

Date Reviewed

March 2023

Course

[Explorations in Social Studies 11](#)

Topic

Treaties and Land Claims

Big Idea

Indigenous peoples are reclaiming mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being despite the continuing effects of colonialism (from Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12).

Essential Question

- How has the Canadian government's relationship with First Peoples regarding treaties changed or stayed the same?

Content

Students are expected to know the following:

- colonialism and contemporary issues for indigenous people in Canada and around the world (adapted from Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12)

Curricular Competencies

Students are expected to be able to do the following:

- Compare and contrast continuities and changes for different groups at particular times and places (continuity and change)

Core Competencies

[Communication](#) – I can describe how Canadian treaties are complex agreements between Indigenous people and the Canadian Government.

[Thinking](#) – I can critically analyze whether the terms in a treaty were beneficial to both parties.

[Personal and Social](#) – I can apply my learning to work towards reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous population.

First People's Principles of Learning

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Introduction

- Show the Government of Canada video [Resolving Specific Land Claims for Everyone's Benefit](#) (6:40).
- Discuss: Where do land claims come from? How are they resolved? Who benefits when land claims are settled?
- Have students read the Canadian Encyclopedia article [Indigenous Land Claims in Canada](#).
- As a class, create a Venn Diagram to show the similarities and differences between a Specific Land Claim and a Comprehensive Land Claim (modern treaty).

Pre-Assessment

- Find out what students already know about treaties by having them complete the “Treaty Awareness Quiz”. You could have them work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Interactive Learning Activities

Part 1: Historic Treaties

- Explain that between 1871 and 1921, the Canadian government made 11 treaties with First Nations to bring Indigenous peoples and their lands under federal jurisdiction.
- Have students work in pairs or triads to research one of the Numbered Treaties.
- Provide students with a copy of the handout “5 W’s Historic Treaties” as well as access to the Canadian Encyclopedia article [Numbered Treaties](#).
- Groups can share their findings with the class, specifically focussing on the “why” behind the treaty.
- Engage students in a discussion of whether the terms of the treaties were beneficial for both parties.

Part 2: Modern Treaties and Land Claims

- Point out that 100 years passed between British Columbia’s last historic treaty (Treaty 8) and its first modern treaty (Nisga’a Agreement).
- Have students work in small groups to investigate a modern treaty / land claim. They may want to select one from British Columbia:
 - Nisga’a
 - Tsawwassen
 - Maa-nulth
 - Tsilhqot’in
- Provide students with a copy of the handout “5 W’s Modern Treaties and Land Claims” as well as access to the Canadian Encyclopedia article [Comprehensive Land Claims: Modern Treaties](#). Students may need to access further sources to complete the 5W chart.
- Groups can share their findings with the class, specifically focussing on the “why” behind the treaty.
- Engage students in a discussion about the similarities and differences in the motivations for each treaty.

Post-Assessment

- Compare the government’s motivation for signing historic treaties with their motivation to sign

modern treaties. How has the Canadian government's relationship with First Peoples regarding treaties changed or stayed the same?

Extension Activities

- Ask if students have heard of the Land Back movement.
 - What do they know?
 - What do they wonder?
- Show the video [Canada, it's time for Land Back](#) (6:17). Ask:
 - How is the goal of Land Back different from a specific or comprehensive land claim?
 - How is the Land Back movement connected to the environmentalist movement?
- Have students research the Land Back movement in Canada. The following websites are a helpful place to start:
 - David Suzuki Foundation [What is Land Back?](#)
 - Yellowhead Institute [Land Back](#)
 - 4Rs Youth Movement [LAND BACK! What do we mean?](#)

Additional References

Albers, Gretchen. 2017. "Treaties with Indigenous Peoples in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-treaties>

B.C. Treaty Commission. 2023. "Why Treaties?" <https://www.bctreaty.ca/why-treaties>

Canada. 2023. "Treaties and Agreements." <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028574/1529354437231#chp2>

Canada. 2013. "Summaries of Pre-1975 Treaties." <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1370362690208/1544619449449>

Equay, W. B. M. (Cynthia Bird). 2018. "The Numbered Treaties." <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/settlement-immigration/the-numbered-treaties>

Hanson, Erin. 2009. "Aboriginal Title." *First Nations & indigenous Studies*. University of British Columbia. https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_title/

Irwin, R. (2018). "Aboriginal Title." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-title>

Materials and Resources

Treaty Awareness Quiz

1. Whose traditional territories do you live on? Is it treaty land or unceded land?
2. Where and when were the first treaties signed in British Columbia?
3. What and when was the first modern-day treaty signed in British Columbia?
4. What Canadian law recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights?
5. What questions do you still have about treaties?

Treaty Awareness Quiz: Answer Key

1. Whose traditional territories do you live on? Is it treaty land or unceded land?
Answers will vary.
2. Where and when were the first treaties signed in British Columbia?
On Vancouver Island between 1850-1854. Known as the Douglas Treaties.
3. What and when was the first modern-day treaty signed in British Columbia?
Nisga'a Treaty in 2000. Located along Nass River near Terrace, BC.
4. What Canadian law recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights?
Constitution Act, 1982
5. What questions do you still have about treaties?
Answers will vary.

5 W's Historic Treaties

Name of Historic Treaty	
WHAT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What did each side promise? ● What did each side give up and what did they gain? 	
WHO? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which Indigenous group(s) signed the treaty? 	
WHEN? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When did negotiations take place? ● When was the treaty signed? 	
WHERE? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What territory does this treaty cover? ● Whose traditional lands does it include? ● Where was the agreement negotiated and signed? 	
WHY? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why do you think each side agreed to the terms of the agreement? ● What motivations can you infer? What do you think they were trying to accomplish? 	

5 W's Modern Treaties and Land Claims

Use this link to begin your research of a modern treaty / land claim:

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/comprehensive-land-claims-modern-treaties>

You may need to access other sources to answer all the questions in the chart below.

Name of Modern Treaty or Land Claim	
WHAT? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What did each side promise? ● What did each side give up and what did they gain? 	
WHO? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which Indigenous group(s) signed the modern treaty or land claim? 	
WHEN? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When did negotiations take place? ● When was the treaty or land claim signed? 	
WHERE? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What territory does this treaty or land claim cover? ● Whose lands does it include? ● Where was the agreement negotiated and signed? 	
WHY? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why do you think each side agreed to the terms of the agreement? ● What motivations can you infer? What do you think they were trying to accomplish? 	