

# Learning Resources

## Orange Shirt Day/ National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

PLEASE NOTE: Information detailed in this document and in the linked documents may stir up or trigger unpleasant feelings or thoughts. The Indian Residential School Survivors Society encourages you to take time to care for your Mental and Emotional well-being. Please contact IRSSS toll-free at 1-800-721-0066 or the 24-Hour Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419 if you require further emotional support or assistance.

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Navigate through the list of links below for learning resources aimed to educate the public about topics such as the residential school system; reconciliation; languages, cultures and heritage of Indigenous Peoples in Canada; effects of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples and more. This list is not exhaustive and only provides a brief snapshot of the learning resources available in various formats and mediums.

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## Mental health and wellness supports

- [Indian Residential School Survivors Society \(BC\)](#)  
The Indian Residential School Survivors Society is a provincial organization with a 20-year history of providing services to Indian Residential School Survivors.
- [Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society](#)  
An Indigenous healing centre providing programs that address the issues of addictions, substance abuse, mental health, and trauma.
- [First Nations Health Authority resources and support services](#)  
The First Nations Health Authority plans, designs, manages and funds the delivery of First Nations health programs across B.C.

## Crisis supports and resources

Immediate crisis support is available to residential school survivors.

- **24-Hour National Crisis Line**  
Call: [1-866-925-4419](tel:1-866-925-4419)
- **KUU-US Crisis Line Society**  
Call: [1-800-588-8717](tel:1-800-588-8717)
- **Métis Crisis Line**  
Call: [1-833-638-4722](tel:1-833-638-4722)

## Learn

### Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

- [Phyllis \(Jack\) Webstad's story](#)  
Did you know the origin of Orange Shirt Day revolves around the story of a Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) woman from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation who currently lives in Williams Lake, B.C.?
- [Orange Shirt Society](#)  
In 2015, the Orange Shirt Society was formed to create awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of Indian Residential Schools with the purpose of supporting Indian Residential School Reconciliation and promoting the truth that Every Child Matters.

- [Resources by the Orange Shirt Society](#)  
Collection of resources to support planning Orange Shirt Day activities in classrooms and communities.
- [Victoria Orange Shirt Day](#)  
Residential school survivor Eddy Charlie and friend Kristin Spray initiated Victoria Orange Shirt Day in 2015 while attending the Indigenous Studies program at Camosun College. After graduating in 2017, they continued to recognize the sacrifices of residential school survivors by bringing the event to the City of Victoria.
- [UBC's Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre](#)  
A comprehensive list of Orange Shirt Day resources and learning materials for all ages.
- [National Truth and Reconciliation Day](#)  
Government of Canada website with details about how to commemorate September 30.

## History and commemoration

- [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)  
The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is a place of learning and dialogue where the truths of the residential school experience will be honoured and kept safe for future generations.
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)  
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences. It is a testament to the courage of each and every survivor and family member who shared their story. In December 2015, the TRC released its entire 6-volume final report. All Canadians are encouraged to read the summary or the final report to learn more about the terrible history of Indian Residential Schools and its sad legacy. Links to other TRC reports can be found here: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>
- [The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)  
In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following 94 Calls to Action.
- [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)  
The findings and recommendations of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report are essential knowledge for those who live and do business in Canada, and especially for those whose business activities immediately affect Indigenous communities.  
  
Drawing on six years of testimony from witnesses, this resource explains the history of Indigenous cultural genocide in Canada, including the legacy of the residential school system and of institutional discrimination and assimilation; explores the challenges of

reconciliation against enduring colonial politics and economics; and issues 94 Calls to Action that organizations can directly or indirectly advance.

- [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: Residential School History](#)  
Synopsis and timeline of the history of the residential school system.
- [The Witness Blanket](#)  
A large-scale work of art containing hundreds of items reclaimed from residential schools, churches, government buildings and traditional and cultural structures from across Canada.

## Reconciliation efforts

- [Reconciliation Canada](#)  
Reconciliation Canada is leading the way in engaging Canadians in dialogue and transformative experiences that revitalize the relationships among Indigenous peoples and all Canadians. Our model for reconciliation engages people in open and honest conversation to understand our diverse histories and experiences. We actively engage multi-faith and multi-cultural communities to explore the meaning of reconciliation. Together, we are charting a New Way Forward.
- [150 Acts of Reconciliation](#) by Crystal Fraser and Sara Komarnisky, Activehistory.ca  
A compilation of 150 everyday acts, as well as others that are more proactive, that average Canadians can undertake to reflect on Indigenous-settler relationships in new ways.
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People](#) (UNDRIP)  
The Declaration is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous Peoples.
- [BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act)  
The provincial government passed the legislation in November 2019 to implement the UN Declaration, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission confirms as the framework for reconciliation. It aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous Peoples while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work we do together.
- [Declaration Act Action Plan](#)  
The Declaration Act Action Plan, released in March 2022, is the first of its kind. Built in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples, the plan articulates the specific actions every ministry in government will take over five years to create a better B.C. for everyone. It includes 89 tangible, achievable actions in the areas of self-determination and self-government, rights and title, ending anti-Indigenous racism, and enhancing social, cultural and economic well-being.

- [Beyond 94: Truth and Reconciliation in Canada](#)

In March 2018, CBC News launched Beyond 94, a website that monitors progress on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. Beyond 94 was the result of a year's worth of research and interviews with survivors, interest holders and all levels of government.

While the content is continually updated, in September 2021, CBC reviewed the progress status of each of the 94 calls to action. The site provides up-to-date status reports on each call to action, as well as extensive summaries explaining those status reports. It includes in-depth features and short video documentaries that tell some of the community stories behind the calls to action. It also features residential school survivors sharing their experiences.

- [Delivering on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#)

Government of Canada's progress in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action.

- [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

Mandate: The National Inquiry must look into and report on the systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including sexual violence. We must examine the underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional, and historical causes that contribute to the ongoing violence and particular vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. The mandate also directs us to look into and report on existing institutional policies and practices to address violence, including those that are effective in reducing violence and increasing safety.

- [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

The National Inquiry's Final Report reveals that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The two-volume report calls for transformative legal and social changes to resolve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country.

The Final Report is comprised of the truths of more than 2,380 family members, survivors of violence, experts and Knowledge Keepers shared over two years of cross-country public hearings and evidence gathering. It delivers 231 individual Calls for Justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries and all Canadians.

- The [Seven Teachings](#)

Information provided by the Southern First Nations Network of Care on the Seven Teachings, which are guiding principles in the collaboration towards restoration of the cultural values, beliefs, and practices that were forbidden. Many Aboriginal organizations and communities have adopted the 7 guiding principles, in one form or another, as a moral stepping stone and cultural foundation. Each community has adapted the teachings to suit their community values. Despite where the teachings may have originated, they share the same concepts of abiding by a moral respect for all living things.

## General learning resources about Indigenous Peoples in Canada and B.C.

- [University of Alberta - Indigenous Canada](#)  
Indigenous Canada is a Massive Open Online Course from the Faculty of Native Studies that explores Indigenous histories and contemporary issues in Canada.  
  
From an Indigenous perspective, this course explores key issues facing Indigenous Peoples today from a historical and critical perspective highlighting national and local Indigenous-settler relations. Indigenous Canada is for students from faculties outside the Faculty of Native Studies with an interest in acquiring a basic familiarity with Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships.
- [Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education](#)  
Free online course at University of British Columbia that will enhance your understanding and knowledge of practices that advance reconciliation in the places where you live, learn, and work.  
  
This course will help you envision how Indigenous histories, perspectives, worldviews, and approaches to learning can be made part of the work done in classrooms, organizations, communities, and in everyday experiences in ways that are thoughtful and respectful.  
  
In this course, reconciliation emphasizes changing institutional structures, practices, and policies, as well as personal and professional ideologies to create environments that are committed to strengthening relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
- [Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada](#)  
Learning resources about First Nations, Inuit and Métis across Canada.
- [Assembly of First Nations Education Toolkit](#)  
Learning modules to bring together First Nations and non-First Nations people and foster a spirit of cooperation, understanding, and action.
- [Knowledge Series](#) created by the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA)  
BCSTA's Indigenous Education Committee has launched the Trustee Knowledge Series in response to the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement.
- [Reconciliation Education – Official Distributor of 4 Seasons of Reconciliation](#)  
These online courses and films provide a comprehensive, customized anti-racist education in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. With you, we aim to promote a renewed relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada through transformative multi-media learning.
- [First Peoples' Map of B.C.](#)  
Explore and contribute to the interactive map of the Indigenous Languages, Arts and Heritage in B.C.
- [Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs](#)  
The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is a non-profit political organization representing First Nations across B.C. in working towards the recognition, implementation and exercise of inherent Indigenous Title, Rights and Treaty Rights.

- [First Nations Summit](#)  
The First Nations Summit is comprised of a majority of First Nations and Tribal Councils in British Columbia and provides a forum for First Nations in B.C. to address issues related to Treaty negotiations as well as other issues of common concern.
- [BC Assembly of First Nations](#)  
The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) is a Provincial Territorial Organization representing and advocating for the 203 First Nations in British Columbia. BCAFN representation and advocacy is inclusive and extends to First Nations currently engaged in the treaty process, those who have signed modern treaties, and those who fall under historic treaty agreements which include the Douglas Treaties and Treaty 8. The BCAFN also represents and advocates for First Nations in B.C. that are not in treaty negotiations.
- [Métis Nation BC \(MNBC\)](#)  
MNBC's mandate is to develop and enhance opportunities for Métis communities by implementing culturally relevant social and economic programs and services.
- [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#)  
The National Representational Organization Protecting and Advancing the Rights and Interests of Inuit in Canada.
- [Native Land](#)  
Native Land Digital strives to create and foster conversations about the history of colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and settler-Indigenous relations, through educational resources such as their map and Territory Acknowledgement Guide.
- [Whose Land Map](#)  
Further engage with reconciliation and use this interactive map to learn more about the traditional territories and Indigenous communities whose land you occupy, as well as where residential schools were located in Canada.
- [Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization](#)  
A free ebook provides a variety of Indigenous perspectives on the history of colonialism, current Indigenous activism and resistance, and outlines the path toward reconciliation.

## Teaching resources

- [Orange Shirt Day Teaching Resources](#)  
A comprehensive list of learning resources and course content for teachers on Orange Shirt Day and the residential school system for Grades K-12.
- [Truth and Reconciliation Week 2023 \(Sept 25-30\) – For Educators](#)  
The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, to assist teachers, is offering *Honouring Survivors*, a week-long educational program open to all schools across Canada, that supports education curriculums, is age appropriate and free to grades 1 – 12. Educational resources provide an immersive experience to UN-learn the myths of colonial history in Canada.

- [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: Reconciliation Through Education](#)  
A part of their mandate, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is to raise awareness of the history and creation of the residential school system, its ongoing legacy, and how it has shaped the country we live in today. The teaching resources and educational programming the NCTR offers make it easier for the public to learn the truth about this tragic history.  
  
The NCTR works closely with educators from a variety of sectors including the K-12 school system, post-secondary institutions, public service and professional sectors to provide access to materials and resources that can aid Canadians of any age to learn about and participate in reconciliation.
- [First Nations Education Steering Committee](#)  
The Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation Teacher Resource Guides for grades 5, 10 and 11/12 were developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association. These unique, B.C.-specific, resources use age-appropriate literature, archival resources, and videos to increase students' understanding of the historical context of residential schools and to develop students' awareness about the reconciliation process as a way to move us all forward.  
  
The units and lessons support the BC Ministry of Education curriculum learning standards. In addition, due to the nature of the subject matter, the resources contain suggestions for how to deal sensitively with the topic of residential schools.
- [Nanaimo Museum](#)  
List of residential school learning resources for various age groups.
- [CBC Podcasts, Secret Life of Canada lesson plan - The Indian Act](#)  
This Secret Life of Canada podcast episode is a free of charge lesson plan that is created and tested by Teachers across Canada. Bring podcasts into the classroom through access to a lesson plan, slides, handouts, homework and videos.
- [What is Orange Shirt Day?](#)  
Learn more about Orange Shirt Day from this kid-friendly resource created by the CBC. And for further learning, check out this [CBC resource on reconciliation](#).
- [Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action](#)  
To learn more about the Calls to Action from a kid-friendly perspective, this Spirit Bear Guide includes a glossary and detailed run through of each call to action (downloadable PDF).
- [First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada](#)  
Compilation of materials on the bottom portion of the page are best for young students.
- [Canadian Centre for Inclusion and Diversity's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day Educational Resources](#)  
Compilation of various educational resources.
- [Curated list](#) of learning and teaching resources from Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools.



- [Curated list](#) of teaching resources from the Greater Victoria School District.
- ***Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Schools* by Pamela Rose Toulouse**  
In this book, author Pamela Rose Toulouse provides current information, personal insights, authentic resources, interactive strategies and lesson plans that support Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners in the classroom. This book is for all teachers that are looking for ways to respectfully infuse residential school history, treaty education, Indigenous contributions, First Nations/Métis/Inuit perspectives and sacred circle teachings into their subjects and courses. The author presents a culturally relevant and holistic approach that facilitates relationship building and promotes ways to engage in reconciliation activities.

## Foundations & funds

- [Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund](#)  
The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund aims to build cultural understanding and create a path toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and to improve the lives of Indigenous people by building awareness, education, and connections between all peoples in Canada.
- [Indigenous Foundations](#)  
An information resource on key topics relating to the histories, politics, and cultures of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada.
- [Legacy of Hope Foundation](#)  
The Legacy of Hope Foundation is a national, Indigenous-led, charitable organization that has been working to promote healing and Reconciliation in Canada for more than 19 years. Their goal is to educate and raise awareness about the history and existing intergenerational impacts of the residential school system and subsequent Sixties Scoop on Indigenous Survivors, their descendants, and their communities to promote healing and Reconciliation.

## Read

To source any materials from the reading lists below, please shop at your local bookstore or visit your local library. Many are available online.

### Recommendations for children

- [Indigenous Children's Literature - University of British Columbia Library](#)  
Curated bibliography that contains a selection of age-appropriate learning resources.
- ***The Orange Shirt Story* by Phyllis Webstad**  
The Orange Shirt Story by Phyllis Webstad, Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band), explains the truth behind Orange Shirt Day held each September 30th. The storyteller describes her first day attending St. Joseph's Mission residential school in Williams Lake, B.C., in the 1970s. On this memorable day the young Phyllis wore a new orange shirt purchased by her grandmother. Upon arriving at the residential school the shirt was removed from Phyllis and never returned by the nuns operating the school. Phyllis never forgot this experience. The story begins a discussion about residential schools and their impact on the children and their families and communities. The book contains a helpful map of Secwepemc territory, along with a brief history of the Shuswap people, the St. Joseph's Mission residential school, and a glossary of terms. This ideal resource picture book captures the author's experiences attending residential school through accessible text and highly evocative illustrations by Brock Nicol.
- ***Phyllis's Orange Shirt* by Phyllis Webstad**  
Phyllis's Orange Shirt is an adaptation of The Orange Shirt Story which was the best-selling children's book in Canada for several weeks in September 2018. This true story also inspired the movement of Orange Shirt Day which could become a federal statutory holiday. A page of information about this day and a short author biography is included at the end of the book. Adapted for ages 4-6.
- ***A Day with YaYah* by Nicola I. Campbell; Illustrated by Julie Flett**  
Set in the Okanagan, B.C., a First Nations family goes on an outing to forage for herbs and mushrooms. Grandmother passes down her knowledge of plant life to her young grandchildren. Recommended for grades K-2.
- ***Aggie and Muddy: The Journey of Two Kaska Dene Children* by Wendy Proverbs**  
Based on the true story of the author's biological mother and aunt, this middle-grade novel traces the long and frightening journey of two Kaska Dena sisters as they are taken from their home to attend residential school.
- ***Amik Loves School* by Katherena Vermette; Illustrated by Irene Kuziw**  
Early readers will learn the meaning of wisdom in this residential school story. Amik Loves School is one book in The Seven Teachings Stories series. The Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabe—love, wisdom, humility, courage, respect, honesty, and truth—are revealed in these seven stories for children.

- ***As Long as the Rivers Flow: A Novel* by Larry Loyie and Constance Brissenden; Illustrated by: Heather D. Holmlund**  
*As Long as the Rivers Flow* is the story of Larry Loyie's last summer before entering residential school. It is a time of learning and adventure. He cares for an abandoned baby owl and watches his grandmother make winter moccasins. He helps the family prepare for a hunting and gathering trip.
- ***Nuttah & Kitchi: National Truth and Reconciliation Day Activity Book*, Sandra Samatte**  
"Join Nuttah and Kitchi as they honour and remember the tens of thousands of residential school survivors and the children who did not survive the residential schools."
- ***Fatty Legs: A True Story* by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton**  
The beloved story of an Inuvialuit girl standing up to the injustices of residential school.
- ***When I Was Eight* by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton; Illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard**  
Bestselling memoir *Fatty Legs* for younger readers. Olemaun is eight and knows a lot of things. But she does not know how to read. Ignoring her father's warnings, she travels far from her Arctic home to the outsiders' school to learn.  
  
Based on the true story of Margaret Pokiak-Fenton and complemented by stunning illustrations.
- ***Arctic Stories* by Michael Kusugak**  
Ten-year-old Agatha, an Inuit girl, is the reluctant heroine in this tapestry of Arctic tales set in the 1950s. Each tale has its origins in Kusugak's own childhood experiences.
- ***Kookum's Red Shoes* by Peter Evyindson**  
The legacy of the residential schools is conveyed with respect and imagination in this illustrated story for young readers. As the elderly Kookum remembers the experiences in her youth that changed her life forever, we see what was lost in her life, and how goodness persisted.
- ***I Am Not a Number* by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer**  
When eight-year-old Irene is removed from her First Nations family to live in a residential school she is confused, frightened, and terribly homesick. Based on the life of co-author Jenny Kay Dupuis' grandmother, *I Am Not a Number* is a hugely necessary book that brings a terrible part of Canada's history to light in a way that children can learn from and relate to.
- ***Shi-shi-etko* by Nicola Campbell**  
In just four days young Shi-shi-etko will have to leave her family and all that she knows to attend residential school. Richly hued illustrations complement this gently moving and poetic account of a child who finds solace all around her, even though she is on the verge of great loss -- a loss that Indigenous Peoples have endured for generations because of the residential school system.

- ***Shin-chi's Canoe* by Nicola Campbell**  
 This moving sequel to the award-winning *Shi-shi-etko* tells the story of two children's experience 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.
- ***Stolen Words* by Melanie Florence**  
 The story of the beautiful relationship between a little girl and her grandfather. This sensitive and warmly illustrated picture book explores the intergenerational impact of the residential school system that separated young Indigenous children from their families. The story recognizes the pain of those whose culture and language were taken from them, how that pain is passed down, and how healing can also be shared.
- ***When We Were Alone* by David Alexander Robinson**  
 An empowering story of resistance that gently introduces children to the history of residential schools in Canada. Winner of the 2017 Governor General's Literary Award!
- ***The Train* by Jodie Callaghan**  
 An intergenerational story of healing from trauma. The legacy of abuse of North America's Indigenous peoples is something that affects all of us, and this book is another important resource to start that conversation with young people. *The Train* can be empowering for children whose families and communities have lived through trauma, as they can learn about the history and that they are strong enough to carry that knowledge and be the change we need.
- **"I Lost My Talk" by Rita Joe**  
 "I Lost My Talk" is a poem by Mi'kmaq poet and songwriter Rita Joe, published in her first collection, *Poems of Rita Joe*, in 1978. The poem, which is autobiographical, focuses on the speaker's time at Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Canada, a boarding school where Indigenous children were punished for speaking in their native tongue.
- ***I'm Finding My Talk* by Rebecca Thomas**  
 A response to Rita Joe's iconic poem "I Lost My Talk", and published simultaneously with the new children's book edition illustrated by Pauline Young, comes a companion picture book by award-winning spoken-word artist and Mi'kmaq activist Rebecca Thomas. A second-generation residential school survivor, Thomas writes this response poem openly and honestly, reflecting on the process of working through the destructive effects of colonialism.
- ***Little Butterfly Girl: An Indian Residential School Story* by the Anishinabek Nation**  
 A picture book produced by the Union of Ontario Indians based on an original account by Jenny Restoule-Mallozzi. With original colour illustrations by Donald Chretien, this story recounts the experiences of an Ojibwe child forced to attend residential school. The tragic account is brought full-circle when Mary begins her healing journey with encouragement from her family. Her name, *Little Butterfly Girl*, is reclaimed along with her language and traditional spirituality. This account will appeal to adult literacy learners as well as junior and intermediate level students.

- ***The Secret Path* by Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire**  
 Secret Path is a ten-song digital download album by Gord Downie with a graphic novel by illustrator Jeff Lemire that tells the story of Chanie “Charlie” Wenjack, a twelve-year-old boy who died in flight from the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School fifty years ago.
- ***A Stranger at Home: A True Story* by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton**  
 The author recalls her experiences as a ten-year-old girl returning to her family in the Arctic after two years at a residential school.
- ***No Time to Say Good-bye: Children’s Stories of Kuper Island Residential Schools* by Sylvia Olsen**  
 Fictional account of five children sent to aboriginal boarding school, based on the recollections of a number of Tsartlip First Nations people. These unforgettable children are taken by government agents from Tsartlip Day School to live at Kuper Island Residential School.
- ***My Name is Seepeetza* by Shirley Sterling**  
 An honest look at life in an Indian Residential School in the 1950s, and how one indomitable young spirit survived it.
- ***Dear Canada: These Are My Words* by Ruby Slipperjack**  
 Acclaimed author Ruby Slipperjack delivers a haunting novel about a 12-year-old girl's experience at a Residential School in 1966.
- ***Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story (Graphic Novel)* by David Alexander Robinson**  
 A school assignment to interview a residential school survivor leads Daniel to Betsy, his friend's grandmother, who tells him her story. Abandoned as a young child, Betsy was soon adopted into a loving family. A few short years later, at the age of 8, everything changed. Betsy was taken away to a residential school. There she was forced to endure abuse and indignity, but Betsy recalled the words her father spoke to her at Sugar Falls — words that gave her the resilience, strength, and determination to survive.
- ***Red Wolf* by Jennifer Dance**  
 In the late 1800s, both wolves and Native people are being forced from the land. Starving and lonely, an orphaned timber wolf is befriended by a boy named Red Wolf. But under the Indian Act, Red Wolf is forced to attend residential school far from the life he knows. And the wolf is alone once more. Courage, love and fate reunite the pair, and they embark on a perilous journey home. But with winter closing in, will they survive, and if they do, what will they find?
- ***Totem* by Jennifer Maruno**  
 As an orphaned white boy in a school full of Native students, fourteen-year-old Jonny Joe isn’t like any of the others at the island Redemption Residential School off the west coast. When the advances of Father Gregory disturb Jonny, he joins another boy in an escape to a mountain cave. But when they leave the cave, the world as they knew it no longer exists.
- ***Good For Nothing* by Michel Noel**  
 Winner of the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction. The year is 1959, and fifteen-year-old Nipishish returns to his reserve in northern Quebec after being kicked out of

residential school, where the principal tells him he's a good-for-nothing who, like all Indians, can look forward to a life of drunkenness, prison and despair.

The reserve, however, offers nothing to Nipishish. He remembers little of his late mother and father. In fact, he seems to know less about himself than the people at the band office. He must try to rediscover the old ways, face the officials who find him a threat, and learn the truth about his father's death.

- ***The Boy Who Walked Backwards* by Ben Sures**

The Boy Who Walked Backwards is a moving story about a young Ojibway boy, Leo, and his family in Serpent River First Nation. Leo's life turns to darkness when forced to attend residential school. Back home for Christmas, Leo uses inspiration from an Ojibway childhood game to deal with his struggles.

- ***Ends/Begins* by David Alexander Robertson**

In 1964, two brothers are torn from the warm and loving care of their grandparents, and taken to a residential school far from home.

- ***Speaking Our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation* by Monique Gray Smith**

Canada's relationship with its Indigenous people has suffered as a result of both the residential school system and the lack of understanding of the historical and current impact of those schools. Healing and repairing that relationship requires education, awareness and increased understanding of the legacy and the impacts still being felt by Survivors and their families. Guided by acclaimed Indigenous author Monique Gray Smith, readers will learn about the lives of Survivors and listen to allies who are putting the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into action.

## Reading recommendations for adults

- [First Peoples' Law](#) has compiled a comprehensive reading list about the residential school system in Canada.
- [The Calgary Public Library](#) has compiled a list of reading recommendations for adults, including non-fiction, memoir, poetry and novels.
- [Orange Shirt Day and Honoring Residential School Survivors Book List](#), Saskatoon Public Library (includes some reading recommendations for children).
- [Truth and Reconciliation Reading List](#), by ConnectR.
- [Read for Reconciliation](#), Regina Public Library (mixture of recommendations for children and adults).
- ***Namwayut—We Are All One: A Pathway to Reconciliation* by Chief Dr. Robert Joseph (2022)**

This recently published book traces [Robert Joseph's journey](#) as a residential school survivor to becoming a leading voice in peacebuilding and reconciliation.

- ***The Witness Blanket — Truth, Art and Reconciliation* by Carey Newman and Kirstie Hudson**  
Highlights the hundreds of items reclaimed from residential schools, churches, and cultural centres across Canada. Every piece holds a story and a history that is never forgotten.
- ***21 Things You May Not know about the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality* by Robert P. C. Joseph**  
Based on a viral article, 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act is the essential guide to understanding the legal document and its repercussion on generations of Indigenous Peoples, written by a leading cultural sensitivity trainer.
- ***A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* by John S. Milloy**  
Using previously unreleased government documents, historian John S. Milloy provides a full picture of the history and reality of the residential school system.
- **[Aboriginal People, Resilience and the Residential School Legacy](#) by Gregory D. Kipling and Madeleine Dion Stout**  
“In this report, a critical analysis of the resilience literature is undertaken and is considered against the cultures, lived experiences and larger social contexts of Aboriginal Survivors of residential school. The findings serve as the basis for recommended actions in the areas of planning and research, interventions and evaluation”. ~Excerpt from Aboriginal Healing Foundation website.
- ***Behind Closed Doors: Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential School* by Agnes S. Jack**  
“Behind Closed Doors features written testimonials from thirty-two individuals who attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The school was one of many infamous residential schools that operated from 1893 to 1979. The storytellers remember and share with us their stolen time at the school; many stories are told through courageous tears.”  
~Excerpt from Strong Nations
- ***Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action in and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* by Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin**  
Arts of Engagement focuses on the role that music, film, visual art, and Indigenous cultural practices play in and beyond Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools.
- ***People of the Land: Legends of the Four Host First Nations* by Aaron Nelson-Moody and Glenn George**  
The sacred legends of the four host First Nations, the Lil’wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, have been passed down from generation to generation through the Elders and are integral to the teachings and oral traditions of First Nations peoples. These stories link people to the land and to each other and pass on traditional knowledge.
- ***Aki-wayn-zih: A Person as Worthy as the Earth* by Eli Baxter**  
One man’s story of growing up in the hunting and gathering society of the Ojibways and surviving the residential school system, woven together with traditional legends in their original language.

- ***Take the Indian Out of the Child***

This book is a Nation-based story rooted in the syilx collective memory. It was undertaken through the support of the ONA Chiefs Executive Council in response to the voices of Survivors who were ready to speak and members who drew attention to the impacts of Indian residential schools in our lives today.

- ***They Called Me Number One* by Bev Sellars**

Like thousands of Aboriginal children in Canada, and elsewhere in the colonized world, Xatsu'll chief Bev Sellars spent part of her childhood as a student in a church-run residential school.

In this frank and poignant memoir of her years at St. Joseph's Mission, Sellars breaks her silence about the residential school's lasting effects on her and her family—from substance abuse to suicide attempts—and eloquently articulates her own path to healing. Number One comes at a time of recognition—by governments and society at large—that only through knowing the truth about these past injustices can we begin to redress them.

- ***Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese**

The story takes place in late 1950s Ontario, where eight-year-old Saul Indian Horse is torn from his Ojibway family and committed to one of Canada's notorious Catholic Residential Schools. In this oppressive environment, Saul is denied the freedom to speak his language or embrace his Indigenous culture and he witnesses and experiences all kinds of abuse at the hands of the very people who were entrusted with his care. Despite this, Saul finds salvation in the unlikeliest of places and the most favourite of Canadian pastimes — hockey.

Saul Indian Horse's story is one that needs to be shared with all Canadians - settler and Indigenous people alike. The story is one of loss and fear, but also one of hope and resilience. Indian Horse dramatically brings the dark history of Canada to the big screen and in the process tells a universal story of hope.

- ***The Red Files* by Lisa Bird-Wilson (poetry)**

This debut poetry collection from Lisa Bird-Wilson reflects on the legacy of the residential school system: the fragmentation of families and histories.

- [\*They Came for the Children\*](#) by The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

- ***Residential Schools, With the Words and Images of Survivors: A National History* by Larry Loyie, Wayne K. Spear, and Constance Brissenden**

Designed for the general reader this accessible, 112-page history offers a first-person perspective of the residential school system in Canada, as it shares the memories of more than 70 survivors from across Canada as well as 125 archival and contemporary images (65 black & white photographs, 51 colour, some never before published).

- ***Calling Down the Sky* by Rosanna Deerchild**

A poetry collection that describes deep personal experiences and post generational effects of the Canadian Aboriginal Residential School confinements in the 1950's when thousands of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were placed in these schools against their parents' wishes.



- ***Northern Wildflower* by Catherine Lafferty**  
Beautifully written and powerful memoir of Catherine Lafferty. With startling honesty and a distinct voice, Lafferty tells her story of being a Dene woman growing up in Canada's North and her struggles with intergenerational trauma, discrimination, poverty, addiction, love, and loss. Focusing on the importance of family ties, education, spiritualism, cultural identity, health, happiness, and the courage to speak the truth, Lafferty's words bring cultural awareness and relativity to Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers alike, giving insight into the real issues many Indigenous women face and dispelling misconceptions about what life in the North is like.
- ***Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada* by the Royal Canadian Geographic Society**  
A groundbreaking four-volume atlas that shares the experiences, perspectives, and histories of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada.
- ***Broken Circle* by Theodore Fontaine**  
Powerful, groundbreaking memoir of survival and healing after years of residential school abuse.
- ***Indian School Road: Legacies of the Shubenacadie Residential School* by Chris Benjamin**  
Journalist Chris Benjamin tackles the controversial and tragic history of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School.
- ***Up Ghost River: A Chief's Journey Through the Turbulent Waters of Native History* by Edmond Metatawabin and Alexandra Shimo**  
A powerful, raw yet eloquent memoir from a residential school survivor and former First Nations Chief.
- ***Silent Voices: Rule by Policy on Canada's Indian Reserves* by Mel Bevan**  
Mel Bevan set out to write the book never before written to find the root cause of the helplessness of the people who live on Canada's Indian reservations.
- ***A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada***  
A Knock on the Door, published in collaboration with the National Research Centre for Truth & Reconciliation, gathers material from the several reports the TRC has produced to present the essential history and legacy of residential schools in a concise and accessible package that includes new materials to help inform and contextualize the journey to reconciliation that Canadians are now embarked upon.
- ***True Reconciliation: How to Be a Force for Change* by Jody Wilson-Raybould**  
From the #1 bestselling author of *'Indian' in the Cabinet*, a groundbreaking and accessible roadmap to advancing true reconciliation across Canada.

## Indigenous publishers

- Founded in 1993 by Anishinaabe writer Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, [Kegedonce](#) is committed to the publication of beautifully written and designed Indigenous literature, both nationally and internationally.
- [Theytus Books](#) is a leading North American publisher of Indigenous voices. Located in Syilx territory on the Penticton Indian Reserve in British Columbia, Theytus Books is proudly First Nations-owned and operated in partnership with the En'owkin Centre.
- [Pemmican Publications](#) is a book publisher with a mandate to promote Metis authors, illustrators and stories. It is a not-for-profit company that operates as an arm's-length affiliate of the Manitoba Metis Federation. Pemmican publishes on average five to six new titles per year, with titles ranging from cultural studies and autobiographies to illustrated titles for children.

## Watch

- [Phyllis Webstad's Presentation on Orange Shirt Day](#), YouTube  
Phyllis Webstad presents her memories of Residential schools and the meaning of Orange Shirt Day.
- [Canadian Residential School History](#)  
Presented by Phyllis Webstad. A brief history of Canada and the Residential School System imposed on Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Timeline from early European contact through to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2010. 27 minutes
- [About Remembering the Children: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 2024](#)  
Live broadcast start on September 30. (English 3 p.m. ET, French 6 p.m. ET, Plains Cree 3 p.m. ET).

In honour of the fourth annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR), APTN, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, CBC/Radio-Canada and the Algonquin Nation have united to produce a 90-minute multilingual commemorative gathering, entitled *Remembering the Children: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*.

- [Sugarcane](#), debut feature documentary by Julian Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie  
Set amidst a groundbreaking investigation by Williams Lake First Nation of St Joseph's Mission, *Sugarcane* illuminates the heartbreak and beauty of a community breaking cycles of intergenerational trauma and finding the strength to survive.

The film premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival where it won the Directing Award: U.S. Documentary and has since garnered over a dozen awards. Acquired by National Geographic Documentary Films, *Sugarcane* is in theaters now and will stream on Disney+ and Hulu. National Geographic's schedule of showing for *Sugarcane* until it is released on streaming services: <https://films.nationalgeographic.com/sugarcane#theaters>

- [The Knowing](#)  
The Knowing is a 4-part series that follows journalist Tanya Talaga and her family's eight-decade-long search for family matriarch Annie Carpenter, revealing a story deeply intertwined with Canada's residential school system. Coming to CBC and CBC Gem on Sept. 25, 2024.
- [The National Film Board of Canada](#) has a selection of films by Indigenous filmmakers and allies about the tragic impacts of Residential Schools.
  - [We Were Children](#): In this feature film, the profound impact of the Canadian government's residential school system is conveyed through the eyes of two children who were forced to face hardships beyond their years. As young children, Lyna and Glen were taken from their homes and placed in church-run boarding schools, where they suffered years of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, the effects of which persist in their adult lives. We Were Children gives voice to a national tragedy and demonstrates the incredible resilience of the human spirit.
  - [Holy Angels](#): In 1963, Lena Wandering Spirit became one of the more than 150,000 Indigenous children who were removed from their families and sent to residential school. Jay Cardinal Villeneuve's short documentary Holy Angels powerfully recaptures Canada's colonialist history through impressionistic images and the fragmented language of a child. Villeneuve met Lena through his work as a videographer with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Filmed with a fierce determination to not only uncover history but move past it, Holy Angels speaks of the resilience of a people who have found ways of healing—and of coming home again.
  - [Sisters and Brothers](#): In a pounding critique of Canada's colonial history, this short film draws parallels between the annihilation of the bison in the 1890s and the devastation inflicted on the Indigenous population by the residential school system. This film is part of *Souvenir*, a series of four films addressing Indigenous identity and representation by reworking material in the NFB's archives.
- [WAWAhte Documentary](#)  
Wawahte began as a book written by Robert P. 'Bob' Wells. When Bob was nine years old, his dear friend Moochum Joe told him to 'draw words on paper' that told of how badly Indian people were being treated, and to 'draw them true'. Sixty-five years later, Wawahte was finally published (2012). The book tells the story of residential schools from the perspective of three of its survivors. They trusted Bob to tell their very personal stories so that all Canadians might find mutual healing and understanding. In 2015, Wawahte was made into an educational documentary produced by John Sanfilippo of Tyton Sound. The documentary combines archival images with elements from the Wawahte audio book.
- [Residential schools in Canada: A timeline](#) by Historica Canada. (2020).  
This short video covers history from the landing of Jesuits in what is now known as Quebec in the 17th century, to the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report in 2015.
- Video from author [Monique Gray Smith](#) to help start the conversation.

- [The Indian Act Explained](#), YouTube  
Since 1876, the Indian Act has structured the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples with profound repercussions. And though the act is well known, its detailed contents may not be. The Agenda welcomes Bob Joseph, founder of Indigenous Corporate Training, a firm specializing in cultural relations instruction, to discuss his book, "21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality."
- From the Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society, a video resource on the impacts of Indian Residential Schools - [Sacred Fire Exercise](#)
- [Gord Downie's "The Secret Path"](#), CBC Arts  
On October 22, 1966, near Kenora, Ontario, Chanie Wenjack died when he was walking home to the family he was taken from over 400 miles away. Fifty years later, Tragically Hip frontman Gord Downie has taken Wenjack's story and turned it into the Secret Path project, including a solo album, a graphic novel and an animated film.
- ["Indian Horse" feature film](#), by Stephen Campanelli  
A film based on the award-winning novel by Richard Wagamese. Also available on CBC Gem, Netflix and Amazon Prime.
- [What non-Indigenous Canadians need to know](#), TVO Docs, YouTube  
Eddy Robinson is an educator on Indigenous issues. In this web series called "First Things First," Robinson explains why asking "How Can I Help?" is not the right question.  
  
TVO Indigenous explores current affairs stories from Indigenous perspectives. Our video content spans topics about land, identity, life and politics, and helps to promote learning and deeper understanding of the issues impacting Indigenous communities. Our goal is to amplify Indigenous voices in Ontario and surface truths, one video at a time. We strive to be friendly and fair in our coverage. We seek to build relationships and ask the questions you're afraid to ask while sharing cultural pride, humour, and the many facets of Indigenous identities.
- [Stolen Children: Residential School survivors speak out](#), CBC News: The National, YouTube  
How Residential Schools affected survivors and their children and grandchildren. Click here for the full story: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal>
- [8th Fire: Wab Kinew's walk through history](#), CBC
- [Namwayut: we are one. Truth and reconciliation in Canada](#), CBC 2017, YouTube  
Chief Robert Joseph shares his experience as a residential school survivor and the importance of truth and reconciliation in Canada.
- [Separating children from parents: The Sixties Scoop in Canada](#), CBC News 2018, YouTube  
Short journalism piece describing how Canada took thousands of Indigenous children from their parents between the 1960s and the 1980s, and the effects are still being felt today.

- [Inendi: My Auntie Survived Residential School](#)  
CBC short documentary: With a pandemic threatening to take our elders, Sarain Fox gathers stories from her auntie and matriarch, Mary Bell, who holds the family's history: the legacy, the trauma, the truth.
- [Indigenous Stories Collection](#)  
A collection of shows, movies, and documentaries featuring the stories, history, and originality of Indigenous Peoples on CBC Gem.
- [TEDx talks on Truth & Reconciliation](#) – YouTube playlist
- [Introduction to Hałcístut \(Reconciliation\)](#)  
Short video produced by the Heiltsuk Tribal Council
- [Survivors of the Red Brick School, produced by the Osoyoos Indian Band](#)  
"Survivors of the Red Brick School" 20th Anniversary original release tributes Virg Baptiste last film and legacy as a tireless advocate for survivors of the Indian Residential Schools in Canada. Produced by the Osoyoos Indian Band, Virg convinced family & classmates after 40 years to take a last look before construction begins to tear down dormitories at the St. Eugene Mission Residential School in Cranbrook, BC. "Let's confront our living nightmare, our we insane" ... Original Release 2001
- [Forbidden Culture](#)  
Directed and produced by Tracey Kim Bonneau for the Penticton Indian Band
- [St. Joseph's Residential School Stories](#): A YouTube Video  
There are a great deal of stories that the Residential School has left in its wake, and most are not pleasant. The problem we have today is not many people know about what it was like. Jonathan Horst heard some of the stories from Williams Lake's local school and discovered that it's not something that should be forgotten.

## Listen

- [Still Here Still Healing](#) – Jade Roberts + on Spotify - [Still Here Still Healing](#)  
A podcast that brings awareness to the history and lasting impacts of residential schools as well as the ongoing impacts of colonization. Listen to stories from residential school survivors and learn from discussions with Indigenous youth about topics such as culture, language, identity, and community.
- [Residential Schools – Historica Britannica](#) + on Spotify - [Residential Schools – Historica Britannica](#)  
"Residential Schools" is a three-part podcast series created by Historica Canada and hosted by Shaneen Robinson-Desjarlais. It aims to commemorate the history and legacy of residential schools, and honour the stories of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Survivors, their families, and communities.

- [Telling Our Twisted Stories](#), CBC podcast with host Kaniehti:io Horn  
Words connect us. Words hurt us. Indigenous histories have been twisted by centuries of colonization. Host Kaniehti:io Horn brings us together to decolonize our minds— one word, one concept, one story at a time.
- [ᐃᓂᐃᑦ ᐅᓂᓐᓴᓂᑦ \(Inuit Unikkaangit\)](#), CBC podcast with host and archivist Mary Powder  
Host and Archivist Mary Powder reunites Inuit with stories from CBC North’s vast Inuktitut language archives by replaying them for the descendants of the original storytellers, some of whom are hearing them for the very first time.
- [Indigenous Canada](#) CBC Music Playlist  
From roots and rock to hip hop and hand drums – Canadian Indigenous music is an invite to a cultural experience across all genres. Hear: Don Amero, Ruby Waters, A Tribe Called Red, Terry Uyarak, Wolf Saga and more!