

Lesson Plan

1. Context

a. **Course:** Social Justice, Grade 12

i. **Course Throughlines:** What is Social Justice? What are ethics? Do we live in a Socially Just and Ethical society?

b. **Unit:** First Nations: Contemporary challenges

c. **Unit Question:** Do the 20th Century changes in the treatment of First Nations Peoples in Canada represent a period of progress, decline or stasis?

d. **Background Knowledge:** This lesson would be one of three based on First Nations health care in a “First Nations: Contemporary Challenges” unit, which would follow a unit on “Colonization”. This unit would serve as a closing unit in the First Nations 12 curriculum, so students would be familiar with:

i. Basic Terminology: Social Justice, Ethics, Ethical, Racism, etc.

2. **Lesson Title (Critical Challenge):** “Who’s In Charge Here?”: How does the *Indian Act* of 1876 continue to affect First Nations health care in contemporary society, and do its effects represent progress, decline or stasis?

3. Rationale:

It is important that students not only recognize social injustice in Canada today in terms of First Nations, but that they understand the historical relationship between the country and First Nations. The *Indian Act* of 1876 is one of the most defining elements of that relationship, and there are many issues inherent in the document. For one, it is a product of its time. What’s more, it is a vague document that has been left wide open to interpretation for over a century since. In order for students to understand *why* First Nations health care is such a challenge in contemporary Canadian society, they must understand the *Indian Act*.

Understanding the *Indian Act*, however, is no small feat. The language is dense, complicated, ornate and colonial. This lesson aims to teach students how to dissect such language, a skill they can apply later on when they encounter similar historical documents. Because the *Indian Act* is vague, the goal is not so much that the students generate an exact definition, or a correct interpretation of the passage in question (73), but that they come to understand how difficult that would be.

By the of the lesson, students will be able to link their current understanding of “ethics” and “social justice” to a case study of “Jordan’s Story.” By reading this present-day tragedy first, students will be hooked at the beginning. The class discussion after reading the story together will allow students to orient themselves and their moral stances around the issue and think about hey they feel/think about it on a personal level. The quick reading of “The Aboriginal Health Legislation and Policy Framework in Canada”, 2011. National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, introduction and “Background” section, will give the students a simplified explanation of the causes of “Jordan’s Story”, and teach how the *Indian Act* continues to affect and complicate First Nations health care.

The PowerPoint presentation and class activity that follows, along with the inclusion of “Words to Watch” lists, is geared towards ensuring understanding and teaching students to critically analyze complicated text that is integral to their understanding of social justice issues. The *Indian Act* is a very difficult text, but by extracting one of the passages, drawing out the brick words, defining them as a class with visuals, and then re-writing the definition in their own words, students will better understand it. They will also see that, even in plain modern English, the *Indian Act* is vague, which causes confusion not only to them, but at a government level, too.

These three activities together will equip students to explain, in basic terms, why First Nations health care is such a challenge in Canada as demonstrated in their homework assignment (a summary of “Jordan’s Story” to be written on the back of the handout and passed in the following day).

4. Objectives (Prescribed Learning Outcomes):

Defining Social Justice

A1: Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and terminology of social justice, including

- Equity and equality
- Ethics
- Human Rights
- Oppression

A3: Apply critical thinking skills to a range of social justice issues, situations, and topics

A4: Analyse selected social justice issues from an ethical perspective

A7: Demonstrate attributes and behaviours that promote social justice, including

- Recognizing injustice
- Fair-mindedness
- Empathy
- Taking action

Recognizing and Analysing Social Injustice

B1: Describe social injustice based on characteristics including

- Race and ethnicity
- Socioeconomic status

B2: Analyse causes of social injustice

B3: Describe consequences of social injustice

B4: Analyse specific examples of injustice in Canada related to characteristics such as

- race and ethnicity
- socioeconomic status

B5: Analyse the roles played by legislation, the courts, public policy, and other forms of government action in promoting or failing to promote social justice in Canada

B6: Assess various methods and models of promoting social justice

Key Elements:

- Examples of marginalized and oppressed groups (historical and contemporary, Canada and global)
- Causes of social injustice (maintaining the power dynamic status quo)
- Consequences of social injustice (inequity, prejudice)
- Case studies of Social Injustice in Canada
- Role of legislation, public policy, and other forms of government action in Canada

Moving Toward a Socially Just World

C2: apply systemic analysis to propose solutions to specific cases of social injustice

C3: implement an appropriate plan for action on a selected local, provincial, national, or international social justice issue

5. Resources:

- 'Jordan's Story' Handout: Worksheet including: "Words to Watch" vocabulary and "Check Your Understanding" homework section
- "The Aboriginal Health Legislation and Policy Framework in Canada", 2011. National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. Introduction and "Background" section and an accompanying "Words to Watch" list
- Powerpoint Presentation: "Contemporary Challenges: Health Care – Whose Jurisdiction Is It Anyway?"

Activities:

Time	Activity	Resources
25 minutes	<p><u>Introduction/Pre-Reading Activity: “Jordan’s Story”</u></p> <p>Teacher: “Today we are starting a new section in our First Nations 12 unit on Contemporary Challenges. We’re going to be focusing on challenges in health care, but before we delve any deeper I’d first like to read you guys a short story and see what you think of it.”</p> <p>Pass out “Jordan’s Story” worksheet, tell students to have a look at the “Words to Watch” section as you distribute sheets.</p> <p>Read “Jordan’s Story” out loud to class and go through questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) First, are there any questions on any terms not in the “Words to Watch” list? 2) Why did Jordan spend his entire life in a hospital instead of being cared for at home? 3) If you were in Jordan’s position, would the same thing happen to you? Why or why not? 4) In your opinion, does what happened to Jordan seem <i>ethical</i>? 5) Why do you think the Private Member’s Motion for “Jordan’s Principle” has rarely been put into action? 6) How do you think the government should act in cases like Jordan’s? 	“Jordan’s Story” worksheet
20 minutes	<p><u>Reading:</u> “The Aboriginal Health Legislation and Policy Framework in Canada”, Introduction and “Background” section</p> <p>Pass out the reading and the accompanying “Words to Watch” sheet to students. Instruct students to either a) read in small groups of 3-4 or b) read on their own. Let students choose or if some students’ reading levels are very low put them in groups so they can help each other. Instruct students to highlight words that are unfamiliar to them as they, and check the “Words to Watch” section on the last page. Tell students if there are any words they don’t understand or any other questions they can raise their hands and ask you.</p>	“The Aboriginal Health Legislation and Policy Framework in Canada” and “Words to Watch” list
29 Minutes	<p><u>Closing/Post-Reading Activity:</u> PowerPoint to dissect Act 73 of the <i>Indian Act</i></p> <p>Draw students’ attention to note ii on the bottom of page 2. “Did anyone notice this note? Who can read it out loud?” Have someone read it out loud. “Now he’s a tougher question; who can explain what it means?”</p> <p>Let students give it a try, then say “let’s take a deeper look at this, because this really is the root of the problem. This could help us understand why Jordan’s story happened.”</p> <p>Go through PowerPoint. See Instructions below each slide.</p> <p>Critical Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Who does this policy apply to? Status Indians? Aboriginal people living on reservations/not living on reservations? 2) Who does it leave out? 3) Who is financially responsible for Aboriginal health care? 4) There is an obesity and diabetes epidemic among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. If the Department of Indian Affairs is supposed to “furnish sufficient aid” for the “relief” of suffering persons, why do you think that is? 5) Does this policy seem ethical? 6) Looking at Jordan’s story, has the Canadian government made much process since the <i>Indian Act</i> was written in 1876? 	<i>Indian Act</i> PowerPoint Presentation

1 Minute	<p><u>Summary:</u> Explain homework assignment</p> <p>“For homework I’d like you to fill in the space on the back of your handout about “Jordan’s Story” and try and use the information from our discussion and PowerPoint presentation. I’ll check it tomorrow, but you can get started now if you like.”</p>	“Jordan’s Story” Handout

Assessment:

Assessment will be based on performance during the class discussion in the pre-reading activity and the question period during the post-reading period. In order to cover different forms of assessment and be fair to all styles of learners, homework will be assigned as well and students’ short, written summaries of “Jordan’s Story” and why it happened will also be marked.

At the end of the 3-part Unit students will be asked to write letters to the government expressing their views on the neglect of “Jordan’s Principle” and suggesting solutions.

Language:

To ensure that all students understand the brick words, “Words to Watch” lists will be provided for each new classroom unit. Students will also be asked to record vocabulary in their notebooks during discussions (these definitions will be represented visually on the PowerPoint presentation).

Alternative Learners:

To accommodate students with hearing impairments, written copies of the documents examined in class are provided to each student, as are the “Words to Watch” lists and a PowerPoint presentation is viewed as a group. These measures ensure that everyone can follow along or read alone if they cannot hear the teacher reading out loud. Copies of the PowerPoint presentation, itself, can also be provided to students with visual impairments in cases where they may be unable to see the screen.

Contemporary Challenges: Health Care (Handout)

“Jordan’s Story”

“Jordan River Anderson, a young child from Manitoba’s Norway House Cree Nation, was born in 1999 with a rare neuromuscular disorder, requiring him to receive care from multiple service providers. He spent his entire short life (5 years) living in an institutional hospital setting, not for medical reasons but because of a jurisdictional dispute between federal and provincial governments and departments over who should pay for his home care. Frustration over these types of jurisdictional disputes have so enraged Aboriginal leaders and children’s advocates that a Private Member’s Motion (M-296) was introduced in the House of Commons. More commonly referred to as “Jordan’s Principle,” the motion stipulates “that in the event of a jurisdictional dispute over funding for a First Nation child, the government of first contact will pay for services and seek cost-sharing later” (Lett, 2008, p.1256). Despite consensus being reached on Jordan’s Principle in the House and its endorsement by several provinces, no real progress has been made on implementing it.”

- “The Aboriginal Health Legislation and Policy Framework in Canada”, 2011. National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Words to Watch:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Neuromuscular: Affecting both the brain and muscles | 9) Stipulate: To demand something |
| 2) Disorder: Illness or sickness | 10) Private Member’s Motion: A law introduced by a member of the House of Commons when they are not representing any level of government, only their personal interests |
| 3) Institution: A place where people who are mentally or physically challenged are cared for | 11) House of Commons: A lower level of government in Canada |
| 4) Jurisdiction: The area run by a legal authority | 12) Consensus: Agreement among all the members of a group |
| 5) Dispute: Argument, Disagreement | 13) Endorsement: To speak in favour of something |
| 6) Federal: Involving the entire country | 14) Implementing: Making something happen in the real world. |
| 7) Provincial: Involving a province | |
| 8) Advocates: People who support something | |

Questions:

- 1) Why did Jordan spend his entire life in a hospital instead of being cared for at home?
- 2) If you were in Jordan’s position, would the same thing happen to you? Why or why not?
- 3) In your opinion, does what happened to Jordan seem *ethical*?
- 4) Why do you think the Private Member’s Motion for “Jordan’s Principle” has rarely been put into action?
- 5) How do you think the government should act in cases like Jordan’s?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Contemporary Challenges: Health Care

(PowerPoint)

Social Justice 12 – First Nations:
Contemporary Challenges

“Who’s In Charge Here?”

Critical Question: *How does the Indian Act of 1876 continue to affect First Nations health care in contemporary society, and do its effects represent progress, decline or stasis?*

Click to add notes

The *Indian Act* Says:

- *“The Superintendent-General in cases where sick, disabled, or aged and destitute persons are not provided for by the band of Indians in which they are members, may furnish sufficient aid from the funds of the band for the relief of such sick, disabled, aged or destitute persons.”*
(Venne, 1981, p.43, emphasis added)

Click to add notes

... But What Does It *Mean*?

- Superintendent-General: The Minister of Indian Affairs
- Destitute Persons: People who do not have the basic things they need to live (Examples?)
- Band: A group of Status Indians who have land or money set apart for them by the Crown, or who have been declared to be a band for the purpose of the *Indian Act*
- Furnish Sufficient Aid: Provide the help needed
- Funds of the Band: Band's money
- Relief: Comfort? Medicine? Hospital Care?

Go through definitions one at a time. Click once so that only the word/term in question shows. Ask students to suggest/offer potential definitions. After a few suggestions (or if there are none), click again so that the definition is shown on screen. Students should be copying the definitions into notebooks.

Summary:

Indian Act's Definition:

- *"The Superintendent-General in cases where sick, disabled, or aged and destitute persons are not provided for by the band of Indians in which they are members, may furnish sufficient aid from the funds of the band for the relief of such sick, disabled, aged or destitute persons."* (Venne, 1981, p.43, emphasis added)

Our Definition:

- *The Minister of Indian Affairs, in cases where sick, disabled, or aged people, and people who do not have the basic things they need to live, are not are not provided for by their band, may from the provide the help needed from the band's own money for the "relief" of those persons.*

Click once to bring up "*Indian Act's* Definition". Ask students to rephrase it using the new definitions they've written in their notebooks. Copy out a new definition under "Our Definition" – it will probably look something like the example.

Questions:

- Who does this policy apply to? Status Indians? Aboriginal people living on reservations/not living on reservations?
- Who does it leave out?
- Who is financially responsible for Aboriginal health care?
- There is an obesity and diabetes epidemic among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. If the Department of Indian Affairs is supposed to "furnish sufficient aid" for the "relief" of suffering persons, why do you think that is?
- Does this policy seem ethical?
- Looking at Jordan's story, has the Canadian government made much process since the *Indian Act* was written in 1876?

-Ask #1: Take all answers.

-Ask #2: Wait for answers. If no one brings it up, remind them of the word "band." Ask leading question: Does every Aboriginal person belong to a band?

-Ask #3: Make sure students come to the realization that it doesn't say. This is the main issue!

-Ask #4: Get students thinking about ethics (a throughline)

-Ask #5: Tell students you're going to be examining this question deeper over the next few classes.]

Words to Watch! (Handout)

Indigenous: Originating from a place

First Nations: The Indigenous peoples of Canada

Aboriginal: Living or existing in a place from the earliest times

Inuit: Indigenous people from Northern Canada, Greenland and Alaska

Metis: A person in Canada who is of Caucasian and First Nations descent

Status/Registered: A person who meets the definition of "Indian" in the *Indian Act* and is recognized as an Indian by the government of Canada

Reserve: Land that belongs to a First Nation

Legislation: Laws

Policy: A proposed rule

Indian Affairs: The section of the Canadian Government in charge of First Nations in Canada

Indian Act: Canadian statute that concerns registered Indians in Canada

Neuromuscular: Affecting both the brain and muscles

Institution: A place where people who are mentally or physically challenged are cared for

Jurisdiction: The area run by a legal authority
Dispute: Argument or disagreement

Federal: Involving the entire country

Provincial: Involving a province

Municipal: Involving a town

Territory: The space occupied by a specific group

Territorial: Involving the space occupied by a specific group

Advocate: A person who supports something

Stipulate: To demand something

House of Commons: A lower level of the Canadian government

Private Member's Motion: A law introduced by a member of the House of Commons when they are not representing any level of government

Consensus: Agreement among all the members of a group

Endorsement: To speak in favour of something

Implementing: Making something happen in the real world

Synopsis: Shorter version

Authorities: People in power

Self-government: When a group of people is legally in charge of themselves

Mechanisms: Processes or actions taken to achieve a goal

Ambiguity: Not detailed or not offering much information

Subsequent: As a result of, because of something

Supreme Court: The highest court of law in Canada

Predominantly: Mostly

Vagueness: Lacking in detail

Adequately: Good enough