



ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

SECONDARY LEVEL

Aboriginal Rights Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to provide students with an understanding of the rights and laws that bind First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work, independent project.
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Different groups are assigned a different legal document and they must present their findings to the class.
- **Course Connection(s):** Canadian and World Studies, English, and Native Studies.
- **Estimated time:** 1 hour
- **Steps:**
 1. Explain to students FNMI peoples have rights that are collective and flow from their original occupation of the land. It is important that they come to understand these rights as Canadian citizens. For that reason, this exercise will be about exploring any law or legal decision pertaining to FNMI peoples in Canada in order to become knowledgeable in the subject.
 2. Divide students into small groups.
 3. As a group, ask students to explore the following documents:
 - *The Indian Act* - <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-5/>
 - *Constitution Act, 1867 to 1982* – specifically s25 and s35
<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/const/9.html>
 - *The Criminal Code of Canada* – specifically s718.2(e) <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/c-46/>

Teacher Note: you may wish to provide students with hard copies of the documents, to save searching time.

4. After students have finished analyzing the documents, conduct a brainstorm using the following suggested questions:
 - What is the *Indian Act*? How does it promote and/or restrict FNMI peoples?
 - What is the *Constitution Act*? How does it promote and/or restrict FNMI people?
 - What is the *Criminal Code of Canada*? How does it promote and/or restrict FNMI peoples?
 - How do you interpret the language of the documents? Are there any inherent beliefs and assumptions behind the language?
 - What is the intent of each piece of legislation or legal decision?
 - Are there aspects of them that promote or perpetuate injustice? What are they?
 - Are there any weaknesses in the documents?
 - Do any of the documents contradict or conflict with each other? Explain.
 - Which piece of legislation does the most to promote social justice for FNMI peoples? Explain.
5. Before concluding this discussion, ensure students have a thorough understanding of First Nations rights and the legislation that binds them.



6. When this is complete, explain to students that they will now have the opportunity to explore decisions made by the Supreme Court of Canada regarding First Nations peoples. Through this activity they will be able to learn first-hand how these laws come into play.
7. Direct students to the Supreme Court of Canada website - <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/index.html> . Encourage them to do a key word search to narrow their search (e.g.: land claims, First Nations, Métis etc.).
8. Students must create a written analysis of the court decision and its consequences.
9. Finished work should be handed into the teacher.

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