

## THE CREATOR'S GAME: THE QUEST FOR GOLD AND THE FIGHT FOR NATIONHOOD



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*Docs For Schools is generously supported by lead sponsor DundeeWealth and exclusive education partner Humber School of Media Studies & Information Technology. Additional support is provided from The Hal Jackman Foundation, the Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, the Charles H. Ivey Foundation, Deluxe, Indigenous Culture and Media Innovations, and through contributions by individual donors.*

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# THE CREATOR'S GAME

Directed by Candace Maracle

2011 | Canada | 42 min

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

This guide has been designed to help teachers and students enrich their experience of documentary film by providing support in the form of questions and activities. There are a range of questions that will help teachers frame discussions with their classes, activities for before, during and after viewing the film, and some web links that provide starting points for further research or discussion. In separate packages, there will also be support materials available with information regarding general viewing and teaching principles for documentary film and the fundamental aspects of making documentary films.

## The Film

*The Creator's Game* is a look at the Iroquois Nationals, the lacrosse team based at the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in southern Ontario, and their quest to capture the gold medal at the 2011 World Indoor Lacrosse Championship in Prague, Czech Republic. The team travelled on Haudenosaunee Confederacy passports issued by the traditional longhouse government at Six Nations, forcing world governments to recognize their sovereignty as an indigenous nation. The film details the traditional values that characterize the game of lacrosse and how those values continue to bind families, communities and nations within the Confederacy.

## The Filmmaker

Director Candace Maracle is a reporter at the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). *The Creator's Game* premiered at the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in 2011, and was nominated for Best Documentary Short at the 36th Annual American Indian Film Festival that same year. Originally from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory near Belleville, Ontario, Maracle spent a year following the team as they prepared for the championship game.

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## VIEWING THE FILM WITH STUDENTS

There are important themes in this film that have broad implications for students and their futures.

Take time to activate your students' background understanding of these themes before viewing.

This will help them as they come to their own understanding and develop their critical abilities.

The following three subsections, on this page, are intended to provide you with a range of pre-viewing, viewing and post-viewing activities. They are followed by a set of questions based upon the film's larger thematic domains, some follow-up questions and quotations, sample curricular outcomes, and a page of web links for further investigation.

### Pre-Viewing Activities

Have students consider the title of the film and ask them to predict what themes might be present in a film entitled *The Creator's Game*. Then add the subtitle, and ask them in what ways the quest to excel at a sport might be connected to the idea of nationhood or sovereignty.

Play the first minute of the film, which features Iroquois vocals on the soundtrack. Ask students why they think the filmmaker used this technique. How does this technique attract the viewer? How does it set the tone?

Print the quotations from the Extension Activities section on individual sheets of paper. Have students work in small groups or in pairs to discuss the ideas in the quotations. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the large group. As they discuss the quotations, ask students to think about the following:

- What is the main conflict in this film? How do you know this?
- From whose perspective is this story told? How do you know this?
- What values are being promoted? How do you know this?
- Whose point of view do the values represent? Are your values represented? Why or why not?

Have a large-group discussion about one of the Extension Activities quotations. Ask students to structure their discussion around the themes of identity, relationships, sovereignty and challenges.

### Viewing Activities

Have students take notes on the connections they see between the issues in this film and one of the Big Ideas in the Big Questions/Ideas/Themes section of this guide.

Have students describe what they see in the film. Ask them to withhold judgment and observe carefully. They can write notes or give an oral description.

Ask students to create a mind map as they watch the film. The mind map should contain the following key words: conflicts, techniques, purpose and perspective. To get students started, use the following prompts:

- What are the main conflicts we encounter in this film? Were the conflicts resolved at the end of the film? Why or why not?
- Who produced this media text, and for what purpose? Who profits if the message is accepted? Who may be disadvantaged?
- How would this story be different if told from the perspective of another character in the film?

Have students jot down three questions for discussion that the film raises in their minds.

### Post-Viewing Activities

Ask students if the predictions they made in the first Pre-Viewing Activity were correct. Have them give specific evidence from the film—facts revealed in images or voiceover/ dialogue—that supports or disproves their prediction.

Have a large-group discussion guided by student questions written during the last Viewing Activity.

Have students revisit the quotations they discussed during the third Pre-Viewing Activity. Have a large-group discussion to see whether their opinions have changed after viewing the film.

Have students build a conceptual map showing the web of ideas, topics and associated subtopics in the film. Using the conceptual map as a guide, ask students to create questions they think will represent the important issues. Then, using the questions and the conceptual map, ask students to make interconnections among elements of the text (film). This should take the form of an argument, including a thesis statement and evidence from the text. Have students make a final judgment about the text based on the argument they

created above. Students will learn that their evaluations and feelings are informed by description, analysis and interpretation.

Have students reflect on the processes of description, interpretation and evaluation they completed during the Pre-Viewing, Viewing and Post-Viewing activities. Ask students to write a personal reflection summarizing what they have learned and how the processes of describing, interpreting and evaluating have informed their understanding of the film.

Have students research the game of lacrosse, including at least two of the following subtopics: history, types of play, rules and regulations and current status of the sport in Canada. When they have completed their research, have them create a one-page newsletter summarizing the issues. The newsletter should contain text, illustrations and at least one chart or graph. To get them started, have them visit the websites listed in the Websites and Online Resources section of this guide.

Have students complete the assignment Sovereign Me: My Identity, My Nationhood, My Documentation; the handout and rubric are included on the following pages of this guide.

## THE BIG QUESTIONS/IDEAS/THEMES

### Multiple Perspectives

What is the subject of this film? Can you determine the filmmakers' perspective on this subject? What evidence can you find in the film to support your view?

How does this film help you analyze and interpret points of view about issues that concern people?

Does the filmmakers' perspective foster respect for diversity and an inclusive society? If so, how?

### Identity

Whose story is told in this documentary? Whose story is not told? How does this story, and the way it is told, help you understand your own community/life?

How do the people in this film identify with their community? What are the common bonds among the people in this film? What challenges do they face in expressing their identity?

What film techniques do the filmmakers use to convey the identity of the people in this film?

### Citizenship

What insights does this documentary offer about the ideals of good citizenship in the community depicted in this film?

How does the film deal with issues of freedom, equality, human dignity, and individual and collective rights and responsibilities?

### Change and Continuity

How does this film help you understand a community's values and its attitudes towards an issue at a particular time?

What changes do the people in the film experience? What causes those changes? What are the consequences of those changes for the people in the documentary?

### Culture and Community

Which aspects of a people's culture does this film focus on? Why do you think the filmmakers focused on those aspects?

How do the images, themes and message of this film help you understand the filmmakers' attitude towards the subject?

What do you think might have been the intended audience's attitude towards the documentary subject?

### Individuals, Societies and Economic Decisions

What economic systems are at work in this film? What are some of the causes and effects of the economic decisions made by the people in the film's community?

Does money play a part in the decisions being made in the film and what does it tell you about their local culture?

### Power and Governance

What system of government control do we see in this documentary? How is power distributed within this society?

What are the implications of that distribution on issues affecting the people's well-being and freedom?

### Global Connections

What global issues are addressed in this film? What is the filmmakers' point of view on the opportunities and challenges of those issues?

Adapted from NFB Documentary Lens: <http://www.nfb.ca>



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is composed of six Iroquoian nations: the Seneca, the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Tuscarora and the Cayuga. Have students research the confederacy, choosing one of the following ideas/themes as their main focus: the Great Law of Peace, clan mothers or longhouse construction. Have students connect what they've learned from their research to any issue raised in the film. Some connections might include:

- The manner in which longhouses are constructed helps maintain unity and peace between families and nations; lacrosse is played for the same reason.
- Gender roles are important in Iroquois society: women do not traditionally play lacrosse, but clan mothers have the power to remove chiefs from office.
- Both the game of lacrosse and the Great Law of Peace stress the concept of "one mind" or having a "good mind."

### Additional Questions for Pre-Viewing or Post-Viewing Activities

How does the Haudenosaunee passport issue relate to and reflect the relationship Aboriginal Peoples have with Canadian (and U.S.) governments?

How would not being able to decide one's own citizenship or nationhood affect a person's identity?

How might the concept of sovereignty—the right to govern oneself—relate to playing lacrosse under the Haudenosaunee flag? How might it relate to the Iroquois Nationals using an Iroquois song for their anthem, in place of "O Canada"? What connections are there between these rituals and the right to self-government?

### Quotations From the Film to Explore

*"In order to be free, you must act free."*

*"I think it's an important legacy, not participating in the tournament and standing up for our basic human rights, not just for my son but for future generations."*

*"We call the power of one-mindedness the strongest power we have."*

*"When we were three and four years old, one of the first rules I learned about lacrosse, playing in the box, was that there's no crying in the box."*

*"You can only play the [traditional] game with a wooden stick. You can't play this game with plastic [sticks]; the ceremonies don't allow it."*

*"It's a healing game—the feelings and emotions that come out from the fans, that's something else."*

*"In this championship, the Iroquois Nationals fought a battle that was bigger than lacrosse. They let the world know that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy has never been defeated."*

## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITY: SOVEREIGN ME: MY IDENTITY, MY NATIONHOOD, MY DOCUMENTATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Mark: \_\_\_\_\_ /40 (See rubric)

The traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy straddle the international border between the United States and Canada. In 2010, members of the Iroquois Nationals were planning to travel to the World Lacrosse Championship in Manchester, England, using Haudenosaunee Confederacy passports. However, the U.K. refused to grant the team visas, and the U.S. said the team would not be able to re-enter the country unless team members presented U.S. or Canadian passports. The players refused, stating that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy pre-dated both the U.S. and Canada, and that the Haudenosaunee have a right to self-determination as a sovereign nation. The players said they were neither Canadian nor American, they were Haudenosaunee. Although U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a one-time waiver that cleared the team for travel, the U.K. would not reverse its decision. The Iroquois Nationals returned home, and Germany took the team's place in the elite Blue Division of tournament play. The film showed how the Iroquois Nationals finally made it to the championship in 2011, travelling on Haudenosaunee passports.

The perspective of the athletes reflects their values, beliefs and aspirations regarding sovereignty. What are your own perspectives and experiences with sovereignty and nationhood? For this assignment, you will be responsible for creating a passport that reflects your own ethno-cultural, linguistic or geographical identity(-ies). You may create your passport using digital or any other art media. As you create your passport, think about the symbols, messages, experiences, associations and feelings of involvement that represent your identity. What colours, fonts and images define your emotional attachment to nation/place/identity? How does your name or the content of the passport help create your identity? How does your identity relate to your nationhood?

Your passport must contain a front cover page and at least two inside pages. The front cover page must show a symbol or insignia of your creation (no trademarked logos or copyrighted images). The inside pages must include the following elements:

- A three-letter code representing the issuing state (not necessarily your current nationality or place of residence)
- Your surname and given name(s)
- Your nationality (this could reflect a geographic, spiritual/religious, ethno-cultural or other form of identity, but might also reflect your current nationality)
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Sex
- Date of issue
- Your signature
- A "passport note" of your own creation (e.g., the U.K. passport note states, "Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State requests and requires in the Name of Her Majesty all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford the bearer such assistance and protection as may be necessary")
- Stamps showing places to which you travel or have travelled (these don't need to be other countries; they might be other towns or cities, other neighbourhoods, other schools, other homes or any other location)

After you complete your passport, you will write a two-page paper stating:

- Why you chose the symbols, colours, fonts, images and other elements that appear in your passport
- Your perspective on nationhood and sovereignty
- How the situation faced by the Iroquois Nationals has informed your perspective on sovereignty, including your own sovereignty and that of non-dominant or colonized peoples within any state.

You may use ideas from the Pre-Viewing, Viewing or Post-Viewing activities, information from the film, the questions from the Big Questions/Ideas/Themes section of this guide and the rubric categories to help guide the creation of your passport and your paper.

## SOVEREIGN ME RUBRIC

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Level 1 (50-59%)	Level 2 (60-69%)	Level 3 (70-79%)	Level 4 (80-100%)
Knowledge and Understanding	5.0 5.2 5.4 5.6 5.8	6.0 6.2 6.4 6.6 6.8	7.0 7.2 7.4 7.6 7.8	8.0 8.2 8.5 9.0 10
Understands the concepts of sovereignty and nationhood as they apply to indigenous peoples	Demonstrates limited understanding of sovereignty and nationhood as they apply to indigenous peoples	Demonstrates some understanding of sovereignty and nationhood as they apply to indigenous peoples	Demonstrates considerable understanding of sovereignty and nationhood as they apply to indigenous peoples	Demonstrates thorough and insightful understanding of sovereignty and nationhood as they apply to indigenous peoples
Explains how sovereignty and nationhood relate to concepts of identity and self-determination	Explains how sovereignty and nationhood relate to concepts of identity and self-determination with a limited degree of understanding	Explains how sovereignty and nationhood relate to concepts of identity and self-determination with some degree of understanding	Explains how sovereignty and nationhood relate to concepts of identity and self-determination with a considerable degree of understanding	Explains how sovereignty and nationhood relate to concepts of identity and self-determination with a thorough and insightful degree of understanding
Thinking/Inquiry	5.0 5.2 5.4 5.6 5.8	6.0 6.2 6.4 6.6 6.8	7.0 7.2 7.4 7.6 7.8	8.0 8.2 8.5 9.0 10
Analyzes and interprets information relating to own sovereignty/identity and situation of Haudenosaunee athletes to arrive at reasonable conclusions	Applies few of the skills involved in an inquiry process	Applies some of the skills involved in an inquiry process	Applies most of the skills involved in an inquiry process	Applies all or almost all of the skills involved in an inquiry process
Communication	5.0 5.2 5.4 5.6 5.8	6.0 6.2 6.4 6.6 6.8	7.0 7.2 7.4 7.6 7.8	8.0 8.2 8.5 9.0 10
Uses language, symbols and visual images to convey how identity is linked to nationhood and how sovereignty is linked to self-determination	Uses language, symbols and visual images with limited accuracy and effectiveness	Uses language, symbols and visual images with some accuracy and effectiveness	Uses language, symbols and visual images with considerable accuracy and effectiveness	Uses language, symbols and visual images with a high degree of accuracy and effectiveness
Application	5.0 5.2 5.4 5.6 5.8	6.0 6.2 6.4 6.6 6.8	7.0 7.2 7.4 7.6 7.8	8.0 8.2 8.5 9.0 10
Makes connections between personal experiences and Native Studies, and between subjects studied and the world outside the school	Makes connections with limited effectiveness	Makes connections with moderate effectiveness	Makes connections with considerable effectiveness	Makes connections with a high degree of effectiveness

Comments:

Total: \_\_\_\_\_/40



## EXAMPLES OF CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

COURSE	OVERALL EXPECTATIONS
Grade 10 Native Studies: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe the characteristics of nationhood.</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal Peoples in 20th-century Canadian history.</li> <li>• explain how Canadian government policies have affected Aboriginal identity in the 20th century.</li> <li>• describe different types of relationships that Aboriginal Peoples have established with Canada.</li> <li>• identify the factors responsible for the development of relationships between Aboriginal Peoples and other nations.</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding that different interpretations exist regarding relationships between Aboriginal Peoples and the Crown.</li> <li>• identify historic and contemporary events affecting the self-determination of Aboriginal Peoples.</li> <li>• explain how sovereign governments makes laws and exercise jurisdiction concerning their citizens.</li> </ul>
Grade 11 Native Studies: Current Aboriginal Issues in Canada, University/ College Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of the influences on Aboriginal societies that have an impact on their sense of identity.</li> <li>• describe Aboriginal perspectives related to issues of identity and sovereignty.</li> <li>• describe the social, legal and political environments in which Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples are constructing new relationships.</li> <li>• describe sovereignty and self-determination in terms of the political assertions of Aboriginal Peoples.</li> <li>• identify social, political and economic issues currently being addressed by Aboriginal individuals and communities in Canada.</li> </ul>
Grade 11 Native Studies: Aboriginal Beliefs, Values and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, College/ Workplace Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe traditional and contemporary beliefs and values of Aboriginal cultures that influence present-day activities and behaviours.</li> <li>• identify aspects of cultural identity related to specific Aboriginal Peoples.</li> <li>• compare Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perspectives on the contemporary cultural identities of Aboriginal Peoples.</li> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of the varying perspectives on Aboriginal Peoples' right to self-determination.</li> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of how traditional teachings and contemporary beliefs are the foundation of Aboriginal self-determination.</li> <li>• describe the efforts of Aboriginal Peoples to attain autonomy in their lives.</li> <li>• describe how contemporary Aboriginal communities assert their autonomy through a blend of traditional and modern practices.</li> </ul>
Grade 12 Native Studies: Aboriginal Governance: Emerging Directions, University/ College Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate an understanding that Aboriginal self-governance is grounded in Aboriginal Peoples' beliefs and values.</li> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of various forms of social organization of Aboriginal Peoples that help define their identity.</li> <li>• describe traditional forms of Aboriginal decision making and their relevance to contemporary efforts of Aboriginal Peoples to establish their identity as autonomous peoples.</li> <li>• describe the impact that governance has with respect to Aboriginal identity.</li> </ul>
Grade 11 & 12 English, University/College/ Workplace Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.</li> <li>• identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.</li> <li>• reflect on and identify their strengths as media interpreters and creators, areas for improvement and the strategies they found most helpful in understanding media texts.</li> </ul>

## WEBSITES AND ONLINE RESOURCES

The CBC Archives contains background information and current media stories on lacrosse, which it calls "Canada's game."

<http://archives.cbc.ca/sports/lacrosse/topics/824/>

The Canadian Encyclopedia contains information on the history of lacrosse, along with types of play.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/lacrosse>

The Iroquois Nationals website contains information on the history of the game, the Haudenosaunee flag, the Iroquois two-row wampum and the 2010 passport controversy.

<http://www.iroquoisnationals.org>

The National Lacrosse League website contains stats, team standings and news about the game of lacrosse.

<http://www.nll.com>

## Various Links for Lesson Plan Ideas, Media Awareness, Critical Literacy and Documentary Films

Center for Media Literacy: A U.S. website which provides several resources for making, understanding and criticizing media.

<http://www.medialit.org>

Hot Docs Library: Dozens of online Canadian documentaries, including a number with education support material to aid with classroom viewing.

<http://www.hotdocslibrary.ca>

Hot Docs' Looking at Documentaries: A teaching guide that sets out questions designed to help teachers include the study of documentary film in their curriculum. Free PDF download.

<http://www.hotdocs.ca/youth>

Media Awareness: A Canadian non-profit media education and Internet literacy resource library.

<http://www.media-awareness.ca>

NFB Education: Rich in resources and activities.

<http://www.nfb.ca/education>

CAMPUS: Your online media solution from the NFB. Ontario teachers—activate your profile today at

<http://www.nfb.ca/campus/go>