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Grade Level: 7–12

Magazine Article:
“Nations in Waiting”
by Guuduniia LaBoucan

Theme(s):

- First Nations, Inuit, & Metis
- Treaty Knowledge

Subject Area(s):

- Social Studies
- History

Lesson Overview: In this lesson students investigate the Treaty experience in British Columbia by exploring and assembling a timeline of significant events. They study these events considering their historical significance in the past, today, and in the future.

Time Required: 1-2 class periods.

Historical Thinking Concept(s):

- Establish historical significance
- Identify continuity and change

Learning Outcomes: Students will...

- Explore the historical and contemporary significance of the Treaty experience in British Columbia.
- Construct a timeline of the British Columbia Treaty experience.
- Assess the historical significance of the Treaty experiences in BC.

Nations in Waiting: The BC Treaty Experience

The Lesson Activity

Activating: How will students be prepared for learning?

- Display a map of Treaties. You can locate one at: www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/htoc_1100100032308_eng.pdf
- Ask:
 - What does the map depict?
 - Describe the map. What can you infer about Treaties?
 - Locate and indicate British Columbia.
 - Based on the map, how do you think the BC Treaty experience is the same and/or different than in other regions in Canada?
- Encourage and lead an all-class discussion.
- Divide the class equally into 16 (either groups or singles).
- Distribute copies of the *Treaties and Treaty Relationship* issue of *Canada's History* magazine.
- Instruct students to turn to page 47.
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the title of the magazine article “Nations in Waiting: British Columbia’s First Nations are in a unique situation regarding Treaties.”
- Ask: Thinking about the map and the title, what does this sentence mean: “British Columbia’s First Nations are in a unique situation regarding Treaties?”
- Encourage and lead an all-class discussion.

Acquiring: What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?

- Assign each group/student one of the following dates:

1763	1899	1997
1846	1913	1998
1849	1973	2014
1850 – 1854	1990	2017
1861	1991	
1871	1993	

- Instruct each group to write their date at the top of a sheet of paper in large numbers.
- Using the magazine article as a source, in a short paragraph, summarize the event pertinent to the BC Treaty-Making experience.
- Collect all dated summaries and organize and tape chronologi-

Nations in Waiting: The BC Treaty Experience (continued)

cally on a long wall.

- Invite students to explore and read the timeline they constructed.
- Encourage questions and discussion.

Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?

- Explain that historians use several criteria to establish the significance of events. They make judgments on the importance of an event, a person or groups of people, and developments in the past.
- Draw the students' attention to the timeline. Ask:
 - What event do you think was most relevant to the First Nations people living at that time? Why?
 - What event best helps us understand the Treaty relationship in British Columbia today?
 - What event is most remembered within the collective memory of First Nation peoples in BC?
 - What event is most remembered within the collective memory of non-First Nation peoples in BC?
 - What event is most revealing about government attitudes in the past?
 - What event did (or will) have consequences for the future?
- Distribute printed copies of BLM 3.2 BC's Treaty History: Establishing Historical Significance to each student.
- Instruct them to complete this handout.

Materials/Resources:

- Copy/copies of the *Treaties and Treaty Relationship* issue of *Canada's History* magazine.
- Printed copies BLM 3.2 - one per student.
- Access to Internet and projector (optional).
- Map of Treaties in Canada.

Extension Activity:

Ask students to re-read the article and make a note of the "three-step test to prove Aboriginal title" set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Delgamuukw* Case Ruling, i.e., that a First Nation must prove to the courts that their Aboriginal title is based on:

1. sufficient,
2. continuous, and
3. exclusive occupation before 1846 (when Britain claimed sovereignty over BC)

Instruct the students to write a short paper explaining the meaning of these three terms and how difficult (and expensive!) it would be to prove such "occupation" in a courtroom. Imagine trying to go back hundreds of years to find proof, especially when your ancestors did not keep written records! Can students remember any specific examples from the articles they read that would illustrate this point?

BLM 3.1 Timeline of BC's Treaty History: Teacher's Key

- 1763 Royal Proclamation of 1763 - very important because the British Crown acknowledges that Aboriginal Peoples do have title to their land and that Treaties should be negotiated to get control of the land - this led to many Treaties being agreed to back east and in parts of western Canada.
- 1846 Britain claims sovereignty over BC after a border is created between the United States and British North America - the British want to ensure lots of British settlement in BC to prevent Americans from pushing into the territory.
- 1849 The colony of Vancouver Island is established - Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) given land and trading rights for ten years as long as HBC establishes a British colony of settlers in five years.
- 1850 - Douglas Treaties are signed on Vancouver Island - James Douglas tries to negotiate Treaties and "purchase" land from other First nations but this is denied by Colonial Secretary E.B. Lytton because he thinks the "acquisition of title" isn't necessary - great discussion question: Was Lytton's refusal to give Douglas money for land purchase the main cause of Treaties not being negotiated in BC - what would the consequences have been if Lytton had agreed?
- 1854
- 1861 Douglas implements a land policy (because he can't buy land) and establishes "Indian Reserves" - Douglas also issues Proclamations 13 and 15 - claiming Crown ownership of all lands in BC (of course, this is in contradiction to the 1763 Royal Proclamation).
- 1871 BC joins Confederation (and claims that "Aboriginal title" has been "extinguished" in BC).
- 1899 Treaty 8 signed in northeastern BC (primarily to curb conflict between gold miners and First Nations and to encourage settlement) despite the fact that BC government still claims there is no Aboriginal title in BC.
- 1913 Nisga'a go to Privy Council in England to pursue their land claims.
- 1973 Nisga'a go to Supreme Court of Canada in landmark Calder case, which prompts federal government to initiate a land-claims process - Nisga'a Treaty negotiations begin in 1976.
- 1990 BC, Canada and First Nations of BC create a task force to come up with recommendations for how the province can start Treaty negotiations.
- 1991 BC Treaty Commission is created as an independent body to oversee negotiations based on "mutual trust, respect and understanding through political negotiation."
- 1993 Formal land negotiations begin.
- 1997 Supreme Court of Canada rules Aboriginal title in BC was **not** extinguished before joining Confederation (*Delgamuukw* case) - court also sets out 3-step test to prove Aboriginal title.
Note: Other than going to court and proving Aboriginal title, the only way to settle land claims is for First Nations to negotiate Treaties with Canada and BC.
- 1998 Nisga'a Final Agreement signed (100 years after Treaty 8) - only possible because of Calder Case.
- 2014 Tsilhqot'in Nation proves Aboriginal Title (but spends millions of dollars to do so).
- 2017 As of this year, only seven First Nations have signed final BC Treaty agreements (5 Maa-nulth First Nations, Tla'amin Nation, and the Tsawwassen First Nation).

BLM 3.2 BC's Treaty History: Establishing Historical Significance

Instructions: Choose one of the events on the class timeline, using the magazine article "Nations in Waiting" by Guuduniia LaBoucan and other digital and print sources, complete the following table.

YEAR:	
EVENT OVERVIEW:	
<p>Remarkable</p> <p>The event was remarked on, talked about, and/or studied by people at the time or since.</p>	
<p>Remembered</p> <p>The event/development was important at some stage within the collective memory of a group.</p>	
<p>Resonant</p> <p>People like to draw comparisons with the event; it is possible to connect with experiences, beliefs or attitudes across time and place.</p>	
<p>Resulting in change</p> <p>It had consequences for the future.</p>	
<p>Revealing</p> <p>The event reveals some other aspects of the past, like how people thought or what the values were at the time.</p>	



Adaptations for grades 3-6

See "Del's Truck"

on pages 20 to 23 in the *We Are All Treaty People* issue of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*.

Minds on

Use a priority pyramid to explain student judgments on a simple issue or topic. Build on this to explore historical significance as the process used by historians to evaluate what was important about particular events, people, and developments in the past.

Hands on

Provide an overview of the Douglas Treaties. Distribute character/player cards who took part in the Douglas Treaties (Nuuchah'nulth/Coast Salish/Kwakwaka'wakw peoples; First Nation chiefs; Sir James Douglas; Hudson's Bay Company; Crown; settlers to BC). Have students arrange them in a pyramid, putting who they believe is the most significant on top. Compare and share.