

Grade 5 Social Studies

Canada and World Connections

- Aspects of Citizenship and Government in Canada

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

Celebrating National Aboriginal Day

Students learn about the importance of National Aboriginal Day and celebrate it with their classmates.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8, 2004*

Specific Expectations

Knowledge and Understanding

- describe some civic ceremonies and celebrations, and explain what they mean or commemorate (e.g., citizenship and reaffirmation ceremonies, the changing of the guard, the opening of Parliament, public events for International Day for the Elimination of Racism, Aboriginal Solidarity Day, Canada Day celebrations, Remembrance Day services)

Aboriginal Context

National Aboriginal Day (also called National Aboriginal Solidarity Day) is held on June 21 to honour and celebrate Canada's First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people, and recognize the important contributions they have made to the country. The establishment of this day of recognition came about after several requests from Aboriginal organizations and was recommended in the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

June 21 – the day of the summer solstice and, therefore, the longest day of the year – was chosen because many Aboriginal groups have for generations celebrated their culture and heritage on or around this date. Many Aboriginal groups use the day as a time to celebrate their heritage, and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across the country mark the day in formal and informal ways.

Teaching Strategies

- Ask students to share what they know about National Aboriginal Day.
- Record their responses on a chart.
Teacher prompts: Why is it important to recognize Aboriginal people and their achievements and contributions to Canada? Why do we need to set aside a day for this recognition? How is this day celebrated in our community?
- Explain how and why National Aboriginal Day came to be created.
- Have students brainstorm ways the class could recognize National Aboriginal Day in the classroom and record students' ideas on a chart. (Suggested ways include: learning words and phrases from an Aboriginal language, such as Cree, Mohawk, or Ojibwe; holding a mini-marathon in honour of Tom Longboat, the Onondaga distance runner; learning an Aboriginal game; learning about musical instruments and styles used by Aboriginal recording artists by listening to music on an Aboriginal radio station; learning a traditional Aboriginal craft or drawing a picture in the style of an Aboriginal artist; learning to tell an Aboriginal story orally; and learning an Aboriginal dance.)
- Organize students into groups and have each group research one activity.
- Have each group teach what they learned to the other students at the class's National Aboriginal Day celebration.

Resources

Aboriginal Games and Activities. <http://www.mts.net/~c54s55/aboriginalgames.html>.

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. Activities for National Aboriginal Day. <http://www.etfo.ca/Resources/ForTeachers/Pages/default.aspx>.

Indian and Northern Affairs. National Aboriginal Day. www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nad/index-eng.asp.

NativeDance.ca. <http://natedance.ca>. A wide array of information on Native dance.

Ontario Arts Council. Aboriginal Arts Education Projects. <http://www.arts.on.ca/Page48.aspx>.

Veteran Affairs Canada. Tom Longboat. <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=history/other/native/longboat>.

Making Community Connections

- Partner with a local school with a large Aboriginal population to celebrate National Aboriginal Day.
- Participate in the celebrations taking place in your area on June 21.

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.

