instructions

1. Give students the eight quotes, reminding them that the first is from Sir John A. Macdonald and the rest are from the film. Consider having students work in pairs.
2. Each quote is accompanied by a question. Ask students to answer each question in note form.
3. Once they are done, give students the following writing prompts and ask them to choose one to answer in detail. Answers should include their opinions as well as evidence/examples from *Colonization Road* and any other sources they have available.
 - a. If you were making the decisions, what would be your process for choosing policies and programs to protect, support and reinvigorate Indigenous cultures?
 - b. Why would people feel it is important to strengthen/support/revive cultural practices and languages as part of Reconciliation?
 - c. Even if there were no official policies pushing assimilation, would there still be pressure to assimilate? Explain.
 - d. How can non-Indigenous people support a resurgence of Indigenous culture?

Activity 7 Resources Handout

(Aside from the first one, all quotes are from the film)

1. "The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change." (1887, Sir John A. Macdonald, first Prime Minister of Canada)

Why would Macdonald (and Canada) want Indigenous people to assimilate? What benefit is there if they assimilate? What does it mean to assimilate?

2. The current situation I would say is that Indigenous peoples are accepted on an individual basis on a daily basis as long as they don't rock the boat. As long as they know their place. But if you start talking about colonization, or treaty violations or land claims, what are you doing? (Jeffrey Denis)

Why would some people who otherwise accept Indigenous people be hostile about issues like colonization or land claims?

3. We hear it a lot over and over. Why can't you just be like us? What does that mean?... But we want to be who we are. We want our culture to be strong. We want them to know that the past and the present and future are actually alive. And we want respect for wanting that for ourselves. (Al Hunter, writer and former Chief of the Rainy River First Nation)

Do Indigenous people feel this pressure more than other groups? What is unique about their situation when it comes to pressure to assimilate?

4. I think that the objective is to kind of get rid of the Indian. And traditionally, the method has been very overt. "We're gonna eradicate your culture, "we're gonna eradicate your language, "get you off of the land, separate you from your family and your communities..." (Hayden King, Carleton University)

Historically, what are some of the ways in which Canada has attempted to undermine or eliminate elements of First Nations culture?

5. We want them to know that the past, and the present, and future are actually alive. (Al Hunter)

What does Hunter mean by this?

6. They didn't see how we lived with the land. They didn't see our networks of relationships. They didn't see our ceremony. (Leanne Simpson, writer and academic, Curve Lake First Nation) **Why is this important?**

7. ...First of all, we're desperate people. And I know because my father went to residential school, and he was desperate for exoneration. He thought what

happened to him was his fault. And I know that because when Harper apologized [for the residential schools policies], at 88 years old, this man said, "Well, at least I know it's not my fault." He needed white people to tell him. Now, I didn't go to residential school, so I don't know, uh, why that's a need. But I do know it's a definite need. We need to be... We need to be exonerated from blaming ourselves when we were in those institutions, that we must've done something wrong-- and that our parents did something wrong in sending us there. (Lee Maracle, writer and traditional teacher)

Why would Maracle's father (and other Indigenous people) feel that he had done something wrong?

8. The second hornswoogling that we're getting is that reconciliation is us forgiving them. Well, I would forgive anybody for standing on my feet if they ----in' got off... Y'know what I mean? ...and stopped doing it. But it doesn't end. They agreed that they separated us from our teachings. They agreed that they separated us from our language-- and that's the language pretty much destroyed in ourselves...They agreed that they separated us from our culture, and so we're culturally fractured and destitute. But nobody's going to help us bring it back together. And it's about establishing education in the culture, in the language. They're not gonna do that. They're educating us in their schools, in their culture, and in their language. It's still going on. They're still squarely on our feet. (Lee Maracle)

What does Maracle mean when she says that 'they're still squarely on our feet'?