First Words: Care, protocols and how we listen

NBE3U, Unit 1: Where We Stand, Lesson 1. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

This course puts the words of First Nations, Métis and Inuit writers, speakers and creators at the centre. Before we read anything, we agree on how we will listen: carefully, accurately and respectfully, knowing that no one in this room speaks for a whole people.

What students do: Students preview the course and its three themes (identity, relationships, and self-determination), learn how classes learn respectfully from Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Métis Senators, practise active listening in a paired interview about their reading lives, co-create listening agreements, and start a course reading log with a purpose for each reading.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
B1.4	select and use culturally appropriate listening practices during oral teachings by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit speakers
B2.2	select and use the most appropriate active listening strategies when interacting in a range of oral communication contexts related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures
B3.2	demonstrate an understanding of a variety of interpersonal speaking strategies, and adapt them effectively to suit the purpose, situation, and audience, exhibiting sensitivity to cultural differences
C1.1	read a variety of student- and teacher-selected contemporary texts from diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant texts from non-Indigenous sources and historical texts, identifying specific purposes for reading

From The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies (2019), English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices, Grade 11, University Preparation (NBE3U). A = First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives and Text Forms in Canada, B = Oral Communication, C = Reading and Literature Studies, D = Writing, E = Media Studies.

Learning goals and success criteria

Learning goals	Success criteria
• We are learning what this course is about and how we will learn together. • We are learning to listen actively and respectfully.	• I can describe the course's three themes. • I can explain respectful practices for learning from knowledge holders. • I can paraphrase and ask a clarifying question when I listen. • I can set a purpose before I read.

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Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** First Words deck.
- **Handouts:** Listening Interview (page 1), Reading Log (page 2).
- **Chart paper:** For the class listening agreements (keep it posted all semester).

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–10	**Warm-up**	Stories that taught us.	Discuss.	
10–25	**The course**	Units, themes, texts.	Preview.	
25–35	**Protocols**	Learning from knowledge holders.	Note.	Respectful practices named.
35–55	**Listening**	Paired interview.	Interview.	Paraphrasing.
55–65	**Agreements**	Co-create.	Agree.	Agreements posted.
65–75	**Reading log**	Purposes for reading.	Plan.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** Sentence frames for paraphrasing and clarifying questions.
- **ELL:** Interview questions provided in writing; partner may write answers.
- **Challenge:** Draft one more listening agreement and explain why it matters.

Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Listening Interview	Active listening (B2.2), interpersonal speaking (B3.2) and purposes for reading (C1.1)
Assessment as learning	Exit ticket	Listening practices (B1.4)

First words: key points

- **Three themes:** Identity; relationships; and self-determination, sovereignty or self-governance (the curriculum's themes).
- **Knowledge holders:** Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Métis Senators share teachings; schools invite them through board protocol, often with an offering and an honorarium.
- **Listening:** Listen to understand, without interrupting; ask before recording or taking photos; don't repeat teachings outside the class without permission.
- **Active listening:** Paraphrase (“So you're saying…”), ask a clarifying question, and allow wait time.

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- **Purposes for reading:** To learn, to compare perspectives, to enjoy, to question, to find evidence.

Teacher notes

- We strongly recommend reviewing this unit with your board's Indigenous education lead and, where possible, inviting a First Nations, Métis or Inuit Elder, Knowledge Keeper or guest speaker following your board's protocols (including offerings and honoraria). Local Nations' own sources come first.
- Do not ask Indigenous students to speak for their communities, to share personal or family histories, or to act as experts. Every student's participation in sharing is optional.
- Protocols differ from Nation to Nation and person to person. Follow your board's guidance and the guest's wishes (for example, about offerings, recording, photographs and note-taking).
- Tell students on the first day that support is available any time this course raises something hard. This course discusses colonization, residential schools and their effects. Some students and families carry this history personally. Support: Hope for Wellness Help Line (for Indigenous people across Canada, 24/7, by phone or online chat at hopeforwellness.ca; English and French, with Cree, Ojibway and Inuktut on request at certain times), 1-855-242-3310; Kids Help Phone, 1-800-668-6868 or text 686868; 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline (call or text 988); National Indian Residential School Crisis Line, 1-866-925-4419.

Coming up

Lesson 2, Naming Matters.

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