
Lesson Plan for Encounters Comic Strip: “What were the Indigenous people’s meetings with the fur traders like?”

Lesson Overview

This comic strip is a small snippet from Gord Hill’s *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* and newer *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book: Revised and Expanded*. Gord Hill is a member of the Kwakwaka’wakw nation, author of multiple comic books, and Indigenous activist. This comic strip contradicts the national narrative of peace by illustrating the conflict, dispossession, and collective resistance in many initial encounters between Indigenous peoples and fur traders on the Pacific Northwest Coast.

Resources:

- Comic strip “What were the Indigenous people’s with the fur traders like?” by Gord Hill

Lesson Learnings

Inquiry Question:

- What were the Indigenous people's meetings with the fur traders like?

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize early encounters between Indigenous peoples and fur traders on the Pacific Northwest Coast. Acknowledge that these encounters were often violent and full of conflict.
- Recognize Indigenous peoples’ resistance to colonialism, oppression, and dispossession.
- Create a comic strip representing a contemporary Indigenous resistance movement.

Activate Prior Knowledge

Use any of the following questions for group discussion or as think-pair-share. Students could draw a mind map to keep track of words and ideas.

- Watch the *Changing Perspectives* video “What attracted the Europeans to the Pacific Northwest Coast?” and note jot examples of cooperation and conflict between Indigenous peoples and fur traders. After watching the video, how would you summarize their encounters?
- Based on your historical knowledge, how do you think Indigenous peoples responded to fur-traders arriving and building forts and raising flags on their land? How do you think they may have felt?

Read Comic Strip

Read the comic strip “What were the Indigenous people’s with the fur traders like?” by Gord Hill

Analysis Prompts

These additional prompts challenge students to analyze further what they’ve learned from the video. These questions ask students to reflect on the practice of history and incorporate evidence to justify their claims. In some cases, students may benefit from further resources to explore these questions.

- After reading the comic strip, reflect on:
 - What information was new to you? What information was not new to you?
 - Are there any similarities amongst the history that is new to you?
 - How do you feel after reading the comic strip?
- What is the theme of this comic strip?
 - In the preface, Gord Hill shares “The purpose of *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* is to raise the levels of historical understanding and warrior spirit amongst Indigenous peoples and others.” (*The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* by Gord Hill, page 6)
- In the preface, Gord Hill shares “When we know and understand this history of oppression, we will be better able to fight the system it has created. Without a fighting spirit, we will have no will to resist (or even survive).” In this sentence, “we” refers to Indigenous peoples. Why do you think Gord Hill says this?

Wrap Up Discussion

Wrap up your lesson with a reflective discussion. Ask students to give answers to the following questions, either as a class, in small groups, or as an independent writing exercise.

- In the preface of *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*, Gord Hill says “In order to understand the world we live in today, it is vital to know our [Indigenous] history.” (page 5). How does this comic strip impact your understanding of the world we live in today?

Create an Indigenous Resistance Comic Strip

Gord Hill's comic strip centres around the theme of Indigenous resistance and opposition to colonialism. He uses art and narrative to communicate these stories that for a long time have been silenced in Canadian education. Gord Hill shares that "the strength of the comic book is that it uses minimal text with graphic art to tell the story" which makes it especially accessible to children and youth (*The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*, page 6).

These stories and acts of resistance continue today. For this creative and inquiry project, students will work in groups to research a recent Indigenous resistance movement and create a comic strip to teach others about the movement. There are some examples in Gord Hill's book *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book: Revised and Expanded* (2021), including the Oka crisis in 1990 and Wet'suwet'en anti-pipeline protests in 2020.

Research an Indigenous Resistance Movement

1. In groups, use online search tools and the "Extra Resources" at the end of this lesson plan to choose and research a recent Indigenous resistance movement.
2. A comic strip is like a story, it has characters, a setting, and a plot. Students will identify information about the resistance movement that will become their story elements. Creating a timeline of events and identifying significant people involved in the movement will assist them in creating their comic strip.

Create a Comic Strip

1. Each group creates a storyboard of their comic strip. They should roughly draw out the title of each scene, an illustration of each scene, and a summary of each scene. This will help them to build and edit their story. Think about:
 - What's the main message you want the reader to take away?
 - How can you use visuals to tell the story?
 - What historical context does the reader need to know to understand the resistance movement?
 - Comic strips use minimal words. What text is *most* important to communicate the story?
2. Draw out the comic strip by hand or using an online comic strip software, like Storyboard Creator.
3. Every group shares their comic strips for the rest of the class to read.

Discussion

Now that the class has learned about multiple recent Indigenous resistance movements, reflect on:

- How is history connected to these current events?
- What are some commonalities amongst these Indigenous resistance movements? How do they compare to Indigenous resistance globally? (ex. Solidarity movements)

that founded the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which authored UNDRIP)

- How is colonialism still present in Canada?
- What can individuals do to support Indigenous resistance movements?

Extra Resources

- *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book: Revised and Expanded* (2021) by Gord Hill
- *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book* (2010) by Gord Hill