



MMIWG2S+ Awareness Inequalities in Cases



Aen shinihkatayk

Title:

Inequalities in MMIWG2S+ cases in Canada

Wiihtamakayhk kaykwy kaa kishkayhtamihk

Explaining what is being learned/overview:

- Students will learn about the history of the MMIWG2S+ movement in Canada.
- Students will explore the inequalities between MMIWG2S+ cases and mainstream cases, including media representation, law enforcement efforts, and societal opinion.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding by creating an authentic call to action.

Kaykwy chi kii ishpayihk

Curriculum Connections

CR A30.1

View, listen to, read, comprehend, and respond to a variety of grade-appropriate First Nations, Metis, Saskatchewan, and Canadian texts that address:

- identity (e.g., Define the Individual, Negotiate the Community)
- social responsibility (e.g., Shift Centres, Blur Margins), and
- social action (agency) (e.g., Understand Beliefs, Initiative Action).

(G) Analyze ways in which language and texts reflect and influence the values and behaviours of people and diverse communities.

CC A30.3

Present and express a range of ideas and information in formal (including a panel presentation and business or community meeting) and informal (including discussions and collaborative work) situations for differing audiences and purposes.

- (A) Function both as a group member and a group leader and demonstrate effective group interaction skills and strategies.
- (C) Apply accurately and effectively the language cues and conventions to construct and communicate meaning when speaking.

L'aanii d'ikol

Year of school/grade:

Twelve

Kaykwy kaa kishkayhtamihk

What is being learned/subject:

English Language Arts A30

Li taan

Time:

60 Minutes

Gashkihtaan

I can statements:

- I can compare and contrast how Indigenous cases were handled in comparison to mainstream cases and identify the differences and inequalities.
- I can recognize, understand, and explain the inequalities in how these cases were treated by society.
- I can develop a call to action to work towards ending stereotypes and stigmas.

Niikaan Iii kesyoon

Focus question:

- What inequalities exist in how MMIWG2S+ cases are represented in society compared to mainstream cases?

Taanishi aen tipahamihk Assessment:

Observe student participation in the research and group discussion portions and collect exit slips to assess understanding.



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Lesson Description

taanishi aen ishi ooshihtaahk

Motivational Set: (10 Minutes)

- *Begin by acknowledging that this lesson addresses difficult subject matter including talking about missing and deceased persons. Remind students to take care of their wellbeing, and to step out or take breaks if needed. Affirm that there are supports they can reach out to if they need to talk.*
- Put MMIWG2S+ on the board and define it for the students.
- MMIWG2S+ stands for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People. It is a movement aimed at raising awareness about the high rates of violence inflicted on Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people. To bring awareness to this movement, May 5th has been dubbed “red dress day” in honour of those who are missing. On this day, red dresses are hung on trees, in windows, and in other visible places to represent those lost. The colour red is significant because many Indigenous people believe it is the only colour spirits can see.

Lii zafayr poor chi ooshihtaahk
ooma

Things needed to do this/
materials needed.

- Exemplar in Appendix 1
- Research note guide from Appendix 2
- Writing utensils
- Technology to conduct research (computers or personal devices)

Use these sources to support the pre-teaching explanation about the MMIWG2S+ movement:

Red Dress Day: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:
read the excerpt and show the video (3:14) tfec.ca/red-dress-day

Red Dress Day | Amnesty International Canada: Read the excerpt. *Optional – show the ted talk video (17:48)*
amnesty.ca/red-dress-day/

Main Procedures: (45 Minutes)

To introduce the activity, explain that historically and currently MMIWG2S+ cases have not been prioritized. This includes limited progress in investigations, often ending on the cold case units, limited media coverage, and limited support provided to the families.

- Prompt students to think about what the outcome might be if they were to go missing, or a close family member or loved one. The ideal response would be a vast search, widely spread media coverage, and community support for the family during this time.
- Go through the comparison example in **appendix 1**.
- **Introduce the activity:**
 1. Students will work in pairs
 2. One partner will research an Indigenous missing person case of their choosing, and will take note of the following: case overview, media coverage, law enforcement efforts, outcome (**see appendix 2**). The other partner will take the same notes, but on a mainstream case of their choosing.
 3. After the research portion, the partners will share their findings and discuss any inequalities.
 4. Followed by a group discussion where each partner group shares a brief summary of what they discussed, and the inequalities they identified.

Teacher Note: If you plan on taking this lesson further and building additional lessons, you can pre-select cases and assign cases to each partner group rather than having them select their own, as there may be groups that select the same case(s).



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Closing: (5 Minutes)

- Lead a short discussion about the patterns that can be drawn from the inequalities that were identified (lack of media coverage and attention, prolonged cases with little result, lack of positive outcomes).
- Close by asking the students to write down one authentic call to action, something that society can do that would change these patterns of inequality. Collect the exit slips.



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Appendix 1: Exemplar

Cindy Gladue

- 36 years old, Cree Métis, murdered while working as a sex worker in Edmonton, in 2011, the man responsible was not arrested at the scene.
- The court failed to have a pre-trial hearing to establish whether or not their sexual histories could be used as evidence in the trial.
- The trial received little national attention, and the jury found the accused man not guilty of 1st degree murder in 2015, his defense was that it was an accident.
- During the trial, Cindy was repeatedly referred to as a “prostitute” or a “native prostitute,” this establishes a racial prejudice.
- It was only in 2020 that a new trial was ordered, and he was convicted of manslaughter in 2021.
- During the original trial, Cindy’s family felt her portrayal was degrading and disrespectful, and that justice was not served.

Laura Babcock

- Disappeared in 2012
- There was a major police investigation, along with immediate and sustained national media attention.
- Two men were convicted of 1st degree murder, and sentenced to life in prison in 2018.
- Laura also had been working as a sex worker, yet articles were not centered around this fact and lightly addressed the topic as a “brief stint as an escort.”
- Throughout the investigation, this case was dealt with by the homicide unit, through a multiyear investigation, with multiple press conferences.
- In the end, Laura’s family felt justice was served.

Examination of Inequalities

- Media portrayal of one case was centered around the fact that Cindy was a sex worker, while media coverage on Laura’s case lightly touched on it, and did not make it appear to be a central component of the case. This establishes a racial and social bias in how victims are framed.
- Laura’s media coverage included testimonies such as “a loyal friend” and a “daughter full of whimsy and fun.” Articles focused on her promise and the bright future that was stolen from her. Cindy’s media coverage included far fewer personal details and more emphasis on the circumstances of her death.
- These differences in framing can influence public perception and, in turn, shape institutional responses. When a victim is humanized and portrayed as innocent and full of potential, there is often stronger public pressure on law enforcement and the justice system to act decisively. In contrast, when coverage focuses on a victim’s involvement in sex work or other marginalized identities, it can reinforce harmful stereotypes and contribute to weaker public empathy and reduced accountability within the system.



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Sources:

'Evil beings' took daughter's life: Laura Babcock's parents react to guilty verdict

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/evil-beings-took-daughters-life-laura-babcocks-parents-react-to-guilty-verdict/>

Who was Laura Babcock? A look into her life as the trial into her presumed death continues | CBC News

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/who-was-laura-babcock-1.4388430>

Cindy Gladue case: Why the not-guilty verdict has sparked outrage

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/cindy-gladue-case-why-the-not-guilty-verdict-has-sparked-outrage/>

The case of Cindy Gladue and the error that delayed justice for her family

<https://www.aptnnews.ca/investigates/looking-back-at-the-case-of-cindy-gladue-and-the-error-that-delayed-justice-for-her-family/>

Teacher Note: If time allows you can dig deeper into this example and show contrasting articles to students.



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Appendix 2: Research Notes

Name: _____

Date: _____

Case: Cindy Gladue

Indicate the victim's name, and if this is an Indigenous case, or a mainstream case.

Case Overview:

Media Portrayal:

Law Enforcement Efforts:

Outcome:

Other Notes:

Sources:



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Appendix 3: Heritage Michif Pronunciation Guide

English	Michif	Pronunciation
<i>Title</i>	aen shinihkatayk	ay SHIN-ick-a-TAKE
<i>Grade ("year of school")</i>	l'aanii d'ikol	la-KNEE dee-COL
<i>Subject ("explaining what is being learned")</i>	Kaykwy kaa kishkayhtamihk	cake-WHY kah kish-KAY-tuh-MICK
<i>Topic ("specifically what we're talking about")</i>	ispray kaa piikishkwatamihk	iss-PRAY kah PEEK-ish-KWAH-tuh-MICK
<i>Overview ("talking about what is being learned")</i>	wiihtamakayhk kaykwy kaa kishkayhtamihk	wee-TUM-a-CAKE cake-WHY kah kish-KAY-tuh-MICK
<i>Assessment ("How it will be measured")</i>	taanishi aen tipahamihk	taan-SHIH ay tip-AH-ha-MICK
<i>Time</i>	li taan	lih TAH
<i>Curriculum Outcomes ("what should happen")</i>	kaykwy chi kii ishpayihk	cake-WHY chih KEY ish-pah-YICK
<i>I Can Statement ("I can do it")</i>	Gashkihtaan	Gahsh-kih-TAHN
<i>Materials Needed ("Things needed to do this")</i>	lii zafayr poor chi ooshitaahk ooma	lee za-FAIR pohr chih oh-sh-TAHCK oh-MA
<i>Focus Questions ("primary questions")</i>	niikaan lii kesyoon	knee-KAHN lee kess-YONE
<i>Lesson Description ("How to do it")</i>	taanishi aen ishi ooshihtaahk	taan-SHIH ay ishih oh-sh-TAHCK
<i>Helping each other and having empathy</i>	Manaachihitoyaahk	mah-NATCH-e-HIT-oh-yah-k

*Capital letters indicate stressed syllables