

## Book List Annotations

### Division One (Kindergarten to Grade 3)

Ansloos, Shezza (2015). I Loved Her

This is a picture book that shares a young Métis girl's recollection of her wise and loving grandmother. From singing songs together at the piano to playing indoor games on rainy days, their bond was strong, and the young girl's treasured memories of her grandmother carry her forward.

Blondin, John and Translated by Sundberg, Mary Rose (2009). The Legend of the Caribou Boy

Written in both English and Dene, this simple story revolves around a young boy who is travelling with his extended family in the winter. Over several nights, when the family stops to rest, the boy has recurring dreams. During his sleep, he moans and groans but he forgets his dream upon awakening. The boy's parents and grandfather assist in discovering the issue. The grandfather uses his medicines to determine the problem but finds no answer. The next night, the parents wake to find their son missing. The family tracks the boy and discovers an amazing occurrence - the boy changes into a caribou before their eyes! The boy explains that he is being called to fulfill his destiny and that his transformation is a gift to his family and the Dene people. When the Dene people need food, they should call on him and he will ensure that the people have meat for their families.

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.

Bruchac, Joseph and Bruchac, James (2003). How Chipmunk Got His Stripes

This is an Iroquois original pourquoi tale that is retold by the author who recalls hearing it from a Mohawk storyteller and as a Cherokee tale. This picture book version of the tale is about how the brown squirrel got his stripes. It begins with the protagonist, Big Bear, who brags about being able to be so big and strong that he can do "anything," including stopping the sun from coming up in the morning. Brown Squirrel challenged Big Bear and said that he could not wish away the sun from coming up. It turned out that Brown Squirrel was correct, but instead of accepting his "win" graciously as his grandmother had advised, Brown Squirrel decided to taunt and tease Big Bear for being wrong. The result was that Big Bear caught Brown Squirrel with his claws as the squirrel tried to run away. The claw marks are what created what is now known by such indigenous communities as the reason why brown squirrels have their stripes.

Bruchac, Joseph and Bruchac, James (2005). Turtle's Race with Beaver

This charming fable of brains versus brawn is a great read for all young readers. Upon awakening, after her long winter nap, Turtle sees that her pond has been taken over by Beaver. Beaver challenges Turtle to a race: whoever wins can stay while the other must find a new home. The one who wins the race demonstrates courage and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Campbell, Nicola I. (2005). Shi-shi-etko

Shi-shi-etko is the protagonist of the story and she is about to leave her family to attend residential school. She spends her last days at home filling her heart with the treasures she is about to leave behind - the beauty of her surroundings (creek, grass, sun) and her family - mother, father and grandmother who each share valuable teachings and mentoring (gathering food, hunting, fishing, making medicine, making clothes) that they want her to remember. Shi-shi-etko finds comfort in the beauty around her even though she is about to endure a great loss.

Campbell, Nicola I. (2008). Shin-chi's Canoe

This is the picture book sequel to the award-winning, *Shi-shi-etko*. It tells the story of two children's experiences at residential school. Shi-shi-etko is about to return for her second year, but this time her six-year-old brother, Shin-chi, is going, too. Shi-shi-etko urges her brother to remember their surroundings as they make the long journey to the residential school. Upon their arrival, Shi-shi-etko gives him a tiny cedar canoe, a gift from their father. Shin-chi endures hunger, sadness, and loneliness but, finally, the salmon swim up the river and the children return home for a joyful family reunion. This text is much more explicit about what happened at the residential school (the expectations to use English names, to speak English, to hide treasures from home, to adopt new roles as males and females). It is based on Campbell's interviews of elders who are residential school survivors, so the text represents residential schooling experiences generally in North America.

Dorion, Leah (2009). The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story

Based on a true story the author learned from Elder Frank Tomkins, this charming tale focuses on the boyhood reminiscences of Moushoom as he describes finding the "Great Giving Tree" with his mother and father. The book explains the concept of the giving tree where Métis travellers often left food packages or everyday utensils in a special tree along the trail. This was to ensure that future travellers would have adequate food supplies or necessary tools if required along the trail. The traveller could take something from the cache and in return was obliged to leave something for the next person. The story teaches about the sacred law of reciprocity and emphasizes Métis core values and beliefs including strength, kindness, courage, tolerance, honesty, respect, love, sharing, caring, balance, patience, and most importantly, the connection with the Creator and Mother Earth. The illustrations include representations of traditional Métis cultural symbols and lifestyle practices and integrate the vibrant colours historically used by Métis women in their beadwork and related designs. The book also includes an accompanying narration CD in English and Michif.

Dunphy, Madeleine (2007). Here is the Arctic Winter

This poetic cumulative tale describes the cold, barren Arctic winter and how the arctic wolf, hare, cod, fox, snowy owl, polar bear, ringed seal, and Peary caribou are interdependently linked to each other in the chain of life (food chain). The pattern of the text makes the book easy to recall and retell.

Dupuis, Jenny Kay and Kacer, Kathy (2016). I Am Not a Number

This picture book story is based on a true story about an eight year old girl named Irene who is sent to residential school. Despite being mistreated and having her identity challenged, Irene remembers her mother's words "to stay true to who she is." Her prayers are answered when she and her siblings are sent home for the summer. When it is time to go back to residential school and the Indian Agent comes, Irene and her family have a plan.

Einarson, Earl (2004). The Moccasins

Earl Einarson is a Kyunax First Nations author who writes about a protagonist, a small boy, who tells his story about feeling loved by his foster family. The moccasins that the boy wears become a symbol of the love that he felt while living in this family. He cherishes those moccasins so much that when his son is born, he puts the moccasins on a shelf to give to him when he gets big enough.

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 her into the back of the truck as a cloud of dust appeared around them (like the tornado in *The Wizard of Oz*).

Eyvindson, Peter (1996). Red Parka Mary

*Red Parka Mary* is about how a young Indigenous boy and an elderly woman build what initially appears to be an unlikely friendship. Originally, when the boy first saw Mary, he was skeptical about her because of her appearance (floppy moccasins lined with rabbit fur, thick grey wool socks, Montreal Canadian red toque and "her skin was brown and wrinkled"). Eventually, he came to know her as she gave him berries, and then his mother asked him to return a cup of sugar to Mary. Over time, they had more opportunities to share and to become good friends who exchanged Christmas gifts (a beautiful red parka for Mary and a beautiful red heart on rabbit fur for the boy). By the end of the story, we see a blossoming of an awkward friendship into a warm familial connection.

Goble, Paul (1987). Buffalo Woman

A talented young hunter draws his arrow against a buffalo cow drinking from a stream. Before he releases his arrow, the buffalo transforms into a beautiful and mysterious maiden, whom he knows he must marry. A son is born to the married couple, however, the hunter's tribe shun the Buffalo Woman because she is different and not considered one of them. The young bride and her son leave to return to her people. The hunter's heart compels him to follow, but he has been warned: The Buffalo Nation is angry at the Straight-up People. His love for his family is tested and if he cannot find his wife and son among the many buffalo, they will be lost to him forever. With the help of his son, the hunter passes his test and is given the honor of joining the buffalo. His bravery results in the union between his People and those belonging to The Buffalo Nation. In the telling of this legend, the close interdependent relationship between man and the buffalo is celebrated and the value of the hero sacrificing himself for his family and his people is taught to the next generation.

Hainnu, Rebecca and Ziegler, Anna (2011). A Walk on the Tundra

Rebecca Hainnu shares a glimpse into her own life on the tundra. She tells the story of Inuujaq who is bored, so she decides to join her Grandma for a walk on the tundra. To Inuujaq's amazement, the tundra is filled with interesting and useful plants. Her grandma tells her stories about each plant and different ways the plants can be used. Inuujaq comes to realize the wealth of knowledge that her grandmother holds and embraces the experience so much that she asks to join her again on their next walk. There is a glossary of Inuktitut words and phrases. In addition to an informative storyline that teaches the importance of Arctic plants, this book includes a plant glossary with photographs and scientific information about various plants found throughout the Arctic.

Holloway, Pam (2006). Berries

This is a simple predictable text intended to introduce students to different kinds of berries such as salmonberries, huckleberries, salalberries, and thimbleberries. Because numerous texts in this literature kit and others mention the importance of berries in Cree, Métis, Iroquois and other indigenous communities' medicine-making, ceremonial preparations, and cooking traditions, this text may compliment others that mention these traditions.

Ipellie, Alootook with MacDonald, David (2007). The Inuit Thought of It - Amazing Arctic Innovations

Alootook Ipellie and David MacDonald explore the amazing innovations of traditional Inuit and how their ideas continue to echo around the world. Some inventions are still familiar to us: the one-person watercraft known as a kayak (Inuit name). Other innovations have been replaced by modern technologies (e.g., slitted snow goggles protected Inuit eyes long before sunglasses arrived on the scene). Other innovations were necessary and reflective of Inuit ingenuity (e.g., using human-shaped stone stacks [Inunnguat] to trick and trap caribou). More than 40 Inuit innovations are explored, including: dog sleds, shelter, clothing, kids' stuff, food preservation, and medicine.

Jameson, Catherine (2006). Zoe and the Fawn

This is a story of a young girl and her father and their search for the mother of a visiting fawn. Each time they spot a new animal, Zoe wonders if that is the mother they are looking for. After a long search, they return home to a surprise. The repetitive text and illustrations make this book a great choice for young readers. Animal names are featured in both English and Okanagan Syilx.

Johnson, E. Pauline (2004). The Lost Island

This picture book portrays a boy learning from an elder about a legend from hundreds of years ago about how Sagalie Tyee, a medicine man, who had a vision that the "Island of the North Arm" would no longer exist and "pale faces" would create huge buildings on the coast (what is now Vancouver) and camp there. The elder makes a plea that extends from this Chief Tyee, to never forget about the power of the island, its animals, the water, and the Earth. This legend is about lamenting the loss of land, animals, traditions, and culture as well as courage and perseverance.

Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Pokiak-Fenton, Margaret (2014). Not My Girl

Two years ago, Margaret left her Arctic home for the outsiders' school. Now she has returned and can barely contain her excitement as she rushes towards her waiting family, but her mother stands still as a stone. This strange, skinny child, with her hair cropped short, can't be her daughter. "Not my girl!" she says angrily. Margaret's years at school have changed her. Now ten years old, she has forgotten her language and the skills to hunt and fish. She can't even stomach her mother's food. Her only comfort is in the books she learned to read at school. Gradually, Margaret relearns the words and ways of her people. With time, she earns her father's trust enough to be given a dogsled of her own. As her family watches with pride, Margaret knows she has found her place once more. *Not My Girl* is a poignant story of a determined young girl's struggle to belong.

Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Pokiak-Fenton, Margaret (2013). When I Was Eight

This picture book memoir begins with Olemaun living on the land with her family. Her older sister has attended residential school and brought back a special book about a girl named Alice. Olemaun wants to attend this school too. Reluctantly her father agrees. A rude awakening occurs when Olemaun's long braids are cut off and her warm Inuk clothing is replaced by thin clothes and scratchy underwear. Even her name is taken and she is now known as Margaret. Hard work scrubbing floors and overseen by black-robed nuns was how the students passed their time in this school. Finally, the students are taken to a classroom and Margaret now believes she will at last learn to read. Overcoming her inability to speak English and dealing with the harsh discipline of the nuns, Margaret finally succeeds. She can read her precious book about a magical world and a girl named Alice. Readers can identify with this Inuk girl whose courage and determination help her to overcome the challenges of a foreign culture and learn to read.

Jumbo, Sheyenne and Willett, Mindy (2009). Come and Learn with Me

Nine-year-old Sheyenne lives in Sambaa K'e (Trout Lake), Northwest Territories, and she is the co-author of this text about her life experiences being mentored by the many adult role models in her life (mother, father, grandfather, aunties, uncles). She takes the reader on a journey through her eyes as she re-lives what her community is like in the fall, the season of moose, over two weeks while school is out. This is the fourth book in the popular series *The Land Is Our Storybook* and features the Dehcho region of the Dene.

Krensky, Dr. Stephen (2009). How Coyote Stole the Summer

This is a trickster tale about the protagonist, Coyote, tricking an "Old Woman" and her children into sharing her magic black bag containing summer. Coyote meets Raven who shares this information about the "Old Woman" having a bag containing summer and suggesting a plan for how Coyote might trick her to get the bag away from her. Coyote follows this plan, and to that end, gathers his friends: Wolf, Moose, Elk, Stag, and Antelope to make a plan to steal summer. Although Coyote gets the bag of summer away from the "Old Woman", he decided that instead of enduring "war", he negotiated sharing summer for part of the year. This proposal was deemed to be "fair" and that is how the season of summer came to be understood by Eastern Shoshones indigenous peoples in Wyoming and the grassy plains of the Rocky Mountains.

Kusugak, Michael Arvaarluk (1998). Arctic Stories

In the prologue, the reader learns that in the summer of 1958, U.S., Canadian, and Russian scientists, who were studying ice in a large black helium-filled airship, "ZPG-2", toured Alaska and northern Canada. The problem was that residents of the Arctic Circle (Repulse Bay) had never seen anything like this airship and mistook it for a threat. This book is a collection of stories told from the perspective of Agatha, the protagonist, who lives in Repulse Bay. The author weaves a tapestry of simply told stories, each of which, by skillful use of detail, manages to bring to life the experience of growing up in a small Inuit community. The last story details Agatha's experience of being flown into Chesterfield Inlet to attend residential school.

Mack, Terri (2013). We Greet the Four Animals

The Medicine Wheel is a guide to living a healthy life. People use it all around the world. There are four parts to the Medicine Wheel that teach us many different things. There are four animals in each of the four directions that are respected. In this short, colourful text the reader learns about thanking the Eagle, Bear, Wolf, and Buffalo. Their gifts teach us the skill of setting goals for ourselves; the courage to learn, share, and teach; the joy of life, laughter, and love; and the importance of being a good friend. This book lends itself to movement and further exploration of the meaning of the medicine wheel.

McDermott, Gerald (2001). Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest

This is a mythic creation tale in a picture book format about how the sun was brought to world. It begins with the protagonist and trickster, Raven, a central and recurring character in myths of the Pacific Northwest. He roams Earth and discovers that the world is blanketed in darkness. He decides to bring light to the world and in his search for light, the Raven uncovers Sky Chief's house, which has light beaming from the windows. To gain access to it, Raven turned himself into a pine needle and was swallowed by the Sky Chief's daughter and reborn as her son. While Raven was her son, he played with some nested boxes and inside the last box was the sun. Once he came into contact with the sun, he was transformed back to his raven form and flew away to give the world the sun. The end pages (beginning and end of the book) contain important information about the Pacific Northwest and trickster tales as part of the culture and history of Pacific Northwest indigenous peoples.

Meuse, Theresa (2003). The Sharing Circle

*Sharing Circle* is a compilation of seven children's stories about First Nations culture. Each of the seven stories, *The Eagle Feather*, *The Dream Catcher*, *The Sacred Herbs*, *The Talking Circle*, *The Medicine Wheel*, *The Drum*, and *The Medicine Pouch* explore First Nations cultural practices and teaches children about Mi'kmaq beliefs and heritage. Matthew, the protagonist, shares his special treasures that remind him of his First Nations culture. One of his favourite treasures is the medicine pouch that his grandfather made for him. In it, he keeps sacred herbs his mother gave him, which remind him to be grateful for nature's gift; an eagle feather from his father, which is a symbol of the spiritual strength of his culture; and a dream catcher that Matthew gave to his friend Dustin to help him not have bad dreams.

Munsch, Robert (2017). Blackflies

*Blackflies* is set on a reserve in northern Alberta, and it is a picture book narrative written in the repetitive style of Robert Munsch. It is about a young girl named Helen, whose sister and father have been swept up by a swarm of blackflies.

Native Northwest/Garfinkel Publications (2010). Learn the Alphabet with Northwest Coast Native Art

A board book that has traditional symbols and Northwest Coast art for letters of the alphabet. The format is simple; each page teaches a letter, a word and features an illustration. **E** is for a bright magenta **Eagle** and **R** is for a dynamic red, black and white **Raven**. Other images relate to Indigenous culture.

Nelson, S.D. (2007). Coyote Christmas - A Lakota Christmas

In this picture book, the protagonist, Coyote, wants to find some people "to trick" in order to get a hot meal on Christmas Eve. Sneaky Coyote is known in this Sioux traditional tale as a trickster, and he is aware that there's one character people can't refuse on Christmas Eve - Santa Claus! Using straw for a jolly belly and wool for his Santa's beard, Sneaky Coyote fools a family into welcoming him into their

home for a Christmas meal. But just when he thinks he's gotten away with his ruse, taking their food and leaving the family with nothing, he's foiled by a strange occurrence. Raven has been observing Coyote's antics and decides to outdo him with her own powers. Unbeknownst to Coyote, she turns the straw into gifts. When the family asks Coyote to open gifts with them, he starts to run to the door and trips over the bag. Coyote is astounded by the gifts that spill out. The little girl and her parents open theirs and find terrific items. The boy opens his, but it is empty. In a panic, Coyote runs from the house. The family - including the boy - races after them. Raven's gift to the boy was the ability to walk again. From atop a fence in the farmyard, Coyote waves back at them, loses his balance and, falls. Raven and the farm animals laugh as Sneaky Coyote slinks into the snowy night.

Nicholson, Caitlin Dale and Morin-Neilson, Leona (2008). Niwechihaw/I Help

This simple story told simultaneously in Cree and English explores a young child's relationship to his Kokhom. As the young child follows his Kokhom on a walk, he absorbs the rich cultural traditions and values of his Cree heritage. The traditions involved him in "listening, picking, praying, eating . . . just as she does." Beautiful paintings help illustrate many of the cultural traditions and evoke the beauty of the relationship between this boy and his Kokhom.

Olsen, Sylvia and Martin, Robert (2007). Which Way Should I Go?

Joey is a happy Nuu-chah-nulth boy, eager to help and quick to see the bright side of things. Joey's grandma was his favourite person in the whole world. But when he loses his beloved grandmother, the sun goes out in his world. Joey grieves the loss of his grandmother and has a difficult time enjoying activities and things he previously loved. Fortunately, Grandma has left something of herself behind - a song, which keeps knocking on Joey's heart, and a dance, which urges him to get up on his feet and embrace life again.

Olsen, Sylvia (2013). Yetsa's Sweater

A beautiful real life narrative of connection between three generations: Yetsa, her mother, and her grandmother. Through the creation of each unique Cowichan sweater, from sheep herding to teasing, carding and spinning, the story of tradition is explored. *Yetsa's Sweater* describes the symbols that are knit into the design that tell a personal story. The text is vibrant and rich in imagery: "cloud mountain", "witch's stew", "wool is heavy and hot", "swishing in the spring breeze", "wound as big as soccer balls". At the end of the story is a short history of the Cowichan Sweater.

Pokiak, James and Willett, Mindy (2010). Proud to be Inuvialuit: Quviahuktunga Inuvialuugama

This true narrative is told by James, who lives in the hamlet of Tuktoyuktuk, North West Territories, which is above the Arctic Circle on the shore of the Arctic Ocean. James grew up on the land, learning the traditional values and survival skills of his people. He is now passing on those traditions to his children. James and his daughter Rebecca share their Inuvialuit culture and history by explaining the importance of and taking part in the beluga whale harvest.



Robertson, David A. and Flett, Julie (2016). When We Were Alone

This picture book is a gentle introduction to residential schools and the difficult time that indigenous children and their families had during this time in Canadian history. This picture book shares a loving connection between a young girl and her grandmother. As they tend to the grandmother's garden together, the little girl asks questions about why the grandmother is the way she is. The grandmother shares sad historical truths that have shaped her identity. Cree language is interspersed throughout the story. She shares how she and other children attended school far away from their families, that they were required to cut their hair against their wishes, and that they were required to dress the same, and that their children were not allowed to speak their Cree language. What was hardest was that children and their families were separated.

Royston, Angela (2009). Life Cycle of a Salmon

This is a nonfiction text that reviews the life cycle of a salmon in a very colourful set of pictures depicting the salmon's life span for a decade.

Savageau, Cheryl (2006). Muskrat Will Be Swimming

This picture book is a layered text, with a story about the protagonist, a young girl named Jeannie, and the Sky Woman creation story of the Haudenonsaunee, People of the Longhouse, also known as the Iroquois. In the primary story, Jeannie laments being called "Lake Rat" by her elementary classmates. She explains her frustration to her grandfather. Her grandfather helps Jeannie understand that her identity as a Métis person is rooted in a spiritual relationship with the land and water. He illuminates this teaching using his own story about being called "frog" in school because of his French and Indigenous background. He then tells Jeannie a creation story about "Sky Woman" falling through a hole in the sky and the sea animals gathering together to bring Earth to her feet so that she would have somewhere to stand in the water. This book is about embracing one's cultural roots and identity.

Scholastic Canada (2010). First Nations Moving Forward and The Territories

*First Nations Moving Forward* is a text that introduces students to the overall timeline and events of historical significance in Canada that highlight how indigenous peoples are diverse and have managed tensions with European communities since the 1800s. Scholastic published a second text, *The Territories: Aboriginal Peoples* in the same series. This text provides an overview of the same period of history and details information about the three Canadian territories and the diverse cultural groups who live there. Both texts are helpful background information resources to help teachers and students in primary grades to develop a general timeline of changing relationships between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada.

Sloat, Teri and Huffmon, Betty (2004). Berry Magic

This is a pourquoi tale "origin" story that explains how the protagonist, Anana, listens to an older woman complaining as they pick the "hard, dry crowberries". During berry picking, Anana thinks up a

plan to give them pleasure. She sews four dolls, each with a different color pelatuuk, or head scarf. After carrying them to the hills, she sings a special song and dances, transforming each doll into a berry girl who speckles the fields with cranberries, blueberries, raspberries, and salmonberries. The rich language enlightens readers to different elements of the Eskimo culture such as reindeer-skin bags, muskrat parkas, and the "ice cream" called akutaq.

Sloat, Teri (2002). There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Trout!

This picture book is a circle story and patterned after the traditional poem, "I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly!", but, in this book, this old lady swallows a salmon, an otter, a seal, a walrus, and more, until eventually she swallows the entire sea and the trout swims free! Beautiful illustrations in this story capture the scenery and wildlife of the Pacific Northwest based on the author's experiences living and working along the Bering Sea in Alaska teaching and learning alongside varied indigenous communities.

Spalding, Andrea and Scow, Alfred (2009). Secret of the Dance

In 1885, the Canadian government passed a law forbidding indigenous people to hold ceremonies, including the Potlatch. But these ceremonies were the essence of indigenous culture and so were continued in secrecy. This story, although fiction, is based on an incident in the life of the child Watl'kina, now known as retired Judge Alfred Scow. The young boy in the story travels with his family to honour their tradition, defying the Indian agent and government rulings regarding ceremony. The boy sneaks into a forbidden potlatch and sees his father dance for the first and last time. Time passes and the boy grows older. Each time he steps in procession and wears the regalia that was once forbidden, he remembers his father and rejoices.

Wheeler, Jordon (2009). Chuck in the City

This is a picture book about a little boy, Chuck, who visits the city for the first time with his mom. He finds that his exploration leads him to see things he hasn't seen before (alley cats, sewer rats, big stray dogs). He gets lost and eventually is found by the city police. This is a rhyming picture book with limited references to Chuck's background except that he mentions his kookum now lives in a city and he imagines that her life must be like his exploration.

Wiebe, Ruby (2006). Hidden Buffalo

This is a wondrous tale of the buffalo based on an ancient Cree legend. As the Cree people watch summer drift into autumn, they search the Prairie for the great buffalo herds that will provide food for the coming winter. But they find none and grow desperate with hunger. Sky Running wants to help his people. One night he has a vision that reveals to him where the great herds are in the Badlands to the south, the territory of his tribe's fiercest rivals. The tribe must risk venturing into enemy territory to survive. The story shows the connections between Elders and thanking the Creator for the bounty of the buffalo.

Yerxa, Leo (2012). Ancient Thunder

This wonderfully lyrical text is inspired by the author's love of horses and the traditional clothing of the Plains People. Each page is a work of art. The compositions feel more akin to cave paintings and evoke a sense of wonder. A must have for aspiring artists interested in native cultures and teaching the art curriculum, particularly: fabric arts, representing texture, creating foreground and background.

## **Division Two (Grade 4 to Grade 6)**

Ahenakew, Freda (2015). Wisahkecahk Flies to the Moon

This book, written in English and Cree, is another story to add to the collection of famous indigenous trickster tales. This story is about Wisahkecahk and his attempt to go to the moon. He convinces Crane to fly him to the moon. On the trip, Wisahkecahk clings to Crane's legs and by the time they reach the moon's surface, Crane's legs have stretched to great length. Crane returns home and Wisahkecahk thinks he will remain on the moon because the view of Earth is wonderful. But something happens and the moon begins to shrink and finally disappears. Wisahkecahk falls back to Earth. Because he created the things on Earth, Wisahkecahk wishes to fall in a soft spot. He lands in soft mud that becomes a wasteland called muskeg. Wisahkecahk tells the muskeg that it will have no value for humans.

Alexander, Karen (2010). Upper Canada: First Nations and Upper Canada: Early Settlers

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, people from many different places chose to settle in Upper Canada or what has now become the province of Ontario. The Flip Point of View examines the settlement of Upper Canada from two different perspectives, both equally weighted. One side of the book details the settlement as related to Early Settlers, immigrants from the United States and Europe. The reverse side of the book details the same timeline but how the settlement of Upper Canada impacted the First Nations peoples of the region. The book engages the reader by providing opportunities for debate, discussion, and critical thinking. It also includes a table of contents, timelines, glossaries, quotes, maps, illustrations, and historical photographs from across Canada.

Alexie, Sherman (2016). Thunder Boy Jr.

This is a contemporary story about a young boy, Thunder Boy Jr., who is named after his father but wishes to have a name that's all his own. He wants a name that celebrates his accomplishments and aspirations, like "Touch the Clouds", "Not Afraid of Ten Thousand Teeth", or "Full of Wonder". Just when Thunder Boy Jr. thinks all hope is lost, he and his father pick the perfect name. While reading the text, the author wishes children to know that "as one person, as one member of a family, you can make your unit larger with your ambitions and your ideas about yourself." The text welcomes readers to explore their gifts and talents as well as gain a better understanding of who they are and wish to become.

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.

Bear, Cheryl and Huff, Tim (2016). The Honor Drum

Two Canadian authors created a book to share conversations about indigenous peoples in Canada and how to appreciate indigenous culture, how to discuss cultural stereotypes, and how to address misunderstandings as they arise. Specifically, the authors explore how indigenous communities are diverse, but all of them tend to refer to: creator stories and the spiritual connection of people to land and animals; the importance of drums and drumming; the significance of traditional songs and dances and traditional and ceremonial clothing; the well-known powwow as a social gathering bringing together many indigenous communities; the centrality of language, story, and oral traditions; and the importance of elders. These commonalities are starting points for learning about similarities and differences amongst indigenous communities. The authors also explore common stereotypes associated with indigenous peoples: that all First Nations people lived in tipis; that all indigenous peoples have totem poles; that names such as “indians” and “aboriginal peoples” are correct terms for referring to indigenous peoples; that all indigenous peoples honour the same symbols such as inukshuks, and so on.

Blondin, John and Translated by Sundberg, Mary Rose (2009). The Legend of the Caribou Boy

Written in both English and Dene, this simple story revolves around a young boy who is travelling with his extended family in the winter. Over several nights, when the family stops to rest, the boy has recurring dreams. During his sleep, he moans and groans but he forgets his dream upon awakening. The boy’s parents and grandfather assist in discovering the issue. The grandfather uses his medicines to determine the problem but finds no answer. The next night, the parents wake to find their son missing. The family tracks the boy and discovers an amazing occurrence - the boy changes into a caribou before their eyes! The boy explains that he is being called to fulfill his destiny and that his transformation is a gift to his family and the Dene people. When the Dene people need food, they should call on him and he will ensure that the people have meat for their families.

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.

Brodsky, Beverly (2006). Buffalo

*Buffalo* is a powerful tribute to the sacred buffalo. Through tribal song-poems and impressionistic watercolour and oil paintings, the book explores the plight of the buffalo as it relates to the Native American experience. The background text for each song-poem gives facts about hunting and the importance of buffalo to First Nations customs.

Bruchac, Joseph and Bruchac, James (2003). How Chipmunk Got His Stripes

This is an Iroquois original *pourquoi* tale that is retold by the author who recalls hearing it from a Mohawk storyteller and as a Cherokee tale. This picture book version of the tale is about how the brown squirrel got his stripes. It begins with the protagonist, Big Bear, who brags about being able to be so big and strong that he can do “anything,” including stopping the sun from coming up in the morning. Brown Squirrel challenged Big Bear and said that he could not wish away the sun from coming up. It turned out that Brown Squirrel was correct, but instead of accepting his “win” graciously as his grandmother had advised, Brown Squirrel decided to taunt and tease Big Bear for being wrong. The result was that Big Bear caught Brown Squirrel with his claws as the squirrel tried to run away. The claw marks are what created what is now known by such indigenous communities as the reason why brown squirrels have their stripes.

Bruchac, Joseph and Bruchac, James (2005). Turtle’s Race with Beaver

This charming fable of brains versus brawn is a great read for all young readers. Upon awakening, after her long winter nap, Turtle sees that her pond has been taken over by Beaver. Beaver challenges Turtle to a race: whoever wins can stay while the other must find a new home. The one who wins the race demonstrates courage and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Bruchac, Joseph and London, Jonathan (1997). Thirteen Moons on Turtle’s Back

To many Indigenous peoples, the thirteen cycles of the moon represent the changing seasons and passage of time. Each moon has its own special name that, while varying among the tribal nations, is consistent with the legend that the thirteen scales of Old Turtle’s back hold to the key to these moons. The book is comprised of thirteen lyrical poems that take the reader through the year. The striking oil paintings reflect the sublime beauty of the land. Readers gain an understanding of Native American culture and relationship with the natural world.

Carriere, Ken (2002). The Bulrush Helps the Pond

Written in Swampy Cree and English, *The Bulrush Helps the Pond*, describes the Prairie wetland ecosystem, the plants, birds and animals. It follows the progression of the seasons and the migratory patterns of the animals. The text provides young readers with an opportunity to gain an appreciation of diversity and fragility of the Prairie wetland ecosystem while demonstrating that traditional indigenous culture is parallel to the dominant paradigm of Western Science. The author preserves the Swampy Cree’s oldest generation’s terminology and knowledge of the marshland ecology.

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.

Dorion, Leah (2009). The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story

Based on a true story the author learned from Elder Frank Tomkins, this charming tale focuses on the boyhood reminiscences of Moushoom as he describes finding the “Great Giving Tree” with his mother and father. The book explains the concept of the giving tree where Métis travellers often left food packages or everyday utensils in a special tree along the trail. This was to ensure that future travellers would have adequate food supplies or necessary tools if required along the trail. The traveller could take something from the cache and in return was obliged to leave something for the next person. The story teaches about the sacred law of reciprocity and emphasizes Métis core values and beliefs including strength, kindness, courage, tolerance, honesty, respect, love, sharing, caring, balance, patience, and most importantly, the connection with the Creator and Mother Earth. The illustrations include representations of traditional Métis cultural symbols and lifestyle practices and integrate the vibrant colours historically used by Métis women in their beadwork and related designs. The book also includes an accompanying narration CD in English and Michif.

Dupuis, Jenny Kay and Kacer, Kathy (2016). I Am Not a Number

This picture book story is based on a true story about an eight year old girl named Irene who is sent to residential school. Despite being mistreated and having her identity challenged, Irene remembers her mother’s words “to stay true to who she is.” Her prayers are answered when she and her siblings are sent home for the summer. When it is time to go back to residential school and the Indian Agent comes, Irene and her family have a plan.

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*).

Eyvindson, Peter (2015). Red Parka Mary

*Red Parka Mary* is about how a young Indigenous boy and an elderly woman build what initially appears to be an unlikely friendship. Originally, when the boy first saw Mary, he was skeptical about her because of her appearance (floppy moccasins lined with rabbit fur, thick grey wool socks, Montreal Canadian red toque and “her skin was brown and wrinkled”). Eventually, he came to know her as she gave him berries, and then his mother asked him to return a cup of sugar to Mary. Over time, they had more opportunities to share and to become good friends who exchanged Christmas gifts (a beautiful red

parka for Mary and a beautiful red heart on rabbit fur for the boy). By the end of the story, we see a blossoming of an awkward friendship into a warm familial connection.

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.

Goble, Paul (1987). Buffalo Woman

A talented young hunter draws his arrow against a buffalo cow drinking from a stream. Before he releases his arrow, the buffalo transforms into a beautiful and mysterious maiden, whom he knows he must marry. A son is born to the married couple, however, the hunter's tribe shun the Buffalo Woman because she is different and not considered one of them. The young bride and her son leave to return to her people. The hunter's heart compels him to follow, but he has been warned: The Buffalo Nation is angry at the Straight-up People. His love for his family is tested and if he cannot find his wife and son among the many buffalo, they will be lost to him forever. With the help of his son, the hunter passes his test and is given the honor of joining the buffalo. His bravery results in the union between his People and those belonging to The Buffalo Nation. In the telling of this legend, the close interdependent relationship between man and the buffalo is celebrated and the value of the hero sacrificing himself for his family and his people is taught to the next generation.

Guest, Jacqueline (2004). Belle of Batoche

The Métis rebellion is brought to life for young readers in this fictional story of Belle Tourond who lived in Batoche, Saskatchewan when the government forces surrounded the town in 1885. Author, Jacqueline Guest, whose great-great-grandmother lived in Batoche, draws on her family history to weave the story of the rebellion into the life of Belle and her family. Belle wishes to become the new bell ringer at her church. When her rival, Sarah, decides that she, too, would like to become the bell ringer, a competition ensues. Each girl must embroider an altar cloth and present it for judging. Although Belle is a tomboy of sorts, she enlists the help of her talented mother to show her the most beautiful stitches to use on her cloth. When Belle suspects Sarah of cheating on her task, she sets out to prove it. Before Belle can prove to the church members that Sarah paid an elder to stitch for her, General Middleton's forces advance on Batoche in the Riel Rebellion. Belle and Sarah must join forces to save their families from the dangerous battle. Hiding out in a root cellar together, Belle and Sarah take charge of the situation and care for their injured family members. For many readers, Belle will serve as a role model with her bravery in the face of danger, her determination to succeed and her



loyalty to family and friends. The book is a welcome addition to the growing body of historical fiction that serves to entertain and inform young readers about the history of Canada.

IPELLIE, ALOOTOK (2009). I Shall Wait and Wait

This is a graphic poetic novel about the protagonist who is waiting at the ice for a seal to come within sight in order to kill it for his family to eat. This text depicts his longing to serve his family through his hunting expedition. As he waits, we see his patience as a virtue and a theme of the text.

JOHNSON, E. PAULINE (2004). The Lost Island

This picture book portrays a boy learning from an elder about a legend from hundreds of years ago about how Sagalie Tyee, a medicine man, who had a vision that the “Island of the North Arm” would no longer exist and “pale faces” would create huge buildings on the coast (what is now Vancouver) and camp there. The elder makes a plea that extends from this Chief Tyee, to never forget about the power of the island, its animals, the water, and the Earth. This legend is about lamenting the loss of land, animals, traditions, and culture as well as courage and perseverance.

JORDAN-FENTON, CHRISTY AND POKIAK-FENTON, MARGARET (2011). A Stranger at Home

This is a short memoir with greater written detail than its picture book companion, *Not My Girl*. It is the sequel to *Fatty Legs*, so it the continuing story of Olemaun, (Margaret) and her difficulty connecting with her family and her culture when she returns to her Inuit community after attending residential school.

JORDAN-FENTON, CHRISTY AND POKIAK-FENTON, MARGARET (2010). Fatty Legs

This is a short novel rooted in real life experiences of residential school survivor and coauthor, Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. It offers more detail than its parallel picture book, *When I Was Eight*. It illuminates the story of Olemaun, renamed Margaret, who attended residential school in Canada’s North. Eight-year-old Margaret Pokiak set her sights on learning to read, even though it means leaving her village in the high Arctic. Faced with unceasing pressure, her father finally agrees to let her make the five-day journey to attend school, but he warns Margaret of the terrors of residential schools. At school Margaret soon encounters the Raven, a black-cloaked nun with a hooked nose and bony fingers that resemble claws. She immediately dislikes the strong-willed young Margaret. Intending to humiliate her, the heartless Raven gives gray stockings to all the girls - all except Margaret, who gets red ones. In an instant Margaret is the laughingstock of the entire school. In the face of such cruelty, Margaret refuses to be intimidated and bravely gets rid of the stockings. Although a sympathetic nun stands up for Margaret, in the end, it is this brave young girl who gives the Raven a lesson in the power of human dignity. Complemented by archival photos from Margaret Pokiak-Fenton’s collection and striking artworks from Liz Amini-Holmes, this inspiring first-person account of a plucky girl’s determination to confront her tormentor will linger with young readers.

Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Pokiak-Fenton, Margaret (2014). Not My Girl

Two years ago, Margaret left her Arctic home for the outsiders' school. Now she has returned and can barely contain her excitement as she rushes towards her waiting family, but her mother stands still as a stone. This strange, skinny child, with her hair cropped short, can't be her daughter. "Not my girl!" she says angrily. Margaret's years at school have changed her. Now ten years old, she has forgotten her language and the skills to hunt and fish. She can't even stomach her mother's food. Her only comfort is in the books she learned to read at school. Gradually, Margaret relearns the words and ways of her people. With time, she earns her father's trust enough to be given a dogsled of her own. As her family watches with pride, Margaret knows she has found her place once more. *Not My Girl* is a poignant story of a determined young girl's struggle to belong.

Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Pokiak-Fenton, Margaret (2013). When I Was Eight

This picture book memoir begins with Olemaun living on the land with her family. Her older sister has attended residential school and brought back a special book about a girl named Alice. Olemaun wants to attend this school too. Reluctantly her father agrees. A rude awakening occurs when Olemaun's long braids are cut off and her warm Inuk clothing is replaced by thin clothes and scratchy underwear. Even her name is taken and she is now known as Margaret. Hard work scrubbing floors and overseen by black-robed nuns was how the students passed their time in this school. Finally, the students are taken to a classroom and Margaret now believes she will at last learn to read. Overcoming her inability to speak English and dealing with the harsh discipline of the nuns, Margaret finally succeeds. She can read her precious book about a magical world and a girl named Alice. Readers can identify with this Inuk girl whose courage and determination help her to overcome the challenges of a foreign culture and learn to read.

Leitch Smith, Cynthia (2000). Jingle Dancer

This is a picture book about the protagonist, Jenna, a young Muscogee (Creek Nation and Ojibway Chippewa/Anishinabe) girl, who looks forward to taking part in a jingle dance at a Powwow like her Grandma Wolfe. After watching a video of how Grandma Wolfe danced, Jenna knew that she needed to have more bells on her dress to have a "voice" in the dance. Jenna approached three people in the story, her neighbour, her cousin, and her grandma who each gave her additional bells from their dresses. The jingle dance is a tradition of the Ojibway people who lived in the Great Lake region.

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.

Loyie, Larry with Brissenden, Constance (2008). Goodbye Buffalo Bay

Lawrence just has to make it through his final year of residential school and then he will never have to set foot in this horrible place again. Fortunately, his friendships and the tutelage of Sister Theresa help make his last school days bearable. When he returns home, Lawrence struggles to find acceptance in a community that seems to have forgotten him. With hard work, increased confidence, and the money he has saved up, he leaves Slave Lake to fulfill his dream of living in the mountains.

Nicholson, Caitlin Dale and Morin-Neilson, Leona (2008). Niwechihaw / I Help

This simple story told simultaneously in Cree and English explores a young child's relationship to his Kokhom. As the young child follows his Kokhom on a walk, he absorbs the rich cultural traditions and values of his Cree heritage. The traditions involved him in "listening, picking, praying, eating . . . just as she does." Beautiful paintings help illustrate many of the cultural traditions and evoke the beauty of the relationship between this boy and his Kokhom.

Pokiak, James and Willett, Mindy (2010). Proud to be Inuvialuit / Quviahuktunga Inuvialuugama

This true narrative is told by James, who lives in the hamlet of Tuktoyuktuk, North West Territories, which is above the Arctic Circle on the shore of the Arctic Ocean. James grew up on the land, learning the traditional values and survival skills of his people. He is now passing on those traditions to his children. James and his daughter Rebecca share their Inuvialuit culture and history by explaining the importance of and taking part in the beluga whale harvest.

Royston, Angela (2009). Life Cycle of a Salmon

This is a nonfiction text that reviews the life cycle of a salmon in a very colourful set of pictures depicting the salmon's life span for a decade.

Savageau, Cheryl (2006). Muskrat Will Be Swimming

This picture book is a layered text, with a story about the protagonist, a young girl named Jeannie, and the Sky Woman creation story of the Haudenononsaunee, People of the Longhouse, also known as the Iroquois. In the primary story, Jeannie laments being called "Lake Rat" by her elementary classmates. She explains her frustration to her grandfather. Her grandfather helps Jeannie understand that her identity as a Métis person is rooted in a spiritual relationship with the land and water. He illuminates this teaching using his own story about being called "frog" in school because of his French and Indigenous background. He then tells Jeannie a creation story about "Sky Woman" falling through a hole in the sky and the sea animals gathering together to bring Earth to her feet so that she would have somewhere to stand in the water. This book is about embracing one's cultural roots and identity.

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.

Sloat, Teri and Huffmon, Betty (2004). Berry Magic

This is a pourquoi tale "origin" story that explains how the protagonist, Anana, listens to an older women complaining as they pick the "hard, dry crowberries". During berry picking, Anana thinks up a plan to give them pleasure. She sews four dolls, each with a different color pelatuuk, or head scarf. After carrying them to the hills, she sings a special song and dances, transforming each doll into a berry girl who speckles the fields with cranberries, blueberries, raspberries, and salmonberries. The rich language enlightens readers to different elements of the Eskimo culture such as reindeer-skin bags, muskrat parkas, and the "ice cream" called akutaq.

Spalding, Andrea and Scow, Alfred (2009). Secret of the Dance

In 1885, the Canadian government passed a law forbidding indigenous people to hold ceremonies, including the Potlatch. But these ceremonies were the essence of indigenous culture and so were continued in secrecy. This story, although fiction, is based on an incident in the life of the child Watl'kina, now known as retired Judge Alfred Scow. The young boy in the story travels with his family to honour their tradition, defying the Indian agent and government rulings regarding ceremony. The boy sneaks into a forbidden potlatch and sees his father dance for the first and last time. Time passes and the boy grows older. Each time he steps in procession and wears the regalia that was once forbidden, he remembers his father and rejoices.

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.

Stephenson, Wendy (2005). Idaa Trail - In the Steps of our Ancestors

This picture book is the story of three grandchildren travelling with their grandparents and learning about their family's' history while travelling the Northwest Territories, following their ancestors' traditional route. They are following the Idaa Trail just as the Dogrib community members had done hundreds of years ago. In their travels, they learn about their own history (stories about special sites, people such as Chief K'aawidaa, legends like the legend of Yamozhah and the Giant Wolverine at the Sliding Hill and so on).

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.

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.

Wiebe, Ruby (2006). Hidden Buffalo

This is a wondrous tale of the buffalo based on an ancient Cree legend. As the Cree people watch summer drift into autumn, they search the Prairie for the great buffalo herds that will provide food for the coming winter. But they find none and grow desperate with hunger. Sky Running wants to help his people. One night he has a vision that reveals to him where the great herds are in the Badlands to the south, the territory of his tribe's fiercest rivals. The tribe must risk venturing into enemy territory to survive. The story shows the connections between Elders and thanking the Creator for the bounty of the buffalo.

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.

Wollison, Mary Anne (2007). Code Talkers

This is a graphic novel that tells the tale of two brothers, Lee and Charlie Yazhee, who are Navajo members of the U.S. military. Although, while in residential school, they were forbidden to speak their own language, when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, the brothers find that their native language is key to winning World War II. "Code talkers" in WWII are those military men who could speak Navajo. The result of sharing the U.S. military's plans for attack in Navajo meant that no one knew when or where the U.S. army would attack and the Japanese eventually lost the war.

Yerxa, Leo (2012). Ancient Thunder

This wonderfully lyrical text is inspired by the author's love of horses and the traditional clothing of the Plains People. Each page is a work of art. The compositions feel more akin to cave paintings and evoke a sense of wonder. A must have for aspiring artists interested in native cultures and teaching the art curriculum, particularly: fabric arts, representing texture, creating foreground and background.

### **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.

## Division Four (Grade 10 to Grade 12)

Boyden, Joseph (2016). Wenjack

This is an historical fiction novella about Chanie "Charlie" Wenjack, an Ojibwe boy who runs away from Northern Ontario Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, not realizing his home in Ogoki Post, Kenora is hundreds of miles from the school. This is a first person retelling in the voice of Chanie and then switches to third person point of view of Manitous (animal spirit guides) who share what they see as they follow Chanie and his friends on their journey. Manitous provide commentary as well as comfort on his attempted journey home. Cree artist, Kent Monkman, depicts the Manitous, at the beginning of each chapter, which include Crow, Hummingbird, Owl, Mouse Skull, Pike, and so on. "The animals start showing up and telling the bigger story as [sic] Chanie is telling his story," said Boyden. "I did not plan for that book to come out that way, but I felt like I was channelling something important."

Downie, Gord and Lemire, Jeff (2016). Secret Path

This is a multimodal (print, visual, oral, digital) postmodern text in an enlarged graphic novella comprised of ten poems that are poignantly illustrated to evoke strong emotion from readers. This story is also available as a ten-song digital download album that accompanies a 60-minute animated film <http://secretpath.ca/>. These texts tell the story of Chanie/ "Charlie" Wenjack, a twelve-year-old Ojibwe boy who died while attempting to run away from the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School in Kenora, Ontario about fifty years ago. Charlie /Chanie died on October 22, 1966; his body was found along the railroad tracks that were on his way home.

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.

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.