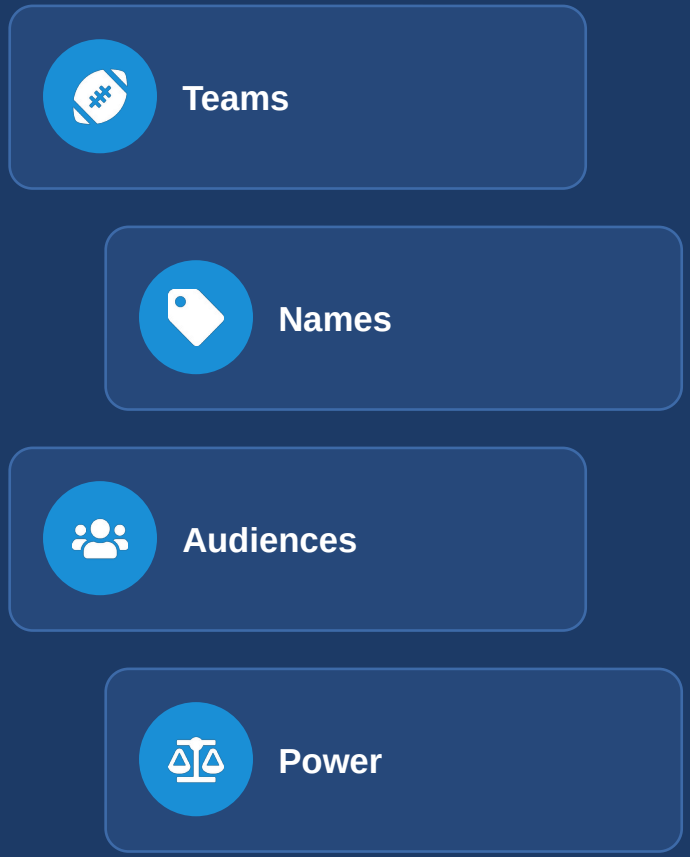
NBE3U Behind the Image, Lesson 5

Who Owns a Name?

Team names, mascots and the power of naming



Today's goals

We are learning…

- Why the same media text prompts different responses from different audiences.
- Why naming choices matter.

I can…

- Explain why audiences responded differently to a team name.
- Identify the perspectives in the story of a team name.
- Use appropriate terms and explain why some terms are harmful.
- Analyse who held naming power, using evidence.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–8 min	**Hook**	Discuss
8–30 min	**Edmonton**	Analyse
30–45 min	**Other teams**	Compare
45–62 min	**Naming**	Practise
62–75 min	**Analysis**	Write

Warm-up



Imagine a team named after your family, with a cartoon of your grandmother as its mascot. Thousands of fans love it. How do you feel?

Sentence starters

“I'd feel…”

“It would matter whether…”

“Fans might say…”

How it works

- Pairs: 3 minutes.

Big idea

Team names and mascots turn real peoples into symbols that crowds cheer, wear and chant. Inuit asked Edmonton's football team for years to drop a name outsiders had given them; the club changed only when sponsors pressed. Whose reading of a symbol counts? Naming is power.

Edmonton: a timeline

When	What happened
2015	ITK president Natan Obed calls on the team to change its name.
Early 2020	After consulting Inuit communities, the club says it will keep the name.
Summer 2020	Sponsors press for change.
July 21, 2020	The club drops the name and plays as the EE Football Team.
June 1, 2021	The team becomes the Edmonton Elks.

Source: Nunatsiaq News, June 2021.

Why responses differed

Tradition

For many fans, a century of history and pride.

An outsider's label

Many Inuit hear a name others gave them, on a jersey.

Inuit disagreed

Some Inuit leaders supported keeping the name.

Money

Sponsors changed the timeline.

Map the audiences

On page 1, in pairs:

1. How might each audience respond?
2. Explain why.
3. Why can one name mean opposite things?
4. Whose response decided the outcome, and what does that show?

A pattern

Team	Change
Edmonton (CFL)	Elks, June 2021
Cleveland (MLB)	Guardians, announced July 2021
Washington (NFL)	Commanders, February 2022

Each change followed decades of Indigenous protest. Check for updates before teaching.

“Honour” or harm?

“It honours them”

- Strong, brave images.
- Tradition and history.
- Fans mean no harm.

“It harms us”

- We didn't choose it.
- Chants, costumes, cartoons.
- Real people reduced to a symbol.

Contradiction: can you honour people by using them as a mascot they didn't choose?

Naming matters

Instead of…	Use…
“Indians” for everyone	First Nations, Métis and Inuit; or Indigenous; or the specific Nation
“Eskimo”	Inuit (people), Inuk (one person)
“Our Aboriginal peoples”	Indigenous peoples (not owned by Canada)
“Half-breed”	Métis (a distinct people), or the person's own term
“The tribe”	The Nation, or its own name: Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Mi'kmaq…

Practise and analyse

On page 2:

1. Complete the naming chart.
2. Write an analysis paragraph: claim, two pieces of evidence, explanation.
3. Use accurate terms throughout.
4. Swap with a partner and check terms.

Check yourself

Be honest. This helps you choose what to work on next.

Success criteria	Not yet	Almost	Got it
I can explain why audiences responded differently to a team name.			
I can identify the perspectives in the story of a team name.			
I can use appropriate terms and explain why some terms are harmful.			
I can analyse who held naming power, using evidence.			

Exit ticket

1. Why did audiences respond differently to the Edmonton name?

2. One term to use instead of an outdated one.

3. Who should decide what a people is called?

Next class: Reel Injun.

Teacher reveal

Who owns a name: key points

Edmonton: Asked to change by ITK's president in 2015; kept the name after consultation in early 2020; dropped it July 21, 2020; became the Elks June 1, 2021.

Different audiences: Long-time fans heard tradition and pride; many Inuit heard an outsider's label for their people on a jersey; some Inuit leaders disagreed with each other.

Pattern: Cleveland (Guardians, 2021) and Washington (Commanders, 2022) followed decades of Indigenous protest.

Why naming matters: Choosing what a people is called is a form of power; the respectful choice is usually the name a people uses for itself.

Contradiction: Teams said the names “honoured” Indigenous people while using them as mascots that Indigenous people had not chosen.