



Orange Shirt Day

Online Learning Teacher's Resource Guide

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Harbourfront Centre School Visits has committed to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action**. School Visits launched two new Indigenous Studies programs in the 2019-20 school year: 7 Gifts and Exploring Treaties. In 2020-21, we shared resources for Orange Shirt Day, considered Indigenous perspectives in conversations about BIPOC representation through our Kuumba Black Futures Month programming, and celebrated First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures through our Indigenous History Month virtual programming. In 2021-22, we expanded our Orange Shirt Day programming with live, synchronous online classes co-facilitated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff members. We provided a book bundle program to ensure First Nations, Métis and Inuit stories are present in classroom libraries in Toronto all year round. As we continue to build meaningful educational content around these topics, Harbourfront Centre presents a multidisciplinary approach to Orange Shirt Day, which can be found in this resource.

September 30 is a day to recognize the **impact** and **intergenerational legacy** of Residential Schools on the First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations, their families and communities. This resource is developed to accompany our online content and includes:

- Guided reading suggestions.
- Structured brainstorming activities.
- Artistic responses.
- An opportunity for students to reflect on the impacts (both historical and present) of Residential Schools.

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About Us

Harbourfront Centre School Visits is an experiential, hands-on learning program that offers curriculum-focused, inquiry-based programs that explore all aspects of contemporary arts and culture. Every year, we host 26,000 students onsite for meaningful engagements with the arts. We trust you will find the step-by-step guide outlined below will allow creativity to shine through.

We recognize that Harbourfront Centre is on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee, Wendat, Anishinaabe and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Harbourfront Centre recognizes the ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples who have passed on, over, or through the lands that we now live and work.

About This Resource

Thank you for accessing our Online Learning resource for Orange Shirt Day! We trust you will find this Teacher Resource Guide helpful.

Key Inquiry Question

Grades 1+

How can learning about Residential Schools provide a chance to reflect on your own connections to school and community?

Suggested Grade Range

Grades 1–12

Required Materials

Grades 1–12

- Teacher's Resource Guide (this resource).
- Step-by-step E-Resource for Accordion Book Visual Arts activity.
- Access to suggested online resources for the structured reading activities.
- If you and/or your students need support building connections to September 30, an opportunity to play our "What is Orange Shirt Day?" video from the Harbourfront Centre website could be helpful (requires a projector, computer, etc).
- To build deeper connections, one or more books from the suggested reading list are at the end of this resource.

Please consider any of the following as additional references to support student learning:

- Share the City News video recording of Phyllis Webstad retelling the origin of Orange Shirt Day in their own words – [click here](#) (2 minutes, 20 seconds).
- Share the written version of Phyllis Webstad's story as posted on the Orange Shirt Day website – [click here](#).
- Share this audio recording from CBC Radio on Phyllis Webstad's story – [click here](#) (4 minutes, 12 seconds).
- Look at the resource list at the end of the Teacher's Resource Guide, which includes several read-aloud options to share with your students.
- Preview the "What is Orange Shirt Day?" video from Harbourfront Centre's website and consider sharing it with students. (Please note that while it was developed with Grades 1–3 in mind, it may support your students as well.)

Curriculum Links

Grade 1

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
- Reading 1.8
- Media Literacy 1.1, 1.4

Social Studies A1.1, A1.4, A2.1, A 2.2, A3.1, A3.2, A3.5

The Arts D1.1, D2.1

Grade 2

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
- Reading 1.8
- Media Literacy 1.1, 1.3

Social Studies A3.1, A3.2, A3.6

The Arts D1.1, D2.1

Grade 3

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
- Reading 1.8
- Media Literacy 1.1, 1.3

Social Studies A1.2, A1.3, A2.2, A3.1, A 3.2, A3.6, A3.7,

The Arts D1.1, D2.1

Grade 4

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. 1.4, 1.6

Social Studies B3.4, 3.6

The Arts D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D2.1, D3.2

Grade 5

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. 1.4, 1.6

Social Studies B1.2

The Arts D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D2.1, D3.2

Grade 6

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. 1.4, 1.6

Social Studies A3.5

The Arts D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D2.1, D3.1

Grade 7

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. 1.4, 1.6

History A3.2, B1.2, B1.3, B3.4

The Arts D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D2.1, D3.1, D 3.2

Grade 8

Language

- Oral Communication 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. 1.4, 1.6

History A2.1, A2.5, A3.3, B1.2, B2.1, B2.5, B2.6, B3.1, B3.3, B3.5

The Arts D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D2.1, D3.2

Grade 9

NAC1O B3.3, D1.2, D2.2

Grade 10

CHC2D B2.5, C1.4, D3.3, E2.3, E3.3

CHC2P A1.5, B2.3, C1.4, C3.2, D3.2, E1.4, E2.2, E3.4

NAC2O A1.4, A1.7, E1.1, E1.3, E3.1, F1.5

Grade 11

CHT3O A1.2

CLU3M/3E C1.2

CPC3O C2.2

NBE3U A2.1, B2.6

NBE3C B2.6, D4.3, E1.3

NBE3E A1.3, C3.3, C4.2,

NDA3M C1.3, D3.3

NBV3C C2.2, D2.3, D2.4

NBV3E C1.2

Grade 12

CHI4U D1.1, D1.6, E 2.3

CHY4U E2.4

CLN4U C2.3

NDG4M A1.7, B2.2, C3.2, D3.3

What is Orange Shirt Day?



Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) Residential School (1891–1981) Commemoration Project and Reunion events in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in May 2013. This project was the vision of Esketemc (Alkali Lake) Chief Fred Robbins, a former student. It brought together former students and their families from the Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, Southern Dakelh and St'at'imc Nations, the Cariboo Regional District, the Mayors, and municipalities, School Districts and civic organizations in the Cariboo Region.

The events were designed to commemorate the Residential School experience, to witness and honour the healing journey of the Survivors and their families and to commit to the ongoing process of truth and reconciliation. Chief Justice Murray Sinclair challenged all participants to keep the reconciliation process alive due to the realization that every former student had similar stories.

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of this project. As a spokesperson for the Reunion group leading up to the events, former student Phyllis (Jack) Webstad shared her story of her first day at Residential School. Arriving at a six-year-old and wearing her beloved new orange shirt (a gift from her grandmother), the t-shirt was immediately taken away.

The annual Orange Shirt Day on September 30 opens the door to a global conversation on all aspects of Residential Schools. It is an opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of Residential Schools and the legacy they have left behind. A discussion all Canadians can tune into and build bridges with each other for reconciliation. A day for Survivors to be reaffirmed that they matter, and so do those affected. Every Child Matters, even if they are an adult, from now on.

The date was chosen because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to Residential Schools and because it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year. It is an opportunity for local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for a better future for future generations.

“On September 30, we call upon humanity to listen with open ears to the stories of Survivors and their families and to remember those that didn't make it.”

(*Orange Shirt Day*. <https://www.orangeshirtday.org>. Accessed September 2, 2020.)

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What is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation?

September 30, 2021, marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The day honours the lost children and Survivors of Residential Schools, their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of Residential Schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process.

The federal statutory holiday was created through legislative amendments made by Parliament. On June 3, 2021, Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) received Royal Assent.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action

140 federally run Indian Residential Schools operated in Canada between 1831 and 1998. The last school closed only 24 years ago. Survivors advocated for recognition and reparations and demanded accountability for the lasting legacy of harm caused. These efforts culminated in the following:

- The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.
- Apologies from the government.
- The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- The creation of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission ran from 2008 to 2015. It provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools policy with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has become the permanent archive for the statements, documents and other materials the Commission gathered. Its library and collections are the foundation for ongoing learning and research.

The Commission released its final report detailing 94 Calls to Action. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a direct response to Call to Action 80, which called for a federal statutory day of commemoration.

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Lesson Plan Gr. 1-3

80 minutes*

*Please note: This can be delivered in one 80-minute block or two 40-minute blocks. For two 40-minute blocks, use the first lesson for Steps 1 and 2 and the second for Steps 3 and 4.

Step 1

Introduction to Orange Shirt Day

Time: 15 minutes

Engage students in a conversation about Orange Shirt Day. Ask students if they have ever worn something special to show how they feel or something they connect with. Examples may include wearing pink on Pink Shirt Day, a poppy on Remembrance Day, specific clothing as part of a celebration or a tradition, etc. Share with the group that they will be learning about a day in our communities when people choose to wear orange shirts, and today we will explore why.

Step 2

Access Harbourfront Centre's website and show the "What is Orange Shirt Day" video

Time: 20 minutes

This video will provide an overview of what Orange Shirt Day is. It also features two Harbourfront Centre staff members who talk about their background and connections to Orange Shirt Day and Residential Schools. Following the video, have a discussion with students about what they learned.

Step 3

Lead the Accordion Book Activity

Time: 30 minutes

Access the Harbourfront Centre Orange Shirt Day website. Familiarize yourself with the Accordion Book activity found on our website. This activity asks students to consider their school story.

Step 4

Consolidation

Time: 15 minutes

Have students share what they learned about Orange Shirt Day, Residential Schools and other Indigenous content through this lesson. Consider reading one of the suggested books from the book list or have students reflect on their school story to fill the pages of their accordion book.

Lesson Plan Gr. 4-8

80 minutes

Step 1

(Re)introduction to Orange Shirt Day

Time: 10 minutes

Have students complete a mind map on Orange Shirt Day. Start with students working on their own graphic organizers, then facilitate a broader discussion using the board or projector to capture their thoughts. Be sure to prompt and clarify if any misunderstandings arise.

Step 2

What is Orange Shirt Day? What is the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation?

Time: 20 minutes

Based on the information shared by your students in the mind map exercise, consider the best way to continue to build a more profound understanding of September 30. Introduce students to the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation and share why this is now a nationally recognized day of significance. Consider using a graphic organizer for students to build a comparison between the two days regarding their purpose, origin and goals.

*NB: Please note that this content may elicit an emotional response from Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. You may need to consider a content warning before sharing any clips or preview the clips beforehand. Consider what resources are available in your school, school board or community. Please also keep the National Indian Residential School Survivors line (866) 925-4419 and the Kids Help Phone line (800) 668-6868 or text 686868 available for students.

Step 3

Complete the Accordion Book activity

Time: 30 minutes

Access the Harbourfront Centre Orange Shirt Day website. Familiarize yourself with the Accordion Book activity found on our website. This activity asks students to consider their school story.

Step 4

Consolidation

Time: 20 minutes

Have students share their own school story on the pages of the accordion book. This may be their school journey, experiences with teachers, school or community, and the significant moments they had which allowed them to build confidence and demonstrate pride. Likewise, it could be a time to share when students did not feel like their identity was fully recognized at school.

Lesson Plan Gr. 9–12

75 minutes

Step 1

(Re)Introduction to Residential Schools

Approximate Time: 10 minutes

Have students participate in a mind map. Ask students to consider what school means to them. Encourage considering the role school plays in their lives or community and how changing schools, neighbourhoods, or social groups would impact their social, cultural and linguistic group. Discuss how the removal from the social support network of peers could affect their social, emotional or mental health needs.

Step 2

Think, Pair, Share:

What significance does September 30th have in Canada?

Approximate Time: 10 minutes

Activate prior knowledge by asking your students to participate in a think, pair and share:

Think: What significance does September 30 have in Canada?

Pair: Discuss with a neighbour

Share: Discuss with the class

Conclude this discussion by clearly distinguishing between Orange Shirt Day and the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. While these are both marked on the same date, OSD is a grassroots movement that is founded in the experience of Phyllis Webstad. National Day of Truth and Reconciliation was established in 2021 and is a federal holiday that directly responds to the Truth and Reconciliation's Call to Action #80.

Step 3

Primary Source Analysis: The Pope's Apology

Approximate Time: 20 minutes

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #58 requested that the pope apologize to the "Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools" in Canada. Find the original text of the Pope's apology [here](#).

Step 4

Reactions to the Pope's Apology

Approximate Time: 20 minutes

After reading the pope's apology as a class, split students into small groups to read one of the articles below to provide a response or perspective to the apology. Let students know they will be sharing a summary of the point of view with the rest of the class at the end of the allotted time.

(continued on next page)

Step 4 Grade 9–12 Lesson Continued

Reactions to the Pope's Apology

Approximate Time: 20 minutes

1. Day school survivors worry they will be left out of whatever apology Pope makes for residential schools:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/indian-day-schools-papal-apology-1.6526438>

2. Pope's Apology to Indigenous People Doesn't Go Far Enough, Canada Says:

<https://www.npr.org/2022/07/28/1114207125/canada-pope-apology-indigenous>

3. Quebec Cree community skipping Pope's visit, focusing on healing at former Residential School site:

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/quebec-cree-community-skipping-pope-s-visit-focusing-on-healing-activities-at-former-residential-school-1.6001189>

4. Are words enough?: Kahnawake locals say Pope's visit is a 'beginning,' but there's no changing the past:

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/are-words-enough-kahnawake-locals-say-pope-s-visit-is-a-beginning-but-there-s-no-changing-the-past-1.6000702>

Step 5

Consolidation

Appropriate Time: 15 minutes

Engage students in a conversation about the concept of reconciliation. As a reminder, reconciliation refers to the act of restoring peaceful relations. What do government officials, religious figures, community members and other Canadians need to do to move further in our reconciliation efforts?

What personal action could each of them take to support these efforts? Is reconciliation (a restoration of peaceful relations) possible in contemporary Canadian society?

What roadblocks or restrictions could students identify that would prohibit meaningful efforts for reconciliation?

Extensions & Additional Resources

Online Resources (order based on applicability to Orange Shirt Day)

Phyllis Webstad Orange Shirt Day Presentation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=27&v=E3vUqr01kAk&feature=emb_logo

Orange Shirt Day

<https://www.orangeshirtday.org/>

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

(includes map of residential schools across Canada, information on virtual Orange Shirt Day)

<http://nctr.ca/map.php>

Legacy of Hope Foundation

(Residential School Survivor testimonial videos; Residential School, Sixties Scoop, Reconciliation exhibitions; Podcasts)

<http://legacyofhope.ca/>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

(Justice Murray Sinclair)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swo9flbACho&feature=youtu.be>

CBC

(other books and interviews addressing residential schools)

<https://www.cbc.ca/search?q=residential%20schools§ion=books&sortOrder=relevance&media=all>

The Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario First Nations, Métis and Inuit content

<https://etfofnmi.ca/>

The Witness Blanket Project

(collaborative art project in response to residential schools)

<http://witnessblanket.ca/#!/project/>

Extensions & Additional Resources

Books (alphabetical by book title)

Ages 4–8

Amik Loves School by Katherena Vermette (2015)
Kookum's Red Shoes by Peter Eyvindson (2015)
Phyllis's Orange Shirt by Phyllis Webstad (2019)
Shi-shi-etko by Nicola Campbell (2005)
Shin-chi's Canoe by Nicola Campbell (2008)
When We Were Alone by David A. Robertson (2016)
When I Was Eight by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (2013)

Ages 9–12

A Stranger at Home: A True Story by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (2011)
Dear Canada: These Are My Words by Ruby Slipperjack (2016)
Fatty Legs: A True Story by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (2017)
I Am Not a Number by Dr. Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer (2016)
My Name is Seepeetza by Shirley Sterling (2011)
No Time to Say Goodbye: Children's Stories of Kuper Island Residential School by Sylvia Olsen (2002)
The Orange Shirt Story by Phyllis Webstad (2018)
Secret Path by Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire (2016)
We Feel Good Out Here – Zhik gwaa'an, nakhwatthajitat gwiinzii (The Land Is Our Storybook) by Julie-Ann André and Mindy Willett (2008)

Ages 14+

Broken Circle: The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools: A Memoir by Theodore Fontaine (2010)
Five Little Indians by Michelle Good (2020)
Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese (2018)
Picking Up the Pieces: Residential School Memories and the Making of the Witness Blanket by Carey Newman and Kirstie Hudson (2019)
They Called Me Number One by Bev Sellars (2012)

Teachers

A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by Phil Fontaine et al. (2015)
A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986 by John S. Milloy and Mary Jane Logan McCallum (2017)
Canada's Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)
Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada by Chelsea Vowel (2016)
Picking Up the Pieces: Residential School Memories and the Making of the Witness Blanket by Carey Newman and Kirstie Hudson (2019)
Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History by J.R. Miller (2017)
Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools by J.R. Miller (1996)
Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada by Paulette Regan and Taiaiake Alfred (2011)

Glossary

Definitions taken from the Ontario Curriculum – Social Studies/History and Geography, 2018 and/or the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Curriculum, 2019

Community: A group of people who have shared histories, culture, beliefs and values.

Culture: The customary beliefs, values, social forms and material traits of an ethnic, religious or social group. Examples of culture include language, beliefs, traditions, celebrations, food and drink, the arts, music, sports/recreation.

First Nations: The term used to refer to the original inhabitants of what is now known as Canada, except the Inuit and Métis. A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian”, which many found offensive. The term “First Nation” has been adopted to replace the word “band” in the name of communities.

Genocide: The planned, systematic destruction of a national, racial, political, religious or ethnic group.

Indigenous: A term referring to the original peoples of a particular land or region. First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit and Métis are recognized as the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

Indian Act: Federal legislation that regulates “Indians” and reserves and sets our current federal government powers and responsibilities regarding First Nations and their reserved lands. The first Indian Act was passed in 1876. Since then, the act has undergone numerous amendments, revisions and re-enactments.

Indians: Under the Indian Act, “a person who pursuant to this Act is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.” Outside this specific legal purpose, the term is often seen as outdated and offensive, and the term “First Nations” or “Indigenous” is preferred.

Intergenerational Trauma: The transmission of the negative consequences of a historical event across generations.

Inuit (singular, Inuk): Indigenous people in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and northern Labrador. The word means “the people” in the Inuit language of Inuktitut. Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act. The federal government has entered in several major land claim settlements with Inuit peoples.

Métis: People of mixed First Nations and European ancestry. The Métis history and culture draws on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibwe and Cree. For additional information on the Métis Community, check out this article. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/metis-identity-history-rights-explainer-1.5098585>

Reconciliation: The act of restoring peaceful relations. In Canada, the term is used to refer to the process of restoring and renewing relationships between First Nations, Métis and Inuit and the rest of Canada.

Residential School System/Residential Schools: A network of government-funded, church-run schools for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, the goal of which was to eradicate Indigenous languages, traditions, knowledge and culture and to assimilate Indigenous peoples into mainstream settler society.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC): A federally-commissioned investigative body whose mandate was to learn the truth about the experience of Residential School Survivors and, in so doing, to create a historical record of and promote awareness and public education about the history and impact of the residential school system.

Two-Spirit: An Indigenous person who possesses both a masculine and feminine spirit. The term can also be used to identify gender, sexual, and spiritual identities outside of traditional Western definitions and binaries.

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