Podcasts and Voices: Story, history and language in your ears

NBE3U, Unit 6: Signal and Story, Lesson 7. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

Podcasts let creators speak directly to listeners, at length, in their own voices. First Nations, Métis and Inuit podcasters use the form to reclaim history, explore identity and return archived stories to communities.

What students do: Students sample teacher-chosen episodes from Indigenous-hosted podcasts (for example, This Place, Telling Our Twisted Histories, Muddied Water, Kiwew and Inuit Unikkaangit), analyse podcast conventions (host voice, interview, sound design, structure), evaluate an episode's effectiveness and plan how they might use the form for their spotlight.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
E2.1	identify general and specific characteristics of a variety of media forms and explain, with increasing insight, how they shape content and create meaning in the context of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures
E1.3	evaluate how effectively information, themes, ideas, issues, and opinions are communicated in 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, and decide whether the texts achieve their intended purpose
B2.7	analyse oral texts from and/or related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, focusing on the ways in which they communicate information, themes, ideas, and issues and influence the listener’s/viewer’s response
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

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 Indigenous podcasters use the podcast form. • We are learning to evaluate the effectiveness of an audio text.	• I can identify the conventions of podcasts and how they shape meaning. • I can describe the contributions of Indigenous podcasters and their shows. • I can evaluate how effectively an episode communicates its ideas. • I can explain how I might use podcast techniques myself.

Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** Podcasts and Voices deck.
- **Handouts:** Episode Analysis (page 1), Podcast Toolkit (page 2).
- **Media:** Teacher-chosen 5- to 8-minute excerpts from two or three Indigenous-hosted podcasts (CBC Listen and other sources). Preview.
- **Devices:** Headphones for station listening, if possible.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–8	**Hook**	Why audio?	Discuss.	
8–18	**The shows**	Five podcasts.	Note.	
18–48	**Listening stations**	Two excerpts.	Listen and analyse.	Conventions identified.
48–62	**Evaluate**	What works?	Write.	
62–75	**Toolkit**	If I made one…	Plan.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** Transcripts where available.
- **ELL:** Slower playback; key vocabulary list.
- **Challenge:** Analyse the episode's structure minute by minute.

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Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Episode Analysis	Media forms (E2.1), effectiveness (E1.3), oral text analysis (B2.7) and contributions (E5.1)

Podcasts and voices: key points

- **Host voice:** A personal, direct voice builds trust; hosts often share their own connection to the story.
- **Interview:** Lets many people speak; the host's questions shape the conversation.
- **Sound design:** Music, archival audio and silence set mood and signal shifts.
- **Structure:** A hook, a question, chapters, a return to the question.
- **Contributions:** These shows reclaim words and history (Telling Our Twisted Histories), Métis history (Muddied Water) and Inuit archives (Inuit Unikkaangit).
- **Effectiveness:** Judge by purpose and audience: clarity, evidence, voice and whether it changes how listeners think.

Teacher notes

- Sources (checked November 2026; CBC, 2021): This Place (host Rosanna Deerchild): Canadian history from Indigenous perspectives. Telling Our Twisted Histories (host Kaniehtiio Horn; launched May 31, 2021): 11 words whose meanings were twisted by colonization, with more than 70 people from 15 communities. Muddied Water: 1870 Homeland of the Métis? (host Stephanie Cram): Métis history in Manitoba. Kiwew (David A. Robertson, Cree): his family's history and his Cree identity. Inuit Unikkaangit (host and archivist Mary Powder): returns stories from CBC North's Inuktitut archives to storytellers' descendants. The Secret Life of Canada (Leah Simone Bowen and Falen Johnson, who is Mohawk and Tuscarora from Six Nations).
- Check that episodes are still available and age-appropriate; some deal with residential schools and violence. 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.
- Preview every clip, episode or post before class. Choose excerpts that are short, non-graphic and suitable for your students; check your board's approved media list.
- 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 8, Digital Ground.

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