

Comic Book Storytelling Using Seven Grandfather Teachings

By: Jaime Fortin, Pinnguaq

Duration: 90 minutes

LEVEL	SUBJECTS	PROVINCES / TERRITORIES	TOOL
Grades 4-6	Visual Arts; English Language Arts; Heritage & Culture	Across Canada	Canva

Overview

The Seven Grandfather Teachings are culturally significant and guide many beliefs and practices of the Anishinaabe people. Art and creativity is very prominent in Indigenous communities and many artists draw pictures of these grandfather teachings in various forms and ways. This module will introduce the Seven Grandfather Teachings by using digital comic book strips.

Prep Work

Materials

- Canva account – Register for Canva: <https://www.canva.com/>
- Seven Grandfather Teachings cards (enough for every two people): bit.ly/grandfather-teachings-matching-game

Key Coding Concepts

- ✓ Sequence

Curricular Connections

This lesson provides an opportunity to address curriculum expectations in the Arts, Character Education, Media Studies and Indigenous Studies.

References

Lesson created by Jaime Fortin for Pinnguaq.

See author profile: <https://pinnguaqlearning.space/en/author/jaime%20Fortin>

- Scissors (to cut out the cards)

Lesson

Learning Goals

The goal of this lesson is for youth to learn about the Seven Grandfather Teachings and also how to create their own stories in a comic book style.

Vocabulary

Taken from the Ojibway Teachings. The Seven Grandfather Teachings can be seen as principles or a set of ways to live the good life:

Humility – Humility is represented by the Wolf, and the wolf lives in a pack. Humility is to know that you are a sacred part of creation. The wolf reminds us to live life selflessly and unselfishly.

Bravery – Bravery is represented by the Bear. The mother bear has the courage and strength to face her fears and challenges to protect her young. The bear also shows us how to live a life balanced between rest, survival and play. To face life with bravery is to know courage.

Honesty – Honesty is represented by either the Raven or the Sabe. The Sabe (English version of Sasquatch) reminds us to be ourselves. Raven accepts himself and knows how to use his gift. To walk life with integrity is to know honesty. Be honest with yourself. Recognize and accept who you are.

Wisdom – The Beaver represents wisdom as he uses his natural gift wisely for his survival. The beaver also alters his environment in an environmentally-friendly and sustainable way for the benefit of his family. To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom. Use your inherent gifts wisely and know how to use them.

Truth – Truth is represented by the Turtle as he was here during the creation of the Earth, and carries the teachings of life on his back. The turtle lives life in a slow and meticulous manner because he understands the importance of both the journey and the destination.

See lesson on the Pinnguaq Learning Space:

<https://pinnguaqlearning.space/en/curriculum/lesson/comic-book-storytelling-using-seven-grandfather-teachings>

Additional Resources:

Canva Comic Strips

<https://www.canva.com/create/comic-strips/>

Kiddle – Comic Strip Facts for Kids

https://kids.kiddle.co/Comic_strip

My Kids' Adventures – How to create a comic strip with your kids in seven easy steps

<http://www.mykidsadventures.com/create-comic-strip-kids/>

Kid Sites - Comic Samples

<http://www.kidsites.com/sites-fun/comics.htm>

The Seven Grandfather Teachings

<https://unitingthreefiresagainstviolence.org/services/the-seven-grandfather-teachings/>

The Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers

<https://ojibwe.net/projects/prayers-teachings/the-gifts-of-the-seven-grandfathers/>

Truth is to know all of these things. Apply faith and trust in your teachings.

Respect – Respect is represented by the Buffalo. The buffalo gives every part of his being to sustain the human way of life, not because he is of less value, but because he respects the balance of life, and the needs of others. To honour all of creation is to have respect.

Love – The Eagle represents love because he has the strength to carry all the teachings. The eagle has the ability to fly the highest and closest to the Creator and also has the sight to see all the ways of being from great distances. The eagle's teaching of love can be found in the core of all teachings, therefore an eagle feather is considered the highest honour and a sacred gift. To know love is to know peace.

Guiding Questions

- Has anyone heard of the Seven Grandfather Teachings?
- Why do you think these teachings are so important?
- Out of the seven different teachings which one is your favourite and why?

Non-Computer Activity

Seven Grandfather Teachings Matching Game

This basic activity is a fun game that allows students to become familiar with the animals associated with the Seven Grandfather Teachings. The game takes 5 to 10 minutes to play. As the game is played in pairs, print enough handouts so that each pair has their own game. Students can cut out the pieces themselves if time permits; if not it can be done prior to class.

1. Begin with a discussion of the Seven Grandfather Teachings, what each animal represents, and why these teachings are important.
2. Shuffle the cards and place them face down in a grid. Children take turns flipping up two cards at a time to see if they have a match. If they don't get a match, then the other player goes. They need to use their memory to remember the location of the cards to build their matches.
3. If the students do not know the Seven Grandfather Teachings by heart, they can use the key code that is printed at the beginning of the game.

Computer Activity

Creating Comic Strips Online

1. Begin with an explanation of what comic strips are, using the information in the links provided.
2. Students will need a Canva account. After they have created their account, the site should automatically go to the Comic Book Strip Layouts page. If not, type "Comic Book Strip Layouts" in the search bar at the top of the page.

3. There are many templates available to choose from, but make sure students only download the free templates.
4. Students select one of the Seven Grandfather Teachings to write a comic strip about. If there is enough time, students can create a longer comic strip using two animals.
5. Students can gather Google images and save them to their desktop, by right clicking on the image and clicking save.
6. On the right-hand side of Canva, there is an upload button for adding images, backgrounds, text, and also a gallery of free elements.
7. Students upload their images and then add text to create their stories.
8. If they need to add another page to their layout, click “add new page”.
9. For example, students could make a comic strip of the Turtle talking to other animals and demonstrating how going slower in life rather than rushing, leads to seeing more and making fewer mistakes.
10. Once students are satisfied with their comic strip, they can download it to their computer.

Conclusion

Once students have finished creating their comic strip, have them share their stories with the class, and explain how they apply to the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Reiterate the importance of the Teachings, and how the Anishinaabe people follow them as a guide to help them live a good life.

Assessment

If learners are using the same class login for Canva, have them rename their projects using their first names.

If learners are using separate logins, have them share their projects with you through the “Share” option.

Extensions

For more lesson ideas, check out the Pinnguaq Learning Space:

<https://pinnguaqlearning.space/en>