



Learn more about Métis history and culture this February!

February 16 is Louis Riel day! Use this simple lesson plan to learn more about the colours on the Métis sash!

History

Who are the Métis?

The Red River Métis are a distinct Nation that arose during the fur trade who created an economic niche for themselves through hunting buffalo and making and transporting pemmican to fur traders.

The Métis are descended from European/First Nations marriages, but have developed a unique culture, language, and way of life through centuries of living in community together.

The Louis Riel Story:

In 1869, the Hudson's Bay Company was in the process of selling Rupert's Land (now most of Western Canada) to the Canadian government for Westward expansion.

Both parties did not consult the Métis or First Nations people living in Rupert's Land. The Métis feared losing their traditional lands and livelihoods.

In 1869, a land survey by the Government of Canada stirred Riel to action. He formed a militia, pushed land surveyors out of the area, and took possession of Upper Fort Garry.

Riel then formed a provisional government and presented a Bill of Rights that protected Métis language, land, and religious rights. This Bill became the Manitoba Act of 1870 and was the foundation of the Province of Manitoba

Instructions

We would recommend engaging students with who the Métis Nation and some of their history. This will help in unpacking the meaning of the colours on the sash. We have provided a quick history, however, there is so much more to know.

To learn more about Métis history in Canada, check out the resource page at the end of the lesson plan.

The Activity;

Put up the coloured photos around the classroom/school/schoolyard. Give each student a scavenger hunt sheet. When they find one of the colours, they will draw a line connecting the colour with what the colour represents.

Afterwards, go over the answers as a class.



RED

The red in represents Métis people
fighting for their rights.



YELLOW

The yellow represents hope for a
positive future for Métis peoples.





GREEN

The green represents fertility for a great nation.





BLACK

The black represents the suppression of Métis people and losing their land.





BLUE

The blue represents the great spirit of Métis people and their resilience.



WHITE

The white represents Métis people's connection to the earth.





MÉTIS SASH SCAVENGER HUNT!

Walk around to find the clue cards.

When you find a card, match the colour to its representation!

BLUE

YELLOW

BLACK

GREEN

WHITE

RED

Fertility for a great nation.

The supression of Métis people and losing their land.

Métis people fighting for their rights.

The great spirit of Métis people and their resilience.

Hope for a positive future for Métis peoples.

Métis people's connection to the earth.



MÉTIS SASH SCAVENGER HUNT!

Answer Key

BLUE

The great spirit of Métis people and their resilience.

The blue represents spirituality and connectedness to community and land.

YELLOW

Hope for a positive future for Métis peoples.

The yellow/gold signifies prosperity and resilience. It reflects how the Métis will continue to pass down their cultural heritage to future generations.

BLACK

The suppression of Métis people and losing their land.

The small bits of black on the sash represent colonization and the loss of culture, lives, land, and ways of life.

GREEN

Fertility for a great nation.

The green represents fertility. Fertility from the land and from those who give birth to future generations.

WHITE

Métis people's connection to the earth.

The white signified connection to Creator, the land, the sky, and water. And the importance of these relations to Métis life.

RED

Métis people fighting for their rights.

The red is the most prominent colour on the sash. It represents the Métis lives that were lost. It represents the blood that has been lost but also the strength of the Métis Nation that has survived to this day.



MÉTIS HISTORY AND CULTURE RESOURCES

[Barrie Métis Council](#) - More information on the significance and history of the sash

[Manitoba Government - Louis Riel Biography](#)

[The Manitoba Métis Federation](#)- Some information on Métis history, valuable information about how the Métis Government serves its citizens.

[The North-West is our Mother by Jean Teillet](#) - An excellent historical account of the Métis in Western Canada.

[Rooster Town: The History of an Urban Métis Community, 1901-1961 by Evelyn Peters, Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner](#) - A book that outlines more contemporary Métis history, specifically around the creation and forced dispersal of the Métis community of Pagan Town (also known as Rooster Town) to expand Winnipeg.

[A list of children's books about the Métis Nation compiled by the Edmonton Public Library](#)