**ABORIGINAL STUDIES 10**

# PROGRAM RATIONALE AND PHILOSOPHY

**RATIONALE**

The focal point of Aboriginal Studies 10–20–30 is the wealth and diverse nature of Aboriginal languages and cultures. The program of studies explores concepts within the students’ own unique context. It is intended to provide a conceptual framework for all learners to enhance understanding of the diverse Aboriginal cultures within their region, Canada and the world. The term “Aboriginal” refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Aboriginal Studies 10–20–30 reflects a perspective that encompasses and integrates the past, present and future of Aboriginal peoples. This program will provide all students with the opportunity to develop, explore and apply their own personal reflections on Aboriginal perspectives. Students will examine how Aboriginal peoples are striving toward maintaining and promoting cultures and identities that reflect values based on respect for the laws of nature and a continual pursuit of balance among individuals, the family unit, the larger community and global community.

The resiliency of Aboriginal peoples’ cultural heritages and languages has promoted a survival of their nations. In spite of many challenges, the majority of Aboriginal peoples in Canada have maintained traditional beliefs and value structures within their cultural framework.

It is important that Aboriginal students experience and feel a sense of pride of their own cultural heritage. This will enhance students’ self-esteem and increase the relevance of education.

For all students, the program can serve to increase an awareness, appreciation and understanding of the rich and long-lasting history, culture and contributions of Aboriginal peoples as part of our society. It can also serve to enlighten and contribute to discussion and analysis of Aboriginal issues.

Aboriginal Studies 10–20–30 is based on Aboriginal worldviews and experiences, and incorporates the following concepts:

* there is a need to respect, honour and celebrate Aboriginal cultures in Alberta, Canada and the world
* Aboriginal values and beliefs are resilient and relevant to global issues
* Aboriginal nations have strong, diverse and evolving cultures that have adapted to a changing world
* language/communication in all its forms is one of the essential means by which culture is learned.

## PHILOSOPHY

The anticipated results for the Aboriginal Studies 10–20–30 program are outlined below:

* encourages students to learn to identify key questions, organize and select relevant content, develop points of view and present their findings and conclusions
* emphasizes clear and effective communication
* fosters a sense of self-worth and pride by encouraging Aboriginal students to appreciate their cultural heritage and social, political and economic contributions to society
* illustrates that traditional Aboriginal communities are as diverse as the current Canadian cultural mosaic
* enables all students to demonstrate an understanding that societies are made up of individuals, but each individual has a responsibility to the well-being of the society
* illustrates the importance of the spiritual nature of Aboriginal peoples and their relationship with all things in the universe
* explores a largely oral and visual culture allowing students to gain appreciation of many communication and art forms
* helps all students to develop respect for the environment and commitment to use resources wisely
* helps all students to appreciate values related to their personal, ethical and spiritual beliefs
* helps all students to acquire the necessary skills and attitudes that will lead to a successful place in the world.

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| ABORIGINAL STUDIES 10 | ABORIGINAL STUDIES 20 | ABORIGINAL STUDIES 30 |
| The course is based on perspectives and worldviews of Aboriginal peoples. It includes the study of traditions and history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and particularly in Alberta. Student learning outcomes provide opportunities to examine such topics as governmental structures, literature, the arts and the sciences. | The course focuses on indigenous people from a Canadian and Alberta perspective. It includes the study of policies, legislation, conflict and cultural change. | Students will gain a greater under-standing of the current issues facing Aboriginal peoples worldwide. Aboriginal Studies 30 enables students to demonstrate an understanding of the issues of Aboriginal rights and self-government, Aboriginal land claims, Aboriginal peoples in Canadian society and Aboriginal world issues. |
| * Origin and Settlement Patterns * Aboriginal Worldviews * Political and Economic Organization * Aboriginal Symbolism and Expression | * The Métis: Conflict and Cultural Change * Treaties and Cultural Change * Legislation, Policies and Cultural Change * Schooling and Cultural Change | * Aboriginal Rights and Self-government * Aboriginal Land Claims * Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Society * Aboriginal World Issues |

# GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

### THEME I: ORIGIN AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

**GENERAL OUTCOME**

*Students will* demonstrate an understanding of the diverse cultural characteristics, origins, and migration and settlement patterns of Aboriginal peoples.

**Related Concepts**: perspective, theory, origin, migration, oral tradition, legends, stories, linguistic groups, cultural groups, traditional territories, cultural diversity, cultural environment, circular seasonal time frames, Métis, Métis settlements, mutual support, mainstream society, colonial governance.

**SPECIFIC OUTCOMES**

*Students will:*

1. demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives to the origin and settlement of Aboriginal peoples in North America:
   * appreciate that many Aboriginal peoples identify with creation stories that introduce place and identity in their culture
   * demonstrate an awareness that creation stories reflect spiritual connections to the land
   * identify cultural characteristics to geographical features occupied by the first people on land
   * examine oral cultural origins and settlement theory; *e.g., research and compare Aboriginal Creation to one or both of the following: Beringia theory, Polynesian theory*
2. demonstrate an understanding that there are distinctive narrations of legends and stories that are related to cultural characteristics of Aboriginal peoples:
   * appreciate the role of legends and stories of how Aboriginal peoples are interconnected to the land and nature
   * distinguish between legends and stories of many diverse linguistic and cultural groups in Alberta and North America
   * appreciate that Aboriginal peoples used sign language to communicate with each other and to communicate ideas and practices of land occupation in a particular territory
   * research creation stories by interviewing Aboriginal Elders and researching current literature
3. demonstrate an understanding that Aboriginal peoples developed distinct cultures in differing Canadian environments:
   * identify and locate the major linguistic and cultural groups in Alberta and Canada
   * interpret Canada as being culturally diverse before the arrival of the Europeans
   * appreciate that Aboriginal peoples shared many of the same characteristics and values; *e.g., respect for nature, harmony with the land*
4. recognize and demonstrate an understanding that Aboriginal peoples moved from place to place according to well-defined patterns:
   * compare and contrast the main geographical regions of Canada, and examine how development of different Aboriginal cultures was influenced by various factors
   * research and trace settlement and migration patterns from a historical perspective, and describe reasons for cultural migrations; *e.g., investigate and trace the reasons for: buffalo hunt, cultural migratory routes, landmarks and hunting routes, intertribal awareness, leaders, alliances/treaties*
   * research how the geographical regions influenced Aboriginal culture by examining the following:
     + behaviours/restrictions influenced by geographical factors
     + harmony with land, clans, families
     + spiritual forces in nature/interconnectedness
     + sharing of resources
     + plants and animals
   * interpret, historically, that circular seasonal time frames were a major influence for moving from place to place
5. demonstrate an understanding that mutual support connected various Aboriginal peoples:
   * appreciate that Aboriginal peoples’ practice of mutual support was essential for survival
   * appreciate that the traditional concepts and practices of mutual support and conflict resolution have been adopted by mainstream society
6. demonstrate an understanding that, historically, Aboriginal peoples were sovereign nations and Europeans and Aboriginal nations coexisted in a state of mutual recognition of sovereign status with mutual economic benefits from trades:1
   * research traditional Aboriginal governance and characteristics of organization; *e.g., clans, families, bands, leaders/chiefs, councils of leaders/chiefs, leader/chief of council*
   * analyze that economic prosperity came through trade and early European contact
7. demonstrate an understanding that the Métis family unit gave rise to what is now known as the Métis people:
   * identify and explain how Aboriginal peoples shared resources with fur traders, explorers, missionaries and settlers
   * appreciate mutual support between Aboriginal peoples and colonial governance
   * research the fur trade as an essential, mutual support for Aboriginal peoples
   * investigate the origin of the Métis family, and describe similarities and differences between Métis and First Nations families
   * recognize that the Métis advanced by adapting along with European technology and forming a new cultural identity; *e.g., Métis sash, the fiddle, Red River jig, Métis flag, Red River cart, York boats*
   * research, identify and describe the development of Métis communities, including Métis settlements in Alberta
   * appreciate Métis culture and lifestyle.

**THEME II: ABORIGINAL WORLDVIEWS**

**GENERAL OUTCOME**

*Students will* demonstrate an understanding of aspects of Aboriginal spirituality and worldviews.

**Related Concepts**: values, spirituality, worldviews, harmony, unity, oral tradition, cycle of life, ceremonies, religions, animate, inanimate.

**SPECIFIC OUTCOMES**

*Students will:*

1. demonstrate an understanding that spirituality is fundamental to traditional Aboriginal worldviews:
   * examine how animate and inanimate objects are interrelated and respected in Aboriginal cultures
   * examine why living in harmony and unity is essential to traditional Aboriginal cultures
   * analyze the role of sharing and generosity in traditional Aboriginal cultures
   * research the following aspects of spirituality by; *e.g., interviewing a local Elder regarding: interrelationship of animate and inanimate, harmony, unity, sharing and generosity, protocols and accepted traditional practices*
   * appreciate and respect the value of Elders in helping people discover their inner gifts and strengths
   * appreciate and respect the diversity of traditional spiritual beliefs and practices of Aboriginal peoples
2. demonstrate an understanding that Aboriginal stories on creation of the world and Aboriginal peoples provide a strong spiritual foundation:
   * examine traditional Aboriginal stories on creation that have inspirational messages about young people recognizing their gifts, journeying to take on challenges and accomplishing feats to help others1
   * examine the role of creation stories and legends in the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada
   * appreciate and respect the diversity of oral traditions of Aboriginal peoples that provides the foundation for Aboriginal worldviews and spirituality
3. demonstrate an understanding that cycle of life is fundamental to the Aboriginal way of life:
   * research the significance of the following symbols:
     + the Circle2
     + Medicine Wheel
   * appreciate and respect that Aboriginal peoples traditionally view life and its interrelated parts as a never-ending cycle
4. demonstrate an understanding that ceremonies have strong spiritual and social significance:
   * appreciate and respect that Aboriginal peoples have ceremonies to express their spiritual nature
   * describe the general role and significance of non-sacred aspects of ceremonies by Aboriginal peoples; *e.g., round dance, tea dance, powwows*
5. demonstrate an understanding that after European contact, many Aboriginal peoples incorporated Christianity into their lifestyles.

**THEME III: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION**

**GENERAL OUTCOME**

*Students will* demonstrate an understanding of the political and economic organization of Aboriginal peoples.

**Related Concepts**: adaptation, interdependence, economy, economic partnership, entrepreneurship, community initiatives, alliances.

**SPECIFIC OUTCOMES**

*Students will:*

1. demonstrate an understanding of the historical, political and economic organizations of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people
2. demonstrate an understanding of how the interaction of two cultural groups has resulted in political and economic adaptation and/or interdependence:
   * research and report on the influences of Europeans and Aboriginal peoples on each other
   * compare economic and political structures of two groups; *e.g., hereditary chiefs, band and tribal customs and Indian Act chief, Chiefs’ committee on economic development*
3. demonstrate an understanding of the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to the historical trade:
   * describe the roles of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian fur trade—beaver, seal, buffalo
   * evaluate the effects on Aboriginal peoples as the fur trade declined
   * appreciate the contribution of Aboriginal peoples as fur traders and entrepreneurs of the West
   * appreciate and respect contributions of the Buffalo Jump
4. demonstrate an understanding that many Aboriginal peoples have successfully entered into the world of business to improve their quality of life while keeping in balance traditional practices:
   * analyze and evaluate how oil, gas and lumber entrepreneurships have changed the quality of life in Alberta Aboriginal communities
   * analyze how traditional values of sharing and generosity influence economic practices of Aboriginal leaders in managing resources to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples; *e.g., economic development, self-government, maintaining a sustainable environment*
   * research and describe how Aboriginal peoples have successfully contributed in the provincial, national and international marketplace
5. demonstrate an understanding of the current issues being addressed by Aboriginal political and economic organizations:
   * describe and analyze Aboriginal political and economic issues, including:
     + poverty
     + economic instability
     + land cooperatives; *e.g., in 1800s, small groups of Iroquois and voyageurs were brought from the east to work in trading companies—they settled in the Jasper and Grande Cache areas, intermarried with the Cree, and set up land cooperatives*
   * appreciate how leaders are striving to strengthen Aboriginal peoples economically and politically
6. demonstrate an understanding of why Aboriginal peoples of Canada have formed unique organizations and alliances to deal with the federal and/or provincial governments:
   * First Nations: Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Tribal Councils (6, 7, 8, Independent)
   * Métis: Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)
   * describe Aboriginal peoples organizations as to their mandates in:
     + improving the quality of life
     + self-government
     + economic development
     + protection of treaties
   * appreciate the role of Aboriginal involvement in Alberta political and economic organizations.

**THEME IV: ABORIGINAL SYMBOLISM AND EXPRESSION**

**GENERAL OUTCOME**

*Students will* demonstrate an understanding of Aboriginal art forms, oral tradition and literature.

**Related Concepts**: cultural transmission, values, beliefs, symbolism, analogy, diversity, cultural expression, holistic, integration, interpersonal relationships.

**SPECIFIC OUTCOMES**

*Students will:*

1. appreciate how oral traditions influence ideas, perspectives and interpretations:
   * describe the central role and function of the oral tradition as a means of cultural transmission
   * explain how oral tradition, legends, humour and stories assist in the transmission of culture
   * respond to and appreciate the importance of the oral tradition in the education and socialization processes
2. interpret and recognize significant oral symbolism and expressions:
   * explore the lives, experiences and values of Aboriginal authors through their writings
   * examine the contributions made by Aboriginal authors
   * identify how Aboriginal writers use symbolism, allusions and inference to portray their messages to the reader
   * identify the different Aboriginal authors and how they use different methods in portraying their experiences. Select two Aboriginal authors; *e.g., Maria Campbell, Verna Kirkness, Gail Bear:*
     + *explore the life experiences of Aboriginal authors and determine how they influenced what they wrote about*
     + *identify and evaluate the methods each author uses to bring the message to the reader*
     + *relate to how the authors portrayed the human experience through their writings*
     + *discuss how the authors’ beliefs and values influenced their writings*
     + *examine the purpose that each author had in mind*
3. develop an understanding of many Aboriginal art forms, oral tradition and literature:
   * identify and appreciate the diversity of cultural expression of Aboriginal peoples
   * describe the relationship of environment expressed in the art form, oral tradition and literature of each Aboriginal group
   * compare similarities and differences in expressions of environmental relationships
   * develop an understanding that Aboriginal art reflects the belief that art is holistic in nature and is integrated in all aspects of Aboriginal life
   * compare how Aboriginal oral tradition connects the expression of personal, spiritual, social and cultural aspects of that individual within the group
   * appreciate Aboriginal philosophy, spirituality and love of land and nature.