Three Peoples, Many Nations: First Nations, Métis and Inuit: distinct histories, diverse lives

NBE3U, Unit 1: Where We Stand, Lesson 3. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

"Indigenous" is not one culture. First Nations, Métis and Inuit are three distinct peoples, and within them are many Nations, languages and ways of life, on reserves, in the North, in small towns and in cities.

What students do: Students test their assumptions with a quick poll, read 2021 Census figures, learn the basics of Inuit Nunangat, the Métis Nation and the diversity of First Nations, research one people through Indigenous-led organizations in a jigsaw, and record how their understanding changed.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
A1.3	identify and explain diverse themes, ideas, and issues related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identities, as reflected in various Indigenous text forms, and, as appropriate, in relevant non-Indigenous texts
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
D1.2	generate, expand, explore, and focus ideas for potential writing tasks, using a variety of strategies and print, electronic, and other resources, as appropriate and with increasing effectiveness

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 about the distinct histories and identities of First Nations, Métis and Inuit. • We are learning to gather information from Indigenous-led sources.	• I can describe key facts about each of the three peoples. • I can explain why "Indigenous" is not one culture. • I can find and record information from an Indigenous-led source. • I can set a purpose for my reading.

Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** Three Peoples, Many Nations deck.

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- **Handouts:** Jigsaw Notes (page 1), What Changed (page 2).
- **Devices:** Sites of Indigenous-led organizations: the Assembly of First Nations (afn.ca), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (itk.ca), the Métis National Council (metisnation.ca), and local Nations' sites.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–10	**Poll**	What do we assume?	Vote.	
10–25	**Three peoples**	Census; basics.	Note.	
25–55	**Jigsaw**	Indigenous-led sources.	Research and teach.	Accurate notes.
55–68	**What changed**	Reflect.	Write.	
68–75	**Exit**	Check.	Answer.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** A research guide with direct links and three guiding questions.
- **ELL:** Pre-highlighted key paragraphs.
- **Challenge:** Compare how two organizations describe the same people.

Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Jigsaw Notes	Identities (A1.3), purposes for reading (C1.1) and gathering information (D1.2)

Three peoples: key points

- **First Nations:** Over 630 communities and more than 50 Nations, each with its own language, history, governance and territory.
- **Métis:** A distinct people who emerged from fur-trade families; the Métis Nation grew around Red River; Michif blends Cree or Saulteaux with French.
- **Inuit:** The people of Inuit Nunangat: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut.
- **2021 Census:** 1.8 million Indigenous people (5.0% of Canada), and a young population: about a quarter were 14 or younger.
- **Not one culture:** Generalizing erases differences in language, law, land and history.

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Teacher notes

- 2021 Census (Statistics Canada, The Daily, September 21, 2022): 1,807,250 Indigenous people, 5.0% of the population; First Nations 1,048,405, Métis 624,220, Inuit 70,545 (single identities). Over 70 Indigenous languages were reported. Check for updated census figures before teaching.
- CIRNAC describes over 630 First Nations communities, representing more than 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages (the census figure counts every language reported, so the numbers differ).
- Who is Métis is debated. The Métis National Council's definition centres the historic Métis Nation homeland and Red River; some Great Lakes and Eastern communities dispute this. Describe each organization's position as it states it, and do not adjudicate any student's identity.
- 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.
- 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.

Coming up

Lesson 4, Whose Land?

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