

An Analysis of a Short Documentary and Painting:
A Grade 10 Integrated Art Unit Using Two Works by Kent Monkman

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Ontario Curriculum links:

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies - Grades 9 to 12

The Arts

English & Media Literacy

Canadian and World Studies

History

Social Sciences and Humanities

PART A - Documentary Film Techniques

Sisters and Brothers: A Short Documentary. 3 minutes, 43 seconds.

https://www.nfb.ca/film/sisters_brothers/

Kent Monkman is a Cree artist.

He made this documentary film in 2015.

Kent Monkman is using documentary film making techniques.

- a. Describe the archival footage and photographs in this documentary:

(2 marks)

- b. The sound track being used for the first 2 minutes and 28 seconds is called ***The Road***, by an Indigenous group of performing artists named *A Tribe Called Red*. Describe this sound track.

(2 marks)

- c. What sound effects are used at the end of this documentary?

(2 marks)

- d. What images do the sound effects accompany?

(2 marks)

e. How do the sound and imagery relate to each other?

(2 marks)

f. This documentary was made in 2015. Why might Kent Monkman have chosen to make this documentary entirely black and white?

(2 marks)

g. How is “movement” used as a dominant principle of design in this film? Why might Kent Monkman be using “movement” in this documentary?

(2 marks)

h. Kent Monkman is also using overlapping images in this documentary. What are these overlapping images? What might be the purpose of overlapping these images?

(2 marks)

i. What other filming techniques is Kent Monkman using deliberately to communicate his message about this subject matter?

(2 marks)

PART B - Text and Image

a. This documentary begins with a black screen with the following quote by Leonard Peltier

Hope and resiliency. These are your greatest strengths. We can work together. Sisters and brothers, all of one human family.

Your generation and mine.

“Leonard Peltier (born in 1944) was a Native American activist and a member of the American Indian Movement. The AIM is a Native American grassroots movement which was founded in Minneapolis, Minnesota in July 1968. Its purpose was to address systemic issues of poverty, discrimination and police brutality against Native Americans.”

Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_Peltier)

Who are the “sisters and brothers” Leonard Peltier is referring to?

(4 marks)

- b. Towards the end of this documentary (at 3:44) we see another screen with the following two quotations by Justice Minister Murray Sinclair (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015):

*We have recorded the deaths of over 6,000 children [while in residential schools]
Many were not returned to their families and most were buried in unmarked graves.*

Residential Schools were operated by the church in Canada. These schools existed till 1996. Research what happened at the residential schools that Indigenous children attended. How were Indigenous children treated at these schools?

(4 marks)

PART C - Imagery

Kent Monkman uses animal imagery to tell us this particular story of Indigenous people in Canada.

- a. What animal imagery do you see in this documentary?

(2 marks)

- b. What is the relationship between Indigenous people and this animal?

Read this article for information:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/bison/people.htm#:~:text=For%20thousands%20of%20years%2C%20Native,of%20Indian%20 people%20and%20society.>

(4 marks)

- c. What parallels might Kent Monkman be implying in this film by choosing this imagery?

(4 marks)

PART D The Scream by Kent Monkman



The Scream by Kent Monkman, 2017

<https://www.kentmonkman.com/painting/2017/1/20/the-scream>

a. What action is taking place in this painting by Kent Monkman?

(2 marks)

b. Describe the mothers in this scene.

(2 marks)

c. Describe the children in this scene.

(2 marks)

d. Describe the Nuns and Priests in this scene.

(2 marks)

e. Describe the Canadian Mounted Police in this scene.

(2 marks)

f. Kent Monkman is depicting a version of a scene from Canada's history. How effectively do you think this history has been taught in your schooling experience? Explain your answer.

(1 mark)

g. Why might it be important that we learn this history?

(2 marks)

PART E.

Consolidating:

Monkman has communicated messages in two different mediums about Canadian Indigenous experiences. Citing specific examples, compare some ways these two different works might impact audiences.

(7 marks)

Total Marks: /50