

First Nations Studies in the Grade 9 Curriculum

Grade 8-10 Integrated Research Package (1997) focused on Grade 9

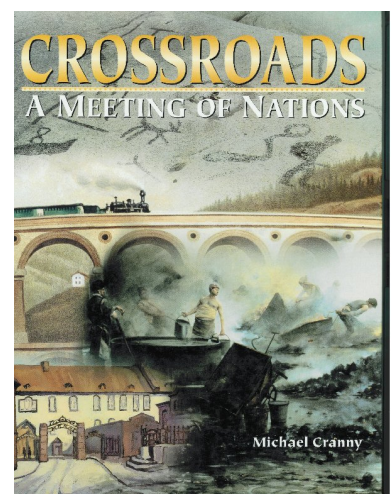
Material

- **Summary and Critique:** (***) denotes reference to Aboriginal studies)
(~~~ denotes areas that could have reference to Aboriginal studies if a teacher decides to draw those conclusions)
 - Applications of Social Studies, students are expected to be able to:
 - Identify and clarify a problem, an issue, or an inquiry
 - Select and summarize information from primary and secondary print and non-print sources, including electronic sources
 - Assess the reliability, currency, and objectivity of different interpretations of primary and secondary sources ~~~
 - Defend a position on a controversial issue after considering a variety of perspectives
 - Plan, revise, and deliver formal oral and written presentations ~~~
 - Co-operatively plan, implement, and assess a course of action that addresses the problem, issue, or inquiry initially identified
 - Society and Culture: Europe and North America from 1500 to 1815, students are expected to be able to:
 - Analyze the relationship between Aboriginal people and Europeans and explain the role of each in the development of Canada ***
 - Describe daily life in Aboriginal communities, New France, and British North America ***
 - Assess how identity is shaped by a variety of factors, including: family; gender; belief systems; ethnicity; nationality ~~~
 - Describe how different forms of artistic expression reflect the society in which they are produced ~~~
 - Analyze roots of present-day regional, cultural, and social issues within Canada ~~~
 - Politics and Law: Europe and North America from 1500 to 1815, students are expected to be able to:
 - Define colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism ~~~
 - Analyze factors that contribute to revolution and conflict ~~~
 - Analyze the contributions of the English, French, and American revolutions in the development of democratic concepts
 - Investigate the roots of Canada's political and legal systems, including the development of two legal systems from two cultures
 - Evaluate the changing nature of law and its relation to social conditions of the times
 - Economy and Technology: Europe and North America from 1500 to 1815, students are expected to be able to:
 - Assess how economic systems contributed to the development of early Canada ~~~
 - Analyze reasons for the initial exploration and settlement of North America

- Analyze effects of colonialism on trade and conflict ~~~
- Assess the impact of the fur trade on exploration and settlement ~~~
- Identify factors that influenced growth and development of industry
- Evaluate the effects of the Industrial Revolution on society and the changing nature of work
- Environment: Europe and North America from 1500 to 1815, students are expected to be able to:
 - Construct, interpret, and use graphs, tables, grids, scales, legends, contours, and various types of maps
 - Describe and compare North America's diverse geographical regions ~~~
 - Identify major exploration routes and historical events in the development of Canada ~~~
 - Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which Aboriginal people interact with their environment ***
 - Explain the role of Aboriginal people in the fur trade and in the exploration of North America ***
 - Assess the role of geographical factors in the development of trade and settlement in Canada and other colonies ~~~
- It is apparent through the use of *** and ~~~ that the IRP makes only a few direct references to Aboriginal peoples. The majority of the time it is up to the individual teacher as to whether or not they chose to use Aboriginal studies in their classroom. This is problematic because the study of Aboriginal history may not be taught uniformly across all classrooms.
- References to First Nations peoples are in described in ways for students to compare and contrast First Nations societies (using information from the past) with present day “Canadian” society. This form of teaching is not constructive for teach Native history. Instead it teaches Aboriginal history in a Eurocentric form, which maintains white privilege and reiterates the status quo.

Crossroads: A Meeting of Nations by Michael Cranny

- **Summary and Critique:**
 - Chapter One: The Modern Age. Summary of Grade 8 material, as well as an overview of Grade 9 material. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Two: The Fight for Democracy and the English Civil War. The information was set in England, no mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Three: Revolution in France. The chapter dealt with the crisis in France and the end of the monarchy. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Four: The Napoleonic Era. The chapter follows Napoleon's rise to power and his European conquests. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.

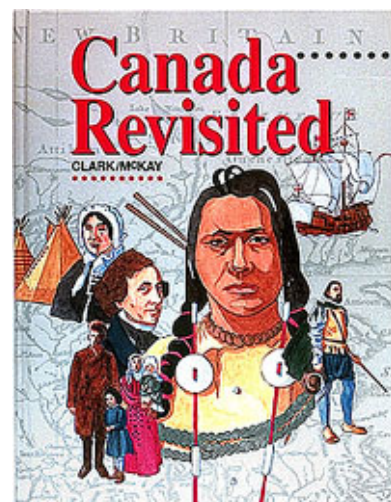


- Chapter Five: The Industrial Revolution. This chapter focused on the Industrial Revolution in Europe. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
- Chapter Six: Regional Geography of North America. This chapter dealt with the geography of North America. No mention of First Nations people in Canada or their relationship with their environment.
- Chapter Seven: The Native Peoples of Canada. This chapter gives an overview of the Inuit, the Iroquois, the Plains Peoples, the Plateau People, and the Peoples of the Northwest Coast. The text describes iconic information about each of the classifications of the First Nations. It does not, however, describe the place of each Native society within a Canadian context. The categorization of the Aboriginal groups is problematic as it generalizes that all groups acted in similar ways.
- Chapter Eight: Arrival in Canada. First Nations peoples are mentioned in the context of the fur trade, as well as the economic benefit they were to the Europeans in both the fur trade and the clashes between the French and English colonists. This is problematic as it situates Aboriginal studies in the past, and makes no reference to the current Aboriginal histories.
- Chapter Nine: Canada Moves West. The text describes Natives as being entrepreneurs within the fur trade. This chapter once again situates First Nations people in the context of the economic gains they provided for Europeans. There is no mention of Aboriginal sentiments towards the Europeans.
- Chapter Ten: The American Revolution and British North America. This chapter provides one page of information on “Native Peoples’ Resistance.” The brief segment mentions Pontiac and his desire to unite all Aboriginal communities in the interior of North America. There is little mention of any First Nations peoples until the segment on the War of 1812, and the Tale of Tecumseh.

***Canada Revisited* by Penney Clark and Roberta McKay**

- **Summary and Critique:**

- Chapter One: “The First People (up to the 1400s). The chapter’s focus is on cooperation and decision-making, while power and conflict are minor themes. The chapter briefly describes the origins of the First People: either due to the Beringia theory of a land bridge between North America and Siberia, or a Native creationist story. The chapter provides a quick overview on the different First Nations groups: The Plains People, The Iroquois, and the Northwest Coast People. Due to the over-generalized terms given to the three Native groups covered by the textbook, the individuality of



each First Nations society is lost. The “First People” chapter is the shortest chapter in the entire textbook. The chapter gives the impression that First Nations people lived in the past, and that they do not share a place in present society.

- Chapter Two: European Exploration (up to 1670). In the Chapter Focus the authors explain that the terms *exploration* and *discovery* refer only to the Europeans throughout the text. The text briefly discusses Native and European Interaction (one page), giving the sense that all the interactions were exchanges in technology. The First Nations people were once again discussed in the context of the *coureurs de bois* (runners of the woods), where they assisted the European fur trade network. The chapter gives no mention to the wars waged against Native communities, or the affect it had on the First Nations peoples.
- Chapter Three: New France: A Royal Government (1663-1760). The chapter mentions First Nations peoples in the context of missionary work (one sentence). No mention of the territorial displacement of any group of Natives.
- Chapter Four: Struggle for Control (1670-1774). As part of the Cultural Exchange, the First Nations peoples were described as losing the skills required to make weapons and utensils. Natives were once again only mentioned in the context of the fur trade. This provides an overgeneralized account of the First Nations peoples.
- Chapter Five: The American Revolution (1775-1783). First Nations peoples were not mentioned in this chapter.
- Chapter Six: The Loyalists (1776-1815). The Iroquois were described as being Loyalists. The textbook gives the example of Thayendanegea (1742-1807) as leader of the Mohawks, and a Loyalist, who moved his community onto the land around the Grand River (in present day southwestern Ontario). In addition, Chief Tecumseh of the Shawnee was provided as an example of the “Native” role in the War of 1812. In this chapter First Nations content was based on how certain Native men (as representatives of their community) were loyal to the British and fought alongside them against the Americans.
- Chapter Seven: Upper and Lower Canada (1815-1838). The First Nations were briefly mentioned in the context of the fur trade, and the amalgamation of the French and British fur trade, under the name of the Hudson’s Bay Company. The chapter gives the sense that Natives were outside of the designated borders of Upper and Lower Canada due to the lack of reference to them.
- Chapter Eight: Planting the Seed of Nationhood (1838-1855). No mention of First Nations peoples. This is difficult to understand, as there were many conflicts and agreements between Europeans and Natives during this time.
- Chapter Nine: The Drive to Nationhood (1854-1868). The text describes that First Nations people did not have any input in Confederation. However, the text does not provide any explanation as to why there were

excluded from negotiations and policies that directly affected them. The text provides a brief overview of a few different cultures that have added much to our history; however, First Nations peoples were not mentioned.

- Chapter Ten: The Nation Expands (1800-1873). First Nations groups were mentioned in the context of Manitoba's entrance into Confederation. The text gave an overview of the Metis before Confederation, and then once again in the context of the Red River Resistance.
- Chapter Eleven: The Nation Has Growing Pains (1873-1911). The Indian Act, 1876, was briefly described (in two points). The text did not provide any detail as to how it affected First Nations peoples. In the final chapter of the textbook, the text finally begins to describe the conflict between Aboriginal peoples and their place in Canadian law. The text, however, continues to brush over the true reasons for conflict and instead highlights only a few reasons for discontent. Once again, the text provides generalized explanations, which are not true for every Aboriginal group across Canada. This is problematic as it may lead students to believe that First Nations cultures are the same across Canada, and that each community reacted similarly to the formation of Canada.

Overall Critique

- First Nations studies are given a backseat in priority throughout the grade nine curriculum. Instead the curriculum focuses on European settlement and expansion across Canada. When First Nations peoples are mentioned, it is generally in the context of their role in the economic expansion of North America. More often than not, First Nations people are grouped together as one entity and are generalized culturally. Not only are First Nations groups combined and discussed as one entity, the majority of the information provided about the Aboriginals tends to originate in the Eastern Aboriginal communities. There is little information given about Aboriginal communities in the West. This is problematic as it can lead students to believe that all Aboriginal communities are identical. Furthermore, there are only a few instances in the IRP that directly reference Aboriginal studies. For the most part it is up to the individual teacher as to whether or not they chose to incorporate First Nations studies into their classrooms. The lack of Aboriginal studies requirement in the grade nine IRP and textbooks is troubling as it continues to maintain European *white* advantages and restates the status quo.