

# Comic Book Study



## Darkness Calls

English 120-130

Developed by



NWT Literacy Council



## Acknowledgements

The NWT Literacy Council gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance for this project from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, GNWT.



Lisa Campbell developed the activities for this comic book study.

Contact the NWT Literacy Council to get copies of this resource. You can also download it from our website.



### **NWT Literacy Council**

Box 761, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6

Phone toll free: 1-866-599-6758

Phone Yellowknife: (867) 873-9262

Fax: (867) 873-2176

Email: [nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca)

Website: [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca)

**June 2010**



## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Page 3-4
Prereading.....	Page 5-8
Vocabulary.....	Page 9-18
Language Skills.....	Page 19-31
Reflection.....	Page 33-49
Reading and Comprehension.....	Page 51-67
Extended Learning Activities.....	Page 69-80



## Introduction

*Darkness Calls* is the story of a teenager who is bullied at school, is misunderstood by his teacher, and feels socially isolated from his family. Even though the hero, Kyle, has tremendous artistic talent and the support of a good friend, he finds one day just too overwhelming and considers taking his own life. With the help of an Elder who is related to Kyle, he combats the evil urges threatening to destroy him. He has a symbolic battle for his soul between the shapeshifting "trickster" warrior hero Wesakechak, who teaches people lessons in Cree legends, and another reimagined character of Cree mythology: the evil, cannibal spirit Weetigo or Wihtiko (as spelled in the comic book). By travelling through this story, Kyle realizes that he has the strength and will to live – despite Weetigo's efforts to lure him into taking his own life.

*Darkness Calls* was produced by the Healthy Aboriginal Network (HAN), a non-profit organization that promotes the health, literacy, and wellness of First Nations youth through the use of visual art.

*Darkness Calls* is a suicide prevention comic book and offers hope to many teens and young adults struggling with their identity. It was released in June 2006. Statistics show the Aboriginal suicide rate is two to three times higher than the non-Aboriginal rate in Canada. Within the youth age group the Aboriginal suicide rate is estimated to be five to six times higher than that of non-Aboriginal youth.

### About Comic Books<sup>1</sup>

Many educators have begun to realize something that long-time comic book readers have always known: **comics are valuable.**

Recently, comics and graphic novels have garnered much attention from educators for their viability as an educational tool. The consensus among most teachers who have used comics in the classroom is that they motivate those students who are unmotivated to read "traditional" books.

<sup>1</sup>From: <http://bookshelf.diamondcomics.com/public/default.asp?t=1&m=1&c=20&s=182&ai=37708&ssd>

This comic study provides learners with a variety of learning strategies, activities and handouts. In this study you will find:

- Prereading questions
- Vocabulary
- Language skills
- Reflection
- Reading and comprehension
- Extended learning activities

Some of the learning outcomes in this comic book study are:

- Set the purpose for reading
- Read to comprehend and respond
- Use word analysis skills to extract meaning from written text
- Use the writing process
- Write to respond, comprehend and express thoughts

## Please Note

This comic book study is very in-depth and provides a variety of activities for learners to do. Instructors can use all the questions, activities and ideas or can pick and choose from each section.

Each section has a list of learning activities and handouts.

**Learning Activities** give instructors ideas for each learning strategy.



**Handouts** are pages you can copy for learners to use during the learning activities. Some activities have no handouts. Some activities have several handouts.







## Prereading

2 Handouts

Preview the comic book with learners before you start reading.

### Activity 1 – Introduce *Darkness Calls* (Handout #1)

Discuss the title, author's name, publisher, date, and picture on the front. Can the learners draw any conclusions about the comic book from the picture on the front? Write their answers on flipchart paper. Ask learners to fill in Handout #1.

### Activity 2 – Comic Book or Graphic Novel (Handout #2)

Compare and Contrast comic books and graphic novels. Ask learners if they know what the differences and similarities between a comic book and graphic novel are. Ask learners to fill in the Venn diagram on Handout #2 after you have brainstormed the similarities and differences.

*Most simply, length. A comic and a graphic novel are told via the same format, officially called sequential art: the combination of text, panels, and images. Comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels are in this sense all the same thing, but comic books stretch a story out to about thirty pages, whereas graphic novels can be as long as six hundred pages.*

Ask learners if they have ever read a comic book or a graphic novel. Show learners a variety of examples of both comic books and graphic novels.

### Activity 3 – K-W-L (No handout)

Know – Want to Know – Learned is a great introduction activity to any topic.

1. Ask learners what they already **know** about suicide. Have them fill in the **K** column before they read the comic book. They write down everything they already know about the topic.
2. What do they **want** to know about suicide? Learners fill in the **W** column before they read the comic book. They write down things they want to



learn about the topic. This helps them have a purpose for reading and focuses their attention on key ideas. Post in the classroom.

3. Learners read the comic book.
4. After they have read the comic book, have the learners fill in the **L** column. They write down the new knowledge they gained. They can also check the information in the **K** column to see if it is correct.
5. Use one color to record prior knowledge and another color to record what information was added after reading (all levels).

<b>K stands for Know</b> What do I already <b>know</b> about this topic?	<b>W stands for Will or Want</b> What do I think I <b>will</b> learn about this topic? What do I <b>want</b> to know about this topic?	<b>L stands for Learned</b> What have I <b>learned</b> about this topic?
---	--	---



## Prereading Handout #1

### Check out the Framework<sup>2</sup>

Items to Check Out	Record Information and/or Reaction
<p><b>Title:</b> Any predictions, questions, clues, or connections?</p>	
<p><b>Author:</b> Are you familiar with the author? Do you know any interesting facts about the author?</p>	
<p><b>Art Work on Cover:</b> Any clues or guesses? What are your predictions?</p>	
<p><b>Inside Cover:</b> When was it published? Who published it? Who funded it?</p>	

<sup>2</sup> From: <http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/checking%20out%20the%20framework.htm>



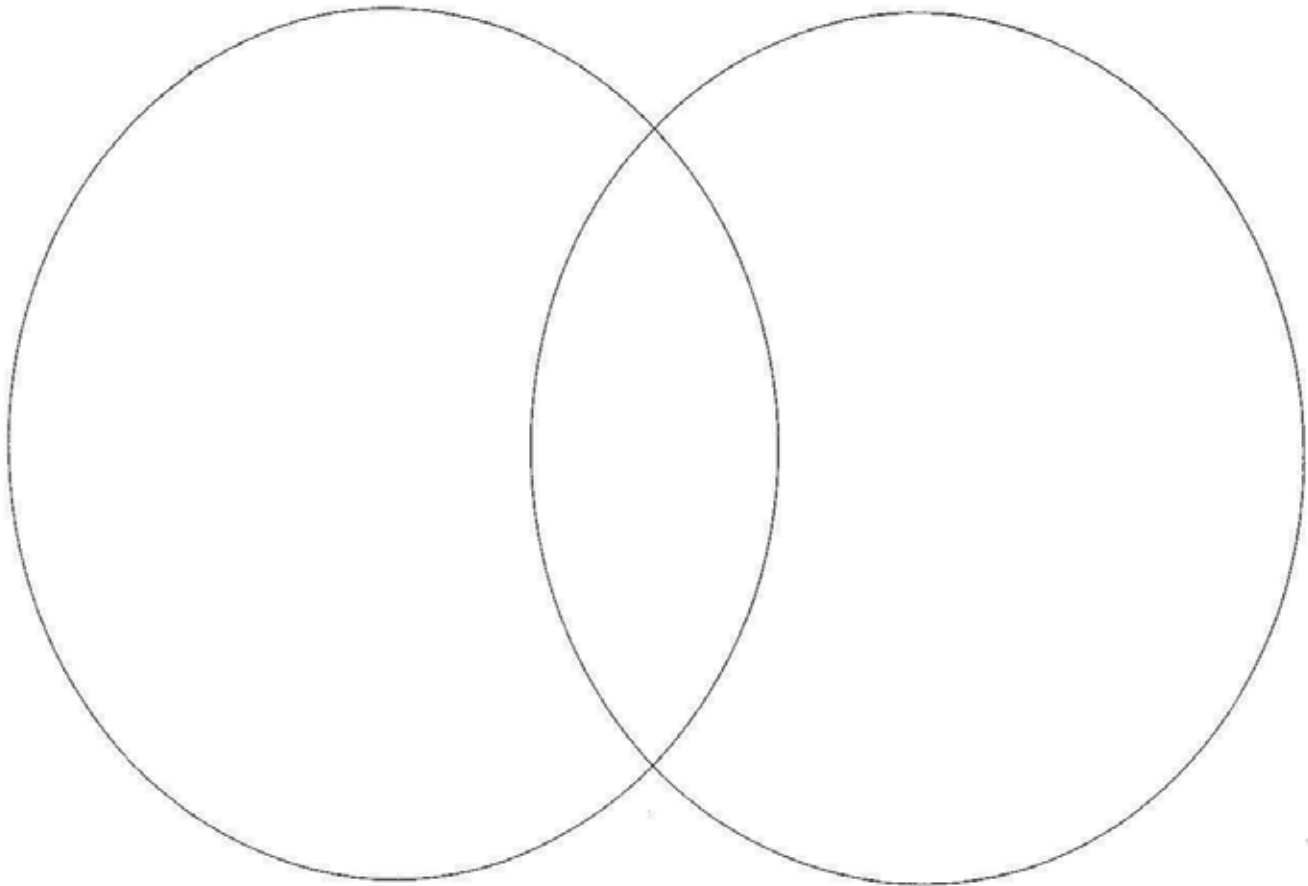
## Prereading Handout #2

### Compare and Contrast

What are the similarities and differences between a comic book and graphic novel? Fill in the Venn Diagram below. Write down all the similarities in the joined area and the differences on the outside.

**Comic Book**

**Graphic Novel**





## Vocabulary

4 Handouts

### **Activity 1 – Definitions for New Words** (Handout #1)

Learners match the meaning of the word to the definition. If they do not know the definition, they can look the word up in a dictionary. Encourage learners to use an online dictionary.

### **Activity 2 – Sentences for New Words** (Handout #2)

Learners write a sentence for each new word.

### **Activity 3 – Word Study** (Handout #3)

Learners study their new words in more depth. They break words into syllables and find the root words. They also study parts of speech by looking at nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

### **Activity 4 – Word Search** (Handout #4)

Learners practice words from the story by doing a word search.



## Vocabulary Handout #1

### New Words

Match the correct word with the correct definition. Look the words up in a dictionary if you do not know them.

Word	Definition
1. focus	___ To show a courteous regard for
2. ancient	___ With genuine, earnest intent
3. honoured	___ Made clear or evident to the eye or the understanding
4. respect	___ Very old
5. seriously	___ Finding fault with
6. obviously	___ Close or narrow attention; concentration
7. special	___ Sorry
8. apology	___ Stopping a person in the middle of a conversation
9. demon	___ Held in esteem or honor
10. manifested	___ The ability to think about creative things in your head

11. confusion	___ The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group
12. criticizing	___ An evil spirit
13. wisdom	___ Inability to understand something
14. imagination	___ Knowledge of what is true or right and able to act on it
15. interrupting	___ Easily seen, recognized, or understood;
16. culture	___ Distinguished or different from what is ordinary or usual



## Vocabulary Handout #2

### Writing Sentences

Write a sentence for each word.

- |              |                |                  |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. focus     | 6. obviously   | 11. confusion    |
| 2. ancient   | 7. special     | 12. criticizing  |
| 3. honoured  | 8. apology     | 13. wisdom       |
| 4. respect   | 9. demon       | 14. imagination  |
| 5. seriously | 10. manifested | 15. interrupting |
|              |                | 16. culture      |

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

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

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_



9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_



## Vocabulary Handout #3

### Word Study

It is easier to understand words when we study them. In this section we will break words into syllables, put them in alphabetical order, find the root word and look at the parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb).

- |              |                |                  |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. focus     | 6. obviously   | 11. confusion    |
| 2. ancient   | 7. special     | 12. criticizing  |
| 3. honoured  | 8. apology     | 13. wisdom       |
| 4. respect   | 9. demon       | 14. imagination  |
| 5. seriously | 10. manifested | 15. interrupting |
|              |                | 16. culture      |

1. Divide these words into syllables and put the accent on the loudest syllable. The first one is done for you. Say the words aloud.

focus	fo' / cus	demon	
ancient		manifested	
honoured		confusion	
respect		criticizing	
seriously		wisdom	
obviously		imagination	
special		interrupting	
apology		culture	

2. Put the words in alphabetical order. culture, confusion and criticizing

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Find the root word for each of these words:

honoured \_\_\_\_\_ seriously \_\_\_\_\_

obviously \_\_\_\_\_ manifested \_\_\_\_\_

confusion \_\_\_\_\_ criticizing \_\_\_\_\_

wisdom \_\_\_\_\_ imagination \_\_\_\_\_

interrupting \_\_\_\_\_

4. A noun is a person, place or thing. List all the nouns from your new words. Some words can be more than one thing. For example “focus” can be both a noun and a verb. Look up the words in a dictionary.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The verb is perhaps the most important part of the sentence. Every English sentence must have a verb. A verb expresses any kind of mental or physical action. List all the verbs from your new words. Remember that “focus” is both a verb and a noun.

---

---

---

---

---

6. Adjectives describe a noun. List all the adjectives from your new words.

---

---

7. Adverbs are used to modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb:

- Mary sings **beautifully**.
- David is **extremely** clever.
- This car goes **incredibly** fast.

Adverbs also tell when or where:

- tomorrow, finally, well, best, fast, soon

List all the adverbs from your new words.

---

---

8. There are three words in your new word list that can be used in different ways.

- “Special” is both a noun and an adjective.
- “Ancient” is both a noun and an adjective.
- “Focus” is both a noun and a verb.

Write two sentences for each word showing the different meanings.

## **Special**

Noun

---

Adjective

---

## **Ancient**

Noun

---

Adjective

---

## **Focus**

Noun

---

Verb

---



## Vocabulary Handout #4

### Word Search

t i d e x x g h o d p v e j y  
o b v i o u s l y i e r c c l  
t b t s t d w s b m m m r g s  
n d e t s e f i n a m i o o u  
e s d q s q k v e g t d f n o  
i n t e r r u p t i n g o m i  
c n e h s g c g c n a u c g r  
n m o i o u r i q a p o u l e  
a j p i l n z t l t o z s n s  
w c x t s i o a f i l r c r v  
n s u q n u i u z o o c g s x  
i r b g b c f t r n g b y h s  
e r d s e p z n n e y w l n v  
t c e p s e r n o y d x l q b  
w i s d o m p g p c g y t a q

ancient

apology

confusion

criticizing

culture

demon

focus

honoured

imagination

interrupting

manifested

obviously

respect

seriously

special

wisdom



## Language Skills

5 Handouts

### **Activity 1 – Contractions** (Handout #1)

Often comic books use a lot of contractions in the text. The author is trying to make the text more authentic by using contractions. Learners rewrite each contraction into two words.

### **Activity 2 – Compound Words** (Handout #2)

The compound words on the handout are taken from *Darkness Calls*. Compound words are words that have two words in them. Learners write the word from List 2 that matches the word in List 1.

### **Activity 3 – Homonyms** (Handout #3)

Homonyms are two words that sound alike and may even be spelled alike but have different meanings, such as *trunk* (meaning part of an elephant) and *trunk* (meaning a storage chest). Learners do a review of homonyms that are used often such as *their, there* and *they're* and *too, to* and *two*. Then they work with a partner to find as many homonyms as they can in the comic book *Darkness Calls*. They write a sentence for each word that shows the meaning of the word.

### **Activity 4 – Slang** (Handout #4)

Comic books use a lot of slang to get the message across. Slang is casual spoken language which differs from formal speech. Learners read each sentence and then write each sentence in proper grammar.

### **Activity 5 – Expressions** (Handout #5)

Expressions are used in everyday language. Learners explain three different expressions from the story and then come up with five other expressions.





## Language Skills Handout #1

### Contractions

In *Darkness Calls* the author uses a lot of contractions. Contractions are used to shorten words. Look at how the words below have been shortened.

did not	didn't	do not	don't
can not	can't	will not	won't

Rewrite each contraction into two words.

1. I've told you time and time again not to draw in class. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I'm listening. \_\_\_\_\_
3. It's a dangerous world out there. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ah dude. That's too bad. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ah, I don't think he's gonna do anything, cuz he's a punk.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. So I'd like to give him the floor. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Aw, I wasn't listening anyways. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Go back. You'll get in trouble. \_\_\_\_\_

Now you try! Find five more sentences with contractions in the story and write them down below. Underline the contraction and then rewrite each contraction into two words. Try to find contractions that have not been used yet.

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Language Skills Handout #2

### Compound Words

These compound words are taken from *Darkness Calls*. Compound words are words that have two words in them. Write the word from List 2 that matches the word in List 1. The first one is done for you.

List 1	List 2
1. head <u>phones</u>	where
2. up _____	phones
3. any _____	one
4. every _____	ever
5. use _____	set
6. some _____	less
7. no _____	selves
8. when _____	times
9. any _____	body
10 our _____	thing

In a group, scan the comic book for more compound words. Write the two smaller words and the compound word on the table below. Compare your list with the other groups.

<b>Compound word</b>	<b>Two words that make up the compound word</b>



## Language Skills Handout #3

### Homonyms

Two words that sound alike and may even be spelled alike but have different meanings, such as *trunk* (meaning part of an elephant) and *trunk* (meaning a storage chest).

#### **Their, There, They're**

**Their** – shows that they own something

- I went on their skidoo to their cabin.

**There** – if you can point at it, use this spelling

- There is the clock.
- There are 22 learners in this class.

**They're** – short form for **they are**

- They're in math class.

Underline the correct homonym.

1. **There, their, they're** on **there, their, they're** way to Ft. Resolution.
2. When we get **there, their, they're** we will stop for lunch.
3. **There, their, they're** not going with us.
4. I always wanted to go **there, their, they're**.
5. I hope that **there, their, there** is enough food for **there, their, they're** wedding. I know that **there, their, they're** going to be really happy.

**To, Two, Too**

**To** – going toward something

- I am going to school.

**Too** – more than enough or meaning also

- I've had too much beer to drink.
- It is too far to walk.
- I am coming too.

**Two** – number 2

- I have two dogs and two cats.

Put it all together – underline the correct homonym.

1. The **to, too, two** boys hiked **to, too, two** Ft. Liard.
2. **There, their, they're** going **to, too, two** Ft. Liard on a camping trip.
3. The **to, too, two** girls are going **to, too, two** Ft. Liard, **to, too, two**.
4. When they get **to, too, two** Ft. Liard, **there, their, they're** going **to, too, two** stay at the campground.
5. The girls will stay at the campground, **to, too, two**.

## Homonym Search

Work with a classmate. How many homonyms can you find in the comic book *Darkness Calls*? Write the word below and its matching homonym. Write a sentence for both words. Don't use **there, their, they're, to, two, too, it's, its**. **The first one is done for you.**

Word      not                  Matching homonym      knot

Sentence 1 Please do not go outside today.

Sentence 2 The knot on the string was too hard to untie.

Word \_\_\_\_\_ Matching homonym \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Word \_\_\_\_\_ Matching homonym \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Word \_\_\_\_\_ Matching homonym \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_



**Word** \_\_\_\_\_ **Matching homonym** \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Word** \_\_\_\_\_ **Matching homonym** \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Word** \_\_\_\_\_ **Matching homonym** \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Word** \_\_\_\_\_ **Matching homonym** \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Word** \_\_\_\_\_ **Matching homonym** \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence 2 \_\_\_\_\_



## Language Skills Handout #4

### Slang

Comic books and graphic novels often use a lot of slang. They are trying to portray real life. Rewrite each sentence with proper grammar. The first one is done for you.

1. Then I seen that punk.

Then I saw that punk.

2. Heeey Kyle. What Cha' Doin' Bro?

---

3. How come you do your hair like this?

---

4. Hey, whatdya listening to?

---

5. You gotta be careful.

---

6. Aw, I don't think he's gonna do anything cuz he's a punk.

---

---

7. Just ignore them. Besides, you got art class to look forward to.

---

---

8. Uh, hey, how ya doin'?

---

9. Too bad you left my speech earlier, 'cause I saw you gettin' excited about it.

---

---

10. But I was kinda upset at your teacher for interrupting me and treating you so poorly.

---

---



## Language Skills Handout #5

### Expressions

We often use everyday expressions to explain things. For example: “put on the back burner” is an expression that tells you to wait or postpone something.

People whose first language is not English can become very confused by everyday expressions. In the comic book *Darkness Calls*, the author uses several everyday expressions to get his point across. Read the expressions below and explain what they mean.

I've told you time and time again....

---

You just doodle your whole life away...

---

I just don't see the light at the end of the tunnel...

---

What are some other expressions? List five expressions and their meanings and share them with your classmates.

Expression: \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

**Expression:** \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

**Expression:** \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

**Expression:** \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

**Expression:** \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_





## Reflection

7 Handouts

### **Activity 1 – Questions About the Story** (Handout #1)

Learners answer the questions about the story in sentence form.

### **Activity 2 – Your Opinion** (Handout #2)

Learners answer opinion questions. Encourage learners to share their opinions with others through a class discussion.

### **Activity 3 – *Darkness Calls* Evaluation** (Handout #3)

Learners write an evaluation of the comic book: They answer questions like: Did you like it? Would you recommend it to others? They can use Handout #3 as a guide.

### **Activity 4 – Write a Review** (Handout #4 & #5)

Often books, graphic novels and comic books are given reviews. Reviews are different than a summary as they express a point of view and often either recommend the book or do not recommend the book. Read the example reviews on Handout #4 with learners. Learners write their own review of *Darkness Calls* using the guidelines on Handout #5.

### **Activity 5 – Response Journal** (Handout #6 & #7)

Response journals require the learners to write about what they felt while reading a book or listening to a story. Response journals record learners' feelings, responses, and reactions to the text. This strategy encourages learners to think deeply about the materials they read and to relate this information to their prior knowledge and experiences. This interaction between reader and text extends the reading experience into the "real life" application of information.



Response journals allow learners to reflect on and raise questions about a text. These journals are especially valuable for promoting opinion making, value judgments, and critical thinking.

Learners read the text “On Northern Lights” by Ric Richardson on Handout #6. The text is about alcohol and the loss of spirit. Ask learners to respond using the guide on Handout #7. Learners can share their ideas with others in the class.



## Reflection Handout #1

### Questions about the Story

1. Why does the teacher give Kyle such a hard time?

---

---

2. Why does Kyle say “Shut up, shut up, stop crying.” to himself?

---

---

3. What does the Elder mean by “the old ways?”

---

---

4. Why does Kyle feel so helpless?

---

---

---

---

5. How do you think the teacher should have handled Kyle in the gymnasium?

---

---

6. How do you think drawing helps Kyle?

---

---

7. Why do you think the Elder requested that the teacher apologize to Kyle?

---

---

8. The Elder tells a story about Wesakecak and Wihtiko. Retell the story in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

9. Who do you really think Wihtiko is? Is he in our minds?

---

---

10. Why can't Wesakecak beat Wihtiko?

---

---

11. How does Kyle stop Wihtiko?

---

---

12. What is the power within Kyle?

---

---



## Reflection Handout #2

### Your Opinion

Answer the following opinion questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Discuss these questions with others in your class.

1. Why do you think asking someone if they are gay is such an insult? Do you think this is right?

---

---

2. Why do you think Kyle gets picked on by others in the school?

---

---

3. How can drinking affect your life? How has it affected Kyle's life?

---

---

---

---

4. Why do you think there is such a high rate of suicide for Aboriginal youth in Canada?

---

---

5. At the end of the story, Kyle feels the power within himself. Does everyone have this power? Why or why not?

---

---



## Reflection Handout #3

### ***Darkness Calls* Evaluation**

Evaluate *Darkness Calls* by commenting on your enjoyment, reaction, and opinion of this comic book.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did you enjoy this story? Why or why not? Would you read another book or comic by this author?

---

---

---

2. Do you think the author made the characters appear as real people? Do you think events in the story were plausible?

---

---

---

3. What did you learn from reading this comic book?

---

---

---

4. Would you recommend this comic book to anyone? Why or why not?

---

---

---

5. How would you rate this comic book on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5





## Reflection Handout #4

### Example Reviews

Read the following reviews. Write your own review for *Darkness Calls*. Share your review with others in the class.

#### **Review of *In Search of April Raintree* by Beatrice Culleton**

★★★ 1/2

This is a moving, if somewhat awkward, account of the life of two Métis sisters as they grow up in a society that frequently treats them quite badly. We have all read about such lives: the broken home, the abuse, the drinking, and the prostitution.

The writer is not as skilful as she eventually will be if she continues to write, but readers will respond to the strength of her emotions. When a writer chooses such topics, particularly within the North American Indian context, it is absolutely essential that he or she avoid stereotyping in action or character. This has not been achieved totally by the author despite her obvious knowledge of her material. She is not in as full control of her material as she might be, and, in places, her piling of horror upon horror weakens rather than strengthens the impact of her story. We begin to feel that she is doing this to shock us rather than to advance the story.

There is no doubt, however, that this is a worthwhile attempt. Distasteful matters are presented honestly. People with an interest in social problems, would find this book very interesting.

Reviewed by C.H. Mountford at

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/cmarchive/vol12no1/searchaprilraintree.html>

**Persepolis, Written and Art by Marjane Satrapi (Graphic Novel)**

★★★★★

**Persepolis** is one of those books that you sometimes hear about when people praise the comic medium, along the likes of *Maus* or *American Splendor*, but that I had personally never read. I knew it was a greatly praised autobiographical work, that it had been turned into an equally acclaimed animated film (which was nominated for an Oscar), and that it's author, Marjane Satrapi, was related to Iran, but little else.

The book is a real eye opener about how life in Iran is really like beyond what you see in TV. I'm a pretty world-y guy (having lived in three different countries and cultures so far), but I was surprised at my own ignorance of Iranian culture. If that doesn't sound particularly appealing to you, the author explains it simply and sometimes funnily enough that you find yourself caring and understanding more of how the Iranian society works. And even if that doesn't sound particularly interesting to you, you will still find plenty that will resonate within you. If you have fallen with the wrong crowd at some point of your life, or if you ever felt like an outsider, or if you have had trouble with relationships, you will relate with what Marjane goes through in this book. Her unique worldview is just an added bonus that makes the book more compelling.

**Verdict - Must Read.** **Persepolis** is a great autobiographical book that should be on everyone's bookshelf. It will make you laugh, maybe cry, and its sincerity will definitely open your eyes and your heart. I cannot praise or recommend it enough.

Reviewed by Matt Ampersand at <http://www.weeklycrisis.com>



## Reflection Handout #5

# Steps for Writing a Good Book Review

Before you begin writing, make a few notes about the points you want to get across. While you're writing, try thinking of your reader as a friend to whom you're telling a story.

### Paragraph One – Introduction

- Identify the book by **author**, **title**, and **type** of book (for example, fiction, nonfiction, biography, autobiography or comic book)
- Mention the book's theme.
- Give a brief overview of what the book is about.

### Paragraph Two – Provide Your Reaction to the Book

- What did you think of the book? Comment on the writing style and the theme or message.
- Respond to the author's opinions.
- Explore the issues the book raises.
- Talk about how the book affected you. How have your opinions about the topic changed? How is the book related to your own course or personal agenda.

### Paragraph Three – Your Recommendation

- Conclude by summarizing your ideas.
- Do you recommend this book? If yes, say why.
- Do you not recommend this book? If no, say why
- Give the book a star rating out of 5.



## Reflection Handout #6

### On the northern lights<sup>3</sup>

By Ric Richardson

When I was young, my father warned me that you should never whistle at the northern lights. He said that the lights were restless spirits that could capture the person who whistled at them.

He told me that when he was young, he'd been told the same thing and, being adventurous, whistled at them at his next opportunity. Almost immediately, he said the lights came down from the sky to where he was standing. He told me that he felt an electric charge and was surrounded by an intense smell of burnt sulphur. While he ran terrified to his home, he decided that he would never try that again.

As a young adult, I would attend Pow-Wows and often invited elders to tell stories around the campfire. The stories I was privileged to have heard have helped me to deal with situations in my life and have left me feeling greatly enriched.

The northern lights, I was told, were the spirits of those people who, although they had died, could not accept their deaths and move on to the next life. They are doomed to dance in the northern lights in the hope that they may, someday, take over a body in which the spirit has been weakened so much that they will be able to move into it and dominate it.

One example of the severe weakening of the spirit, I was told, is what is called an alcoholic "Blackout." During a blackout, an individual may act in a manner totally uncharacteristic of his or her normal behaviour. There are no memories of the time spent in a blackout once it is over and none will ever return. It is as if that period of time is lost, even though the person experiencing the blackout was conscious and functioning during that period.

---

<sup>3 3</sup> From : [http://individual.utoronto.ca/jaiu725/ebook/Tracking\\_Heaven/08.htm](http://individual.utoronto.ca/jaiu725/ebook/Tracking_Heaven/08.htm)

I was reminded of these stories when I was in early recovery from my own alcoholism. I had had numerous blackouts while I was an active alcoholic. Many times, I was told of what I had done while drinking and, even after being told, I had absolutely no memory of the time described. As well, many of the behaviours described were so unlike me that I often believed that the people telling me about them were lying. Through years of drinking, I came to realize that these people were telling the truth when they told me that I had “not been myself” various times while I was drunk.

My use of alcohol had suppressed my own spirit to the point that one of the disembodied spirits, such as those that dance in the northern lights, was able to take over my body for brief periods of time, I believe.

Fortunately, our spirit is a part of us and belongs in our body. This is why we are usually able to reassert our ownership of our body and push the invader out. The disembodied spirit lacks the connection to our body and cannot be complete.

I have been told that some spirits are so weakened that they cannot push the imposing spirit out. In these cases, since the person can only be complete with its own spirit, the person becomes what is known as insane. The longer a restless spirit occupies a body, the harder it is for its own spirit to reassert itself and take command again.

I was fortunate that I was spared from that fate, but have been advised by many people that I have great respect for the fact that alcohol abuse is only one way of weakening our spirit. Having respect for ourselves and honoring our values helps to keep our spirits strong and free from this particular danger.



## Reflection Handout #7

### Response Journal Guidelines

There is no right or wrong way to respond to a piece of writing. Below are some guidelines to help you respond to the text “On the northern lights.”

1. Take time to write down anything that interests you or that you are puzzled by in the text.

---

---

---

---

---

2. Make connections with your own experience. What does the reading make you think of? Does it remind you of anything or anyone?

---

---

---

---

---

3. Do you see any similarities between this text (concepts, events) and the comic book *Darkness Calls*? (concepts, events)? Does it bring to mind other related issues?

---

---

---

---

---

4. Ask yourself questions about the text: What perplexes you about a particular passage? Try beginning, "I wonder why..." or "I'm having trouble understanding how..." or "It perplexes me that..." or "I was surprised when ...."

---

---

---

---

---

5. Try agreeing with the writer. Write down the supporting ideas.

---

---

---

---

---

6. Try arguing with the writer. On what points, or about what issues, do you disagree?

---

---

---

---

---

---







# Reading and Comprehension

5 Handouts

## Activity 1 – Fact or Opinion (Handout #1)

Teach fact and opinion concepts. Give clear examples. Ask learners to identify the differences between fact and opinion statements and give a reason to support their answer.

### Facts:

- Information we can prove and confirm from an atlas, encyclopaedia, reference book, knowledgeable person, or from a story.
- Information that is true. Something that actually happens.

### Opinions:

- Information based on what people believe or think about a fact or belief. Opinions say that someone is happy or sad. If something is good or bad, that is an opinion.

Write these examples on the board. Ask learners to say if it is a fact or opinion and why.

Statements	Fact or Opinion	Why?
Skidoos have replaced dog teams in the north.	fact	Information is on television documentaries and in reading material.
Skidoos are better than dog teams.	opinion	Everyone may not believe this.

Handout #1 provides a list of fact and opinion statements from the comic book *Darkness Calls*. Learners must decide whether the statement is a fact or an opinion. Learners may have different opinions on the answers. Ask them to share their reasoning for why they chose **fact** or **opinion**.

## **Activity 2 – Suicide in Canada** (Handout #2)

Learners read the article on the handout and answer the questions. You can read the article together as a class or groups of learners can share the reading. It might be a complex document for the 120 level.

## **Activity 3 – Retelling the Story** (Handout #3 & 4)

Ask learners to retell the legend on Handout #3 in their own words. Handout #4 is a good format for a retelling guide. Ask them to share their work with others in the class. This is a good way for learners to share and learn from one another.

## **Activity 4 – Reading More Stories about Wesakechak** (Handout #5)

Learners read the three stories about Wesakechak on Handout #5 and discuss the stories' meanings together as a class.



## Reading and Comprehension

### Handout #1

## Fact or Opinion

A statement of **fact** expresses only what actually happened, or what could be proven by objective data. For example: Inuvik is in the Northwest Territories.

A statement of **opinion** expresses an *attitude* toward something – it makes a judgment, view, or conclusion, or gives an opinion that cannot be proven true or false. For example: Inuvik is the best place to live.

Here are a few more examples:

- It is -18°C today. Fact
- I am sure next week will be warmer. Opinion
- More women are deciding to give birth at home. Fact
- A hospital is not the best place for a baby to be born. Opinion

Read the following sentences from the comic book *Darkness Calls* and decide whether it is a fact or an opinion. Write a F beside all the statements that are facts and write a O beside all the statements that are opinions. Compare your answers with others in the class.

1.     \_\_\_\_\_     Kyle's teacher is mean.
2.     \_\_\_\_\_     Kyle likes to draw.
3.     \_\_\_\_\_     Kyle is good at drawing.
4.     \_\_\_\_\_     Kyle has low self-esteem.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle gets in trouble at school.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle gets bullied at school.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The Elder is very wise.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle doesn't respect the Elder.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle's drawings are useless.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Drinking can destroy lives.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle should talk to a counselor.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle feels lonely and sad.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ The Elder was upset with Kyle's teacher.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Wihtiko eats a lot of young spirits.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Wesakecak has the ability to change shapes.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle is more powerful than Wihtiko.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle is confused by life.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle feels the power within himself and defeats Wihtiko.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle will be fine from now on.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ Kyle will pass on his knowledge to his friends.

21. \_\_\_\_\_ A hospital, after all, is not the best place for a baby to be born.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Jamie Bastedo, author of many northern books, lives and works in Yellowknife.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ Jamie Bastedo is the best northern author in the NWT.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ The Giant Mine strike devastated many families.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ Elders are the holders of knowledge in the community.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ Legends are true accounts of the past.
27. \_\_\_\_\_ Alcohol is a big problem in many communities.
28. \_\_\_\_\_ Drinking any alcohol is not good.



## Reading and Comprehension Handout #2

### Canadian Suicide Data<sup>4</sup>

Experts in the field suggest that a suicidal person is feeling so much pain that they can see no other option. They feel that they are a burden to others, and in desperation see death as a way to escape their overwhelming pain and anguish. The suicidal state of mind has been described as constricted, filled with a sense of self-hatred, rejection, and hopelessness.

Canada's overall suicide rate is typically about 14 per 100,000 people. These numbers are influenced by the economy – they go down as economic conditions improve, and go up during recessions.

The rate of suicide among Aboriginal people in Canada for all age groups is **2 to 3 times higher** than the rate among non-Aboriginal people. It is **5 to 6 times higher** among Aboriginal youth than among their non-aboriginal peers.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in Canadian youth ages 13-19 and the leading cause for those ages 25-34. Youth deaths by suicide account for more than 15,000 years of potential life lost in Canada each year. Males kill themselves three times more often than females, partly because they use more lethal methods.

Across the lifespan, Aboriginal youth from 15-25 are at the highest risk of suicide. Those living on a reserve are 6 times more likely to die by suicide than their non-Aboriginal peers; those living within cities have a suicide rate equal to non-Aboriginal youth. Aboriginal/Inuit girls are eight times more likely to commit suicide and Aboriginal/Inuit boys are five times more likely to commit suicide than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Over 40% of non-Aboriginal people and 60% of Aboriginal people who die by suicide were intoxicated at the time of their attempt.

---

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.religioustolerance.org/sui\\_nati.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/sui_nati.htm) and <http://www.nandecade.ca/article/aboriginal-suicide-statistics-71.asp>

Sexual abuse can increase a person's suicide risk 9 nine times, as does a history of suicide in the family. Repeated suicide attempters are 20 times more likely to die from suicide.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual youth are up to six times more likely to die by suicide due to homophobic discrimination, lack of healthy role models and lack of support.

There is a wide and demoralizing ripple effect from almost every Aboriginal suicide through a chain of interconnected families and communities. Some people in the chain are vulnerable to copycat suicides and other self-destructive responses in their turn.

## Questions

1. Why do people kill themselves?

---

---

2. What influences the overall suicide rate? \_\_\_\_\_

3. The suicide rate for Aboriginal people is \_\_\_\_\_ higher than non-Aboriginal people.

4. The suicide rate for Aboriginal youth is \_\_\_\_\_ higher than non- Aboriginal youth.

5. Suicide is the leading cause of death for what age group? \_\_\_\_\_



6. Over \_\_\_\_\_ of non-native people and \_\_\_\_\_ of Aboriginal people who die by suicide were intoxicated at the time of their attempt.

7. What are some reasons for the high suicide rate for non-Aboriginal people? Give four reasons.

---

---

---

---

8. Males kill themselves \_\_\_\_\_ times more than females. Why

---

---

---

9. How do suicides affect a community?

---

---

---



## Reading and Comprehension Handout #3

### Retelling the Story

Read the legend below about Wesakechak. Retell the story using the guide on Handout #4.

#### The Earth, the Animals<sup>5</sup>

By Ric Richardson

Long ago, the Creator sent a Great Flood to cleanse the world.

After a time, He sent Wesakechak to bring back the land so that the plants, animals and other people could have a place to live again.

The Creator told Wesakechak that he would find a turtle floating on the water and, if Wesakechak could get some mud and seaweed from the bottom, he could create a land on the back of the turtle where the plants, animals and people could live again.

As Wesakechak floated on the turtle's back, he found some companions who, he was told, could help with his quest. These companions were an otter, a beaver and a little muskrat, all of whom were comfortable living in and out of water. When Wesakechak told them of his task, they all eagerly agreed to help and decided to begin on the next day.

At sunrise, after some debate, for they all wanted to help, it was decided that Otter should try to dive to the ocean's bottom to get the mud and seaweed needed. The reason Otter was chosen was because he was a very good swimmer and was at home in the ocean.

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://individual.utoronto.ca/jaiu725/ebook/Tracking\\_Heaven/08.htm](http://individual.utoronto.ca/jaiu725/ebook/Tracking_Heaven/08.htm)

Otter then dove from the turtle's back and swam down and down, as deep as he could. He stayed under the water longer than he ever had before, but could not reach the bottom. When his lungs felt like they would burst, he returned to the surface, barely conscious and drained of energy.

Those on the back of the turtle saw him and realized that he was too weak to swim. They paddled over to Otter and dragged him onto the back of the turtle, barely conscious and in a great deal of pain from his exertions. The companions decided that this was enough for one day and they would try again the next day.

In the morning, it looked obvious that Otter was in no condition to make another attempt as he had not recovered from the injuries he received the day before.

Both Beaver and Muskrat offered to try to find the mud and seaweed for Wesakechak. Wesakechak thought about it for a while and then spoke to Beaver. "Beaver," he said, "with your webbed feet and wide tail, you are a great swimmer. Also, you can hold your breath for a long time." He asked Beaver to try to reach the bottom of the sea.

Without a moment's hesitation, Beaver dove into the water and began to descend as deep as he could. He swam deep and deeper and went deeper even than Otter. He was down under far longer than Otter but eventually floated to the surface, unconscious. When Wesakechak and his friends spotted him, they paddled over and pulled Beaver onto the back of the turtle. As he had been drowning, they pumped the water from his lungs and massaged him to make his blood flow. After a long time, Beaver coughed and began to regain consciousness.

Almost heartbroken, he confessed that even though he got deep enough to see the ocean bottom, he was unable to reach it. The companions would wait for the next day to try again.

As day broke, both Otter and Beaver had not recovered and could not move without pain, let alone swim.

Little Muskrat went to Wesakechak and enthusiastically offered to dive to the bottom and bring up the mud and seaweed. After some thought, and not

wanting to hurt his feelings, Wesakechak spoke to Muskrat: "My friend, Otter, who lives in the ocean, was unable to reach the bottom and was injured trying to. As well, Beaver, who has webbed feet, a wide tail and can hold his breath for a long time, could not get the mud and seaweed from the ocean bottom. He was nearly drowned and remains in a great deal of pain still. If you really want to you can try, but don't feel bad if you cannot reach the bottom."

Muskrat then dove from the turtle's back. He dove deep and swam deeper. He stayed down longer than Otter had. He stayed down longer than Beaver. He stayed down longer than Otter and Beaver combined.

After he had been down under the water for so long that Wesakechak and the others had almost given up on him, Muskrat floated to the surface, unconscious and barely alive.

When Muskrat was pulled onto the turtle's back, the others had to work very hard to revive him. As he lay there coughing and shaking, he opened his hands. In his left hand was some mud. In his right hand was the much sought after seaweed.

Wesakechak took the mud and built an island on the back of the turtle. He placed the seaweed on the mud. Once he had done this, the island grew very large and the seaweed became plants of all descriptions.

Having seen him, the Creator brought back all of the animals, insects, birds and people from where He had kept them and repopulated the land. Wesakechak thanked Otter and Beaver for their extreme efforts and they went on their way.

Wesakechak then spoke to Muskrat: "My little friend," he said, "even though Otter and Beaver tried their best and failed, you made a tremendous effort and succeeded in spite of our doubts. All of Turtle Island is grateful for your deed and for that, I will give you a great gift. Wherever your people live, there will be a plant growing that will be a food to your people. This plant (Rat Root) will also be a powerful medicine for all people."

This is the story of how Turtle Island came to be and how we came to have Rat Root for medicine. To this day, we continue to use Rat Root for colds and many other medicinal purposes and we still live on Turtle Island.



**Reading and Comprehension**  
Handout #4

**Retelling Guide**

Use the questions as a guide to tell the order in which the events happened in a story.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Beginning**

- What happened at the beginning of the story?
- Where did the story take place?
- Who (or what) is the main character?
- What is the problem?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## End

- How did they solve the problem?
- How did the story end?
- What is the author trying to tell you?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





## Reading and Comprehension Handout #5

### Stories with Wesakechak<sup>6</sup>

Read the stories either on your own or with your class. Discuss the meaning of each story with your classmates.

#### **An excellent lesson in humility and working for stature.**

Wesakechak feels he deserves a more powerful name. He convinces his fellow creatures to ask the Creator to give out new names. Wesakechak becomes so fixed on being the first in line at the naming ceremony that he tries to stay awake all night. Of course, he falls asleep towards dawn and is so late for the ceremony that he ends up with his old name. But the creator gives him a new job - he will become the teacher of the First People. This way he will make his name important, not the other way around.

#### **Abusing medicine can be very dangerous.**

On a beautiful day, Wesakechak sees two chickadees getting extra energy from their special medicine berries. He begs them to share and they do, cautioning him to take only one at a time and only when he is very tired. Wesakechak overdoes it, floats off the earth only to fall headfirst into a swamp. Later, he spies two cranes who toss their eyes to the sky to help improve their eyesight. Again, Wesakechak begs for the secret and overdoes it. He is blinded. Eventually, the creator shows him how to restore his sight, but first insists on a promise from Wesakechak that he will not abuse strong medicine again.

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.galileo.org/initiatives/moka-meyo/meyo/english/learning-wasak3.html>

## The Origin of the Moon

A long time ago, there was no moon. There was only the sun. The Creator had messengers who helped him in his work. One of these was the Caretaker of the Sun. He had two children, a boy and a girl. All three lived in the Sky World. They were very happy.

The daughter looked after the camp. She kept it clean and tidy. When she shook the feather bedding, the feathers would fall to the earth as snow. The son hunted and fished. When he hung his nets to dry, droplets fell to earth as rain. The father would be away. All day he kept the great fire, burning on the sun. He was very old. Soon he would leave his children, never to return. He said to them, "When I die, you must keep the fire burning, or else the people and animals on earth will die."

One day when the fire was low on the sun, the father came home tired. He said, "Children, my children, my children. I have to go. I will never return." The children cried and mourned. They knew he would die.

In the morning, it was time to start the sun's fire. The children began to quarrel over who would do the task. "I will tend the fire, I am older," said the sister. "No, I am the man, I will do it," said the brother. They yelled thus to each other.

The people on earth began to worry, saying, "Why is the sun so late? It should be up by now!" Wesakechak went to the sun to see what was the matter. When he arrived, the boy and his sister were still quarreling. Wesakechak was angry. "The People and animals will perish," he said to them. "It is up to you! You keep the fire burning," he told the boy. "Your name from now on will be Pisim." To the sister he said, "You, too, will work as hard as your brother. You will keep the fire in another place. You will work at night. You will be Tipiskawipisim, the Moon. The two of you did not get along. As a punishment, you will see each other once a year. For all time, you will see each other from across the sky." And so it happened. Even now it is so.





## Extended Learning Activities

3 Handouts

### Activity 1 – Research (Handout #1)

Learners research Wesakecak or Wesakechak on the Internet. Wesakecak has several different spelling.. They answer the questions on Handout #1.

#### For Instructors

✦ *Wesakechak* (also spelled Wisakecahk, Wisakechak, Wesakaychak, Wisakedjak, Weesageechak, Wissaketchak, Whiskey-Jack, and several other ways.)

Wesakechak is the benevolent culture hero of the Cree tribe (sometimes referred to as a "transformer" by folklorists.) His name is spelled so many different ways partially because Cree was originally an unwritten language (so English speakers just spelled it however it sounded to them at the time), and partially because the Cree language is spoken across a huge geographical range in both Canada and the US, and the name sounds different in different dialects. The correct pronunciation in Plains Cree is similar to wee-sah-keh-chahk.

Wesakechak is a trickster character whose adventures are often humorous, but unlike Plains Indian tricksters he is portrayed as a staunch friend of humankind, not a dangerous or destructive being. Wesakechak shares many similarities with other Algonquian heroes such as the Wabanaki Glooskap, Blackfoot Napi, and Anishinabe Nanabozho, and the same stories are often told in different Algonquian tribes with only the identity of the protagonist differing.

### Activity 2 – About the Story (Handout #2)

Learners research different reviews of *Darkness Calls* on the Internet. They answer the questions on the handout. The reviews will help learners understand the impetus for writing a comic book about suicide.

Part of the research is about why Steve Sanderson the author chose to write about suicide.

“Sanderson said he was partially inspired by a younger cousin who contemplated killing himself a few years ago. The artist helped his troubled cousin through the crisis and said the young man is now preparing to graduate from film school.”

### **Activity 3 – Agree/Disagree** (No handout)

Read out the statements below and ask students to take a stand. If they agree with the statement they can go to the AGREE side if they don't agree they can go to the DISAGREE side. Ask learners to discuss the statement together with their group and then present their opinion to the other side.

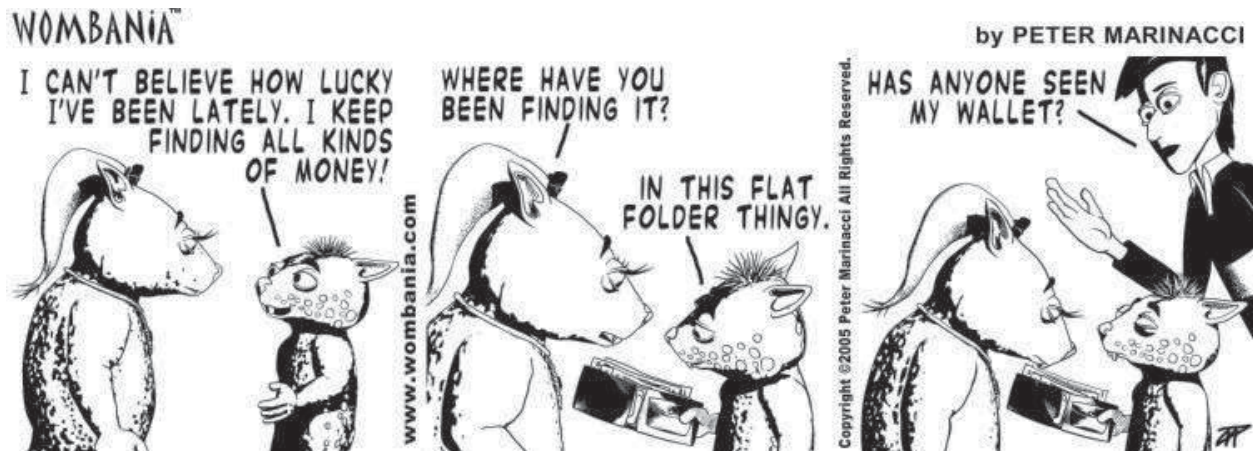
1. Suicide is a problem in our community.
2. Alcohol is a problem in our community.
3. Alcohol is bad for your spirit.
4. Residential schools are to be blamed for the high suicide rate for Aboriginal people.
5. Living a traditional life will put people on the road to recovery.
6. Youth don't respect Elders and the traditional way of life.

### **Activity 4 – Writing Activities** (Handout #3)

Below are some writing activities that you can get learners to do. You can give learners Handout #3 and they can choose one writing activity to complete. The writing activities are below too.

1. Write a letter from Kyle to the Elder telling him how his life has changed since his encounter with Wihtiko and Wesakecak. The letter should be at least one page long and should be properly addressed.
2. Write and illustrate your own comic strip on a topic of your choice. A comic strip is a sequence of cartoons that tells a story, often humorous, although you can also do serious comic strips with a message. Choose a topic. You can do a humorous one or you can choose an issue in your community that you would

like to address. Try to do at least four frames for your comic strip. Below is an example of a comic strip.



From: [http://www.wombania.com/wombania\\_comic\\_strips/wombania-comic-strip-4.htm](http://www.wombania.com/wombania_comic_strips/wombania-comic-strip-4.htm)

- Write the script of Kyle going back to school and his teacher apologizing for kicking him out of the gym during the Elder's speech. The script should be at least one page long. When you write a script make sure you are clear on who is talking. For example:

Teacher: "Hi Kyle."

Kyle: "Hi."

Teacher: "I would like to..."

- Write the script of Kyle confronting his parents about their drinking problems. Again make sure you are clear on who is talking. Try to make it as realistic as possible. The script should be at least one page long.

## **Activity 5 – Storytelling** (No handout)

Learners research a story from their community or family to tell it to the class. They can talk to Elders, their parents or other community members to find stories from the past. The stories may be traditional stories or stories about the recent past.

## **Activity 6 – Review On-line Video** (No Handout)

View the video on Native American Tube about Wesakecak at <http://natube.magnify.net/video/Wesakecak-and-the-Wolves>

Discuss as a group the meaning of the video.





## Extended Learning Activities

### Handout #1

## Research

Research **Wesakechak** and **Wihtiko** on the Internet. Below are some sites that you can review. Wesakechak can also be spelled as Wisakecahk, Wisakechak, Wesakaychak, Wisakedjak, Weesageechak, Wissaketchak, Whiskey-Jack, and several other ways.)

- <http://www.galileo.org/initiatives/moka-meyo/meyo/english/learning-wasak4.html>
- <http://www.native-languages.org/cree-legends.htm>

1. What culture does Wesakechak originate from? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Wesakechak always is a \_\_\_\_\_
3. Stories about Wesakechak always have a \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. What kinds of powers does Wesakechak have?

---

---

---

---



5. Stories about Wesakechak usually start with \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

6. When should stories about Wesakechak be told?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

7. Why were stories told about Wesakechak? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

8. Describe Wesakechak in your own words.

---

---

---

---

---

9. Draw a picture of Wesakechak as you see him.





## Extended Learning Activities

### Handout #2

## About the Story

Research some reviews of *Darkness Calls* on the Internet. The reviews will help you understand why writing about suicide was important to the author and important in general.

You can Google: “*Darkness Calls* – Steve Sanderson” (author’s name). Several reviews will pop up. If you have trouble finding specific reviews you can go to the following sites:

- <http://www.bluecorncomics.com/hlthyabo.htm>
- <http://www.cbc.ca/arts/story/2006/06/21/cree-comic-hero.html>
- <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/276036>

Answer the questions below after you have read several reviews.

1. Why did the Healthy Aboriginal Network choose to publish a comic book to talk about suicide?

---

---

---

2. How many comic books were distributed to Aboriginal teenagers when it was first published?

---

---

---

3. What makes the comic unique?

---

---

---

4. Where did the author Steve Sanderson get his inspiration from?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. How did Sanderson merge traditions with pop culture?

---

---

---

6. With every piece of writing there are good things and bad things. In the reviews that you have read what are some of the good things about *Darkness Calls*?

---

---

---

7. What are some of the bad things about *Darkness Calls*?

---

---

---

8. What questions do you have for the author? List at least three questions.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

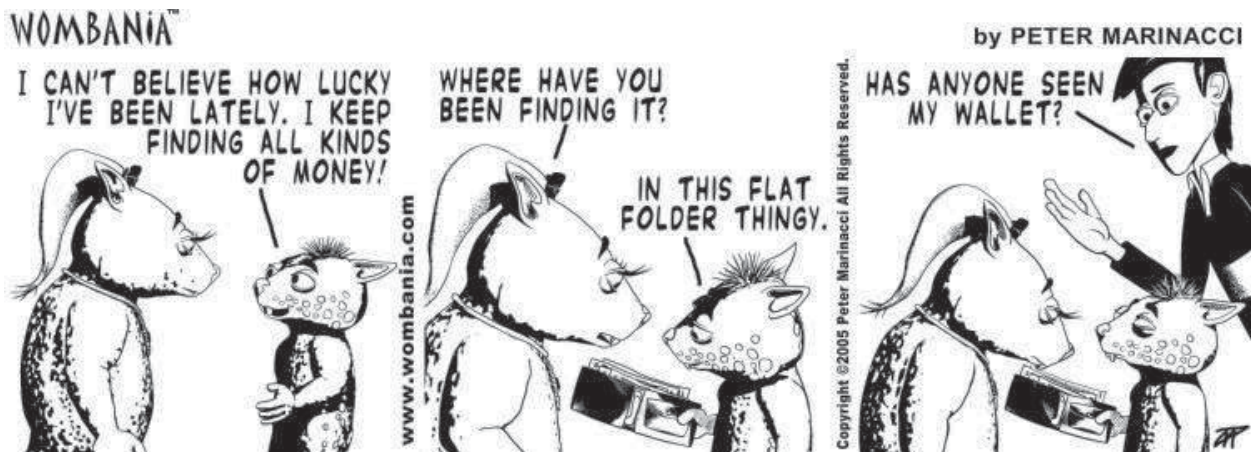


## Extended Learning Activities Handout #3

### Writing Activities

Choose one of the writing activities below:

1. Write a letter from Kyle to the Elder telling him how his life has changed since his encounter with Wihtiko and Wesakecak. The letter should be at least one page long and should be properly addressed.
2. Write and illustrate your own comic strip on a topic of your choice. A comic strip is a sequence of cartoons that tells a story, often humorous, although you can also do serious comic strips with a message. Choose a topic. You can do a humorous one or you can choose an issue in your community that you would like to address. Try to do at least four frames for your comic strip. Below is an example of a comic strip.



From: [http://www.wombania.com/wombania\\_comic\\_strips/wombania-comic-strip-4.htm](http://www.wombania.com/wombania_comic_strips/wombania-comic-strip-4.htm)

3. Write the script of Kyle going back to school and his teacher apologizing for kicking him out of the gym during the Elder's speech. The script should be at least one page long. When you write a script make sure you are clear on who is talking. For example:

Teacher: "Hi Kyle."

Kyle: "Hi."

Teacher: "I would like to..."

4. Write the script of Kyle confronting his parents about their drinking problems. Again make sure you are clear on who is talking. Try to make it as realistic as possible. The script should be at least one page long.