



Canadian and World Studies Law

Understanding Canadian Law
Grade 11, University/College Preparation (CLU3M)

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

Aboriginal Peoples' Rights in Canada

Students explore the context and history of Aboriginal rights in Canada and examine current issues and perspectives through research, writing, and discussion.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Canadian and World Studies, 2005*

Strand

Rights and Freedoms

Specific Expectations

Barriers to Human Rights

- describe historical and contemporary situations in which rights in Canada have been denied (e.g., rights of Japanese during World War II, First Nation rights to land and veterans' benefits, women's rights, rights of physically or mentally challenged persons)

Aboriginal Context

As the original inhabitants of Canada, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people have a variety of Aboriginal and treaty rights, including land rights and the right to maintain their culture. These existing rights are protected by the Constitution Act, 1982. Numerous Aboriginal records (such as wampum belts, oral tradition) and non-Aboriginal documents (such as treaties, acts, laws, proclamations, and agreements) outline Aboriginal peoples' rights in Canada.

The rights of Aboriginal peoples have come into conflict with the rights of the non-Aboriginal majority on numerous occasions. There are many instances, both contemporary and historical, in which Aboriginal peoples' rights have been denied (e.g., loss of treaty and Aboriginal rights by Aboriginal women; rights to land, voting, and natural resources).

Teaching Strategies

- Show the video *Forgotten Warriors* (or distribute a scholarly article on the denial of rights to Aboriginal veterans following World War II) and discuss it with the class.
Teacher prompts: How were the rights of Aboriginal people denied? Why were they denied? What is the current status of this issue? What was the impact of this denial on these people? How did the denial of rights alter an Aboriginal person's view of the government?
- Have students search newspapers for articles that address situations in which Aboriginal rights are being denied, and report their findings in a written report or presentation that shows the sequence of events in the example chosen and the causes and effects of the denial.
- Have students research and identify the position(s) of an Aboriginal organization or individual on specific rights (e.g., language rights, land rights, rights under Bill C-31, rights related to taxation, property rights).

Resources

The following recommended resources and web links were accurate at the time of publication. Teachers are encouraged to check that these reference listings remain current.

Aboriginal Canada Portal. <http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca>

Anishinabek News.

http://www.anishinabek.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=285&Itemid=9

Forgotten Warriors. Montreal: National Film Board, 1997. 51 min.

Frontiers Foundation. <http://www.frontiersfoundation.ca>

Turtle Island News. <http://www.theturtleislandnews.com/>

Veterans Affairs Canada. <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca>

Wawatay News Online. <http://www.wawataynews.ca/>

Making Community Connections

- Contact the local Royal Canadian Legion (Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal) branch to invite a guest speaker, or research the military service history of local citizens.
- Contact local government or non-government organizations that address the denial of Aboriginal peoples' rights (e.g., Frontiers Foundation) to invite a guest speaker or conduct an interview.
- Contact an Aboriginal or human-rights lawyer or an Aboriginal Justice of the Peace and invite him or her to speak at the school.

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

This teaching strategy is one component of *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom. Based on the revised Ontario curriculum, the collection includes resources for educators at both the elementary and secondary levels. Other resources in this series can be found on the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

