**English First Peoples 11**

**8th Fire: Indigenous in the City (Episode 1) /20**

**Background***: 8th Fire* is a four-part documentary series about contemporary

Aboriginal peoples in Canada, social and economic issues facing

them, and possibilities for moving forward in a world that is rapidly

changing.

**Note on terminology and**

**nomenclature**

Language is alive and fluid, constantly changing and adapting based on usage and

societal shifts. Throughout history, different terminology

and **nomenclature** (the act or process of naming things) have been used to describe groups of

people, some of which may be offensive by today’s standards.

We talk about this so that we learn and teach others the proper terminology to use.

In Canada, it is generally suitable to say **First Nations** or **Aboriginal**, but whenever

possible, it is more appropriate to use the name of the specific group of people, such as the

**Mohawk**, the **Lil’wat** or the **Cree**.

This first installment in this series is a focus on acknowledging and challenging stereotypes, particularly

surrounding urban Aboriginal people. Challenging stereotypes has, in the cases of the people highlighted

in this episode, resulted in great personal success and often public acclaim.

Do a quick google search of the following people.

1*. Winnipeg’s Most*

2. comic book artist Steve Keewatin

3. lawyer Renee Pelletier,

4. writer Lee Maracle,

5. artist Kent Monkman

6. health worker Leslie Varley

7. hockey player Jordin Tootoo:

***8th Fire – Indigenous in the City (Episode 1)***

1. What is the definition of **stereotype**? How can stereotypes be positive? How can stereotypes be

negative? How have stereotypes impacted you or people you know?

2. What is success? By what standards is success measured?

**Viewing Questions**

1. The opening section of the episode shows some street interviews with “average Canadians”

discussing Aboriginal stereotypes. What is the general consensus from those interviews about

stereotypes surrounding Aboriginal people in Canada? Discuss the impact of some of these

stereotypes on Aboriginal people in Canada.

2. We meet comic book artist, Steve Keewatin. Discuss the kind of art he creates. What were his artistic

influences, and how did these influences impact the art he creates today? Why are people surprised

when he tells them about his occupation and his ancestry?

3. We meet litigation lawyer Renee Pelletier. Discuss the kind of work she does, and the education that

she has received. When she tells people that she is Aboriginal and a lawyer, what is the reaction that

she receives? How is this reaction offensive? How does this connect to the reactions that Steve

Keewatin also receives?

4. *Winnipeg’s Most* is a band that is achieving some fame. Describe their success. How do the band

members fit some of the stereotypes surrounding urban Aboriginal people? How are they fighting

against those stereotypes?

5. Near the end of the episode, *Winnipeg’s Most* visits some Elders from their local area. How can

Elders help Aboriginal youth rebuild their lives? How can their traditional roles be integrated into

today’s world?

6. According to this episode, Aboriginal youth are more likely than other Canadian youth to join gangs

or to be in trouble with the law. Discuss some of the issues that have created this situation.

7. A major part of the Indian Act involves the creation of reserve lands. How has that impacted

Aboriginal people? Why are more and more Aboriginal people leaving the reserves?

8. We meet Lee Maracle, a writer who believes our nation has been founded on theft. Discuss this idea.

9. We meet Kent Monkman, an artist who creates what he refers to as “subversive” art. What is the

definition of subversive? How is his art subversive? Why does he choose to integrate romanticized

images of Aboriginal peoples?

10. The Varley/Dixon family are an example of the challenges and successes facing many Aboriginal

families. Discuss how Leslie Varley, Herb Dixon, and Herb Varley have struggled to survive and

succeed. What are their hopes for the future?

11. Several of the guests on this episode discuss the importance of having a relationship with the land.

What is a relationship with the land and how is it important to many Aboriginal peoples?

12. We meet Jordin Tootoo, an Inuit hockey player in the NHL. Why does he continually return to his

home in Rankin Inlet? How does he cope with the contrast between his life in urban centres during

hockey season and the way of life at home?