
ABORIGINAL DIVERSITY AND LANGUAGE SURVIVAL

Grade Levels: 1–12

Subjects: Language, Social Studies, Math, Geography, English

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about diversity among Aboriginal peoples; diversity of Aboriginal languages; effect of geography on culture; and Aboriginal language survival.

SPECIFIC CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Grade 1/2/3 Language: Media Literacy

- » identify overt and implied messages in simple media texts

Grade 4/5 Language: Media Literacy

- » use overt and implied messages to draw inferences and construct meaning in media texts

Grade 6/7/8 Language: Media Literacy

- » interpret media texts using overt and implied messages as evidence for their interpretations
- » explain how various media texts address their intended purpose and audience

Grade 6 Social Studies: First Nations Peoples & European Explorers

- » identify results of contact for First Nation peoples
- » identify some present-day issues confronting First Nations peoples that relate to results of early contact

Grade 4/5/6/7/8 Math: Data Management & Probability

- » read, interpret, and draw conclusions from secondary data

Grade 7 Math: Data Management & Probability

- » make predictions about a population when given a probability

Grade 8 Math: Data Management & Probability

- » identify and describe trends using informal language

Grade 8 Geography: Patterns in Human Geography

- » identify and explain the factors affecting population distribution

Grade 8 Geography: Migration

- » explain how the components of culture can be affected by migration

Grade 9/10/11/12 English: Media Studies

- » interpret simple and complex media texts, identifying some of the overt and implied messages they convey
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RESOURCE

- » Toronto District School Board's "Welcome" Poster – Aboriginal Languages

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION STRATEGIES

- » Observation
- » Work Samples
- » Checklist

TEACHING STRATEGY #1 – LARGE-GROUP DISCUSSION

Prompt: Which people in the poster do you think are Aboriginal people? What makes you think so?

Background Information: All of the individuals in the poster are Aboriginal people, except in two of the group shots (middle left and bottom right), where some non-Aboriginal people are shown. As students are asked to justify why they think certain people may or may not be Aboriginal, any stereotypes that are suggested should be discussed. Use the poster as a teaching tool to dispel stereotypical ideas about daily activities, style of dress, hairstyle, skin colour, settings in which Aboriginal people might live or work, etc. The Aboriginal people in this poster wear contemporary clothes and powwow regalia; some wear braids and/or have long hair while others have short hair; some are playing drums and some are working in a contemporary classroom; there are a range of hair and skin colours.

TEACHING STRATEGY #2 – THINK-PAIR-SHARE OR LARGE-GROUP DISCUSSION

Prompt: What might the coloured handprints represent in the poster? How is the use of this technique an effective way to inform the viewer that Aboriginal peoples in the Americas speak a diversity of languages?

Background Information: The differently coloured handprints on this poster and any differently coloured but single-image illustrations on many posters you may encounter is a way to suggest diversity within a group. The population of the Americas circa 1500 CE is estimated to have been over 100 million people, speaking approximately 2,500 languages. In what is now known as Canada, the population is estimated to have been anywhere between 500,000 to 2 million people; within this diverse population were many hundreds of diverse nations and languages.

TEACHING STRATEGY #3 – WRITE A PARAGRAPH

Prompt: What is the central message of the poster?

Background Information: Posters are designed to deliver a message through words and pictures. The waving hands on this poster represent a welcoming gesture. On this poster, some of the words in Aboriginal languages are a direct translation for the word "welcome," while others are a general word for a greeting such as "hello," "how are you?" or "come in." Students who feel welcome in the classroom and included in the school are more likely to be engaged and have higher achievement.

ACTIVITY

Have students write a paragraph using images and text from the poster to support their ideas.

TEACHING STRATEGY #4 – SMALL-GROUP ACTIVITY

Prompt: How does geography affect our cultures and ways of life?

Background Information: Find an Aboriginal language map of Canada at <http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/auth/english/maps/peopleandsociety/lang/aboriginallanguages/bycommunity>. Find information on how geography affects language and culture at <http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/auth/english/maps/peopleandsociety/lang/aboriginallanguages/bycommunity/1>. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples live across the Americas; they have diverse cultures, languages, histories, and current realities. In the past, some Aboriginal communities were nomadic; others were sedentary. Today, many Aboriginal peoples do not live in their traditional territories – they live in cities and towns and move around just as much as non-Aboriginal people do. Consider a range of historical and contemporary contexts when considering the effect geography has on language and culture.

ACTIVITY

Using a map of Canada, have students locate each First Nation, Métis, and Inuit language geographically.

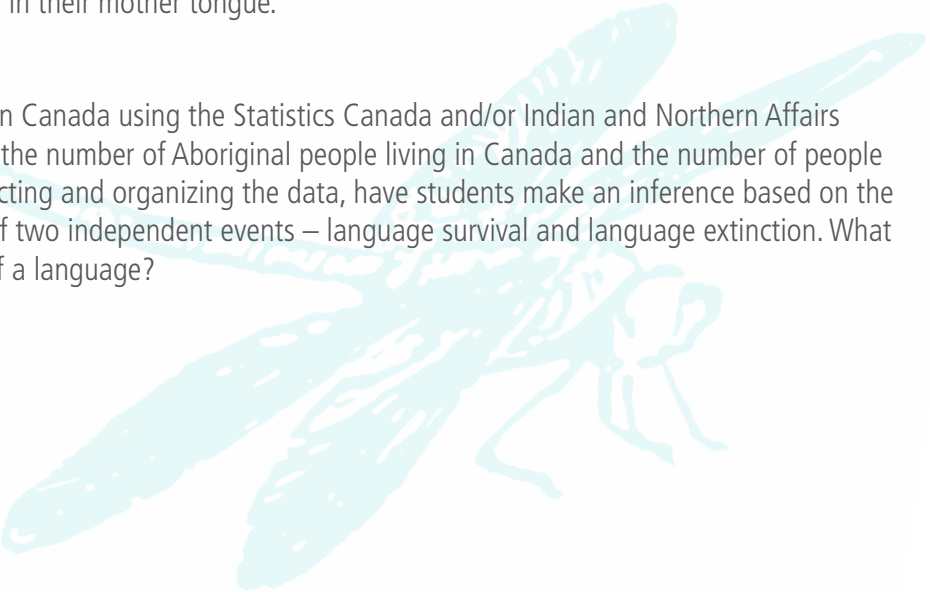
TEACHING STRATEGY #5 – SMALL-GROUP ACTIVITY

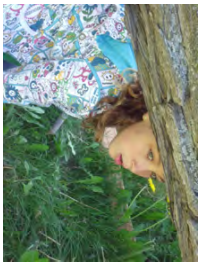
Prompt: How might Canadians ensure that Aboriginal languages survive?

Background Information: Today, only three of Canada's 50 Aboriginal languages – Cree, Ojibwe, and Inuktitut – have large enough populations to be considered secure from the threat of extinction. However, only a small proportion of the Aboriginal population in Canada speaks an Aboriginal language: of the 800,000 people who claimed an Aboriginal identity in the 1996 census, only 26% said that an Aboriginal language was their mother tongue, and even fewer spoke it at home. Many Aboriginal children lost their Aboriginal languages after attending residential schools, where they were forced to speak English or French and punished for speaking Aboriginal languages. After they returned home, many children were no longer able to communicate with their parents in their mother tongue.

ACTIVITY

Have students research Aboriginal languages in Canada using the Statistics Canada and/or Indian and Northern Affairs Canada websites and create a graph showing the number of Aboriginal people living in Canada and the number of people who speak an Aboriginal language. After collecting and organizing the data, have students make an inference based on the data to determine the theoretical probability of two independent events – language survival and language extinction. What things might affect the survival or extinction of a language?





Boozhoo
Potawatomi

Hadi
Tahltan



Tunggasugit
Inuktitut



Tikilluarit
Inuktitut

Hau Koda
Dakota

Ant Chukkoa
Choctaw

Gila Kasla
Kwak waka wakw



Ontitoka
Alabama

Na Keneherateht
Tuscarora



Dahuts'i
Dekelh

Hooy
Makah

Kats Hlaa
Haida

Eylineyttay
Dene Suline

Sge:No
Cayuga

Cat oc lok paja
Achi



Tawnshi
Michif



Watchay
Cree



Welcome!

(in Aboriginal Languages)

Ikiciyuskin
Sioux

Aang
Aleut



Aaniin
Ojibwe Anishnabe

Tsi-Lugi
Cherokee



She:kon
Kanienkehaka

HA AN DA H
Apache

Tansii
Cree

Va Ohtama
Cheyenne

Heiltsuk
Wei Wai Kai

I-Yu-I-Yu
Esselen

Temike
Lenape

Kolipaiio
Abenaki

Qaimarutin
Inuktitut



Yaw
Naxalk



Aboriginal Education Centre

