

Division Three (Grade 7 to Grade 9)

Auger, Dale (2007). Mwâkwa Talks to the Loon - A Cree Story for Children

This Cree story tells of Kayas, a talented hunter who knows the ways of the “beings” he hunts. He can even talk to them. But, Kayas grows too proud and loses his gift. His people grow weary and hungry. With the help of the Elders, Kayas learns that he must respect and share the gifts that he has been bestowed. A glossary with a pronunciation guide to Cree words and phrases is included.

Bouchard, David (2003). The Elders Are Watching

This poetic picture book is designed to illuminate the experiences of a boy who learns through his elders about his cultural roots, his connection to the land, animals, water, and sky. David Bouchard noticed Vickers’ paintings and was moved to collaborate with him on this text as an effort to share the beauty of Indigenous culture and the need to respect the environment.

Cutting, Robert (2006). Falling Star

In 1870, a Caucasian baby is rescued by the Lakota people. They name him “Falling Star” and raise him as one of their own. Years later, 1874-1875, the Lakota people are pushed off their land in the Black Hills and forced to live on reservations. Chief Sitting Bull refused and was joined by many others who defeated the U.S. Army at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876. By 1877, Chief Crazy Horse, Chief of the band of Lakota called Oglala. Eventually, he gave up fighting against the U.S. Army and led his people to live on a reservation at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. This text details those two stories to uncover the tensions and the moments of beauty that existed between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the late 1800s (early 19thC) in America.

Eyvindson, Peter (2015). Kookum’s Red Shoes

This is a picture book that compares the protagonist’s experience to that of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, when Dorothy is whisked away by a tornado to Oz. Kookum draws this comparison to her experience throughout the story, from the time the green truck came “knifing” its way down a dirt road from the residential school to her home. A man grabbed her and tossed into the back of truck as a cloud of dust appeared around them (like the tornado in *The Wizard of Oz*).

Florence, Melanie (2015). Missing Nimâmâ

Missing Nimâmâ is the true story of missing and murdered indigenous women written as a free verse picture book. It is told in two voices. The first voice is that of Kateri, a young girl. The second voice, in italicized text, is an ethereal one, that of Kateri’s mother. *Missing Nimâmâ* is heartbreaking. It is soulful and breathtakingly painful. *Missing Nimâmâ* is a haunting story of lives lost and lived and shared, beautifully rendered in words and art.

Fournel, Kelly (2007). Great Women from our First Nations

Fournel, a Métis author, born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, wrote a collection of ten biographical accounts of North American indigenous women's lives as Métis or First Nations community members. Each of these women overcame difficulties connected to discrimination and domination by Europeans (i.e., Indian Agents, Nuns, Priests, Armies). Each indigenous woman proved to be resilient in their struggles. For example, Susan Rochon-Burnett, a Métis Quebecois woman suffered discrimination at school, but despite her struggles, she honed her French language skills and eventually became a successful journalist, radio show producer and owner. She was the first Indigenous woman inducted into the "Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame." Each biographical account illuminates a struggle and how the individual overcame such circumstances and illuminated resilience.

Guest, Jacqueline (2000). Lightning Rider

January Fournier learns that her brother was in a horrible motorcycle accident and has become the prime suspect in string of motorcycle thefts. Jan knows her brother is not guilty but also knows that the local law enforcement, with the exception of Constable McKenna, are not fond of her brother because of his reputation in town. Jan and her brother face obstacles from the townspeople because of their Métis heritage. Throughout the novel, we learn of how she is treated simply because her family claims Métis status. We are also enlightened with a look at traditions of her people and their practices when faced with adversity.

Loyie, Larry with Brissenden, Constance (2005). As Long as the Rivers Flow

This is a four-chapter picture book, an autobiographical (first person) account of the author's life as a boy living near Slave Lake with his family prior to being taken away to St. Bernard's Mission Residential School in northern Alberta. In each chapter, the reader grows closer to understanding Larry's experiences of living as a Cree boy and learning firsthand about his family's traditions (stories of fishing on his own, hunting with his kokom, gathering berries with his siblings and cousins, and camping and listening to stories told by elders). Loyie illuminates how close the family is and how when Lawrence is taken away at ten years old to go to "mission" school, everyone is devastated. When Lawrence returns home at the age of 18, he finds it difficult to pick back up with his family's traditions. His experience of loss is explained in the epilogue.

Olsen, Sylvia with Morris, Rita and Sam, Ann (2001). No Time to Say Goodbye

This is a fictional account of five children from Tsartslip school on Vancouver Island who were sent to live in Kuper Island Residential School, which is a Pacific West Coast island in British Columbia. Their stories are rooted in true stories told by residential school survivors from that school. The stories illuminate their experiences of pain of homesickness and confusion while trying to adjust to a world completely different from their own. Their lives are no longer organized by fishing, hunting, and family, but by bells, line-ups, and chores.

Robertson, David Alexander (2012). Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story

This is a short black and white graphic novel, a biographical (second person) account of Betsy Ross's life. Betsy is an Elder from Cross Lake First Nation. The story is told by protagonists, Daniel and April, two high school students. Daniel has to write an essay about a residential school survivor. April asks her kokum, Betsy Ross, to share her story with Daniel. She shares her story, which is an emotionally poignant account of how she was abandoned by her birth mother who had been abused in a residential school and unable to care for Betsy. Betsy then lived with a new family and she grew very close to them. Her father knew that Betsy would be taken away by priests and nuns to a nearby residential school. To prepare Betsy for this eventuality, he takes her to a beautiful location where the "water crashes over the rocks" and looks like "white sugar" and shares with her that when she remembers this place, she will be touching his heart and their relationship would be stronger than anything; no one could break them apart or take away who she is if she takes time to remember. Betsy recounts how she was abused (i.e., rough treatment, hair cut against her will; asked not to speak Cree; and sexually abused).

Robertson, David Alexander and Blackstone, Madison (2008). The Life of Helen Betty Osborne

This is a short black and white graphic novel, a biographical (second person) account of Helen Osborne's life just before she was murdered. Helen left her home in Norway House, Manitoba to attend Guy Hill Residential School in 1969 and in September 1971, she entered Margaret Barbour Collegiate in The Pas, Manitoba. Two months later, on November 13, 1971, she was brutally murdered by four young, white men. Years later, an inquiry concluded that her murder was the result of racism, sexism, and indifference. *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne* is a graphic novel about Betty's life up to that tragic November day. Her story is told by a young boy named Daniel. The events in Betty's story are true.

Slipperjack, Ruby (2016). Dear Canada: These Are My Words: The Residential School Diary of Violet Pesheens

This is a novel written as a fictional account in diary format about the protagonist, Violet Pesheens, who lived in a village in the Northern Ontario railway settlement, Flint Lake. Violet attended residential school in a nearby city. In the fall of 1966, 14-year-old Violet and seven other children leave Flint Lake for school in the city. *These Are My Words* presents the story of that year through Violet's eyes, starting with the tearful goodbyes as they board the "Train of Tears" (an allusion to the "Trail of Tears", the 1838 forced relocation of the Cherokee nation in the United States, a 1,000 mile forced march in winter, on which a quarter of the Cherokee died.) In *These Are My Words*, the First Nations children heading for the city survive their trip, but it is clear from Violet's account that it was dangerous and poorly planned by Indian Affairs. Drawing from her own experiences at residential school, Ruby Slipperjack creates a brave, yet heartbreaking heroine in Violet, and lets young readers glimpse into an all-too important chapter in our nation's history. The account illuminates her struggles to feel comfortable in this environment because she is stripped of her identity (her name is replaced with a number and her belongings from home are taken from her), and she misses her Grandma. Violet is not making friends easily with Cree girls at her "white" school, and she finds that she is an "outsider" and "everyone just stares" at her. As she stays in the school, she shares her fear of forgetting the things she treasures most: her Anishnabe language, the names of those she knew before, and her traditional customs. Her notebook is the one place she can record all of her worries, and heartbreaks, and memories.

Stellings, Caroline (2010). The Contest

Rosy, a humorous, spunky, dark-haired, girl is the first and only half-Mohawk girl to enter an *Anne of Green Gables* look-alike contest. Rosy meets Lydia, a young girl her age, and they become close friends. The only challenge is that they are both competing in an Anne look-alike contest and they spend the majority of the novel building up to that event.

Sterling, Shirley (1992). My Name is Seepeetza

This novel is written as a first person diary account by the protagonist, who has two names, Seepeetza at home and Martha Stone at residential school. She shares poignantly about her life as a twelve year old girl in a residential school during the late 50s in Kalamak, British Columbia. She provides a clear picture of her identities at school and at home, which encourages the reader to think about where she should have grown up and the methods and quality of her learning between the two different cultures.

Tichenor, Harold (2002). The Blanket: An Illustrated History of the Hudson's Bay Point Blanket

The story of this marvelously utilitarian product has been told in a colorfully illustrated book that covers the blanket's two hundred year history. The book traces the woolen blanket as an item of trade, from the inception of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, to the formal adoption of the point blanket in 1780. During the 1800s, their warmth and durability made them a favorite of the Indigenous peoples, traders and pioneers. Today, these blankets are still essential gear and have accompanied explorers to the top of Everest and to the heart of Antarctica and have been used for everything from sled and boat sails to panning for gold.

Wallace, Mary (2008). Inuksuk Journey – An Artist at the Top of the World

This picture book is the artistic journal of the author's summer trip to the Arctic. It contains a variety of photographs, sketches, and artifacts of Inuit life, including her experiences with Arctic wildlife, hunting, fishing, and living off of the land in traditional ways. Mary also writes about being accompanied by Inuit guides and learns about undisturbed relics of Inuit life dating back thousands of years.

Wilson, Janet (2011). Shannen and the Dream for a School

This is a nonfiction text that tells the story of Shannen Koostachin and the people of Attawapiskat, a Cree community in Northern Ontario, who have been fighting for a new school since the late 1970s when a fuel leak contaminated their original school building. By 2008, Shannen and students at J.R. Nakogee Elementary created a YouTube video describing the poor conditions in their school (smelly portables) and their plea for a decent school. This video captured attention and support from community leaders and children across the country. Because of the momentum, the students decided to visit Ottawa to speak to the Canadian government. Once there, Shannen spoke passionately to the politicians about the need to give indigenous children the opportunity to succeed. The following summer, Shannen was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize. Her passion and that of the other students makes politicians stand up and take notice, and becomes a rallying point for the community and for the country. Tragically, Shannen was killed in a car crash in 2010. Her family,

friends, and supporters are continuing to fight and to honor her memory as they work for equality for children in communities everywhere.