

## Introduction lesson : Secret Path by Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire

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Lessons can be found online at: <http://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/resources/teacher/>

### Driving Question:

How does learning about one person's story give us an idea about the impact of residential school on people in Canada?

- How is this a story for all Canadians?

**Learning Targets:** Thinking critically; making meaningful personal connections; inferring from images/art expression; connecting and engaging with others to share and develop ideas

## Secret Path Introductory Lesson Curriculum Connections

### Grade 4 Social Studies: Learning Standards- First Peoples and European Contact

- the history of the local community and of local First Peoples communities

### Grade 4 English Language Arts

#### Big Ideas

- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world
- Texts can be understood from different perspectives

### Curricular Competencies: Comprehend and Connect (reading, listening, viewing)

- Respond to text in personal and creative ways
- Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding

### Grade 5 Social Studies: Learning Standards- Canadian Issues and Governance

- past discriminatory government policies and actions, such as the Head Tax, the Komagata Maru incident, residential schools, and internments
- human rights and responses to discrimination in Canadian society

### Grade 5 English Language Arts:

#### Big Ideas

- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
- Texts can be understood from different perspectives
- Curricular Competencies: Comprehend and Connect (reading, listening, viewing)
- Respond to text in personal and creative ways
- Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding

### Curriculum Competencies:


Thinking critically; making meaningful personal connections; inferring from images/art expression; connecting and engaging with others to share and develop ideas

1. Compassion Poster—talk about self-care and reason for action
2. Ask students about the ways they take care of themselves.

*This poster can be printed at our sd71 print shop.*



Share the two principles of learning with your students...



# FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

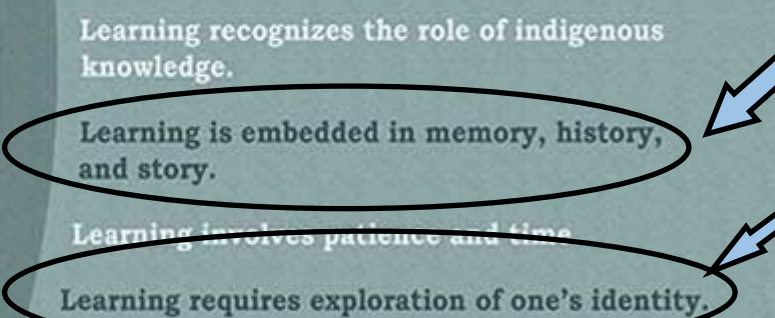
Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.


Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.



For First Peoples classroom resources visit: [www.fnesc.ca](http://www.fnesc.ca)





### Establishing a Need to Know:

YouTube video: "Secret Path: Official Film Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGYnQx2R4nE>

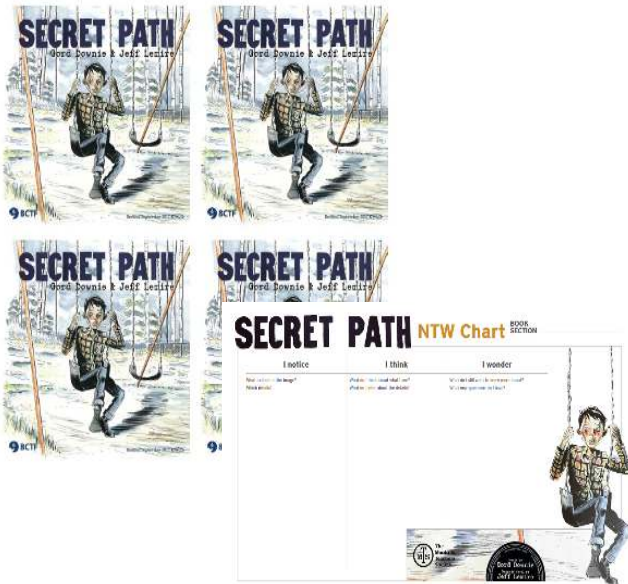
**Model:** Noticing, thinking and wondering from the opening screen shot.

**Watch video:**

**Partner Turn-and-Listen:** guiding questions- What did you notice? Think? Wonder?

**Some history of the project:** In October 2016, Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire formally launched the *Secret Path*, a book and CD which chronicles the story of Chanie Wenjack, a 12-year-old boy who died after running away from Residential school in the 1960s.

See website for more information. <https://secretpath.ca/>



### Secret Path Cards: Think Wonder Notice

Model—notice think wonder with the cover of the book.

Hand out cards to students

People with like cards get together to discuss picture and put their observations on their own chart

Trade cards and meet with new people and add new thoughts to chart. Repeat.

**Talking Circle:** Ask students to consider and begin to answer the **Driving Question:** How does learning about one person's story give us an idea about the impact of residential school on people in Canada? How is this a story for all Canadians?

Have everyone sit in a circle and passing an object like a talking stick to give everyone a chance to respond to the question.

**For more information about the Secret Path and lessons see the following website:**

<http://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/resources/teacher/Pages/SecretPath.aspx>



**Driving Question:**

**How does learning about one person's story give us an idea about the impact of residential school on people in Canada?**

- How is this a story for all Canadians?**

What are you thinking? What is important to know?

Make an inference... Ask a question...  
 Make a connection...  
 Sketch thoughts... Determine importance...

How does learning about one person's story give us an idea about the impact of residential school on people in Canada?  
 How is this a story for all Canadians?

Make a prediction... Synthesize... Transform... Use nonfiction text features...

## Thinking Sheet: How does learning about one person's story give us an idea about the impact of residential school on people in Canada?

- How is this a story for all Canadians?

Discuss Gord Downie's Statement (page 8) about why this is Canada's story. Have a group discussion about the driving question and have students put their first thoughts on their thinking sheet.

## STATEMENT BY GORD DOWNIE

Ogoki Post, Ontario

September 9, 2016

Mike Downie introduced me to Chanie Wenjack; he gave me the story from Ian Adam's Maclean's magazine story dating back to February 6, 1967, "The Lonely Death of Charlie Wenjack."

Chanie was a young boy who died on October 22, 1966, walking the railroad tracks, trying to escape from the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School to walk home. Chanie's home was 400 miles away. He didn't know that. He didn't know where it was, nor know how to find it, but, like so many kids - more than anyone will be able to imagine - he tried. I never knew Chanie, the child his teachers misnamed Charlie, but I will always love him.

**Chanie haunts me. His story is Canada's story. This is about Canada. We are not the country we thought we were. History will be re-written. We are all accountable, but this begins in the late 1800s and goes to 1996. "White" Canada knew – on somebody's purpose – nothing about this. We weren't taught it; it was hardly ever mentioned.**

All of those Governments, and all of those Churches, for all of those years, misused themselves. They hurt many children. They broke up many families. They erased entire communities. It will take seven generations to fix this. Seven. Seven is not arbitrary. This is far from over. Things up north have never been harder. Canada is not Canada. We are not the country we think we are.

**I am trying in this small way to help spread what Murray Sinclair said, "This is not an aboriginal problem. This is a Canadian problem. Because at the same time that aboriginal people were being demeaned in the schools and their culture and language were being taken away from them and they were being told that they were inferior, they were pagans, that they were heathens and savages and that they were unworthy of being respected — that very same message was being given to the non-aboriginal children in the public schools as well...They need to know that history includes them." (Murray Sinclair, *Ottawa Citizen*, May 24, 2015)**

I have always wondered why, even as a kid, I never thought of Canada as a country – It's not a popular thought; you keep it to yourself – I never wrote of it as so. The next hundred years are going to be painful as we come to know Chanie Wenjack and thousands like him – as we find out about ourselves, about all of us – but only when we do can we truly call ourselves, "Canada."

*"Do we want to live in a haunted house the rest of our lives?" - Joseph Boyden*

**Note highlighted parts of Gord Downie's reason for this book and discuss as a class how this is Canada's story and how the truth is important.**

**Also could view the Heritage minute below before the students read the book.**



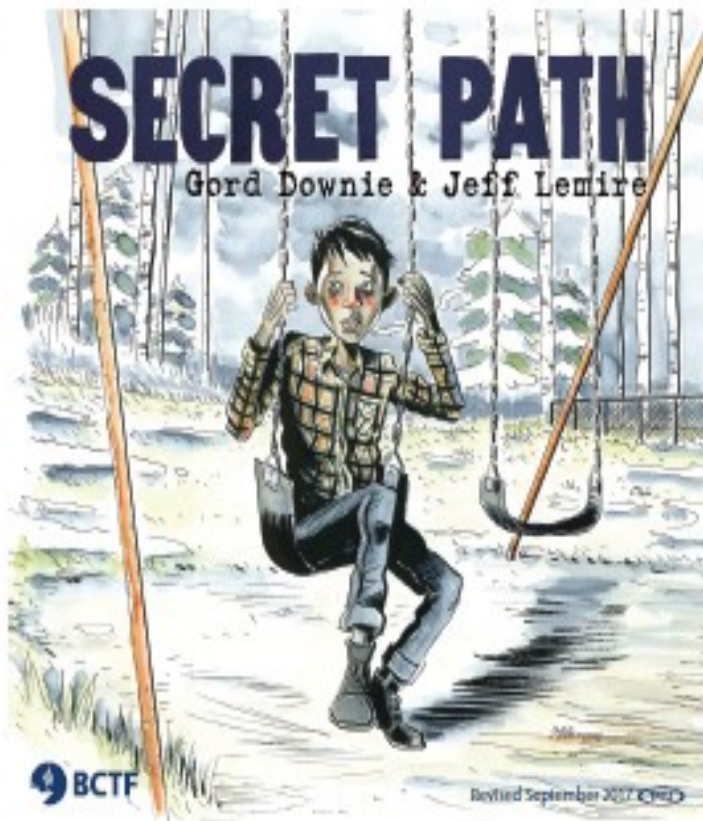
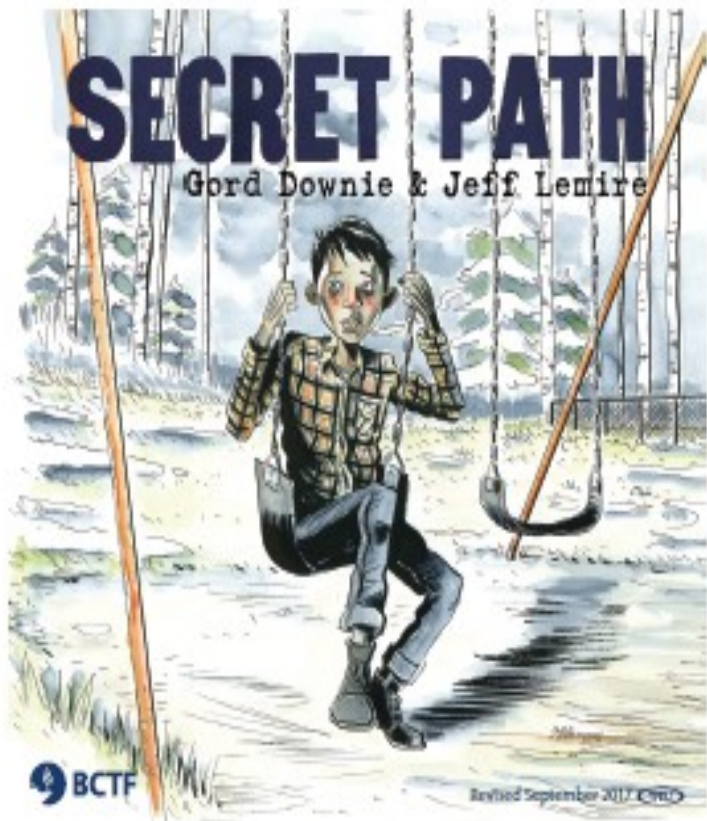
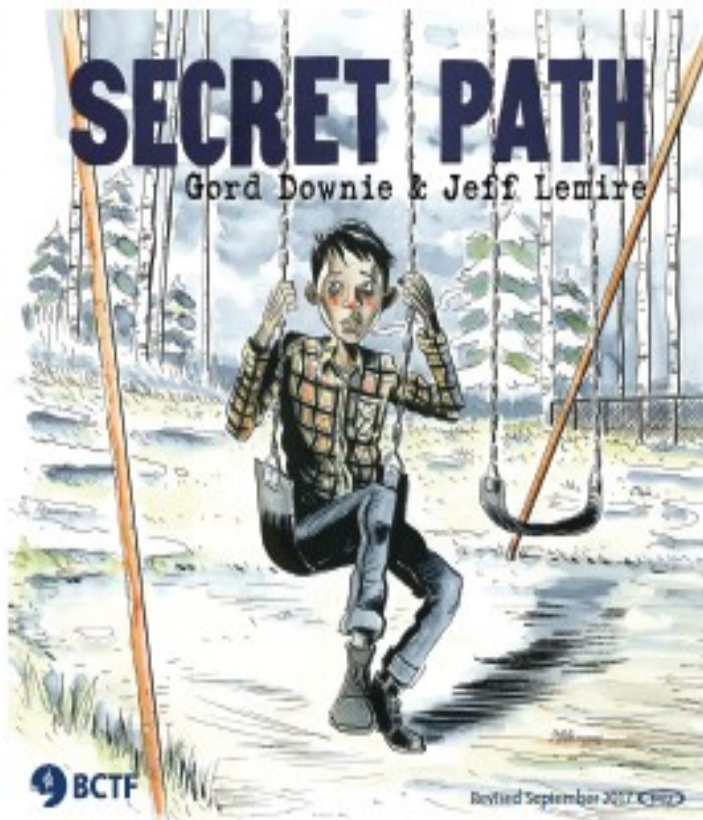
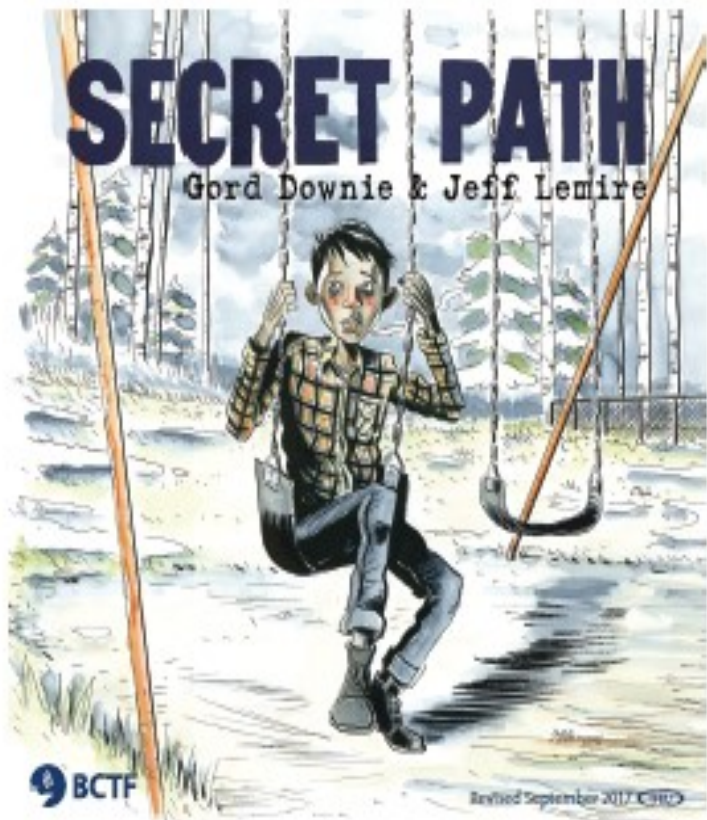
Heritage Minute: [https://youtu.be/v\\_tcCpKtoU0](https://youtu.be/v_tcCpKtoU0)

Could also wat

# Secret Path Cards—for use with the Think Wonder Notice Charts

For rest of cards see the following link: (set of 9 cards—4 copies each)

<https://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/resources/teacher/Pages/SecretPath.aspx?login=-139913736>





# SECRET PATH

BOOK SECTION  
**NTW Chart**

| <b>I notice</b>                                       | <b>I think</b>  | <b>I wonder</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>What do I see in the image?<br/>Which details?</p> | <p>What do I think about what I see?<br/>What do I infer about the details?</p> | <p>What do I still want to know more about?<br/>What new questions do I have?</p> |



The illustration shows a young boy with dark hair and a red nose, wearing a plaid shirt and blue jeans, swinging happily on a swing set. The background is a simple, light-colored sky.



The logo for The Manitoba Teachers' Society (MJS) is a circular emblem with the letters 'MJS' in the center, surrounded by the text 'The Manitoba Teachers' Society'.



The book cover features a circular design with the text 'Music by Gord Downie' and 'Graphic Novel by Jeff Lemire'. The background of the cover is a stylized, abstract landscape with a blue and white color palette.