

Among Equals

Podcast Listening Guide

INTRODUCTION

The Among Equals Podcast Listening Guide offers activities for classroom use related to each episode in the series. The activities are based on the core concepts of historical thinking: historical significance, evidence and interpretation, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspective and ethical judgment. The Critical Thinking Consortium offers an [Overview of the core concepts of historical thinking](#) for those who want to gain more familiarity with the concepts. Historical thinking concepts have benefits for students, including the opportunity to “do history” instead of simply reading someone else’s interpretations. The concepts can contribute to the development of critical thinking skills, understanding historic experiences and perspectives, analysis of primary and secondary sources, using historical knowledge to understand current society, and turning knowledge into action. These concepts also enable students to weigh historical interpretations and selective narratives they encounter and approach history in a way that broadens their understanding.

EP. 1: A NEW WAY OF SEEING

Norval Morrisseau explodes onto the Canadian art scene with his inaugural exhibition at Toronto's Pollock Gallery. Daphne Odjig nurtures her gift as a precocious visual artist, and struggles with her identity as a First Nations woman.

Students are encouraged to conduct web searches to familiarize themselves with the art of Daphne Odjig, Jackson Beardy, Alex Janvier, Eddy Cobiiness, Norval Morrisseau, Joseph M. Sánchez, and Carl Ray.

HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPT: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

History tries to understand the past and the concerns, beliefs, and values of the people living through a historical period or event. Examining historical perspectives allows us to understand the past through the social, intellectual, and ethical lenses at the time. It also allows us to appreciate the diversity of perspectives that existed in the past.

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Before listening to the episode, as a class or in small groups, discuss famous and familiar depictions of Indigenous People or Peoples in art (e.g., paintings, novels, movies, music, etc.). Determine who created 1 or 2 representations your group identified and when they were created. Consider: Was the person Indigenous? What does the depiction reveal about the artist or author’s perspective about Indigenous Peoples? What values or beliefs do you think influenced the representation? Do you think this depiction reflects or diverges from common perspectives of the period during which it was created? What other issues with the depictions did the group(s) identify?

LISTENING ACTIVITY

While listening, take notes on Canadian and European perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous art before 1962 and during Morrisseau’s exhibition at the Pollock gallery.

POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Using examples from the episode and the following two excerpts from newspaper articles, develop a short response that presents different historical Canadian perspectives on First Nations Peoples and First Nations art. What do these examples reveal about what made First Nations art noteworthy in the early 1960s? Who were seen as “experts”? What do the following examples reveal about non-Indigenous peoples’ views of First Nations Peoples? Additionally, identify any attitudes, values and beliefs that may explain why an individual or group held a particular opinion.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES FOR POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Display Featured at Meet by Mary Bletcher, Winnipeg Free Press, 1963 [Excerpts]

The call of the north for a chance to participate in the 20th century has been partially answered in Manitoba by [the] establishment of a sales depot for Indian, Métis and Eskimo arts and crafts...

At the conference last year, the request for the establishment of a permanent sales depot was made by Indian and Metis representatives. It came as a result of public interest in the handcrafts display and sale which has been part of the annual conference since 1960...

Pride in their ancient arts is gradually returning to the Indian and Eskimo people, along with increased income for those who can meet the requirements of the committee in charge of their sale.

Ojibway Painter "Discovered" by Politician and Art Teacher, Canadian Press, 1963

The complaint of many budding artists is that they are never discovered at all.

For Norval Morrisseau, 31-year-old Ojibway Indian painter from Northwestern Ontario, it was a case of being discovered twice in the same year.

The first discovery was made by Allister Grosart, national director of the Progressive Conservative party, when he was traveling about during the federal election campaign.

"I learned about Norval from a CPR train conductor who was a Conservative Worker in the Kenora area," Mr. Grosart said at the opening here of a one-man exhibition of Mr. Morrisseau's paintings.

"He told me that Morrisseau could do with some help, so I said, 'Have him write me.' So he did, and also sent me some examples of his work."

The symbolic Indian mythology paintings impressed Mr. Grosart, an art collector and so did the letters Mr. Morrisseau wrote. The Indian, then working in a gold mine, explained that if he could only get the summer off he could "really do something."

Praised by an Expert

Mr. Gosart got in touch with Selwyn Dewdney in London, Ont., an expert on Indian paintings and author of the recently published Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes.

He wanted Mr. Dewdney's opinion of the work. As Mr. Dewdney said later, "Norval's paintings have a passion, spontaneity and unpretentious simplicity that expose the emptiness of much contemporary painting."

With \$900.00 from Mr. Grosart for living expenses, Mr. Morrisseau had the time he needed to do the work he wanted.

Shortly after Mr. Grosart discovered the painter, Jack Pollock made the second discovery. He found Mr. Morrisseau at Beardmore, Ont., while teaching art during the summer for the Ontario government.

Mr. Pollock says the Indian offered to sell him all his paintings at \$5 each. Instead an exhibition of 35 of the paintings was arranged for Mr. Pollock's Toronto art gallery.

At the opening of the exhibition Mr. Morrisseau was introduced as a "genius" by Mr. Pollock.

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EP. 2: INDIANS AT EXPO 67

In this episode, we look at the quiet aftermath of Norval Morrisseau's Pollock Gallery exhibition, and what happened next for First Nations artists in the wake of his celebrated debut, including the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67.

Students are encouraged to conduct web searches to familiarize themselves with the art of Daphne Odjig, Jackson Beardy, Alex Janvier, Eddy Cobiness, Norval Morrisseau, Joseph M. Sánchez, and Carl Ray.

Short activity: Watch the National Film Board's short bilingual film "Indian Memento", which features a visit to the "Indians of Canada" Pavilion during Expo 67.

For those who do not have time to watch the entire video, the exhibition panels state:

The Pavilion was designed and created by the Indians of Canada.

The Indians of Canada bid you welcome.

Walk in our moccasins the trail from our past.

Live with us in the here and now.

Talk with us by the fire of the days to come.

When the white man came we welcomed him with love.

Wars and peace treaties deprived us of our lands.

Many Indians feel our fathers were betrayed.

We wanted to live our own life on our own land.

The reserve is the home of our spirits.

The white man's school, an alien land for an Indian child.

An Indian child begins school by learning a foreign tongue.

Indian student enrollment 1966 - 61,935.

Indian students in vocational training (1966): 2,143.

HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPT: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

As in our own lives, social, political, cultural, economic, environmental, and technological aspects of life can change and stay the same over periods of time. Changes occur at different rates, and they can be positive or negative. Historians can assess changes and constants for their importance. Notable changes are called "turning points", as they make a significant difference in people's lives and the way broader society functions.

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Episode 2 underlines the on-going "policy of exclusion" that First Nations artists faced in Canada and some of the ways that they navigated their experiences in the mid-to-late 1960s. As a class or in small groups, choose 1 or 2 example from your studies related to the wider "policy of exclusion" that First Nations Peoples navigated after the passage of the Indian Act in 1876 (e.g., the pass system, enfranchisement, Indian Residential Schools, segregated hospitals, the Sixties Scoop, Treaty rights violations, imposed governance systems, ceremonial bans, economic exclusion, etc.) After choosing 1 or 2 examples, determine if each policy resulted in a substantial change to those impacted or if First Nations communities remained the same. Additionally, determine how First Nations Peoples resisted or expressed disapproval about the policy individually or collectively. Did their expressions and efforts influence or shift government policies over time? Share your assessments of the changes and constants and compare them with any other assessments completed by your peers of the same policies.

LISTENING ACTIVITY

While listening to the episode, take notes on what Greg Hill calls the “policy of exclusion”, including the Royal Commission on the Arts, access to educational opportunities for First Nations artists, art collectors’s opinions, access to opportunities for exhibition, and the policies carried out by the Cultural Affairs Program, including the Expo 67 Pavilion. Additionally, note down examples of how the artists challenged or rejected these policies.

POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Using this episode and the previous episode (if applicable), students can work in small groups to determine the changes and constants they noted with regard to the “policy of exclusion” that First Nations artists faced in the 1960s. Some questions to consider include: Who was making decisions about representation of Indigenous Peoples in art and public exhibitions? How were artistic visions influenced by gallery or government policies? What were artists expressing through their pieces? Who was the audience and how was their art received? What opportunities were available to First Nations artists?

Groups can also discuss if the consequences of the constants or changes contributed to progress and opportunities for First Nations artists. Finally, students should discuss if they feel that the Indian Pavilion at Expo 67 was a turning point for First Nations artists in Canadian history. While these particular questions are difficult to determine using just this episode, consider them when listening to Episode 3: Did the Pavilion make a significant difference in First Nations artists’ lives? Did the participating artists shift government policy?

Short post-listening activity: Using Episode 2, the text from the Indian Pavilion, and if desired, Chief Dan George’s poem “Lament for Confederation”, discuss how First Nations’ artists’ perspectives on Expo 67 and the Canadian centenary differed from non-Indigenous peoples’ perspectives about the 100th anniversary.

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EP. 3: Daphne's Place

In this episode, we meet Joseph Sanchez and Eddy Cobiness. Daphne reconnects with her roots and opens her shop inspired by Andy Warhol's famed studio: The Factory. We also delve into examples of First Nations activism in North America in the 1970s.

Students are encouraged to conduct web searches to familiarize themselves with the art of Eddy Cobiness, Norval Morrisseau, Daphne Odjig, Jackson Beardy, Alex Janvier, Joseph M. Sánchez, and Carl Ray.

HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPT: EVIDENCE AND INTERPRETATION

History requires critically examining and interpreting written and oral evidence, as well as available artifacts (i.e., a photograph) to establish historical knowledge. Evidence can be drawn from primary (i.e., a testimony) and secondary (i.e., a journal article) sources. When examining evidence, it is important to consider how reliable it is. Is a historical document written by an outside observer? Could it have been altered or forged?

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Episode 3 highlights examples of 1970s First Nations activism and resistance to forced assimilation policies in North America, including the Red Power Movement and Citizens Plus. It also highlights examples of artists reconnecting with Indigenous forms of expression, being participants in political activism and reaffirming cultural pride. As a class or in small groups, think about one familiar artist or piece of art that promoted political or social change or offered commentary on injustice. Examples can come from other periods or histories the class has covered, including anti-war or labour movement art or artists. Discuss what you know about the artist, what you think motivated the artist to create the piece or pieces selected, the artist's proximity to the event or experience depicted, if you think the piece conveys the intended message or brings about a particular emotion, and how you think it would have been received by the government or the public at the time.

LISTENING ACTIVITY

Take notes on cultural reconnection and First Nations activism discussed throughout the episode. Note how First Nations artists, including members of the PNIAI, contributed to these efforts.

POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Using this episode, the previous episodes and related research, students can work individually or in small groups to conduct an evaluation of one of the following pieces of primary evidence created by PNIAI artists, which students can access through a web search:

1. Norval Morrisseau's *White Man's Curse* (1969)
2. Alex Janvier's *Sun Shines, Grass Grows, River Flows* (1972) [Note that students can review Numbered Treaties texts to support this activity]
3. Daphne Odjig's *Vision* (1975)
4. Norval Morrisseau's *The Land [Land Rights]* (1976)



POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY CONTINUED

Alternatively, students can analyze the following excerpt of a poem written by Jackson Beardy, entitled "A Main Street Indian":

*As I walk the dismal streets of this city,
Kicking a tin beer can ahead of me,
I think bitterly of that invisible government
That took me away from my folks so early,
Only to be used as a psychological sop
To relieve society's major hang-up.
They denied me the right to experience
My identity and my culture,
They denied me the right to experience
The intricacies of the White world,
While they stripped me of my pride and dignity
In a secluded governing boarding school
During the crucial twelve years of my life.
I emerged a learned man with a hollow soul.
After a few faltering steps, I fell flat on my face -
I had never learned to walk in either world.
I was born of the noble Indian race,
Bred in the confines of a government test-tube,
And released a zombie.*

Questions to guide students in their analysis include:

1. What are your first impressions of the piece you chose? How does it make you feel?
2. Can you identify the key subject of the piece? Was the artist in the position to observe or directly experience what they depicted? What about their lived experience could have motivated them to create this piece?
3. Is the representation consistent with the social movements and experiences shared in the episode? Was a theme that you heard in the episode also represented in the piece?
4. What do you think the selected piece's key message(s) is?
5. Do you think this representation is credible or not credible? Why or why not? Is there a conflict of interest that might make the representation misleading? Why or why not?
6. What questions do you still have about the piece?
7. Based on your knowledge, this episode and previous episodes, how do you think the piece would have been received by government representatives or the wider public at the time?

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EP. 4: Breaking Glass

In this episode, Daphne, Jackson, Alex, Eddy, Carl, Joseph and Norval begin exhibiting together. An idea starts to take form. The seven of them will form a collective; one of the first self-organized art activist groups in Canadian history. One of its main goals: to establish a forum and the spaces for the voices and perspectives of Indigenous artists.

Students are encouraged to conduct online research to familiarize themselves with the art of Jackson Beardy, Alex Janvier, Joseph M. Sánchez, Carl Ray, Eddy Cobiness, Norval Morrisseau, and Daphne Odjig.

HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPT: HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Studying history involves careful consideration of what past events and people are important and why they are considered important. It involves selecting and questioning what and who should be remembered, researched and taught. Historical figures and events are often seen as historically significant if they created change or consequences that affected many people over time, or if they are representative of larger issues or trends in history. Determining historical significance includes determining how important selected events and people are in relation to others. It is important to keep in mind the perspectives and positions of those who decide what is historically significant (e.g., historians, authors, and educators) and that their perspectives may differ from those of another group. What is significant to one group may not be to another.

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Episode 4 focuses on the significance of Daphne Odjig's gallery for First Nations art and artists, representations of Indigenous peoples in art, and non-Indigenous audiences, buyers, and galleries. It also highlights PNIAI's collective efforts and successes. As a class or in small groups, ask students to write down 3 or 4 significant events that have happened in their community or Canada in the last 2 - 4 years. Ask the class or small groups to assess the impact of these events on their lives, their families' lives, their communities, etc. Ask the class or the small groups to consider the criteria they used to determine that their selected events were significant. Ask the class or the small groups to consider any outlier events or events that were not added to the list, and why the event was more or less significant to participants. Finally, ask the class or the small groups to determine if in the future people in the community, province, country, or world should know about the events they selected and why.

LISTENING ACTIVITY

Take notes on the historical and on-going importance of the formation and efforts of the Professional Native Indian Artist Incorporated (PNIAI).

POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Using this episode, previous episodes and supplemental research, students can work individually or in small groups to analyze the historical significance of the PNIAI by considering why the history and art of the PNIAI should be taught in classrooms and cultural institutions internationally, nationally, provincially, or locally. Students should consider the reasoning behind their assessments, including the following questions:

- Was the group's formation and artwork notable (think about non-Indigenous and Indigenous perspectives)
- Were their contributions to First Nations, Canadian, and international art widespread and long-lasting (think about what is now considered noteworthy Canadian art)? Did the group create opportunities for the following generations of First Nations artists?
- Has the group been showcased and/or memorialized?
- Does the group's formation and its efforts represent a historical issue or trend?

Students can share their assessments and reasons with the class. Ensure to discuss similarities and differences in opinions. Finally, ask the class if they feel there are other artists in Canadian history that are equally or more significant and why.

To learn more about the legacy and on-going influence of the PNIAI, students can listen to Episode 5: The Image Makers.

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EP. 5: THE IMAGE MAKERS

This episode examines the factors that contributed to the “dissolution” of the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation, what happened to the artists in the years that followed, and the group's legacy.

Students are encouraged to conduct online research to familiarize themselves with the art of Alex Janvier, Eddy Cobiness, Carl Ray, Joseph M. Sánchez, Jackson Beardy, Daphne Odjig, and Norval Morrisseau.

HISTORICAL THINKING CONCEPT: ETHICAL JUDGMENT

History is more than describing what occurred. It can also be a way to assess whether events and actions were appropriate or inappropriate, or if related consequences were fair or unfair based on historic and current ethical frameworks. Ethical judgment of past action must consider historical context and be based on adequate evidence. What were the effects of actions and decisions on people? Were past actions justifiable? Were people treated appropriately? Who was responsible for those actions? Who is accountable for past actions in the present?

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Consider earlier episodes, discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups to practice using criteria for making ethical judgments:

- Considering non-Indigenous perspectives and government policies regarding First Nations, were the ways that galleries and museums treated First Nations artists in the mid-to-late 20th century justifiable?
- Given national and international economic interests, was the promotion of First Nations art as “arts and crafts” a representative, respectful, and reasonable showcase of First Nations artistic talents?
- Were the rights and interests of First Nations artists and Peoples accounted for in the development and delivery of the Canadian government’s arts and culture policies and programs related to First Nations cultural heritage and artists? Were First Nations Peoples consulted? Was there a mechanism for First Nations to meaningfully influence the programs and policies?

LISTENING ACTIVITY

Take notes on the artist’s experiences with the national and international art world after the 1970s with a focus on forgeries.



POST-LISTENING ACTIVITY

Discuss as a class or in small groups the issues related to First Nations art forgeries in Canada. Next, individually or in small groups, assign historical ethical responsibility for forgeries by determining the following:

1. How has art forgery impacted Norval Morrisseau? What about the value of his work?
2. Are art forgeries justifiable? Who was responsible for the forgeries mentioned in the episode?
3. Who was aware of the situation? How long did it take for authorities to respond?
4. Who could have affected or prevented the outcome? Who could have protected First Nations artists' works and earnings?
5. Were artists and their concerns treated appropriately?
6. Who should be accountable for the harm caused to First Nations artists?

Students may wish to use trusted news sources to support their answers to the post-listening activity questions.

Students can also try to anticipate how future generations may react to this issue (would future generations be shocked or not shocked?), including how future generations would react to counterfeiting, unfairly profiting from, and culturally appropriating First Nations art.

Students wishing to learn more about the forgeries and additional PNIAI history can tune into Among Equals bonus episodes.

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