

---

## Learning Resources

# Orange Shirt Day/ National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Please navigate through the list of links below for learning resources aimed to educate the public about topics such as reconciliation; languages, cultures and heritage of Indigenous Peoples in Canada; the residential school system; 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.

### ONLINE RESOURCES

- [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 (Canoe Creek Indian Band) who currently lives in Williams Lake, B.C.?
- [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)  
The 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.
- [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.
- [Take the Indian Out of the Child](#)  
While there are now many books about the Indian residential school system, this is the first to speak about the specific ways in which it has touched the syilx people.
- [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 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.

- [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.
- [Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada](#)  
Learn more about First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples across Canada.
- [First Peoples' Map of B.C.](#)  
Explore and contribute to the interactive map of the Indigenous Languages, Arts and Heritage in B.C.
- [Métis Nation BC](#)  
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.
- [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.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

- [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.

## ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES AND COURSES

- [UBC'S Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre](#)  
A comprehensive list of Orange Shirt Day resources and learning materials for all ages.
- [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.
- [University of Alberta - Indigenous Canada](#)  
Indigenous Canada is a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) 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.

## TEACHING RESOURCES AND READING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILDREN

- [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.
- [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. They are our response to the call by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada for education bodies to develop age-appropriate educational materials about Indian residential schools.
- [Indigenous Children's Literature - University of British Columbia Library](#)  
Curated bibliography that contains a selection of age-appropriate learning resources.
- [Nanaimo Museum](#)  
List of Indian Residential School learning resources for various age groups.
- [Indigenous History Booklist - The Canadian Children's Book Centre](#)

Curated selection of books for all ages that highlight the voices of those in Indigenous communities.

- [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.
- [A Day with YaYah](#)  
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](#)  
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](#)  
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](#)  
*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](#)  
"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." ~Excerpt from Strong Nations website.

## READING RECOMMENDATIONS - 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.
- [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 Husdon (2022) highlight 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.

- [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [21 Things You May Not know about the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality](#)  
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](#)  
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](#)  
“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](#)  
“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](#)  
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](#)  
The sacred legends of the four host First Nations, the Lil’wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tseil-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](#)  
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.

## **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

## VIEWING RECOMMENDATIONS

- [The National Film Board of Canada](#) has a number of videos and documentaries about Residential Schools available on their website.
  - [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 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.