

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND TITLE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Grade: 11

Time Period: 1900-Present

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Time Allotment: 2 x 80 minutes

Brief Description

This lesson uses background narratives from the Union of British Columbia Indian Chief's website, "Our Homes Are Bleeding" and primary sources drawn from the website to explore continuity and change through the 20th century in both aboriginal and non-aboriginal perspectives on issues of aboriginal rights and land title.

The Task

After reading some background information, you will examine a series of documents from the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs website, including perspectives of both aboriginal and non-aboriginal points of view. Your task will be to evaluate what has changed and what has remained the same over the 20th century, and to use this to provide recommendations for policy makers in the present. It will be important to consider both sides of the debate and to assess the moral implications for policy-makers today.

Provincial Outcomes

Students will "Demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by aboriginal people in Canada during the 20th century, and their responses, with reference to...reserves...[and] treaty negotiations." BC SS 11 IRP, p. 21

Detailed Instructions

Background notes:

For students with little or no background in First Nations issues, it might help to ask how many students have studied FN before. If this is the first students' first lesson on *continuity and change*, it may also be useful to have them do an exercise to help them think about the concept with the following picture, (from www.historybenchmarks.ca see "Continuity and Change"), or another like it, asking students what has changed and what has remained the same about the experience of [school] since this picture was taken:



Library and Archives Canada / A-028095

1. Introductory Activity: Discussion questions (either in small groups or as a class)

- a. Take something from a student (e.g., a pencil, a food item, a coat); claim it as your own: is this a legitimate claim? Then list, with students, the various bases for ownership (historical possession, mutual agreements for an exchange, standard practices of exchange).
- b. What rights do you and your family have in relation to your home and your subsistence (having adequate clean, safe water, food and shelter)?
- c. Where did these rights come from? Who protects these rights? Who will protect these rights in the future? [hopefully this discussion will end up with the understanding that *history* is important: that rights are secured in part through claims about what happened in the past: a rental agreement was signed, a property was bought and these carried forward into the future on the basis of *trust* between parties and the state which could enforce that trust.]

The question of aboriginal rights and land title are about First Nations claims that go back to a time before the dominion of Canadian and the province of British Columbia were established. That, in part, is what makes them difficult.

2. Reserve History: Powerpoint and Timeline. Hand out Attachment #3 Aboriginal Rights and Title Timeline. Show "Reserve History Powerpoint." Students can fill in additional notes on Timeline. Last page of PPT: "Our future is in the land." Discuss what this means. Introduce "Union of BC Indian Chiefs" whose logo has been this for over 30 years.

<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/>

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3. “Key Terms”(see “Attachment #1: Worksheets for students” and “Attachment #2: Key Terms”) These definitions can be discussed as a whole class, to clarify any difficulties with meanings. Then note that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people might have different perspectives on each. Divide the class into two, one group discussing and making notes on Aboriginal perspectives on each definition, the other non-Aboriginal. Reassemble as a whole class to discuss and have students fill in a summary of the other group’s views on Worksheet.

4. Examination of sources: After a demonstration analyzing the first source (in “Attachment #5 Primary Sources for Students” attachment), students work in pairs to analyze the remaining sources for continuity and change, filling in the “Using Evidence” section (in “Attachment #1: Worksheets for students”).

5. With their “Using Evidence” notes in front of them, students individually complete paragraph questions on Continuity and Change (in “Attachment #6 Student Final Writing and Questionnaire attachment”).

Notes: Additional information on this issue can be found in “Land Claims in British Columbia” pp. 214-216 in Michael Cranny and Garvin Moles, *Counterpoints: Exploring Canadian Issues*. This text has the wrong name for “Delgamuukw” as well as the wrong date. Further background can be found on “Background on Indian Reserves in British Columbia” (Attachment #3).

Handouts (as separate attachments)

Attachment #1 Worksheets for Students

Attachment #2 Key Terms

Attachment #3 Aboriginal Rights and Title Timeline

Attachment #4 Reserve History Powerpoint

Attachment #5 Primary Sources for Students

Attachment #6 Student Final Writing and Questionnaire (questionnaire needed only for research)

Optional background materials:

Attachment #7 Background on Indian Reserves in British Columbia

CBC Podcast on Aboriginal rights and title: <http://www.cbc.ca/podcasting/includes/current.xml>