



## Grade 5 Language

Reading  
Writing

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

### Aboriginal Heroes

Students research an Aboriginal hero and write that person's biography.

#### Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006*

#### Specific Expectations

##### *Reading for Meaning*

- 1.9 identify the point of view presented in texts, ask questions to identify missing or possible alternative points of view, and suggest some possible alternative perspectives (e.g., ask why the perspective of certain characters in a story is not presented and include some missing voices in a dramatization of a text; with a partner, role-play an interview with a person who represents one of the missing voices)

##### *Using Knowledge of Form and Style in Writing*

- 2.1 write longer and more complex texts using a variety of forms (e.g., a biographical sketch, based on research; a report, including research notes, describing the effect of the natural environment on an early civilization; an outline of the procedure for becoming a Canadian citizen; an explanation of how a human organ system functions, using pictures, captions, and notes; a review of or commentary on a book, movie, or video game; a myth using themes identified in reading; a pamphlet on a socially relevant topic they have studied this year)

#### Aboriginal Context

Aboriginal people and their achievements may be under-recognized in Canada. There are many famous Aboriginal Canadians who have contributed to our society.

#### Teaching Strategies

- Write the word “hero” on the board or a chart and ask students to define what it means. Have them give examples of some heroes they relate to and note beside the names what students say about what each has done to be called a hero. Emphasize that there are a variety of different heroes, and that different people may consider different things heroic.

- Look at the list of heroes students have generated, and divide the list into groups (e.g., musicians; sports stars; women; local, national, and international heroes). If no one has named an Aboriginal hero, ask students if they are aware of any. If students have named some, discuss them and start a list of their achievements. If students are unaware of Aboriginal heroes, name a few that students might know (e.g., Buffy Sainte-Marie, Jordin Tootoo, James Bartleman, Susan Aglukark, Ted Nolan, Tom Longboat, Pauline Johnson, Stan Jonathan, Harry Smith, Roberta Jamieson, John Kim Bell). Have students identify as many Aboriginal heroes as possible, using works from the Resources section, and share these results with the class.
- Have students select an Aboriginal person to research and chart all information learned about that person on a graphic organizer. Ensure that students use relevant sources to look for information regarding the person's Aboriginal background, as well as basic information about each person, and how that background has played a role in the person's life.
- Have students read the completed biographies to the class or compile them in a class collection.
- Using differentiated instruction, have students record their biography in different forms – on an audiotape, on a computer, or as a visual representation (e.g., a timeline).

## Resources

*The following recommended resources and web links were accurate at the time of publication. Teachers are encouraged to check that these reference listings remain current.*

Archibald, Jo-ann, Jeff Smith, and Val Friesen, eds. *Courageous Spirits: Aboriginal Heroes of Our Children*. Penticton, BC: Theytus, 1993.

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. <http://www.etfo.ca/Resources/ForTeachers/>

National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. [http://www.naaf.ca/html/awards\\_e.html](http://www.naaf.ca/html/awards_e.html) Award winners.

Newhouse, David R., Voyageur, Cora J., and Beavon, Dan, eds. *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2005. ISBN 0-802-8800-7 (cloth) ISBN 0-8020-8581-4 (paper)

Toronto District School Board. *Aboriginal Voices in the Curriculum: A Guide to Teaching Aboriginal Studies in K–8 Classrooms*. Toronto: Toronto District School Board, 2006. See page 27 for a list of Aboriginal people in Canadian public life.

## Making Community Connections

- Contact a nearby Aboriginal community or Native Friendship Centre to enquire about a prominent member of the local community who might visit the class or take part in a telephone interview.

### ABOUT THE TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

This teaching strategy is one component of *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom. Based on the revised Ontario curriculum, the collection includes resources for educators at both the elementary and secondary levels. Other resources in this series can be found on the ministry website, at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).

