



## Global Voices Information Sheet

### Aboriginal Education



Aboriginal students at a residential school in Manitoba, 1901. (Photo: Library and Archives Canada)

#### Background Info

- According to the 2006 Census, 40 per cent of aboriginals 20-24 years do not finish high school. 13 per cent of non-aboriginal Canadians do not finish high school.
- The experience with residential schools has made many aboriginals distrust the Canadian education system.
- Many aboriginal cultures do not like European-style education, where a teacher lectures to students. They believe in learning by experience. Children are not given the answers or told how to solve problems. They are expected to try it themselves and if they fail, they try again until they learn.
- Canadian history classes teach very little about aboriginal history, unless it is about how they interacted with European settlers.
- Standard Canadian English classes do not usually include aboriginal authors.
- To learn about aboriginal experiences and literature, teacher Robert Genaille recommends aboriginal authors like Sherman Alexie, Eden Robinson and Thomas King.
- British Columbia has created special English and Social Studies courses for aboriginal high school students.
- The city of Prince George, B.C., has set up an aboriginal school, and Vancouver will soon also.
- Ontario is developing native studies courses for grades 9-12 and a native languages program for grades 1-8.
- On February 8, the National Panel on First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education called on the government to give more money immediately for First Nations education.

#### Key terms

- **Curriculum** – The courses you can take at an educational institution.
- **Residential school** – Schools where aboriginal children were made to live away from their families and learn European-Canadian languages and culture. They were not allowed to learn about their own language and culture. The first residential schools opened in the 1840s and the last one closed in 1996.

## Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

### Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

### Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: Aboriginal education, education system, culture, cultural teaching techniques.
- Course Connections: Language and Social Studies.

### Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Global Voices column

### Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

### Reading Comprehension

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
  - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
  - b. Pre-reading steps:
    - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
    - ii. Introduce vocabulary from the column.
    - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
  - c. Reading steps:
    - i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, so that everyone gets a turn to read.

- ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
- d. Post reading steps:
  - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
  - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.

### Discussion Questions

1. Discussing the Global Voices Column (estimated time: 10 minutes)
  - a. Ask students the following suggested questions about the column, encourage them to use evidence from the Global Voices column to support their answers:
    - i. What is the message in this column?
    - ii. What perspectives are presented in this column? Which ones are left out?
    - iii. What problem is presented in this column?
    - iv. What are some challenges facing Aboriginal students within the public school system?
    - v. What are some teaching methods from Aboriginal culture are mentioned in the column?
    - vi. What steps are being taken by the provincial curriculum developers to accommodate these learning differences? Why is this important?

For more resources and complete lesson plans on Aboriginal education. . .

Sign up for Free The Children's Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education campaign. In partnership with the [Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative](#), Free The Children is shining the spotlight on the successes and challenges of Aboriginal youth education from February 13-24. [Click here](#) to sign up!

Resources and materials include:

- **Daily Facts:** Short reports that educate and spark discussion on the topics of Aboriginal history and culture.
- **The Awareness Action Guide:** A source for using the Daily Facts to spread the word and raise awareness of Aboriginal education in your school and community. Gives participants the tools they need to help turn the spotlight on Aboriginal education.
- **Secondary and elementary school lesson plans:** Lesson plans focused on First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth education.
- ...and more!

**Local Spotlight:**  
**Aboriginal  
Education**

In partnership with:



local  
spotlight

*Every February, we raise awareness about an issue that is important to our own communities. This year, the spotlight is on the successes and challenges of Aboriginal youth education.*