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Distributed by

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www.movingimages.ca

Acknowledgements

How a People Live was produced for the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations by Sharon Bliss, Bliss Pictures Inc., and Catrina Longmuir, and written and directed by Lisa Jackson.

In the making of this film, we gratefully acknowledge the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations Treaty Office for funds acquired through the British Columbia Treaty Commission; and guidance from Colleen Hemphill and Linda Dorricott and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations community.

Teachers Guide written by

GT Publishing Services Ltd., Vancouver, BC
www.gtpublishing.com

Introduction

This teacher resource provides a number of suggestions for using the film ***How a People Live*** in senior secondary classrooms.

How a People Live is a one-hour documentary focusing on the story of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation, whose members were forcibly relocated from their traditional territories on the coast of British Columbia in 1964 by the Canadian government. Candid and moving interviews, striking archival films, photos dating back over 100 years, and a journey to their stunning “Homelands” bring to life the story of a people known for their theatrical dances, their strong connection to the land, and the strength that has enabled them to overcome incredible hardships — including disease, residential schooling, and the razing of their villages. In 1970, a former Indian Agent wrote a controversial book he said was based on the lives of these people and titled it, “How a People Die.” Forty years later, this film looks at their traditional and contemporary life and culture — as well as the traumas that threatened to destroy them — to see how a people live.

Using This Resource

This resource offers the following lessons for senior secondary school classes:

Lesson 1: The Setting is the Story. This lesson uses the film to focus on the importance of setting to First Nations and their stories. Curricula addressed:

- English First Peoples 11-12
- English Language Arts 11-12

Lesson 2: The Importance of Place. This lesson focuses on the relationship between land and culture, and how removing a people from their land affects their culture. Curricula addressed:

- BC First Nations Studies 12
- Social Justice 12

Activity Starters. These shorter activities can be used to supplement and extend learning from lessons 1 and 2, or can be used as stand-alone activities in a wide range of secondary school classroom settings including

- BC First Nations Studies 12
- English First Peoples 11-12
- English Language Arts 11-12
- Film and Television 11-12
- Social Justice 12

Lesson Plan 1: The Setting Is the Story

Overview

This lesson uses the film to focus on the importance of setting to First Nations and their stories.

Curriculum Correlation

This lesson can be used to address learning outcomes from the following BC provincial curricula:

- English First Peoples 11
- English First Peoples 12
- English Language Arts 11
- English Language Arts 12

For a list of the BC prescribed learning outcomes related to this lesson, see the Curriculum Correlation section at the end of this resource. Comparable learning outcomes/objectives from other provinces can also be addressed by this lesson.

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups, and have them create a word web or mind map around the word “Setting.”

Bring the class back together to discuss some of the common terms and concepts generated. Discuss: how is “Setting” different in fiction vs. non-fiction works? Novels or short stories vs. films?

2. View the film (59 minutes).

Debrief the film as a class, beginning with students’ initial responses. Then use questions such as the following to focus discussion on the importance of place/setting as a key theme in the story depicted in the film:

- Does setting take on a particular importance in stories by and about Aboriginal peoples? Why or why not?
 - How did changing the setting change the story for the people in the film (the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw peoples)?
 - Consider the following quotation from the film: “Everything that we do has a direct connection to the land and the territories. That’s where it all comes from.” What does this mean? How is this sentiment reflected in the film?
 - Why did Curtis choose the setting he did for his film?
3. Have students read the stories in the “Tribes” section of the U’Mista Cultural Society web site (<http://www.umista.ca/kwakwakawakw/tribes.php>). Discuss how setting is depicted explicitly or implicitly in these stories, and how the depictions compare with those represented in the film.
 4. Ask students to think of a place that is important to them and their families. It could be somewhere they’ve been, or somewhere they’d like to go. Have them create their own works (written, film, or other) to represent this place, how it is important, and/or the role it plays in their own personal story.

Provide opportunities for students to share their works with one or two partners. Ask each member of the “partnership” to review each piece of work, using the assessment tool provided at the end of this lesson. Students can provide an assessment of their own work as well as the work of their partner(s), using a separate sheet for each piece.

5. Use students’ reviews to assess both the works produced (applying the same criteria as those used for the peer assessment) and the quality of the review work they have done in their partnerships (e.g., Have the reviewers provided detailed comments explaining their ratings? Are their comments insightful? Is their feedback constructive? Are the improvement suggestions offered relevant, practicable, appropriate?).

Extension

Compare the film *How a People Live* with other authentic Aboriginal texts read or viewed in class that include a strong theme of place (e.g., *Monkey Beach*, *They Called Me Number One*, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, *Keeper ‘n Me*, *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*, N. Scott Momaday’s address to the United Nations), and with non-First Peoples texts with similar emphasis on setting (e.g., *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, *The Tempest*). Focus on the role that the setting plays in each story. Does setting/place play a different role in Aboriginal texts than in non-Aboriginal texts?

Title of piece _____

Created by _____

Reviewed by _____

Use the following key and criteria to help you assess the treatment of setting in the piece you are reviewing: 4=excellent, 3=good, 2=fair, 1= not evident

To what extent does this piece	Rating	Explanatory Comments or Suggestions
...include a clear, evocative, compelling portrayal of a setting?		
...make setting or location a meaningful part of the piece?		
...convey characters' perceptions, feelings, or thoughts about the setting/environment?		
...incorporate meaningful interaction between character(s) and setting?		
...use setting to contribute to a reader's/viewer's understanding of other aspects of the piece (e.g., the characters, the theme, the story)?		
...communicate an overall attitude toward the setting (on the part of the characters, ...on the part of the implied author/narrator)?		
Teacher comments:		

Lesson Plan 2: The Importance of Place

Overview

This lesson focuses on the relationship between land and culture, and how removing a people from their land affects their culture.

Curriculum Correlation

This lesson can be used to address learning outcomes from the following BC provincial curricula:

- BC First Nations Studies 12
- Social Justice 12

For a list of the BC prescribed learning outcomes related to this lesson, see the Curriculum Correlation section at the end of this resource. Comparable learning outcomes/objectives from other provinces can also be addressed by this lesson.

Procedure

1. Read the following quotation (from the film) to the class: “Your identity derives from the place where you have roots, where your origin stories are. Everything comes from the land.”

Discuss the meaning of this quote. Do students agree? Why or why not?

2. View the film (59 minutes).

Debrief the film as a class, beginning with students’ initial responses.

- Is there anything about this chapter of history that you would have liked to learn more about? If so, what? What reason might there be for its absence from the film?
- Do you think this film presented a balanced view about issues such as the residential school system? Why or why not? Do documentary filmmakers have an obligation to present a balanced view? What other issues or topics are such obvious examples of social injustice that the issue of “balance” is moot?
- Do the situations portrayed in the film relate to any current events or news items you’ve seen or heard?
- What is the meaning and significance of the film’s title?

Continue the debrief by focussing on the relationship between land and culture depicted in the film. Consider the three events discussed in the film that took the Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw peoples away from their traditional lands: establishment of the reserve system, removal of children to residential schools, and the 1964 government relocation.

- What resources were traditionally harvested by the Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw peoples? How would this have changed due to relocation?
 - In what other ways would the culture of the Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw peoples have been affected by relocation and the residential school system?
 - What options are available for people and groups who face systemic injustice?
3. Have students imagine the decision for relocation or creation of residential schools was being made today. They have an opportunity to make presentation to the Canadian government to try to change their views. Students can present their

arguments in a mock panel format, as a letter or petition, or in another format of their choosing. Students should work in groups conduct research, prepare their arguments, and present to the rest of the class.

Two assessment tools are provided at the end of this lesson (one designed for BC First Nations Studies 12 and one for Social Justice 12). These assessment tools can be used as the basis for student self-assessment and teacher assessment of students' presentations.

4. Conclude by revisiting the quote given at the beginning. Ask students if they have any new understandings or perceptions about this quote based on the film and the work they have done.

Extension

Compare *How a People Live* with other examples of filmmaking as a tool for social justice and self-determination. There are many such documentary and feature films; some suggested titles include the following.

Films on First Nations issues:

- *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*
- *Club Native*
- *March Point*
- *Our First Voices*
- *Potlatch ... A Strict Law Bids Us Dance*
- *Reel Injun*
- *Stolen Spirits of Haida Gwaii*

Films on other social justice issues:

- *Before Stonewall*
- *Black Gold*
- *Crossing Over*
- *GasLand*
- *Go Do Some Great Thing*
- *The Interrupters*
- *The Island President*
- *The Laramie Project*
- *The Milagro Beanfield War*
- *Shake Hands with the Devil*

To what extent does the presentation:	Student Rating	Teacher Rating	Teacher Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate evidence of critical thinking skills to support their arguments 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate evidence of effective research skills to support their arguments 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> articulate their arguments in terms of specific impacts on First Nations peoples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> economic social political cultural 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relate the issue to other examples of First Nations responses to contact and colonialism 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> present information and arguments in an effective, persuasive manner 			

Student Presentations

Assessment Tool: Social Justice 12

To what extent does the presentation:	Student Rating	Teacher Rating	Teacher Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate evidence of critical thinking skills to support their arguments 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate evidence of effective research skills to support their arguments 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cite specific examples of social injustice to support their arguments (e.g., Indian Act, relocation, residential schools) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relate the issue to other historical and contemporary social justice issues 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cite specific ways legislation, the courts, and public policy can work to promote social justice 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply principles of social justice to argue alternatives and solutions, with emphasis on consequences for those affected by political decisions (i.e., the Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw peoples) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use an appropriate format to articulate their arguments 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> present information and arguments in an effective, persuasive manner 			



Activity Starters

The following activities for using the film *How a People Live* are designed for a variety of secondary school classroom settings. These activities can be used on their own or as extensions to Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 provided in this resource. Suggested curriculum connections are listed here, although the activities can be adapted for a wide variety of subject areas at the senior secondary level.

Quickwriting

English Language Arts 11-12, English First Peoples 11-12

Provide students with one or more of the key quotations and thoughts from the film, and ask them to quickwrite for 5-10 minutes in response. For example:

- Our culture shows the strength we have as a people.
- Everything that we do has a direct connection to the land and the territories. That's where it all comes from.
- When you grow up on water you need to be able to think fast.
- It was a way of life, moving from community to community, chasing the seasons.
- We lived off the land. Wherever we went, we picked up our food from there. The freedom that we had was knowing that this was our country.
- Sometimes I dream about those places. I haven't been there since I was a child but I still remember.
- We've survived it all. We're all out here together learning, learning what we did in our time, how a people live.
- When you see people dancing, what do you think they're doing? They're telling you a story of who they are.
- I ask for my country to be returned to me, and that the reserves be no more. There was a time when there was no white man, and I had full possession of all the country. What has been done to me with my country would be done the other way. I would have measured off pieces for the white man, instead of the white man measuring off pieces for me.
- I reconnected with a part of myself that I didn't know was there.



Filmmaking

Film and Television 11-12, English Language Arts 11-12, English First Peoples 11-12

Discuss the purposes of filmmaking, and documentary filmmaking in particular.

- How does this film inform? ...entertain? ...persuade?
- What artistic components and techniques did the filmmakers use to entertain, inform, and persuade in *How a People Live*? (e.g., archival photos, archival footage, interviews, and "in the field" footage). What was the impact and purpose of each?
- Who is the intended audience of this film?
- What other purposes are represented in this film? (e.g., cultural revitalization, recording and communicating history/events)
- What protocols would you have to follow if you were making a similar film in your community?

Continue the discussion by focussing on format of the film in terms of encompassing four films in one (the archival work of Boas, Gardner, and Curtis, and the overall *How a People Live* film itself).

- How do the works of Boas, Gardner, and Curtis add to this film?
- What techniques were used by Boas, Gardner, and Curtis when they created their works? How were their techniques the same? Different?
- What were their purposes for filmmaking? What audiences were they addressing?

Note: for additional activities related to filmmaking techniques, refer to the film *Our First Voices* and its accompanying teacher guide. The film is available from Moving Images Distribution (www.movingimages.ca/store/products.php?our_first_voices). The teacher guide is available for download from the same link. The film is also viewable online from Knowledge Network: <http://knowledge.ca/program/our-first-voices>



Message Marketing

English Language Arts, English First Peoples, Film and Television 11-12

After viewing the film, have students work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm taglines for the film. Have them select their favourites and incorporate into a marketing campaign to promote the film.



The Potlatch

BC First Nations Studies 12

Discuss:

- What is the purpose of potlatch in traditional Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw cultures?
- Why did governments and missionaries want the potlatch banned?
- How did the banning of the potlatch affect Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw cultures?

Have students research the history and significance of the potlatch or similar ceremonial practices for the local Aboriginal peoples.

(The film *Potlatch ... A Strict Law Bids Us Dance* is an excellent resource for this activity, available from Moving Images Distribution – www.movingimages.ca/store/products.php?potlatch)



Media Literacy

English Language Arts 11-12, English First Peoples 11-12, BC First Nations Studies 12, Social Justice 12

Discuss the term “authenticity” as it relates to the film. How important is authenticity when it comes to evaluating the usefulness and reliability of a resource?

Curriculum Correlation

The following pages identify the prescribed learning outcomes for the BC provincial curricula (current as of August, 2013) that are addressed in whole or in part by the lessons and activities provided in this teacher guide. Full and up-to-date details concerning all BC curricula can be found online at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/irp.htm

The lesson plans can also be used to address comparable learning outcomes/objectives in other provinces.

BC First Nations Studies 12

- A1 apply critical thinking—including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, hypothesizing, and defending a position—to make reasoned judgments about a range of issues, situations, and topics
- A2 demonstrate effective research skills, including
 - accessing information
 - assessing information
 - collecting data
 - evaluating data
 - organizing information
 - presenting information
 - citing sources
- B2 analyse the relationship of First Nations peoples with the natural world
- C3 assess the economic, social, political, and cultural impacts of contact with Europeans on BC First Nations during the period of the land-based fur trade up to Confederation
- C4 analyse post-Confederation government policies and jurisdictional arrangements that affected and continue to affect BC First Nations
- C5 analyse the varied and evolving responses of First Nations peoples to contact and colonialism

English First Peoples 11

- A1 describe the function, significance, and validity of the oral tradition
- B4 view, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of visual texts representing local and other BC First Peoples cultures, such as
 - film and video
 - photographs
 - paintings, carvings, totems, petroglyphs, pictographs
 - textiles, regalia, masks
 - dance, drama
 - graphic novels and illustrated literature
 - broadcast media
 - web sites
 - student-generated material
- B13 recognize and explain how structures and features of First Peoples texts shape readers' and viewers' construction of meaning and appreciation of author's craft, including
 - functions of text
 - form and genre
 - literary elements
 - literary devices
 - use of language
 - non-fiction elements
 - visual/aesthetic devices

English First Peoples 12

- A1 explain the function, significance, and validity of the oral tradition
- B3 view, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of visual texts representing local and other BC First Peoples cultures, such as
 - documentary film and video
 - photographs
 - paintings, carvings, totems, textiles, regalia
 - dance, drama
 - masks
 - broadcast media
 - web sites
 - student-generated material
- B12 recognize and explain how structures and features of text shape readers' and viewers' construction of meaning and appreciation of the author's craft, including
 - functions of text
 - form and genre
 - literary elements
 - literary devices
 - use of language
 - non-fiction elements
 - visual/aesthetic devices

English Language Arts 11

- B3 view, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of visual texts, with increasing complexity of ideas and form, such as
 - broadcast media
 - web sites
 - graphic novels
 - film and video
 - photographs
 - art
 - visual components of print media
 - student-generated material
- B12 recognize and explain how structures and features of text shape readers' and viewers' construction of meaning and appreciation of author's craft, including
 - form and genre
 - functions of text
 - literary elements
 - literary devices
 - use of language
 - non-fiction elements
 - visual/artistic devices

English Language Arts 12

- B3 view, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of visual texts with increasing complexity and subtlety of ideas and form, such as
 - broadcast media
 - web sites
 - graphic novels
 - film and video
 - photographs
 - art

- visual components of print media
 - student-generated material
- B12 recognize and explain how structures and features of text shape readers' and viewers' construction of meaning and appreciation of author's craft, including
- form and genre
 - functions of text
 - literary elements
 - literary devices
 - use of language
 - non-fiction elements
 - visual/artistic devices

Social Justice 12

- A2 demonstrate effective research skills, including
- accessing information
 - assessing information
 - collecting data
 - evaluating data
 - organizing and presenting information
- A3 apply critical thinking skills to a range of social justice issues, situations, and topics
- B1 describe social injustice based on characteristics including
- age
 - marital or family status
 - mental or physical ability
 - political belief
 - race and ethnicity
 - religion and faith
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
 - socioeconomic status
- B2 analyse causes of social injustice
- B3 describe consequences of social injustice
- B4 analyse specific examples of injustice in Canada related to characteristics such as
- age
 - marital or family status
 - mental or physical ability
 - political belief
 - race and ethnicity
 - religion and faith
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
 - socioeconomic status
- B5 analyse the roles played by legislation, the courts, public policy, and other forms of government action in promoting or failing to promote social justice in Canada
- C1 assess various methods and models of promoting social justice