

# Aboriginal Education Day Intermediate Lesson Plan



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**EDUCATION DAY**  
**CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL**  
**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2009 – COPPS COLLISEUM**

**Intermediate Curriculum Connections**

**The Great Birch Tree**

Adapted and modified from The Great Kapok Tree Readers' Theatre

by Lynne Cherry

**Overall Expectations**

**Language Arts**

**Oral Communication**

- Listening in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes.
- Using speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Reflect on and identify their strengths as listeners and speakers, areas of improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in oral communication situations.

**Reading**

- Use knowledge of words and cueing systems to read fluently.

**Writing**

Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience.

- Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience.
- Use editing, proofreading and publishing skills, and strategies and knowledge of language conventions to correct errors, refine expressions, and present their work effectively.

## **Media Literacy**

- Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.
- Create a variety of media works for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions and techniques.
- Identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.

## **Drama and Dance**

- Create drama pieces, selecting and using a variety of techniques.

## **Visual Arts**

- Identify the principles of design and use them in ways appropriate for this grade when producing and responding to works of art.

## **Science**

### **Grade 7**

- Assess the impacts of human activities and technologies on the environment, and evaluate ways of controlling these impacts.
- Investigate interactions within the environment, and identify factors that affect the balance between different components of an ecosystem.
- Demonstrate an understanding of interactions between and among biotic and abiotic elements in the environment.

## **Science**

### **Grade 8**

- Assess the personal, social, and/or environmental impacts of a system, and evaluate improvements to a system and/or alternative ways of meeting the same needs.

## **History/Geography**

### **Grade 7**

- Identify and explain examples of conflict and cooperation between the French and First Nation; Identify types of conflict and describe strategies for conflict resolution.
- Describe and analyze conflicting points of view about a series of historical events
- (e.g., using the natural environment without regulation or considering environmental impact versus respectful and sustainable use).

- Investigate and report on methods of conflict resolution employed in everyday life at home, at school, and in the community (e.g., looking at how humans can be environmentally respectful and friendly at home, school, and in the community).
- Analyze current environmental issues or events from the perspective of one or more of the themes of geographic inquiry.
- Choose an environmental issue that illustrates one of the themes of geographic inquiry and explain why various individuals and groups have different opinions on the issue (e.g., theme of interaction: wilderness conservationists versus loggers).
- Describe how humans acquire, manage, and use natural resources, and identify factors that affect the importance of those resources.
- Use a variety of resources and tools to gather, process, and communicate geographic information about the distribution, use, and importance of natural resources.
- Describe positive and negative ways in which human activity can affect resource sustainability and the health of the environment.

## **History/Geography**

### **Grade 8**

- Describe and analyze conflicting points of view about a historical issue or personality (e.g., how humans should consider and use the natural environment and issues of sustainability).
- Describe the everyday life of various groups (e.g., the different ways that First Nations people, Métis, and Europeans used the natural environment on a daily basis) in western Canada in the late nineteenth century.

### **Prior Knowledge**

### **Lesson Plan**

1. Students co-operatively or independently complete a **KWL** chart demonstrating prior knowledge/experiences regarding First Nations people and their use of birch trees, birch bark, and other plants and trees in the natural environment. Use reproducible “**KWL**” to record this information – Appendix 1.
2. Teacher introduces/reviews the characteristics of the narrative as a writing form (characters, setting, plot, problem/s, and solution).

3. Teacher distributes **The Great Birch Tree** – Appendix 2 and reads it over with students to familiarize them with the vocabulary, and script, and to review appropriate ways to present information (communicates clearly, using tone, pitch, and volume).
4. Teacher provides time for students to practice the script while s/he circulates to assist any struggling readers or students needing help to concentrate on the task.
5. Students perform the Readers' Theatre for the class or another group.
6. Whole class discussion about narrative form to identify the purpose, audience, and various points of view in this play. Students could fill out the reproducible **Characteristics of Fiction** – Appendix 3 when identifying the parts of a fiction.
7. As a class, identify the animals and other life in the story that would be affected by the birch tree being cut down. Discuss how natural resources have been mismanaged, what living things are vulnerable in this process, long-term effects, and how sustainability should be the direction for future development of our natural surroundings. Teachers can use **Exploring Current Environmental Issues in Our World** - Appendix 4.
8. The students are given the opportunity to write a narrative or a Readers' Theatre script to illustrate how many living things use birch trees, other trees, and plants in the local area to survive and to address the problem of destroying natural habitats. This can be done independently, in partners, or in small groups.
9. Students self and peer edit their writing for conventions appropriate for this grade. Use **Editing Check List** reproducible – Appendix 5
10. Have students write from the perspective of a settler, First Nations person, or the Earth. The writing must be from that perspective, accurate, and researched. Students can be given the **Grade 7 and 8 Rubric** reproducible – Appendix 6 so they know the criteria for this writing piece.

### **Recommended Extensions**

1. Have students discuss in groups or assume roles and role play from the perspective of a First Nations person and then a settler of New France to explore the commonalities and differences in how these two groups used and perceived the natural environment. When enough information has been gathered, students can individually, in small groups, or as a class, fill out the reproducible **Compare and Contrast** – Appendix 7.
2. As a class, examine, discuss, and record how humans exist in a state of positive interdependence with their natural environment. How do humans rely on nature and vice versa? Does one group need the other more? Discuss whether a hierarchy between humans and plant/animals really exists. Have students consider if they are

using the natural environment in an irresponsible way (making waste, wasting water etc.) and have them generate possible strategies to correct their behavior.

3. Write a journal entry from the perspective of a First Nations person who has come to realize that many things (e.g., plants, trees, land, animals etc.) that are essential to their traditional way of life are being mismanaged and destroyed by the settlers.
4. Have students form a triangle debate about whether or not humans should be using the natural environment for their own gain, without regulation, or having to abide by a governmental framework for sustainability, and if people should be monitored or regulated to ensure sustainability, or trusted to do the right thing without regulation.
5. Have students browse newspapers or read the local news on line. Have them pick one current event that highlights the issue/s of environmental destruction, lacking regulation and/or the issue of sustainability of the environment. Have students research the issue and record key points to share with a partner or small groups using the reproducible **Exploring Perspectives on Environmental Issues** – Appendix 5. Hold a “Current Issue Café” where students can mingle, share, and discuss the current events they have researched.
6. Teacher informs students that many Aboriginal nations believe that humans should be planning carefully everyday to care for the Earth so that it has all that people, plants and animal life need to live well for the next seven generations. Have students reflect on what the problem/s in the story is other relevant environmental issues and brainstorm a list of solutions and strategies that they could be used to solve the issue of mismanagement of resources, like trees, and how to ensure sustainability that will provide for the seven generations to come. Students can use the reproducible **Planning for the Next Seven Generations** – Appendix 8 to record their ideas.
7. Have students develop a list of ways that they use trees and plants in their lives every day. Have them fill out the reproducible called **Modern Uses of Plants and Trees** – Appendix 9. Have them rate how important these things are to survival in modern times on a scale of 1-10 (e.g. shelter, fire wood, food, transportation, medicine, oxygen etc.).
8. Make a poster to address the issue of environmental destruction and the negative impact it has OR a poster to address the issue of sustainability and why it should be used by all humans. Use the elements of design to create the poster and make it visually appealing as a media piece. Students should be prepared to discuss with the teacher what elements of design they used and why they used these elements to create an effective media piece.

## **Modifications and Accommodations**

1. Teacher circulates to assist struggling readers with difficult vocabulary or buddy them up with a peer.
2. Teacher gives extra practice for students who need it, or reduces the amount they need to read/present.
3. Teacher helps students with their oral communication and presentation skills.
4. Struggling writers can write less and create a shorter play or narrative, or make a storyboard of illustrations/photographs and captions to recount the significant events that occurred in the story.
5. Non-writers can have the teacher or a peer scribe their play or narrative.
6. Struggling writers can have the teacher edit their narrative, play, or storyboard.

## **Evaluation**

1. Students can self-evaluate their listening and speaking skills using the reproducible **Oral Communication Self-Evaluation Sheet** – Appendix 10.
2. Teacher can evaluate their presentation skills during Readers' Theatre and group work using the reproducible **Oral Communication Evaluation for Readers' Theatre** – Appendix 11.
3. Readers' Theatre writing can be evaluated using the reproducible **Assessing Writing – Readers' Theatre** – Appendix 12.
4. Group work can be evaluated.
5. Journal Perspective writing can be assessed.

## **Materials**

- Copies of Readers' Theatre;
- Reproducibles: oral communication reflection sheet, Readers' Theatre assessment sheet, oral communication reflection sheet; other reproducibles mentioned in this document;
- Pencils; markers, and/or pencil crayons;
- Paper;
- Space to move; and
- Computers for on-line reading or access to newspapers.

## Resources

- Readers' Theatre Script: The Great Birch Tree (An Adaption of the story The Great Kapok Tree).
- Goodminds Publisher offers a variety of print resources that address the issue of Environmental Destruction and the importance of caring for the Earth. The online catalogue is available at <http://www.goodminds.com/>

# KWL

Appendix 1

What I KNOW	
What I WANT TO KNOW	
What I LEARNED	
What I would like more information about	

# The Great Birch Tree

Appendix 2

Adapted and modified from The Great Kapok Tree Readers' Theater  
by Lynne Cherry

**Narrator:** One woman was walking into the forest. Moments before, the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling wolves. Now all was quiet as the forest animals watched the woman and wondered why she had come. The woman stopped and struck the trunk of the tree with her ax.

**The Woman:** Whack! Whack! Whack!

**Narrator:** The sounds of the blows rang through the forest. The wood of the tree was very hard. The white papery bark peeled back from the trunk.

**Woman:** Chop! Chop! Chop!

**Narrator:** The woman wiped off the sweat that ran down her face and neck.

**The Woman:** Whack! Chop! Whack! Chop!

**Narrator:** Soon the woman grew tired. She sat down to rest at the foot of the great Birch tree. Before she knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled her to sleep. A squirrel lived in the great Birch tree. She scampered down its trunk to where the woman was sleeping. The squirrel looked at the gash the ax had made in the great Birch tree. Then the squirrel climbed onto her shoulder and softly chatted in her ear.

**Squirrel:** Ikwe (woman) this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down.

**Narrator:** A butterfly flew near the sleeping woman's ear.

**Butterfly:** Ikwe (woman) our home is in this great Birch tree and I fly from tree to tree and flower to flower collecting pollen. In this way I pollinate the trees and flowers throughout the forest. You see, all living things depend on one another.

**Narrator:** A wolf appeared from behind the great Birch tree. He growled to the sleeping woman.

**Wolf:** Ikwe (woman) I have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, and then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. In the spring when the rains come, the soil will be washed away and there will be no place for new trees or plants to grow.

**Narrator:** An eagle flew down from the tree tops.

**Eagle:** Ikwe (woman) you must not cut down this tree. I have flown over the forest and have seen what happens once you begin to chop down the trees. Many people settle on the land. They bring bulldozers and big machines to clear the land and soon the forest disappears. Where once there was life and beauty now are houses, roads, and concrete.

**Narrator:** A bright and small tree frog crawled along the edge of a leaf. In a squeaky voice he piped in the woman's ear.

**Frog:** Ikwe (woman) a ruined forest means ruined lives ... many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this great Birch tree.

**Narrator:** A mountain lion had been sleeping along a branch in the middle of the tree. Because his coat blended into the light and shadows of the tree, not one had noticed him. Now he leapt down and padded silently over to the sleeping woman. He growled in her ear.

**Mountain Lion:** Ikwe (woman) the great Birch tree is home to many birds and animals. If you cut it down where will I find my dinner?

**Narrator:** A porcupine swung down from branch to branch and whispered to the woman.

**Porcupine:** Ikwe (woman), do you know what we animals and humans need in order to live? Oxygen. And, Ikwe (woman), do you know what trees produce? Oxygen! If you cut down the forest you will destroy that which gives us life.

**Narrator:** The porcupine continued.

**Porcupine:** Ikwe (woman), you are chopping down this tree with no thought for the future. And surely you know that what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today. You must think of our children, who tomorrow must live in a world without trees.

**Narrator:** The frog spoke once again to the Ikwe (woman) in her deep and lazy voice.

**Frog:** Ikwe (woman) how much is beauty worth? Can you live without it? If you destroy the beauty of the forest, on what would you feast your eyes?

**Narrator:** A child who lived with his family in the forest knelt over the sleeping woman. He murmured in her ear.

**Boy:** Ikwe (woman), when you awake, please look upon us with all new eyes.

**Narrator:** The woman awoke with a start. Before her stood the forest child, and all around him, staring, were the creatures who depended upon the great Birch tree.

**Birch Tree:** What wondrous animals they were! The woman looked about and saw the sun streaming through the trees. Spots of bright light glowed like jewels amidst the dark green forest. The woman smelled the fragrant smell of the forest. She felt the morning mist rising from the forest floor. But she heard no sound, for the creatures were strangely silent. The woman stood and picked up her ax. She swung back and looked at the animals and the child. She hesitated. Then dropped the ax and walked out of the forest.

# Characteristics of Fiction

Appendix 3

Main Idea

Main Character(s)

Problem/Conflict

Solution

# Exploring Current Environmental Issues in Our World

Appendix 4

Title of Article: \_\_\_\_\_

Environmental Issue/s being addressed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Key Points from the Article:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who/what is being affected by this problem? Are they given voice in the article?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Possible solutions or strategies for making positive change and ending this environmental problem:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ways that citizens and individuals can help to address and solve this issue at home, school or in the community:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Editing Check List

Appendix 5

## Form

- Have you followed the proper narrative form?
- Does your introduction include characters, setting, and action?
- Does the middle of your story have three main events leading to a well-developed problem?
- Does the ending include a solution that makes sense?

## Clarity and Organization

- Does your writing make sense?
- Is your problem well-developed and clearly written?
- Is the solution clearly written so the problems are solved in a logical way?
- Do you need to cut or add writing to make it better?

## Conventions

- Did you include proper conventions?
- Did you use capitals for proper nouns, place names, names, start of sentences?
- Did you use a variety of sentences (exclamatory, declarative, questions)?

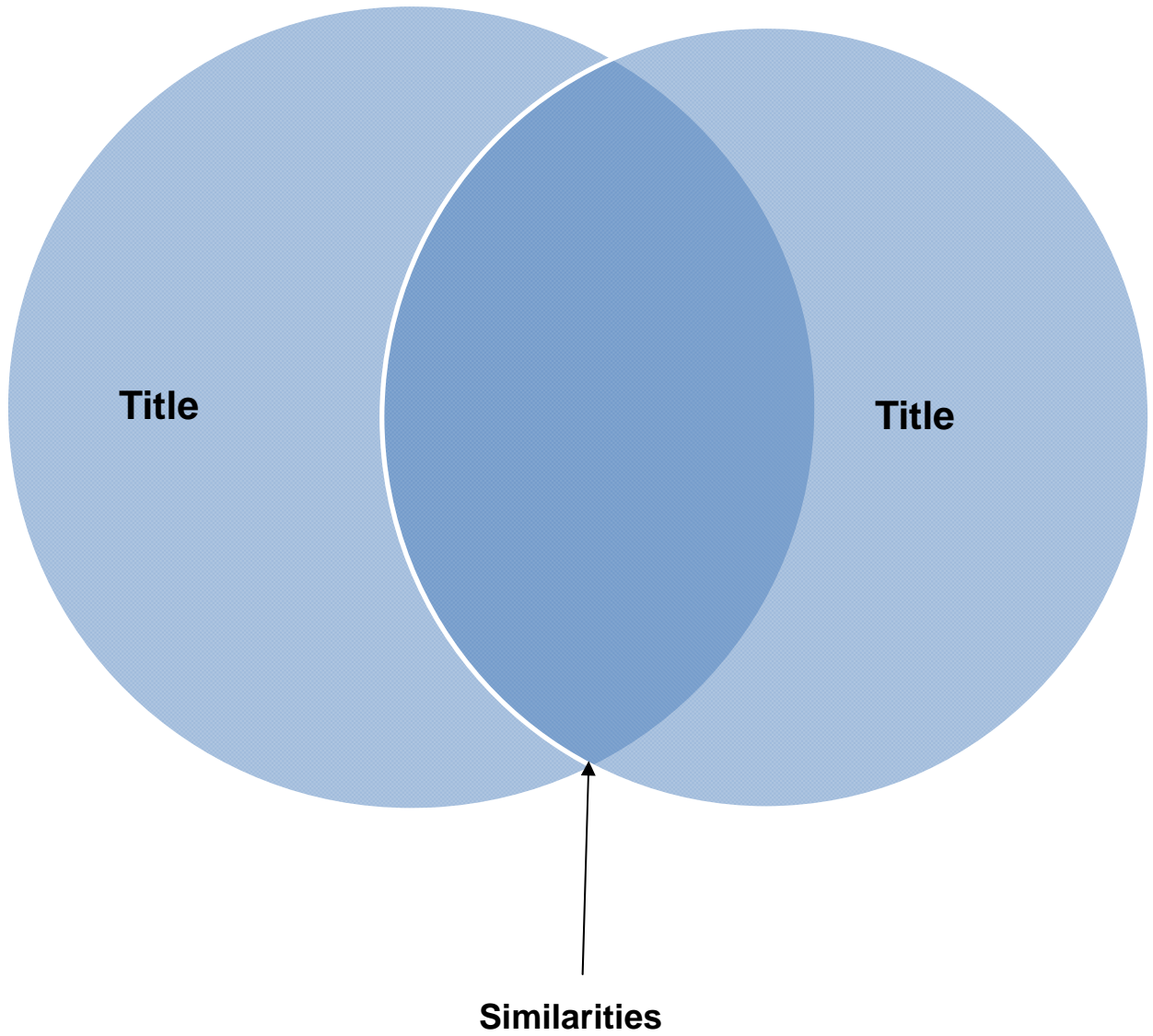
## Style and Word Choice

- Is your writing interesting?
- Have you used adjectives and description to develop your story and characters?
- Have you used a variety of sentence starters?

# Exploring Perspectives on Environmental Issues

Category	Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	- explain key characteristics of life in English Canada from a variety of perspectives	- demonstrates limited understanding of the ways in which different cultural groups used/misused the environment for survival	- demonstrates some understanding of the ways in which different cultural groups used/misused the environment for survival	- demonstrates good understanding of the ways in which different cultural groups used/misused the environment for survival	- demonstrates thorough understanding of the ways in which different cultural groups used/misused the environment for survival
<b>Thinking</b>	- analyse, synthesize, and evaluate historical information (i.e. describe how cultural, historical, and traditional beliefs, customs, and practices affected stakeholder groups' respect and use of the environment for survival)	- demonstrates a limited ability to use both primary and secondary sources to analyse, synthesize, and evaluate historical information	- demonstrates some ability to use both primary and secondary sources to analyse, synthesize, and evaluate historical information	- demonstrates a good ability to use both primary and secondary sources to analyse, synthesize, and evaluate historical information	- demonstrates exceptional ability to use both primary and secondary sources to analyse, synthesize, and evaluate historical information
<b>Communication</b>	- communicate the results of inquiries for specific purposes and audiences, using media works, oral presentations, written notes and reports, drawings, tables, charts, and graphs	- communicates information gathered in the research process with limited effectiveness	- communicates information gathered in the research process with some effectiveness	- communicates information gathered in the research process with considerable effectiveness	- communicates information gathered in the research process with exceptional effectiveness
<b>Application</b>	- identify and explain examples of conflict and co-operation between the French and First Nations as it pertains to the use of or misuse of the natural environment	- perspective writing represents the researched perspective with very little detail, authenticity, and accuracy	- perspective writing represents the researched perspective with some detail, authenticity, and accuracy	- perspective writing represents the researched perspective with very good detail, authenticity, and accuracy	- perspective writing represents the researched perspective with exceptional detail, authenticity, and accuracy

# Compare and Contrast



# Planning for the Next Seven Generations

Appendix 8

Students will look at solutions and sustainability in current environmental issues.

Many Aboriginal nations believe that humans should be planning carefully everyday to care for the Earth so that it has all that people, plants, and animal life need to live well for the next seven generations.

Name some serious environmental issues that exist today. Examine the issue and look at any pertinent background information about that topic. Brainstorm solutions or strategies that speak to solving these problems. Aim for solving the issue, stopping the issue or bringing the issue to a place of sustainability.

Current environmental issues and background information:

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Possible strategies for solving this environmental problem:

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Current environmental issue and background information:

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Possible strategies for solving this environmental problem:

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# Modern Uses of Plants and Trees

Appendix 9

Develop a list of ways that humans use trees and plants in their lives every day. Rate how important these things are for human survival in modern times on a scale of 1-10. Consider how the trees/plants are used by humans in important ways, for example, shelter, fire wood, food, transportation, medicine, oxygen, etc.

1. Name of plant/tree?

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How humans use this in daily life?

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Rate the importance of this plant/tree on a scale of 1-10

1 (**irrelevant**)   2   3   4   5 (**somewhat important**)   6   7   8   9   10 (**essential to life**)

2. Name of plant/tree?

---

How humans use this in daily life?

---

---

Rate the importance of this plant/tree on a scale of 1-10

1 (**irrelevant**)   2   3   4   5 (**somewhat important**)   6   7   8   9   10 (**essential to life**)

3. Name of plant/tree?

---

How humans use this in daily life?

---

---

Rate the importance of this plant/tree on a scale of 1-10

1 (**irrelevant**)   2   3   4   5 (**somewhat important**)   6   7   8   9   10 (**essential to life**)

# ORAL COMMUNICATION SELF-EVALUATION SHEET

Appendix 10

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Oral communication is when people are involved in a conversation, or they are presenting information to others. It is a skill to speak well and clearly.

A good **oral speaker** does the following:

- Speaks clearly, at a good pace, and volume level;
- Knows the topic well and can speak about it;
- Keeps eye contact with their audience;
- Answers questions about the topic;
- Shows confidence as a speaker;
- Seems to enjoy speaking about the topic and speaks with expression;
- Listens attentively to the audience when they have a question or comment to make; and
- Catches the interest of the audience and makes the topic seem interesting.

What are three strengths you have as a speaker?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

As a speaker, what are two things you could improve?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

What are your strategies to improve in these two areas?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

# ORAL COMMUNICATION EVALUATION FOR READERS' THEATRE

Appendix 11

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Work Checklist:**

When the student practiced/presented the Readers' Theatre did they contribute meaningfully and work constructively in their group by:

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Offering praise	___	___	___
Giving feedback	___	___	___
Using problem-solving strategies	___	___	___
Brainstorming relevant ideas	___	___	___
Staying on task	___	___	___

**Independent Presentation Checklist:**

When the student practiced/presented the Readers' Theatre, did they demonstrate an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour by:

	Yes	No
Speaking clearly, at a good pace, and volume level	___	___
Showing they know the topic well and can speak about it	___	___
Keeping eye contact with their audience	___	___
Answering questions about the topic	___	___
Showing confidence as a speaker	___	___
Seeming to enjoy speaking about the topic, with expression	___	___
Listening attentively to audience questions/comments	___	___
Catching the interest of the audience, making the topic interesting	___	___

# ASSESSING WRITING – READERS’ THEATRE

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this evaluation sheet to evaluate the Readers’ Theatre writing task. Circle the number that best represents the student’s work in that area.

Level 1 - very little evidence of this was included.

Level 2 - some evidence of this was included.

Level 3 - an adequate level of this was included.

Level 4 - this was thoroughly and consistently included.

<b>Brainstorming</b>				
Have they generated an adequate quantity/quality of ideas regarding what the Readers’ Theatre could be about and who could be involved?	1	2	3	4
Have they looked through their idea list to determine whether the ideas they have gathered are relevant and adequate for the purpose of the Readers’ Theatre?	1	2	3	4
Have they shared their ideas with their peers/teacher for feedback on strengths and areas of need?	1	2	3	4
<b>Writing Form</b>				
Have they included an appropriate title for the Readers’ Theatre?	1	2	3	4
Have they correctly and consistently included proper Readers’ Theatre form?	1	2	3	4
Have they included the speaker’s name and the spoken lines/narrative for that character every time?	1	2	3	4
<b>Writing Process</b>				
Have they used words or phrases that help to convey their meaning, plot action, and develop the character profile?	1	2	3	4
Have they established a personal voice for each character in the play, showing each character’s unique perspective?	1	2	3	4
Does the Readers’ Theatre make sense/unfold in a logical and organized way?	1	2	3	4
<b>Editing Process</b>				
Have they self/peer-edited the rough copy to find errors in convention, spelling, reasoning, organization, word choice, and fluency?	1	2	3	4
Did they show evidence of the editing process (e.g., reordering sentences, removing and adding words, including more descriptive words, consistent tense, spelling correction?)	1	2	3	4