From Being Filmed to Filming: Who holds the camera, and why it matters

NBE3U, Unit 6: Signal and Story, Lesson 1. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

For most of the twentieth century, First Nations, Métis and Inuit people appeared on screens made by other people. Since the 1980s, Indigenous creators have built their own broadcasters, studios, festivals and platforms. When the people in the story also hold the camera, the story changes.

What students do: Students recall the stereotypes of Unit 2, build a timeline of Indigenous-led media in Canada (Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, Isuma, APTN, imagineNATIVE, the Indigenous Screen Office, NFB Indigenous Cinema, Uvagut TV), sort contributions by people, organizations and initiatives, and pose an inquiry question for the unit.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
E5.1	describe the contributions of a variety of individuals, organizations, and initiatives to the development and production of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit media texts
E5.2	analyse the influence of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit media texts on identities and heritage in Canada, commenting with increasing insight on the role of media production as a social and cultural force in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities
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
A1.2	formulate increasingly effective questions to guide their explorations of themes, ideas, and issues related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identities, relationships, and self-determination, sovereignty, or self-governance, as reflected in various Indigenous text forms, and, as appropriate, in relevant non-Indigenous texts

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 First Nations, Métis and Inuit creators built their own media in Canada. • We are learning why it matters who controls a media text.	• I can describe at least four Indigenous-led media organizations or initiatives and when they began. • I can explain how controlling production changes a media text's purpose and audience. • I can connect this unit to the representations we analysed in Unit 2. • I can write an inquiry question for the unit.

Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** From Being Filmed to Filming deck.
- **Handouts:** Media Timeline (page 1), Unit Inquiry (page 2).
- **Media:** Optional: the trailer or opening of a film from NFB Indigenous Cinema (nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema), chosen and previewed by the teacher.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–10	**Hook**	Who held the camera?	Discuss.	
10–35	**Timeline**	Seven milestones.	Build the timeline.	Dates and purposes recorded.
35–50	**Who, what, why**	People, organizations, initiatives.	Sort.	
50–65	**Why control matters**	Purpose and audience.	Discuss.	Connections to Unit 2.
65–75	**Inquiry**	Unit question.	Write.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** Timeline with the dates filled in; students add purposes.
- **ELL:** Glossary: broadcaster, licence, festival, platform, production.
- **Challenge:** Research one milestone further using the organization's own website.

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Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Media Timeline	Contributions of organizations and initiatives (E5.1, E5.2) and purposes and audiences (E1.1)

From being filmed to filming: key points

- **Before:** For decades, film and TV images of Indigenous peoples were made by outsiders, often as stereotypes (Unit 2).
- **1982:** The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation begins broadcasting in Inuktitut.
- **1990:** Igloolik Isuma Productions, an Inuit-owned independent production company, is founded.
- **1999:** APTN launches nationally on September 1; imagineNATIVE is founded in Toronto (first festival 2000).
- **2017–2018:** The Indigenous Screen Office is announced (2017); NFB Indigenous Cinema puts over 200 films online free (2018).
- **2021:** Uvagut TV launches as the first 24/7 Inuktut channel.
- **Why it matters:** Control of production shapes purpose, audience, language and which stories get told.

Teacher notes

- 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.
- Milestones (checked November 2026): Inuit Broadcasting Corporation began broadcasting in Inuktitut in January 1982 after its 1981 CRTC licence (The Canadian Encyclopedia). Igloolik Isuma Productions was founded in 1990 by Zacharias Kunuk, Pauloosie Qulitalik, Paul Apak and Norman Cohn (Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada). APTN launched on September 1, 1999, the world's first national Indigenous broadcaster (it grew out of Television Northern Canada, 1992). imagineNATIVE was founded in 1999 by Cynthia Lickers-Sage with Vtape; its first festival was in 2000 (The Canadian Encyclopedia). The Indigenous Screen Office was announced in June 2017; Jesse Wente became its first executive director in 2018. NFB Indigenous Cinema launched online on March 22, 2018 with more than 200 free films. Uvagut TV, the first 24/7 channel in Inuktut, launched in January 2021.
- 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.
- Facts in this lesson were checked in November 2026. Media organizations, funding and leadership change; check for updates before teaching.

Coming up

Lesson 2, On Air.

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