

Introductory Video 

# Orange Shirt Day 2018

Orange Shirt Day!  
 “Every Child Matters”  
 Honouring Residential School Survivors and Remembering Those Who Didn’t

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## Orange Shirt Day - What is it?

- It is a national movement to recognize and acknowledge the experience of students of Indian Residential Schools, to honour the survivors and those who did not make it home.
- Orange Shirt Day began in 2013
- This initiative asks for every Canadian to wear an orange shirt on September 30 in the spirit of healing and reconciliation, honouring and validating the healing and reconciliation of former students and their families.

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## Why September 30<sup>th</sup>?

- September 30<sup>th</sup> was chosen because it was during that time of the year in which children were taken from their homes and communities to the residential schools.

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## What are residential schools?

- 1870-1996: the Canadian government operated 130 residential schools throughout Canada.
- Over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Metis children were taken from their homes to attend these school
- It is estimated that over 6,000 children died while attending residential schools or as they tried to flee the schools.
- There are approximately 70,000 to 80,000 Indigenous people alive today who are survivors of the Residential School System.

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## What are residential schools?

- The purpose of residential schools was to assimilate Indigenous children into the mainstream culture
- Attendance was compulsory for children aged 6-18
- Schools were set up as immersion programs
  - Use of Indigenous Languages was forbidden and punishable.
  - Children were not permitted to practice traditional spiritual and cultural beliefs so that they would become Christian
- Physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse were common
- Living conditions were harsh - inadequate nutrition and other forms of neglect
- Parents who were forced to send their children to residential schools also had to deal with the effects of separation and of having no involvement at all with the care of their children
- They also lost the opportunity to pass on traditional knowledge and values

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## Residential School effects

- The aims of assimilation meant devastation for those who were subjected to years of abuse.
- Loss of traditional languages
- Loss of traditional culture and traditions
- Disconnect from family and community; when students returned to their communities, they often found they didn't belong. They didn't have the skills to help their parents, and became ashamed of their native heritage.
- Intergenerational Trauma- The trauma of Residential Schools continues for many generations.
- How does this connect to Empowerment or Disempowerment?

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## Vocabulary:

- Resilience:
  - an ability to recover from or adjust to misfortune, challenging circumstances, or change
- Survivor:
  - in this context, an Indigenous person who attended residential school and lived through the experience
- Residential School:
  - schools to which Indigenous children were forced to go, leaving their homes and families behind. They were funded by the Canadian government.
- Forgiveness:
  - the act or process of forgiving or being forgiven
- Reconciliation:
  - the restoration of relationships with the process of healing

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## Resilience

- What is resilience?
  - Can you come up with an example of someone who has demonstrated resilience?
  - What does it mean in the context of residential schools?

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## “When We Were Alone” by



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeaS6vIPUSk>

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## Canada's Apology

Two primary objectives of the residential school system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, “to kill the Indian in the child.” Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

--Prime Minister Stephen Harper, official apology, June 11, 2008

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## Truth & Reconciliation Commission

- 94 Calls to Action
- #62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
  - i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- #63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:
  - i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
  - iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

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## Woliwon! / Thank You!



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