

# NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

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SEPTEMBER 30



## ABOUT

Each year, September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The day honours the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process. This federal statutory holiday was created through [legislative amendments](#) made by Parliament.

Both the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day take place on September 30.

[Orange Shirt Day](#) is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

### Phyllis Webstad

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) residential school commemoration event held in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in the spring of 2013. It grew out of the account of a young girl, Phyllis, having her shiny new orange shirt taken away on her first day of school at the Mission. This has provided us with an opportunity to keep the discussion on all aspects of residential schools happening annually. The date was chosen because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools, and because it is an opportunity to set the stage for the continued creation of a safe, equitable and inclusive school environment as the school year begins. Orange Shirt Day is also an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come.

### Wear Orange

On this day, we wear orange to remember the experiences of former students of Residential Schools and to commit to ongoing reconciliation.

Reference: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>

## EASY IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

- Introduce Orange Shirt Day during the week leading up to September 30<sup>th</sup>, and encourage students to wear orange on that day.
- Make Orange Shirt Day stickers to give out
- Cut out orange shirt templates with residential school history to be handed out and/or displayed
- Get leadership students involved (orange papers on walls of school; silk screening t-shirts)
- Set up area in libraries with residential school photos and books (local people, local stories)
- Sign out one or more of the many residential school display kits and/or resources available in school/board Media Libraries
- Introduce books about residential schools in class, such as They Called Me Number One, No Time to Say Goodbye, My Name is Seepeetza, Fatty Legs, and Shi-Shi-Etko
- Have all staff and students wearing orange t-shirts
- Put up an information board in school staff rooms
- Have students read Phyllis Webstad's story in classrooms or assemblies
- Announce Orange Shirt Day on webpage, Facebook and Twitter page

## QUICK LINKS

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlXk-Coy-HU>

<https://nctr.ca/>

<http://www.orangeshirtday.org>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll1pUrK29MM&feature=youtu.be>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkssXtqScM0&feature=youtu.be>

# RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS LITERATURE

*Please note that the grades attached are only approximate. It is important to preview the books listed and ensure the readiness level for students and individual life experiences are considered.*

## PRIMARY

### WHEN WE WERE ALONE

*By David Alexander Robertson*

A touching account of a Cree child helping her Kokum (grandmother) around her home. The powerful yet gentle conversation between grandchild and grandparent provides a safe and reassuring space for the students listening to the question and answer format of this approach to explaining a difficult and current concern for all Canadians.

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### WITH OUR ORANGE HEARTS

*By Phyllis Webstad*

Phyllis Webstad, founder of Orange Shirt Day, show that sharing her story with the world helped her to process her feelings. This book encourages young children to open their hearts and listen as others share their feelings, and to be more comfortable sharing their own feelings too. Listening is a first step towards reconciliation.

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### STOLEN WORDS

*By Melanie Florence*

Explains language loss among First Nations residential school survivors and their descendants. Told through the eyes of a child and her grandfather, the book captures the close and caring relationship between generations as the girl learns about residential schools and language loss.

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### WHEN I WAS EIGHT

*By Christy Jordan-Fenton, Margaret Pokiak-Fenton*

When I was Eight is the 32-page picture book adaptation of Margaret Pokiak-Fenton's book, Fatty Legs: A True Story. Margaret and her daughter-in-law, Christy Jordan-Fenton have adapted Margaret's childhood story about her life in a residential school when she was a child.

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### EVERY CHILD MATTERS

*By Phyllis Webstad*

Orange Shirt Day founder, Phyllis Webstad, offers insights into this heartfelt movement. Every Child Matters honours the history and resiliency of Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island and moves us all forward on a path toward Truth and Reconciliation.

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### SHI-SHI-ETKO

*By Nicola I. Campbell*

Shi-shi-etko knows she has only a few days left before she leaves for residential school. She spends her time renewing her memories of special places and nature around her village.

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### SHIN-CHI'S CANOE

*By Nicola I. Campbell*

In the sequel to *Shi-shi-etko*, Shi-shi-etko tries to help her little brother during his last days at home before Shin-chi starts school himself. Can her gift of a small canoe sustain Shin-chi through the school terms?

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### ARCTIC STORIES

*By Michael Kusugak*

This trio of stories about a 10-year-old girl named Agatha is based on the childhood experiences of beloved Inuit author Michael Kusugak. The book begins with a tale of Agatha 'saving' her community from a monstrous flying object. The book also includes the story of Agatha being sent away for school, "The nuns did not make very good mothers and the priests, who were called fathers, did not make very good fathers," Kusugak writes.

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### KOOKUM'S RED SHOES

*By Peter Eyvindson*

An elderly Kookum (grandmother) recounts her experiences at residential school - a time that changed her forever. The book has been described as running parallel to the story of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. "Her tornado had arrived. It rushed up and slammed to a halt just past the wonder world she had created," writes Eyvindson. Throughout the story Kookum reveals what was lost in her life, and how goodness persisted.

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## JUNIOR/INTERMEDIATE

### I LOST MY TALK

*By Rita Joe*

*I Lost My Talk* is one of Rita Joe's most influential poems and tells this Mi'kmaw Elder's story of losing her Mi'kmaw language while at residential school in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia.

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### I AM NOT A NUMBER

*By Jenny Kay Dupuis*

When eight-year-old Irene is removed from her First Nations family to live in a residential school she is confused, frightened, and terribly homesick. She tries to remember who she is and where she came from, despite the efforts of the nuns who are in charge at the school and who tell her that she is not to use her own name but instead use the number they have assigned to her.

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### NO TIME TO SAY GOODBYE: CHILDREN'S STORIES OF KUPER ISLAND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

*By Sylvia Olsen; with Rita Morris and Ann Sam*

Five children from a Saanich village in British Columbia are suddenly taken to a residential school on an isolated island. They need each other as they learn to survive away from their land and their families in a strange world.

### **FATTY LEGS: A TRUE STORY**

*By Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton*

8-year old Olemaun, an Inuit girl, thinks that going to residential school and learning to read will be a great adventure. The harsh reality at her school doesn't break her spirit.

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### **A STRANGER AT HOME: A TRUE STORY**

*By Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton*

In this sequel to Fatty Legs, the changes Olemaun finds within herself and her family when she returns home two years after leaving for residential school threaten to break her spirit.

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### **AS LONG AS THE RIVERS FLOW**

*By Larry Loyie with Constance Brissenden*

The summer he is ten is memorable for Larry – he and his father raise an orphaned owl, he and his grandmother tackle a giant grizzly bear, but there are also the daily pleasures of living with his family in Northern Alberta. But this summer is different, as he learns that he has to go away to school in the fall.

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### **GOODBYE BUFFALO BAY**

*By Larry Loyie with Constance Brissenden*

This is a continuation of Larry's story from *As Long as the Rivers Flow*.

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### **THE ORANGE SHIRT STORY**

*By Phyllis Webstad*

When Phyllis Webstad (nee Jack) turned six, she went to the residential school for the first time. On her first day at school, she wore a shiny orange shirt that her Granny had bought for her, but when she got to the school, it was taken away from her and never returned. This is the true story of Phyllis and her orange shirt. It is also the story of Orange Shirt Day (an important day of remembrance for First Nations and non-First Nations Canadians).

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### **PHYLLIS'S ORANGE SHIRT**

*By Phyllis Webstad*

Phyllis's Orange Shirt is an adaptation of The Orange Shirt Story which was the bestselling children's book in Canada for several weeks in September 2018(Book manager). This true story also inspired the movement of Orange Shirt Day which could become a federal statutory holiday.

When Phyllis was a little girl she was excited to go to residential school for the first time. Her Granny bought her a bright orange shirt that she loved and she wore it to school for her first day. When she arrived at school her bright orange shirt was taken away. This is both Phyllis' true story and story behind Orange Shirt Day which is a day for us all to reflect upon the treatment of First Nations people and the message that 'Every Child Matters'. Adapted for ages 4-6.

## SECONDARY

### INDIAN HORSE

*By Richard Wagamese*

With compassion and insight, author Richard Wagamese traces through his fictional characters the decline of a culture and a cultural way. For Saul, taken forcibly from the land and his family when he's sent to residential school, salvation comes for a while through his incredible gifts as a hockey player.

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### RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, WITH THE WORDS AND IMAGES OF SURVIVORS, A NATIONAL HISTORY

*By Constance Brissenden, Larry Oskiniko Loyie, Wayne K. Spear*

An accessible, 112-page history offers a first-person perspective of the residential school system in Canada, as it shares the memories of more than 70 survivors from across Canada as well as 125 archival and contemporary images.

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### ORANGE SHIRT DAY

*By Orange Shirt Society*

Tells the story of Orange Shirt Day, a day observed annually on September 30th to honour residential school survivors and their families, and to remember those who did not make it. This book explores the historical impact on Indigenous people in order to create champions who will walk a path of reconciliation through Orange Shirt Day.

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### BEYOND THE ORANGE SHIRT STORY

*By Phyllis Webstad*

A unique collection of truths, as told by Phyllis Webstad's family and others, that will give readers an up-close look at what life was like before, during, and after their Residential School experiences.

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### SPEAKING OUR TRUTH

*By Monique Gray Smith*

Invites young adult readers on a journey of discovery regarding truth and reconciliation about residential schools.

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### ENDS/BEGINS

*By David Alexander Robertson*

This third book of the *7 Generations* graphic book series chronicles the lives of two brothers, James and Thomas, at residential school in the 1960s and James' plans to rescue his little brother from abuse.

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### THE PACT

*By David Alexander Robertson*

This fourth and last book of the *7 Generations* graphic book series focuses on how James still suffers from his time at school and his struggles to build a family with his son, Edwin.

### AS LONG AS THE RIVERS FLOW

*By Larry Loyie with Constance Brissenden*

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### LITTLE BUTTERFLY GIRL – AN INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL STORY

[www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/LBG-Book-English.pdf](http://www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/LBG-Book-English.pdf)

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### SUGAR FALLS: A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL STORY (GRAPHIC NOVEL)

*By David Alexander Robertson and Scott B. Henderson*

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### SECRET PATH

*By Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire*

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### A IS FOR ASSIMILATION THE ABC'S OF CANADA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

*By Len Fortune*

The summer he is ten is memorable for Larry – he and his father raise an orphaned owl, he and his grandmother tackle a giant grizzly bear, but there are also the daily pleasures of living with his family in Northern Alberta. But this summer is different, as he learns that he has to go away to school in the fall.

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## LESSON PLANS/TEACHING RESOURCES (I/S)

We Were So Far Away – The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools

<https://legacyofhope.ca/home/exhibitions/we-were-so-far-away-the-inuit-experience-of-residential-schools/>

100 Years of Loss – The Residential School System in Canada

<https://legacyofhope.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/100-YoL-Guide-v2.7LR.compressed.pdf>

Tebatchimowin – Promoting awareness of the history  
and legacy of the Indian Residential School System

<https://wabano.com/product/tebatchimowin-guide/>

An Overview of the Indian Residential School System

[www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/An-Overview-of-the-IRS-System-Booklet.pdf](http://www.anishinabek.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/An-Overview-of-the-IRS-System-Booklet.pdf)

## SHORT VIDEOS

Heritage Minutes: Chanie Wenjack

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=v\\_tcCpKtoU0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_tcCpKtoU0)

Phyllis Webstad Orange Shirt Day Presentation

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3vUqr01kAk&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3vUqr01kAk&feature=youtu.be)

Every Child Matters

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=riSgg53AJb8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riSgg53AJb8)





*Contributions from Nicole Bell, Bobby Henry, Rich McPherson & DDSB.*