

GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS #1

Subject/topic

Language, Social Studies, Visual Art

Overview/focus questions

Students will watch the *Geographical Terms* video and read *Manny's Memories* by Ken Caron and Angela Caron to help them identify how the Métis learn from and live off the land, and then students will make their own connections to the land.

Developed by

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Time

Approx. 120 minutes (Over 2-3 learning blocks)

Grade level

Grades 2 - 5

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Learn how information is gained from visiting and connecting to the land, as well as learning from stories.
- Identify ways in which Métis learn from and live off the land.
- Make personal connections to the land and, through written and visual representations, demonstrate ways that they learn from and live off the land.

Materials Needed

- *Geographical Terms* video
- *Manny's Memories* by Ken Caron with Angela Caron
- Chart paper

Lesson Description

Teacher preparation and background information:

In Canada, there are three recognized groups of Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The Métis Nation are self-defining people from a specific region (mainly the Canadian western prairies but also parts of British Columbia, Ontario, Northwest Territories, North Dakota, and Montana) with a unique culture, language, and history. The Métis are those who self-identify as Métis and are descended from Indigenous and European/Euro-Canadian people, and who acknowledge the conscious choice of their ancestors to identify as Métis because of a common history and past.

The official language of the Métis Nation is Michif, though there are other languages spoken by the Métis as well. Michif is spoken in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, as well as Montana and North Dakota. Dating to the late 18th century, Michif is a hybrid language that blends together different languages, most commonly English, French, and Cree.

Michif is an oral language and, until very recently, had not been written down. There is no standardized orthography, and so spelling will vary depending on the speaker and region, as words are spelled phonetically. When learning Michif, the focus is not so much on the spelling and the writing of the words, as on the speaking. There are also other Michif languages, including French Michif and Northern Michif. As such, teachers will see words spelled in numerous ways throughout the lesson plans and videos in the Future of Michif project. The Michif primarily referred to and used in these lesson plans and through the online dictionaries and apps is known as Michif or Heritage Michif; however, you will see other spellings and pronunciations.

You will also hear some speakers in the videos use the term "Michif" to describe a people, and not only a language. The Michif are Métis who speak Michif, versus other languages spoken by the Métis, such as Cree or French.

The Métis have traditionally had a strong connection and relationship with the land. They relied on the land for food, medicine, clothing, building supplies, and more. Communities would travel across the land, living and eating according to nature's cycles and seasons. The cultivation of crops and employment opportunities also impacted the movement of the Métis. Today, some still follow the traditional Métis lifestyle, paying attention to signs from nature that tell them when certain tasks need to be started or finished. Gifts (often tobacco or tea) are left for the Creator whenever resources (gifts from the land) are harvested. Knowledge of the land is learned through experiences, stories, and teachings. When people celebrate and perform tasks such as harvesting with their families, visiting the land, and listening to others, it allows for them to know the land. Through this knowledge, it is possible to gain an appreciation of the land, the gifts it has to offer, and its teachings. This allows for a connection to the land to be formed.

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- Learning from the Land card (one per student)
- Living off the Land card (one per student)
- Writing tools
- Paper or notebooks
- Colouring tools
- Sticky notes or index cards
- Feedback from my Peers card (one per student)

Connection to the Canadian Geography Learning Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Interrelationships
- Geographic perspective

Inquiry Process

- Evaluate and draw conclusions
- Communicate
- Reflect and respond

Geospatial Skills

- Foundational elements

Teachers should watch the *Geographical Terms* video prior to the lesson to become familiar with Michif geographical terms.

Student Activities

Minds on: Students will watch the *Round Prairie* section of the *Geographical Terms* video and note ways in which the Métis learn from and live off of the land.

Action: The teacher will read *Manny's Memories* by Ken Caron with Angela Caron and students will identify ways that the book illustrates learning from and living off the land, and then create a written and visual representation of how they learn from and live off the land.

Conclusion: Students will share written and visual representations of their own learning from and living off of the land. A class book can be created using these representations. Students will also give and collect peer feedback.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Share the following with students: *We have all had experiences being out in nature, on the land, maybe in a park, at the lake, or on a farm. These experiences always have lessons to teach us because the land (La Tayr) is one of our best teachers if we are ready to learn. In the video we are going to watch, Lyla goes to the land at Round Prairie (La Prayrii Rond) to continue her own learning of what the land offers to teach her.*

Give each student a large sticky note or index card. Watch the *Round Prairie* section of the *Geographical Terms* video. Ask students to write down all the things mentioned in the video that demonstrate how Métis are learning from and living off the land. Ask the class for their examples and create an anchor chart (a chart you create, together with your students, that captures the most important content and relevant strategies of the lesson). If possible, include Michif translations for select words on the anchor chart. Use an online Michif dictionary, or the Michif to Go or Heritage Michif to Go app (see Additional Resources) to help with translation.

Action

Introduce the book *Manny's Memories* by Ken Caron and Angela Caron. Ask students: Does anybody recognize this book? What did Lyla from the video say about this book?

Show students how to extract information from pictures by modeling your observations of the front cover.

Example: *"This little boy is watching his dad or uncle as he spends time on the land and hunts with him. When they are together, the dad is helping him and that is how the boy is learning. I am wondering how the Métis know where to hunt and when is the right time to hunt."*

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Show students how to gather information from text by modeling your observations of the first page of the story.

Example: *"I know from what I just read that Poppa is about to share more stories with his grandchildren. I think that Michif/Métis people learn by sharing stories because the grandkids are going to learn about where their Poppa grew up."*

Before you start reading again, let the students know that you will expect them to share how they think learning from and living off the land is happening in the stories. On the anchor chart, continue recording new examples students identify from *Manny's Memories*. Pause after reading each short story to allow students to share examples of learning from and living off the land. If possible, include Michif translations for select words on the anchor chart and encourage students to repeat the words in Michif. Use an online Michif dictionary, or the Michif to Go or Heritage Michif to Go app (see Additional Resources) to help with translation.

Possible examples they or you might share:

- The land provides us with food (rabbit, deer, berries, porcupine).
- The land provides families with a way to make a living (cutting tree posts).
- The land provides us with a real connection to our ancestors (a place to visit where the knowledge and stories come from).
- The land provides us with a place to have fun (sailing homemade boats in the ditch).
- The land teaches us to be safe (learning from the ice break up).
- The land teaches us to be respectful and to only take when we need it (porcupine for supper).
- The land teaches us not to waste anything (using all the fallen trees).
- The land teaches us to share some of what we have with others (Bullett giving Manny's family some of the deer he shot).

Then, give students one of each template (Living off the Land and Learning from the Land). Have students write a sentence in the space provided about their experiences living off the land and learning from the land. Students will then draw a picture of their examples on their sheets. Make sure their sentences are written correctly and edited before they start drawing a scene on each template. These pictures can be used to create a class book or posted to a bulletin board. (See the Modifications section for an extension of this activity which incorporates Michif terms).

Conclusion and Consolidation

Have students share their pictures with each other in groups of four. As each student is presenting, the others should think about one thing they really like about the picture. The audience will write one piece of positive feedback on a sticky note for each person in their group so that every student will have three positive comments about their work from their peers. Each student will collect their feedback sticky notes after they present

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and will put them on the Feedback from my Peers organizer. Have students hand this in at the end of the lesson along with their presentation.

Extend your geographical thinking

Have students complete a Learning from the Land and Living off the Land template each time they engage in a land-based excursion. These will serve as both a record of their learning and provide the opportunity to create individual books for themselves that reflect their personal learning and enhanced understanding about the land.

Have students bring in a picture of themselves learning from or living off the land and have them share the experience with peers in a sharing circle.

Read the stories in *Plants Growing Along the River - lii plante kaa shaakikihki oborr la rivyayr* produced by Gabriel Dumont Institute about harvesting plants and then go on a plant nature walk.

Create a word wall of terms in Michif that were used in the lesson.

Research what living off and learning from the land might look like in different regions of Canada and for different people.

Provide opportunities to go out on the land to gain knowledge of how things change from season to season.

Invite a Métis Elder to speak to students about their experience of learning from and living off the land.

Modifications

- Read additional stories about the importance of place to extend the lesson.
- Have students work with a scribe.
- Provide landscapes or images that students can use as examples of place to support their drawing.
- Extension: View the *Knowledge of the Land* part of the *Geographical Terms* video and have students identify the Michif term for the geographical location of where their picture was taken.

Assessment Opportunities

- During the anchor chart creation, add names of students beside their given examples to assess levels of understanding and participation.
- Assess visual and written representations to gauge level of understanding of living off and learning from the land.
- Provide feedback for students on their sentences before they make their final copies of their Learning from the Land and Living Off the Land templates.

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- Review Feedback from my Peers organizers for identification of positive aspects of visual and written presentations.

Sources and Additional Resources

- *Remembering My Métis Past: Reminiscences of Edwin St. Pierre* by Edwin St. Pierre
- *Plants Growing Along the River-*lii plante kaa shaakihiki oborr la rivayay** produced by Gabriel Dumont Institute
- Michif To Go (Google Play) or the Heritage Michif To Go (The App Store) apps
- Gabriel Dumont Institute Michif Dictionary
- Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada - Métis