



VOICES OF CHANGE (T8)

OVERVIEW

Learners will read examples of petitions and letters written to Provincial and Crown authorities throughout the Treaty Denial period. Working in pairs or individually, students will create their own petitions for selected topics including habitat destruction, mobility restrictions, assimilationist pressures, disease, and market opportunities. The petitions will go by email or be formatted for a social media post rather than a written letter.

LEARNERS WILL...

- ▶ Consider carefully real letters written by Mi'kmaw leaders and individuals.
- ▶ Be exposed to a range of issues Mi'kmaq faced during the Treaty Denial period.
- ▶ Encounter Mi'kmaw agency and efforts to change the conditions of this difficult time.
- ▶ See that oral histories continued to be reflected in written correspondence to government officials.
- ▶ Be asked to write and think from a Mi'kmaw perspective on particular issues.
- ▶ Create possible strategies or solutions to a real historical issue.

FOCUS

Examples of letters and petitions can be found at the Nova Scotia Archives-- see the link in the "Additional Resources" panel). Working in pairs, students will create their own emails based on a short description of an issue (provided). Each letter should have three components, 1) description of who they are and where they live, 2) description of the problem, and 3) a request for a solution or suggested first steps to a solution.

Some basic guidelines may help learners succeed with this experience:

- Learners should be discouraged from suggesting strategies that would result in Mi'kmaw people changing from being who they have been (no assimilationist strategies). Rather, strategies that allow for Mi'kmaw practices and identity to continue and thrive should be encouraged.
- Letters should convey what students know about Mi'kmaw practice (e.g., netukulimk) and oral histories as strengths.
- Letters are formal communications. Slang or other informal phrasing are not present in these types of letters.
- Often people use exaggeration to create a point, which students could try.

A technology twist for this experience would be to use multimedia (video or audio) to deliver a persuasive message.



It is important that students engaging in this experience have a clear understanding of the following content:

- The Mi'kmaq as the Indigenous people of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region.
- Mi'kma'ki as the ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq.
- The family as the heart of Mi'kmaw culture and practice.
- Mi'kmaw core cultural values.
- Understand the concepts of *netukulimk* and *ms-it no'kmaq*. The concept of netukulimk is included in the script as well.
- The oral traditions inherent in Mi'kmaw culture and practice.
- That the treaty denial period is defined by British governance and culture denying the treaty agreements and by an overwhelming colonial experience of environmental and cultural disruption.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See the Treaties theme introductions (p. 29, 30, 34-36, 52) and the general introduction to the resource (p. 9-12)

Additional resources can be found at the Nova Scotia Archives, see: <https://archives.novascotia.ca/mik-maq/results/?Search=petitions&-SearchList1=all>