In the News: Framing, sources and two stories about the same water

NBE3U, Unit 2: Behind the Image, Lesson 8. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

News feels like plain fact, but every story is framed: someone decides the headline, the first sentence, who gets quoted and who "did not return calls." In 1885 newspapers called Louis Riel a traitor; in 1992 Parliament recognized him as a founder of Manitoba. How a story is framed shapes what a whole country believes.

What students do: Students compare two original model news briefs about the same invented event, identify the overt and implied messages created by framing, learn how coverage of Louis Riel and the Métis changed over time, and explore guidance written by Indigenous journalists on reporting in Indigenous communities.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
E1.1	explain how media texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant media texts from non-Indigenous sources, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, are created to suit particular purposes and audiences
E1.2	interpret media texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant media texts from non-Indigenous sources, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, identifying and explaining the overt and implied messages they convey
E1.4	explain why the same media text might prompt a variety of different responses from different audiences
A2.1	determine how the messages relating to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures conveyed in various contemporary and historical Indigenous text forms, and, as appropriate, in non-Indigenous texts, might change if they were presented from a range of different perspectives, and make appropriate inferences about how the viewpoint of the creator/author is shaped by factors related to historical period, gender, culture, sexual orientation, ability, and/or politics

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.

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Learning goals and success criteria

Learning goals	Success criteria
• We are learning how news stories are framed for purposes and audiences. • We are learning to identify overt and implied messages in news.	• I can identify the purpose and audience of a news story. • I can explain the overt and implied messages of a headline and lead. • I can explain how different audiences might respond to one story. • I can explain how perspective and period shape coverage.

Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** In the News deck.
- **Handouts:** Two Briefs (page 1), Frame Check (page 2).
- **Devices:** Optional: a current story from APTN News and from a national outlet on the same topic, chosen and previewed by you.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–8	**Hook**	Same event, two headlines.	Predict.	
8–30	**Two briefs**	Framing.	Compare.	Implied messages explained.
30–45	**Riel**	Coverage over time.	Note.	
45–65	**Frame check**	A real story.	Analyse.	
65–75	**Reflect**	Exit.	Write.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** Highlighted headline, lead and quotations in each brief.
- **ELL:** Vocabulary: frame, lead, source, deadline, advisory.
- **Challenge:** Compare coverage of one story in APTN News and a national outlet.

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Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Two Briefs and Frame Check	Purpose and audience (E1.1), overt and implied messages (E1.2), audience responses (E1.4) and perspective (A2.1)

In the news: key points

- **Brief A's frame:** Waiting and failure: no names, officials quoted, the community silent (“did not return calls”). Implied message: helpless people, a problem to pity.
- **Brief B's frame:** Achievement: the community acts, its own operators run the plant, its leaders speak at the opening. Implied message: a Nation solving its own problem.
- **Same facts:** Both report eight years of boiled water and a new plant. The frame changes the meaning.
- **Riel over time:** 1885: a traitor hanged for treason. Since 1992: recognized as a founder of Manitoba, with a provincial holiday. Period and perspective changed the story.
- **Better practice:** Indigenous journalists' guidance: many voices, context, and stories beyond crisis.

Teacher notes

- 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.
- Both briefs are original model texts written for this lesson about an invented community; they are not real news stories. Tell students so.
- Louis Riel was hanged for treason in Regina on November 16, 1885. In 1992 he was formally recognized as a founder of Manitoba, and Manitoba created Louis Riel Day, a February holiday, in 2007 (CBC News, November 2015).
- Duncan McCue (Anishinaabe, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation) created Reporting in Indigenous Communities (riic.ca), a guide for journalists (First Peoples' Cultural Council resource page). Summarize its spirit in your own words: go to communities, find many voices, avoid the narrow, stereotyped story types the guide warns against (warriors, drummers, dancers, the drunk and the dead), and include context.
- APTN launched its national news in 1999; APTN News (aptnnews.ca) is a useful comparison source. APTN launched on September 1, 1999, the world's first national Indigenous broadcaster (it grew out of Television Northern Canada, 1992).
- If students bring up real boil-water advisories, Indigenous Services Canada publishes current counts. Check for updates before teaching.
- 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.

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Coming up

Lesson 9, Contradictions.

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