

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Have you ever heard of Orange Shirt Day?
2. What do you know about Canadian residential schools?
3. What does the phrase "Canada is a mosaic" mean?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. reconciliation | a) to pay for |
| 2. commemorate | b) the most powerful |
| 3. residential school | c) a bad experience that can have effects in time |
| 4. fund | d) something that one owns |
| 5. assimilate | e) building a good relationship after a conflict |
| 6. dominant | f) hurt someone very bad (physically and mentally) |
| 7. abusive | g) to remember and honour someone or something |
| 8. possession | h) do things like everyone else does |
| 9. trauma | i) knowledge about something |
| 10. awareness | j) schools for Indigenous children. The staff was Christian |



Reading

1. In Canada, the National Day for Truth and **Reconciliation**, also known as Orange Shirt Day, takes place on September 30 every year. The purpose of this day is to **commemorate** the experience of more than 150,000 Indigenous children who attended **residential schools**, including those that did not survive.
2. There were more than 130 residential schools across Canada between 1831 and 1996. These schools were **funded** by the government and run by Christian churches. According to Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, residential schools were established to "take the Indian out of the child." By making children attend these schools, the government hoped students would forget their native cultures and **assimilate** into the **dominant** society.
3. The children were not allowed to go home to see their families, speak their traditional languages, or practise their customs. The teachers and staff were often emotionally, physically, and sexually **abusive**. Furthermore, the quality of education was much poorer in residential schools than in other schools.
4. The idea for Orange Shirt Day came from a woman named Phyllis Webstad, who attended a residential school in the province of British Columbia. As a child, she was excited to start her new school. Her grandmother gave her a new orange shirt to wear for the occasion. Unfortunately, when she arrived, school officials took her shirt away, along with all other **possessions** that were reminders of home. This was only the beginning of the mistreatment of Phyllis and her Indigenous classmates.
5. In Canada today, there are 80,000 residential school survivors still dealing with the **trauma** caused by these schools. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation raises **awareness** about residential schools with the hope that history will not repeat itself.

"They told us to remember our number. Instead of calling my name, they called my number. If you don't remember your number, you get yelled at."

—Wilbur Abrahams,
Residential School Survivor

Comprehension

Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner.
Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

1. What is the purpose of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation?
2. Why did the Canadian government establish residential schools?
3. How did the teachers and staff treat the students at these schools?
4. Who is Phyllis Webstad?
5. How many residential school survivors are there in Canada today?

Vocabulary Review

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word forms.

1. Immigrants often try to _____ into the culture of their new country by learning the language and changing their style of clothing.
2. The city put up a statue to _____ the soldiers who died in the war.
3. Many children who attended _____ never saw their families again.
4. The 80,000 survivors continue to suffer from the _____ they experienced at these schools.
5. It's important to raise _____ of this dark part of Canada's history.

Grammar Review

PARTS OF SPEECH

A. Reference

In English, there are eight different parts of speech. These are *nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections*. Can you remember how each of these parts of speech function?

Many of the vocabulary words in this lesson can be changed into different parts of speech. For example, if you wanted to change the adjective *genetic* into a noun, the result would be *gene*.

B. Changing the Word Forms

Change the forms of the following vocabulary words:

#	What kind of word is...	Make it into a...
1	abusive _____	verb _____
2	trauma _____	adjective _____
3	possession _____	verb _____
4	awareness _____	adjective _____
5	reconciliation _____	verb _____

Discussion

1. What sorts of difficulties might a residential school survivor have later in life?
2. Have you heard of similar efforts to eliminate cultures in other parts of the world? Share what you know.
3. Do you think it's possible for something like this to happen again? Explain your opinion.

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

1. In Canada, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, takes place on September 30 every year. The purpose of this day is to _____ the experience of more than 150,000 Indigenous children who attended residential schools, including those that did not _____.
2. There were more than 130 residential schools across Canada between 1831 and 1996. These schools were _____ by the government and run by Christian churches. According to Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, residential schools were established to "take the Indian out of the child." By making children attend these schools, the government hoped students would forget their native cultures and _____ into the dominant society.
3. The children were not allowed to go home to see their families, speak their _____ languages, or practise their customs. The teachers and staff were often emotionally, physically, and sexually _____. Furthermore, the quality of education was much poorer in residential schools than in other schools.
4. The idea for Orange Shirt Day came from a woman named Phyllis Webstad, who attended a residential school in the _____ of British Columbia. As a child, she was excited to start her new school. Her grandmother gave her a new orange shirt to wear for the occasion. Unfortunately, when she arrived, school officials took her shirt away, along with all other _____ that were reminders of home. This was only the beginning of the mistreatment of Phyllis and her Indigenous classmates.
5. In Canada today, there are 80,000 residential school survivors still dealing with the _____ caused by these schools. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation raises awareness about residential schools with the _____ that history will not repeat itself.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students learn about the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day to commemorate the experience of Canada's residential school survivors. Students learn related vocabulary, practise parts of speech, and discuss the implications of this dark period of Canadian history.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: Orange Shirt Day, residential schools, Indigenous, cultural genocide, racism, culture, social justice, trauma, parts of speech

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. The phrase "Canada is a mosaic" means that Canada is a diverse place where many different cultures can exist side by side.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. e | 3. j | 5. h | 7. f | 9. c |
| 2. g | 4. a | 6. b | 8. d | 10. i |

Reading

Read the article out loud together or assign it for silent reading.
Discuss the quote and have students underline any vocabulary that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. The purpose of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is to commemorate the experience of more than 150,000 Indigenous children who attended residential schools, including those that did not survive.
2. The Canadian government established residential schools to "take the Indian out of the child," which means they wanted to force the children to assimilate into the dominant culture.
3. The teachers and staff of these schools were often emotionally, physically, and sexually abusive.
4. Phyllis Webstad is a residential school survivor who came up with the idea for Orange Shirt Day.
5. In Canada today, there are 80,000 residential school survivors.

Vocabulary Review

1. assimilate
2. commemorate
3. residential schools
4. trauma
5. awareness

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Grammar Review

B. CHANGING THE WORD FORMS

Challenge students to change some of the vocabulary from the reading into different word forms. If your students could use a review of the main parts of speech, hand out this chart https://esllibrary.com/resource_categories/103/resources/2479 or lesson <https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/1605>

1. adjective, abuse
2. noun, traumatic
3. noun, possess
4. noun, aware
5. noun, reconcile

Discussion

Go over the discussion questions as a class. Answers will vary.

Listening

1. commemorate, survive
2. funded, assimilate
3. traditional, abusive
4. province, possessions
5. trauma, hope