

Grade 11 English First Peoples - Syllabus

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This semester we will engage with a variety of “texts” representing authentic First Peoples’ voices (“texts” refers to oral, audio, visual, cinematic, and digital media works, as well as written works). Our analysis will be centered around the five big ideas for the course:

1. *The exploration of text and story deepens understanding of one’s identity, others, and the world.*
2. *Texts are socially, culturally, geographically, and historically constructed.*
3. *First Peoples texts and stories provide insight into key aspects of Canada’s past, present, and future.*
4. *Self-representation through authentic First Peoples text is a means to foster justice.*
5. *First Peoples literature plays a role within the process of Reconciliation.*
6. *New media influence people’s understandings of community.*

Course Overview:

Unit 1: Who defines us? How do we define ourselves? How does formal education come into play?

Key questions:

How is our sense of self formed? What are the influential factors that help shape our sense of self?

How do our family and community affect how we define who we are?

What is meant by “authentic” First Peoples’ voices?

How can we determine whether a text is authentic?

How are First Peoples often represented in popular culture?

Why is authentic First Peoples’ voice necessary?

How can creating an authentic text help foster justice?

Key texts: Short fiction and film excerpts

Summative assessment: Learning journal entries, essay/film review

Unit 2: Understanding Character

Key questions:

What factors influence development of identity?

How can an examination of character development in stories influence my understanding of who I am?

How can literature act as a starting off point for an examination of complex social and cultural issues?

Key text: *Monkey Beach* by Eden Robinson

Summative Assessment: Short film assignment, socratic seminar, literary essay

Unit 3: First Peoples' Oral Traditions

Key questions:

What are First Peoples' Oral Traditions?

What purposes do oral traditions serve?

What are the relationships between the oral tradition, oral history, and the land?

How do stories by First Peoples writers reveal/respond to some of the shared experiences of First Peoples?

Key texts: oral stories and short films; interviews with community members

Summative Assessment: Learning journal entries, interview assignment/presentation

Unit 5: Digital Trickster: The Complex Interaction of New Media and First Peoples

Key Questions:

What effects can new digital media have on First Peoples' cultures?

How do we navigate the differences between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation with respect to First Peoples' cultures?

How do increased digital media potentially impact opportunities for self-representation in, and misrepresentation of, Indigenous cultures?

How can social media and digital technologies be used to support cultural resistance and political advocacy for First Peoples?

Key Texts: non-fiction articles, music and other media texts

Summative assessment: Socratic seminar, student-created visual text

Supplies required

Notebook for personal writing, drafting and learning journal entries

Lined paper

Writing utensils, including highlighters