Storywork: Unit Overview

ENL1W, Grade 9 English (De-streamed), Unit 3. 14 classes of 75 minutes (about three weeks).

The big question

What can stories by First Nations, Métis and Inuit creators teach us about relationships, land, identity and truth?

Students learn from First Nations, Métis and Inuit creators across time: oral storytelling, short films from the National Film Board, the poetry of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), a contemporary text chosen by the teacher, and the truth of residential schools and the resilience of Survivors. The unit ends with a comparison of two texts from different times and a sharing circle. We recommend that an Indigenous educator, knowledge keeper or your board's Indigenous education lead review the unit before you teach it.

Lessons

#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
1	**Why Stories Matter**	1	What do stories do, and how do we learn about them with respect?	A3.3, C2.1, B1.1	What stories do; protocols for respectful learning; whose land?
2	**The Listening Way**	1	How are stories passed on by listening?	B1.1, B1.2, C1.7	Guest storyteller (best) or NFB film; listening guide
3	**Stories Without Words**	1	How can a film tell a story with no dialogue?	C1.4, C1.7, C3.4	Mobilize (Caroline Monnet); film language; image log
4	**Who Holds the Camera?**	1	Why does it matter who tells the story?	C3.5, C2.2, C1.7	Perspective detective; Three Thousand (Asinnajaq) or Mobilize
5	**The Corn Husker**	1	How does a poem honour a person and name an injustice?	C1.7, C3.1, C3.7	E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake); imagery and simile; context
6	**The Song My Paddle Sings**	1	How do sound and rhythm carry a journey?	C3.1, B1.3, B2.3	Sound devices; river map; choral reading
7	**Land and Relationship Maps**	1	Who and what are we connected to?	C3.4, A3.3, D1.2	Relationship webs; the Two Row Wampum; my place map
8	**Contemporary Voices**	2	What do Indigenous creators of today show us?	C1.7, C2.2, C3.2, C2.5	Teacher-chosen contemporary text; reading circles; inference log
9	**Language Lives**	1	How does language connect to identity?	A3.3, C3.4, C2.5	Language and me; language revitalization; NFB film

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#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
10	**Truth and Resilience**	1	Why does reconciliation start with truth?	A3.3, C3.6, B1.1	Key facts; a Survivor-centred text; actions
11	**Comparison Workshop**	2	How have time and context shaped these texts?	C3.7, C3.4, D2.5	Comparison and reflective response (summative)
12	**Sharing Circle**	1	How has our understanding grown?	B1.1, B1.3, A3.3	Looking back at our questions; sharing circle; commitment

Assessment

Type	In this unit
Assessment for learning	Listening guides, image logs, perspective detective, close reading, inference logs, exit tickets
Assessment as learning	River map, reading circle roles, relationship webs, looking back
Assessment of learning	Two Texts, Two Times: a comparison of two texts by First Nations, Métis or Inuit creators from different times, with a reflective response and rubric

Texts and resources

Public-domain poems by E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) are printed in the handouts. Films come from the National Film Board of Canada's Indigenous Cinema collection; many stream free in Canada, but check availability. For Lesson 8, choose a contemporary text from your board-approved resources. Some suggestions:

- **The Marrow Thieves** Cherie Dimaline (Métis, Georgian Bay Métis community), 2017. A YA novel set in a future where Indigenous people are hunted for their bone marrow, which holds the ability to dream.
- **A Girl Called Echo (series)** Katherena Vermette (Métis, Red River), illustrated by Scott B. Henderson and Donovan Yaciuk, 2017 onward. A graphic novel in which a Métis teen time-travels into Métis history.
- **Those Who Run in the Sky** Aviaq Johnston (Inuk, Igloolik), 2017. A YA novel about a young Inuk shaman lost in the spirit world.
- **This Place: 150 Years Retold** Various First Nations, Métis and Inuit authors and artists (HighWater Press), 2019. A graphic novel anthology of Indigenous histories.
- **Take Us to Your Chief** Drew Hayden Taylor (Ojibwe, Curve Lake First Nation), 2016. Funny and thoughtful science fiction short stories.
- **Embers** Richard Wagamese (Ojibwe, Wabaseemoong Independent Nations), 2016. Short reflections and meditations that work well as stand-alone readings.
- **The Barren Grounds** David A. Robertson (Swampy Cree, Norway House Cree Nation), 2020. A fantasy adventure for younger teens.
- **Speaking Our Truth** Monique Gray Smith (Cree, Lakota and Scottish), 2017. Non-fiction for young people about reconciliation.

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Plan ahead: invite a guest storyteller, Elder or knowledge keeper through your board's Indigenous education office, and follow their protocols. Find out whose traditional territory your school is on and which languages are connected to your area. Lesson 10 deals with residential schools: tell your student services team in advance.

What's in each lesson

- Teacher lesson plan with expectations, timed sequence, differentiation, look-fors and answer guides
- Slides with speaker notes
- Student handouts and organizers
- Editable Word and PowerPoint files, plus PDFs

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