

8TH FIRE



***8th Fire* Guide for Educators**

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8th Fire Guide for Educators



8th Fire is a four-part documentary series about contemporary Aboriginal peoples in Canada, social and economic issues facing them, and possibilities for moving forward in a world that is rapidly changing. This Guide for Educators contains several components. For each of the four episodes, there are content overviews and social considerations, along with main elements on which to focus instruction. In addition, for each episode, there are *Critical Thinking Challenges*, *Viewing Questions*, *Instructional Activities* and *Possibilities for Involving the Community*.

The *Critical Thinking Challenges* are meant to be “big picture” questions that can be posed to students at any point during instruction. Because the documentary series is a reflection of the lives of Canadians, it is important for students to be able to apply some of the ideas to their own lives and experiences, beyond the content of each episode.

The *Viewing Questions* are meant to be answered by students while watching each episode, or in discussion after watching the episode. For the most part, they are in order of appearance in the episode, although due to the non-chronological nature of the episodes, this is not always possible. Students should be informed that they may have to answer one question early on and then add more details as the episode unfolds.

The *Instructional Activities* are meant for educators to adapt into possible projects and assignments. They range in scope from activities that could be completed in part of a class, to projects that might span several classes.

The final section, *Possibilities for Involving the Community*, includes ways in which educators may either invite members of the community into the classroom, or to take students outside of the classroom.

Note on terminology and nomenclature

Language is alive and fluid, constantly changing and adapting based on usage and societal shifts. Throughout history, different terminology and nomenclature have been used to describe groups of people, some of which may be offensive by today’s standards. It is very important to bring up the use of language with students when viewing this series, so that in their discussions later, they know to use currently acceptable and inclusive terminology and nomenclature.

In Canada, it is generally suitable to say **First Nations** or **Aboriginal**, but whenever possible, it is more appropriate to use the name of the specific group of people, such as the **Mohawk**, the **Lil’wat** or the **Cree**.

8th Fire – Indigenous in the City (Episode 1)

Overview

The first installment in this series is a focus on acknowledging and challenging stereotypes, particularly surrounding urban Aboriginal people. Challenging stereotypes has, in the cases of the people highlighted in this episode, resulted in great personal success and often public acclaim. The narrative moves back and forth between people such as the rap group *Winnipeg's Most*, comic book artist Steve Keewatin, lawyer Renee Pelletier, writer Lee Maracle, artist Kent Monkman, health worker Leslie Varley and hockey player Jordin Tootoo. These people help the host, Wab Kinew, to tell their stories about the impact of urbanization and the need to maintain a relationship with the land. The stories are presented in a non-linear fashion, building on each other, and sometimes doubling back. The main elements to focus on for this episode are **stereotypes** and **defining success**.

Please note: In this episode, there are mentions of physical and sexual abuse, and references to drug dependence and the use of crack cocaine.

Instructional Activities

1. Divide the class into five groups, and assign each group one of the following celebrities/groups to research: Steve Keewatin, *Winnipeg's Most*, Lee Maracle, Kent Monkman, and Jordin Tootoo. They should research their Aboriginal ancestries, lives, challenges, successes, and contributions to society. After the research is done, form the class into different groups, with one member each from the previous groups (each student in the new group should have researched a different celebrity/group). They should share their information, and discuss the following question: What connections can be made between the successes of all of the celebrities?
2. Have students write a reflective journal, or share in a circle, what story of success from the episode was most impactful and why.
3. Host Wab Kinew tells us that success can be found in “changing and strengthening the relationship” between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. In this episode, we learn about the Friendship Centre in Val d’Or, Quebec, and the daycare program they have created. As a class, research other examples around the country in which these kinds of programs are finding success.

Episode 1 - SEE ALSO

Critical Thinking Challenges.....	p. 3
Viewing Questions.....	pp. 3-5

Possibilities for Involving the Community

1. Visit the local Friendship Centre with the class, and learn about the programs it offers.
2. Invite an Elder or storyteller to visit the class and tell the students about the experience of the local First Nation during colonization.
3. Invite a local Aboriginal celebrity (artist, performer, politician, writer, athlete, etc.) to visit the class and tell the students about his or her challenges and success.

8th Fire – Indigenous in the City (Episode 1)

Critical Thinking Challenges

1. What is the definition of **stereotype**? How can stereotypes be positive? How can stereotypes be negative? How have stereotypes impacted you or people you know?
2. What is success? By what standards is success measured?

Viewing Questions

1. The opening section of the episode shows some street interviews with “average Canadians” discussing Aboriginal stereotypes. What is the general consensus from those interviews about stereotypes surrounding Aboriginal people in Canada? Discuss the impact of some of these stereotypes on Aboriginal people in Canada.

2. We meet comic book artist, Steve Keewatin. Discuss the kind of art he creates. What were his artistic influences, and how did these influences impact the art he creates today? Why are people surprised when he tells them about his occupation and his ancestry?

3. We meet litigation lawyer Renee Pelletier. Discuss the kind of work she does, and the education that she has received. When she tells people that she is Aboriginal and a lawyer, what is the reaction that she receives? How is this reaction offensive? How does this connect to the reactions that Steve Keewatin also receives?

8th Fire – Indigenous in the City (Episode 1)

Viewing Questions (continued)

4. *Winnipeg's Most* is a band that is achieving some fame. Describe their success. How do the band members fit some of the stereotypes surrounding urban Aboriginal people? How are they fighting against those stereotypes?

5. Near the end of the episode, *Winnipeg's Most* visits some Elders from their local area. How can Elders help Aboriginal youth rebuild their lives? How can their traditional roles be integrated into today's world?

6. According to this episode, Aboriginal youth are more likely than other Canadian youth to join gangs or to be in trouble with the law. Discuss some of the issues that have created this situation.

7. A major part of the Indian Act involves the creation of reserve lands. How has that impacted Aboriginal people? Why are more and more Aboriginal people leaving the reserves?

8. We meet Lee Maracle, a writer who believes our nation has been founded on theft. Discuss this idea.

8th Fire – Indigenous in the City (Episode 1)

Viewing Questions (continued)

9. We meet Kent Monkman, an artist who creates what he refers to as “subversive” art. What is the definition of subversive? How is his art subversive? Why does he choose to integrate romanticized images of Aboriginal peoples?

10. The Varley/Dixon family are an example of the challenges and successes facing many Aboriginal families. Discuss how Leslie Varley, Herb Dixon, and Herb Varley have struggled to survive and succeed. What are their hopes for the future?

11. Several of the guests on this episode discuss the importance of having a relationship with the land. What is a relationship with the land and how is it important to many Aboriginal peoples?

12. We meet Jordin Tootoo, an Inuit hockey player in the NHL. Why does he continually return to his home in Rankin Inlet? How does he cope with the contrast between his life in urban centres during hockey season and the way of life at home?

13. What is the Sixties Scoop and how did it impact Aboriginal communities? Discuss the example of Nakuset and the identity issues she experienced growing up in a Jewish family. How is she trying to prevent this for her own children?

8th Fire – It's Time (Episode 2)



Overview

In order to understand the issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today, we need to learn about the historical context. This episode expands on some of the ideas introduced in Episode 1, such as the Indian Act, the impact of colonization, treaties, and residential schools. Comedian Howie Miller makes recurrent appearances, and his family is used as an example of how exploring your identity can help to repair some of the wrongs of the past. Host Wab Kinew, in a two minute segment, reviews the major historical events, and we hear from Paul Martin, former Prime Minister, about why we need to create partnerships between Aboriginals and

non-Aboriginals in order to encourage economic growth in Canada. The main elements to focus on for this episode are: the impact of colonization and ways to heal after generations of trauma.

Please note:

This episode includes shocking images of living conditions on a reserve. Discussions of residential school may be disturbing to some students, particularly the term, "Kill the Indian in the child."

Instructional Activities

1. At the beginning of the episode, Wab Kinew discusses one phrase he hears all the time – “Get over it!” This phrase is mentioned recurrently throughout the episode, and develops layers of meaning. Before watching the episode with your class, have a discussion about the phrase. Ask your students to make notes when and by whom the phrase is mentioned, and what it means in each context. After the episode, discuss the layers of meaning the phrase develops over the course of the episode.
2. Review Wab Kinew’s "walk though history" with the class. Brainstorm historical events that can be dramatized in this way. Divide the students into small groups and assign each group an event. Make video recordings of the dramatizations.

Episode 2 - SEE ALSO

Possibilities for Involving the Community.....	p. 7
Critical Thinking Challenges	p. 8
Viewing Questions	pp. 8-10

8th Fire – It's Time (Episode 2)

Instructional Activities (continued)

3. At the time of publication, the proposed Enbridge Pipeline is a contentious issue. Split your class into two groups and assign one group to the “pro” side, and one group to the “con” side. Have a debate on this issue in your classroom.
4. As a class, view some of the photos in the portfolio section of the website for Nadya Kwandibén’s photography company, Red Works, which can be found at <http://www.redworks.ca/>.
5. If your class has learned about the Holocaust, discuss why Howie Miller makes an analogy between the Holocaust and the Residential School experience. Research Duncan Campbell Scott and his stated purpose for residential schools, “to kill the Indian in the child.” Research the purpose of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* and listen to some of the stories.

Possibilities for Involving the Community

1. In the episode, we learn about *Project of Heart*, a national project to educate students about residential schools and to commemorate the lives of residential school children who died during their time at the schools. Information about participating in Project of Heart can be found at <http://www.projectofheart.ca/>.
2. Some past residential schools have been given to local First Nations and are now museums, places of learning, and even resorts. If this is the case locally, plan a field trip to a past residential school.
3. During the episode, Howie Miller’s family discusses what Aboriginal content should be taught in schools, and they feel that some history has been unspoken. As a class, have a discussion about mandatory school curriculum, and develop recommendations. What stories must be told in schools in Canada? Have your students write letters to your province’s Ministry of Education or to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* with their recommendations.

8th Fire – It's Time (Episode 2)

Critical Thinking Challenges

1. Think about historical events that have impacted your family or people of your ethnic group. Why is it important to learn about historical contexts?
2. What is colonization, and how has colonization impacted Canada?

Viewing Questions

1. In this episode, we meet Howie Miller and his family. What experience did Miller have while growing up? How has this impacted his identity as an Aboriginal man? What does he do today? Why is this significant?

2. Howie Miller's son, Tyson Houseman, wants to be a role model for Aboriginal youth. Why does he want this, and how is he achieving this goal? How has he explored his own Aboriginal identity?

3. In approximately two minutes, Wab Kinew takes us on a walk through colonial history, exploring the events relevant to the relationship between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. Describe this walk through history. What are the major events? What historical documents are particularly significant?

4. Why was the Indian Act (1876) created by the Government of Canada? What were some of the controls placed on Status Indians as a result of the Indian Act? How did the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982 change the Indian Act?

8th Fire – It's Time (Episode 2)

Viewing Questions (continued)

5. The Vancouver 2010 Olympics made a profound impact on many local First Nations, particularly those in the Whistler area. Discuss the impact on the Lil'wat Nation in terms of recognition, acknowledgement and economic gains. In terms of the rest of Canada, what is the significance of this fundamental relationship change?

6. We meet Paul Martin, former Prime Minister of Canada, who also served for some time as Finance Minister. He is also a very successful businessman in his own right. Why does he think the non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals should partner financially?

7. We meet Vanessa, a 32-year-old mother of six, who has just received a job offer from a financial institution. How has she moved beyond what some might have expected of her? Why is she participating in Nadya Kwandibens's "Concrete Indian" photo series?

8. The cover of the 8th Fire guide depicts one of Nadya Kwandiben's photos. What is she trying to achieve through the creation of the "Concrete Indian" series? How is the photo on the cover representative of the purpose of the series?

9. Throughout the episode, we see segments of a workshop presented by John Lagimodiere, owner of Aboriginal Consulting Services. What is his approach in his workshops? Initially, what are the reactions from participants? By the end of the workshop, how have their reactions changed?

8th Fire – It's Time (Episode 2)

Viewing Questions (continued)

10. Discuss the differences between the experiences of Native Americans in the United States during colonization and the experiences of Aboriginal people in Canada during the same time period.

11. The celebration shown during Treaty Day is symbolic. Discuss some of the events of that day, and why some First Nations continue to celebrate this day.

8th Fire – Whose Land is it Anyway? (Episode 3)



Overview

Land claims and treaties for Aboriginal peoples have been contentious and varied issues across the country. In many geographic areas, the land has vast earning potential. In some cases, others have accessed that earning potential before the local First Nations were able to do so. This episode helps students to understand some of the concerns about Aboriginal land use, and to see some ways that First Nations have achieved some economic prosperity through the use of their land. It also shows the bleakest possible picture of what can happen when an Aboriginal community – Attawapiskat – is not able to profit from its land. The main elements to focus on for

this episode are: the benefits and drawbacks of compromise, making agreements in good faith, and a relationship with the land.

Please note: In this episode, there are images of violence and protest, and very disturbing images of the living conditions in Attawapiskat. Students who have experienced loss may have difficulty hearing about the death of Shannon Koostachin, a young woman from Attawapiskat.

Instructional Activities

1. Explore the website for Nk’Mip Resort, owned by the Osoyoos Indian Band, which can be found at the following link: <http://www.nkmip.com/>. Have students research the James Bay Cree and build an imitation website or make brochures to advertise for one of their development companies.
2. Many First Nations across the country have made agreements that have led to economic prosperity for their members. Some of these include the Rama First Nation, the Westbank First Nation, the Musqueam First Nation, the Lil’wat People, the Gitksan Nation, and of course, the Osoyoos Indian Band and the James Bay Cree. If possible, try to find examples of prosperous First Nations that are local. Divide the class into groups and assign each group a First Nation to research. Have the groups report back to the class about their findings.
3. Many First Nations across the country have made “bad deals” or had experiences in which the government has acted in bad faith. Have your class research some of these examples and then share their findings with the class.

Episode 3 - SEE ALSO

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8th Fire – Whose Land is it Anyway? (Episode 3)

Instructional Activities (continued)

4. In the pre-contact era, the Iroquois Confederacy had a system of consensus decision making. Have the class research the ways in which this system promoted fairness and equity. One very good source can be found at the following link:
http://www.canadiana.ca/citm/themes/constitution/constitution2_e.html.
Have a class discussion about how this system differs from the compromise-based model used to reach agreements between the Government of Canada and First Nations.
5. CBC's News in Review has released a video that includes a closer look at "The Emergency in Attawapiskat". There are a variety of activities in the Teacher Guide that accompanies this video, which can be found at <http://newsinreview.cbclearning.ca/the-emergency-in-attawapiskat/>.

Possibilities for Involving the Community

1. If there is a local First Nation that is using its land for economic development, plan a field trip to go to visit and learn about the projects.
2. Many First Nations have understandings about the land that involves traditional ecological knowledge. Invite an Elder to visit the class to talk about the relationship with the land that is universal among Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Ideally, the class could go on a field trip to visit a local reserve and hear the Elder talk while on the land. After the visit or field trip, have a discussion with the class about why the Osoyoos Indian Band is not developing vast tracts of their land.

8th Fire – Whose Land is it Anyway? (Episode 3)

Critical Thinking Challenges

1. What is the definition of compromise? Think about situations in which compromise can be positive. Are there ways in which compromise can also be negative?
2. What is the definition of consensus? How is consensus different than compromise?

Viewing Questions

1. The first story of economic prosperity in this episode focuses on the Osoyoos Indian Band. Why is this band performing statistically better than many others? What does Chief Clarence Louie say about their success? What challenges have they faced regarding land claims and land use? Why do they choose not to develop all of their land?

2. Nk'mip Cellars is a joint venture between the Osoyoos Indian Band and an outside group. Why have they decided to partner with others in this venture? Discuss the importance that the geography of the land has on the successes of this band.

3. The second story of economic prosperity focuses on the James Bay Cree. Describe the James Bay Agreement. Why is this agreement so unique?

4. The James Bay Agreement involved compromise on the parts of the Canadian Government and the James Bay Cree. What did the James Bay Cree agree to give up? What did they gain by making this agreement?

8th Fire – Whose Land is it Anyway? (Episode 3)

Viewing Questions (continued)

5. The protests held before the 1975 James Bay Agreement stopped a \$17 billion contract. What do you think this accomplished for the morale of the people? What challenges do they still face today? What issues are different for them than many other First Nations?

6. The Innu refused to negotiate at the time of the James Bay Agreement. They live on James Bay Cree land, but lack the development potential that the James Bay Cree were able to access as a result of the agreement. How do you think they feel seeing the prosperity of the James Bay Cree?

7. In 1976, Manitoba Hydro diverged the Churchill River. How did this impact the Nisichawayashik Cree Nation? Why do you think there was no consultation with the local First Nations before action of Manitoba Hydro? Because there was no consultation, the Nisichawayashik Cree Nation fought back. What did they achieve? How was the situation different in 2006?

8. Describe the situation in Attawapiskat. What did Charlie Angus, the Minister of Parliament for the Timmins-James Bay constituency, say about the situation in Attawapiskat? The situation was described as “4th World” — what does this mean?

9. Discuss the agreement made between the First Nation in Attawapiskat and De Beers. Do you think the agreement was in the interest of the local First Nation? Why or why not?

8th Fire – Whose Land is it Anyway? (Episode 3)

Viewing Questions (continued)

10. Describe the education system in Attawapiskat? What did Shannon Koostachin do to try to fight for better schools? How have her life and death inspired people in Attawapiskat to keep fighting?

8th Fire – At the Crossroads (Episode 4)

Overview

The final instalment in the 8th Fire series is a focus on the young generation – known as the “Seventh Generation” – who have experienced less cultural trauma and are better equipped than some who have come before them to create a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada. This particularly hopeful episode requires an understanding of the 8th Fire Prophecy and some historical knowledge for students who are viewing it. The main elements to focus on for this episode are: Aboriginal media such as visual art and television productions, the future of the Indian Act, educational opportunities and challenges for some Aboriginal youth, and the lure of economic development.

Please note: In this episode, there are excerpts from the Blackstone television series, which include swearing, flashes of nudity and sexuality, and drug and alcohol consumption. In some communities, the suggestion that the Indian Act should be repealed may be a touchy issue, as well as the construction of the proposed Enbridge oil pipeline.

Instructional Activities

1. Research the Seven Fires Prophecy. There are several different versions that can be found online. Be sure to pick one that comes from an authentic Anishnaabe (Ojibwe) source. Ideally, the class could hear the story told orally by a storyteller from an Anishnaabe First Nation. How has history in Canada since contact mirrored the prophecy? Divide the class into seven groups, one for each prophet and generation, and asks the groups to find historical events that match their assigned generation. As a class, put together a timeline that shows the prophecies on one side and the historical events on the other.
2. The official Indian Act can be found at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-5/>. Go over parts of it as a class. Replay the section of the episode that shows exhibition on *The Indian Act Revisited*. Examine each of the exhibits and match them to the sections of the Indian Act. Discuss how the each of the artistic representations resists the Act in some way.
3. Research reviews of the television series *Blackstone*. There is a great deal of both negative and positive feedback related to the series. Discuss why it has such widespread appeal.
4. Research the “Statement of Government of Canada on Indian Policy” (1969) — also known as the White Paper because of the colour of the document cover. Why was there so much resistance to abolishing the Indian Act at that point in time? What has changed today, when the cries for abolishing the Act are coming from the Aboriginal community rather than the non-Aboriginal community?
5. Research both sides of the current debate over the future of the Indian Act. Divide the class in half and have an informal debate about how the Act should evolve or if it should be abolished.
6. As a class, investigate the programs at the First Nations University of Canada. The website for the university can be found at <http://www.fnuniv.ca/>.

Episode 4 - SEE ALSO

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Critical Thinking Challenges	p. 18
Viewing Questions	pp. 18-20

8th Fire – At the Crossroads (Episode 4)

Possibilities for Involving the Community

1. Find two members of a local First Nations community who have different opinions about the future of the Indian Act, and invite them to come in and talk to the class about their positions.
2. If one of the artists whose work was exhibited in *The Indian Act Revisited* is from your local area, invite him or her to talk to the class about the exhibit or the art. If there is a museum or art gallery that has traditional and contemporary Aboriginal art, plan a field trip to visit. Alternatively, invite a local contemporary Aboriginal artist to visit your class to teach your students some of the techniques he or she uses, or to talk about his or her training.
3. On the First Nations University of Canada website (<http://www.fnuniv.ca/>), there is a link to their alumni. If one of their alumni lives locally, invite him or her to visit the class to talk about the university. Alternatively, arrange a field trip to the university or another post secondary institution that incorporates Aboriginal perspectives. Some possibilities are the First Nations House of Learning at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC (<http://www.longhouse.ubc.ca/>), the First Nations House at the University of Toronto (<http://www.longhouse.ubc.ca/>), the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatoon, SK (<http://www.gdins.org/>), or the En'owkin Centre in Penticton, BC (<http://www.enowkincentre.ca/>). Occasionally, representatives from these institutions are willing to visit schools. Your school could host a fair with representatives from post-secondary institutions from around the country, and make sure to include several that are exclusively Aboriginal or integrate Aboriginal perspectives.

8th Fire – At the Crossroads (Episode 4)

Critical Thinking Challenges

1. What is a prophecy? What are some prophecies from other parts of the world?
2. What is the difference between formal and informal education? Discuss the value of each kind of education.

Viewing Questions

1. At the beginning of the episode, Wab Kinew gives a brief overview of the meaning of the title of the 8th Fire series. Discuss the relevance of the title.

2. Wab Kinew tells us his opinion of the Indian Act. What is his opinion and the reasons behind the opinion?

3. One segment of the episode focuses on the television series *Blackstone*. What is the series about? What does its creator say about the appeal of the series?

4. Throughout the episode, arguments for abolishing the Indian Act are discussed. What are some of these arguments? What questions arise around this discussion?

5. We meet Stanley Volant, who discusses his concerns about the rate of high school dropouts in the Aboriginal population. Why is continuing with school so important to him? What are some of the challenges faced by some Aboriginal youth to stay in school? What do we lose, both as individuals, and as a society, by not acquiring a formal education? What is Stanley Volant's answer to keep youth in school?

8th Fire – At the Crossroads (Episode 4)

Viewing Questions (continued)

6. We see the First Nations University of Canada in Regina. Describe the physical space and the methods of instruction. How do you think it is different from other Canadian universities? How does this institution contribute to the academic success of some Aboriginal students? Why is significant that they include an annual powwow as part of their calendar?

7. First Nations University of Canada has an enrolment that is 70% female. Why do you think the disparity between male and female students is so high? How are the challenges faced by each gender different?

8. According to Wab Kinew, economic development is the way forward for Aboriginal communities in Canada. However, many First Nations in BC are saying “no” to the Enbridge Oil Pipeline. Why are they refusing to consent to the pipeline passing through their territories? What are the benefits and drawbacks of this kind of economic development?

9. One segment of this episode focuses on Membertou First Nation, a Mik’maq community in Nova Scotia. What are some of the challenges they have faced in the past? Why are so many of their youth returning to live on their traditional territory?

8th Fire – At the Crossroads (Episode 4)

Viewing Questions (continued)

10. There is some debate about casinos and gambling on First Nations land. Why has the Membertou First Nation built a casino? How does the casino benefit the people living in their community? What are some of their other business ventures?

11. We meet Elisapie Isaac, an Inuk throat singer. She gives workshops across Canada's North to inspire students to be successful. What does she talk about with students? What does she think that students are tired of hearing about and why? Discuss the potential success of her programs.
