



Aboriginal Perspectives

Secondary

The Teacher's Toolkit

Aboriginal perspectives bring the curriculum to life!



English

English

Grade 11, Workplace Preparation (ENG3E)

Note: Similar expectations and examples are found in the Grade 11 college preparation English course (ENG3C) and the Grade 11 university preparation English course (ENG3U). Teachers are invited to adapt this strategy for use in these courses also.

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

Media Portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples

Students research the ways Aboriginal peoples have been portrayed in the mainstream media such as film and television in the past, and compare these with portrayals in the Aboriginal and mainstream media today.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: English, 2007*

Strand

Media Studies

Specific Expectations

Understanding Media Texts: Critical Literacy

- 1.5 identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in both simple and complex media texts, and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, and identity (e.g., identify the values suggested by depictions of destinations in travel brochures and on websites; describe common features of portrayals of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian media and the impression they create)

Aboriginal Context

In the past, mainstream media have often misrepresented Aboriginal peoples. Media portrayals of Aboriginal peoples (such as the “Wild West Indian”, “protesting warrior”, and sports team mascots) can sometimes be offensive to First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Ontario. Today, Aboriginal people combat stereotypes by creating their own media on radio, television, and in print. Many Aboriginal media sources, such as the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, local Aboriginal community radio stations, and Aboriginal newspapers, attempt to paint an accurate, contemporary picture of Aboriginal peoples.

Teaching Strategies

- Have the class brainstorm to create a list of the ways in which Aboriginal peoples have been portrayed in television and film to date.
- Record a segment of an Aboriginal Peoples Television Network show and have students watch the recording and take notes on how Aboriginal peoples are portrayed in it.
- Compare the students' notes with the brainstormed list.
- Have students write a journal entry on how they would like to be portrayed if they were an Aboriginal person.

- Discuss the meanings of the following words: *beliefs*, *values*, *identity*, and *power*. Debate/explain how these words can be perceived as positive or negative. Provide examples for each word and have students record definitions and examples in their notebooks.
- Show the class five advertisements from an Aboriginal publication (such as *Spirit and Youth [SAY] Magazine*) and five advertisements from non-Aboriginal publications (such as *Teen People* and *YM*). Have students compare the ads by discussing the similarities (such as treatment of body image, beauty, and style) in and differences (approach to culture and appearances, and use of settings or props) between the two sets of advertisements.
- Discuss how the advertisements contribute to or detract from Aboriginal beliefs and values, or what they say about identity and power issues.
- Have students create an advertisement that helps them express their individual or collective identity.

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>

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). <http://www.aptn.ca/>

Media Awareness Network. <http://www.media-awareness.ca>

Spirit and Youth (SAY) Magazine. <http://www.saymag.com/>

Teen People. <http://www.people.com/people/package/0,,20045075,00.html>

Making Community Connections

- Study the local Aboriginal community's media productions (e.g., print, digital, television).
- Invite speakers of Aboriginal descent who are employed in a media-related field to talk about the portrayal of Aboriginal peoples in the media.
- Analyse local media sources to discover how Aboriginal peoples are depicted.
- If you are not near an Aboriginal media outlet, contact an Aboriginal media outlet outside your community, and request that information be sent to the school or that a telephone interview be arranged.

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.

