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# ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

## SECONDARY LEVEL

Lesson Plan: Aboriginal Education in the secondary classroom

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### Rationale

The term Aboriginal refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) populations in Canada. Each of these groups is unique in culture and traditions and they have a history spanning hundreds of years. Unfortunately, this history is also defined by disproportionate levels of incarceration, poverty, unemployment, school dropout rates, alcohol abuse, suicides, and domestic violence. However, these negative characteristics should not be taken at face value; rather, it is important to question how and why they came to be.

We at Free The Children believe that education and awareness are the first steps to bringing an end to issues facing our world. For this reason, this lesson was created to support educators and students explore this complex and integral part of Canada's past, present and future. With this knowledge, we hope youth will spread awareness about FNMI issues throughout their school and community.

This lesson is organized into three parts: orientation, core and concluding activities followed by Blackline Masters (B.L.M.1 - B.L.M.2) and an assessment rubric (Appendix 1: Assessment Rubric for Student Work). At the conclusion of this lesson, students will participate in Free The Children and Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative's campaign, Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are not alone in their struggles, let's stand in unity and celebrate this truly Canadian culture.

### Details

- **Grade level:** secondary
- **Themes:** traditions, culture, development, Aboriginals, community, awareness, geography, climate, survival, legislation, social justice and rights.
- **Estimated time:** 4 hours
- **Learning goals**
  - Students will:
    - Formulate and share opinions on local issues and problems.
    - Demonstrate research skills by compiling information from a wide variety of print and electronic resources.
    - Participate in active group work and class discussions.
    - Communicate effectively in written, oral and artistic forms.
    - Further develop the ability to think critically.
    - Raise awareness on a local issue of importance.
- **Resources required**
  - Paper and writing materials
  - Computers and internet
  - Projector and screen
  - Blackboard/white board/chart paper
  - Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education How-To Guide



- Blackline Master 1 (B.L.M.1) - Blackline Master 2 (B.L.M.2)
- **Assessment**
  - Appendix 1: Assessment Rubric for Student Work

## Aboriginal Education: Aboriginal Traditions Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to educate students about the topic of Canadian Aboriginal populations and heritage by exploring a general overview of culture and customs.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work.
- **Differentiated instruction:**
  - Read each Aboriginal story as a class and discuss the specified questions together.
  - Students respond to the questions in written language and hand their answers into the teacher.
- **Course Connection(s):** Canadian and World Studies, English, Interdisciplinary Studies, Native Studies and Social Sciences and Humanities.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes
- **Steps:**
  1. Ask students to list any Canadian First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) traditions they are aware of (e.g.: storytelling). Write suggestions on the board.
  2. As a class, discuss each tradition listed on the board and why they think it's important to Aboriginal culture.
  3. Explain to students that Canadian FNMI peoples value a legacy of oral tradition. They believe that stories bind a community, linking it with its past and future. Such stories hold information about a community's spirituality, their lessons of morality, as well as life skills to be passed down to later generations.
  4. Divide the students into small groups and distribute B.L.M.1 to each group.
  5. On B.L.M.1, students will find three stories selected from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. Assign each group one of the stories.
  6. Ask each group to read over the story together and discuss the following questions:
    - What is the moral of the story?
    - What symbols are used in this story? What do these symbols represent?
    - What knowledge will this story pass on to future generations?
    - Why do they think the story is important to Aboriginal people?
  7. When groups are finished reading their stories and answering the above questions, have the groups responsible for the different stories explain them to the class.
  8. Move the discussion back to Canadian Aboriginal traditions, focusing on why it is important to keep cultural traditions (such as those discussed in this activity) alive. Encourage an active debate at this time.

*Teacher Note: all Aboriginal stories were obtained from the Government of Canada Aboriginal Portal - <http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/ao04580.html>*

## Aboriginal Education: Comparing Aboriginal Groups Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to complete an in depth study of a specific Canadian Aboriginal community.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work, group presentations.
- **Differentiated instruction:**
  - Students create a written report or a visual display about their selected Aboriginal group instead of orally presenting their findings to the class
- **Course Connection(s):** Canadian and World Studies, English, Interdisciplinary Studies, Native Studies and Social Sciences and Humanities.
- **Estimated time:** 1 hour
- **Steps:**
  1. Explain to students that they will be participating in a small group research project where they will research one of the following topics:
    - First Nations
    - Métis
    - Inuit
  2. Divide the class into six small groups (so that two groups are assigned to each topic) and assign each group to one of the above topics.
  3. Once they have selected their Aboriginal group, students must collect information around the following topics:
    - Any significant historic background information and events that affected this population.
    - Geographical distribution.
    - List of communities or bands within the group (e.g.: the First Nations Mi'kmaq from the Easter Woodlands).
    - The language(s) spoken by the group.
    - Economic basis.
    - Any means of survival adopted by the community (e.g.: food preservation etc.).
    - Traditional customs carried out by the community along with traditional dress, food, dance, myths and artistic expression.
    - The status of the group today. Listing any trouble the community is facing along with any successes they have experienced.
    - How the community has grown and changed throughout history.
  4. Once research is complete, ask each group to summarize their findings for the class. Encourage other members of the class to take notes during these presentations.
  5. When presentations are complete, ask each group to create a series of five questions on their research findings that were presented to the class.
  6. Collect these questions and compile them together, creating a quiz to be completed independently by the students in the next class.

## Aboriginal Education: Aboriginal Rights Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to provide students with an understanding of the rights and laws that bind 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.

## Aboriginal Education: Exploring the Issues

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is for students to understand the issues FNMI peoples face in the education system.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, independent work, independent presentations.
- **Differentiated instruction:**
  - Students create a written report instead of a PowerPoint presentation.
  - Students work in pairs.
- **Course Connection(s):** Canadian and World Studies, English, Interdisciplinary Studies, Native Studies and Social Sciences and Humanities.
- **Estimated time:** 30 minutes followed by independent work and class presentations.
- **Steps:**
  1. Begin this activity with the following discussion questions:
    - What are you interested in? What do you feel passionate about? Write suggestions on the board.
    - Do you feel excited when you are learning about things that interest you in school? When you learn about things that do not interest you, do you feel engaged in the lesson?
    - What is the best way for you to learn (e.g.: by working independently, by observing teacher demonstrations, etc.)? What is the hardest way for you to learn (e.g.: group work etc.)? If you are asked to learn in a way that is difficult for you, how does this make you feel? Do you make progress?
    - When you attend school, if you were to feel as if you did not have a voice, how would this make you feel?
  2. After this discussion, distribute B.L.M.2 to each student.
  3. Ask students to volunteer their first impressions when looking at the graphs.
  4. Following this initial discussion, explain to students that when the Europeans settled in Canada, FNMI children were forced into a European way of learning that did not acknowledge the different learning and teaching styles of FNMI peoples.

*Teacher Note: this activity is intended to introduce FNMI education issues before students become involved in Free The Children and Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative's Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education campaign. In this campaign, students will take a more in-depth look at Aboriginal education issues.*

5. Ask students to view the graphs and analyze the impact this educational journey has had on FNMI peoples.
6. After students have finished viewing the graphs, bring the class back together and ask students to volunteer their thoughts on the topic of FNMI education. Use the following questions as prompts:
  - If FNMI students were able to be educated through their traditional ways of learning, do you think this data would be different?
  - Why are students living on-reserve, less likely to achieve their high school certificate? What do you know about education on-reserve?
  - Looking at Graph c., what does this data tell you about FNMI education?
  - What direction should the education systems take in order to support the Aboriginal people?
7. Explain to students that in FNMI culture, learning includes the following key attributes: holistic, lifelong, experiential, rooted in traditional language, spiritually oriented, communal activity, and the integration of traditional and contemporary knowledge.



8. Ask students to research these attributes and traditional forms of instruction. With this information, ask students to write a proposal regarding how these attributes can be integrated into the current education system so to promote inclusive education.
9. Final proposals will be handed in for grading.

## Aboriginal Education: Aboriginal Initiatives Across Canada

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to encourage students to analyze different FNMI assistance strategies selected by various organizations. Students will analyze the impacts of these initiatives.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, independent research.
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
  - Assign students to groups based on their agency of choice.
- **Course Connection(s):** Canadian and World Studies, English, Interdisciplinary Studies, Native Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Technological Education.
- **Estimated time:** continuous project.
- **Steps:**
  1. Explain to students that many organizations across Canada have mobilized to help resolve FNMI issues. Ask students to list any initiatives they have heard about, listing suggestions on the board.
  2. Tell students they will be conducting an analysis of an organization that is working in the Aboriginal community. In this analysis, they must determine the effectiveness and impact of this assistance approach through a written analysis and a visual project.
  3. Ask students to choose one of the following organizations:
    - Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative - <http://www.maei-ieam.ca>
    - The Belinda Stronach Foundation - <http://www.tbsf.ca/>
    - Ch'nook Cousins - <http://www.ch-nook.ubc.ca/highschool.html>
    - Fort McMurray – The Royal Conservatory - [http://www.rcmusic.ca/ContentPage.aspx?name=Portal\\_Alberta\\_Government\\_Invests\\_in\\_Innovative\\_Conservatory\\_Program\\_in\\_Fort\\_Mcmurray](http://www.rcmusic.ca/ContentPage.aspx?name=Portal_Alberta_Government_Invests_in_Innovative_Conservatory_Program_in_Fort_Mcmurray)
    - The Seventh Generation Club - <http://www.seventhgenerationclub.com/>
  4. Once they have chosen their organization, students must research their organization identify the following information:
    - Organization description - including the mission statement of the organization as well as any other relevant information.
    - Current initiatives in the Aboriginal community - a list and description of programs being implemented in the Aboriginal community.
    - Effectiveness - the extent to which the organization is attaining its objectives.
    - Impact - the effects produced by the initiative(s). This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local, social, economic, environmental, and other development indicators.
    - Sustainability - whether the benefits and outcomes of the initiative(s) are likely to continue into the future.
  5. After completing their research, students must create their written report. Ask them to structure their research into the following paragraphs: overview report, background information, discussion of findings, and conclusion.
  6. When reports are complete, ask students to create one of the following visual projects about their chosen organization to accompany their written report:
    - A news bulletin
    - A magazine or newspaper advertisement
    - A poster
    - An article for a newspaper or magazine
    - A PowerPoint presentation
  7. When students have completed their projects, ask them to hand them in for grading.

## Aboriginal Education: Local Spotlight Campaign

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to provide students with an outlet for action by engaging them in Free The Children and the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative's Aboriginal Education campaign.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion.
- **Differentiated instruction:**
  - Students read the How-To Guide, learning the details of the campaign and go on to present awareness-raising ideas to the classroom educator.
- **Course Connection(s):** Canadian and World Studies, English, Interdisciplinary Studies, Native Studies and Social Sciences and Humanities.
- **Estimated time:** 20 minutes
- **Steps:**
  - a. Ask students to reflect on all they have learned about Canada's FNMI peoples. Explain to students that Free The Children and the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative have introduced a campaign that will allow them to focus on Aboriginal issues particularly in the area of education.
  - b. Introduce the campaign by viewing the following video:
    - Free The Children's Local Spotlight: Aboriginal Education - [www.freethechildren.com/aboriginaleducation](http://www.freethechildren.com/aboriginaleducation)
  - c. Keeping in mind all they have learned throughout the course of the lesson, ask students the following questions:
    - Why is this campaign important?
    - What does this campaign mean to you?
    - What are the goals of this campaign?
  - d. As a class, access the campaign How-To Guide and follow the specific steps to determine your class awareness strategy.

## Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

- Free The Children Aboriginal Education campaign - [http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/campaigns/campaigns.php?type=local\\_spotlight\\_aboriginal\\_education](http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/campaigns/campaigns.php?type=local_spotlight_aboriginal_education)
- The Indian Act - <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/l-5/>
- Constitution Act, 1867 to 1982 – <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/>
- The Supreme Court of Canada - <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/index.html>
- Assembly of First Nations - <http://www.afn.ca/>
- Government of Canada Canadian Aboriginal Portal - <http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/index.html>
- Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs - [http://www.aboriginalaffairs.gov.on.ca/english/news/2010/oct28\\_10.asp](http://www.aboriginalaffairs.gov.on.ca/english/news/2010/oct28_10.asp)
- First Nations Youth Network - <http://www.fn-youthnetwork.com/>
- Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative - <http://www.maei-ieam.ca>

## Blackline Master 1

Canadian Aboriginal Stories

1. **The Earth World:** A story told by the Mohawk from the residents of the Tyendinaga Reserve, Ontario.

The woman from the sky world went through the hole in the sky and fell downwards; there was only water below her. The beaver, the otter, the muskrat, and the turtle saw her fall, and fearing that she would drown sent a flock of ducks to catch her. The ducks flew underneath the woman, caught her on their backs, and set her safely down on the turtle's shell.

When she had rested she told the animals what must be done. She said that she needed soil which could be obtained from the bottom of the sea that covered the world. The strong beaver was the first to go down towards the bottom. He was gone a very long time until finally his drowned body floated to the surface. The otter considered himself to be a much better swimmer than the beaver; he was the second to make the attempt. He was down for an even longer time, and when his body surfaced he too was dead. Finally the muskrat attempted the dive. He was underwater longer even than the otter, but his body eventually floated to the surface. The woman discovered a tiny piece of soil in the crevice of the muskrat's paw, and this she sprinkled on the edge of the turtle's shell.

While the woman slept, the world grew from the edge of the turtle's shell and extended as far as one could see in every direction. By the time she awoke there were willows growing along the edge of the world, and they were the first trees to grow upon the earth.

2. **The Wolf and the Caribou:** A story told by the Inuit of Canada, the people of the North.

In the beginning – so the legend says – there was a man and a woman, nothing else on the Earth walked or swam or flew. And so the woman dug a big hole in the ground and she started fishing in it. And she pulled out all of the animals. The last animal she pulled out was the caribou. The woman set the caribou free and ordered it to multiply. And soon the land was full of them. And the people lived well and they were happy. But the hunters only killed those caribou that were big and strong. And soon all that was left were the weak and the sick. And the people began to starve. And so the woman had to make magic again, and this time she called Amorak, the spirit of the wolf, to winnow out the weak and the sick, so that the herd would once again be strong. The people realized that the caribou and the wolf were one, for although the caribou feeds the wolf, it is the wolf that keeps the caribou strong

3. **How the People Hunted the Moose:** A story told by the Métis-Cree of Canada, the children of the Cree women and French, Scottish and English fur traders

A family of moose was sitting in the lodge when a pipe came floating in through the door, passing close to each of the Moose People until it reached the youngest of the young bull moose. He took the pipe and started to smoke it. The old moose knew that it was a pipe the human beings were smoking to ask for success in their hunt. "Now, tomorrow, they will find us," he said. But the young moose was not afraid, for he thought he could outrun them.

When the Moose People reached the edge of the forest the next day, they caught the scent of the hunters. The thin crust on the snow made it hard for the moose to move quickly. The young moose was still sure he could outrun the hunters, but the hunters were wearing snowshoes. They followed him until he tired, and then they killed him. They thanked him for giving himself to them so they could survive. They treated his body with care, soothing his spirit.

When the young moose woke up in his bed that night, he said to the others, "Those hunters treated me with respect. It is right for us to allow the human beings to catch us." And so it is to



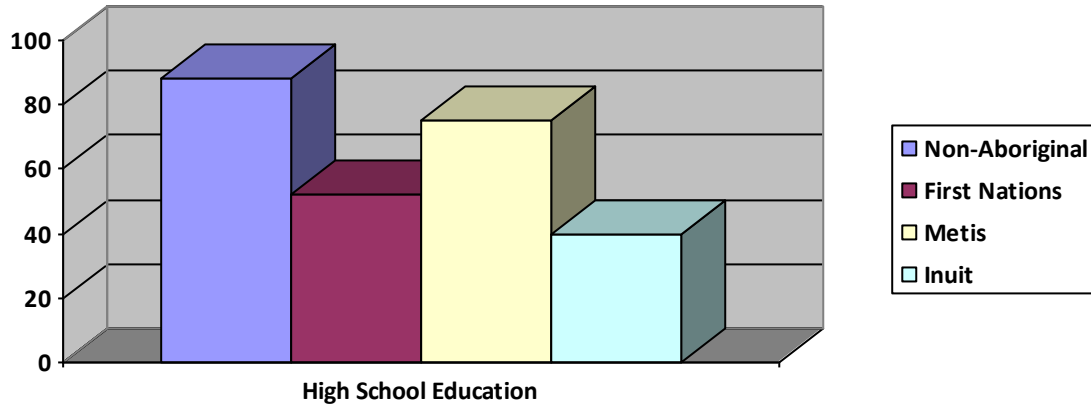
this day. Those hunters who show respect for the moose are always the ones who are successful when they hunt.

Blackline Master 2

Education Data

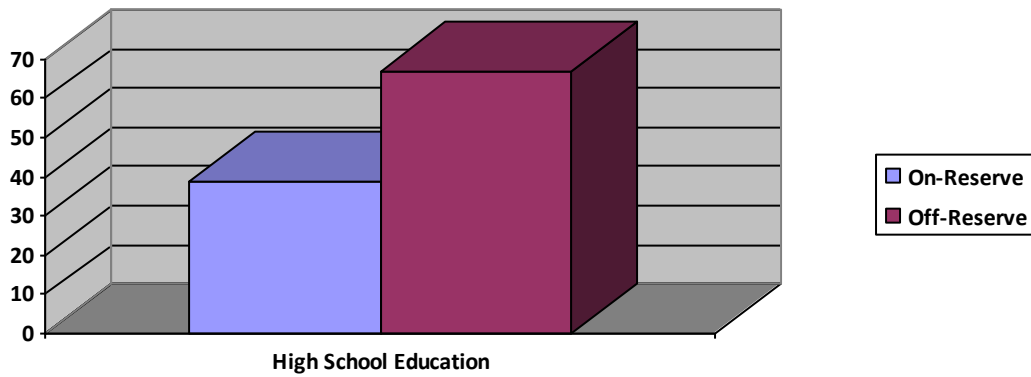
Graph a.

FNMI High School Completion Rates, Age 20-24, 2006



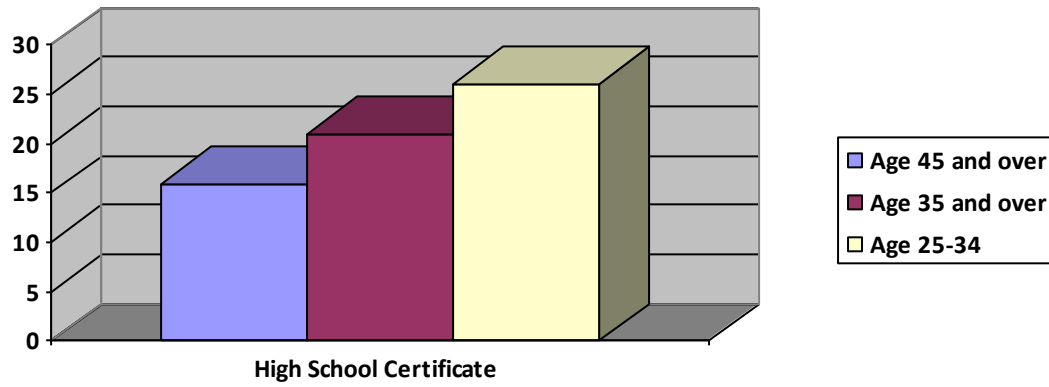
Graph b.

First Nations High School Completion Rates, Age 20-24, on/off reserve, 2006



Graph c.

Percentage of FNMI Peoples who Achieved a High School Certificate, 2006



\*Data taken from 2006 Canadian Census

## Appendix 1

Use the below assessment rubric to evaluate students' comprehension of issues and participation in the lesson plan activities. This rubric can be used in the following activities: Aboriginal Traditions, Comparing First Nations, Métis and Inuit Groups, FNMI Rights, FNMI Education and Aboriginal Initiatives Across Canada.

Assessment Rubric for Student Work

<b>Performance Factors</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Very Effective</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Marginally Effective</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>
<b>Producing Quality Work</b>	Produces high quality work.	Produces quality work.	Produces good quality work.	Produces work with limited quality.	Produces work with no quality.
<b>Using Work Time Effectively</b>	Always remains on task, showing exemplary adherence to boundaries and rules.	Consistently remains on task, showing respect to boundaries and rules.	Sometimes on task, showing inconsistent observance of boundaries and rules.	Sometimes on task, showing limited observance of boundaries and rules.	Not on task, showing no observance of boundaries and rules.
<b>Knowledge Of Topic</b>	Demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of concepts.	Demonstrates considerable knowledge and understanding of concepts.	Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of concepts.	Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of concepts.	Demonstrates no knowledge and understanding of concepts.
<b>Communicating Effectively</b>	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with a high degree of effectiveness.	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with considerable effectiveness.	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with some effectiveness.	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with limited effectiveness.	Expresses and organizes ideas and information with no effectiveness.
<b>Originality</b>	Presents or selects a fresh and original idea.	Presents or selects a somewhat original idea.	Presents a somewhat predictable response to the topic.	Presents a predictable response to the topic.	Restates topic using no original ideas.