

■ GRADE 9: HISTORY

TREATIES BETWEEN FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE AND THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

Purpose: Through cooperative learning strategies, students will use research, critical media literacy, presentations and note-taking skills to teach their classmates important information on Treaties 1 to 8. While putting themselves in the position of First Nations People, students will decide if they think the treaties created equitable relationships between First Nations People and the Canadian government.

Estimated time: 250 minutes or approx. 8 classes

Resources required:

- Computers with internet capabilities for research (optional)

Resources included:

- Blackline master 1, 2 and 3

Activity 1: Negotiating a contract

1. Open the lesson with an announcement that the principal has a plan to share the school's gym with a school whose gym is under construction. (It is best if you use real school names to make the issue more relevant to your students.)
 - a. Suggested script: "We have a task to complete for our principal this week. XX School's gym is going to be under construction. The school has called our principal and asked if they can use our gym during this time. We are hoping to help them out, but first we need to make arrangements that all teachers and students agree upon. In eight different groups, fill out the worksheets and figure out how we can best share this resource.
 - b. Should we allow XX School to use our gym? Why or why not?
 - c. How will this benefit XX School's students? How will this benefit our students?
2. Split students into eight groups. Distribute copies of blackline master 1. Instruct students to fill in blackline master 1.
3. As a class, fill out one chart akin to blackline master 1 on the board. Allow students to share their thoughts on the agreement. Create a basic agreement that the whole class is comfortable with and announce that you will share this with XX School.
4. Instruct students to reflect on the activity. Ask students the following questions:
 - a. Was building this agreement fair?
 - i. Why or why not?
 - b. What would make it fairer?
 - c. Was negotiation possible?
 - d. Can we ensure negotiation is possible?

- e. Who should be a part of the negotiations?
 - f. Think beyond the classroom, when do other people have to make agreements like this?
 - g. When in Canadian history have groups of people had to make agreements like this?
5. Ask students to define the term "Treaty":
 - a. Treaty—An agreement usually made between two nations. For example, many treaties in Canada are made between First Nations groups and the federal government.
 6. Continue the discussion on treaties with students with the following questions:
 - a. What is the similarity between treaties with First Nations and the agreement with XX School?
 - b. Were treaties necessary between First Nations and the Canadian government? Why or why not?

Activity 2: What do you know about First Nations treaties and government relationships?

1. Return to the agreement with XX school:
 - a. Provide an update regarding the status of the agreement. List some demands that XX School has for the contract. (Make amendments as necessary to help the students understand the weight and nature of the demands the Canadian government put on First Nations People.) Ask the class if they will agree to make some changes to the agreement. Allow a few minutes to discuss the changes.
2. Classroom brainstorm and discussion.
 - a. Ask the class what they know about the relationships between First Nations People and the Government of Canada. Ensure students express what they how they learned the information they are sharing, e.g. did they read it, learned it from someone, experience it, etc.
 - b. Ask students what they know about treaties in Canada. Encourage students to see the similarity between the use of their gymnasium and XX School with the issue of land rights between First Nations People and the Canadian government.
3. Individual Reading
 - a. Direct students to read the articles online or print off and distribute the articles amongst students.
 - i. The following articles have a bias that favours First Nations:
 - news.nationalpost.com/2013/01/07/theresa-spence-an-inspiration-to-all-canadians-former-pm-paul-martin-says-after-meeting-with-chief/
 - fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2013/01/06/michael-den-tandt-canada-aboriginal-hopes-to-incubate-in-misery/

- ii. The following article has a bias that favours the Government of Canada:
 - www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1314718067733/1314718114793
4. Homework
- a. Have students finish the following assignment for homework. Tell them they will be handing it in the next class.
 - i. Based on the articles, how would you describe the relationship between First Nations People and the Canadian government?
 - ii. Describe the bias in each article.
 - iii. Search online or in newspapers for an article about the relationship between First Nations People and the government. Is there a bias in the article? Describe it
 - b. After Confederation, many Canadians wanted to move west to the Prairies with the hope that the land would be open for farming and settlement.
 - c. Due to the increased presence of people hunting on prairie land, the First Nations and Métis People noticed a steep decline of the buffalo—an extremely important animal for their food, clothing and shelter.
 - d. This area, east of the Rocky Mountains consisting of land, lakes and rivers that drained into Hudson Bay, was known as Rupert's Land. King Charles II gave the trade rights of Rupert's Land to the Hudson's Bay Company.
 - e. In 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company sold their rights to trade in Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada for £300,000.
 - f. After making this deal, the Canadian government tried to extinguish First Nations and Métis rights to land in the territory from western Ontario to the Rocky Mountains.
 - g. From 1871 to 1877, the Canadian government negotiated seven different treaties, which became known as the "Numbered Treaties."

Activity 3: Treaty Background

1. **Article investigation.** In pairs, have students explain the article and the bias they identified within the article. Students should record two questions related to the article, treaties and the relationship between First Nations People and the Canadian government.
2. **Discussion.** Ask students to discuss the bias that existed in their articles. Remind students that before the question of who is right can be answered it is important to understand the history of the situation. Let them know that understanding the negotiation process that occurred between the Canadian government and First Nations People when writing the treaties is an important part of understanding the current relationship.
 - a. Who is right, the Canadian government or First Nations People?
 - b. What questions should be answered before you can give an opinion on this topic?
3. **Treaties.** Remind students of the definition of a treaty. Provide some historical context for the treaties. Point out similarities and differences between pre-Confederation and post-Confederation treaties. Ask students to think about the differences that might have existed between pre- and post-Confederation treaties.
 - a. Pre-Confederation (1764-1826) treaties were made with the Crown through representatives of the British government.
 - b. Post-Confederation (1871-1921) treaties were made with the Canadian government.
4. **History of the Numbered Treaties.** Lead a discussion to cover the important events of Canadian history surrounding the time of Confederation. Use the following points to frame the conversation. Ask students what important event occurred in Canada in 1867? Why is this event important?
 - a. At the time of Confederation, Canada only consisted of four provinces: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario.
5. **The Numbered Treaties' Purpose.** Give a brief overview of the Numbered Treaties' purpose using the following summary:
 - a. From 1871 to 1921, treaty commissioners met with First Nations People throughout northwestern Ontario and the southern Prairies. They were instructed to secure access to the land. Many First Nations People living on the Prairies, weakened by new diseases and the loss of the buffalo, believed that the treaties would ensure their physical, cultural and spiritual survival as they could make certain education, health and sovereignty demands of the government. They sought guarantees to enable them to continue to govern themselves, hunt and fish. The treaties that were negotiated throughout western and northern Canada were called the Numbered Treaties.
 - b. Common to all numbered Treaty negotiations, the "surrender of large tracts of land in return for annual cash payments and other benefits." As stated in the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, First Nations People involved in the treaties generally believed that they were "sharing the land, not surrendering the land."
6. **Developing a Treaty.** Ask students to recall their experiences with the XX School agreement. Provide a brief explanation of how treaties were negotiated to serve as an example for later research.
 - a. The Canadian government and First Nations People each practiced their own customs in sanctioning the treaties. The government had lawyers and government officials; the First Nations People had spiritual leaders, women and chiefs. Most were authorized to carry out a process of negotiation and consultation.
 - b. There was some resistance to treaty negotiations from some First Nations People who were skeptical of the

government's promises. For First Nations People, it is customary to approve important matters through spiritual ceremonies. During the treaty signing process, First Nations People conducted spiritual ceremonies because they believed the Creator had to be part of the arrangement in order for the treaties to be validated.

7. Explanation of homework assignment.

- a. Divide the class into eight groups; assign a treaty to each group.
- b. Refer to blackline master 3 to show students the geographical locations of the treaty negotiations.
- c. Tell students to use blackline master 2 as their summary of the treaty.
- d. Students are to use blackline master 4 to keep track of their sources of information.

Activity 4: Library Research

1. Direct students to research their treaties in depth, with at least two primary sources. Searching for primary sources on their own will encourage students to use and hone their researching skills.

Activity 5: Presenting the Treaties

1. Presentations.
 - a. Distribute blackline master 5, a treaty timeline.
 - b. Each group will present their findings. Presentations should be approximately four minutes each. While each group is presenting, the rest of the class will be filling our blackline master 5.
2. Personal response. Give the students the following questions to complete before the next class:
 - a. Why do you think the government and First Nations People wanted to sign treaties with each other?
 - b. Do you think the First Nations People had a choice to sign the treaties?
 - c. What are some of the long-term positive and negative impacts of the treaties?

Activity 6: Personal Reflection and Essay

1. Class discussion. Announce that XX School has agreed to the terms of the agreement. Additionally, the school has made money from community groups renting the space. Ask students the following questions to spark a discussion.
 - a. Is this fair?
 - b. Does this impact the agreement?
 - c. Does it change the way you want to approach how the gym is used?
 - d. How does this situation relate to what you've learned about the treaties?
2. Sharing perspectives. Discuss answers to the worksheet assigned in the last class. Ask students to adapt their

answers to include thoughts shared by their peers. Some responses are included.

- a. Why would the Canadian government want to sign these treaties? Why would First Nations People want to sign these treaties?
 - i. The Canadian government: the government wanted to gain sovereignty or control over land so Canadian settlers could populate the area. The government believed they would receive:
 - o Peaceful access to lands for settlement.
 - o Peaceful settlement in the west.
 - o Minimal costs for westward expansion and prevention of costly wars with First Nations People.
 - o Protection for western lands by stopping American expansion as well as other benefits.
 - ii. First Nations People: First Nations People believed they were creating an alliance that would be renewed each year. Buffalo herds were in serious decline from overhunting. First Nations leaders were worried about the decline and wanted to switch to farming for food. They insisted that the treaties included farm education, tools and animals. They believed they would receive:
 - o Survival of their Nations.
 - o Peaceful relations with the newcomers through ongoing equitable relations.
 - o Respect for cultural and spiritual survival as distinct Nations through the preservation of their distinctive traditions and institutions.
 - o A transition to a new lifestyle by learning different technologies within education, economics and health as well as other benefits.
 - b. Do you think the First Nations leaders had a choice in signing the Numbered Treaties.
 - c. Why did they choose to sign?
 - i. Pressures on their way of life from Canadian settlers moving west, disappearing buffalo, a way of ensuring survival by farming instead of hunting.
 - d. Chief Poundmaker (Pihtokahanapiwiyin), an influential Cree man, stated the following after hearing that each family would receive 640 acres of land: "This is our land, it isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It is ours and we will take what we want" (Peter Erasmus, as told to Henry Thomson, Buffalo Days and Nights, (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1976), p. 244). How do you think Chief Poundmaker felt about the treaties? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
3. Problems with the treaties.
 - a. The Canadian government believed it had bought the land with the treaties.

- b. The First Nations People lost their sovereignty over the land.
 - c. Some First Nations People believed they had not sold the land to the Canadian government, but simply allowed Canadians to live and farm it in exchange for payments.
 - d. The treaties were followed by Canadian laws that further regulated how First Nations People would be educated, where they could live and where they could work.
4. Important questions unanswered. Look through the questions students brought forward in Activity 2. Ensure all of the questions have been answered. Ask students if they have anymore questions.
 5. Final assignment. Have students write a short opinion essay complete with a bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Allow students time for brainstorming thoughts on both sides of the statement. Give students the following statement, instruct them to take one position for the essay:
 - a. Agree or disagree with the following statement providing strong evidence for your case—The Numbered Treaties were a positive development in the relationship between the Canadian government and First Nations People.

■ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the lesson plan, share these resources with your students:

- Canadiana: www.canadiana.org
- Numbered Treaties Overview: www.canadiana.ca/citm/specifique/numtreatyoverview_e.html
- Curriculum Links: www.canadiana.ca/citm/themes/aboriginals/abtable_e.html
- Additional education resources: www.canadiana.ca/citm/education/intro_e.html
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Treaty Information: www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032297/1100100032309
- Canada. Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Vol. 1: Looking Forward, Looking Back. Ministry of Supply Services, 1996: www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637#chp3
- The Evolution of First Nations Treaties: www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/firstnations/reasons.html
- Treaty Essential Learnings: We Are All Treaty People. Field Test Draft. Office of the Treaty Commissioner. 2008. Canada in the Making: Aboriginals: Treaties and Relations: www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution1_e.html
- The Canadian Encyclopedia Online: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com
- Natural Resources Canada: The Atlas of Canada: www.atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/
www.atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/reference/national/hist_treaties/
- Lesson plans and ideas on evaluating fairness in negotiations: govlet.ca/en/tgIntro.php

BLACKLINE MASTER 1

CREATING AN AGREEMENT

Agreement name:

Agreement signing date:

		Our School	Visiting School
1	Agreement objectives (Why does each party want to create the agreement?)		
2	Who is impacted? (Who will sign the agreement thus being impacted by the rules?)		
3	Terms of the agreement (What rules must be followed?)		
4	Benefits (How does the agreement benefit each party)		

BLACKLINE MASTER 2

ANALYZING TREATIES 1-8

Agreement name:

Agreement signing date:

		First Nations Group	Government of Canada
1	Treaty objectives (Why does each group want to create the treaty?)		
2	Who is impacted? (Who will sign the treaty thus being impacted by the rules?)		
3	Terms of the Treaty (What rules must be followed?)		
4	Benefits (How does the treaty benefit each party)		

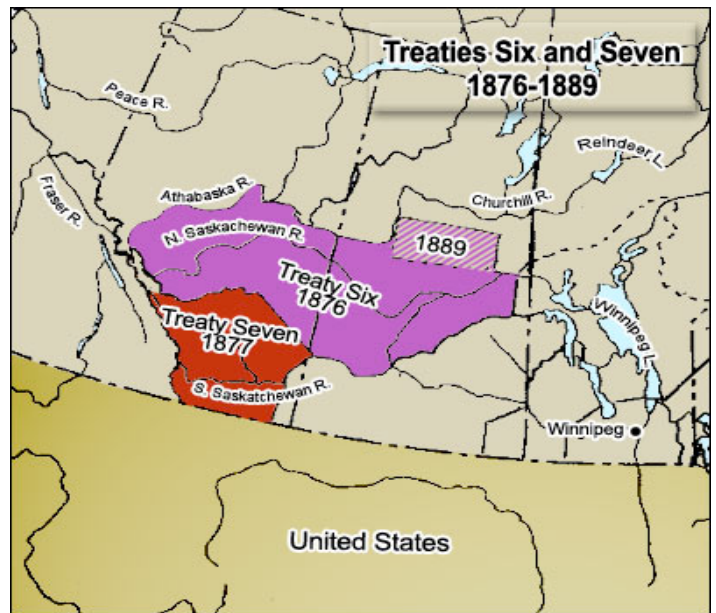
BLACKLINE MASTER 3

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE TREATIES

Treaties One to Five (1871-1875)



Treaties Six and Seven (1876-1889)



Treaties Eight to Eleven (1899-1921)



Resource: www.canadiana.ca/citm/specific/numtreatyoverview_e.html

BLACKLINE MASTER 4

UNDERSTANDING RESOURCES

Author	Title	Year written/ updated	Website	Biases present

BLACKLINE MASTER 5

TREATY TIMELINE

Name	Date	Summary