



TEACHING THROUGH BOOKS | PART 2

INDIGENOUS VOICES

By Jonelle St. Aubyn

THEME: Indigenous Voices

GRADE LEVELS: High School with adaptations for Middle School and Elementary

LEARNING FOCUS

Hearing and learning about Indigenous peoples *from* Indigenous peoples is something that has traditionally been lacking in Canadian society. The focus of this lesson is to amplify their stories and voices, and to educate and inform students about Canada's history and relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Students will use the featured graphic novel to make contemporary connections to the four Rs of Indigenous education: resilience, resistance, resurgence, and reclamation. They will learn about important Indigenous peoples and stories in the past, present, and future, as told directly from Indigenous authors across Canada. Students will connect their learning to the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and determine what they can do to work toward those calls to action being accomplished.

Identity: How does reading about the history of Indigenous peoples, as told by Indigenous peoples, help us to better understand their experiences?

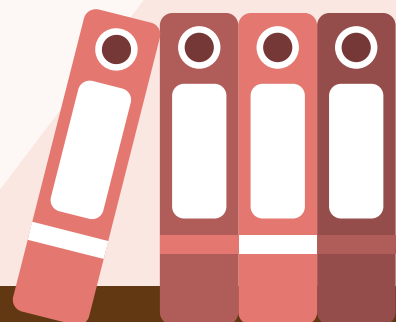
Skills: How does learning about these experiences help us to understand our role in addressing past injustices and create a pathway forward to truth and reconciliation?

Intellectualism: In learning about the four Rs, how does this allow us to address misconceptions, stereotypes, and falsehoods about Indigenous peoples?

Criticality: How does reading books about Indigenous peoples help us to understand Canada's true history with Indigenous peoples and why it has taken so long for that history to be told in the education system?

Joy: How can reading this story help us understand why the four Rs are a celebration of Indigenous peoples and their cultures? What positive things have we learned about Indigenous peoples in Canada and what do we want to learn more about?

Note that these learning goals follow Gholdy Muhammad's Historically Responsive Literacy Framework, an equity framework for learning. Using this framework, goals are set to ensure that students are making deep connections and being introspective at the same time.



HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)

FEATURED BOOK

This Place: 150 Years Retold

By Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, Sonny Assu, Brandon Mitchell, Rachel Qitsualik-Tinsley, Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley, David A. Robertson, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, Jen Storm, Richard Van Camp, Katherena Vermette, Chelsea Vowel, and Alicia Elliott; illustrated by Tara Audibert, Kyle Charles, GMB Chomichuk, Natasha Donovan, Scott A. Ford, Scott B. Henderson, Ryan Howe, Andrew Lodwick, Jen Storm, and Donovan Yaciuk

HighWater Press, 2019



MINDS ON PROVOCATION

In small groups, students will brainstorm what, if anything, they know about the following key people, terminology, acts, and events mentioned in the book:

- Annie Bannatyne
- Louis Riel
- Potlatch
- The Federal Fisheries Act
- Treaties 9 and 10
- Jack Fiddler
- The Indian Act
- The League of Indians
- Deskaheh
- Francis Pegahmagabow
- The Natural Resources Transfer Acts
- Aangakkuik
- Residential Schools
- The Sixties Scoop
- Chief Frank T'Seleie
- Meech Lake Accord
- The Oka Crisis
- Elijah Harper
- Phil Fontaine
- The Kelowna Accord
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Idle No More
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Have students think about and try to explain why they may know these people, terms, acts, and events and/or why they may not. Whose history gets to be told and learned about? Why?



READ, PLAN, AND PRACTICE

Teachers can assign one of the ten stories in the book (or multiple stories, since they are short) to different students and have them identify which of the four Rs (resilience, resistance, resurgence, and reclamation) appear in the stories they are reading. Students should provide specific, concrete examples from the text. They will then share their learning with the class by providing a brief summary of the story that they read and how the four Rs were demonstrated in the story via a podcast. (Note that there are free apps and websites available to help students create their podcasts, such as [Riverside](#).)

MAKE, TINKER, AND MODIFY

Despite Indigenous peoples showing resilience, resistance, resurgence, and reclamation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations still had to address the systemic issues/barriers that Indigenous people continue to face. Therefore, students will critically examine either the [94 Calls to Action](#) based on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP) and discuss the following:

- What role can they personally play to ensure that the Calls to Action or UNDRIP are being followed through on?
- What can they do within their community to ensure that the Calls to Action or UNDRIP are being followed through on?
- How can they hold their politicians accountable to ensure that the Calls to Action or UNDRIP are being followed through on?

Students should document their findings and analyses to share with the teacher and/or the rest of the class using the following possible options:

- [FigJam](#) or [Whiteboard](#)
- [Padlet](#)
- A graphic organizer like [Mindomo](#)
- Chart paper with sticky notes

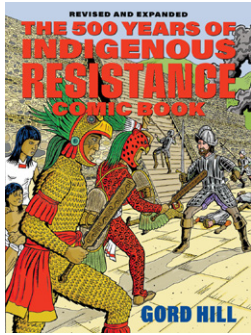
REFLECT AND CONNECT

At the beginning of each chapter of the featured graphic novel, there is a short historical timeline that shows the history and treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Students will select one date/event on the timeline and conduct research to further their knowledge about it. They will then develop a short presentation about the event to help their classmates learn more about it. Students should be given a variety of methods to present their learning (i.e. podcast, infographic, short film, TED Talk, essay, spoken word, song, etc.). This sharing of knowledge can happen at the school level, the school board level, with the politicians in their communities, or with other community organizations.





ADDITIONAL CANADIAN BOOKS TO SUPPORT THIS THEME



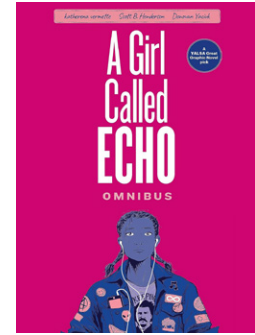
The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book by Gord Hill (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2021)



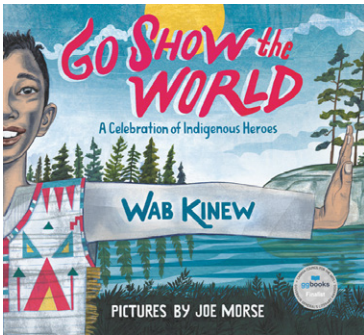
Dakwākāda Warriors by Cole Pauls (Conundrum Press, 2019)



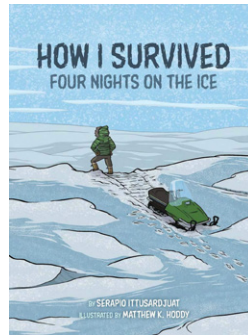
Four Faces of the Moon by Amanda Strong (Annick Press, 2021)



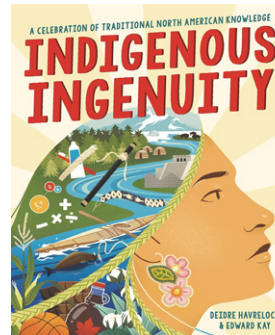
A Girl Called Echo Omnibus by Katherena Vermette, illustrated by Scott B. Henderson and Donovan Yaciuk (HighWater Press, 2023)



Go Show the World: A Celebration of Indigenous Heroes by Wab Kinew, illustrated by Joe Morse (Tundra Books, 2018)



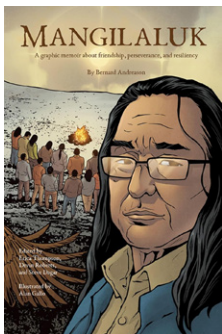
How I Survived: Four Nights on the Ice by Serapio Ittusardjuat, illustrated by Matthew K. Hoddy (Inhabit Media, 2020)



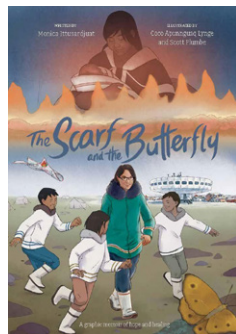
Indigenous Ingenuity: A Celebration of Traditional North American Knowledge by Deidre Havrelock and Edward Kay (Christy Ottaviano Books, 2023)



Indiginerds: Tales from Modern Indigenous Life edited by Alina Pete (Iron Circus Comics, 2024)



Mangilaluk: A Graphic Memoir about Friendship, Perseverance, and Resiliency by Bernard Andreason, illustrated by Alan Gallo (Arvaaq Press, 2023)



The Scarf and the Butterfly: A Graphic Memoir of Hope and Healing by Monica Ittusardjuat, illustrated by Coco Apunnguaq Lynge and Scott Plumbe (Arvaaq Press, 2024)



Surviving the City series by Tasha Spillett, illustrated by Natasha Donovan (HighWater Press)

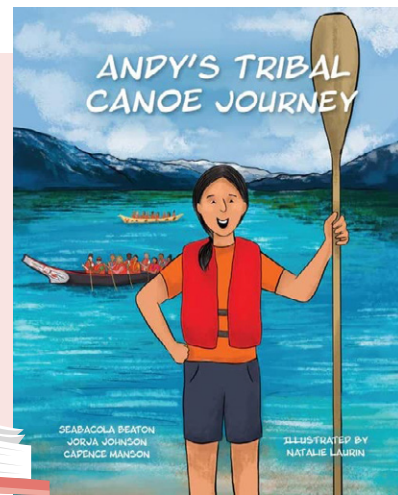


ADAPTATIONS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL (4-8)

FEATURED BOOK

Andy's Tribal Canoe Journey

By Seabacola Beaton, Jorja Johnson, and
Cadence Manson, illustrated by Natalie Laurin
Strong Nations Publishing, 2022



Although some of the stories in *This Place: 150 Years Retold* could be used for a middle school audience, another book option to explore the four Rs (resilience, resistance, resurgence, and reclamation) is *Andy's Tribal Canoe Journey*. This could be read as a class novel and students could identify how the four Rs appear in this story. Students could then answer the following questions:

- Can you give some examples of how Andy demonstrated resilience as he prepared for the journey?
- What are some ways that Andy showed resistance while on the journey?
- How did Andy connect with and reclaim his heritage?
- How did Andy see a resurgence of his community and their way of life on his journey?

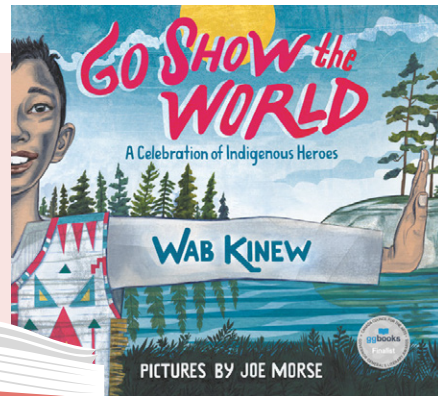


ADAPTATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (K-3)

FEATURED BOOK

*Go Show the World:
A Celebration of Indigenous Heroes*

By Wab Kinew, illustrated by Joe Morse
Tundra Books, 2018



Elementary school students' knowledge and understanding of what it means to be Indigenous may be limited. Start the lesson by showing this short video from CBC Kids News: "[The word Indigenous—explained.](#)" Afterwards, read *Go Show the World* as an introduction to celebrating the stories of Indigenous people.

The four Rs could be explained to elementary school students as follows:

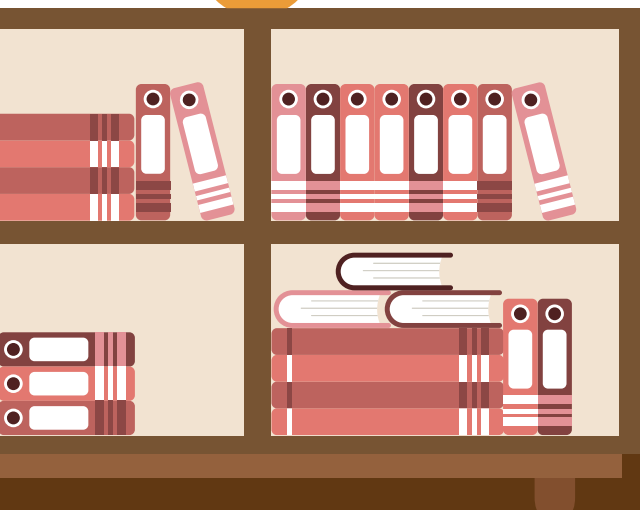
- **Resilience:** This is like a rubber band. When you stretch it, it can bounce back to its original shape. Resilience means being able to recover quickly from difficult situations, like when you fall down but get back up to try again.
- **Resistance:** Imagine trying to push a heavy door that won't move. Resistance is the ability to stand firm against something that tries to change you or make you give up, like saying "no" to peer pressure.
- **Resurgence:** Think of a flower that blooms again after winter. Resurgence means coming back or growing stronger after a tough time. It's like when a sports team loses a game and then practices hard and wins the next one.
- **Reclamation:** This is like taking an old toy that you don't play with anymore and fixing it up to enjoy again. Reclamation means taking something that was lost or forgotten and making it useful or beautiful again.

Students could then connect one of the four Rs to one or more of the people in the story.



MORE RESOURCES

- [“Chapter 9: Indigenous Resilience ~ Reclamation ~ Resistance”](#): Learn more about the four Rs through this chapter from David D. Varis’ book *Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island*.
- [Resurgence: Engaging with Indigenous Narratives and Cultural Expressions In and Beyond the Classroom](#): This resource, edited by educators Christine M’Lot and Katya Adamov Ferguson, helps support teachers in bringing Indigenous works into the classroom.
- [This Place](#): Based on the graphic novel of the same name, this podcast by CBC offers a 10-part journey through 150 years of Indigenous resistance and resilience.
- [Teacher Guide for This Place: 150 Years Retold](#): This guide created by Christine M’Lot contains 12 lessons to help support learning as students read through the graphic novel. It also incorporates the CBC podcast.
- [“What Are the Truth & Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action & How Are We Working Toward Achieving Them Today?”](#): This guide presents a history of residential schools, along with a summary of the 94 Calls to Action and how Canada is working towards reconciliation.



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