



Indigenous History Month: Week 3: Return to the Land

[Indigenous Peoples](#) across Turtle Island have been intimately and intricately connected to the land since time immemorial. Creation Stories speak of the relationship between the two-leggeds and all other creatures as being one of interconnectedness. They give lessons of the deep reverence and respect the land must be approached with. They talk of ceremony that must be taken to keep the connection sacred and harmonious. These stories and teachings were passed on from generation to generation and kept alive through ceremony.

For Indigenous Peoples, everything comes from the land: language, spirituality, culture, physical necessities, protocol, order, ceremony, clothing, shelter, food, medicines. Everything we do pertains to the land. Our very existence relies solely on this connection and relationship to the land. We survived and thrived on Turtle Island for millenia by respecting and honouring this reciprocal relationship.

Colonial impact on Turtle Island brought different world views and perspectives of relating with the land. These new ideologies were forced upon Indigenous Peoples to adopt and adapt with. These ideologies spoke of taking without giving back. They spoke of using everything and not leaving anything to sustain future generations. They instilled destruction. They taught greed and a one-sided relationship. Policy and law and economy dismantled the beautiful relationship that existed for so long.

During this time, some nations were displaced from their traditional lands disrupting the relationship that was vital to their survival. Resource extraction has deep negative consequences on indigeneity and cultural knowledge systems. Teachings were lost. Culture was stolen. Language disappeared. Land was taken. Water was poisoned.

Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island resisted these changes. Our languages and cultures were explicitly spoken of during Treaty talks and negotiations. When Canadian Federal Policy made it illegal to practice our traditional ways of knowing and being, our leaders hung on to them and brought ceremony underground. Our people fought for fishing and hunting rights. They proudly protected the waters and the lands. They created policy to reclaim their traditional lands and waters. They told the stories of place and connection. They spoke the language. They sang the songs. Indigenous leaders fight to this day for clean drinking water in communities across Turtle Island. They still protect the land. They still defend the water. They still maintain the reciprocal relationship that ensures survival. Indigenous Peoples still exist.

With the help of these leaders, many Indigenous communities are revitalizing a return to the land. Elders are supported to uphold our traditional ceremonies. Knowledge and culture keepers are encouraged to sustain teachings, values, and knowledges. Youth and children understand the vital importance of these knowledges and advocate for participation in

building these relationships with the land. Indigenous Peoples retain the knowledge that our existence relies solely on our connection and relationship to the land. With this knowledge and action, we will survive for millennia more.

Videos

[Gerry Oldman video](#)

NCCIE: [Land-based Learning Playlist](#)

[Indigenous Land-Based Education Pedagogy](#)

[Red Willow picking](#)

[Indigenous Plant Diva](#)

[Violence Against the Earth is Violence Against Women](#) - Melina Laboucan-Massimo

[Trick or Treaty](#) - Alanis Obomsawin

[Angry Inuk](#) - Alethea Arnaquq-Baril

[Future History](#)

[Our People, Our Land](#)

[Cree Star Perspectives](#)

[I hold the dehcho in my heart](#)

Resources

[Native Land](#)

[Native Land - Educator's Guide](#)

[BC First Nations Land, Title, and Governance](#)

[Nettle Foraging with the District Aboriginal Team in SD8 Kootenay Lake](#)

Articles

[How Indigenous Land-Based Learning can help fight climate change](#)

[Indigenous Land-Based pedagogy and decolonization](#)

[Decolonizing Education through Outdoor Learning](#)

[Land Education and Reconciliation](#)

[First Nation Relationships to the Land](#)

[How Indigenous Peoples are taking back astronomy](#)

[Indigenous Water Activists speaks at UN](#)

[Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness program in Vancouver](#)

[On the Land Educators](#)

Podcasts

[Stories from the Land](#)

[Teachings in the Air](#)

[Water: Our First Relative](#)

[Indigenous Land Rights & Reconciliation](#)

[This Land](#)

BC Curriculum Connections

Big Ideas: Water is essential to all living things, and it cycles through the environment. Daily and seasonal changes affect all living things. The biosphere, geosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere are interconnected, as matter cycles and energy flows through them. Human actions affect the quality of water and its ability to sustain life. Sustainable land use is essential to meet the needs of a growing population. Living sustainably supports the well-being of self, community, and Earth.

Core Competencies:

- **Creative/Critical Thinking:** I can ask open-ended questions, explore, and gather information. I experiment purposefully to develop options. I can contribute to and use criteria. I use observation, experience, and imagination to draw conclusions, make judgments, and ask new questions. I can describe my thinking and how it is changing.
- **Personal/Social Responsibility:** I advocate and take thoughtful actions to influence positive, sustainable change in my communities and in the natural world. I look for ways to make my classroom, school, community, or natural world a better place and identify small things I can do that could make a difference.
- **Communication:** In discussions and conversations, I am focused and help to build and extend understanding. I am an engaged listener; I ask thought-provoking questions when appropriate and integrate new information

FPPL Connections: Indigenous Land-Based Teachings encompass all of the First Peoples' Principles of Learning.

How does knowledge of Indigenous Land Based Teachings link to [Equity for Indigenous students](#)?

Indigenous students that have the opportunity to engage in land-based teachings will experience equity in education as their ancestors' knowledges are being upheld and validated in the education system.

How does experiencing Indigenous Land Based Teachings confront [implicit bias](#)?

Upholding Indigenous land-based teachings confronts the incorrect assumption that they are not as valid as scientific teachings. Utilizing Indigenous knowledges in your curriculum informs learners that land-based teachings have thousands of years of knowledge behind them.

How does including Indigenous Land Based Teachings [confront privilege](#)?

Recognise the land you are on. Who does the land belong to? Realise that many Indigenous communities, under Federal policy, were forcibly removed from their traditional territories and transplanted on land they were unfamiliar with. To have access to land-based teachings is a privilege that, even today, many Indigenous people are removed from.

How does knowledge of Indigenous Land Based Teachings inform [antiracist perspective](#)?

Knowledge of Indigenous land-based teachings actively pushes against racism through upholding Indigenous perspectives as valid and informative.

Possible Classroom Uses:

Share podcasts, videos & facilitate a class discussion; Connect with a local Elder or knowledge-keeper to go on an Indigenous plant walk of your local area; Student inquiry using 'Native Land' map; Use Educator's guide of 'Native Land' as a unit plan; Inquiry into resource extraction effects on Indigenous Peoples; Inquiry into ethical and sustainable practices of traditional perspectives of land stewardship.