

Indigenous Languages and *Secret Path*

Learning Bird Resource Kit

Target Course and Grade

The resources in this kit will support secondary level courses in English, social studies, Indigenous studies, and history.

These activities can also be adapted to language and humanities courses that include reading, writing, and learning about the relationships between language, culture, place, and identity.

Inquiry Question

What is the significance and state of Indigenous languages across Canada (and the world), how did the residential school system bring us to this point, and what is currently being done for revitalization?

Prerequisite Skills and Concepts

- Familiarity with the story of Chanie Wenjack and the different parts of the *Secret Path* project
- Working knowledge about the intent, history, and impacts of the residential school system in Canada

Introduction to the Resource Kit

This resource kit positions the story of Chanie Wenjack as told in Gord Downie's *Secret Path* multimedia project as an opportunity to explore the topic of Indigenous languages and how they relate to Indigenous rights on a local/regional/national/global scale.

The resource kit starts by gaining learners' attention and making connections from *Secret Path* to the topic of Indigenous languages and Indigenous language revitalization with video and mapping hook activities.

Then, the resource kit uses *Secret Path* as a starting point for deeper conversations about Indigenous languages by directing learners to conduct research, listen to the stories of Indigenous language speakers and Elders, and create informational materials.

Finally, learners will demonstrate their learning by conducting an inquiry project on a topic of personal interest that relates to Indigenous languages.

This resource kit supports and develops literacy, research, communication, and empathy skills by asking learners to work together in sharing what they learn about a variety of Indigenous languages and revitalization efforts.

Resources

#1 - Hook (Video)

Indigenous Languages and *Secret Path*

#2 - Learning Activity (Handout)

Finding a *Secret Path*: Mapping Activity

#3 - Learning Activity (Handout)

Indigenous Languages in Canada: KWL Chart and Infographic Analysis

#4 - Learning Activity (Video)

Indigenous Languages: Worldviews and Revitalization

#5 - Learning Activity (Handout)

Research: Indigenous Languages Here and Now

#6 - Demonstration of Learning (Handout)

Indigenous Languages Inquiry Project

#7 - Learning Activity (Teacher Handout)

Annotated Bibliography: Indigenous Languages and Language Revitalization

#1: Hook (Video)

Indigenous Languages and *Secret Path*

Materials Needed:

- Computer
- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- Speakers

OR

- Laptops, tablets, or smartphones
- Headphones
- Smartphones
- Pencils or pens

Learners will:

- Make connections between *Secret Path* and Indigenous language loss and revitalization
 - Conduct a visual analysis of “I Will Not Be Struck”
 - Discuss the significance of shifting text in the film
 - Understand that language connects us to a group
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Key Terms: *residential schools, colonization, Indigenous language, Secret Path*

Instructional Strategies:

1. Before:

Learners should be familiar with *Secret Path* and have some understanding of the residential school system.

Preview the video before showing it to the class. Note the changing characters on the blackboard and map in the clip from *Secret Path*. This represents the illegibility of the words and map, as Chanie’s first language was not English.

Arrange seats to facilitate group discussion.

2. During:

Project the video onto a large screen for all to see.

Pause as necessary to provide context or definitions.

When the video provides questions for discussion, pause and see what your learners picked up on. If necessary, replay the clip or ask guiding questions to lead learners to the meaning of the changing characters.

3. After:

Guide learners through a discussion of the reflection questions. Provide definitions and context as necessary.

Teacher Tip:

If learners are well-versed in residential school history and familiar with *Secret Path*, this activity can be completed independently on a laptop, tablet, or smartphone with headphones.

Rather than facilitating a group discussion, you may wish to gather written answers to the questions from learners.

#2: Learning Activity (Handout)

Finding a *Secret Path*: Mapping Activity

Materials Needed:

- Pencils or pens
- Crayons or coloured pencils
- Markers
- Printed copies of handout (one for each learner)

Learners will:

- Navigate a map with little information and try to imagine Chanie Wenjack's experience
- Reflect on the practical importance of language in their lives
- Write a reflection to start thinking about the spiritual/emotional/cultural/relational importance of language in their lives

Key Terms: *geography, Indigenous language, culture, communication, terrain, experience*

Instructional Strategies:

1. Before:

Watch "**Resource #1 - Indigenous Languages and *Secret Path***" or the clip entitled "I Will Not Be Struck" from *Secret Path*.

Consider asking questions to the class to prepare them for the task ahead.

For example:

- Have you ever planned a trip, or watched someone else plan a trip?
- What tools were used?
- What information was needed?
- Now, imagine these tools weren't available. What would you do?

2. During:

Distribute handouts and read the introduction out loud, have a learner volunteer to do so, or allow learners to read on their own.

Review instructions together and clarify any questions that learners might have.

Provide an overview of the map that is included in the handout. Ask learners what information is included in this map and how it can be helpful. Emphasize how the symbols are being used as signposts for some major features of physical geography, and explain that other maps can give more detailed information for different purposes.

#2: Learning Activity (Handout)

Finding a *Secret Path*: Mapping Activity

2. During (cont'd):

Teacher Tip:

The map in this handout includes major waterways and several symbols to identify some major plant types and animal species that can be found in the region or at that latitude. These symbols are intended to give learners a starting point for situating themselves on the map without using textual language, and do **not** provide comprehensive information about the full spread or scope of climatic zones, vegetation regions, and terrain.

If the symbols included in the map are not enough to help your learners begin orienting themselves, consider working as a class (before or after the activity) to identify what the symbols could refer to:



Consider also having learners populate the map with other important physical and cultural landmarks that might come to mind.

Depending on the makeup of your class, instruct learners to tackle the mapping activity individually, in pairs, or in groups.

If learners are working collaboratively, use the arrangement of desks and chairs as an opportunity to encourage cooperation and teamwork by asking learners to arrange themselves in groups.

Verbal encouragement and support are recommended during this learning activity. It is intended to be challenging, so you may wish to circulate the room and let the class know that it's okay if they can't answer every question or complete each task; the intent is to try their best and challenge themselves.

After completing the mapping activity, reveal the locations of your community and your province's capital city (or the capital city of the province next to you) on the map. Facilitate a class discussion around the discussion questions that are provided. You can also start by having the groups discuss the questions among themselves, and then elect a group representative to summarize what they talked about for the whole class.

3. After:

Invite learners to reflect upon the reflection questions that are provided. Reflections can be discussed in pairs, as a class, or written individually.

#3: Learning Activity (Handout)

Indigenous Languages in Canada: KWL Chart and Infographic Analysis

Materials Needed:

- Printed copies of handout (one for each learner)
- Pencils or pens
- Crayons or coloured pencils
- Markers
- Highlighters
- Sheets of blank paper

Learners will:

- Read about the number and variety of Indigenous languages in Canada in the form of an infographic
- Understand the impacts of residential schools and colonization on Indigenous languages in Canada
- Understand that Indigenous languages are endangered and recognized as an inherent Indigenous right (UNDRIP, TRC, Bill C-91)

Key Terms: *language, revitalization, Indigenous rights, residential schools*

Instructional Strategies:

1. Before:

Decide how you would like to deliver the Know, Wonder, Learn activity (KWL). Depending on learners' familiarity with the KWL format and the content being discussed, KWL charts can be filled in together as a class, in small groups, in pairs, or individually.

2. During:

KNOW: To ensure that you have the attention of all learners, you may wish to lead the class in filling out the "Know" section of their KWL charts by creating a large version of the chart on the board for all to see and asking leading questions.

WONDER: For the "Wonder" section of the chart, you may wish to:

- Guide learners as a class to fill out the section by modeling on a larger version of the chart for all to see and asking leading questions.
- Ask learners to complete the "Wonder" section of their charts individually, in pairs or in groups.
- Invite learners to share what they wondered with the class and encourage classmates to add anything they hear to their own charts.

LEARN: To complete the "Learn" section of the KWL chart, learners must read the infographics provided in the final pages of the handout. Again, learners can complete this task individually or cooperatively with others.

Teacher Tip:

The infographic pages in this handout are primarily focused on quantitative data and qualitative facts about languages and language families. To further emphasize the role that location plays in the distribution of languages, consider projecting or posting additional graphics from "Canadian Geographic (2017). Mapping Indigenous Languages in Canada" (<https://bit.ly/2AAjvq6>) while learners are completing the *LEARN* section of the activity. This resource can also provide more advanced learners with a more detailed breakdown of the individual languages that make up each language family.

#3: Learning Activity (Handout)

Indigenous Languages in Canada: KWL Chart & Infographic Analysis

3. After (cont'd):

If you have chosen to conduct this activity with a KWL chart on the board, you might invite learners to come up front and add information they learned. Alternatively, you might wish to call on learners to provide answers and write them in for all to see.

After completing the activity and having the class share what they know, wonder, and have learned about Indigenous languages in Canada, you can further extend this learning opportunity to explore Indigenous languages around the world.

Use the questions that learners have asked in order to guide your selection of facts, stories, and experiences from around the world to share with the class. Invite learners to compare and contrast these perspectives with what they have learned about Indigenous languages in Canada.

#4: Learning Activity (Video)

Indigenous Languages: Worldviews and Revitalization

Materials Needed:

- Computer
- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- Speakers

OR

- Laptops, tablets or smartphones
- Headphones

Learners will:

- Listen to Elders and speakers of Indigenous languages as true experts about Indigenous languages and their significance
 - Understand ways that the residential school system affected the transmission of Indigenous languages
 - Understand how language loss impacts Indigenous individuals, families, and communities
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Key Terms: *language, residential schools, colonization, revitalization*

Instructional Strategies:

1. Before:

Learners should be familiar with *Secret Path* and have some understanding of the residential school system.

2. During:

Project the video onto a large screen for all to see, or set learners up with computers, tablets, or smartphones for individual viewing.

Pause the video as necessary to provide context or definitions.

When the video provides questions for discussion, or touches on topics of interest, pause and see what your learners picked up on.

3. After:

The video ends with a series of three questions. Pause the video to keep the questions onscreen and guide learners through a discussion or individual reflection. Provide definitions and context as necessary.

Teacher Tip:

This activity can also be completed independently on a laptop, tablet, or smartphone with headphones. Rather than facilitating a group discussion, you may wish to gather written answers to the questions from learners.

#5: Learning Activity (Handout)

Research Activity: Indigenous Languages Here and Now

Materials Needed:

- Printed copies of handout (one for each learner)
- Computers, laptops, tablets or smartphones
- Access to the Internet
- Sheets of blank paper
- Pencils and/or pens
- Coloured pencils and/or markers

Learners will:

- Find important information about Indigenous languages in Canada
 - Identify the Indigenous languages of their region
 - Research Indigenous place names for places of personal relevance
 - Summarize the “Languages and Culture” calls to action of the TRC
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Key Terms: *language, residential schools, colonization, revitalization*

Instructional Strategies:

1. Before:

Learners should have some understanding of Indigenous cultures and languages in Canada. “**Resource #4 - Indigenous Languages: Worldviews and Revitalization**” can provide some basic context.

Decide whether learners will complete this assignment individually, in pairs, or in groups.

The activity will ask learners to watch and listen to a video clip, as chosen by their teacher, before summarizing the speaker’s points. Preview and select an appropriate video for your classroom (eg. TED Talk, video diary, slam poetry) that features a speaker or speakers as they share their personal perspectives on the role that Indigenous languages play in their lives and in the past/present/future of Canada and the world. Consider starting your search for relevant material with the REDx Talks project (<https://vimeo.com/redxtalks>).

2. During:

Distribute handouts and read the introduction out loud, have a learner volunteer to do so, or allow learners to read on their own.

Review instructions together and clarify any questions learners might have. Refer to the infographic in “**Resource #3 - Indigenous Languages in Canada: KWL Chart & Infographic Analysis**” as an example of a visual representation that can be created in Part 3. Provide additional examples of infographics and fact-sheets as needed.

This activity can be completed in several parts. Determine a due date and a schedule for in-class work periods and homework time. Book computer time or library time as needed.

If learners are working collaboratively, use the arrangement of desks and chairs as an opportunity to encourage cooperation and teamwork by asking learners to arrange themselves in groups.

#5: Learning Activity (Handout)

Research: Indigenous Languages Here and Now

2. During (cont'd):

Teacher Tip:

This activity is intended to encourage independent research among learners. However, you can also provide learners with additional resources to use or read together as a class when thinking about starting points for their research.

Here are some examples of resources that may be helpful to begin with:

- Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (2017). What You Need To Know About Indigenous Language Revitalization - <https://bit.ly/2ZmbcdW>
- Canadian Geographic (2017). Mapping Indigenous Languages in Canada - <https://bit.ly/2AAjvq6>
- Canadian Heritage (2017). Diversity of Indigenous Languages in Canada - <https://bit.ly/2jNejLW>
- Statistics Canada (2017). The Aboriginal Languages of First Nations People, Métis and Inuit - <https://bit.ly/2T80lg1>

Encourage learners to also go beyond these sources as they continue their research. Advise them to prioritize sources from Indigenous perspectives and to ask critical self-check questions about their research purpose and the information that they find.

Collect the answers to Part 1 and Part 2 of the activity before giving learners the approval to begin working on Part 3. Because answers may vary between each research project, this will give you a chance to verify the sources and data that each learner used. If necessary, you can organize a class debrief about their different experiences while researching, the possibility of conflicting data, and any other questions about the author/audience of informational texts.

After giving learners the approval to begin working on Part 3, collect the final visual representations on the final due date. Consider evaluating for accuracy, clarity, and organization of information.

3. After:

Post learners' fact-sheets and infographics in a visible location within the classroom or school. This will allow you to demonstrate the attention-grabbing qualities and impacts of effective awareness campaigns, and will enable learners to share their messages with the wider community.

Modification/Accommodation:

In multi-level classrooms you may wish to change the format of certain questions depending on learners' abilities. Questions can be transformed into multiple choice, fill in the blank questions, short answer, or essay questions to meet learners' needs. Clarify these modifications when reviewing the instructions as a class.

#6: Demonstration of Learning (Handout)

Indigenous Languages Inquiry Project

Materials Needed:

- Printed copies of handout (one for each learner)
- Computers, laptops, tablets or smartphones
- Access to the Internet

Learners will:

- Complete an inquiry assignment on a chosen topic related to Indigenous languages
- Direct their own learning about Indigenous history, Indigenous culture, and change through time
- Transmit their knowledge to classmates through a presentation

Key Terms: *Indigenous languages, colonization, culture, residential schools*

Instructional Strategies:

1. Before:

Learners should have some understanding of Indigenous cultures and languages in Canada. Completing the learning activities in this resource kit can serve as preparation for this inquiry project. The items listed in “**Resource #7 - Annotated Bibliography: Indigenous Languages and Language Revitalization**” can also help to build this foundation.

Depending on learners’ familiarity with the inquiry process, decide how you will share the instructions and assign the different parts of this assignment. You may wish to give learners all of the information up front and allow them to progress through the inquiry process at their own pace, or dole out information step-by-step and guide learners throughout the process on a predetermined timeline.

2. During:

Read the introductions to each part of the inquiry process out loud, have a learner volunteer to do so, or allow learners to read on their own. Review instructions together and clarify any questions learners might have before the work begins.

This activity can be completed in several parts. Determine a due date and a schedule for in-class work periods and homework time. Book computer time or library time as needed.

Circulate the classroom and check in frequently with learners to ensure that they are on track and that their inquiry is fruitful. If someone is stuck, work with them one-on-one to get them back on track.

3. After

Review “Part 5: Reflection & Self-Assessment” with learners and have them complete the handouts independently.

Consider holding “conferences” with learners where you discuss their reflections and self-assessments to decide upon a final score.

Organize a class period or external event where learners can share the representations of their inquiry findings with classmates and other members of the school and/or community. Consider also building a class website or e-portfolio that can provide a digital home for these projects.

#7: Learning Activity (Teacher Handout)

Annotated Bibliography: Indigenous Languages and Language Revitalization

Materials Needed:

- Printed copies of handout (optional)
- Personal reflection journal (optional)
- Shared document or e-portfolio

Learners will:

- Identify areas for continued personal learning and development
 - Provide guidance to other learners as they independently enrich or expand their understanding of issues and topics related to Indigenous languages and language revitalization
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Instructional Strategies:

NOTE: This resource is only intended to be viewed by teachers.

The items in this short annotated bibliography can be useful tools for teachers and learners who would benefit from advancing their understanding of the topics that are covered throughout this resource kit.

Preview the items from this list on your own and determine which resources are appropriate for your own learning objectives and, additionally, which resources might be suitable (in content and reading-level) for your learners.

Consider printing out a copy of the handout to keep for yourself as an ongoing reading list. Keep a reflection journal to track insights, opportunities for further discovery, and ideas for additional class activities.

As needed, share items from this bibliography with individual learners or in a document or e-portfolio that is accessible to the whole class.

Consider directing individual learners to the resources that will help their specific objectives in “**Resource #6 - Demonstration of Learning: Indigenous Languages Inquiry Project**”.

You can also have learners compile their own annotated bibliography as they begin and continue learning about Indigenous languages in Canada and around the world.

Extension Activities:

- Learners choose sections of *Secret Path* (or another book, poem, play, etc.) to translate into a different language and answer reflection questions about their experience with using new words to express concepts and tell stories. Learners can use their own language knowledge, collaborate with another language class in the school or community, or use online dictionaries.
- Learners propose their own initiatives for an Indigenous language revitalization program or design their own plans to contribute within the framework of reconciliation or the TRC Calls to Action. Learners can pitch these plans in front of the class to receive feedback and potentially select an initiative to implement as a group.
- Learners choose a community within the larger global Indigenous context and do further research to compare and contrast the current state of Indigenous language revitalization efforts around the world. Learners share their findings in a “Language Fair” event. Alternatively, teachers or schools organize an ongoing digital exchange with classrooms in other cultural contexts and share experiences with language.

Additional Online Resources:

- **Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund** (<https://downiewenjack.ca/>): The landing page of the Downie Wenjack fund and its mission to help learn, build connections, encourage “reconciliACTIONS”, and work toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Provides information about *Secret Path* Week and opportunities to register for the Legacy Schools, Legacy Spaces, and Artist Ambassador programs.
- **2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages** (<https://en.iyil2019.org/>): The landing page of the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages. Summarizes the goals of the various initiatives within this framework and provides educators with additional academic resources and teaching material.
- **First Peoples’ Cultural Council Language Revitalization Strategies** (http://www.fpcc.ca/language/toolkit/Language_Revitalization_Strategies.aspx): Examples and summaries of language revitalization strategies and programs that are being used by Indigenous Peoples and individuals in British Columbia and around the world.