

Aboriginal Rights and Title in British Columbia

Concept(s) Continuity and Change, Historical Perspectives

Prepared for Grade(s) 11

Province BC

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Time Period(s) 1900-present

Time allotment 160 minutes

Brief Description of the Task

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.

Objectives

Students will: 1. Compare two (or more) documents from different time periods and explain what changed and what remained the same over time. (Continuity and change) 2. Understand multiple perspectives of historical actors as a key to understanding developments in the past. 3. Use historical narratives to inform judgments about moral and policy questions in the present. (The moral dimension)

Required Knowledge & Skills

To complete this task, students will need to have: – basic vocabulary (see attached) for discussion of aboriginal rights and title – contextual knowledge of the problem of reserves in British Columbia (supplied in attachments and Cranny and Moles textbook reference) – an understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources – experience working with primary and secondary sources for the purposes of constructing an historical argument – basic understanding of the co-existence of continuity and change over time

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 a historical picture, asking students what has changed and what has remained the same about the experience of [x] since this picture was taken. (For an example, see the picture of a classroom on the History Benchmarks homepage, under "Continuity and Change").

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 Canada 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 #6: 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/>

3. "Key Definitions" (see "Attachment #1: Worksheets for students" and "Attachment #2: Key Definitions"). 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 #4: 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 #5: 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 Attachment #8
Background on the Website for teachers Attachment #9 Detailed
timeline Attachment: Two Myths (assistance for responding to students in
discussions) CBC Podcast on Aboriginal rights and title:
<http://www.cbc.ca/podcasting/includes/current.xml>

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