



# NORTHERN STUDIES 30

DRAFT CURRICULUM | 2023

Government of  
Northwest Territories

## BIG IDEAS

- Big Ideas help to guide the Northern Studies 30 program. Note that the Big Ideas below are from, or adapted from, British Columbia's (BC) Grade 12 Social Studies courses and combined with takeaways from conversations with local stakeholders, including Northwest Territories (NWT) Indigenous Governments.
- Big Ideas intersect and combine depending on the topic and can blend and be considered across cross-disciplinary applications.

### The Land

The identities, worldviews, and languages of the people in the Northwest Territories are renewed, sustained, and transformed through their **connection** to the Land.

### Governance

Indigenous Peoples continue to **advocate** for and assert rights to self-determination. Understanding how political decisions are made is critical to being an informed and engaged citizen, and is influenced by the distribution of political and social power.

### Wellness

Indigenous Peoples are **reclaiming** mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being despite the continuing effects of colonialism in the NWT and beyond. Mental and physical wellness ties directly to the quality of the relationships between people, the land, and the spiritual world.

### Reconciliation

Reconciliation requires all northern people to work together to foster healing, address injustice, and **celebrate** diversity and living well together through the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

# NORTHERN STUDIES 30

## Learning Standards

Curricular Competencies	Content
<p><i>Students are expected to be able to do combinations of the following:</i></p> <p><b>Social Studies Inquiry Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas, and communicate findings and decisions.</li></ul> <p><b>Historical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess the significance of people, events, places, issues, or developments in the past and present. <b>(significance)</b></li><li>• Identify what the creators of accounts, narratives, or maps have determined to be significant. <b>(significance)</b></li><li>• Consider worldviews from multiple sources, specifically local sources, to validate knowledge.</li><li>• Using appropriate <b>protocols</b>, interpret a variety of sources, including local stories or oral traditions and Indigenous ways of knowing (holistic, experiential, reflective, and relational experiences, and memory) to contextualize different events in the past and present. <b>(evidence)</b></li><li>• Recognize your biases and actively listen to communicate well together.</li><li>• Characterize different historical periods, including examples of progress and decline, and identify key turning points that marked periods of change. <b>(continuity and change)</b></li><li>• Assess the long- and short-term causes and the intended and unintended consequences of an action, event, decision, or development. <b>(cause and consequence)</b></li></ul>	<p><i>Students are expected to know the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Geographic regions can encompass a variety of physical features and/or human interactions.</li><li>• Physical features and natural resources influence demographic patterns and population distribution.</li><li>• Human activities alter NWT landscapes in a variety of ways.</li><li>• Colonization, economics, and law as they relate to the NWT.</li><li>• Regional self-government systems/development.</li><li>• Indigenous well-being creates an opportunity for all NWT residents to further develop as capable human beings.</li><li>• How to create an NWT response to the inequalities in relationships of Indigenous people with governments in Canada and colonial powers worldwide.</li></ul>

- Assess the connectedness or the reciprocal relationship between people and place. **(cause and consequence)**
- Explain different perspectives on past and present people, places, issues, or events, and distinguish between worldviews of today and the past. **(perspective)**
- Explain and infer perspectives and sense of place. Compare varying perspectives on land and place. **(perspective)**
- Make reasoned, ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and assess appropriate ways to remember, reconcile, or respond. **(ethical judgment)**

### Geographical Thinking

- How do we determine and assess the features that make particular geographical phenomena and locations worthy of attention or recognition? **(spatial significance)**
- What can we conclude about the variation and distribution of geographical characteristics over time and space? **(patterns and trends)**
- How do human and natural factors and events connect with and influence each other? **(interrelationships)**
- What human and physical features and identities characterize a place, and what lenses aid and influence our understanding? **(geographical perspective)**
- What information can be used as evidence to support ideas about geography, and how adequately does the geographical evidence justify the interpretations offered? **(evidence and interpretation)**
- What information can be used as evidence to support ideas about geography, and how adequately does geographical evidence justify the interpretations offered? **(ethical judgment)**

- The impact of Indigenous survival and resiliency in the face of historical colonial structures on the future wellness of NWT communities.
- The responsibilities of all NWT residents to actively participate in reconciliation

**Curricular Competencies - Elaborations****Social Studies Inquiry***Key skills:*

- *draw conclusions about a problem*
- *assess and defend a variety of positions on a problem, issue or topic*
- *identify and clarify a problem or issue*
- *evaluate and organize collected data*
- *interpret and present data*
- *accurately cite sources*
- *construct graphs, tables and maps to communicate ideas*

**Historical Thinking****Assess the significance of people, events, places, issues, or developments in the past and present. (significance)***Key questions:*

- What factors can cause people, events, places, issues or developments to become more or less significant?
- What criteria should be used to assess the significance of people, events, places, issues or development?

*Sample activities:*

- Advocate for collective self, the Land, spirit, and others to reconcile histories to build a prosperous and fulfilling future.
- Understand how the process of political decision-making is critical to being an informed and engaged citizen.

**Characterize different historical periods, including examples of progress and decline, and identify key turning points that marked periods of change. (continuity and change)***Key questions:*

- What factors lead to changes or continuities affecting groups of people differently?

- How do gradual processes and more sudden rates of change affect people living with them? Which method of change has more of an effect on people?
- How are periods of change/continuity perceived by the people living through them? How does this compare to how they are perceived after the fact?

*Sample activities:*

- Examine how contact and colonialism continue to affect Indigenous People’s political, social, and economic lives and their relationships with non-Indigenous people within communities.
- Identify how societal responses have changed over time towards Indigenous healing practices. Examine the causes and consequences of the changing healing practices in the NWT. Is there a turning point to consider in the reclamation of healing processes?
- Recognize Indigenization as a tool in decolonization and a path to forgiveness and healing that allows for accessible language, culture and cultural expressions. Celebrate Identity awareness and stories of belonging.

**Assess the long- and short-term causes and the intended and unintended consequences of an action, event, decision, or development. (cause and consequence)**

*Key questions:*

- What is the role of chance in particular actions, events, decisions or developments?
- Are there events with positive long-term but negative short-term consequences, or vice-versa?

*Sample activities:*

- Identify how Indigenous people challenge and resist Canada’s ongoing colonialism through self-governance, leadership and self-determination.
- Understand Indigenous ways of knowing, decolonization practices and interconnected social justice issues.

**Explain different perspectives on past and present people, places, issues, or events, and distinguish between worldviews of today and the past. (perspective)**

*Key questions:*

- What sources of information can people use today to understand people in different times and places?
- How can we generalize values and beliefs in a given society or period, or should we?

*Sample activities:*

- Examine how decision-making in a democratic system of government is influenced by the distribution of political and social power, particularly in the NWT.
- Consider how the concept gifted to us in *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* of being and becoming an NWT capable person creates an opportunity for all northerners to embrace holistic wellness.
- Examine how positive relationships and kinship models can support being and becoming a capable NWT human being.
- Consider worldviews from multiple sources to validate knowledge.

**Make reasoned, ethical judgments on how political institutions and ideology shape the exercise of power and the nature of political outcomes in local regions/Indigenous/government relationships and Canada/NWT systems. (ethical judgment)**

*Key questions:*

- What is the difference between implicit and explicit values?
- Why should we consider the historical, political, and social context when making ethical judgments?
- Should people of today have any responsibility for actions taken in the past?
- Can people of the past be celebrated for outstanding achievements if they have also done things considered unethical today?

*Sample activities:*

- Consider ongoing political issues in the NWT (current events - Social Studies inquiry).
- Assess how systemic racism continues to impact the well-being of the NWT capable person.
- Consider how reconciliation plays out in your local community, the NWT, and the larger global world.

**Using appropriate protocols, ask questions and corroborate inferences of Elders and other local Knowledge Keepers through oral traditions, Indigenous knowledge, memory, history, and stories focusing on wellness as a function of being and becoming a capable human being. (evidence and protocols)**

*Key questions:*

- How is the idea of the NWT capable person, as defined by the *Dene Kede* curriculum as “ones who had integrity with the spiritual world, the land, other people and themselves” shown in your community?
- What do the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in your community believe will help youth in being and becoming a capable person?

*Sample activities:*

- How does your community see different roles for men and women traditionally and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- Establish criteria, with the help of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, to build a model and identify capable people within your area or region.
- Connect with community members to celebrate their identification as an NWT capable person for your home.

### **Geographical Thinking**

**How do we determine and assess the features that make particular geographical phenomena and locations worthy of attention or recognition? (spatial significance)**

*Key question:*

- What adaptations must be made for humans to exist within their particular realities?

*Sample activity:*

- Consider the shape of the Land in your area and how it has affected human development, settlement, use, and community placement.

**What can we conclude about the variation and distribution of geographical characteristics over time and space? (patterns and trends)**

*Key questions:*

- Consider different historical and practical land-use changes; what is continuous, and what has changed?
- How has land-use changed because of human behavioural patterns (subsistence to the recreational land-use/wage economy)?
- How has climate change impacted land use?

*Sample activities:*

- Inquiry project considering changing transportation technologies and their effect on the local community structure: as technologies evolved and became more mechanized, how did the community structure respond?
- Recreate local important transportation modes and skills i.e., moosehide boats, kayaks, one stroke engines, etc.



## **How do human and natural factors and events connect with and influence each other? (interrelationships)**

### *Key questions:*

- What are the interacting forces to consider how the world might have been otherwise and how the future might be reshaped?
- What would a world that was Indigenized look like? Is this possible?

### *Sample activities:*

- Identify historical and modern relationships between the different people using the Land.
- Examine the building and development of communities and their connection to colonialism and the advent of a wage economy system.
- Consider migration to urban centres as a force to empower social justice initiatives that can transform individuals and systems. Consider empowerment, housing, poverty, the standard of living, and economics.
- Assess the connectedness or the reciprocal relationship between people and place.

## **What human and physical features and identities characterize a place, and what lenses aid and influence our understanding? (geographical perspective)**

### *Key question:*

- What perspectives may be present in creating geographical spaces, i.e., national parks, game reserves/preserves, traplines, mining/reclamation, and commodities?

### *Sample activity:*

- Consider the cultural/ecological significance of habitat, modern-day development/traditional land use, governance, and decision-making affecting NWT land.

## **What information can be used as evidence to support ideas about geography, and how adequately does the geographical evidence justify the interpretations offered? (evidence and interpretation)**

### *Key questions:*

- How has the different kinds of geographical information available been used to profile your community?
- How should this information lead to policy and actions by different levels of government and people?

- Who decides what information should be acted upon?

*Sample activities:*

- Mapping a photograph: using archival or locally produced photographs, consider the topographical details and terrain representation to create a map on important features.
- Create criteria for important inclusions and emphasize specific features of their local environment not previously considered.
- Walk the map, establish geographical importance from a physical examination of the surroundings.

**How desirable and responsible are the practices and outcomes associated with particular geographical actions and events?  
(ethical judgment)**

*Key questions:*

- How do western and Indigenous governance systems value the Land?
- How does culture influence land use?

*Sample activities:*

- Assess who determines land use and decides social impacts.
- Consider how reconciliation plays out in your local community, the NWT, and the larger global world.

**Content - Elaborations**

*Students are expected to know the following:*

**Geographic regions can encompass a variety of physical features and/or human interactions**

- *regions*
- *landforms*
- *community features*
- *oral history/traditions/language*
- *worldview/land use*

**Demographic patterns and population distribution are influenced by physical features and natural resources**

- *geographical/natural resources*
- *historical land use*
- *human migration*
- *Indigenous kinship/land relationships*

**Human activities alter NWT landscapes in a variety of ways**

- *protected/valued/benefited*
- *regional changing landscapes and climate*
- *economic uses*
- *Language Keepers/world view/linguistic heritage*
- *cultural traditions/community purpose*
- *migration to urban centres*

## **Colonization, economics, and law, as they relate to the NWT**

- *government systems*
- *language reclamation and revitalization*
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the world, Canada, and the NWT*

## **Regional self-government systems/development**

- *political decision-making*
- *consensus*
- *political leaders*
- *political issues*
- *political ideology*
- *Canadian Arctic sovereignty and global Northern issues*
- *resource boards and modern land agreements, and urban centre/remote centre control over decision-making*
- *role of social media in social power movements in the NWT, Canada, and the world.*

## **Indigenous well-being creates an opportunity for all NWT residents to further develop as capable human beings**

- *Dene Laws/Inuuqatigiit*
- *Western and Indigenous healing practices*
- *traditional knowledge*
- *resiliency*
- *language and culture reclamation*
- *mental health and addictions*
- *privilege, positionality, and self-reflection*

## **Creating an NWT response to the inequalities in relationships of Indigenous people with governments in Canada and colonial powers worldwide**

- *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit Peoples (MMIWG2S)*
- *world views and social justice (action)*
- *social justice and citizenship*
- *community wellness and leadership*
- *boil water advisories and arsenic contamination*
- *lateral violence*
- *housing*
- *education stability*
- *health care access and inequalities*

## **Understand and reflect upon how Indigenous survival and resiliency in the face of historical colonial structures impact the future wellness of NWT communities**

- *NWT timeline of development*
- *mental health and addictions*
- *systemic racism*
- *self reflect on personal responsibilities for reconciliation and healing*
- *futuring – healthier NWT going forward*

## **Understand that it is the role of all people to actively participate in reconciliation**

- *Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and 94 calls to action in your community*
- *effects of migration to urban centres*
- *cultural representations of NWT and local Indigenous people*
- *cultural expressions; for whom and by whom*

- *issues of cultural appreciation and appropriation in the NWT*
- *role of social media*
- *memorials and museums*

*Resources to consider:*

<https://tc2.ca/shop/teaching-geographical-thinking-revised-expanded-edition-p-27>

<https://tc2.ca/shop/teaching-historical-thinking-revised-expanded-edition-p-2160>

<https://tc2.ca/en/creative-collaborative-critical-thinking/resources/thinking-about-history/>

<https://tc2.ca/en/creative-collaborative-critical-thinking/resources/reconciliation/>

[https://tc2.ca/uploads/PDFs/reconciliation/meaningful\\_reconciliation.pdf](https://tc2.ca/uploads/PDFs/reconciliation/meaningful_reconciliation.pdf)

*Resources for assessment:*

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/classroom-assessment>

*Note: Strong interrelation with curriculum and **Historical/Geographical** thinking processes. This is based on a similar correlation within the BC curriculum to make process transfer easier.*

Shifting the focus on assessment away from traditional exams or essays and toward “Evaluating students on their ability to provide evidence-based responses to open-ended inquiries.” (Sharpe, Bahbahani, & Huynh, 2016, p. 7)

# Northern Studies 30

## Recommended sample approaches for the Big Ideas

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### The Land

#### *Sample activities:*

- **Using evidence as your basis, assess and determine whether the results of a particular land-related action had intended or unintended consequences.**
- **Evaluate the most important causes and consequences of various events, decisions or developments connected to the Land and help create a land-use plan for your NWT community.**
  - Permafrost, flooding, fire, Arctic coast melt
  - Visual storytellers, on-the-land experience, GIS mapping. Whose stories are maps telling, and what purpose do the maps fulfil?
  - Ownership/capitalism-structured western, land-based society and land wealth
  - Consider Giant Mine, Pine Point, diamonds, and oil resources in the Beaufort Delta
- **Using a Treaty simulation or Legislative Assembly simulation, explain how people's beliefs on different sides of the same issue influence their opinions.**

#### *Key questions:*

- What is the significance of local landforms in oral history, traditions, or language?
- What is the connectedness or the reciprocal relationship between people and place in the NWT?
- How will significant environmental issues affect NWT people today?
- What are potential ethical solutions to contemporary challenges, such as climate change and resource disputes?

## Governance

### *Sample activities:*

- **Reflect on how different groups and communities benefited or suffered from a particular change. Create a community profile of a region or area within the NWT connected to the chosen change. Explore populations, resources, and systems, suggesting possible ways to balance any change within the community.**
  - NWT and Canada: [\(continuity and change\)](#)
    - Compare government systems from Indigenous and local governments to more extensive regional, territorial, and Indigenous self-government as forms of self-determination in a global world. [\(cause and consequence\)](#)
    - Consider how language reclamation and revitalization affect relationships between NWT communities.
    - Identify the significance of UNDRIP, global relations and Canadian governance to the NWT.
  - Explain different perspectives on the past and current regional self-government development, including the negotiated Nunavut/NWT division. Distinguish between worldviews of today and the past. [\(perspective\)](#)
    - Assess the function of resistance and challenge in the creation of the NWT. [\(cause and consequence\)](#)
    - Foster your relationships when asserting your rights and taking responsibility to fulfill your roles within the Treaty lands, NWT and Canada. [\(cause and consequence\)](#)
  - Develop an understanding of how consensus government in the NWT works. [\(cause and consequence\)](#) [\(significance\)](#)
  - Identify what creators of accounts, narratives and stories have determined to be important in the story of their role in the NWT political system. Explore the identification and functions of political leaders past and present. [\(evidence\)](#)[\(cause and consequence\)](#) [\(significance\)](#)
  - What factors led to changes or continuities affecting people differently; for the acquisition of citizenship in the NWT, Treaty voting rights, immigration and the evolution of Canadian citizenship? How are those factors today affecting NWT residents? [\(continuity and change\)](#)
  - Make reasoned, ethical judgments on the position of ideology (colonization, democracy, capitalism) in NWT decision-making. The formation of the Northwest Territories reflects a colonial past and a diverse, resilient future. [\(ethical judgment\)](#) [\(ethical judgment\)](#)
  - Consider worldviews from multiple sources to validate the knowledge on NWT global issues and the effects of Canadian Arctic sovereignty on the NWT. [\(significance\)](#)
  - Understand the resource boards, modern land agreements, and regional centre/small community control over decision-making. [\(perspectives\)](#)



- Analyze the role of social media in social power movements in the NWT, Canada, and the world. ([ethical judgment](#))
- Using a Treaty simulation or Legislative Assembly simulation, explain how people's beliefs on different sides of the same issue influence their opinions.

*Key questions:*

- What is the responsibility of people in an autonomous or self-determining territory toward each other and the larger Canadian identity?
- How does the evolution and reclaiming of Indigenous governance shape the NWT? How does this integrate into the territorial government and Canadian collective?
- Assess current issues for their significance in NWT governance.
- How has media/social media influenced the citizenship/Indigeneity of the NWT?

**Wellness**

*Sample activities:*

- **Create a wellness initiative. Evaluate how the available evidence shapes your perspective on the people, locations, events, or developments for wellness within the NWT. Examine what sources are available and what information or perspectives are missing. Incorporate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in your findings. Put the plan into action in your community.**
- **Compare and contrast continuities and changes from the perspectives of different groups in different periods and places:**
  - Indigenous knowledge integration for NWT capable human beings
  - Resiliency
  - NWT/Canadian education, healthcare systems
  - Health perspectives
  - Health and education practices and success
  - Criteria for well-being as a local, NWT and global citizen
  - NWT response to the inequalities in relationships of Indigenous people with government systems in Canada and colonial powers worldwide

- Individual world views and understandings of social justice issues in a local, national and global sphere
- Primary and secondary sources of stories
- Social justice actions
- Cultural perspective in responsible action to support effective leadership
- Indigenous survival through historical colonial structures and its impact on future wellness of NWT communities
- Historical NWT developments over time (comparing development within Canada)
- Kinship patterns, the value of family, family and interpersonal relationships, and well-being in a post-colonial environment
- The response to colonization in trauma responses and stereotype creation

*Key questions:*

- How can you advocate for the collective self, the Land, spirit, and others to reconcile histories and build a prosperous and fulfilling future?
- What is your role to advocate against the marginalization and intersectionality of MMIWG2S?
- What do Northern people need to do to enact the recommendations/rights outlined in UNDRIP and the TRC and MMIWG2S final reports?

**Reconciliation**

*Sample activities:*

- **Build criteria on how your community recognizes influential people, locations, events, or developments.**
- **Create a museum/exhibit/memorial to celebrate stories, histories, or reconciliation passages that reflect the spirit of reconciliation in the NWT.**
- **This may be an appropriate spot for the NWT Blanket Exercise or a variation.**
- **A 'community connection' project evaluating community programs by participation or personal review, to connect with personal reconciliation response (participation in community-sponsored, outside-of-school programming or personal experiences to connect with the Indigenization of the community).**

*Key questions:*

- How does the idea of 'Canada as a nation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people' incorporate reconciliation?
- What barriers to reconciliation exist in your community/territory/country?
- What is my role in advancing reconciliation programs in my community/territory/country?