

Podcast with Cherie Dimaline

“A Story Within Our Métis Stories”

Grade 9 English — ENL1W

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Funded by:



The views expressed in the publication are those of the Métis Nation of Ontario and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.

Version 1

ISBN: 978-1-998262-14-4

A Note to Educators



Welcome to the Métis Nation of Ontario's Grade 9 English Cherie Dimaline Study Guide! We recognize that this may be new learning for many educators. Our goal is to provide a series of resources that support educators and learners as they explore and learn about the Métis Nation and its people.

This study guide was created to provide teachers and students with three entry points to explore the works of Métis author and Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Cherie Dimaline. We invite you to use this resource to explore approaches to various topics and to help guide your reading of Dimaline's works. This resource has also outlined an analysis of key sections from the texts for educators to use in their literature units. This resource connects to the novels *The Marrow Thieves* and *Hunting By Stars*, as well as a Podcast Interview and Lesson Plan with author Cherie Dimaline.

These resources are simple-to-use tools for teachers and students. Educators can use the contents to bring authentic Métis voices into the classroom. The resources provide students and educators with an opportunity to use the Métis experience to connect with themes and learning goals in the Grade 9 De-streamed English course.

Author Letter to Students

Dear Students,

Everything is a story, and everyone is a storyteller. When you have a conversation, when you post online, when you dress in a way that puts your personality on display – these are all stories being told. These are your stories, and every one of them is important.

When we remember that the world is made up of stories, we are more observant, better listeners, and less likely to absorb information without critical thought. Keeping in mind that all information is being delivered through a point of view reminds us to consider the source of the information and to be thoughtful in our response. This is a great way to bring solutions, compassion, and understanding to an issue.

Stories are the building blocks that create our societies, and you are the storytellers that determine what is built next, what should be dismantled, and how we should move forward. It's a lot of responsibility, but it's also powerful. Better yet, it puts power back where it belongs – with you.

As an author, I think about story all the time – whether or not I am creating new ones. But as a human, it's something that we should all be aware of. A picture is a story, and so is a choreographed dance or a comment. Every moment that we are alive adds to the collective story is 'us'. I think it's a beautiful gift to be able to tell our own stories and to live in a world made more complex and remarkable because of them.

One of the best gifts I was given as a child was to be raised by Elder women who decided I needed the stories of my community, the land, our history, and what we collectively learned along the way. Being given such a colourful recounting of my community meant that no matter where I lived, I

was able to bring my home with me. It also meant that when I started to write books, I was able to return to that specific place, to those specific people, and bring them forward with me – to even send them beyond me. It's how I know, that no matter what changes in the way of geography or politics, my community will survive.

My advice is always to read voraciously, diversely, and often. Even if we don't agree with what we are reading, we at least are broadening the ability to respond and perhaps even create our own tales to counter. We need narratives from as many perspectives as we can get. Every great thinker and leader I have met in my life has been a consumer of story – whether or not they came from books and articles or people and art. Having a good understanding of different narratives allowed them to create their own from a place of being informed and empowered.

A story is not just a way into the world; it is also a way out – an escape. It is a hidden door, a secret garden, a portal to another time and place. And we all need to escape now and then. We need to exist in a story that ponders what things would be like without colonization or to drop us into an apocalyptic landscape so we can imagine the version of ourselves that would make heroic decisions and change everything.

When the day-to-day effort of living gets heavy and anxiety starts to creep in around the edges, I remember that we are just a story that the universe is telling. In response, I want to tell stories back to the universe. And the closest thing I know to being able to whisper into the ear of the universe is to create stories for you – for readers who are on their way to a heroic place. So, bring yourselves into the books you read, bring your dreams and your troubles, bring your hearts and your voices. These stories are for you, always. And in return, I hope you tell your own because everything is a story, and everyone is a storyteller. The world is counting on it.

Move and think, act and create with all the best parts of yourself, bringing all the dark corners you are shining a light into. Your ability to tell your own truth is an incredible thing. These are your stories, and every one of them is important.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in a cursive, flowing style, rendered in a light gray color. The signature appears to read 'CDL'.

Cherie Dimaline

About this Resource

Welcome to the Métis Nation of Ontario's ***Podcast with Cherie Dimaline and OSSLT Lesson Plan*** for Grade 9 educators and students! Thank you for taking the necessary steps to include Métis voices, culture and stories in your classroom!

Educators can use this resource to support students in their preparation to write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. Within the OSSLT Framework, students will be required to demonstrate their understanding by responding to selected response questions and one open-response question. This resource focuses on the importance of a main idea in a paragraph related to the podcast “A Story Within Our Métis Stories” with Cherie Dimaline. Included are lesson plans and consolidation activities on finding the main idea of a paragraph, on including a supporting detail, and on answering a series of multiple choice questions related to the paragraphs. We recommend 3-4 class periods to work through this podcast assignment. Supporting resources include a link to the podcast, a written component, and multiple-choice questions.

Disclaimer: Use of the Term “Half-Breed”

Métis communities emerged in west-central North America from the initial marriages of European fur traders and First Nations women beginning in the late 1700s. Several generations of continuous intermarriage and community-building between the children of these unions gave rise to a new and unique culture—Métis culture—distinct from those of their European and First Nations forebears.

The emergence of these distinct communities necessitated the use of new language to identify and describe them. While the term “Métis” is most commonly used today to recognize those distinct communities from Ontario westward and has been enshrined in Canada’s Constitution since 1982, other terms such as “Halfbreed” or variations of it have also been used historically by both outsiders and the Métis communities themselves.

Numerous instances exist from present-day Ontario westward of Métis communities asserting themselves and advocating, as “Halfbreeds”, for their distinct rights and way of life.

Métis self-identification as “Half-Breeds” and advocacy for reserve lands in the Cypress Hills mirrors that of the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community who, in 1875, signed the “Adhesion by Halfbreeds of Rainy River and Lake” to Treaty 3. Similar to the Cypress Hills Métis bison hunters, the “Halfbreeds of Rainy River and Lake” advocated as a distinct collective for two new “reserves of land” of their own—rather than join existing First Nations bands or integrate into existing reserve lands—as well as “payments, annuities and presents, in a manner similar to that set forth in the several respects for the Indians [sic.]”.

This pattern of Métis community self-identification and collective advocacy as “Halfbreeds” is repeated across the Métis Homeland, throughout the historical record, from present-day Ontario westward, including the 1840 Petition of the “Half breeds” residing at the Town of Penetanguishene, 1850 petition from the “half-breeds” of Sault Ste. Marie; 1876 petition of “Half

Breeds” to join Treaty 4; 1880 petition from “Half-breeds of the Lakes Qu’Appelle”; and many more!¹

At present time, the term "half-breed" is considered offensive and problematic for the Métis people because it was used to describe people of mixed race in a way that was derogatory and demoralizing.

¹ Métis Collective Advocacy as “Halfbreeds” | Ontario Métis Facts (ontariometisfacts.com)

Background Information

Who are the Métis?

The Métis are a distinct Indigenous people with a unique history, culture, language, and way of life. The Métis Nation is comprised of descendants of people born of relations between First Nations women and European men. The offspring of these unions were of mixed ancestry. Over time, a new Indigenous people called the Métis resulted from the subsequent intermarriage of these individuals. This *ethnogenesis* of distinct Métis communities, along the waterways and around the Great Lakes region of present-day Ontario, occurred as these new people were no longer seen as extensions of their maternal (First Nations) or paternal (European) relations and they began to identify as a separate group. Distinct Métis settlements emerged as an outgrowth of the fur trade along freighting waterways and watersheds. In Ontario, these settlements were part of larger regional communities, interconnected by the highly mobile lifestyle of the Métis, the fur trade network, seasonal rounds, extensive kinship connections, and a shared collective history and identity.

There are many Métis communities throughout Canada. However, in Ontario, the Métis derive from seven historical communities throughout the province.²

Métis Storytelling

Storytelling is woven into all cultures. It can convey teachings, history, family and community memories and provide social entertainment and life lessons. Métis stories are intergenerational, passed down from the elders and knowledge holders to the young. Storytelling could occur around a campfire, at family and community gatherings during harvest or on cold winter nights. Like many Indigenous nations, Métis stories have been passed down orally for generations and, more recently, have become written stories in the form of novels, poetry, art and film.

² Métis Nation of Ontario | Culture and Heritage | Métis of Ontario (metisnation.org)

Métis stories do not have to be linear nor require a beginning, middle and end format. "Some Métis suggest that recounting the lineage of a story before telling it is vital to the cultural practice of Métis storytelling, whereas others prefer to maintain anonymity, thus allowing the story to take a life of its own, void of any temporal or labeled title."³

A skilled storyteller has an elaborate tone, engages the listeners, and sometimes even involves them in the story's development. Such is a skill of the past that is being reclaimed. In the spirit of cultural appreciation (and not appropriation), it is essential that the teller of a story has permission to share from the author, or that credit is given to the author, the community, or the nation to which it belongs.

The Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- Identify the main idea and supporting details from the text in preparation for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).
- Understand explicit and implicit stated information and ideas.
- Use the writing process to demonstrate their understanding of how the text is organized and to locate information within the text.
- Respond to, appreciate, and create a full range of texts in various forms, genres, modes, and media, including digital and media texts.
- Make connections between information and ideas to their personal knowledge, lived experiences and those of Métis heritage.

Success Criteria

- Students will successfully develop a main idea with sufficient supporting details from the text.
- Students will use various transferable skills (critical thinking, global citizenship and sustainability, communication and collaboration) to communicate their ideas, arguments and/or conclusions clearly.
- Students will organize information and ideas coherently and answer multiple-choice questions related to the historical Métis text.

³ *Voices of Métis: Métis* – Library and Archives Canada Our Voices.

Curriculum Connections:

Overall Expectation(s): B2, C1, D1

Specific Expectation(s): B2.2 B2.3, B3.2, B3.3, C1.1, C1.7, C2.6, D1.4.

Assessment

Before students begin to prepare for the OSSLT preparation assignment, we encourage educators to provide Minds On (Assessment for Learning) prompts on the page to assess previous student knowledge and prepare students for the upcoming task.

Sections #1–4 include a variety of student questions that assist in developing an understanding of identifying the main idea in a paragraph. The teacher can use these for Assessment as Learning.

Section # 1

OSSLT Preparation: Main Idea of a Paragraph

In paragraphs, the main idea is often the first sentence, otherwise known as the topic sentence. It is the most important piece of information for the reader. All other sentences in a paragraph add to the meaning of the topic sentence and are usually called supporting details.

The topic sentence is usually the first sentence, but it isn't always. It is usually quite long and contains a lot of information. In longer works, it is usually called the theme or central idea. Titles and headings often give clues about the main idea in books or chapters.

A correct response on the OSSLT will be a response that provides a correct main idea supported by clear, specific, and relevant details from the selection.

Minds On Lesson Opener: 15 minutes

Initiate a discussion to prepare students for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). The teacher will distribute the “Moose Paragraph” and questions (*Appendix A*) to students who can read the paragraph together or individually. As a whole class, students will learn to identify the main idea of a paragraph and complete multiple-choice questions relating to the paragraph. In partners or small group settings, students will generate their answers on sticky notes or through online thought-sharing apps like Jamboard on their devices.

Guiding Questions:

1. Where do we usually find the main idea of a paragraph?
2. What is the main idea of the paragraph?
3. How can we support it?

Have students share their answers with a gallery walk, in discussion or sharing activity.

Combine the students' answers and discuss them to ensure understanding is achieved.

Materials Needed: Sticky notes or devices, an online thought-sharing app to share with the whole class (Jamboard, etc.)

Section # 2

Lesson Activity and Consolidation: 60-75 minutes

Watch Métis Nation of Ontario's podcast "A Story Within Our Métis Stories" with Métis author Cherie Dimaline. Let students know that Cherie Dimaline alludes to and discusses the importance of the 1840 Penetanguishene Petition within the podcast.

After viewing, distribute a copy of an excerpt from "The 1840 Penetanguishene Petition" (*Appendix B*) to students. Students are encouraged to highlight, underline or make notes on the text in order to answer the following questions.

Guiding Questions:

1. Where do we usually find the main idea of a paragraph?
2. What is the main idea of the paragraph?
3. How can we support it?

Have students read the selection and answer the following questions on the sheet provided. The assessment has a written component and multiple-choice component similar to the Minds On Assessment.

Extension/Modification

- Teachers may choose to have students give feedback on the selection of text. *"What was difficult? What was familiar to you? Do you feel prepared for this section of the OSSLT?"*
- Teachers may choose to have students complete more than one Main Idea practice assignment. (Please see the EQAO website for more practice materials)

Materials Needed: Appendix B - An excerpt from "The 1840 Penetanguishene Petition" including questions.

Section # 3

Appendix A - Moose Paragraph



Moose (*Alces alces*) are large members of the deer family that can be found across most of Ontario. They are herbivores with highly developed senses of smell and hearing. Over 100,000 moose inhabit different regions of Ontario, which means that the province is home to approximately 10% of the estimated total number of moose living in North America. 5

The moose's diet consists of both terrestrial and aquatic vegetation, depending on the season, with branches, twigs and dead wood making up a large portion of their winter diet. Much of a moose's energy is derived from terrestrial vegetation, mainly consisting of forbs and other non-grasses and fresh shoots from trees such as willow and birch. As these terrestrial plants are rather low in sodium, as much as half of their diet usually consists of aquatic plants, including lilies and pondweed, which, while lower in energy content, provide the moose with its sodium requirements. In winter, moose are often drawn to roadways to lick salt that is used as a snow and ice melter. When populations of moose swell due to relaxed hunting and predation, access to food proportionately decreases. This leaves large numbers of moose vulnerable to malnourishment and diseases resulting from it. 10 15

Written Answer

State a main idea of this selection and provide one specific detail from the selection that supports it.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

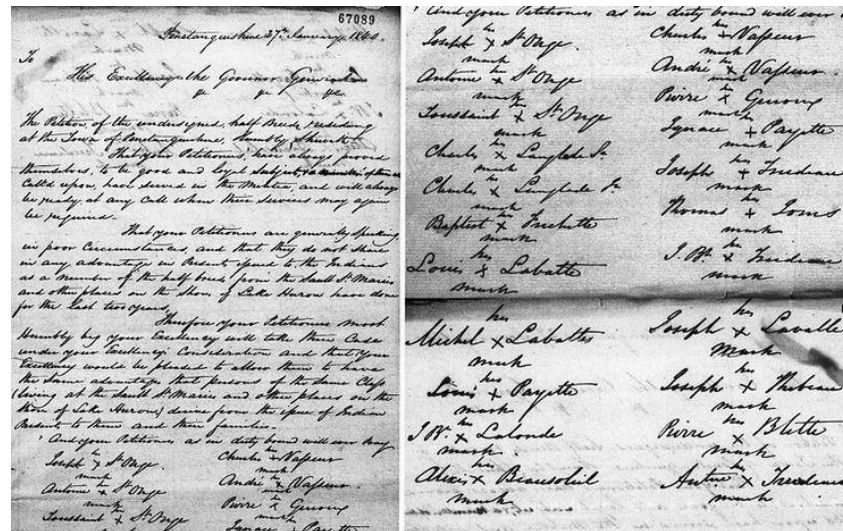
Multiple-Choice

(Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

1. What is the best meaning of “inhabit” as used in line 3?
 - a. Occupy
 - b. Leave
 - c. Reside
 - d. Settle
2. What is compared in this selection?
 - a. Moose and deer
 - b. Moose populations and access to vegetation
 - c. Terrestrial vegetation and aquatic vegetation diet of the moose
 - d. Areas of vegetation available for moose and deer
3. What is the purpose of the commas in lines 7 and 8?
 - a. To separate each item in a series of words
 - b. To separate independent clauses
 - c. To set off direct quotations
 - d. To separate dates, addresses, titles, and numbers
4. Which option best describes how the information in lines 12 to 17 is presented?
 - a. Chronologically
 - b. By cause and effect
 - c. As a problem and solution
 - d. By similarities and differences
5. Which of the following is likely to occur if the Ministry of Natural Resources eliminated the moose hunting season?
 - a. The moose population will decrease.
 - b. Moose can become malnourished due to competition for food.
 - c. Moose will cease to consume vegetation.
 - d. Moose will migrate to another province.

Section # 4

Appendix B - An excerpt from “The 1840 Penetanguishene Petition”



The 1840 Penetanguishene Petition is an early example in what would become a long history of Métis communities utilizing petitions as a tool of collective political expression—one that would later be repeated throughout the Métis Homeland, including Sault Ste. Marie, Red River, Batoche, and beyond.

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In the late 1830s, the Crown began excluding “Halfbreeds” from annual present-giving—a longstanding pre-treaty practice used to maintain diplomatic relationships with First Nation and Métis in the Upper Great Lakes. This policy change was a significant concern for Métis in the Upper Great Lakes, who by this time had developed distinct communities with their own unique identity, governance, and way of life, separate and apart from their First Nations neighbours. By 1839, discontent among the Georgian Bay Métis Community members in Penetanguishene was unmistakable. Members of the Métis community surrounded Indian Agent Samuel Jarvis’s residence to confront him about the discriminatory policy change.

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On January 27, 1840, the “Half breeds residing in the town of Penetanguishene” collectively organized once again. Twenty-two members of the Métis community—including members of the Longlade, Labatte, Laval, Trudeau, and St. Onge families—sent a petition to the Crown to restore their inclusion in present-giving. The petition stated:

“[We] do not share in any advantage in presents issued to the Indians as a number of the half breeds, from the Sault St. Marie and other places on the shores of Lake Huron. ... Therefore, your Petitioners most humbly beg your Excellency will take their case under your Excellency's consideration and that your Excellency would be pleased to allow them to have the same advantages that persons of the same class (living at the Sault St. Marie [sic] and other places on the shores of Lake Huron) derive from the issue of Indian present to them and their families.”

In the Penetanguishene Petition, the Métis in Penetanguishene firmly recognize and situate themselves within a broader Upper Great Lakes Métis Community. Their appeal for justice is grounded in the principle of maintaining equity with their Métis relatives.

Written Answer

State a main idea of this selection and provide one specific detail from the selection that supports it.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

Multiple-Choice

(Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

1. The word “discriminatory,” as used in line 16, means
 - a. Impartial
 - b. Equitable
 - c. Prejudiced
 - d. Damaging
2. What was the reason for the creation of the petition?
 - a. Joining of Métis communities
 - b. Half-breed exclusion from annual present giving
 - c. Asking for more money
 - d. Petition to be a U.S. Territory
3. What is the purpose of the quotations in lines 24 to 32?
 - a. To doubt the validity of a word
 - b. To quote a source directly
 - c. To indicate speech
 - d. To differentiate a nickname
4. Which option best describes how the information in lines 9 to 17 is presented?
 - a. Chronologically
 - b. By cause and effect
 - c. As a problem and solution
 - d. By similarities and differences
5. Which communities did the 1840 Penetanguishene Petition affect?
 - a. Northwestern Ontario
 - b. Mattawa
 - c. Moosonee
 - d. Georgian Bay

Section #5 - Answer Key **Moose**

1. What is the best meaning of “inhabit” as used in line 3?

- a. **Occupy**
- b. Leave
- c. Reside
- d. Settle

2. What is compared in this selection?

- a. Moose and deer
- b. Moose populations and access to vegetation
- c. **Terrestrial vegetation and aquatic vegetation diet of the moose**
- d. Areas of vegetation available for moose and deer

3. What is the purpose of the commas in lines 7 and 8?

- a. **To separate each item in a series of words**
- b. To separate independent clauses
- c. To set off direct quotations
- d. To separate dates, addresses, titles, and numbers

4. Which option best describes how the information in lines 12 to 17 is presented?

- a. Chronologically
- b. By cause and effect
- c. **As a problem and solution**
- d. By similarities and differences

5. Which of the following is likely to occur if the Ministry of Natural Resources eliminated the moose hunting season?

- a. The moose population will decrease.
- b. **Moose can become malnourished due to competition for food.**
- c. Moose will cease to consume vegetation.
- d. Moose will migrate to another province.

Answer Key 1840 Petition

1. The word “discriminatory,” as used in line 16, means
 - a. Impartial
 - b. Equitable
 - c. Prejudiced
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 - d. Georgian Bay

Additional Resources and References

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The 1840 Penetanguishene Petition | Ontario Métis Facts (ontariometisfacts.com)

⁴ Link leads to the YouTube home page, the transcript is available in the video description.

