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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Spoiler alert! Unless your class or group has already seen THE GRIZZLIES, this study guide is best used after viewing the film. This film is rated 14A.

This movie is uplifting and unflinching. It does deal with suicide.

Educators have the great privilege and deep responsibility of working with youth. Suicide is a challenging topic because of the pain it surfaces and dominant culture doesn’t have a lot of training in talking about pain, sadness or hopelessness. Suicide isn’t simple. It is a response to an absolute loss of hope.

Within the Canadian population, First Nations and Inuit people have the highest rates of suicide-related behaviours. This is a direct response to the unique conditions birthed from colonialism, marginalization, institutionalized trauma, structural violence, racism, and prejudice.

But the story isn’t simply about suicide. This movie is, in part, an invitation. It invites us into a deep conversation about colonial structures and the depth of the loss and pain they have caused.
This movie is also an invitation to engage in a conversation about the power of resilient and hopeful and absolutely inspiring Inuit youth. To witness the strength born out of friendship and family. The constant message of this film reflects the importance of working together to move through tough times. This movie tells us clearly that suicide is never the answer.

This is a powerful message of hope and resilience.

Paul Nutarariaq, who was nominated for a Canadian Screen Award nomination for Best Actor for his role as the troubled teen Zach in The Grizzlies, talks about the profound affect the film had on him personally: “It doesn’t end well for my character, it’s affected me in many ways. I actually ended up applying and taking part in a community social work program, and it really made me want to advocate for the mental health of our youth in Inuit because I went through so much in my teenage years as a young Inuit male. And we face a lot of challenges. You know, you’re expected to be strong and just hold your emotions in, but to be able to channel all of these emotions and all your, your experiences in your life and to channel that in an artistic way, it’s profound. It’s changed me for the better. I look at my friends in a different light now. I’m a lot less critical of how they deal with their emotions, and in turn, I’m a lot less critical on myself about how I treat myself when it comes to the traumas that I face and the trauma that I see in the day-to-day life of my people.” - Paul Nutarariaq (Zach in The Grizzlies)

“I hope that this movie changes lives as it did for me. Suicide is not the answer. It is not the answer. It takes a while to open up to people especially with difficult situations like this. It’s very scary. It’s terrible, but I would say don’t let it interfere with asking someone for, you know, advice or heartwarming words.”

- Emerald MacDonald (Miranda in The Grizzlies)
Mental Health Supports

It is important for each educator to gauge their own comfort and skill level before bringing forward emotionally charged topics to students. It may be helpful to consult with your school counsellor before requiring every student to watch the film. For some, it may be too emotionally triggering. The film does end on an upbeat and hopeful note, as does the ongoing true story of Kugluktuk.

MAKE SURE STUDENTS KNOW IT’S OK TO GET HELP.

Feeling down? Hurt? Suicidal?

We Matter is a place for Indigenous young people to turn for uplift, support, or reminder that you matter. Get Help now at https://wemattercampaign.org/get-help/

CRISIS LINES YOU CAN ACCESS

First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line
Phone: 1-855-242-3310 Toll free, 24/7 for Mental Health and Wellness.

Web: https://thelifelinecanada.ca/resources/first-nation-metis-and-inuit

CrisisServicesCanada.ca
Web: http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/

SuicidePrevention.ca
Web: https://suicideprevention.ca/Need-Help
Beyond Suicide—promoting strength, culture and hope

If the youth in a small remote arctic community can turn the suicide statistics around, other youth and communities can too. Alethea Arnaquq-Baril and Stacey Aglok MacDonald, as producers from the North who have not only worked on THE GRIZZLIES movie, but have been living with this story, and others like it for our entire lives, are well connected across the north. Stacey grew up in Kugluktuk, and experienced what life was life before and after the real Grizzlies.

The real Russ Sheppard (Played by Ben Schnetzer in the movie) speaks of how thinking only of suicide prevention as a goal is actually a ‘low bar,” Why are we worrying about a low bar of stopping suicide only when we have a lot of other higher expectations that we should be looking at?” Speaking of the markers that matter overall in promoting well being he says: “Your worry is high graduation rates and college.” What he speaks reflects the need to be engaged in the promotion of overall mental health, which includes all the ways people can connect to each other, as well as gaining life-skills.
Currently, we are partnering with Embrace Life Council and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) in the north and with We Matter across the country. Working with young Inuit actors from the movie who are connected to these issues in real life not just on screen, we will contribute videos to the #WeMatter Campaign as part of our commitment to connecting the movie with real life.

The unflinching and uplifting true story of The Grizzlies is a perfect fit with our partners shared values. In particular, the three pillars of “Hope, Strength, and Culture” that is the basis of the We Matter campaign could be the tagline for the film.

See more about our partners on www.TheGrizzliesMovie.com

We are calling on Educators to help us create useful and meaningful resources to accompany the film release. Please sign up as an educator on our site and give us feedback! Or email TheGrizzlies@HelloCoolWorld.com
The Grizzlies is a movie, but it was very much based on a deep depiction of the true story, both in the movie-making process, and the script.

Real Grizzly Miranda Atatahak, a pivotal character in the real story, played in the movie by her Kugluktuk neighbor Emerald MacDonald, says: “When I see it on the big screen my memories are just popping back at me, it’s really weird. They did a really good job of bringing the Northern context to this huge movie. It does feel very much authentic.”

The power of the movie, really is the power of the community of Kugluktuk. Says Atatahak: “When I reflect back on the time when we were, as a community, very much struggling, and then being able to live through the Grizzly experience and see all of the things that the community has built upon since then, all of the positive changes that have been made. The number of programs that are actually happening in Kugluktuk right now is, it’s phenomenal to see. For me personally, the impact has been huge. But also to see my peers, like, Winter and Missy and April and all of them that are a part of the Grizzly story, they’re living very, very, very good lives. Their children are living very good lives. That’s the impact that, that I think The Grizzlies has had, and it’s going to be lasting over multiple generations.”
Director Miranda de Pencier says: “What’s exciting about showing the film to young Indigenous audiences, is there’s so many young people that get to see versions of themselves as heroes on the big screen as the stars of a movie for the first time in their lives. They’ve never been able to see themselves as heroes, and they are; and they can all teach us something. And in the South, I think what’s exciting is to get to learn about the North, learn about the history of trauma, residential schools, and colonization, see what’s really going on through the eyes of young people and take the lessons of what we need to do as a nation to start supporting indigenous communities and meaningfully, thoughtfully, and respectfully listening to them. It’s time, as Canadians, that we step back, and we let indigenous people speak for themselves.”

Russ Sheppard was a teacher in Kugluktuk from ’98 to ’05. He is one of the original founding Grizzly members, now a lawyer in Cranbrook, BC. Russ also found the film very true to his memory of real events: “There’s a scene where the kids are standing in a circle, and the character, Russ, asks them to close their eyes. That was really emotional because I remember that day. I remember being out on the ball field and asking them to do that. Um, so that was a really emotional scene for me, um, because I guess I didn’t realize at that point, what I was trying to get them to do but that was trust each other and trust me.”
In the movie, Russ is portrayed like a seal out of water - not very informed about this town he has shown up in to “do his time” before moving on to cushy private school. Says Sheppard: “Looking back now, I think that they captured a lot of my character. When I showed up, I was young and dumb like we all are at 23 in a lot of ways, very naive to what teaching was going to be like, very naive to the impact I could have in a positive or negative way, and really didn’t understand the, the issues that a lot of our kids dealt with. I think they made me probably a little bit more naive in the film than I was originally, but that’s not a bad thing. I think that probably portrays quite well. And one of the things I think they did very well is they really captured the quick connection and the admiration I had for the students. You know, to give me any credit for what happened in Kugluktuk is totally false credit.”

Says the Real Miranda about the Real Russ: “He’s been a big part of my life. And he’s also been very much an advocate for me and for my peers, for us to push past our comfort zones, to believe in ourselves. We butt heads a lot! In The Grizzlies you see some of those moments where Miranda and Russ butt heads.”
Russ is adamant that he “learned a lot more from the kids and about strength and character in human beings than I could have ever taught them. When you look at the kids and the stuff that they dealt with day in and day out and how hard it was for them to get up in the morning and make sure they were at school, it’s hard for me to think that I did anything extraordinary. I would say the kids did all of the heavy lifting. So I think that the writers and and Miranda (de Pencier) did a great job of capturing that part of it which really ensures that this movie is not what you would typically see where a teacher saves the day — because that’s garbage.”

**Acting Reality**

The character Miranda is played by Emerald MacDonald, who is also the sister of Inuk producer from Kugluktik, Stacey Aglok MacDonald. She lives right next door to the real Miranda! In this film she had to act shyer than she feels in real life, but she also had to deal with the emotions that were brought up by playing scenes that felt too ‘close to home.’

Describing the character of Miranda, Emerald says “At the very beginning she is a very closed girl. She’s very shy and I think she’s a little scared to have attention. Then she starts to open up. And she starts to really build a friendship with the lacrosse boys and Russ and Spring. She learns to take leadership with the Grizzlies team.”
Q. What’s the most important lesson that we learned from your character?

“Opening up is not that bad. It’s not terrible at all. You know, she’s this little seed, and all you have to do is just pour a little water and she’ll open up with all these ideas. She’s very smart, very straightforward once, once she opens up with Russ and Mike and all the other characters. She’s very kind with Zach. When Zach was trying to steal her lunch, you know, she knows how it is and he, she can see his struggles as well even though he’s not showing them really. The lesson is kindness is very important in life.”

As the team manager, Miranda really takes charge of all of them, and in the end it is her wise words that motivate Russ when he’s ready to give up. In real life Miranda Atatahak became the mayor of Kugluktuk and still holds leadership roles in the community.

“A story like this is, it’s very much a universal story, which is why a lot of people when they see the movie, the can see themselves it or they recognize experiences that they might have gone through. So in a way, this story is, it connects people.” - Miranda Atatahak
Jamie Takkiruq plays the Vinnie - a character that brings some comic relief into the film early on. In real life Jamie is studying to be a lawyer. He speaks of the impact of making this film on his life: “It's affected me greatly in terms of you know, the amount of pride I feel. I walk around now knowing that I was part of this film, this project, that helps, helps Southern Canadians and people around the world understand the reality that we live in, you know. Because suicide is real, and just knowing that I helped to create this thing that helps people understand, that it's a put yourself in my shoes kind of thing, it's just-- it's amazing.”
Assignment

HISTORICAL FICTION

This film is based on a true story, and this gives it an authenticity that is often the terrain of documentaries. Yet it has the drama, and the entertainment style of a feature movie. There were little touches in the film that may not have literally happened in the historical story of Kugluktuk’s Grizzlies, but the main points are true to the historical story. However, another truth is that many of the young first time Inuit actors were acting in ways that were depicting the realities they had also experienced. If someone were to make a movie of your life, what are the stories you would want shared and why?
Discussion questions

• When you saw the film did you know it was based on a true story? If not now that you do, how does that make you feel about the story you saw in the movie? Did it feel real to you?

• Even though this story takes place in the North, in Nunavut, it does represent the struggles of youth all over. How relatable did you find the story to your own experience?

• What do you think is the turning point in the story?
Challenge

We Matter is the only Youth-led Indigenous Mental Health Organization in Canada.

In the spirit of the #Next150 Challenge that was launched alongside the film Indian Horse - Check out We Matter founders challenge to watch and share the stories of hope from Indigenous youth. If you feel inspired you can make your own messages of hope for your peers. Tell them I Matter, You Matter, We Matter!

https://next150.indianhorse.ca/challenges/amplify-youth-voices

See actor Anna Lambe's We Matter video!

https://wemattercampaign.org/portfolio_item/anna-lambe/
“Oh, there are so many teachable moments in The Grizzlies!” says Director Miranda de Pencier: “I think this is a movie for teachers, I think this is a movie for students, and I think this is a movie for everybody. Although the story takes place in a small-town way, way up in the Arctic Circle, this is a universal story that speaks to youth everywhere in the world. I think the whole film is a teachable moment. What does it mean to be a teacher? What does it mean to be a student? How do we work together?”
Q. What are your hopes for this movie?

“What I hope for Inuit people and Indigenous communities, is that they feel hope, and they see that, you know, if a group of kids that were traumatized by suicide, by abuse, by so many horrible things that most people could never imagine, that there’s hope for a lot of other Inuit going through the same. Because this Grizzlies story translates into so many other communities. But for people that aren’t Inuit, that aren’t indigenous, watching this film, I hope that they start to understand how Inuit can be portrayed so negatively in the media. You only hear about the bad things that happen, you never really hear about the good. I hope that by showing not just the bad stuff, but the good stuff as well, that we’re allowed to break down stereotypes, we’re allowed to change people’s perspectives, and we’re really going to make a difference in how non-Indigenous people are going to look at and treat Indigenous people.” - Anna Lambe, plays Spring in The Grizzlies
“I hope it promotes critical thinking. I hope it helps to expand worldviews that people may not be accustomed to seeing, an empathetic reaction where people try to put themselves in the shoes of Indigenous people that do go through the struggle.

And they try to get a better sense of understanding of the land that they live on and the people that they interact with and even-- yeah, even just showing it in a school, even just showing it in a class, um, it could create a change where people start to-- start to realize the biases that they have, to realize and understand and analyze the way with which they interact with indigenous peoples in Canada, you know. And I just hope that it, it makes a change in the mindset of Canadians.” - Jamie Takkiruq, plays Vinnie
Jamie Takkiruq talks about the impact of the film in highlighting the importance of youth leadership: “We’re the next generation. In 10, 15, 20 years, we’re going to be the people that are sitting in power. We’re going to be the people making decisions that affect the next generation. Getting a sense of leadership when you’re young, it greatly affects how you act in the future, you always act in a way where people value you. When they respect you from a young age, and as that carries on into your adulthood, you know, you start making better decisions, you start making bigger changes. Even just starting off small with being the captain of a team or even participating in a team you get the sense of people are looking for what I have to say, even if it’s just your friend group, your sports team. Instilling a sense of leadership in the youth in general, it has effects that could change the world.”
TATTOOS AND TRADITIONS

In the movie, Spring puts tattoos on her face. This is one of the scenes that did not happen in real life, but it does depict an Inuit tradition that is experiencing a resurgence today. Explains producer Alethea Aranaq-Baril, “The tattoos that Spring puts on, which are like the ones that I have on my hands and my face, these particular tattoos are Inuit women’s tattoos. Identity tattoos. And they’re a rite of passage into womanhood. They can be all over the body as well.” Traditionally all Inuit women had them, and it would have been highly unusual to not have them. Because of the influence of the church and colonization, the tattoos were nearly wiped out. Says Alethea: “As Inuit women, we’re reclaiming this tradition. I actually made a documentary about tattoos (name of it) .

The filmmakers felt it was appropriate for Spring to be tattooed as part of the story, because what she experienced was so difficult she had to grow up too soon. She’s still a very young woman. She’s a teenager but she basically had to grow up overnight and become an adult because of her life experience. And she went into mourning and left school for a while. But then, she went through her grief and was ready to come out of that. So the tattoos were actually a sign that she was coming out of it and she’s ready to come back into the world and be part of society and be an adult.
FOOD INSECURITY

In the film there are some scenes that show the issues around food security in the north. The first of these is when Russ gets the bill for his small bag of groceries at the store. We also see how Zach is trying to get food for himself and his little brother. Adam is not being encouraged to go to school, but to hunt for food for his family. These are realities in the north. Says producer Stacey Aglok MacDonald: Some of the issues that we face in Nunavut, are housing, overcrowding, poverty, food insecurity.” She explains that “access to traditional food has become more of a problem, and why it’s become more difficult for Inuit communities and Inuit hunters to go out and secure healthy food for their families.” This issue is broad to a crisis when Zach is caught stealing from the store, with tragic consequences.

WHITE SAVIOUR TROPE

It was very important to the Inuit producers on this movie, Stacey Aglok MacDonald and Alethea Arnaq-Baril to reframe the stereotype of the “white saviour” - the outsider who swoops in to “fix” things. In the beginning Russ makes some of these mistakes - but as Stacey says: “The underlying message of this movie is really that if you’re going to be a teacher working with youth, you need to empower the youth to speak for themselves. How our character and teacher, Russ collaborates with and works with the youth is a very important teachable moment
because you really see, or I hope you see that the youth really take charge of their lives and become the leaders. They were allowed to take up space, and they were allowed to be leaders in their own community and leaders in the sports program that they were in.”

“We had a lot of conversations, about the term and the trope of the white saviour in movies. It’s a long, long, long history. Not just in narrative fiction, but also in documentary. White characters going into communities that are underserved or underprivileged or oppressed in some way and being the saviour.” Says Alethea: “You see it in a thousand movies, particularly in the sports genre.”

Says real Grizzly Miranda Atatahak, “In Nunavut, we don’t have very many local homegrown teachers. A lot of the people that are coming in to teach in our communities are transient, Southerners coming into sometimes a whole other way of looking at things when you come into a community of 1,500. It’s isolated. The only way you can get in is you fly in and you fly out. So right off the bat, I think being able to create relationships in the community is so important.”
Stacey explains that Russ counters this is by making connections in the community and also by giving the power over to the youth to run the Grizzlies so that when he eventually leaves, things don't just shut down. Says Russ: Creating dependence is often very selfish. It gives you a purpose. It doesn't help them when you leave.”

Says Stacey: “When you go into an indigenous community and you haven’t done your due diligence and you haven’t learned about the history of the community or the history of the people, there is a lot at stake. But if teachers come into indigenous communities with a lot more background information, having studied more, learned more about our history and the colonization process that we underwent, I would hope that maybe their perspectives and the way they teach and the way they make themselves present in the communities would really change, in a better way. Russ didn’t just come in and start a sports team and magically fix everything. That’s not what the story says.”
Assignment

SPOT THE TWIST!

A trope is defined as:

**Trope**: noun (ˈtrōp)
A: a word or expression used in a figurative sense : FIGURE OF SPEECH
B: a common or overused theme or device : CLICHÉ the usual horror movie tropes

This film has been described as a drama, a sports film, and even by producer Stacey Aglok MacDonald as “Dramedy.” What it does in all cases, is turn the tables on the typical tropes, whether they be part of the genre, or the stories we tell ourselves about society and each other.

At the end of the day, a trope is a stereotype, and while they may ‘work’ for story structure, following and believing in the tropes has consequences for those who find themselves relegated to a role they never chose to play. These discussion questions explore some of the ways The Grizzlies re-frames the tropes.
Discussion questions

- How does this movie follow the trope of the underdog sports film? And how does it subvert this idea?

- The movie starts on a very serious note, and it deals with heavy real-life content. How does it move away from being a tragedy, and how are tragic events turned around in the story?

- How does this movie challenge traditional ideas of who is the hero? The villain? The victim?
Challenge

The real Miranda Atatahak works as a Career Development Officer for the government of Nunavut, helping to link people to jobs. Most recently, she has taken on a term as the deputy mayor of Kugluktuk.

“Being able to live through the Grizzly experience and see all of the things that the community has built upon since then, all of the positive changes that have been made, and all the number of programs that are actually happening in Kugluktuk right now is, it’s phenomenal to see. The impact that The Grizzlies has is it’s going to be lasting over multiple generations.”

Reel Youth is an organization that has spent some time in Kugluktuk - take a look at their short documentary on what is going on there now. Can you spot a cameo by the real Miranda Atatahak?

https://reelyouth.ca/kugluktuk2018.html
For ‘southerners’ -- which in this context means everyone NOT north of 60, the Arctic is an exotic and unknown place. It is very different, in climate, in culture, and in what it takes to survive and thrive. How the Inuit people have experienced colonization has its’ own specific history.

European settlers were in contact with the Inuit through the fur trading routes between the numerous forts owned under the Hudson Bay Company which functioned as the de facto government in parts of North America for nearly 200 years until the HBC sold the land it owned (known as Rupert’s Land) to Canada in 1869 as part of The Deed of Surrender. In 1901 Canada’s Colonial efforts in the Arctic ramped up with the annual scientific and investigatory expeditions of Captain J.E Bernier, supervised by the Federal government whose intention was to nationalize these into nation-state territories to protect “unclaimed” resources.

1. See further: Hudson Bay Company History Foundation, 2016: http://www.hbcheritage.ca/history/fur-trade/deed-of-surrender
2. Federal: “Arctic Sovereignty and Inuit Relocations”
The economy that was created by the fur trade, resulted in numerous other traditional practices – such as seal hunting and fishing – having to rely on the economic gains of the company in return for credits to purchase goods. The dependency on a fragile trading economy has also resulted in a need for imported goods and resources from outside Inuit territories. By the Great Depression, the demand on fur trade declined, resulting in extreme poverty amongst Inuit communities. This Northern economy has recently been negatively affected again, by the international anti-sealing movement.

**Settlements**

By 1932, the Department of the Interior sought to federally recognize the Inuit under the Indian Act, which subsequently made the federal government “responsible” for the Inuit. Post-war debates tackled whether specific acts should be made to specifically focus on Inuit affairs; however, Northern Affairs departments soon took over these responsibilities. In 1936, the Department for Mines and Resources took over responsibilities, as few to no programs were instilled by the government for Inuit social well-being.
Throughout the Second World War, any social issues within Inuit communities were largely ignored. By the early 1950s, Federal agencies (primarily the Department of Resources and Development) sought to increase accessibility to socioeconomic programs to the Arctic in order to improve what they saw as “problems” within these deterritorialized communities: access to colonial standards of education and healthcare, as well as increase self-sufficiency within Inuit communities to support themselves within the post-war economy.

By the 1950s, as part of the national social welfare system emerging out of the Great Depression, the Canadian government launched a region-wide relocation program to re-instill hunting practices within what they deemed to be areas with an abundance of necessary resources. However, their desire for being the saviour backfired when many communities began to starve and be sent to areas with little to no provisions. They were sent without warning, and without adequate equipment or understanding of their new “homes.”

This complex legacy of resettlement disrupted traditional knowledge and created widespread poverty, leading to the types of trauma experienced by the characters in the Grizzlies story.

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8. See further: The Ahiarmiut Inuit are ready for an apology after multiple relocations.
Residential Schools

For the government, education was the priority within certain resettled communities, which came at the cost of the Inuit's continual loss of autonomy as their cultural and political independence was being extinguished at the hands of the federal government's social programs.

Like the Residential schools in Southern Canada, these institutions were to assimilate Inuit youth into Western education and ways of life. Prior to the 1950s, the eight schools were Catholic missionary run, with some federal aid. By 1949, around 111 Inuit children were in these residential schools. These schools were hundreds of kilometres away, often involving dangerous travels, and, once arrived, would go years without seeing their parents, and food was scarce, as the school's reliance was on the food of these local regions.

Lessons were divided by gender: boys learned skills such as carpentry and garden while girls were assigned to domestic household duties. Inspections throughout the 1940s and 1950s revealed poor living conditions, as well as levels of literacy that were substandard to federally recognized education standards. Rather, these schools were designed to produce “industrious” citizens who, like adults in vocational programs, would be provided with employment in Arctic resources.
By 1952, many parents of the children in these schools complained they were being overworked and under-educated. Many students were forced into unpaid labour including the feeding and cleaning of cattle and hens, as well as unloading barges for the fuel for the school furnaces, among other activities. All children were forced into the daily maintenance of these schools, regardless of age.

By 1960 these schools replicated the problems of the Residential Schools throughout Canada. Religious conversion and cultural assimilation continued to be of institutional interest, rather than provide “education” to Inuit youth. The largest of these hostels, located in Fort Churchill and Iqaluit, the former being located close to the military base.

Criticisms subsequently occurred surrounding the implementations of southern education into Inuit communities, and in 1973, these schools came under fire for their treatment of students and enforcement of assimilation which resulted in the loss of cultural practices among youth. Locally-managed education systems were not instilled until 1982 by the Legislative Assembly Special Committee on Education, and from this, the creation for Inuuqatigiit, which focused on establishing curriculums built from the Inuit perspective, requesting the training of Inuit educational leaders to ultimately bring an Inuit educational model and cultural content back into the schools which originally sought to build citizens for the Canadian wage economy. They also requested the implementations of elders into the curriculum to teach seasonal practices and cultural lessons on values and traditions.
Reconciliation Efforts

In recent years, the response to the poverty and effects of assimilation upon communities, Nunavut's Department of Justice desired to instill Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to incorporate cultural community values and cultural knowledge, to promote language, stories, and environmental knowledge. As well, the RCMP seeks to promote communication with the Justice Department and communities, working with Inuit legal counsel in order to promote Inuit legal systems integrated into their cultural values and traditions.

In terms of Inuit education, a lack of funding and tax money within the Territories; thus, no funding is going towards promoting elders in the classroom or hiring for understaffed schools, with the government not actively pursuing methods to incorporate Inuit language and knowledge into the schools, as were initially proposed. In 2007, education staff continued to be primarily non-Inuit.

In regards to resettlement, community members are still waiting for an apology: As said by Relocation lawyer, Steven Cooper, “the apology is what goes down in the history books.”
Sources


Assignment

This section reflects a very small part of the Colonial history of the Arctic. We’ve provided a few sources for this information. This assignment is about digging deeper into the history of the Arctic. Research some of the ‘history’ of this part of Canada, and ask yourself what the historical reality was before the era of settlements and residential schools.
Discussion questions

• What does “north of 60” refer to?

• In the Canadian Arctic, there are how many Territories? Do you know what year Nunavut became a Territory?

• Do you know what the Truth and Reconciliation Report says regarding the Inuit?
Challenge

Do you think the Government of Canada owes the Inuit people an apology? Read what the Truth and Reconciliation Report has to say about the north and the Inuit. Find the recommendations that fit and write about how they might be able to be implemented.
In the movie Russ tries to tell the kids that Lacrosse is an “indigenous game” - at that point they don’t listen, but things do change. And in real life the cast all had to learn to play the game. Says Emerald MacDonald, who plays Miranda: “I even learned how to play lacrosse in this movie. I have my own lacrosse stick now. The prop guys asked me, “Do you want a lacrosse stick ‘cause I always see you grabbing a lacrosse stick and playing pass with the guys.” And I was like, “Sure.” And they’re asking, “What color net I want? Did you want like designs, on the, the stick?” And I was like, “You can do that?” So they, they gave me a lacrosse stick!” - Emerald MacDonald
Assignment

READ THIS BLOG POST BY ALISON TEDFORD - INDIGENOUS “LACROSSE MOM”

Lacrosse is an ancient sport in a period of rapid growth. As we look to our neighbours to the south, new leagues are emerging, players are earning income in new ways and games are even being televised more widely. Lacrosse will be played in the 2021 Canada Summer Games. While it was played in the Olympics in 1904 and 1908, the IOC has recently provisionally recognized the Federation of International Lacrosse, paving the way towards full recognition as an Olympic sport. So much is happening with lacrosse in the now, but it’s important to look at where lacrosse came from and acknowledge that in this period of growth.
On May 12, 1994, Lacrosse was declared Canada’s national summer sport in an act of parliament. It was also purported to have been acknowledged by parliament in 1859 as Canada’s National game, though the existence of evidence of this is under discussion. This is a sport with a deep and complex history. While its 150th birthday was celebrated in 2017, its roots go far deeper than that.

“Lacrosse, because of its unique history, exists as a link between these disparate components of Canadian society. It is one of the rare examples of the culture of the First Nations being accepted and embraced by Canadian society,” opines an article on the Canadian Lacrosse Association website.

It wasn’t always called lacrosse, it was “Baggataway” in Algonquin and “Tewaarathon” in Iroquois. It is also referred to as The Medicine Game or the Creators Game. It got its current name through the influence of French settlers who believed lacrosse sticks resembled a Bishop’s staff, a crozier, which in French is called “crosse” – thus “Lacrosse” was born. There are historical references and legends that discuss lacrosse being played in the 1600s and 1700s.

The game was historically used by Indigenous people to settle disputes, to keep “young men fit and strong for both war and hunting...to strengthen diplomatic alliances, support social conformity and economic equality, and honour the gods” and to show gratitude. It was a sport that became a cultural bridge between Indigenous people and settlers, common ground and common love of competition and competition. The desire to recognize this Indigenous history resulted in the Canadian Lacrosse Association’s ‘Honour Our Game Campaign’.
It had an early history of including women which was quite progressive at the time, in rules authored by William George Beers, a dentist and secretary of the National Lacrosse Association. The rules were set forth to standardize the game. The National Lacrosse Association of Canada was also Canada’s first governing body of sport. The Minto and Mann Cups, the junior and senior lacrosse symbols of achievement, originated in the early 1900s, with donations of trophies by Lord Minto and Sir Donald Mann.

Lacrosse has changed over the years, first a game played over spans of even 3 kilometres between nations to a sport played in arenas or on grass fields. It is played in different forms: box lacrosse, field lacrosse, women’s field lacrosse and a game called inter-lacrosse which a variant of lacrosse without contact. The equipment has changed to, from traditional wooden sticks to mainstream, mass-produced sticks with staffs of varying materials, with different iterations and specifications based on the form of lacrosse being played. The pockets of field and women’s field lacrosse vary from those of box lacrosse.

Lacrosse is believed by the Iroquois people as the Creator’s gift to heal the people. Their lacrosse origin story is a legend involving four-legged animals and birds. The history of the belief of Indigenous people that lacrosse can heal has particular significance given the role of the game in The Grizzlies Movie, where a community was able to work to heal themselves through sport, with this ancient belief exemplified by the change observed in a Northern community in more recent times.

Discussion Questions

- When and why did Lacrosse become Canada’s national sport?
- How can sports, or being part of a team promote mental health?

Challenge

Does your school have a Lacrosse team?
Go play Lacrosse! Get off your butt and play outside. : )
WHAT LIES BEHIND US IS TINY COMPARED TO WHAT LIES WITHIN US

“...TRANSCENDENTLY MOVING.”
— Hollywood Reporter

THE
GRIZZLIES
BASED ON A TRUE STORY

FROM THE PRODUCERS OF ANGRY INUK AND BEGINNERS