

## Indigenous People's Experience in The First World War: Excerpts from *Three Day Road*

Francis Pegahmagabow was born in 1889 on the Parry Island Indian Reserve (now the Wasauksing First Nation), an Ojibwa community near Parry Sound, Ontario. When he is three, his father dies and his mother returns to her home in the Henvey Inlet First Nation... In the care of elder Noah Nebimanyquod — who had also raised Pegahmagabow's own orphaned father — young Francis spends his childhood steeped in the customs of the Anishnaabe. Nebimanyquod teaches him to fish and hunt, while his foster mother educates him about traditional medicine. He grows up practicing both traditional Anishnaabe spirituality and Roman Catholicism... After spending so much of his youth hunting, Pegahmagabow turns out to be a uniquely skilled sniper. He sneaks into No Man's Land under darkness, buries himself in cover and waits patiently until a German helmet fills his scope. It's this mix of patience and unerring aim that makes him the deadliest sniper on either side of the war, with 378 confirmed kills.



Source: <https://www.cbc.ca/2017/canadathestoryofus/the-deadliest-sniper-of-The-First-World-War-was-francis-pegahmagabow-an-ojibwa-soldier-1.4083644>

Pegahmagabow's life was inspiration to writer Joseph Boyden in his novel *Three Day Road*. Unfortunately, Pegahmagabow's success in battle and his return to Canada is not typical. Boyden's two Cree characters demonstrate a full range of the First World War experience.

Excerpts/ Passages from *Three Day Road* :

### Group 1

1. Cree Aunt Niska meets her nephew on his return from The First World War (3-9)
2. British colonization; Niska's epileptic visions (46-49)

### Group 2

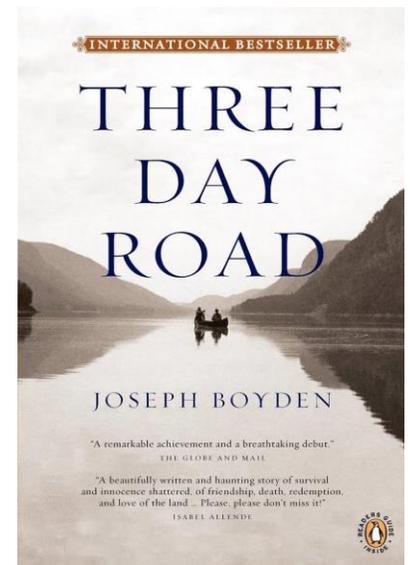
3. Residential school of Niska (89-95)
4. Niska rescues Xavier from residential school (217-220)
5. Xavier remembers Residential School (221-223)

### Group 3

6. Xavier and Elijah decide to enlist; Niska goes to town to hear news (289-301)
7. Cree Nephew and friend, Xavier and Elijah, travel south to enlist (161-163)
8. Cree identity in a British war; Morphine addiction (136-146)

### Group 4

9. Memories of the trauma in Passchendaele (302-307)
10. The attack on Vimy Ridge (232-239)



## Analyzing Historical Significance Through the Historical Thinking Pillars:

- Causes and Effects
- Changes or Continuity
- Ethical Dimensions
- Historical Perspectives

We will work together on using evidence from *Three Day Road* to explain historical significance. We will practice effective answer form by using complete sentences, insightful organization, specific evidence/details from the text, and explanation of one or more historical pillars.

1. The passages in group 1 provide a strong illustration of the effects of British colonialism in Canada: settlement of 'empty' lands attained by the numbered treaties. Explain what we learn about the features of British colonialism in northern Ontario. How did colonialism work and what did it look like? How is perspective and effects the major historical significance pillars we can associate with this section of the book?
2. Colonialism in Canada included cultural genocide, the deliberate eradication of Indigenous culture. This genocide was attempted through the assimilation of Indigenous people in residential schools. Explain what we learn about these residential schools in the passages of group 2. For a stronger answer, try to group your details effectively, such as by school structure, lifestyle, rules, punishment, effects, etc. Apply three historical significance pillars to your answer: ethical dimensions, causes and effects, and change.
3. Once Canada announces its support for Britain and its allies in The Great War, Niska's nephew Xavier and his friend Elijah decide to enlist in the army. After reading the passages of group 3, explain the process of enlisting for a northern indigenous Canadian and explain how the historical concept of perspective is further developed: what more do we learn about being indigenous in a colonial Canada and an imperial war?
4. Group 4 illustrates the war itself and the nature of First World War battles. Provide evidence from these passages to explain trench warfare and weapons technology. Choose a number of historical pillars to apply to this evidence for an insightful answer about historical significance.

**Curriculum Expectations Addressed:**

**A1. Historical Inquiry:** use the historical inquiry process and the concepts of historical thinking when investigating aspects of Canadian history.

**B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context:** describe some key social, economic, and political events, trends, and developments between 1914 and 1929, and assess their significance for different groups and communities in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

**B2. Communities, Conflict, and Cooperation:** analyse some key interactions within and between different communities in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, and between Canada and the international community, from 1914 to 1929, and how these interactions affected Canadian society and politics.

Criteria & Categories	90-100% Outstanding Level 4+ 9-10 marks	80-89% Excellent Level 4 8 marks	70-79% Good Level 3 7 marks	60-69% Fair Level 2 6 marks	50-59% Poor Level 1 5 mark	0-49% Insufficient 0-4	
<b>Knowledge 10 marks</b>  CONTENT MASTERY: the extent to which the student includes strong evidence and explains how the evidence establishes historical significance	-demonstrates outstanding knowledge and understanding of historical significance through evidence	- demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of historical significance through evidence	- demonstrates considerable knowledge and understanding of historical significance through evidence	- demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of historical significance through evidence	-demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of historical significance through evidence	-insufficient knowledge and understanding of historical significance through evidence	
<b>Thinking and Inquiry: Historical Significance 10 marks</b>  CRITICAL THINKING & INQUIRY: the extent to which critical and creative thinking skills are employed by analyzing the historical thinking concepts (pillars) and explaining how the pillars establish historical significance	-analyzes and explains the historical thinking concepts with a degree of effectiveness	- analyzes and explains the historical thinking concepts with a high degree of effectiveness	- analyzes and explains the historical thinking concepts with considerable effectiveness	- analyzes and explains the historical thinking concepts with some effectiveness	- analyzes and explains the historical thinking concepts with limited effectiveness	-insufficient employment of critical and creative skills	
<b>Application 5 marks</b>  ORGANIZATION: the extent to which the evidence is incorporated and cited properly into paragraph form	-evidence incorporated with an outstanding degree of effectiveness	-evidence incorporated with a high degree of effectiveness	-evidence incorporated with considerable effectiveness	-evidence incorporated with some effectiveness	-evidence incorporated with limited effectiveness	-no use of evidence	

**Communication 5 marks**

STYLE & CONVENTIONS: the extent to which spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are effective; word usage is correct; sentences are complete and varied in structure

-outstanding command of the conventions of language  
0-1 error

-uses the conventions of language accurately and effectively 2 errors

-uses the conventions of language with considerable effectiveness 3 errors

-uses the conventions of language with moderate effectiveness 4 errors

-uses the conventions of language with limited effectiveness 5 errors

-mechanical errors impede understanding  
6+ errors

**Pillars of Historical Thinking Rubric**