

"The Ballad of Alice Moonchild" and "I Lost My Talk"

poetry by Aleata Blythe and Rita Joe

BEFORE READING:

The First Nations peoples in Canada have a rich history in terms of language, beliefs, rituals, customs, food, religion, and music. Unfortunately the last century of their history has been battered with exploitation and mistreatment, resulting in displacement and resentment. Our present and our future generations must strive to mend the rift created between the First Nations peoples and the rest of multicultural Canada for a better future.

A **K-W-L chart** is a strategy that helps students recall what they **KNOW** about a topic, what they **WONDER** or **WANT TO KNOW** about a topic, and, at the end of the lesson, what they have **LEARNED** about a topic.

ASSIGNMENT: Before reading the poems and information given in the next section, **complete K and W portions of the following K-W-L chart.**

After reading the poems and information in your research, **complete the L portion of the K-W-L chart.** Submit your completed chart and a bibliography of your sources. Research "Shubenacadie school" which is mentioned in Rita Joe's poem. Feel free to research other Canadian Residential Schools sites.

K: What do you KNOW about Indian Residential Schools in Canada - what were they, why were they established, how were they run, what effect did they have on the First Nations people, do they exist now, etc.	W: What do you WONDER about Indian Residential Schools in Canada - what were they, why were they established, how were they run, what effect did they have on the First Nations people, do they exist now, etc.	L: What did you LEARN about Indian Residential Schools in Canada – what were they, why were they established, how were they run, what effect did they have on the First Nations people, do they exist now, etc.

Assignment Part Two:

- A) After reading and discussing the poetry, write a short poetry analysis of ONE of the poems. Be sure to answer:

What is the underlying theme of the poem? What is the general impression or conflict expressed by the writer? How does this poem relate to our course? Is there anything particularly interesting about this poem? What poetic techniques does it contain (you must find at least 2)? Are there any parts of the poem that you would change, being given the chance? Why or why not? What do you like/dislike about the poem?

- B) Then, using resources from the library first and the internet second, your task is to find another poem related to the same theme and present an oral reading to the class. You will take the time to practice and prepare, as you will be evaluated on how you present (ie. pronunciation and enunciation, tempo, volume etc.). With your oral reading, you will also explain to the class how your chosen poem fits with the current theme.

EQUITY AND ETHICS: Justice and Fairness
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From "The Ballad of Alice Moonchild"
A poem by Aleata Blythe

They said, "This is better,
A home with whites.
They will give you
All the things you never had:
Butter on your bread,
Three square meals a day,
Clean clothes . . . schooling . . .
A warm room in which to stay."
They scrub my face
(Trying to wash away the colour);
They cut my hair and curl it
(Trying to cover up the black);
They teach me to speak fluently
(Trying to erase the past).
But I laugh . . .
For I make them gasp
When I come upon them silently,
And I hear them curse
When I sing my songs in Cree.
Do they think I will forget
I will always be me?

**"I Lost My Talk
A poem by Rita Joe**

**I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.**

**You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my world.**

**Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful.**

**So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.**

Oral Reading Rubric

	5	4	3	2	1-0
Expression	Very expressive throughout the entire selection.	Expression throughout most of the selection.	Some expression in parts of the selection.	Very little expression.	None.
Phrasing	Meaningful phrasing throughout the entire selection.	Some phrasing; pays attention to punctuation.	Phrases known expressions; rest are word-by-word.	Mostly word-by-word; pauses at end punctuation.	Not yet.
Pronunciation	96-100% accurate.	90-95% accurate.	86-89% accurate.	Under 85% accurate.	Under 60% accurate.