

Colonialism and Resistance Activity Instructions

Age: High School (grades 9-12)

Objectives:

- Understanding of colonialism (historic and current) achieved
- Examples and explanation of resistance to colonialism provided
- Common misunderstandings of Indigenous peoples explored

Table of Contents

Perfect Community Activity	2
Myth or Fact Activity	3

Perfect Community Activity

Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

4 pieces of large paper

Markers

THIS CAN BE A TRIGGERING ACTIVITY, USE WITH ATTENTION AND SENSITIVITY

Instructions:

Split group into smaller groups of about 6 people, provide each group with a large sheet of paper and markers. Give about 8 minutes for students to create their perfect community on large pieces of paper, complete with everything they think it would need – schools, hospitals, houses, green space, etc. Allow them to be creative. Encourage them to get creative and imaginative – they can draw this community to include everything they think they would want and need for a healthy community.

Facilitators will then go around, “visiting” the communities, introducing themselves as “developers” and inform them that they are going to be developing on the perfect communities’ land, and they are very excited to be working with the community members. Make comments to the different community members about how beautiful their land is.

Come back for a second visit and start aggressively marking with black markers on their communities where the “proposed development” will be, telling the people that they are going to have to move completely off this land, and not giving the community members a chance to defend their community. If they try to speak up or resist, speak over them, and tell them they already had consulted with them in their last visit so they shouldn’t have any complaints.

Come back for a third visit and start ripping up/taking the map altogether, abrasively explaining how this is just the way things have to be. Game will end as quickly as you want this final visit to go on for (depending on students’ reactions).

Debrief:

Put follow up questions up on slide, work through each question in larger group

Explain how this is a small sample of the power imbalance and exploitation that occurs through colonialism when communities were first being settled, and how today this is how many communities might feel when corporations or the government comes in and decides to develop on Indigenous land without proper consent of communities.

Myth or Fact Activity

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

10 pieces of scrap paper (blank on one side)

Instructions:

Ask the students to form groups of 5-6 people, and to get 2 pieces of scrap paper: write MYTH on one, FACT on the other

Tell them that each slide will have a statement on it, and they have to decide as a group if they think it is true or not. Say that you will give about twenty seconds to think about it, then count down from 3 and each group has to hold up their myth or fact sheet, depending on what they think is correct.

Explain that these are common claims that we hear people make about Indigenous people – some are true and some aren't. We'll go through and discuss them so that you are able to talk to people about the truth, if you hear them believing the myths. Emphasize that it is okay to be wrong, and that this is a space where we should be eager to learn.

All Indigenous people go to University for free. MYTH: Education is a treaty right, but we know that post-secondary (college, university) is not free in Canada. The federal government funds bands to provide some funds to students who are pursuing post-secondary. This funding is far below inflation and population growth rates.

Band councils have limited funds that they are able to provide to students who apply for the funding, so bands have to choose if they will provide full funding to students (and thus have a very long wait list) or provide smaller grants to students that might not cover the complete costs of university.

-Ask the students if they know what a band is? Define if need be [a basic form of government for a community of people, governed by a chief and council. A band is usually connected to just one community or reserve, but some govern multiple.]

The last residential school closed in the early 1900's. MYTH: The last residential school closed in 1996. That's only about 20 years ago. So there are many residential school survivors alive today, and for a lot of families, the healing journey is still new. It is unfair to argue then that Indigenous people should just "get over it".

Indigenous Canadians were not allowed to vote until 1960. FACT: for a long time First Nations people were allowed to vote, but this was only if they gave up their treaty rights. It wasn't until 1960 that the Prime Minister at the time, John Diefenbaker made it possible for Indigenous people to vote federally without having to give up any of their rights in exchange.

Metis people were generally allowed to vote because they were mostly not covered by treaties, and Inuit communities were excluded completely from the voting system for a long time.

Indigenous people get a lot of government money so it doesn't make sense that so many are living in poverty. MYTH: treaty people (those who have membership with a band that signed treaties with the Crown way back when) receive approximately \$5 a year (depending on the region) – this has been the same for more than 100 years.

An Indigenous researcher in the area calculated what the amount should equate to today if the money amount was being adjusted for inflation, and he estimated about \$3,600 a year.

Funding for First Nations bands comes from the federal government (this was established in 1867 in the British North America Act) to cover basics such as education, health and social services, roads, housing, water and waste management etc. But up until December of 2015, funding levels for FN bands didn't match the growth rates of communities nor inflation. Recently the new Liberal federal government under Justin Trudeau has committed to renewing the relationship with Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and so he has removed the cap that was previously in place to limit the amount of money given to FN communities.

Indigenous people do not pay taxes. MYTH: all Inuit, Metis, and non-status First Nations people pay taxes. Status First Nations people who live off reserve pay taxes. The only Indigenous people who are exempt from paying tax are Status First Nations people who earn their income on a reserve for a company or organization located on the reserve.

Remind students what status/non-status means [Status: somebody recognized by the federal government as being registered under the Indian Act, they have certain rights and access to resources that non-status folks don't have.]

Most missing or murdered Indigenous women were sex trade workers. MYTH: Although it is hard to find solid numbers, research completed by the Native Women's Association of Canada has found that only a small percentage of missing or murdered Indigenous women were involved in the sex trade.

This is often an argument when people are trying to put the blame on the women who were killed or who are missing by saying that they were living risky lifestyles as sex workers. This is not true.

This also reflects the value that we put on certain lives over others. Even if all of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls were sex trade workers, that should not allow us to value their lives less.

Most First Nations chiefs are corrupt and overpaid. MYTH: A study done in 2014 of the majority of chiefs in Canada found that the median income is \$60,000 (for comparison the median income for all Canadians in 2013 was \$76,550).

There are a handful of chiefs who have a very high income (over \$200,000), but there were also 42 chiefs who received less than \$10,000, which includes 8 who received nothing.

The most important thing to understand is that there is a large range in the amount of money being made by chiefs across Canada, and although there are some who are making a lot of money and they should be questioned and held accountable for this, it is dangerous to paint all chiefs with the same brush.

Indigenous people have given up and are unable to change the issues that are impacting their communities. MYTH: there are many examples of Indigenous people working to heal the issues in their communities. Here are four examples just from Winnipeg alone:

Meet me at the Bell Tower: a group in the North End that meets at the bell tower on Selkirk Avenue every single Friday night to come together as a community and confront violence. They discuss ways to better work together as a diverse community and host events to engage people in the neighbourhood.

Got Bannock: Althea Guiboche works to recreate the traditional village where wealth was measured in how you shared with one another. Once a week she makes a meal and hands it out to those on the streets. She herself has experienced homelessness and poverty.

Aboriginal Youth Opportunities: a youth movement from the North End, young people coming together and volunteering their gifts to make the dreams of young people happen, they are tied with Meet me at the bell tower

Red Rising Magazine: a magazine started in Winnipeg that seeks to highlight the voices of Indigenous artists and authors, reclaiming the power of the media to portray Indigenous stories in a certain way.

* All of these are grassroots movements with no government funding or affiliation – Indigenous people working together as a community to make change