

Orange Shirt Day - AOB 2025



September 30th

**NATIONAL DAY FOR
TRUTH AND
RECONCILIATION**

**EVERY
CHILD
MATTERS**



Orange Shirt Day: Explained



-In Canada, September 30 is Orange Shirt Day, as well as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (*New national holiday since 2021*)

-Starting in 2013, this day was the idea of Indigenous groups in BC that wanted to help give Residential School Survivors and their families a chance to heal and also to raise awareness of the schools in Canada.

-The idea of using an **orange shirt** as a symbol came from Phyllis Webstad's personal experience (see picture). She had her new orange shirt that her family gave her taken away when she first started as a student at St. Joseph's Residential School in 1973 at the age of 6.



-September 30th is an opportunity for Canadians to learn the truths of this school system and recognize current impacts on Indigenous people.

Residential Schools: Explained



- Starting in 1830 and for a period of more than 150 years, First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation children were forcefully taken from their families and communities to attend schools which were often located far from their communities. The schools were created by the Canadian government and run by various churches at the time.
- More than 150,000 Indigenous children attended Indian Residential Schools with many never returning home.
- The intent was to separate these children from their families and cultures and force them to change who they were - **assimilation** in to the Euro-Canadian culture of the time.
- In 1920, the Indian Act made attendance at Indian Residential Schools compulsory for Treaty-status children between the ages of 7 and 15. The last school was open in 1997.

Indigenous Perspectives: Resilience



- Edmonton Residential School experienced a **student protest** back in 1961.
- The school was located near St. Albert, northwest of Edmonton, and the school was run by the United Church of Canada.
- Students at the Edmonton Residential School were not happy with the abuse they suffered nor the very poor living conditions at the school, including the unhealthy food that was given to them.



Edm Residential School
- open from 1924-1968
- students from Alberta and BC attended.

Indigenous Perspectives: Resilience



-In this incident, students protested the bad food they were being fed and took control of the school, even if just for a few hours.

-In the video, you will hear from Gary Williams, Ray Jones and Helen Johnson, all students and survivors of the schools.

-This incident was an act of **RESILIENCE** where Indigenous students pushed back.



(7.5 min in length) Youtube - CBC News

"The night Edmonton residential school students fought back"

Orange Shirt Day lesson takeaways:

-Indigenous people DID resist Residential schools and the taking over of their language and culture by Canada.

-As most Indigenous people did not win the right to vote until the 1960's, they could not create real change as they had no political power in Canada.

-Today in Canada, Indigenous people continue to be **RESILIENT** as they reclaim their many different languages and cultures.



Indigenous dancers honoring their traditions at an Orange Shirt event.

Orange Shirt Day lesson takeaways:

-Chief Justice Dr. Murray Sinclair was a Indigenous leader who was part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that travelled across Canada from 2008-2015 to hear from survivors and record the TRUTH about the schools impact on Indigenous communities.

-Dr. Sinclair passed in 2024, but his actions and words live on for all Canadians. See his quote...



REMEMBER, RECONCILIATION IS YOURS TO ACHIEVE. WE OWE IT TO EACH OTHER TO BUILD A CANADA BASED ON OUR SHARED FUTURE, A FUTURE OF HEALING AND TRUST.

Justice Murray Sinclair



Orange Shirt Day Reflection:

On September 30th, please take time to reflect on the impacts of Residential Schools.

- Learn** more about the schools and their history.
- Listen** to Indigenous voices and perspectives, like the ones in the video you watched.
- Act** as an ally by supporting Indigenous people - share with others what you learned in this lesson.



THANK YOU AOB STAFF AND STUDENTS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RECOGNIZE THIS IMPORTANT DAY!