



The Land



An Education Guide
by Native Land

2019

You

Live On



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Getting to
Know
Native Land



Introduction



Introduction

Getting to know Native Land

Hello from Vancouver, as well as from the team at Native-Land.ca! Native Land is a tool that maps out Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages. We initially began in North America and have spread increasingly worldwide, and new areas are added regularly.

This tool is not meant to be an official, legal, or archival resource. It is instead a broadly researched and crowdsourced body of information. It is meant to encourage education and engagement on topics of Indigenous land—particularly, where you are located.

Native Land brings about discussions of colonization, land rights, language, and Indigenous history tied to our personal histories. We hope this guide makes you, the reader, want to know about the land you live on.

The major goals of this guide are to:

Encourage discussion of topics on Indigenous history and geography

Suggest exercises that increase students' awareness of the history of the land around them

Help teachers discuss the rich and diverse cultures that have evolved from the land where they teach and live

Some of the questions we hope to answer, or complicate, by the end of this guide include:

What is Indigeneity, and what are Indigenous lands?

What defines these lands and who places them on the map?

How do the maps at Native-Land.ca differ from more standard "colonial" maps?

How do these maps lead into a discussion of colonization?

How can teachers and students best utilize our maps?



Introduction

Disclaimer

Due to its crowdsourced nature, Native-Land.ca may be used as a teaching tool in classrooms, but teachers should be aware that it is not meant to be used as a wholly reliable academic source. In this sense, it is more akin to Wikipedia than an academic text. Please see the section Differences from Academic Maps in How to Use Our Maps for more information.

Because we continually seek feedback from both researchers and Indigenous communities, our maps are ever changing and need to be updated by Native Land staff on a regular basis. We make a point of attempting to include all voices and feedback in the shaping of Indigenous landscapes, and we are guided by our Board of Directors.

If you notice any inaccuracies in our maps or would like to suggest something to add, please feel free to contact us at: victor@native-land.ca

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the [xʷməθkʷəyəm](#)¹ (Musqueam), [səlilwətaʔ](#)² (Tsleil-waututh) and [Skwxwú7mesh](#)³ (Squamish) Nations for allowing us to live, work and grow on their unceded territories. The Coast Salish people, which these nations belong to, have existed for over ten thousand years along the northwest coast of North America, and has a beautiful history that can be explored more [here](#)⁴. While Native-Land.ca's staff and work is not exclusively based in these territories, this is where most of our work takes place.

We would also like to thank both the researchers and the Indigenous peoples which have continually contributed to our project. Without their support and guidance we would not be here. We look forward to building long-lasting relationships with both new and old communities.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the staff who have worked very hard to support Native Land in the past, present and future.

Building a support network

When addressing materials on Indigenous issues questions may arise where you want to reach out and gain more information on topics. When doing this it is both important to respect cultural protocols and use the resources around you. You may find that there are already resources in place to help you access this information.

These may include:

- Local Indigenous organizations
- Indigenous communities and elders
- Online information and official public websites

When accessing resources through Indigenous communities and organizations it is best to first inquire about how to engage through the correct channels. If you are a teacher who has access to an Indigenous learning coordinator, ask them how to best reach communities. It is best to first make information inquiries through main offices of organizations or communities. Don't be afraid to look up local Indigenous groups and give them a call!



Introduction

Why Land Acknowledgements Are Important

Land acknowledgements are a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or, in this case, education guides. It can be an explicit yet limited way to recognize the history of colonialism and first nations as well as a need for change in settler-colonial societies. In this context, we're looking to acknowledge the existence of Indigenous bodies in geography and how they occupy land.

How do we acknowledge territory?

Often, territory acknowledgements are concise, along the lines of: "I want to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of (nation names)." Some people may also mention the name of a local treaty. Some may learn the language and speak a few words in it.

If you are not sure how to pronounce a nation's name, there are a number of ways to learn, including:

Respectfully asking someone from that nation or from a local organization such as a Friendship Center or Indigenous Student Center

Call the nation after hours and listen to their answering machine recording.

Check the nation's website: they may have a phonetic pronunciation on their "About" page, an audio-recording of their name, or videos that include people saying the nation's name

While a brief acknowledgement may work for some groups, others wish to add more intention and detail to acknowledgements. To thoughtfully prepare an in-depth acknowledgement requires time and care. You may find it helpful to reflect on and research questions such as:

Why is this acknowledgement happening?

What is your relationship to this territory?

How does this acknowledgement relate to the event or work you are doing?

How did you come to be here?

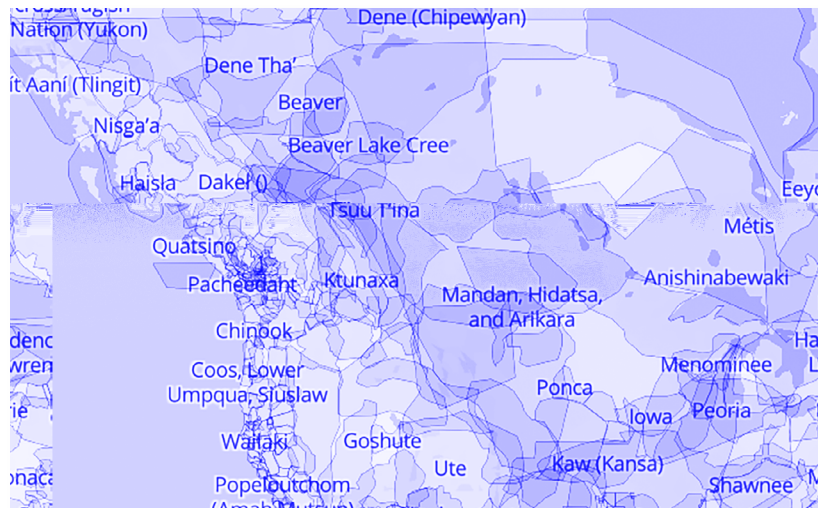
What is the history of this territory? What are the impacts of colonialism here?

What intentions do you have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism beyond this territory acknowledgement?



How to Use our Maps

Introduction to how maps work



Native-Land.ca offers an online platform where users can interact with maps of Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages, and locate themselves and their favorite places on the map. Fundamentally, the maps aim to visualize the complexity and diversity of Indigenous peoples, nations, and cultures across the Americas, Australia, and increasingly the world, so that non-Indigenous and Indigenous people alike can increase their understanding and knowledge of the breadth and depth of Indigenous history in these places.

There are many questions embedded in the use of such maps, such as: what time periods are represented? Who counts as "Indigenous" and is therefore represented on the map? Why is the rest of the world not mapped? Why are there overlapping territories in some areas, and not in others? Why do the names of nations sometimes differ so much from the common names that Western culture is familiar with? What does it mean to say that we are "on native land"?

The map, and the questions it raises, are designed to encourage the user to engage with the history of both Indigeneity and colonialism. Users can reach out to Indigenous nations through links provided, try to learn a little of the local language, or just dive into the history; in any case, the deeper purpose of Native Land is to plant a seed of consciousness in users that will cause them to think more critically and comprehensively about Indigenous history, especially where they live and play.

To use the maps, you can use either a full-size computer (desktop or laptop) or a mobile device (iOS or Android).

For computers, go to <https://native-land.ca>, and for mobiles, look up "Native-Land" or "Native Land" in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



Viewing the map

When you land on the map, you will see a zoomed-out view of North America and Australia (if your screen is large enough). This can be overwhelming because of the vast array of colours and shapes, totally unfamiliar to most people, that are covering lands that we are used to seeing differently. Zoom in and mouse around, and you will see shapes highlighted and a small popup showing the names of the nations you are mousing over. You can click on any shape or area on the map, and on the left, you will see a few links appear with the nations that exist in the area you clicked on. You can then visit these links to see more about sources, further links, and official websites related to those nations, languages, or treaties.

(please be aware that we are constantly updating this information, and shapes will differ in source comprehensiveness)



Layers

The maps automatically start with the "Territories" toggle turned on. You can layer the "Languages" and/or "Treaties" toggle on top of this, but it may become very difficult to understand and see what is happening. Try turning one off, and then another on, and mousing over some more. See how the treaty areas, languages, and territories are related to each other, or sometimes are completely unrelated.



Desktop

Search a location to find territory acknowledgement information:

Enter your location here...

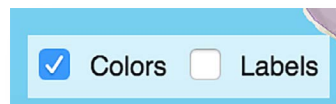
Search Function

You can search a location directly (such as "Vancouver, British Columbia") or a territory, treaty, or language, in the search box under the toggles. Clicking on the desired result will zoom in the map to the area and also provide links in the area on the left hand side of the screen.

You may also search and select territories, languages, or treaties from a list by opening the select menu on the left hand side of the screen under the search area. These lists are very long, sometimes with more than a thousand entries, so it may help to narrow down your search—but be careful to use correct accents and diacritics, otherwise your search may not be successful.

Color Coding

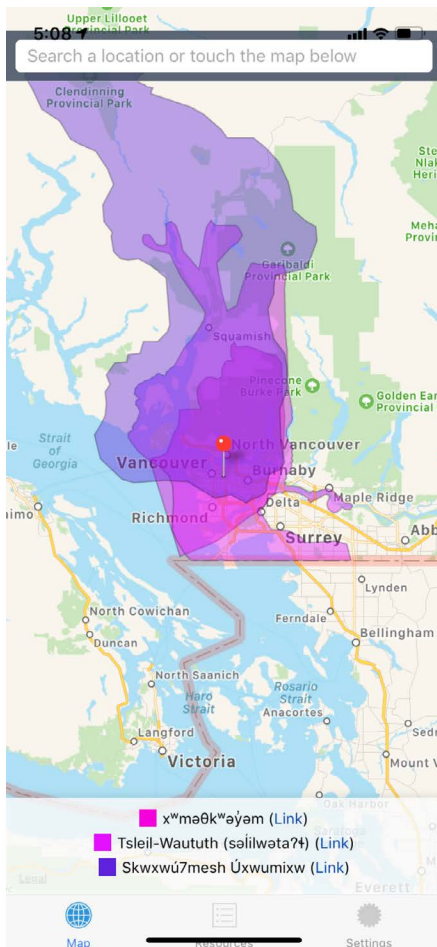
Finally, you can turn off and on the colours and non-Indigenous labels in the bottom right-hand corner of the map. Turning off colours will show the shapes as more standard-looking borders and text labels, which may be easier to read. Turning on non-Indigenous labels will populate the map with roads, cities, states, and countries more familiar to users who have used Western maps extensively, and may help people locate themselves or particular locations more easily on the map.



On the app versions of Native-Land.ca, things function quite differently than the desktop version. This is because it is more difficult to load such a large number of shapes into the live map. We are working on updating this technology but we have a lot on our plate and may not get to an update for some time.



To use the mobile app, you must first download it from the App Store for your device. The first time you open the map, shapes will be downloaded from the Native-Land.ca site. You can turn off and on the current set of shapes (Territories, Languages, or Treaties) on the Settings screen of the app.



Search Function

You may search a location using the search bar in the main page of the app, or press/touch anywhere on the map, in order to see shapes appear and "drop a pin" that will show the shapes corresponding to that location. You will not see the wide array of overlapping shapes outside of the touched area (unlike the desktop map).

To search for a specific shape, you can go through the lists in the List page of the app and select the appropriate shape. You may also see more about each nation by touching the link provided after dropping a pin (this will take you to the Native-Land.ca website).



Note

There are a few other important distinctions to keep in mind:

In most cases, Native-Land.ca places little emphasis on exact geographic precision, opting to sketch shapes more generally. This decreases load times for the map, and also enables us to move more quickly in adding shapes. There may be exceptions to this when it comes to certain datasets (particularly for treaties), when we can obtain precise information directly.

Native-Land.ca has not rigorously documented its sources throughout its history. Many sources come from easily discovered online maps or discussions, but others may come from emails, books, or other sources. In the earliest days of Native-Land.ca, we attempted to document this, but the speed of growth of the site meant that this often fell off. We are working hard to improve this but it will take some time until we can point to multiple sources for each shape.

Native-Land.ca can be improved by anyone who wants to email and who can provide a reasonable source for their update. A "reasonable source" may include more traditional academic sources like books, articles, or academic maps, but may also include oral histories, knowledge keeper transmission, or other forms of documentation. Native-Land.ca strives to be open to Indigenous forms of knowledge.

Native-Land.ca is constantly updating and changing and does not represent a solid, complete source of information. It would be incorrect to assume that most of the shapes on the map are exact and precise; the sources and history around how these sources were put together—whether by colonial powers or Indigenous nations—means that each source needs to be investigated individually, and there is always room for improvement. We update the map multiple times each week.

It's important to be aware that Native-Land.ca is not a perfect source, and that its methods have pros and cons.

Pros:

The map is built quickly and can relatively easily add new nations, languages, or treaties: it is not bound by academic requirements or rigorous source methods

The map is crowdsourced, meaning that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike can participate in the improvement of the website, and Indigenous people whose nations may be often forgotten can see their land shown on a map

The map covers huge swaths of land, and strives to avoid "empty spaces" in order to show the diversity and all-encompassing nature of Indigenous land bases throughout history

The map's size and complexity shocks non-Indigenous users into reconsidering how vast and complicated Indigenous history might be

The map is easy to use for users of many ages and encourages engagement by allowing users to search any location

Cons

The map is often inaccurate due to its crowdsourced nature and lack of sources

The map is eternally incomplete, meaning that Indigenous people may feel left out, ignored, or displaced from their traditional lands, in a public forum

We cannot prevent governments or corporate entities from using the map irresponsibly in their consultation efforts or engagements with Indigenous people

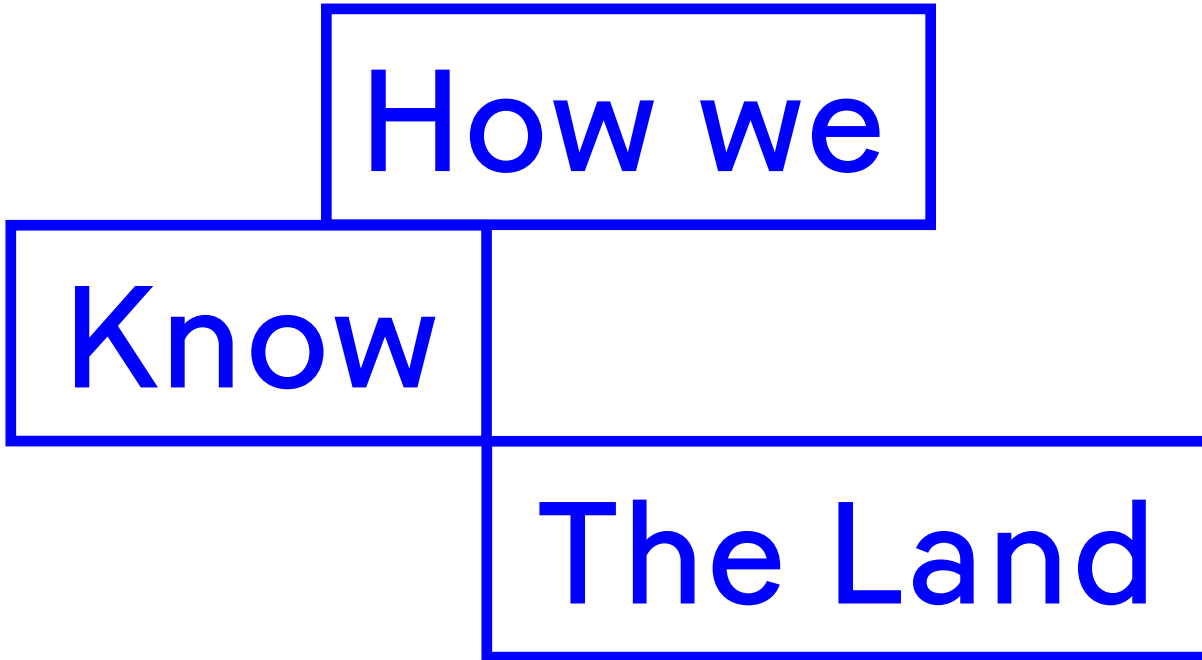
The map may replicate colonial naming practices or flatten the complexity of nations or people, in regards to their indigeneity and self-determination

We need to make hard decisions about who belongs on the map, and sometimes must reject what we regard as inaccurate or insufficient sources, and we may make mistakes and do real harm to Indigenous people when making those mistakes

The map may be too complex for many users to make sense of it

The nonprofit behind [Native-Land.ca](https://native-land.ca) is still in development, and authority on "who gets to say who belongs on the map" is still in flux





Exercises in mapping



The Land as a Way of Knowing

Land as Pedagogy

How do we think about the land that we live on? When we think about land, we often see it as a large body that exists to host our needs as people, animals, and plants. It provides us resources that give us nourishment, and in turn we create our own ecosystems that revolve around it. In the ever-evolving conversation on environmentalism, the land is seen as something that must be protected and cared for; otherwise, there will be no more resources left.

In Indigenous teachings, the relationship between humans and the land has always been discussed, as Indigenous people hold the land up as both a living being and as a teacher. 'Living lightly' on the land has always been emphasized as a means of minimizing environmental impact and ensuring a continued quality of life for future generations to come.

Looking at the land from an Indigenous perspective means understanding that the land is a living being; this understanding both gives us insight into and increases our awareness of how we treat and interact with the land. From a classroom perspective, using the land as a teacher allows us to breathe life into the maps that we look at, as well as imagine the land that we live on in new and creative ways. The exercises below are meant as a means of exploring these spaces, which we hope will start some conversations of the importance of the land. These exercises are geared at a primary to middle school level and can be adjusted based on the depth of the conversation.

Suggested Resources

Writings

[As we Have Always Done: Ch. 9: Land as Pedagogy⁵](#)
[Indigenous Ways of Knowing and the Environment⁶](#)
[First Peoples Principles of Learning⁷](#)
[A Guide to Indigenous Knowledge⁸](#)

Media

[Helping the Earth: Indigenous Land Stories⁹](#)
[Gateway to Culture: Indigenous Land Stories¹⁰](#)



Level: Basic
Setting: Classroom
Time: About 30min

Purpose of this exercise

To assess students' knowledge of local traditional lands and explore them, using Native-Land.ca as a teaching tool. This exercise will have students learn more about where they come from and what their geography means to both them and the Indigenous people that live on their land.

Learning Goals

To understand as a class how to use Native-Land

To use Native-Land to have students to locate where they live.

To have students understand the Indigenous history of where they live.

To have students understand the Geography of where they live.

Materials needed

An electronic device with access to the internet

Resources

[Canadian First Nations Communities Map](#)¹¹

Before going on Native-Land have your students see how many Indigenous territories they can name. Do they know where these territories are? Do they know the name of the Indigenous territory that they live on?

Have yourself or your students go on Native-Lands and look at the territories that they just discussed.

How many territories can they count?

How many languages?

Find out which Indigenous lands you live on.

What do they know about the territory that they live on?

What do they know about the culture? (ex. events, traditions, etc.)

Where is your local reserve? (Find through the INAC First Nations Communities List)

Do a quick web search to learn more about your Indigenous region's history. Where did they live? Where are they located now? Note which plants and animals exist in the area and note how geography impacts these traditions. Eg.: Families that live along the Skeena River traditionally fish salmon every summer as the salmon go to spawn upstream.



Level: Basic
Setting: Classroom
Time: About 30min

Purpose of this exercise

The purpose of the next exercise is to have students express the information that they just learned about in a creative and colorful way. Students will map with pencils and crayons the locations of Indigenous peoples as well as local plants, rivers and mountains, and finally add the location of the school.

Learning Goals

To have students be able to locate and display local indigenous geography.

To have students be able to see how the geography of rivers, mountains and plants play a part in Indigenous culture and territories

Materials needed

A print out from Native Lands of the Native Lands website of where you live for each student

Pencils and coloring tools

Go on Native Land and find out which Indigenous lands you live on. Isolate the territory or territories on the map and print them out so each student has a copy.

Using pencils and coloring tools, have students mark down roughly where their school is located on the printed out maps. Using information gathered from the previous exercise, have students map out the locations of Indigenous peoples as well as local plants, rivers, and mountains. Have students share their drawings and maps with each other.



Level: Basic
Setting: Classroom
Time: About 30min

Purpose of this exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to have students take a special interest in a specific piece of geography of the land that they live on. Students will present on their special interest topic to the rest of the class and will discuss how this topic relates to other pieces of geography on their land.

Learning Goals

Using Native Land have students research in depth on a geographic specific topic

To have students relate the materials from their presentation to others

To create an illustration of how geography comes together to create Indigenous territories

Materials needed

An electronic device with access to the internet

Discussing information that was brought up from previous exercises, have your students pick a special interest topic on local Indigenous geography.

Suggestions:

Mountains
Rivers
Local plants and animals

The goal of this presentation is to discuss how this topic relates to the local indigenous territories ecosystem. How did/do the Indigenous people that occupy this territory interact with the geographic topic? Did/do they hunt and fish it? Do they live on it or near it? Is there a specific history related to the topic?

Have students research these questions and give a short presentation. At the end, have students relate these topics to each other and discuss how their topics come together to create an Indigenous landscape.



Have your students write a reflection journal on the activities.

What's something that they didn't know that they learned about?

What was the favourite thing they learned about?

How did they feel learning about Indigenous territories and people?

What would they like to learn more about?

Use these journals to gather ideas to shape future discussions about Indigenous Geographies.



Advanced Exercises

These activities are meant for older classrooms that want to engage more with contemporary topics on Indigenous land. These activities are meant both to help students position themselves into relation with the land, as well as teach them about how Indigenous people relate to their own land. It is recommended going into these activities that your classroom already have a basic understanding of Indigenous peoples and colonization, as well as be prepared to talk about more advanced topics such as; land displacement and colonial bodies.



Level: Advanced
 Setting: Classroom
 Time: About 30min

Purpose of this exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to students become more aware of how their bodies, and Indigenous bodies interact with their land through storytelling. In this activity students will have discussions on the land they live on after listening to the podcasts of the [Dechinta Land and Medicine Stories](#)¹² from students attending school at the Dechinta Bush University in Chief Drygeese territory at Blatchford Lake.

Learning Goals

For students to have knowledge of how Indigenous people interact and have relations with the land

For students to be able to understand the importance of audio recordings of stories and the knowledge that they hold

Materials needed

An electronic device with access to the internet

Listen with the class to [Moosehide Camp by Melaw and Ethel](#)¹³.

Lead a group discussion with the following questions:

How does the speaker in this podcast relate to the land?

How does the speaker have relationships through the land?

How is this displayed at the moosehide camp?

What are the values of having audio recordings of activities like this?

How do they teach us more about the way that we and Indigenous people interact with the land?

Audio recordings of stories and activities on land are important for Indigenous people as they pass down forms of knowledge and allow others to experience spiritual, social and political forms of growth. Many Indigenous communities only pass down history through oral retellings which makes audio recordings especially important. By listening to these moments being captured we are able to see the land through other's eyes and connect with their experiences.



Exercise 5

Your Stories of the Land

native-land.ca

Level: Advanced
Setting: Classroom
Time: About 30min

Purpose of this exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to have students come up with their own stories of their relationships with the land, record and present them. In this activity students will work together to develop their own podcasts on the topic of a time that they learned something new about the land that they live on.

Learning Goals

For students to be able to create their own audio recordings

For students learn in new ways about ways that they live and interact with the land they live on.

Materials needed

An electronic device with access to the internet

An audio recording device such as; a phone, computer or recorder

Free Recording Resources

[Audacity Recording Device](#)¹⁴

[Podcast Editing Guide](#)¹⁵

Have students listen to [Dechinta Land and Medicine Stories](#)¹² to come up with ideas with how they relate to their land.

Have students get into groups to create a podcast story with the topic: something new I've learned about the land I live on. While it's recommended that these topics centre around new Indigenous knowledge about the land, this is not a limiting factor and can be about anything students have learned.

After coming up with an idea, have students write a script for their podcasts and when they're ready begin recording. Encourage students to be creative about how they record (ie. settings, sound effects).

Using your sound editing software, put together and save your podcasts as mp3 files and have your students present to the rest of the class.

Follow up discussion questions:

What was the hardest part of creating a podcast?

Was it easier or harder to express certain things through recording instead of writing?

What was the most enjoyable thing about recording their podcast?



Learning Outside the Classroom

Going forward, it's important to take these conversations outside of the classroom and out into nature. What are some of the things that you've learned inside of the classroom that you'd like to know more about? Inquire into local Indigenous events that your class can get involved with or simply go on a nature walk in relation to some of the classroom exercises previously done.

Below is a suggested follow-up activity to get students out of the classroom and onto the land.



Exercise 6

Nature Walk

native-land.ca

Level: Advanced
Setting: Outdoors
Time: About 30min

Purpose of this exercise

Identify a nearby area that you and your class have researched and take a nature hike that features topics that have already been discussed in the classroom. Have students identify researched materials such as plants, animals, and landscapes, and engage with them!

Learning Goals

For students to be able to create their own audio recordings

For students learn in new ways about ways that they live and interact with the land they live on.

Materials needed

An electronic device with access to the internet

An audio recording device such as; a phone, computer or recorder

Suggested Resources

[Traditional Plant Foods of Canadian Indigenous Peoples¹⁶](#)

[A Conversation about Aboriginal Foods¹⁷](#)

Identify a nearby area which you and your class have researched and take a nature hike which features topics that have already been discussed in the classroom. Have students identify researched materials such as; plants, animals and landscapes and engage with them!

Do the subjects look the same as they did in their pictures?

How do they feel?

How do they smell?

Bring along sketchbooks and have the class take drawings of their chosen subjects and bring them back to the classroom.

As an extra activity, have students sketch or take photos of one plant that they didn't know about on their walk and try to identify it when they get back to the classroom.

Have them write a reflection journal on:

What they found out about their plant.

What are some of the challenges of only identifying plants through sketches?

How do they think that Indigenous people identified plants before having access to the internet or books?



Going Forward

Going forward we must all do our part when it comes to dismantling colonization and seeing the world in a new light. This can mean anything from exploring and learning more about where we live to simply building connections with the community and people around us. We at Native Land Digital hope that these exercises and resources have inspired deeper reflection and critical thought. Thank you for reading our guide!

This guide was written and produced by Samantha Martin-Ferris and Victor Temprano, and designed by Colin Frazer, with lots of contributions from other people working with Native Land Digital. Thank you so much, everyone!

Thanks to:

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Adam Recvlohe
Joey Takeda
Hannah Stanley
Norah Stogan
Dechinta Class of 2018
Jim Andrews



Resources

- 1
<https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/>
- 2
<https://twnation.ca/>
- 3
<http://www.squamish.net/>
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