

Case of Windy Lake, The

When an archaeologist mysteriously disappears on the Windy Lake First Nation reserve, the Mighty Muskrats are on the case. This tight-knit band of cousins investigates the event while giving readers a glimpse of reserve life, touching on the daily life, struggles, and relationships of those living there. Suitable for students in Grade 3–7, this engaging novel can be used as a class novel study, inviting opportunities for creative and critical thinking about the conflict between Indigenous peoples and industry. The descriptive language can facilitate research projects about environmental issues, and teacher-led discussions around land rights, activism and the connection between people and natural resources.

mysteryIndigenousactivismminingorearcheologysacred
groundAdventureelderscommunityland rightsFPOLvision
questreservationfamilysacred knowledgesurvival

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?

Extensively

THIS PRODUCT SUPPORTS THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF THE BC CURRICULUM:

- Critical thinking
- Positive Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Responsibility

“The Case of Windy Lake” supports Big Ideas in Language Arts for Grade 3–7: “A story can help the reader understand and make connections to others.” “The Case of Windy Lake” is written from the view of living, working, learning, and playing on a Canadian Indigenous reserve. This

novel fits nicely with the First People's Principles of Learning. This resource provides many teaching opportunities and discussion points for Grade 3–7 that align with the Big Ideas in Social Studies curricula. Core Competencies in the areas of Positive Personal and Cultural Identity, Personal Awareness and Responsibility, Social Responsibility, are woven throughout the story.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

This resource could be used as a class novel study that could lead to research projects about current Canadian and international environmental activist issues. “The Case of Windy Lake” touches on Indigenous land rights, the connection between people and natural resources, life on a reserve, and the culture of some Indigenous groups in Canada. The role and relationship of elders with members of the community are integrated throughout the book in a positive easy-to-understand manner. This novel explores ways to stand up for what you believe in and how peer pressure can be from both individuals and communities. This novel could be a story read to students by the teacher with oral interactions.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Indigenous Peoples:

There are several references to a person "pointing with their lips." This phrase could be perceived as a negative description of cultural behaviour.

Belief System:

Pre-teaching of Indigenous people's cultural activities and rites of passages could be helpful to deepen the understanding of the cousins' activities.

Socio Economic:

The setting of an Indigenous reserve in this novel presents a realistic picture of the poverty and disrepair of some of the reservations in Canada.

Ethical:

Pre-teaching basic understandings concerning trespassing on private property could be beneficial in helping the reader understand the conflict in the novel and why the local authorities were called to remove a person from a private, worksite property.

Safety:

Young readers could benefit from some pre-teaching about the dangers of talking to strangers and exposing oneself to nature's elements without shelter, food, or water.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?

Extensively

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS COMMENTS:

A valuable teaching opportunity for sustainability is offered in this novel on the possible sacrifices for keeping one's environment healthy. The potential dangers of being exposed to the elements without proper food, water, and shelter is a social consideration touched on in this novel. This novel gives opportunities for exploring the differences of opinions in regard to what one group might consider important enough to take risks to defend.

Relationships, lifestyles, and activities of residents on an Indigenous reservation are portrayed in this story in a manner that allows the reader to have a better feel for what life may be like on a reserve.

GENERAL CONTENT

CONTENT

Should this product be identified as Canadian?

Yes

Is the resource engaging?

Extensively

Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content timely and important for student broad understandings?

Extensively

Is the resource an Authentic First Peoples Text?

Yes

AUDIENCE:

Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Extensively

Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?

Extensively

Is the level of detail appropriate?

Extensively

Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Extensively

This novel is very engaging, with readability and content that is well suited for the intended curriculum and grade. It is a very current and authentic portrayal of the way of life, struggles, and relationships of those living on a reserve. The descriptive language of this novel gives many opportunities for creative and critical thinking. During the reading of this novel, students are invited to think critically about the conflict between Indigenous peoples and the industry.

TECHNICAL DESIGN

Does the resource make effective use of the medium?

Extensively

Is the resource easy to use?

Extensively

Is the use of font, text size and presentation uniform?

Extensively

The font, text size, and uniform presentation of the text make this an easy-to-use resource.

PRINT NOVEL

Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?

Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?

Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?

Extensively

PLOT DESCRIPTION:

Four close-knit cousins (Sam, Otter, Atim, and Chickadee) are on the case of a missing person on their reserve of Windy Lake First Nation. They are known as the Mighty Muskrats due to their inquisitive nature and playful antics. The Mighty Muskrats overhear their Uncle Levi (Tribal Police) talking with Grandpa about a visiting archeologist (bone digger) who is missing on their reserve. The Mighty Muskrats take on the case. The case takes the cousins to adventures that include a protest, native land rights issues, an older cousin on a vision quest, a community search effort, and an understanding of what it can mean to stand up for yourself and others.

RELATED COMMENTS:

The story gives a glimpse into the complexity of reserve life through the eyes of four youths. Events in the story touch on cultural beliefs, traditions, land rights, personal growth, family relationships, sacred knowledge, a sense of belonging, as well as the importance of identity and family. The search for the missing archeologist and the tension regarding the activist's protest create suspense and intrigue. The descriptions of life on the reserve create a picture of how it might feel to live on a reserve. The events and social issues in this novel are important to today's youth and can foster a cultural understanding that furthers efforts of reconciliation.

GENRE:

- Adventure
- Contemporary
- Historical
- Mystery / Suspense

LITERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Complex conflict
- Well-developed themes
- Point of view

TYPE:

- Novel
- Electronic Version

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

READABILITY:

- At intended grade level(s)

Winner of the Second Story Press Indigenous Writing contest.

←← A MIGHTY MUSKRATS MYSTERY →→

THE CASE OF WINDY LAKE



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2019

Primary Identifier

9781772600858

Recommended Grades & Subjects/Courses

3-7

Evaluation/Record Entry Date

Apr/2020

Subject

English Language Arts

ID

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