NBE3U Behind the Image, Lesson 9

Contradictions

Noble and savage, vanishing and threatening



Today's goals

We are learning…

- To identify contradictions in how Indigenous peoples have been depicted, and why.
- To organize ideas for an analytical paragraph.

I can…

- Identify contradictory depictions in texts and images.
- Analyse the reasons for the divergence of views.
- Explain how perspective shaped each depiction.
- Sort ideas into a logical paragraph plan.

Today's plan

Time	What we're doing	You will…
0–8 min	**Hook**	Discuss
8–30 min	**Contradiction pairs**	Analyse
30–45 min	**Why?**	Discuss
45–70 min	**Paragraph plan**	Plan
70–75 min	**Exit**	Write

Warm-up

How can one group be described as both “noble” and “savage” in the same century, sometimes by the same writers?

Sentence starters

“Maybe because…”

“It depends who needed…”

“Both images…”

How it works

- Pairs: 3 minutes.

Big idea

Settler images contradicted themselves. Indigenous people were noble and savage, vanishing and dangerous, “wildflowers” and scandals, traitors and founders. The contradictions weren't mistakes: each image served a different purpose for the people making it.

Pairs we've already met

Image 1	Image 2	Where
Noble	Savage	Westerns (Lesson 6)
Vanishing	Threatening	Scott's sonnet and 1920 policy (Lesson 3)
“Sweetest wildflower”	A scandal	“A Red Girl's Reasoning” (Lessons 1, 2)
“Honoured” mascot	Unheard people	Team names (Lesson 5)
Traitor	Founder	Louis Riel (Lesson 8)

Approved, then rejected

Christie’s insight was quick. There was a peculiar expression of interrogation in the eyes of her listeners, and the girl’s blood leapt angrily up into her temples as she said hurriedly, “I know what you mean; I know what you are thinking. You were wondering how my parents were married—”

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

Think about it

What changes in the listeners?

Why does Christine become a scandal?

What did approval depend on?

Analyse the pairs

On page 1, in groups:

1. Note where we saw each image.
2. Whose purpose did each image serve?
3. Add one pair of your own.
4. Why could both exist at once?

What each image did for its makers

Romantic images

Sold art, novels and tourism.

Threatening images

Justified troops, laws and land-taking.

Vanishing images

Excused policies as fate.

“Civilized” images

Sold assimilation as progress.

Divergent views served divergent purposes.

Talk it out



Which contradiction do you still see in media today? What purpose does it serve now?

Sentence starters

“I still see…”

“It serves…”

“The people shown would probably…”

How it works

- Groups: 4 minutes.

Plan a paragraph

On page 2:

1. Choose one contradiction for a topic sentence.
2. Add two pieces of evidence.
3. Explain whose purpose each served.
4. Number your sentences in a logical order.

Model: a topic sentence

Task: One contradiction, one claim.

Settler texts around 1900 described Indigenous peoples as both vanishing and threatening, and the contradiction was useful: one image excused government policy as fate, while the other justified the force used to carry it out.

Why it works

Names the contradiction.

Makes an arguable claim.

Points to purpose.

Check yourself

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

Success criteria	Not yet	Almost	Got it
I can identify contradictory depictions in texts and images.			
I can analyse the reasons for the divergence of views.			
I can explain how perspective shaped each depiction.			
I can sort ideas into a logical paragraph plan.			

Exit ticket

1. One contradiction and where you saw it.

2. Whose purpose it served.

3. The first sentence of your paragraph.

Next class: Whose Story?

Teacher reveal

Contradictions: key points

Noble / savage: “Noble” made Indigenous people romantic subjects for art; “savage” justified taking land and wars. Both erased real Nations.

Vanishing / threatening: “Vanishing” excused policies; “threatening” justified troops and laws. Both served the government.

Wildflower / scandal: Christine was charming until she defended her mother's marriage law. Approval depended on silence.

Traitor / founder: Riel's image changed as Métis and Manitoba perspectives gained power.

The reason: Each image served its creator's purpose at that moment, which is why they could contradict each other.