

Beginning Literacy Packet

Notes for the Teacher

Introduction to the Packet

This 13-page packet contains five pieces, all written at about a fourth grade equivalency level. All the pieces (except for the first) are adapted from articles that appear in the “Indigenous Peoples” issue of *The Change Agent*. If your class is multi-level, you can teach from different levels of the same piece.

1. Introduction to Settler Colonialism (pp. 1-2)

I created this piece as an introduction to the packet. Some of the articles refer to “settlers” and/or “settler colonialism.” These are complex terms that could use more teaching time. This piece consists of an illustration, an authentic historical document, some vocabulary definitions, and some discussion questions. The goal is that by looking at the images, studying the vocabulary, and discussing and writing about it, students will understand settler colonialism as a type of colonialism that involves not just extracting wealth and resources from the colonized country, but also involves people settling permanently on the colonized land.



2. Teachings of the Buffalo Hunt (pp. 3-5)

This piece was adapted from the original, which appeared on pp. 4-6 of the “Indigenous Peoples” issue of *The Change Agent*. The first page includes “Before you read” activities that give students the opportunity to read maps, learn vocabulary, gain knowledge about U.S. geography and history, and connect the story to their own experiences. There is also an “After you read” activity, which asks students to explain something about the text and point to evidence for their assertion. The article is rich with photographs that help tell the story.



3. Three Sisters: Corn, Beans & Squash (pp. 6-8)

Adapted from pp. 22-23 of *The Change Agent*, this piece provides students with “Before you read” activities that include generating prior knowledge about gardening, scanning to determine what the article is about, and looking at pictures to learn vocabulary—including science words (eg., nitrogen and chemical). The “After



you read” activities include scaffolding into a higher level text, “The Fourth Sister” (on p. 8). There is also an opportunity to learn a difficult (but highly relevant) word: reciprocity. And finally, there are gardening instructions and a link to a Chickasaw Nation video about growing the Three Sisters.

4. Indigenous Peoples Day (pp. 9-11)

Adapted from p. 35 of *The Change Agent*, this short piece argues that we should not celebrate Columbus. He brought settler colonialism to the Americas, which proved devastating to the Indigenous people. Rather we should celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day. The “Before you read” activity encourages students to explore the meaning of “Indigenous” and to name some synonyms (eg., Native or First Peoples). Some students might say “Indian,” in which case, see p. 7 of the magazine for an article called, “Why Call Them Indians?” The “After you read” activities include an in-depth letter-writing exercise, an opportunity to explore how to gain knowledge about a topic, and a grammar/vocabulary point about why students are seeing an “s” added to “people.”



5. Acknowledge the Land (pp. 12-13)

The final piece in the packet is designed to close out the series with a writing and speaking activity. It is adapted from pp. 14-15 of *The Change Agent*. Students learn about “land acknowledgments”—a common practice for Native people, and a practice that is becoming more common for non-Native people. The idea is to learn more about who lived on the land before settler colonialism and then write a Land Acknowledgment that reflects your location. Students could read their Land Acknowledgment out loud before class or before an event in your program. The “Before you read” question activates student knowledge about the concept of “acknowledging.” The “After you read” activities support students to summarize the main idea of the article and notice key details. They also have a chance to read the author’s own Land Acknowledgment (which scaffolds them into slightly more complex text), and write their own Land Acknowledgment.



Click on this interactive map to learn more about the land you are on [<native-land.ca>](http://native-land.ca).