Hakadah: Charles Eastman and a grandmother's school

NBE3U, Unit 3: Writing Back, Lesson 10. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

Readers in 1902 assumed an Indigenous childhood was a childhood without education. Charles Eastman's Indian Boyhood answers that a Dakota grandmother in exile in Manitoba was a rigorous teacher of observation, memory, patience and language. The memoir is a record and an argument at once.

What students do: Students meet Eastman, read his opening chapter, map its key ideas and supporting details, analyse how he explains Dakota words for English readers, discuss where his writing romanticizes, and compare his grandmother's teaching with Zitkála-Šá's schooling.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
C1.3	identify the most important ideas and supporting details in texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, in relevant texts from non-Indigenous sources, including increasingly complex or difficult texts
C1.5	extend their understanding of texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant texts from non-Indigenous sources, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, by making rich connections between the ideas in them and in other texts and to their own knowledge, experience, and insights
C3.2	use decoding strategies effectively to read and understand unfamiliar words, including words of increasing difficulty, in texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, in relevant texts from non-Indigenous sources

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 to identify a memoir's key ideas and supporting details. • We are learning to make connections between texts.	• I can map the chapter's key ideas and details. • I can explain how Eastman glosses Dakota words. • I can use context to understand unfamiliar words. • I can compare two kinds of education with evidence.

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Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** Hakadah deck.
- **Handouts:** Key Ideas and Glosses (page 1), Two Educations (page 2).
- **Reader:** Eastman, Indian Boyhood, chapter 1 (excerpts).

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–8	**Hook**	Your best teacher.	Discuss.	
8–15	**Eastman**	Who he was.	Note.	
15–35	**Read**	Chapter 1.	Read and map.	Key ideas.
35–50	**Glosses**	Dakota words in English.	Analyse.	
50–75	**Two educations**	Compare.	Compare and write.	Text-to-text connection.

Differentiation

- **Support:** Key ideas map with headings filled in.
- **ELL:** Glossary of the chapter's Dakota words with Eastman's own explanations.
- **Challenge:** Read the chapter's lullaby and discuss what it shows about relations between nations.

Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Key Ideas map and Two Educations	Key ideas (C1.3), connections (C1.5) and decoding (C3.2)

Hakadah: key points

- **Key idea 1:** Dakota children were “close students of nature”: observation was their curriculum.
- **Key idea 2:** Names are earned: “Hakadah,” “the pitiful last,” until a better name is won.
- **Key idea 3:** His grandmother, Uncheedah, was his first teacher: birds, sounds, memory and silence.
- **Glosses:** “Shechoka (the robin),” “Oopehanska (the thrush)”: the Dakota word first, the English second; readers enter his language.
- **Audience:** “We studied the habits of animals just as you study your books”: “you” is the 1902 reader.
- **Two educations:** Eastman's grandmother teaches through relationship and nature; Zitkála-Šá's school teaches through bells and rules.

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Teacher notes

- Before reading, name the content (boarding and residential schools, separation from family, loss) and remind students they may step out, pass, or talk privately. 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.
- Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa), Santee Dakota (1858–1939), was born near Redwood Falls, Minnesota; after the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862 his grandmother and uncle raised him in exile in Manitoba until his father returned when he was about fifteen. He became a physician and wrote Indian Boyhood (1902).
- Eastman graduated from Dartmouth College in 1887 and earned his medical degree at Boston University in 1890; as a government physician at Pine Ridge he cared for survivors of the Wounded Knee massacre (December 1890).
- Zitkála-Šá (Yankton Dakota) and Charles Eastman (Santee Dakota) wrote in the United States. Dakota homelands cross today's border, and Eastman spent his boyhood in exile in Manitoba after the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862. Their accounts of U.S. boarding schools are context for, not the same as, Canada's residential school system.
- Eastman uses period terms and sometimes romanticizes (“the freest life in the world,” “children of the wilderness”). Discuss this as a strategy for 1902 readers and as a limit. Historical texts use the words of their time, including terms now considered offensive (for example, “Red-skin,” “savage,” “squaw,” “half-breed,” “Eskimo”). We quote accurately when analysing, explain why these terms are harmful, and use today's terms (First Nations, Métis, Inuit, Indigenous, or the specific Nation) in our own words. Readers may say “[skip]” instead of reading a slur aloud.
- Dakota words are given as Eastman spelled and explained them in 1902; spellings in Dakota today may differ. Students do not need to pronounce them aloud.
- 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 11, The Fire-Boat.

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