

First Nations Studies in the Grade 8 Curriculum

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

Summary:

1. Application of Social Studies:

- identify and clarify a problem, an issue, or an inquiry
- gather and organize a body of information from primary and secondary print and non-print sources, including electronic sources
- interpret and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary sources
- assess a variety of positions on controversial issues
- plan, revise, and deliver written and oral presentations
- co-operatively plan and implement a course of action that addresses the problem, issue, or inquiry initially identified

2. Society and Culture – Civilizations Through Time 500-1600:

It is expected that students will:

- identify factors that influence the development and decline of world civilizations
- compare daily life, family structures, and gender roles in a variety of civilizations
- describe a variety of diverse cultural traditions and world religions
- demonstrate awareness of artistic expression as a reflection of the culture in which it is produced
- identify periods of significant cultural achievement, including the Renaissance
- describe how societies preserve identity, transmit culture, and adapt to change

3. Politics and Law - Civilizations Through Time 500-1600:

It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate understanding of the tension between individual rights and the responsibilities of citizens in a variety of civilizations
- assess the impact of contact, conflict, and conquest on civilizations
- describe various ways individuals and groups can influence legal systems and political structures
- explain the development and importance of government systems

4. Economy and Technology - Civilizations Through Time 500-1600:

It is expected that students will:

- compare basic economic systems and different forms of exchange
- analyze the effect of commerce on trade routes, settlement patterns, and cultural exchanges
- compare the changing nature of labour in rural and urban environments
- describe the impact of technological innovation and science on political, social, and economic structures

5. Environment - Civilizations Through Time 500-1600:

It is expected that students will:

- construct, interpret, and use graphs, tables, grids, scales, legends, and various types of maps
- locate and describe major world landforms, bodies of water, and political boundaries on maps
- locate and describe current and historical events on maps
- describe how physical geography influenced patterns of settlement, trade, and exploration
- analyze how people interacted with and altered their environments, in terms of: population, settlement patterns, resource use and cultural development

Pathways: Civilizations Through Time by Michael Cranny

- Summary and Critique:
 - Chapter One: Europe's Early Middle Ages. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Two: Europe's High Middle Ages. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Three: The Civilization of Early China. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Four: The Early Arab World. No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Five: Europe's Late Middle Ages: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Six: Medieval Japan: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Seven: European Renaissance: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
 - Chapter Eight: Navigators and Sea Dogs: No mention of First Nations people in Canada. There is mention however of

Aboriginal people in Central and South American upon the arrival of the Spaniards.

- Chapter Nine: Emergence of the Nation State: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
- Chapter Ten: Islamic Spain and the Ottoman Empire: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
- Chapter Eleven: Indian: Survival of the Spirit: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
- Chapter Twelve: Africa: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.
- Chapter Thirteen: The World Power: No mention of First Nations people in Canada.

Overall Critique:

The history of Canadian First Nations people is not covered in the grade 8 curriculum. The textbook addresses the histories of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. There is no discussion of North America around the time that Columbus “discovered” America. There are very little opportunities for teachers of grade 8 social studies to incorporate First Nations into their classrooms by using this textbook. There are opportunities however if a teacher did not use this text. Teachers could include their own unit of First Nations in North America in the mid 15th century. Or teachers could create a link between the First Nations in Central and South America during the conquest, to the conquest of North America First Nations. The IRP’s allow for First Nations people’s histories to be included into the grade 8 curriculum, teachers just need to be resourceful and find alternative sources from the standard textbook.