

Unit Title: The Oka Crisis and Indigenous Resistance in Canada

Film: *Kanehsatake: 270 years of Resistance* – 1 hr 59 min

Time required: 4-5 classes

Grade(s): 10-12



Unit Overview:

This guide has been designed to accompany the documentary film *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, directed by award-winning Abenaki director Alanis Obomsawin. Students will learn about the importance of the Oka crisis in recent Canadian history and the need for a consultation process today with First Nations peoples. They will learn how Indigenous lands have been historically colonized and occupied by the French and the British and continue to be shaped by American and Canadian governments today – history isn't over. The main activities in this unit include viewing the film, then discussing and analyzing the actions of Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian government over the 78 days of the civil unrest in Oka. Finally, students in groups will prepare a presentation of their 3 top recommendations to the current federal government's policies for improving relationships with First Nations people across Canada.

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The overarching goal in this unit of exploration is to encourage students to practice historical thinking skills to be able to ethically evaluate past events in order to develop an educated opinion about current events, and to go one step further by imagining possible solutions to shape the present and future in a positive way. The Oka crisis is not an exception and similar events still happen today. Students may draw connections with barricades and resistance in recent years at the Standing Rock Protests in the United States, and pipeline protests here in Canada. History isn't over; similar events and conflicts continue across the continent.

About the Film:

In July 1990, a dispute over a proposed golf course to be built on Kanien'kéhaka (Mohawk) lands in Oka, Quebec, set the stage for a historic confrontation that would grab international headlines and sear itself into the Canadian consciousness. Director Alanis Obomsawin—at times with a small crew, at times alone—spent 78 days behind Kanien'kéhaka lines filming the armed standoff between protestors, the Quebec police and the Canadian army. Released in 1993, this landmark documentary has been seen around the world, winning over a dozen international awards and making history at the Toronto International Film Festival, where it became the first documentary ever to win the Best Canadian Feature award. Jesse Wente, Director of Canada's Indigenous Screen Office, has called it a “watershed film in the history of First Peoples cinema.”

Curriculum Connections:

1. Main course of study: Social Studies, Native Studies, Aboriginal Studies, First Nation Studies, Film Studies, Law.

Subject Matter	Big Ideas	Inquiry questions
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<p>Social Studies History, Law and Geography</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indigenous peoples are reclaiming mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being despite the continuing effects of colonialism (from Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12). 2. The impact of contact and colonialism continues to affect the political, social, and economic lives of B.C. First Peoples. 3. Moving images offer dynamic ways of exploring identity and culture. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are Indigenous people reclaiming mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being despite the continuing effect of colonialism? 2. How are the impacts of colonialism still felt and lived by First Peoples of Canada? 3. How do moving images shape one's way of exploring identity and culture?
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2. Cross Curricular Opportunities: Language Arts and History

Curricular Competencies:

<p>(SWBAT)</p>	<p>I will know because</p>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.● Make reasoned ethical judgments about controversial decisions, legislation, or policy (ethical judgment).● Compare and contrast continuities and changes, trends and patterns, or similarities and differences for different people, places, events, phenomena, ideas, or developments (continuity and change).● Explore the role of story and narrative in expressing First Peoples perspectives, values, and beliefs, including protocols related to ownership of First Peoples oral texts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Through critically analyzing the film and other secondary sources reported in group discussions● Participating in post-viewing activity● Compare and contrast activity● Close observation of Alanis Obomsawin's film and critically assessing other secondary sources alongside it |
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Students will:

- Be able to examine the historical facts related to the Oka crisis, both through the primary and secondary sources.
- Be able to engage in critical thinking about media representation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

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- Be able to explain and justify the necessity of Indigenous resistance movements in protecting Indigenous sovereignty and environment's rights in Canada.
- Be able to find another case of Indigenous resistance against forces of industrialization shored up by the various bodies of government in North America. Students will be able to compare and contrast this event with the Oka crisis.

Lessons:

	Main Questions	Main Activity	Resources
Lesson 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is Alanis Obomsawin? 2. Why does she make documentaries? 3. What is bias and point of view? 	<p>The class will watch the short introductory clips about Obomsawin (see links at right) and in groups of 3 they will find answers to the 6 focus questions in today's class. Debrief</p>	<p>Resources and clips about Alanis Obomsawin:</p> <p>nfb.ca/film/making_movie_history_alanis_obomsawin</p>

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	<p>4. What influences our biases, and points of view?</p> <p>5. Why watch documentaries with a critical eye?</p> <p>6. Is Obomsawin's film a primary source or a secondary source?</p>	<p>together in a class discussion about each group's answers and thoughts.</p>	<p>https://www.vancouverbiennale.com/big-ideas-director/alanis-obomsawin/</p>
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	Main Questions	Main Activity	Resources
<p>Lesson 2</p>	<p>What were the political, ethical and historical significances of the chain of events in the film?</p> <p>What did the lack of presence of the national press coverage during the crisis mean for our</p>	<p>Teacher will pull up the interactive map of the Oka incident and demonstrate the interactive map.</p> <p>Students will break into 6 groups and each group will watch approximately 20 minutes of the film**. Each group will record important details and explore the map for further understanding G1 0:00- 19:25</p>	<p>NFB education resource for this film:</p> <p>https://blog.nfb.ca/blog/2020/06/17/kanehsatake-270-years-of-resistance-canadas-history-of-resistance-to-indigenous-land-claims/</p>



	<p>notion of democracy in that timeframe?</p> <p>Has this changed today? How or not?</p>	<p>G2 19:25- 40:00 G3 40:00- 60:06 G4 60:06-80:00 G5 80:00-100:00 G6 100:00- 119: 24</p> <p>** Variation below</p>	<p>Interactive Google map of Kanehsatake resistance, 1990</p>
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Film Screening Variation:

The entire film is valuable for students to see. It could be screened during class over 2 or 3 sessions, with students paying extra attention for notetaking during their 20 min segment. Alternatively, students could also watch the full film at home, then in class the groups could review their 20 minunte segment together on a laptop or mobile device in order to create notes on paper with their group for the timeline activity.

	Main Questions	Main Activity	Resources
Lesson 3	<p>What are the historical and political significance of these terms when situated in one context?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kanehsatake, 2. Mohawk, 3. Resistance <p>In which part of Canada did this event take place?</p> <p>What was the sequence of events in the Oka crisis?</p>	<p>Each group will report their findings from their study of the film and other secondary sources.</p> <p>The class will together create a timeline of events by adding each group’s findings on a timeline in a chronological order. Groups share their response to the post-viewing questions.</p>	<p>Useful article:</p> <p>“The media are picking scabs with coverage of latest Oka Crisis.” CBC. July 2019:</p> <p>https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/oka-crisis-tension-media-coverage-1.5218368</p>



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	Main Questions	Main Activity	Resources
Lesson 4	<p>Can you find another example of tension/ disagreement between Canadian government and Indigenous Peoples over Indigenous rights to their lands and identity?</p> <p>Compare and contrast this incident with the Oka crisis.</p>	<p>Students will research in groups of 3 and display their findings through a PowerPoint or poster map presentation or an interactive map</p>	<p>A CBC article mentioning other similar events in Canada after Oka: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/pov-taionr%C3%A9n-hote-dan-david-on-oka-crisis-after-30-years-1.5644082</p> <p>Point of View: The Oka Crisis — looking forward after 30 years. CBC. July 2020. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/pov-taionr%C3%A9n-hote-dan-david-on-oka-crisis-after-30-years-1.5644082</p> <p>Idle No More official website: https://idlenomore.ca/</p>

Lesson 5: Presentation Day

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BIG IDEAS WITH FILM

— TEACHER'S GUIDE

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