



Understanding Documentary Film as a Form of Resistance

Lesson Plan

NBE 3C Curriculum Expectations

First Nations, Métis, And Inuit Perspectives And Text Forms In Canada

A3. Reconstructing: demonstrate an understanding of the role of contemporary and historical text forms created in Canada in representing the diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit lives, cultures, and world views, and assess the impact on Canadian society of efforts to challenge colonialist views and incomplete or inaccurate representations

A3.1 demonstrate an understanding of several different challenges First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities face and have faced in controlling their own narratives and resisting colonialist views, as revealed in text forms studied in this course **(Acknowledging)**

Media Studies

E1. Understanding Media Texts: demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant media texts from non-Indigenous sources;

E1.2 interpret media texts from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, and, as appropriate, relevant media texts from non-Indigenous sources, including increasingly complex texts, identifying and explaining the overt and implied messages they convey **(Interpreting Messages)**

E2. Understanding Media Forms, Conventions, and Techniques: identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning in the context of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures;

E2.2 identify conventions and/or techniques used in a variety of media forms and explain how they convey meaning and influence their audience in the context of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures **(Conventions and Techniques)**



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Learning Goals & Success Criteria

Learning Goals

We are learning to:

- Describe cultural prejudice, systemic oppression and its effects as it relates to First Nations, Métis and Inuit
- Explain how First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices are using media to fight back against cultural prejudice and systems of oppression

Success Criteria

I can:

- Gather key information from a media text
- Define the meaning of cultural prejudice and systemic oppression
- Describe ways First Nations, Métis and Inuit fight back against cultural prejudice, misrepresentations and inaccuracies
- Explain how the choices made by a media creator make an impact on the viewer

Essential Questions

1. What is cultural prejudice? What is systemic oppression? What is the relationship between cultural prejudice and systemic oppression?
2. How are First Nations, Métis and Inuit fighting back against cultural prejudice and systemic oppression?

Lesson Materials and Resources

- Documentary film [Angry Inuk](#) by Alethea Arnaquq-Baril (check school library subscriptions for availability; or, NFB lists a classroom licence at \$12.99. It is also available through streaming platforms such as [Apple TV](#) and [Prime Video](#))
- Handout: [Passages](#)



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Lesson Plan:

Estimated Timeframe: 75-150 minutes

Minds On

1. Post the question: What is cultural prejudice? What is systemic oppression? Gather responses to create a draft shared definition based on students' understanding at this point. (This draft definition will be revisited later in the lesson.)
2. Share Essential Questions, Learning Goal and Success Criteria of the lesson. For the Success Criteria, engage students in identifying key words in the criteria. Debrief by noting key words they identify and clarify any terms as needed.

Action

3. Explain to students that they will be viewing a documentary film called [Angry Inuk](#) by an important Inuit documentary film-maker [Alethea Arnaquq-Baril](#). Make distinctions between documentary films and fiction films. For example, documentary films capture people's lives, they tell stories based on people's real life situations, and the construction of the film follows how that reality unfolds. Also, discuss how documentary filmmakers capture and edit footage to shape the story and ideas they want viewers to see.
4. View the first few minutes of the documentary (**Note:** determine if you wish to play the preview to the film (00:00-01:07) or begin at the title credit (at 01:07). As students view the opening minutes of the film, pause the film periodically and ask students to share what they Notice and Wonder. Create a t-chart for Notice/Wonder and record students' responses. (Wonders can include questions, predictions, connections, conclusions). Students' noticings and wonderings could be about the subject of the film or about the film itself (e.g., how it looks and feels, the experience of viewing it).

Some suggested points to pause the film and ask students to respond: 02:25, 03:14, 04:42.

5. The main problem or conflict being shown in the film is the effects of the sealskin ban as the result of cultural prejudice, and how this prejudice causes oppression of Inuit people, including loss of land and starvation.

Continue showing the first half of the documentary (up to 22:40), and as students watch, ask them to record the impacts of the sealskin ban on the Inuit community. (Responses may include forcing Inuit from traditional lands, the price of seal skins crashing, loss of livelihood, widespread hunger.)

Pause the film at the midway point (22:40) and gather responses about the impacts students drew from the film.

Extend the discussion by exploring the roots of the cultural prejudice (e.g., what



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is causing this cultural prejudice? If needed, prompt students to consider how factors, such as capitalism, colonialism, racist policies, feed this cultural prejudice and how they impose and maintain systemic oppression.)

6. Establish groups and distribute [one passage](#) per group. Ask students to discuss the significance of the quote. Remind students that finding significance includes explaining how it relates to the film as a whole, what meaning the passage reveals related to the content, and what the passage reveals about the speaker (in this case, Arnaquq-Baril herself). Have each group share their quote and the significance they drew from it.
7. Make the connection that the impacts of the sealskin ban and the thoughts revealed in the passages are the result of colonial views and cultural prejudice. Extend the discussion by exploring how the actions of anti-sealers impede the rights of the Inuit whose way of life has depended upon eating and wearing seal for millennia.

Return to the shared definition of cultural prejudice from the Minds On. In a whole group discussion, invite students to add and extend to this definition based on what they have seen in the documentary.

8. Explain how Arnaquq-Baril fights back against this cultural prejudice, racism and systemic oppression, and the inaccuracies and misrepresentation of the Inuit. The film shows how she does this
 - through the content of the film (e.g., what she includes in the film about members in her community, what she shows about the anti-sealers),
 - through her actions as documented in the film (e.g., organizing a protest, starting “sealfies” on social media), and
 - by the way she constructs the film (e.g., by including personal voices and stories of community members, use of close-ups to capture emotion).

Resume showing the film. Ask students to track evidence (e.g., in a chart) of the three ways Arnaquq-Baril fights back against social prejudice, racism and systemic oppression.

Once students have viewed the rest of the film, gather responses (e.g., through whole class discussion or small groups).

Consolidation

9. Invite students to focus on the ways Arnaquq-Baril constructs her film. Ask students to select two of those ways, and explain why these ways of constructing the film are effective in making an impact (e.g., of fighting back against cultural prejudice, combatting misrepresentations and inaccuracies of Inuit).



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Invite students to share their responses (e.g., through discussion or in writing).

10. Invite students to complete a final personal reflection (e.g., on an exit card) responding to the following questions: *What did Arnauq-Baril teach you about Inuit? What did Arnauq-Baril teach you about your own perceptions of Inuit? How were you able to think about things in new ways? What do you understand differently after viewing the film?*

Extension Possibilities

1. Share the article [How One Documentary Is Changing People's Minds About The Inuit Seal Hunt](#) as a follow-up to the film, and check [Arnauq-Baril's](#) Twitter channel for more news about her fight to combat cultural prejudice.
2. Make connections to the lesson [Myth Busting with Non-Fiction Texts](#).
3. Use the documentary [Colonization Road](#) as another example of how an Indigenous media creator [Ryan McMahon](#) fights back against colonial perceptions and inaccuracies. The expectations of this lesson could align with the use of [Colonization Road](#).
4. Explore other non-fiction works, such as personal essays and podcasts, by Indigenous writers and media creators/producers.



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Passages from *Angry Inuk*

“They call it *the* Canadian seal hunt, or just the seal hunt, which completely ignores that Inuit are part of the seal skin market.” (07:42)

“Anti-sealers have carefully developed the image of commercial sealing as a massive and evil operation, and they say it is inherently inhumane.” (08:50)

“I have seen many campaigns argue that sealing should end because it is immoral to kill a seal just for the fur. They say fur is a shame and a frivolous luxury. But Inuit defy that argument because we eat the meat, and for us a warm coat is not a luxury. It’s necessary for day-to-day survival.” (09:39)

“How could these groups work for so many decades to crush our industry without having to see it with their own eyes?” (11:04)