Opening Pages: Inferences from the first chapter

NBE3U, Unit 5: Stories Now, Lesson 3. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

A novel's first chapter makes promises: about who matters, what is at stake and how the story will be told. Strong readers infer from small details, such as a name, an object, a silence, and then test those inferences as they read.

What students do: Students practise inference with an original model opening, then make and support inferences about their own novel's first chapter, distinguishing stated and implied ideas, and set predictions to test.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
C1.4	make and explain inferences of increasing subtlety about texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant texts from non-Indigenous sources, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, supporting their explanations with well-chosen stated and implied ideas from the texts
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
C2.2	identify a variety of features of texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant texts from non-Indigenous sources, and explain, with increasing insight, how they help communicate meaning or reflect a world view

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 make and support inferences about a novel's opening. • We are learning how text features help create meaning.	• I can tell stated ideas from implied ideas. • I can make an inference and support it with a detail. • I can explain how a text feature (title, epigraph, chapter heading) shapes meaning. • I can make predictions to test.

Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** Opening Pages deck.

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- **Handouts:** Inference Ladder (page 1), Features and Predictions (page 2).
- **Books:** Circle novels.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–10	**Model**	An original opening.	Infer.	
10–25	**Stated vs implied**	Practice.	Sort.	
25–50	**Your opening**	Circles.	Infer with evidence.	Evidence for each inference.
50–65	**Features**	Titles, epigraphs.	Analyse.	
65–75	**Predict**	Test later.	Write.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** Inference frame: “The text says… so I think…”
- **ELL:** Pre-taught words from each novel's first chapter.
- **Challenge:** Infer what the opening suggests about the book's ending.

Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Inference Ladder	Inferences (C1.4), important ideas (C1.3), text features (C2.2)

Look-fors

Task	Strong response	Next step if not yet
Inference	States an idea not in the text and links it to a specific detail	Ask: What exact words made you think that?
Feature	Explains how the title or epigraph frames the book	Point to the first page and ask what it promises

Model opening: possible inferences

- **The map:** Stated: the map is old and the lake has a different name. Implied: the narrator's family may not know the land's history.
- **The cousin:** Stated: Dev laughs and doesn't answer. Implied: Dev knows something the narrator doesn't, or finds the question naive.
- **The ending line:** Stated: “I didn't ask again.” Implied: silence will matter in this story.

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- **Features:** Titles, epigraphs, maps and dedications tell readers how to read: what to watch for and whose story it is.
- **Predictions:** Good predictions are testable: “The lake's other name will matter,” not “Something will happen.”

Teacher notes

- The model opening is an original text written for this lesson from a non-Indigenous teenage narrator's point of view. Original model texts in this course were written for the lessons by K9solutions. They are written from a student's or a teacher's point of view and never imitate an Indigenous person's voice, story or teachings.
- Circles work with their own novels; you circulate and coach. Ask: What makes you say that?
- Do not ask Indigenous students to speak for their communities, to share personal or family histories, or to act as experts. Every student's participation in sharing is optional.

Coming up

Lesson 4, Who Is Telling This?

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