Circle Meeting 2: Endings, themes and literature as a force

NBE3U, Unit 5: Stories Now, Lesson 12. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

Endings tell us what a novel finally values. At our last circle meeting we read the ending closely, name the novel's themes, and ask how books like this act as a social and cultural force in First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and in Canada.

What students do: Circles meet after finishing their novels, analyse the ending, build a theme statement with evidence, discuss the novel's influence on identity and heritage, and gather evidence for the seminar and essay.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
C1.6	analyse texts, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, in terms of the information, themes, ideas, and issues they explore in relation to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, explaining with increasing insight how various aspects of the texts contribute to the presentation or development of these elements
C5.2	analyse the influence of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit literary works on identities and heritage in Canada, commenting with increasing insight on the role of literature as a social and cultural force in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities
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

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 analyse a novel's ending and themes. • We are learning how literature can be a social and cultural force.	• I can analyse how the ending resolves (or doesn't) the novel's questions. • I can write a theme statement with evidence. • I can explain the novel's possible influence on identity and heritage. • I can collect evidence for my essay.

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Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** Circle Meeting 2 deck.
- **Handouts:** Ending and Theme (page 1), Evidence Bank (page 2).
- **Books:** Finished circle novels; role sheets.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–8	**Endings**	What did it value?	Discuss.	
8–35	**Meeting**	Roles.	Discuss.	Evidence and turn-taking.
35–50	**Theme**	Statements.	Write.	Theme is a sentence, not a word.
50–62	**Force**	Influence.	Discuss.	
62–75	**Evidence bank**	For the essay.	Collect.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** Theme statement frame.
- **ELL:** Ending summary in pairs first.
- **Challenge:** Compare the ending with the opening from Lesson 3.

Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Ending and Theme; Evidence Bank	Themes (C1.6), influence (C5.2), connections (C1.5)

Endings and themes: key points

- **Endings:** Open, closed or circular: what is resolved, what isn't, and what the last image leaves.
- **Theme statements:** A full sentence about life (not a single word): “Survival depends on remembering who you are,” not “survival.”
- **Evidence:** Two or three moments across the book, not only the ending.
- **Force:** Books can affirm identity, carry language and history, start national conversations, and change classrooms.
- **Opening and ending:** Compare: what has changed in the narrator, the community, the reader?

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Teacher notes

- Students who haven't finished: give a summary of the last chapters from a circle member and a plan to finish before the seminar.
- Endings in several novels involve death, violence or loss. Check in with circles. 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.
- 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 13, Where I Stand as a Reader.

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