

## LITERATURE GUIDE

# ***READ • LISTEN • TELL***



### **“The Way of the Sword” by Dawn Dumont**

Literature guide created by  
**Tamara Hansen**

## "The Way of the Sword" by Dawn Dumont

*Read, Listen, Tell: Indigenous Stories from Turtle Island (pp. 14-29)*

### STORY SUMMARY (from the headnotes in *Read, Listen, Tell*)

"The Way of the Sword" is a story about a young girl, also named Dawn, who obsessively reads Conan the Barbarian comics. Dawn loves Conan because, as she says, the story of his people "mirror[s] the story of Native people." Finding her own experiences "mirrored" in Conan's stories sustains Dawn and helps her find a way to counter the stereotypes of Native people that she contends with on a daily basis. But when Dawn is confronted with a real-life challenge by a group of older, stronger girls, she needs to find a solution other than hand-to-hand combat. (15)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR (from the headnotes in *Read, Listen, Tell*)

Dawn Dumont is a Plains Cree comedian, actor, and writer born and raised in Saskatchewan, Canada. She says of her reservation, the Okanese First Nation, that it is "quite possibly the smallest reservation in the world but what it doesn't have in terms of land area, the people make up for in sheer head size" (Dumont, "Stand"). Trained as a lawyer, Dumont has said (in a tongue-in-cheek interview) that she decided to follow the talk show host Oprah's advice to "follow your bliss" and become a writer instead ("Dawn"). The story included in this anthology is from her collection of linked short stories, *Nobody Cries at Bingo* (2011). Three of Dumont's plays, *The Red Moon* (Love Medicine), *Visiting Elliot*, and *The Trickster vs. Jesus Christ*, have been broadcast on CBC. She has also published a novel, *Rose's Run* (2014) and another collection of stories, *Glass Beads* (2017). In addition to her work as a writer, Dawn has performed as a comedian at comedy clubs across North America, including New York's Comic Strip, the New York Comedy Club, and the Improv. (14)

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THE FREEBOOTER



## **SETTING**

Okanese Reserve, Saskatchewan, Canada

## **THEMES**

Stereotypes, standing up for yourself, identity, bullying, coming of age, heroes

## **INTERTEXTS**

Conan the Barbarian (15), comics (15), native hero (16), Chris Rock (16), Red Lobster (16), Braveheart (17), Conan the movie (16, 17), Dairy Queen (22), Ghandi (22), Wayne Gretzky (29)

## **WARNING**

"Exceptionally large breasts" (17)

"Sex life" (17)

"Kicked him in the ass" (18)

"The ass-kickers" (18)

"My ass handed to me" (19)

"You. Called. Me. A. Bitch." (21)

"Helped me conquer shit" (22)

"We were fucked" (26)

"Fuck that" (28)



## **STEREOTYPES/CONCEPTS WHICH MAY NEED TO BE CLARIFIED**

"I learned that throughout the world, people thought that Indians had been killed off by war, famine and disease" (16)

"Mainly to annoy them and steal their tax dollars" (16)

"Attempted genocide" (16)

Women speak candidly about getting beaten up by men (18)

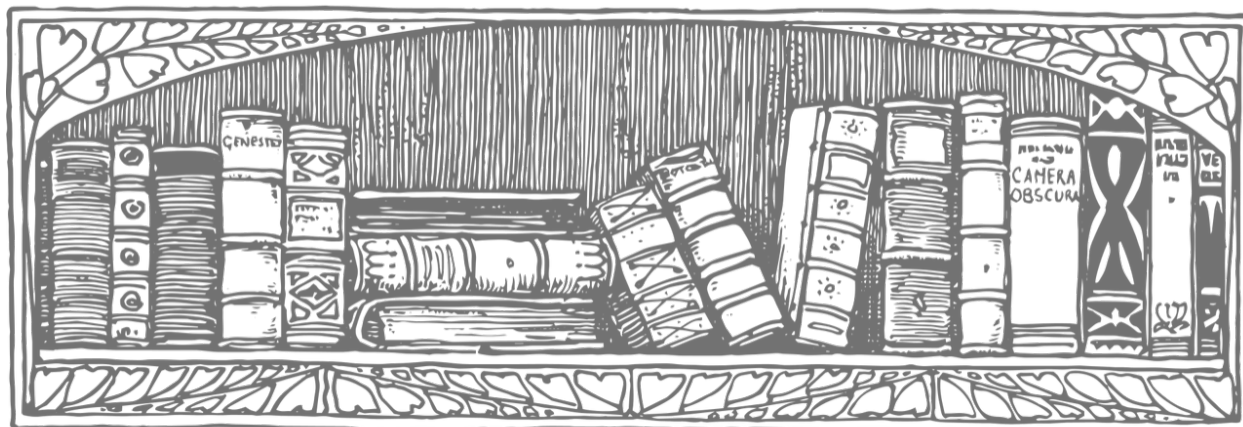
"Dad would come thundering home after a week-long drinking binge" (18)

"At school, Natives were assigned the role as the ass-kickers" (18)

"Growing up on reserve means you have to be tough" (18)

"My dad had attended a Residential school" (23)

"My dad had enjoyed every minute of it" (23)



## ENGLISH 9 MINI-UNIT PLAN FOR “THE WAY OF THE SWORD”

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Aboriginal Competencies:		Big Ideas Questions	→	Essential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Belonging</li> <li>•Generosity</li> <li>•Independence</li> <li>•Mastery</li> </ul>	Understand	<i>English Language Arts 9</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How could new fictional experiences change your perspective on real, everyday life?</li> <li>• How can exploring stories and humour help us understand ourselves and make connections to others and the world?</li> <li>• How is identity formed by others' expectations of us?</li> </ul>
Aboriginal Pathways to Learning: Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cross Curricular</li> <li>•Voice &amp; Choice</li> <li>•Kinship Dialogue</li> <li>•Place-based</li> <li>•Purposeful</li> <li>•Collaboration</li> </ul>		<b>Core Competencies</b> <i>Which core competency or competencies will be focused on in this unit?</i> Communication      Creative Thinking      Critical Thinking      Positive Personal and Cultural Identity Personal Awareness and Responsibility      Social Responsibility		

<p>Aboriginal Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identity (worldviews and relationships)</li> <li>•Culture (language, oral traditions, practices, ceremonies, traditions, artistic expressions)</li> <li>•Contributions</li> <li>•Lands &amp; Rights</li> <li>•Protocols &amp; Governance</li> <li>•Historical impacts</li> <li>•Current issues</li> </ul>		<p><b>Curricular Competencies</b></p> <p><i>Which process skills will students be applying in order to learn the content? List only those that will be assessed.</i></p> <p>Using oral, written, visual, and digital texts, students are expected individually and collaboratively to be able to:</p> <p><u>Comprehend and connect (reading, listening, viewing)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and appreciate how different features, forms, and genres of texts reflect different purposes, audiences, and messages</li> <li>• Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts</li> <li>• Recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in texts</li> <li>• Respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of the diversity within and across First Peoples societies represented in texts</li> <li>• Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literary and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audiences</li> </ul> <p><u>Create and communicate (writing, speaking, representing)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literary and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audiences</li> <li>• Use and experiment with oral storytelling processes</li> </ul>
	Know	<p><b>Content</b></p> <p><i>What knowledge will students learn and be assessed on?</i></p> <p>Students are expected to know the following:</p> <p><u>Story/text:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forms, functions, and genres of text</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• text features</li> <li>• literary elements</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies and processes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading strategies</li> <li>• oral language strategies</li> <li>• writing processes</li> </ul> <p><u>Language features, structures, and conventions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• features of oral language</li> <li>• presentation techniques</li> <li>• rhetorical devices</li> </ul>
<b>POSSIBLE ASSESSMENTS</b>		
FOR Learning	<p><b>Formative</b></p> <p><i>How will information be gathered about what students already know (i.e., pre-assessment/accessing prior knowledge)? What strategies will be used to evaluate student learning and adjust teaching? Where will students have the opportunity to share their understanding in order to receive feedback, revise and improve?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop their reading strategies by seeking targeted information from the text, which they will share in a smaller group</li> <li>• Students will gather evidence from the text to demonstrate their understanding of writing with humour</li> <li>• When class has finished reading "The Way of the Sword" teacher will facilitate a discussion on humorous life stories (personal narratives, memoir, autobiography)</li> <li>• Students will write a short story and receive teacher feedback before preparing to tell their story to the class</li> </ul>	
AS Learning	<p><b>Reflective</b></p> <p><i>What opportunities will there be for students to reflect on their thinking and feelings as part of their learning? (e.g., self/peer evaluations, partner talk, goal setting, journaling, etc.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be asked to reflect on their life experiences and to find where the humour is in their personal stories</li> <li>• They will brainstorm in partners and bounce ideas off their classmates and teacher</li> </ul>	

OF Learning	<p><b>Summative</b></p> <p><i>How will students demonstrate their understanding of the curricular connections listed above (e.g., performance task, project, portfolio, test, etc.)? How will the assessment criteria be communicated to or created with students?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will write a personal narrative and submit it to the teacher for evaluation</li> <li>The teacher will provide feedback on their writing, and based on that feedback students will prepare and perform the story to the class, which will also be evaluated</li> </ul>
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*\*\* Unit planner adapted from Learning Services, SD #40 by L Kim, J Angiola*

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/contributed-resources/sd%2040%20Unit%20Planning%20Template.pdf>

*Along with School District #71 template created by Aboriginal Support Techers and Juanita Coltman*  
<http://www.learn71.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Aboriginal-Education-Planning-Template.docx>

## TEACHING "THE WAY OF THE SWORD"

Dawn Dumont (Plains Cree) studied law, is a comedian, a mother, and an author of several books. Her delightful story, "The Way of the Sword" is a chapter in her book, *Nobody Cries at Bingo* (Thistledown, 2011). This book has been described as "semi-autobiographical" and "a fictionalized memoir." Dumont was asked in an interview how her more recent novel *Rose's Run* (Thistledown, 2014) is different from *Nobody Cries at Bingo*, to which she responded, "It's a novel. It's supernatural. It's scary. I'm not in it" (EFN Staff). Implying that to Dumont, *Nobody Cries at Bingo*, is not a novel and that she is also the Dawn Dumont that narrates her stories.

Educators often have questions about whether certain Indigenous literatures are appropriate, or "too dark" for their students. This idea is also raised in a great new book by Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee). In *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2018), Justice powerfully argues,

This, to me, is the fundamental reason why Indigenous literatures matter. They reflect the truths of our survival and our own special beauty in the world to which we belong. They don't hide the traumas or the shadows; they don't make everything neat and tidy or presume that the horrors of colonialism will be easily put to rest—like zombies, vampires, and ungentled ghosts, settler colonialism is nothing if not persistent. But our literatures remind us that our histories are more than tragedy, more than suffering, more than the stories of degradation and deficiency that settler colonialism would have us believe. (210)

Here Justice makes an argument for the beauty, breadth, and importance of the works of Indigenous authors. However, he also touches on some of the critique often hurled at Indigenous literature, its supposed "darkness." Dumont's "The Way of the Sword" is a great illustration of what Justice is discussing. While some might hesitate to teach this story to a grade 9 reader, as it

does contain some swear words and challenging topics, Dumont’s matter-of-fact, witty, young narrator, Dawn, will be very engaging for younger readers. Dawn’s narration about the struggles she faced growing up are rich in depth and humour, making it a highly teachable text. The themes of the stories Dawn recounts will be familiar to many students: bullies, heroes, and family. However, the context of growing up in an Indigenous community on the prairies, may add a context which is unfamiliar to some readers.



The narrator Dawn finds comfort in reading comic books about her personal hero Conan the Barbarian. For most readers this choice of hero, especially for a young Plains Cree girl, will elicit a laugh. Conan is best known for being a racist trope, a “savage” who solves his problems with violence rather than discussion or debate. In an article for the *Guardian Newspaper*, book reviewer, Alison Flood, writes of her recent reading of Conan: “there are elements that jar horribly today. Villains are usually dark-skinned; the darker the eviller. The more lily-white a woman's skin, the more prized she is.” Flood examines how racism and sexism permeates the stories of Conan, making these texts difficult for her to read.

At the same time, author and avowed Conan fan, Robert B. Marks, also finds something subversive within the racism of the Conan comics written by Robert E. Howard. Marks explains: “in the stories Conan looms over them and us, confident of his victory—long after we and our petty civilized concerns are gone to dust, he and the savagery he represents will remain.” While Dawn reflects on her memories of reading Conan as a child, both Flood and Marks are reading and interpreting as adults. This brings to mind questions about how our view of bullies, heroes, and family change over time.

Using humour Dumont creates a powerful, personal narrative, providing many angles from which to analyze the story. In this mini-unit plan students will delve into this rich story and its meanings, asking questions such as: How can exploring humour in stories help us understand ourselves and make connections to others and the world? How is identity formed by others’ expectations of us? Students will also work to unpack how Dumont writes: what makes her work so funny? How can we become funnier writers?

### **Step-by-Step overview**

Class #1: The essential questions & identity (1h30mins)

Class #2: The essential questions & identity (1h30mins)

Class #3: The danger of the single story & stereotypes (1h30mins)

Class #4: Oral Storytelling & Creative Writing (1h30mins)

Class #5: Oral Storytelling & Creative Writing (1h30mins)

Class #6: Storytelling day (45mins)



**PROPOSED SCOPE AND SEQUENCE**

Teacher action	Student action
<p><b>Class #1: The essential questions &amp; identity</b></p> <p><b>Materials:</b> A copy of the story, Handout #1, Handout #2; TED-Ed video (Links in Works Cited)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher introduces the essential questions, the author and the text.</li> <li>Outline the final creative writing/storytelling project at the beginning – what are you working towards as a class?</li> <li>“You will be writing a short story based on something that really happened in your life. We are going to talk about techniques to make your writing funnier and how conflicting perspectives and expectations in a story can create humour.”</li> <li>“To begin we are going to read “The Way of the Sword” p. 14 to the end of the fight on page 19. How does the narrator, Dawn, describe herself, who does she wish she was, what are the expectations others have of her, and do the expectations of others shape her actions and the way she views herself? Begin to answer these questions by filling in notes on Handout #1 as you read.”</li> <li>Stop to talk about writing humour. “How does the author use humour?”</li> <li>Watch Ted-Ed by Cheri Steinkellner on “How to make your writing funnier.”</li> <li>“While you are reading the story let’s keep in mind these comedic concepts and try to identify where Dumont uses them. Make</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students read (either as a class or silently) the story and fill in notes for Handout #1: Four square</li> </ul>

<p>notes of what you find on Handout #2. Continue reading the story, you will have time to continue next class if you do not finish today."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students continue to read (either as a class or silently) and fill in notes for Handout #1: Four square &amp; Handout #2: Humour</li> </ul>
<p><b>Class #2: The essential questions &amp; identity</b></p> <p><b>Materials:</b> same as previous class</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review with students what was discussed last class</li> <li>Review what you want students to do for Handouts #1 &amp; #2. Review the plans for the assignment at the end of the unit.</li> <li>"You should have filled in both of the Handouts and have read the story at least once by next class."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students continue reading the story and filling in notes for Handout #1: Four square &amp; Handout #2: Humour</li> </ul>
<p><b>Class #3: The danger of the single story &amp; stereotypes</b></p> <p><b>Materials:</b> Handout #3, TED-Ed videos (Links in Works Cited)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch the TED-Ed talk by Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie titled, "The Danger of a Single Story"</li> <li>"Why is it important to read stories that mirror our own experience?" What stories or novels have spoken to you most in your lives? Have the characters you've connected with most mirrored aspects of your identity to you?</li> <li>Watch the TED-Ed video "How fiction can change reality" narrated by Jessica Wise</li> <li>"Why is it important to read stories that do not necessarily mirror us? How might it be important to read stories that come from diverse authors and perspectives?"</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring class back together to highlight some of the discussions that have happened during the class, invite students to report back to the class.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will discuss the story "The Way of the Sword" as well as these two short videos in groups or pairs. Guiding questions from Handout #3: "The Danger of a Single Story" can be the basis of the discussion.</li> </ul>
<b>Class #4: Oral Storytelling &amp; Creative Writing</b> <b>Materials:</b> Handout #4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Today we will begin working on your short personal narrative stories. The idea is to think of a specific incident in your life that you can turn into a personal narrative, as Dawn Dumont did with the stories of almost getting into fights when she was growing up."</li> <li>• "Think about an incident—maybe one that you have never told anyone, or maybe one that your family re-tells all of the time to embarrass you—that really made you laugh at your own expense. Don't choose a story in which you were laughing at the expense of someone else. Think of a time when there was a real misunderstanding between you and someone in your family – did it lead to some form of funny conclusion?"</li> <li>• "Look back to the comedic concepts we discussed when we watched Cheri Steinkellner's video, "How to make your writing funnier." could the stories you are thinking about be made funnier by adding some of these concepts to the way you tell it?"</li> <li>• "What about if you think about a really sad incident or awful day you had, is there a way to find humour in it?"</li> </ul>	

- "If you are struggling to choose a story, try to think of a foil to your personal narrative—for example, write a story about a childhood or current hero. Think about if your hero was watching over your shoulder, what would they think about your life choices? How might you meet or disappoint their expectations?"
- Give students a chance to start brainstorming ideas along with Handout #4. Tell them to write down as many ideas as they can in 15 minutes. Then they will share what they have come up with two partners and see which one seems the most humorous.

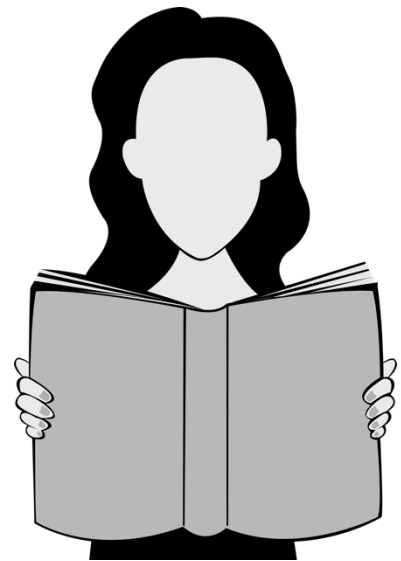
If students are struggling, here are some short videos you may want to show.

- How to Write a Good First Line
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm9trk8xRpg>
- How to write descriptively - Nalo Hopkinson
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSorZTtwgP4>

- Individually students write down a sentence or two about personal life stories that came to mind. Give a 15-minute timer.
- Ask students to get into groups of three. Each person will have two minutes to pitch the story ideas they have written down and then their friends will give them feedback – how to make something funnier, or which stories to cut. Give 2 minutes for pitches, 2 minutes for feedback. Then go to next group member. This is meant to feel fast paced, but fun – teacher should add or take away time as needed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Handout #4 with students. They are writing a story that you will be reviewing and giving them feedback on, they will then be telling that story to the class, either as a video, audio recording, or presentation. They should make sure that they are comfortable sharing the story they chose with you and with the whole class.</li> <li>• Again, emphasize that the humour of the story should not be at the expense of someone else, unless they get that person's express approval. If they have any questions about what this means they should discuss with the teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give students any remaining time in class to being writing. Let them know they will have 45 minutes next class to write. When the story is read out loud it should take about 2 minutes to present.</li> </ul>
<b>Class #5: Oral Storytelling &amp; Creative Writing</b> <b>Materials:</b> Handout #4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin class by reviewing the expectations of the project and the work done last class.</li> <li>• "Before you begin writing today, I am going to discuss some tricks for oral storytelling, which I recommend you keep in mind as you are writing your personal narratives."</li> <li>• The BC English Language Arts 9 curriculum recommends the following concepts be brought to student's attention when discussing oral storytelling processes. Introduce them to students:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sharing the story from memory with others,</li> <li>○ using vocal expression to clarify the meaning of the text,</li> <li>○ using non-verbal communication expressively to clarify the meaning,</li> <li>○ attending to stage presence,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

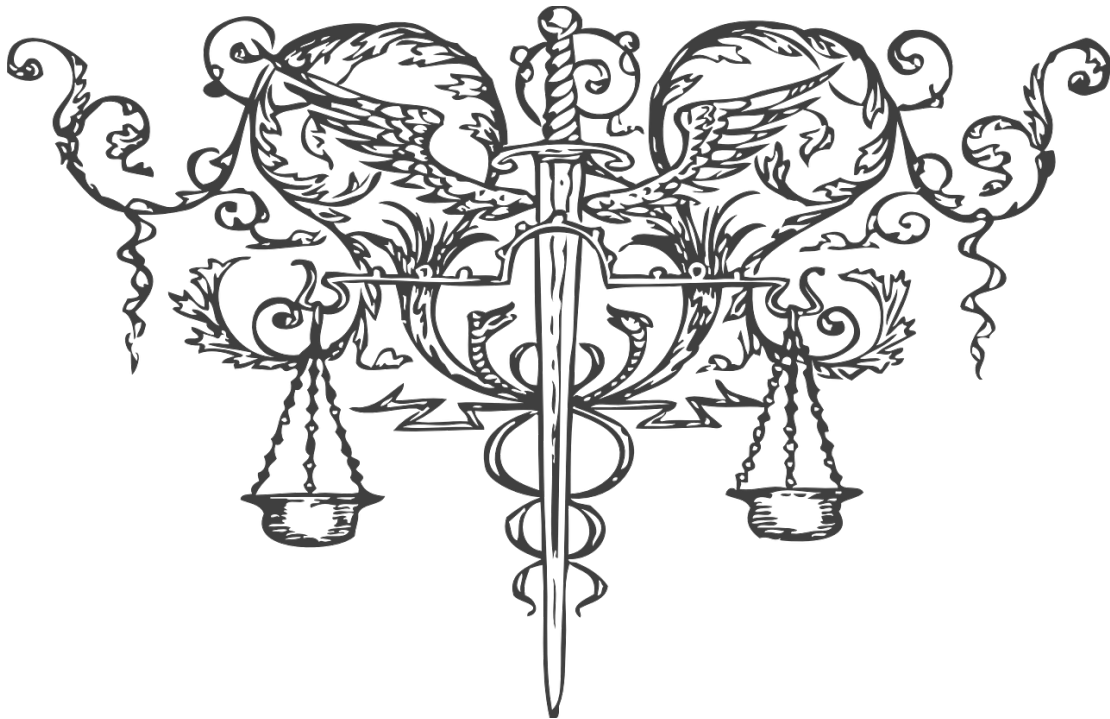
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ differentiating the storyteller's natural voice from the characters' voices,</li> <li>○ presenting the story efficiently,</li> <li>○ keeping the listener's interest throughout,</li> <li>○ using an expanding repertoire of techniques to enhance audience experience</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may also want to review the comedic concepts with them.</li> <li>• "Your written stories are due next class. I will be marking them and giving you feedback before you prepare for the oral storytelling presentation to the class."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give students quiet time to work on their writing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Class #6: Storytelling day!</b></p> <p>Depending on the length of time you need to mark the written work, you may want to do one of the extension activities in the next classes to give yourself time to give proper feedback for their written stories. Once you have returned the stories to the students, give them time to review the comments and change some elements or add more humour to their story. Then review the rubric for the presentation and oral storytelling processes again, so students are aware of what is expected. Set a date for the presentation/storytelling day! Make sure to have the technology available for projecting / listening to assignments that are submitted and not presented in front of the class.</p>	



**"THE WAY OF THE SWORD" DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How is the author Dawn Dumont's love of reading and writing evidenced throughout the text by her narrator, a younger Dawn Dumont?
2. "Part of the reason we loved Conan was we believed he was Native. The story of Conan mirrored the story of Native people." Why is it important for young people to feel they are mirrored by the characters they learn about in texts (literature, film, radio, etc.)?
3. What does it mean when Dawn proclaims, "It did not matter that Conan was a man and we were girls; we were all Conan in spirit" (17)?
4. How does Dawn compare the women in her life and the women in the Conan comic series?
5. In what ways does Dumont challenge our preconceived perception of Conan the Barbarian?
6. What are the expectations Dawn feels are imposed on her as a young Plains Cree girl? To what extent does she match up to these expectations?
7. How does Dawn's use of humour allow the reader to think more deeply about some serious topics alluded to within the text?
8. Dawn observes: "When I walked between the two of them, it looked like two giraffes were being taken for a walk by a hobbit" (25). What notions is she counterposing for a humoristic effect?
9. "As I washed the blood off my face, my hands shook. Even though I was no longer in danger, the memory of the fight hummed through my body. I could not relax and felt like puking. I never wanted to fight again. That desire was incompatible with my love of Conan and with being a Native woman" (20) To what extent do the expectations of others shape Dawn's actions and/or the way she views herself?
10. Dawn often looks to books for advice in difficult times, whether it is Conan or Gandhi. What helps you get through difficult times? It is something you read, listen to, watch, or say to yourself?

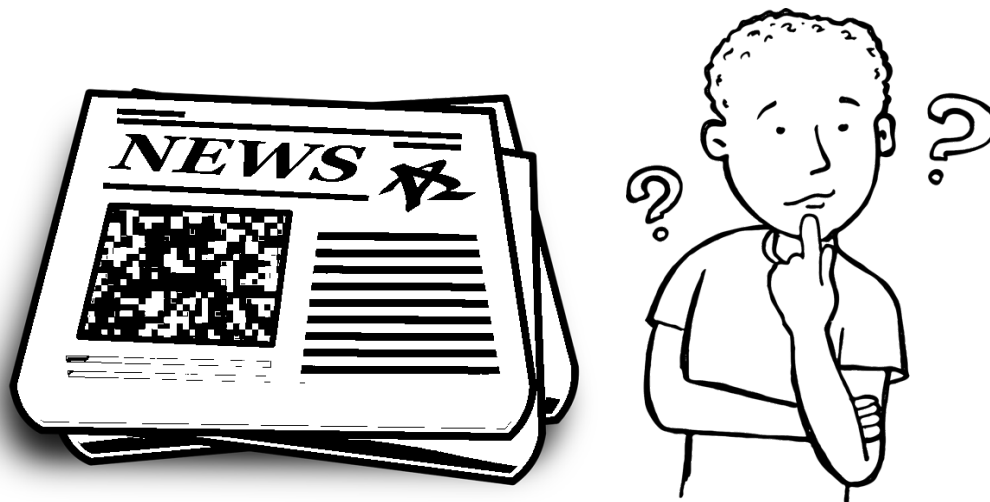
11. What stories are part of your childhood memories? How did pop culture (comics, tv, movies, books, music, video games, etc.) affect your childhood? How did these stories influence your own upbringing?
12. Who were your heroes when you were a child? Are they still your heroes today? How are you similar to or different from those heroes?
13. How does "The Way of the Sword" challenge stereotypes about Indigenous people in Canada? What could be problematic in this story's representation of Indigenous people in terms of possibly reinforcing stereotypes?
14. Why is it important as an individual to have a pluralized perspective of any group or culture? What happens when we get all of our information of a group or person, from "a single story" as Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explains in her TED-Ed talk?





**EXTENSIONS/POSSIBLE CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS*****Activity with Article: Dawn Dumont*****Overview:**

Dumont regularly writes columns for the Saskatoon StarPhoenix Newspaper and Eagle Feather News online. Her writing ranges in topics, but often combines current political issues, lifestyle magazine articles, and humour. Each piece is frank, educational, and amusing. Have students read some of her articles and choose one to respond to. They should write a short letter to Dawn Dumont respectfully and thoughtfully expressing an opinion about something she wrote. A few articles are listed and linked below as examples, but more can easily be found online.

**Sample Articles:**

- Legal Eagle: UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)  
<http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=1917>
- That's What She Said: Old Kid Shows vs. New Kid Shows  
<http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=1916>
- Dawn Dumont: Why cultural appropriation is a thing  
<http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/thats-what-she-said-why-cultural-appropriation-is-a-thing>
- Dumont: Online comments — free speech or free rage?  
<http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/thats-what-she-said-free-rage>
- That's What She Said: Info drain  
<http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=2440>

Some quotes from Dumont articles	Some questions to ask students to reflect on their opinions...
<p>From "Dumont: Online comments — free speech or free rage?":</p> <p>"CBC shut down comments on articles about Indigenous people because the comments were so offensive they could make Donald Trump cringe."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Dumont's article and consider what she is saying about this decision. What should we do about trolls on the internet? Should free speech be completely free? Should there be limits on hate speech?</li> </ul>
<p>From "That's What She Said: Old Kid Shows vs. New Kid Shows":</p> <p>"Back in my day, kid shows were humble; the focus was on story, not on the wardrobe budget. So, when you turned off the TV for dinner you felt like you were a normal person having a normal life."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Dumont's article and consider what she is saying about TV shows today and when she was growing up. Do you think she is exaggerating about how bad TV is today? What kinds of shows do you watch on TV? What kind of show could you create that would be more representational of real life?</li> </ul>
<p>From "That's What She Said: Info Drain":</p> <p>"For some reason, children's stores seem to be at the forefront of the information collection. They say that they're going to enter you into raffles and send you coupons, but I haven't seen any yet. I have, however, had three texts from companies telling me that I'm missing out on "AMAZING SALES - TEXT NOW KNOCKOFF MICHAEL KORS" in the past week. As a result, I will be returning to my normal, no-information, stance. When cashiers request my phone number, I'll request theirs."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Dumont's article and consider what she is saying about the way companies collect our personal information. What do you think about her decision not to give her information? What do you think companies are doing with this information?</li> </ul>

**The Way of the Sword — Handout #1: Four Square**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How could new fictional experiences change your perspective on real, everyday life? How can telling and listening to stories help us understand ourselves? How can humour help us connect to others? How are our identities (in)formed by others' expectations?

<b>Dawn describes herself as...</b>	<b>Dawn wishes she were...</b>
<b>The expectations that others have of Dawn...</b>	<b>To what extent do the expectations of others shape Dawn's actions and/or the way she views herself? Is she fiercely independent? A follower? Or somewhere in between?</b>

**The Way of the Sword — Handout #2: Humour**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**Let's talk about writing with humour!**

- Watch award-winning screenwriter and film producer Cheri Steinkellner's TED-Ed video "How to make your writing funnier."
- Once you have watched the video, go back to Dawn Dumont's "The Way of the Sword" and find evidence of how she has incorporated these comedic concepts into her writing.

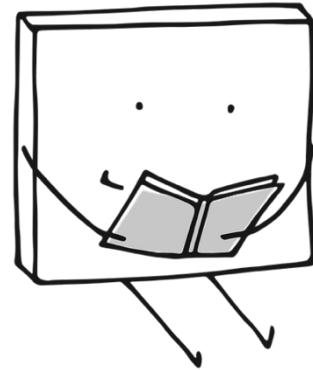
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Find the flaws</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Discover the details</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Insert incongruities</b></li><li>• <b>"Secret to humour is surprise"</b></li></ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Shift from observation to imagination from</b></li><li>• <b>"What is" to "What if?" (2:44)</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>"Dumb stuff that happens in real life"</b></li><li>• <b>Things that cause irritation, frustration, and humiliation</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Rule of Three (or Zig, Zig, Zag)</b></li><li>• <b>Punchline rule</b></li><li>• <b>Rule of K</b></li><li>• <b>Have fun</b></li></ul>	
<b>Other</b> <b>(Does Dumont write something humorous that does not fit these categories?)</b>	

**The Way of the Sword — Handout #3: Reality and Fiction**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How could new fictional experiences change your perspective on real, everyday life? How can telling and listening to stories help us understand ourselves? How can humour help us connect to others? How are our identities (in)formed by others' expectations? Why might it be important to read stories that mirror our own experiences? Why might it also be important to read stories that reflect the experiences of others?

**Ideas to reflect on:**

*The following quotations are from two well-known TED videos, "How fiction can change reality" by educator Jessica Wise, and "The danger of a single story" by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says, "Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So, what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are" (02:36).

"It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person" (10:12).

Adichie further adds, "All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become

the only story [...] The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar." (13:45).

In "How fiction can change reality," Jessica Wise discusses how reading fiction allows us to "walk a mile in the shoes" of others (00:42). She explains, "Stories have a unique ability to change a person's point of view. Scholars are discovering evidence that stories shape culture, and that much of what we believe about life comes, not from fact, but from fiction" (01:02). Wise asks the viewer to consider, "how new fictional experiences might change your perspective on real, everyday life?"

### **Discuss "text to text" conversations with a classmate/classmates**

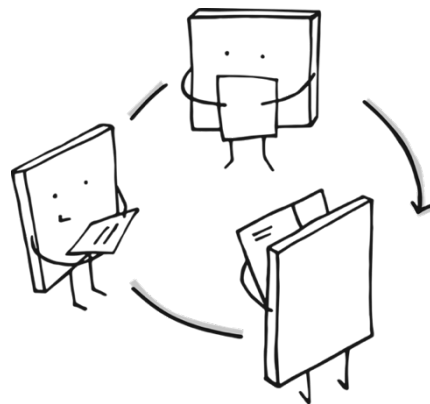
- How do these texts, "The Way of the Sword," "The Danger of a Single Story" and "How fiction can change reality" speak to one another? What do they say?

### **Discuss "text to world" conversations with a classmate/classmates**

- How do these texts, "The Way of the Sword," "The Danger of a Single Story" and "How fiction can change reality" speak to the world we live in today? What does storytelling have to do with power?

### **Discuss "text to self" conversations with a classmate/classmates**

- What personal connection do you feel to "The Way of the Sword", "The Danger of a Single Story" and "How fiction can change reality"? Can you relate to them? In what way?



**The Way of the Sword — Handout #4: Writing a Humorous Personal Narrative**

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How can telling and listening to stories help us understand ourselves? How can humour help us connect to others? How are our identities (in)formed by others' expectations??

**Assignment**

Write a short humorous narrative based on an event or events from your own life.

**Think about an important moment/incident in your life:**

- Something weird you used to believe when you were younger, maybe a secret you never revealed
- An incident your family re-tells all the time to embarrass you
- An incident that made you laugh at your own expense
- A time there was a real misunderstanding between you and someone in your family. Did it lead to some form of funny conclusion?
- A sad or awful day you had in the past—is there a way to find humour in it?
- If you are struggling to think up an idea for a story, try to think of a foil to your personal narrative. For example, write a story about a childhood or current hero. If your hero were watching over your shoulder, what would they think about your life choices? How might you meet or disappoint their expectations?

*\*\* Remember you are writing a story your teacher will read and that you are expected to share with the class, so you should make sure that the story you choose is one you are comfortable sharing.*

**Details**

**STEP 1** – Write as many ideas of incidents in your life that might work quickly on a page. You will have 15 minutes.

**STEP 2** – Find two partners. You will have two minutes to pitch your story ideas to them. They will have two minutes to give you feedback. You will listen and give feedback to their story pitches.

**STEP 3** – Choose the incident you want to use for your project.



**STEP 4** – Start writing! Keep in mind the comedic concepts reviewed in class. How can you incorporate them to make your story funnier?

**STEP 5** – Submit your written story to your teacher (rubric for evaluation is in this package). Your teacher will be reading over your story and giving you feedback.

**STEP 6** – Get teacher feedback, change story as needed. Prepare to tell your story to the class. Think about ways to make your story more gripping when read out loud. Consider these oral storytelling processes:

- sharing the story from memory with others
- using vocal expression to clarify the meaning of the text
- using non-verbal communication expressively to clarify the meaning
- attending to stage presence
- differentiating the storyteller's natural voice from the characters' voices
- presenting the story efficiently
- keeping the listener's interest throughout
- using an expanding repertoire of techniques to enhance audience experience

**STEP 7** – Tell your story to the class! You are welcome to tell it to the class, or to make a video or audio recording to share; however, there should be no special effects.



<b>Writing a Humorous Personal Narrative</b>				
<b>Scale</b>	<b>MEANING</b> (ideas and information; use of detail)	<b>STYLE</b> (clarity, variety, and impact of language)	<b>FORM</b> (beginning, middle, end; organization and sequence; transitions)	<b>CONVENTIONS</b> (spelling, Punctuation, sentence structure, grammar)
<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offers an engaging perspective; individuality of the writer comes through; real life incident was successfully recounted in a humorous way featuring some maturity or sophistication in ideas</li> <li>• builds a convincing personal narrative through detail, example, explanation; solid use of comedic concepts (may use more sophisticated comedic concepts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flows smoothly and naturally—sense of effortlessness</li> <li>• varies language to develop subtleties of meaning and effect</li> <li>• varies sentence structure, sometimes to create a particular effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develops from an engaging introduction, which usually includes a thesis statement, to a satisfying ending</li> <li>• connections and relationships among ideas are clear; smooth transitions create a sense of movement from beginning to end</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spelling, punctuation, and grammar are generally correct</li> <li>• errors in sentence structure are usually the result of experimentation or attempts to develop complex structures</li> <li>• appears to have been carefully reread and checked for errors; most errors have been eliminated</li> </ul>
<b>Fully meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develops a stance or point of view with some voice or individuality; real life incident was successfully recounted</li> <li>• builds a solid personal narrative through the use of detail, example, explanations; includes sufficient use of comedic concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flows smoothly; easy to read</li> <li>• varies language according to topic and purpose; may choose words for effect</li> <li>• uses a variety of sentence forms; although attempts sometimes result in problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develops smoothly, from a clear and often interesting introduction or thesis statement to a logical conclusion</li> <li>• uses a variety of transitions to establish connections among ideas; related ideas are grouped together; paragraphing is logical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may have occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar</li> <li>• may include occasional errors or awkwardness in complex sentence structures (e.g., inappropriate subordination)</li> <li>• appears to have been carefully reread and checked for errors</li> </ul>
<b>Minimally meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• takes a clear stance or point of view with some relevant ideas; however, retelling of real life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generally easy to read; some sense of flow from one sentence to the next</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beginning introduces the topic and attempts to engage the reader;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar occasionally</li> </ul>

	<p>incident was not engaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some development of a personal narrative through explanations and examples; often without much analysis; does not include sufficient use of comedic concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• largely conversational, with some instances of more precise language for effect</li> <li>• some variety in sentence length and pattern</li> </ul>	<p>includes a clear middle and an end</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• links ideas with appropriate transitions; most paragraphing is logical</li> </ul>	<p>distract the reader, but meaning is clear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• follows basic rules for sentence construction, but may include some run-on sentences</li> <li>• appears to have been reread; obvious errors may have been corrected</li> </ul>
<b>Not yet within expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose or point of view may be unclear; often very brief; may be illogical</li> <li>• may attempt to develop or elaborate ideas; however, it is difficult to follow the writer's reasoning; does not include sufficient use of comedic concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficult to read; no sense of fluency or flow</li> <li>• language may show some variety but tends to be basic and general, and may be inappropriate in places</li> <li>• sentences are short and simple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the middle and ending may be weak in relation to the beginning</li> <li>• may shift abruptly from one idea to another; often written as a single paragraph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequent, repeated errors in basic spelling and grammar distract the reader and may obscure meaning</li> <li>• no sense of control in sentence structure; often includes run-on sentences</li> <li>• few corrections; little evidence that the writing has been reread and checked for errors</li> </ul>

*\*\* Rubric adapted from BC Performance Standards - Writing Grade 9:*

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/performance-standards/writing\\_g9.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/performance-standards/writing_g9.pdf)

<b>Your own personal narrative - STORYTELLING PRESENTATION</b>				
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Content/Meaning</b>	<b>Humour</b>	<b>Delivery/Performance</b>	<b>Listening</b>
<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains a story based in a real-life experience thoroughly and insightfully.</li> <li>Two minutes or more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of comedic concepts (that we explored in class) are excellently integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear expressive and confident voice.</li> <li>Enhances audience understanding of the power of oral storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full attention to the speakers during presentations.</li> </ul>
<b>Fully meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good explanation of a story based in a real-life experience.</li> <li>Just two minutes long.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of comedic concepts (that we explored in class) are integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate volume and expression. Some nervous or careless gestures occur.</li> <li>Enhances audience understanding of the power of oral storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few lapses in attention.</li> <li>No interruptions.</li> </ul>
<b>Minimally meets expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superficial / minimal explanation of a story based in a real-life experience.</li> <li>Basically, two minutes long.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few comedic concepts / moments are integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaking skills barely adequate.</li> <li>Lack of preparation impedes storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few lapses in attention.</li> <li>No interruptions.</li> </ul>
<b>Not yet within expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal attempt made to explain a story based in a real-life experience.</li> <li>Missed the point or lacked effort.</li> <li>Well under two minutes long.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No noticeable comedic concepts were integrated into the storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words are mumbled or inaudible.</li> <li>Lack of preparation impedes storytelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student needs reminders to show respect for others.</li> <li>Use of phone or another electronic device.</li> </ul>
<b>No attempt made</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No attempt made to explain a story based in a real-life experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refusal to present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refusal to give presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is rude and disruptive.</li> <li>Use of phone or another electronic device.</li> </ul>

*\*\* Rubric adapted from English 10 and 11 First Peoples Teacher Resource Guide by First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)*

<http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/efp/>