

**Grade Level:** Social Studies 11

**Topic:** Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

**Unit 4:** (includes topics that exemplify mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples, including right to vote 1960, White Paper 1969, Meech Lake Accord, Assembly of First Nations, Oka 1990)

**Textbook:** p. 384-385 “Acceptance at Last? Aboriginal Peoples in Canada”

**Title:** What do Aboriginal Rights Have to do with Justice?

**Objectives:**

- Students will have a workable definition of what it means to be ‘just,’ including an understanding of the subjectivity of this term in history and current events
- Students will know more about the struggles for/against aboriginal recognition and land, cultural and ancestral rights and identity in Canada
- Students will be able to identify bias in primary documents
- Students will begin to form their own ethics regarding minority rights in Canada

**Corresponding PLOs:**

‘Skills and Processes of Social Studies:’ apply critical thinking—including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, and defending a position—to make reasoned judgments about a range of issues, situations, and topics

‘Society and Identity:’ 1) assess the development and impact of Canadian social policies and programs related to immigration, the welfare state, and minority rights 2) demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by Aboriginal people in Canada during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their responses, with reference to residential schools, reserves, self-government, treaty negotiations 3) represent what it means to be Canadian with reference to distinctive Canadian programs and policies

**Rationale:**

This lesson is to teach students how slippery a definition of justice can be in a multicultural society, and how the actions of our forefathers directly influence our actions and lives today in that same society. Students will recognize and empathize with both ‘sides’ in this issue, and decide for themselves where they might fit in the spectrum of these competing views.

**Expected Background Knowledge:** As this Unit comes toward the end of the textbook and is located in the last unit of the IRP it is expected that the students will have considered minority rights more generally and also the treatment of aboriginals during colonization and throughout the early twentieth century. They will have knowledge of both the history of residential schools and colonial history of Canada, as well as the separatist movement in Quebec as a basis for comparison for this topic.

## Lesson Plan One Assignment One

### **Introduction:**

*[10min]* Ask students to define ‘justice.’ What does this mean and what can it mean? What can it mean to be ‘just’ in society or in a person? Use classroom discussion format. Come up as a class with a workable definition and write on the board for everyone to see for the rest of the class.

*[5min]* Draw students attention to definition of ‘Aboriginal Rights’ on board, written next to definition of justice (teacher has written definition before class, yet preferably covered until now)

*[5min]* Introduce topic title to the class and explain to the class that you are going to read one man’s opinion of the Aboriginal rights in Canada during the 1970s. Introduce both the author of the words and the context. Read the document to the class aloud in gripping oratory

### **Body of Lesson:**

*[15-25min]* Divide the class into groups of three or four, giving everyone a passage and a list of questions (see ‘Breakdown of Primary Source and Questions’ below). Ask them to discuss the passage and answer the questions together in their groups. Ask groups to appoint ‘roles’ to each member: Facilitator (‘in charge’ of group discussion, keeps time, makes sure people are on track – each person has about a minute to respond to each question), Recorder (records group responses in written form on slip of paper), Summarizer (summarizes out each person’s points out loud after each question to help recorder), Reporter (relates to rest of the class the main points of group discussion).

*[10-15min.]* Show full quote on overhead projector and ask each group to relate to the rest of the class one or two of their findings on the different parts of the reading. Make notes on the sides of the transparent to clarify key expressions and concepts as the students elucidate.

### **Conclusion:**

*[10-15min]* Lecture on the treatment of aboriginal rights under Trudeau in the 1970s, and Mulroney in the 1980s including White and Red Papers, Meech Lake Negotiations/Accord and the Constitution Act; how they affected aboriginal rights and how they would set the stage for the treatment of aboriginal peoples in the latter half of the twentieth century. Focus largely on the ‘red paper’ as Native response to Trudeau’s proposed legislation. Describe what exactly aboriginal rights are in the context of this speech and how we understand them in Canada.

*[10min]* Ask the class to answer the last set of questions on a slip of paper and hand in as an ‘exit slip’ at the end of the class. Write a minimum of 2 sentences for each question; if they don’t have an opinion, to write why they do not. Tell them they can include personal experience or learned knowledge in their response. (If time, take up answers together and get another workable definition on the board in answer to last group question; if not, start next class with a summary of what you, the teacher, has learned about student’s opinions on this topic from their responses).

**Assessment:**

Students will be assessed for participation during class and group discussion, for engaging in the activities prepared by the teacher for the lesson, and for fulfilling their roles during the group work. Criteria to assess participation:

- Respectful dialogue/questions and an awareness of the opinions/feelings of others
- Thoughtful, detailed responses orally from assigned questions to the rest of class
- Spirit of inquiry and respectful challenge of others' stereotypes or unfounded assertions

Students will also be assessed after class on their written responses to last four questions posed in class. If time is short, students can choose to answer two of the four or teacher can assign two or three of the four. Criteria to assess written responses:

- Inclusion of a variety of ideas learned from class, including touching on answers to the questions posed in group work, ideally incorporating the ideas of other groups
- Inclusion of key concepts (justice), themes (minority rights), and factual events (White Paper or the separatist movement) learned from this lesson or others to support answers
- A high degree of personal reflection/insight and inclusion of own personal definitions or experiences with the topic

**Full Text Document Source for Lesson One**

"We won't recognize aboriginal rights. We can go on adding bricks of discrimination around the ghetto in which Indians live, and at the same time helping them preserve certain cultural traits and certain ancestral rights. Or we can say you are at a cross roads - the time is now to decide whether the Indians will be a race apart in Canada, or whether they will be Canadians of full status... Perhaps the treaties shouldn't go on forever. It's inconceivable, I think, that in a given society one section of a society should have a treaty with the other section of society. We must all be equal under the laws and we must not sign treaties amongst ourselves. Indians should become Canadians as all other Canadians. This is the only basis on which I see our society can develop as equals. But aboriginal rights, this really means saying, 'We were here before you. You came and cheated us, by giving us some worthless things in return for vast expanses of land, and we want to reopen this question. We want you to preserve our aboriginal rights and to restore them to us.' And our answer - our answer is 'no. "We can't recognize aboriginal rights because no society can be built on historical 'might-have-beens...' We will be just in our time. That is all we can do. We will be just today."

- Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, speaking to the Liberal Association of Vancouver, Seaforth Armories, Vancouver, 1969

**Extension:**

The next two classes will be devoted to an extension of this topic and the topic of minority rights in Canada. The next class will include the analysis of similar quotes from Native American sources concerning justice and the treaties, an example source of which is listed below. Particular emphasis will be placed on Aboriginal views and reaction to government policies in the last quarter of the twentieth century, such as in the Oka Crisis and the class action lawsuit undertaken in Canada for reparations for residential schools. Students will at the end of this lesson sequence (3 lessons total) be asked to write a reflective paper in the last (third) class comparing a time in their lives when they felt they were being treated ‘unjustly’ to a topic relating to the experience of aboriginal peoples in Canada and their struggle for specific rights (ie: Oka or the White Paper). They can also choose to write the paper on a time when they treated somebody ‘unjustly,’ reflecting on their experience with parallels to the aboriginal experience in Canada.

**Example Document Next Lesson Two:**

“...In British Columbia and a number of other provinces, there are no treaties, no agreements. So as far as the legal situation is concerned the issue has not been settled and this is what we're talking about is the unsundered title of Indian people to the province we now know as British Columbia, that's what we're dealing with”.

- (Philip Paul, Director of Land Claims Research, audio recording, 1972, UBCIC fonds, file Ac 10. Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Resource Centre.)

## 1. Section One (two groups)

"We won't recognize aboriginal rights. We can go on adding bricks of discrimination around the ghetto in which Indians live, and at the same time helping them preserve certain cultural traits and certain ancestral rights. Or we can say you are at a cross roads - the time is now to decide whether the Indians will be a race apart in Canada, or whether they will be Canadians of full status..."

- What might 'bricks of discrimination' be in his mind?
- How are 'aboriginal rights' and 'discrimination' connected here?
- What choice does he believe that Native Americans have?
- Who is giving them that choice?

## 2. Section Two (two groups)

"...Perhaps the treaties shouldn't go on forever. It's inconceivable, I think, that in a given society one section of a society should have a treaty with the other section of society. We must all be equal under the laws and we must not sign treaties amongst ourselves. Indians should become Canadians as all other Canadians. This is the only basis on which I see our society can develop as equals."

- Why doesn't he think that treaties should exist in society?
- What might he mean when he says we should all be Canadians?
- Are Native Americans 'Canadian' like other Canadians are? Why or why not?
- Can you think of other groups that enjoy different 'rights' in Canada? Who and why?

## 3. Section Three (three groups)

"But aboriginal rights, this really means saying, 'We were here before you. You came and cheated us, by giving us some worthless things in return for vast expanses of land, and we want to reopen this question. We want you to preserve our aboriginal rights and to restore them to us.' And our answer - our answer is 'no. "We can't recognize aboriginal rights because no society can be built on historical 'might-have-beens...' We will be just in our time. That is all we can do. We will be just today."

- How do you think he is feeling?
- Who is the 'we' that he refers to when he says 'We will be just today'?
- What might he mean when he says 'historical might-have-beens'?
- Why won't he reopen the question of land rights?

## Last Set of Questions for Whole Class (Exit Slip):

- How might Trudeau's past and politics this influence his opinion on rights?
- What does 'being just' in Canada mean to you?
- Do you agree with Trudeau? Why or Why Not?
- What do aboriginal rights have to do with justice?