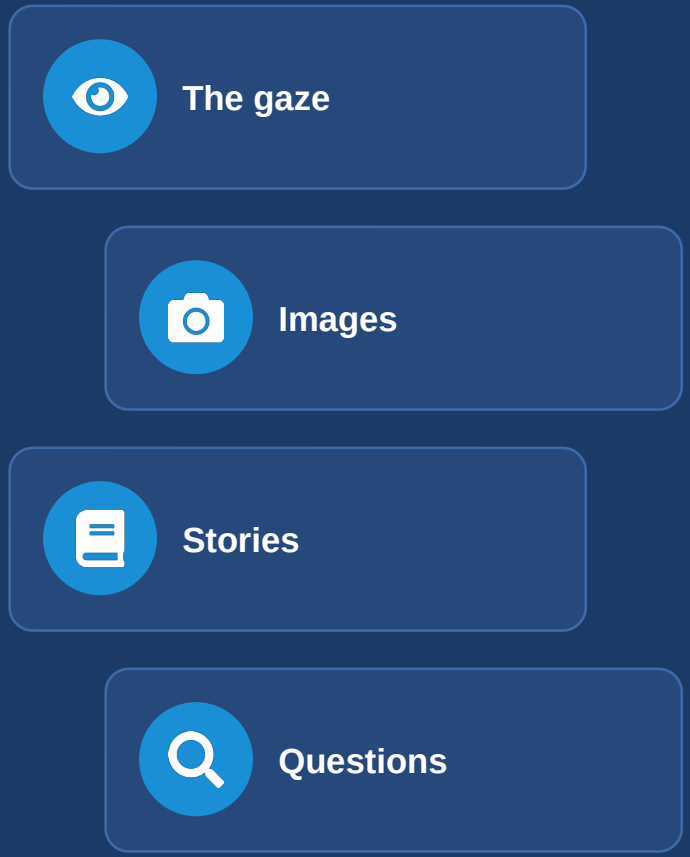
NBE3U Behind the Image, Lesson 1

Who Does the Looking?

Stereotypes, the gaze and five questions for any image



Today's goals

We are learning…

- How representations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people are shaped by who creates them.
- A set of questions to use on any image or text.

I can…

- Explain the difference between a stereotype and a specific, accurate description.
- Use the five lens questions on a text or image.
- Infer the attitude behind a description, using evidence.
- Compare two perspectives on the same subject.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–10 min	**Hook**	Reflect privately
10–25 min	**Key terms**	Note
25–45 min	**The lens**	Apply in pairs
45–65 min	**Two descriptions**	Compare
65–75 min	**Unit launch**	Plan

Private warm-up

Close your eyes. Picture “an Indian” from an old western movie. Now write down where you think that picture came from. Don't share the picture, only the source.

Sentence starters

“I think it came from…”

“I first saw it in…”

“Nobody ever told me it was…”

How it works

- Private writing: 3 minutes.
- Share sources only.

Big idea

For most of Canada's history, First Nations, Métis and Inuit people were described, painted, photographed and filmed by outsiders. Those images taught generations of Canadians what an “Indian” was supposed to look like. Before we can see clearly, we have to ask who made an image, for whom, and what it leaves out.

Words for this unit

stereotype	A fixed, oversimplified picture of a whole group. *“The noble savage,” “the vanishing Indian.”*
representation	How a person or group is shown in a text or image. *Every representation has a maker and an audience.*
gaze	Who is looking, and who is looked at. *Settler painters, photographers and writers looked; Indigenous people were looked at.*
perspective	The position a creator sees from. *Shaped by period, culture, gender and politics.*

The five-question lens

Ask…	Look for…
Who made it?	Creator, time, place, audience
Who is shown?	Named people, or a type?
Who speaks?	Voices, captions, silence
What is left out?	Modern life, Nations, women, change
Who benefits?	Money, power, comfort

Text A: what society said

She was “all the rage” that winter at the provincial capital. The men called her a “deuced fine little woman.” The ladies said she was “just the sweetest wildflower.” […]

E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), “A Red Girl's Reasoning” (1893), The Moccasin Maker (1913). Public domain.

Think about it

Who is doing the looking?

What is Christine compared to?

What attitude do the words reveal?

Text B: what the narrator says

she was really but an ordinary, pale, dark girl who spoke slowly and with a strong accent, who danced fairly well, sang acceptably, and never stirred outside the door without her husband.

E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), “A Red Girl's Reasoning” (1893), The Moccasin Maker (1913). Public domain.

Think about it

How is this description different?

Why does Johnson add this sentence?

Which one is a stereotype?

Use the lens

On page 1, in pairs:

1. Answer the five questions for Text A, then Text B.
2. Infer the attitude behind each one.
3. Quote one word as evidence for each.
4. Which text treats Christine as a person?

Type vs person

A type

- A “wildflower”: exotic, decorative.
- No name, no Nation, no history.
- Exists for the viewer's pleasure.

A person

- Ordinary, specific, observed.
- Speaks with an accent, dances “fairly well.”
- Has a life beyond the viewer.

Stereotypes flatten; specific description restores a person.

Stereotype or specific?

On page 2:

1. Sort each description.
2. Explain your choice in a few words.
3. Write one rule for the unit.
4. Share your rule with a partner.

Your summatives

Representation analysis essay

Analyse how one text or image represents First Nations, Métis or Inuit people, and why.

Deconstruct and reconstruct

Take apart one image in a presentation, then show how Indigenous creators have answered it.

How we'll talk



We will study harmful images in order to understand them, not to repeat them. We quote only what we need, and we never ask a classmate to speak for a Nation.

If something in this unit hits close to home, you can pass, step out or talk with me privately.

Exit ticket

1. Define stereotype in your own words.

2. One of the five lens questions, and why it matters.

3. Where did your picture come from?

Next class: The Indian Girl in Fiction.

Teacher reveal

Who does the looking: key points

Stereotype: A fixed, oversimplified picture of a whole group, repeated until it feels true.

Representation: How a person or group is shown in a text or image. Every representation is made by someone, for someone.

Gaze: Who is looking and who is looked at. In most older texts, settlers do the looking.

Johnson's correction: Society calls Christine “just the sweetest wildflower”; Johnson's narrator calls her “an ordinary, pale, dark girl”: a person, not a type.

Why it matters: Images shape laws, schools and how people are treated, and how young people see themselves.