

Treaties, Heart Gardens and the Crown



Overview

In this activity, students will learn about the geography and history of treaties in Canada, the connection between treaties and Heart Gardens, and the plants and traditional medicines that are grown in these spaces. Upon completion of the activity, students will be able to answer the questions:

- What is the history of the treaty-making process in Canada?
- What agreements currently exist between the government of Canada and Indigenous Peoples, as outlined in Canada's Constitution?
- How can the Crown be a positive treaty partner as Canada works towards truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples?

Time required

1-2 class periods

Grade level

Grades 7-10

Subjects

History, Geography, Civics

Materials needed

- Copies of the Treaties worksheet
- Copies of the Crown and Indigenous Peoples in Canada infographic
- Copies of the Discovery Place article [Seeds of Change](#) by Nathan Tidridge in the 2023 May/June issue of *Canadian Geographic*
- Computers for research
- A colour printer to print historical pictures and backgrounds for the pop-up book
- Craft supplies

Lesson implementation

Minds on

Begin the activity by letting students know that they will be learning about historic treaties in Canada that still exist today between Indigenous Peoples and the Crown. Ask students to share what they know about treaties or any forms of agreement between Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the Canadian government, and the Crown. If this is a new topic for students, consider working as a class through the information available from the sources below to acquire foundational knowledge:

- [The Indigenous Foundation: What are Treaties?](#)
- [CBC Kids News: Treaties with Indigenous peoples in Canada, explained](#)
- [Elections Canada: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada's Constitution](#)
- [Government of Canada: Treaties and Agreements](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada: Treaties](#)
- [University of Toronto Centre for Indigenous Studies: 6 Common myths about treaties in Canada](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada: Governance](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada: The Road to Reconciliation](#)

Note: If this is a topic that is relatively well-known to students, have them refresh their thinking using the Crown and Indigenous Peoples in Canada infographic produced by Canadian Geographic Education.

After reviewing the history of treaties and agreements between Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the Government, allow students to take part in a cooperative summary. Give groups of 3-4 students five minutes to fill in the Treaty worksheet using key points uncovered during their review of the previous sources. Invite each group to share one of their answers with the class or ask a group leader to share the groups' responses.

Action

Note: This portion of the activity addresses content of a sensitive nature in association with the residential school system in Canada. Please adjust the activity according to the sensitivities of your students.

Explain to students that an unfortunate reality that occurred after the negotiation of several historic treaties was the breaking of promises made by the Crown and federal government, including the assurance that Indigenous Peoples would retain their inherent rights to land and freedom. A dire example of this is the residential school system. In the late 1800s, the government of Canada initiated the residential school system with the objective of indoctrinating Indigenous children into settler and Christian ways of living, in an effort to sever their connection to land, language, culture, and tradition. The system resulted in the miseducation, malnutrition, and abuse of an estimated 150,000 children, many of whom died as a result of the strict mistreatment by government officials and church representatives. See the [Paths to Reconciliation website](#) for additional information about the residential school system and the ongoing search for missing children and unmarked burial sites, which is happening under the guidance of survivors, their families, and communities.

Treaties, Heart Gardens and the Crown



Learning goals

Student will:

- Practice their research skills and use the information they gather to build a pop-up book.
- Learn to communicate key pieces of information from a variety of primary and secondary sources.
- Extract information from a variety of sources to help them understand the historical relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
- Discover the different Heart Gardens that exist in Canada.
- Analyze different treaties, while considering ongoing challenges Indigenous Peoples face and some of the actions the Crown has taken in support of reconciliation.
- Describe various significant historical events in Canada and explain their impact on Indigenous Peoples.

Connection to the Canadian Geography Learning Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Spatial significance
- Geographic perspectives

Inquiry Process

- Ask geographic questions
- Acquire geographic resources
- Interpret and analyze
- Evaluate and draw conclusions
- Communicate
- Reflect and respond

Developed in collaboration with

Emily Baggetta

Inform students that although the government of Canada will never be able to fully atone for broken promises and mistakes made in the past, a positive path towards truth and reconciliation, and the healing of Indigenous communities, is beginning to take shape in the form of the [Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams project](#). This project invites all communities to consider the planting and maintenance of a Heart Garden in honour of the children and families who have suffered and who continue to face challenges as a result of the residential school system. Heart Gardens can serve many purposes, including providing a space for:

- People to rest, reflect and heal
- The planting and cultivation of food sources and traditional medicines
- For relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
- Younger generations to learn about Canada's history
- Reminding the government of Canada to uphold its promises to Indigenous Peoples
- The gathering of national and international representatives committed to truth and reconciliation

Remind students that “the Crown” is the legal term used in treaties when referring to the British or Canadian governments. Inform students that the current British monarch, King Charles III, as Canada's head of state, has a great part to play in reconciliation in Canada. The monarchy is just as accountable to Indigenous Peoples as the government is responsible for taking part in the truth-telling currently happening in our country. Suggest to students that Heart Gardens provide a way of uniting the Crown, the Canadian government, and Indigenous Peoples in this important journey.

Allow time for students to explore the [Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams website](#) and to read the [Seeds of Change](#) article by *Canadian Geographic*.

Conclusion and consolidation

To consolidate their newfound knowledge, task students with the creation of a pop-up book on one of the topics outlined below. Students must answer each question. Each answer should cover 1-2 pages of the pop-up book. Each page should have a background, script, and an image that pops up from the page.

Examples of instructions on how to make a pop-up book:

- [LRNKEY: How to make a pop-up book](#)
- [Science Friday: How to make a pop-up book with engineering](#)
- [Tanu Creative: Pull tab - Pop up tutorial](#)
- [Duck Duck Goose Fun: Pop-up Book Tutorial](#)
- [Keith Allen: Pop up book angle folds](#)

Topic #1: Historic treaties

1. Who are the parties involved in historic treaties in Canada?
2. What is a treaty?
3. Discuss one historic treaty that exists between the First Nations and the Crown. Outline three specific rights and obligations that are in this treaty.
4. What Indigenous rights are recognized in the Constitution Act?
5. Indigenous Peoples in Canada have suffered under colonial policies and

Treaties, Heart Gardens and the Crown



ideologies that are in opposition to the original spirit and intent of the treaties. Discuss one example that you feel was not fair towards Indigenous people and explain why.

6. Although the government is responsible for upholding treaty relationships, the Crown has an important role to play as a treaty partner in working towards truth and reconciliation. How can the Crown support truth and reconciliation? Give at least two examples.

Topic #2: Heart Gardens

1. What is a Heart Garden?
2. On a map, locate where there are some Heart Gardens planted throughout Canada.
3. Select one Heart Garden. What does the layout of the garden look like? Why is the layout significant for the Indigenous people in that area?
4. What are some of the plants in the garden? Discuss at least 3-4 different plants and their importance to the Indigenous people of the area.
5. Why are the gardens an important symbol of the Crown's relationship with Indigenous Peoples?
6. The gardens are "a space meant to center Indigenous teachings." How can the Crown support truth and reconciliation through these gardens? Give at least two examples.

Display the finished pop-up books for a gallery walk for the school community to view.

Extend your geographical thinking

- Teachers and students can plant their own Heart Garden on school grounds to honour the victims and survivors of the residential school system.

Accommodations and supports

- Students can choose to create a video instead of a pop-up book. The video can be made using a variety of mediums, using tools such as PowerPoint or Powtoon.
- For the students who need a greater challenge, the pop-up pages can be more creative. For example, there can be more than one pop-up per page and can include pull tabs or flip tabs.

Assessment opportunities

- Throughout the work periods, it is advised that the teacher continues to help students with their research to improve the quality of their answers and creativity of the pop-up book.
- The pop-up books can be marked using the following guidelines:
 - Cover: Includes an illustration, title, and student's name. Font and colors fit the emotional content of the book. The graphic illustrates the theme of the book.
 - Content: Text is of high quality and provides a complete picture of the topic. All facts in the book are accurate and all questions are answered. Booklet includes educational information relevant to the topic and is well organized. Writing mechanics are of high quality.
 - Presentation: Pop-up book is of high quality. The work done exceeds all expectations and shows student's pride in their work. Booklet is legible, coherent, and easy to understand. Background, artwork, and pop-ups are colourful, interesting, and neatly done.