

Wapos Bay LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION episode 17

Episode Description

Mr. Darian invites acclaimed actor Adam Beach to mentor the students with a unique video project. The students have to pitch their ideas to Adam, who will judge proposals responding to the question “what do Treaty Days mean to you?” The best idea gets the green light, meaning that the project will be made with the help of Adam Beach. Adam sees the merit of both T-Bear’s idea for an action-adventure story of the historic treaty signing and Talon’s idea for a documentary with the elders’ perspectives on how the treaty impacted their lives. The flurry of activity around Treaty Days leaves Raven feeling left out. T-Bear’s concern for perfection drives his crew away, while Talon’s project finishes according to schedule, but the finished product is not very engaging. Adam helps bring the two projects together to combine the lived experience of the elders with a dramatization of the treaty signing to create a successful production. Raven’s mom realizes she needs to remain true to her words regarding how Treaty Days highlight the importance of family and spending time together.

Background information

Treaties are like promises made between groups of people. Treaties between Aboriginal peoples and the British Crown contained promises for what each group would do for the other. Promise-keeping is an ethic.

Treaty Days are celebrated in many First Nations community in Canada. First Nations entered into official agreements with the European newcomers to formalize the kind of relationships each expected, including how land and resources would be used. Early agreements were peace treaties, and promises to live side by side in peace. There were many factors that led First Nations to enter into more treaties agreeing to share extensive areas of land. These included land wars fought south of the border between the US army and Indigenous nations; diseases, such as small pox and influenza, which had weakened Indigenous communities; and US food blockades.

Treaties are agreements between the British Crown and the First Nations. British Law recognized Aboriginal rights to land and resources, including Aboriginal title to the land. When Euro-settlers wanted to establish settlements and colonies, they had to negotiate with the First Nations to acquire land. Modern treaties are established between Aboriginal peoples, the federal government of Canada and, in some cases, a provincial government.

When treaties were negotiated, there were interpreters who knew both an Indigenous language and English because many Euro-settlers did not speak the many Indigenous languages of the First Nations who signed treaties. Nor did many of the First Nations leaders speak English.

Television, newspapers, magazines, the Internet and other types of media influence human behaviour and daily life in all part of Canada including northern communities such as Wapos Bay. The media is an important communication tool for political messages and positions when groups are in dispute. Canadian Aboriginal artists have used documentary filmmaking as a tool to advance an understanding of history and to preserve and revive cultural traditions.

PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

- 1 ► What languages are spoken in your family, in your community?
- 2 ► Are you a speaker of the Cree language?
- 3 ► What words do you know in Cree?
- 4 ► Introduce the Cree language glossary words used in the Wapos Bay episode 17 entitled, “**Lights, Camera, Action.**” Ask students to listen out for these words when the time comes to view, to determine their meaning.

CREE LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

kohkum – grandmother

mushom – grandfather

Wapos – Rabbit

Tansi – Hello



- 5 ► Have you ever made a promise? Did you ever break a promise? What was the outcome? Have you ever entered into an official agreement? What should be done when promises are not kept?
- 6 ► What is a treaty? What did Aboriginal peoples agree to exchange? Are treaties still important today? Why or Why not? What do treaties mean to Aboriginal peoples? What do treaties mean to the Aboriginal peoples in your area?
- 7 ► What treaties were signed in your area of Canada? What were the terms of the treaty? Which groups participated in the treaty?
- 8 ► What is an interpreter? When are interpreters needed? Could you be an interpreter? What are some of the challenges for interpreters?
- 9 ► What skills are needed to conduct an interview for a documentary? What makes a good interviewer? If you were interviewing participants regarding their thoughts on treaties, what questions would you ask?
- 10 ► Can films affect what you say and do? Give an example. What is a documentary film? Give an example of one you have viewed. What is a docudrama? Give an example of one you have viewed.

VIEW EPISODE

Introduce and View “**Lights, Camera, Action**”

POST-VIEWING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1 ► Review the glossary words. How do you say _____?

Grandmother
grandfather
rabbit
hello

Work in pairs to review the Cree words used in this episode.

- 2 ► Discuss: How are treaties related to promises? What should be done when promises are not kept?
- 3 ► What is a treaty? What did Aboriginal peoples agree to exchange? Are treaties still important today? Why or Why not? What do treaties mean to Aboriginal peoples? What do treaties mean to the Aboriginal peoples in your area?
- 4 ► How do the members of Wapos Bay feel about their historical treaty? What treaties were signed in your area of Canada? What were the terms of the treaty? Which groups participated in the treaty?
- 5 ► Discuss the role of interpreters in treaty signing. What would the challenges have been for an interpreter involved in treaty signing?
- 6 ► What did Talon do to be a good interviewer? What questions did he ask? What questions would you have asked?
- 7 ► How do you think the film project could affect the members of the Wapos Bay community? Do you think the film that Talon and T-Bear made was a documentary film? Or a docudrama?



PROJECT IDEAS

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- Research Adam Beach's acting career. Write a biography or profile. Research the careers of other Aboriginal actors, such as Graham Green, Gary Farmer, Tantoo Cardinal, Lorne Cardinal, Tina Keeper, Tom Jackson, Dakota House and August Schellenberg. Research the treaties that were signed between Aboriginal peoples and the British Crown. A useful website is atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/historical/indiantreaties.
- Divide the class into groups to negotiate a contemporary mock treaty. There is a process for negotiating treaties in British Columbia. Check the British Columbia Treaty Commission website to learn more about the treaty negotiation process in that province: bctreaty.net
- Invite a representative from the local First Nation to present their perspective on the historical treaties in which they have participated. Develop questions to ask the representative before the classroom visit.
- Create a mock historical newspaper that announces the treaty signing event. Brainstorm the range of articles/stories that might be contained in this historical newspaper. Conduct the research and write them.
- Plan a documentary project of an important historical event in your community. Which perspectives will be included? Make a list of those to be interviewed. Create a storyboard to plan the shoot. A storyboard indicates each shot that will contribute to the film. Some scenes could be dramatized. Carry out the plan. Invite the school community to view the completed projects.
- View some of the documentary films made by Aboriginal filmmakers such as Alanis Obomsawin, Gil Cardinal, Greg Coyes, Loretta Todd, and Duncan McCue. What are some of the themes in these films? Host a documentary film festival and screen the films created by Aboriginal film makers.
- Invite an Aboriginal film maker to present their film(s). Host a question and answer session after screening the film.