Where We Stand: Unit Overview

NBE3U, English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis and Inuit Voices (Grade 11, University), Unit 1. 12 classes of 75 minutes (about two and a half weeks).

The big question

Whose land are we on, who are its peoples, and how should we listen?

The course opens with care, listening and words. Students co-create listening agreements and learn how classes learn from Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Métis Senators through board protocol; learn respectful terminology, self-names and the legal terms in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982; and meet First Nations, Métis and Inuit as three distinct peoples through 2021 Census figures and Indigenous-led sources. They research the Nations and treaties connected to their school's land (Ontario is covered by 46 treaties), explore the Dish With One Spoon, and stretch the meaning of “text” to include wampum, birch bark scrolls, button blankets and katajjaq, learned about rather than imitated. The Two Row Wampum anchors a debate about evidence and oral tradition. Students explore the course's three themes: identity (Charles Eastman's account of his first name, beside a teacher-chosen contemporary poem), self-determination (section 35, UNDRIP, Red River to Daniels, land claims and Nunavut) and the truth of residential schools, carried in testimony, the TRC's report, survivors' poems and the orange shirt. Each student drafts a course inquiry question to carry all semester.

Lessons

#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
1	**First Words**	1	How will we listen?	B1.4, B2.2, B3.2, C1.1	Course preview; protocols for knowledge holders; listening interview; agreements; reading log
2	**Naming Matters**	1	Who chooses the name?	A3.2, A1.3, D1.1	Umbrella, specific and legal terms; self-names; UNDRIP 13(1); Scott's 1898 poem; class style guide
3	**Three Peoples, Many Nations**	1	Why isn't “Indigenous” one culture?	A1.3, C1.1, D1.2	2021 Census; Inuit Nunangat; the Métis Nation; jigsaw with Indigenous-led sources
4	**Whose Land?**	1	What promises were made here?	A1.4, A1.5, D1.2, B3.1	Treaties as relationships; 46 treaties; Dish With One Spoon; local research; acknowledgement audit
5	**What Counts as a Text?**	1	Can a belt be a text?	A1.1, A1.6, B2.1	Cultural text forms; gallery walk; listening to katajjaq with a goal; two kinds of record

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#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
6	**Two Rows**	1	What counts as proof?	A1.4, A1.2, A1.6	The Two Row Wampum; the 1613 evidence debate; question types; the 2013 renewal
7	**Asking Better Questions**	1	What will I carry all semester?	A1.2, D1.1, D1.2	Inquiry stance; question ladder; three lenses; course question and research plan
8	**The Names We Carry**	1	Where does identity come from?	A1.3, C1.1, B3.1	Eastman, Indian Boyhood (1902); a teacher-chosen contemporary poem; identity map; optional name reflection
9	**Self-Determination**	1	Who decides?	A1.5, A1.6, C1.1	Section 35; UNDRIP Article 3; stations on First Nations, Métis and Inuit; Canada 2007 to 2021
10	**The Truth We Carry**	1	How is truth carried?	A1.3, B2.1, B2.2	Residential schools; texts that carry truth; survivor testimony; listening reflection; care
11	**Building the Brief**	1	What does my reader need?	D1.1, D1.2, C1.1, A1.2	Task and rubric; five-section structure; source reliability; planner; peer check
12	**Inquiry Roundtable**	1	How many perspectives can one place hold?	B3.1, B3.2, B2.2, A1.6	Roundtables (summative); building on others; comparing perspectives; reflection

Assessment

Type	In this unit
Assessment for learning	Listening interview, style-guide entries, jigsaw notes, land research, gallery and listening notes, evidence table, question ladder, identity map, station notes, texts that carry truth, brief planner and source check
Assessment as learning	Exit tickets, self-checks, peer feedback on plans, listening and roundtable reflections, the reading log
Assessment of learning	“Where We Stand” research brief (Writing and Perspectives) and the inquiry roundtable (Oral Communication), with rubrics in the Summative Tasks file

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Texts

Used in this unit:

- **Public domain:** Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa), Indian Boyhood (1902), opening (historical context); Duncan Campbell Scott, “The Onondaga Madonna” (1898), lines 1–4, read critically
- **Public documents:** Constitution Act, 1982, section 35; United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Articles 3 and 13(1)
- **Teacher-chosen:** a contemporary poem about identity by a First Nations, Métis or Inuit poet; survivor testimony from a trusted source such as the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation; a katajjaq performance by Inuit singers; images of cultural text forms from museums or Nations' own sites (titles and sources only; not included)
- **Indigenous-led sources:** the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council and local Nations' own websites

Lesson 10 discusses residential schools; teacher notes include care routines and support lines (Hope for Wellness Help Line, 1-855-242-3310; Kids Help Phone, 1-800-668-6868 or text 686868; 9-8-8; National Indian Residential School Crisis Line, 1-866-925-4419). Students learn about cultural text forms and ceremonies but never imitate them, and are never asked to speak for a Nation or to share personal or family histories. Figures (2021 Census, 46 Ontario treaties) were checked in November 2026; check for updates. We strongly recommend reviewing the unit with your board's Indigenous education lead and inviting an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or Métis Senator following board protocol.

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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