

***BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English -  
Reader 3***

# **BC Reads: Adult Literacy**

# **Fundamental English - Reader 3**

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Shantel Ivits

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# About the Book

*BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 3* was created by Shantel Ivits. This creation is a part of the [B.C. Open Textbook project](#).

The B.C. Open Textbook project began in 2012 with the goal of making post-secondary education in British Columbia more accessible by reducing student cost through the use of openly licensed textbooks. The B.C. Open Textbook project is administered by BCcampus and funded by the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education.

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For more information about this project, please contact [opentext@bccampus.ca](mailto:opentext@bccampus.ca).

If you are an instructor who is using this book for a course, [please let us know](#).

## Acknowledgments

These book were developed on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Huy tseep q'u! Chen kw'enmántumiyap! Kw'as hoy!

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work on this project alongside a dedicated team of basic education instructors from across British Columbia. This series was shepherded by Leanne Caillier-Smith (College of the Rockies) and benefited enormously from the insight and encouragement of Julia Dodge (University of the Fraser Valley), Chandra McCann (Okanagan College), Jan Weiten (Vancouver Community College), and Melinda Worfolk (College of New Caledonia). The above five mentioned are representatives of the BC Adult Literacy Articulation Committee and were the advisory committee members for this project. It has been a pleasure to scaffold my own learning among such brilliant and passionate educators.

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A special thank you to my partner, Marria, for always lending my words an eager ear, and for keeping the world around me turning even though my head was perpetually stuck in these books.

# Notes to the Instructor

## Welcome to BC Reads!

This reader contains nine original stories written specifically for adults, and is designed to accompany the [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3](#). This level 3 reader, one of a series of six readers, is roughly equivalent to grades 3 to 4.5 in the K-12 system.

The units in this reader mirror those in the course pack and cover three themes:

- Mysteries in BC History
- Snapshots of Culture in BC
- Wild BC

New vocabulary and word patterns are highlighted throughout each story, and then summarized at the end. Font size and line spacing can be adjusted in the online view, and have been enhanced for the print and PDF versions for easier reading. This reader has been reviewed by subject experts from colleges and universities.

I hope you and your students find the contents of these pages to be both enjoyable and rewarding!

-Shantel Ivits

***Unit 1: Mysteries in BC History***

# Searching for Sasquatches

When you talk to a **judge**, you have to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. A man named Albert Ostman from British Columbia told a **judge** that he was once kidnapped by a family of **sasquatches**. Was he telling the truth?



*Camping in the woods*

In 1924, Ostman said he went camping in the woods of British Columbia. One night, he was sleeping in his sleeping bag. Suddenly, something lifted him up. It carried him through the woods while he was balled up in his sleeping bag. This went on for three hours. Then he was dumped out onto the ground. He looked up to see a family of four **sasquatches** looking down at him. The **sasquatch** family held him at their camp. They would not let him leave. After six days, he was finally able to escape.



*Sasquatch*

A reporter named John Green was interested in stories like this one. He wanted to get to the bottom of the mystery of the **sasquatch**. So he put together hundreds of reports by people who said they had seen the animal. Green's research says the **sasquatch** is a big and hairy beast that looks like an ape. It

walks on two legs. It stands three metres tall. It can run very fast, and it smells very, very bad.



### *Harrison Hot Springs*

Harrison Hot Springs is a place in British Columbia's Fraser Valley. If you drive to Harrison Hot Springs, you will see a sign that says, "Land of the **Sasquatch**." Many people say they have seen a **sasquatch** in this area. In 1957, the government of Harrison Hot Springs started a search party to look for the beast. They didn't find it.

Stories of the **sasquatch** are not new. Many First Nations people in British Columbia have told stories about a big ape-like beast for thousands of years. Very old paintings and carvings show ape-like beasts, too. But there is no proof that the **sasquatch** is real. No **sasquatch** bones have ever been found. There are no photos or videos of a **sasquatch** that scientists say are real.



*Scientist*

Scientists know that an ape three metres tall did exist 200,000 years ago. Scientists think this ape has died out. Many people who believe in the **sasquatch** say that maybe the ape did not die out after all. Maybe this is the ape we now call a **sasquatch**.

Just in case the **sasquatch** is real, it is on the list of protected animals in British Columbia!

### *Word Patterns*

The letters **-dge** like in **judge** make the /j/ sound. The **d** is usually silent.

The letters **-tch** like in **sasquatch** make the /ch/ sound. The **t** is usually silent.

These patterns are only found at the end of a word or syllable, or after a short vowel.

See [Searching for Sasquatches](#) in BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3.

### *Attributions*

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#### **Scientist**

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# The Shooting of Ginger Goodwin

On a spring day in England in 1887, a baby with red hair was born. His name was Albert Goodwin, but his family called him “Ginger.”

Coal was very important back then. Coal is a black rock that can be used for fuel. It was used to run **trains** and steamboats. Albert “Ginger” Goodwin became a coal miner at age 15. That is how he **found** himself in British Columbia. There were lots of coal mining jobs on Vancouver Island.



*Coal miners at work*

Coal mining was not a safe job. The coal dust made the workers sick. Sometimes gas in the **ground** made the workers sick, too. Sometimes mines caved in. Many miners wanted the **right** to be safe at work. So in 1912, some workers on Vancouver Island went on strike. Ginger was one of them. He spoke out for workers' rights. When the strike ended, the mining company would not give him his job back. The company was angry that he had spoken out. So Ginger moved to the **mainland** of British Columbia. He continued to **fight** for workers' **rights**.

At that time, Canada was **fighting** in World War I. In 1917, the government made a law that all men aged 20 to 35 must **fight** in the war. Ginger did not believe in war. He also had many health problems from working in the mines. A doctor looked at him and said he was not fit to go to war. Ginger began to speak out **against** the law that forced men to go to war. Shortly after, he got a letter from the government saying he needed to be seen by a doctor **again**. This time, the doctor said he was fit for war. Many people were sure that the government was trying to get rid of him for speaking out.



*Cabin on a mountain*

Ginger escaped to a cabin on Alone **Mountain** near Comox Lake. He was joined by some other men who would not **fight** in the war. People in the nearby town helped them hide by bringing them food and water. Police spent months looking for the men. A police officer named Campbell said he would get Goodwin dead or alive.

One day in 1918, Campbell and two other police officers went to Alone **Mountain** looking for the men. The two police officers went one way and Campbell went another. Then the two police officers heard a shot ring out. They went toward the **sound**. They found Ginger's dead body on the **ground**. Campbell had shot him. Campbell said he had to because Ginger pointed a gun at him. The police burned the cabin where Ginger was shot. Some people thought that it was a cover-up. They said it was not **right** that Ginger was killed. They thought the government finally got what it wanted. The government got rid of Ginger Goodwin.



*Ginger Goodwin's funeral*

Miners and friends carried Ginger's coffin on their shoulders through the streets of the town. People followed behind for six kilometres. That day, all the workers in British Columbia put down their tools and went on strike. They protested the shooting of Ginger Goodwin. It was the first general strike of British Columbia.

Today, we wonder what really happened on that summer afternoon in 1918 on Alone **Mountain**.

### Word Patterns

The bold words in this story have these word patterns:

The word ending **-igh** has three letters. But it makes one sound. The letters **-igh** make a long /i/ sound. These letters are usually followed by **t** like these words:

- **right**
- **rights**
- **fight**
- **fighting**

The word ending **-ain** has two vowels that make one sound. The vowels **-ai** can make the long /a/ sound. Words from this story that contain this ending include:

- **mainland**
- **against**
- **again**

The word **mountain** contains the letters **-ain** like *mainland* and *again*. But it doesn't have the long /a/ sound.

The last word family in this lesson is the **-ound** family. The two vowels **-ou** can make the same sound you make when you stub your toe: **ow!** Here are the words in this story that contain this word ending:

- **found**
- **ground**
- **sound**

See [The Shooting of Ginger Goodwin](#) in BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3.

## *Attributions*

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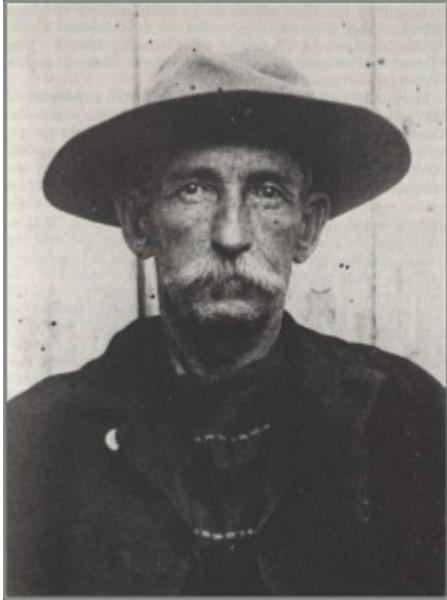
### **Cabin on a mountain**

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# The Gentleman Bandit



*Bill Miner*

In the days before cars, people and goods travelled a long way on horses and trains. Horses and trains were easy targets for bandits looking to make easy money. Bill Miner was one of the most feared **train bandits**. He spent four years of his life here in **British Columbia**. This is the story of those four years.

**Wanted posters** with Bill Miner's face were put up all over the west coast of the **United States**. Bill needed to escape. He slipped across the border into Canada. George Edwards was the name he gave anyone who asked who he was. He went from town to town in **British Columbia**. He had no trouble making friends. He was a charming man. He played the fiddle. He showed people how to dance. He was known as a real **gentleman**. Nobody thought he could be a bandit.

During this time, he got to know the area around Mission, **British Columbia**. Many trains of the Canadian Pacific Railway, or the CPR, passed through the

area. He knew where the trains were coming from and where they were going. He knew how often they passed. By talking to the **railroad** workers, he found out what the trains carried.



*CPR train*

One day in September 1904, a CPR train stopped outside of Mission to fill up with water. Bill and two men climbed onto the train with their faces covered. Bill pulled a gun on the man driving the train. He took the man's money and gold watch. Word spread to the **passenger cars** that the train was being robbed. The passengers hid their money and took out their guns. They were ready for the bandits. But the bandits unhooked the **passenger cars** from the train. The train went on without them. Next, the bandits made a worker open the train's safe. Inside was \$7,000, mostly in gold. They took it all. Bill chatted with the man driving the train. He gave him his money and watch back. Then he wished him a good day and got off the train with his two men and the gold.



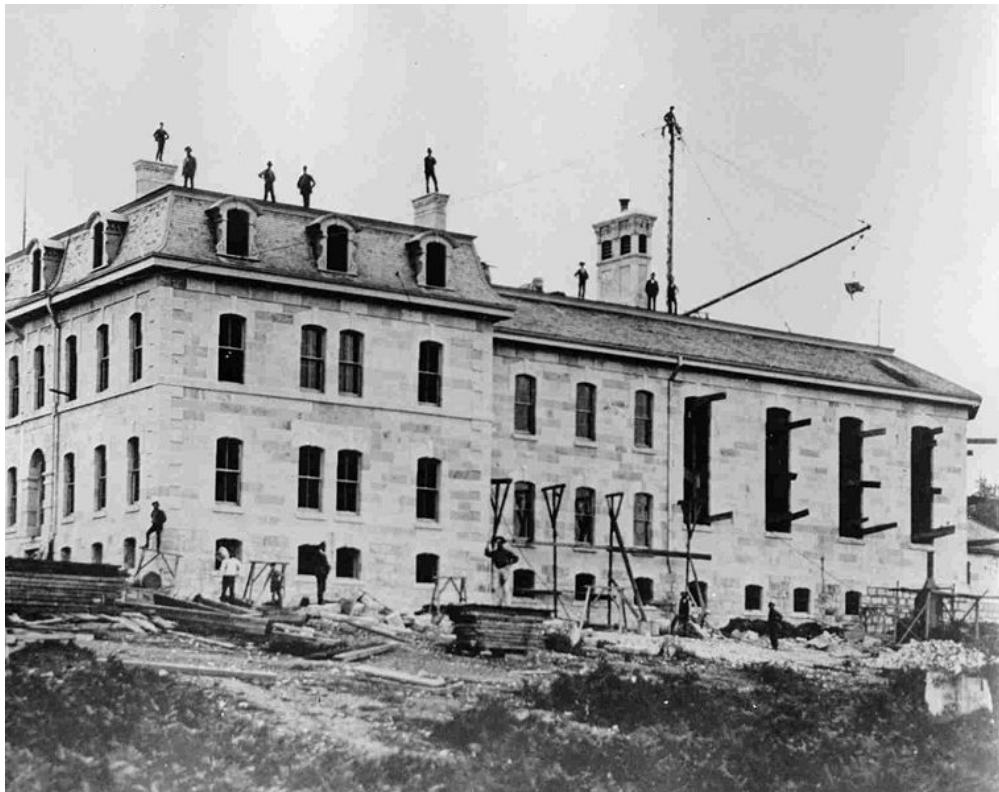
*Gambling*

This was the first time the CPR was ever robbed. It was in all of the **newspapers** across **British Columbia**. More **wanted posters** went up. But the posters did not describe Bill's face because it had been covered up. Bill went to Chilliwack. He played pool and poker. He even played poker with **police officers**. He didn't get caught. He spent his money freely and told people he made it from mining.

Two years later, Bill and two friends climbed aboard another CPR train. This time the train was near Kamloops. One of the men's masks slipped. Someone saw his face. Another mistake was made. They unhooked the **passenger car**, just like last time. But this time, they also unhooked the train car with all the money. They only made \$15.50 from the robbery. They wished the workers a good night and got off the train, very upset.

The bad luck continued. About a week later, the police found the bandits in the woods making a meal over a **campfire**. A **gunfight** followed. It ended with Bill being arrested. Bill said his name was George Edwards but nobody believed him. He was brought to a prison in Kamloops. When he arrived, a local photographer

named Mary Spencer took a photo. That photo was printed in **newspapers** all across Canada. Yet, not many people across **British Columbia** were mad at Bill. In fact, many people were fond of him! They thought he was charming, bold, and handsome. They called him “**The Gentleman Bandit**.” When Bill was brought to a prison in New Westminster, a crowd of fans was waiting to see him.



*New Westminster prison*

Bill was expected to stay in that prison until the day he died. But less than a year later, some friends dug a hole under a **prison fence**. Bill Miner got away. Nobody knows how he was able to escape the province unseen. It was like he disappeared into thin air. He left **British Columbia** and never returned. **British Columbians** still talk about “**The Gentleman Bandit**” to this day.

## Word Patterns

Sometimes when you get stuck on a big word, it helps to look for smaller words inside of the big word. Below are examples from this story:

- **gentleman** = gentle + man
- **railroad** = rail + road
- **newspapers** = news + papers
- **campfire** = camp + fire
- **gunfight** = gun + fight

Other times, two words talk about just one thing. Here are examples from this story:

- **train bandits**
- **British Columbia**
- **wanted posters**
- **United States**
- **passenger cars**
- **police officers**
- **prison fence**

See [The Gentleman Bandit in BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3.](#)

## Attributions

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## CPR train

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## Gambling

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## New Westminster Prison

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***Unit 2: Snapshots of BC Culture***

# All Together Now: BC Festivals



*Vancouver Island*

In places across British Columbia, people come together for festivals that celebrate the things that make their hometown special.

Every year, about 20,000 grey whales swim past the west coast of Vancouver Island. The whales travel from Mexico to the Arctic and back again. The whole trip is about 16,000 kilometres. This is one of the **longest** yearly journeys of any mammal. Each March, the people who live around the Pacific Rim National Park hold a festival to celebrate the whales' journey. The festival is known as the Pacific Rim Whale Festival. The whales travel very close to the shore as they swim north. This allows people to gather together to watch them from land as well as from boats.

On the east coast of Vancouver Island, you can spot mammals of a different sort moving through the water — people in bathtub boats! The city of Nanaimo is home to the world's **oldest** and best-known bathtub boat race. It started out as a silly event in 1967. Today, Nanaimo's World Championship Bathtub Race is a serious sport that brings **racers** and **visitors** from around the world.



*Bathtub race in Nanaimo*



*Dragon Boat Festival in Vancouver*

Vancouver is home to another famous festival on the water — the Dragon Boat Festival. Dragon boat racing started in China over 2,000 years ago. It was brought to Vancouver during Expo 86. It returned as a yearly event in 1989 as a way to celebrate the many cultures living together in the city. The festival begins with a ceremony to awaken the dragon and give the people and boats the dragon's strength. Each boat has a dragon's head carved on the front and a tail on

the back. The boat holds a team of about 20 people, who paddle to the beat of a **drummer** seated at the front.



*Vernon*

One of Canada's **largest** winter festivals takes place in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia. It's the Vernon Winter Carnival, which is held each February. Some of the major events include a BC snow sculpture contest, sports using giant hot air balloons, and a parade. During the carnival, people can have a friend, **co-worker**, or boss arrested by carnival cops who then throw them in "jail" until they raise enough money for bail. All money raised goes to support the carnival.

The festivals of British Columbia are a way for the many people who live here to enjoy nature, share a laugh, and learn about one another.

### *Word Patterns*

When you see the suffix **-er**, **-or**, or **-ar** at the end of a word, it often means "a person who."

- A **baker** is a person who bakes.
- An **actor** is a person who acts.
- A **liar** is a person who lies.

Words in this story that fit this pattern are:

- **racers**
- **visitors**
- **drummer**
- **co-worker**

The suffix **-est** means “the most.”

- **Fastest** means the most fast.
- **Strongest** means the most strong.
- **Lightest** means the most light.

Words in this story that fit this pattern are:

- **longest**
- **oldest**
- **largest**

New vocabulary words have been underlined in the story.

See [All Together Now: BC Festivals in BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3.](#)

### *Attributions*

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## **Bathtub race in Nanaimo**

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# Bold and Bright: Sook-Yin Lee



*Sook-Yin Lee*

Sook-Yin Lee has been called “a cultural Jill of all trades.” This means she can do a little bit of everything. She’s a musician, actor, writer, filmmaker, and broadcaster. Since she was a child, she has loved putting on a show. At the heart of a good show is a good story. She says stories are how she makes sense of a world that’s both strange and **wonderful**.

Sook-Yin grew up in North Vancouver. Her parents moved to British Columbia from China. They were strict and her mom used to hit her. So Sook-Yin ran away when she was 15. Her sister Dede went, too. Together, they lived on the streets. Dede fell in with a violent gang and died very young.

Sook-Yin turned to the arts for survival. In the late 1980s, she became the lead singer of a Vancouver-based punk band called Bob’s Your Uncle. The owner of MuchMusic heard about her and asked her to try out for a job as a VJ. A VJ is like a DJ for music videos. She landed this dream job. She quickly became known for being smart, funny, and **fearless**. In 1995, gay people won some basic human rights. Sook-Yin celebrated by kissing another woman on air. And on her last day at MuchMusic, she said goodbye by mooning the camera.



*The band Bob's Your Uncle*



*CBC studio in Vancouver*

In 2002, she moved to CBC Radio as host of a show called *Definitely Not the Opera*. The show is about Canadian pop culture. It has also become a place for Canadians to share stories about the sad, **joyful**, and **embarrassing** moments of

modern life. What makes Sook-Yin different is that she doesn't hold back. She shares her stories on the air, too.



*The movie Shortbus*

In 2006, CBC threatened to fire Sook-Yin for starring in a racy film called *Shortbus*. After the film was shown at the Cannes Film Festival, people stood and clapped for 20 minutes. This act sent a loud message about letting artists express themselves. So CBC didn't fire her after all.

Since then, Sook-Yin has continued to live by her motto: be bold, shine bright. She shows us how storytelling and the arts can help us find who we are, connect with others, and make it through whatever life has in store for us.

### Word Patterns

The suffix **-less** means “without.”

In this story, for example, **fearless** means without fear. Other examples (not in this story) include:

- **Homeless** means without a home.
- **Careless** means without care.

The suffix **-ful** means “full of.”

In this story, for example, **joyful** means full of joy and **wonderful** means full of wonder. Other examples (not in this story) include:

- **Fearful** means full of fear.
- **Careful** means full of care.
- **Beautiful** means full of beauty.

## Vocabulary

The underlined words in this story (listed below) are from the synonyms task you did in Unit 2 of Course Pack 3. If you get stuck on a word from your SYN-Circles, see if the synonyms help you.

- strange
- strict
- violent
- embarrassing
- modern
- racy
- motto
- bold

See [Bold and Bright: Sook-Yin Lee in BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3.](#)

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# Spread the Word: First Nations Languages in BC

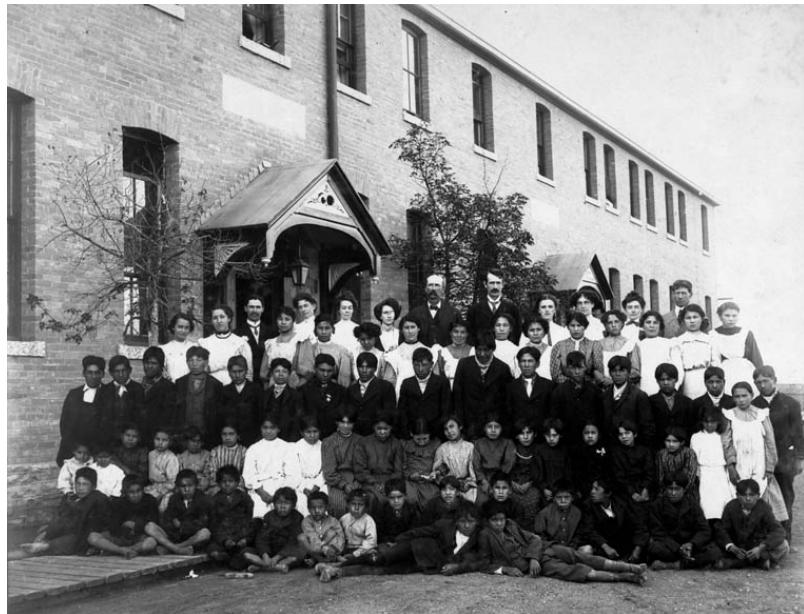


*Khelsilem Rivers*

The land we now call British Columbia is **home** to more First Nations languages than any other part of Canada. About 32 First Nations languages are spoken here. But many of **these** languages are at risk.

For example, there are now fewer than 10 people who can speak the language of the Skwomesh Nation. Most of the speakers are over the age of 65. Then there is a young man named Khelsilem Rivers. Khelsilem is 24 years old. He has learned the Skwomesh language and spends much of his **time** working to keep it **alive**. He lives in a house with other young people who want to speak their traditional language every day.

Why is language so important? Language is how we practice our culture. It is how we share our stories, our songs, our history, and our teachings. It is part of our identity. It connects us to our family who **came** before us. Knowing our language helps us be healthy in mind, body, and spirit.



*Residential school*

Why are First Nations languages at risk? When **white** people came to Canada, they thought they were better than First Nations people. They thought First Nations people should be just **like white** people. So they **made** it against the law to practice First Nations culture. From the 1880s until the 1990s, First Nations children were **taken** from their families and sent to boarding schools. At **these** schools, they were told never to speak their language. If they did, they would be punished. Now as adults, many have forgotten their language or do not feel **safe** speaking it. Some languages are said to be sleeping, because there is no one left who can speak them. Today, most people in British Columbia see that what happened was racist and wrong.

Khelsilem compares this history to what happens when a forest is destroyed by a fire. First, the flowers will come back. Then the grasses and weeds will return. Then the shrubs and berry bushes will grow. Next, the softwood trees will come. Finally, the hardwood trees will return. Now the hardwood forest will renew itself. Each **stage made** way for the next **stage**. Khelsilem **hopes** to set up the



*Forest*

next **wave** of Skwomesh people so they will be like that hardwood forest. He is starting a school called the Skwomesh Language Academy.



*Acwsalcta School in Bella Bella, British Columbia*

Like Khelsilem, First Nations people across British Columbia are working to save their languages. There are First Nations language programs for pre-school children. There are camps where First Nations kids learn to do everyday tasks the way their families did them for thousands of years. There are programs for adults to spend **time** with elders who know their First Nations language.



*My future is in your hands*

Settlers can help, too. Settlers are people who moved to British Columbia from other **places**. Settlers can listen to people speak their languages. Settlers can learn something about the First Nations land where they live. Settlers can also find ways to support First Nations language learning in their area.

We cannot **rewrite** the past. But we can work toward healing.

### Word Patterns

Now you will study a new word pattern. This pattern is like the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern, but it has an **e** on the end. So we call them **CVCE** words. Here are some examples:

- bone
- cake
- bike

Check that each word above has the consonant-vowel-consonant-e pattern.

The **e** on the end of these words is sometimes called the **bossy e** or the **magic e**. That's because the **e** tells the other vowel to make a long sound.

Read the CVCE words again and notice the long vowel sound. A **long vowel** sound is when the vowel says its own name.

CVCE words found in this story are:

- **home**
- **these**
- **time**
- **alive**
- **came**
- **like**
- **white**
- **made**
- **taken**
- **safe**
- **stage**
- **hopes**
- **wave**
- **save**
- **places**

- **rewrite**

See [Spread the Word: First Nations Languages in BC](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3](#).

### *Attributions*

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#### **Residential school**

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#### **Forest**

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#### **Acwsalcta School in Bella Bella, British Columbia**

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#### **My future is in your hands**

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***Unit 3: Wild BC***

# The Rare Spirit Bear



*Spirit bear*

There are lots of wonders in the Great Bear Rainforest. There are trees that are more than a thousand **years** old. There are waterfalls rushing off **mossy** mountains. There are wolves that fish — and there are black bears that are white. These bears are known as “spirit bears.”

Spirit bears are rare. They are **only** found in British Columbia. In all of British Columbia, only about 1 in 100 black bears has white fur. Most spirit bears live in the Great Bear Rainforest. This rainforest is on the coast of British Columbia. On



*Great Bear Rainforest*

some of the islands in the Great Bear Rainforest as **many** as 1 in 3 black bears has white fur.



*Spirit bear eating*

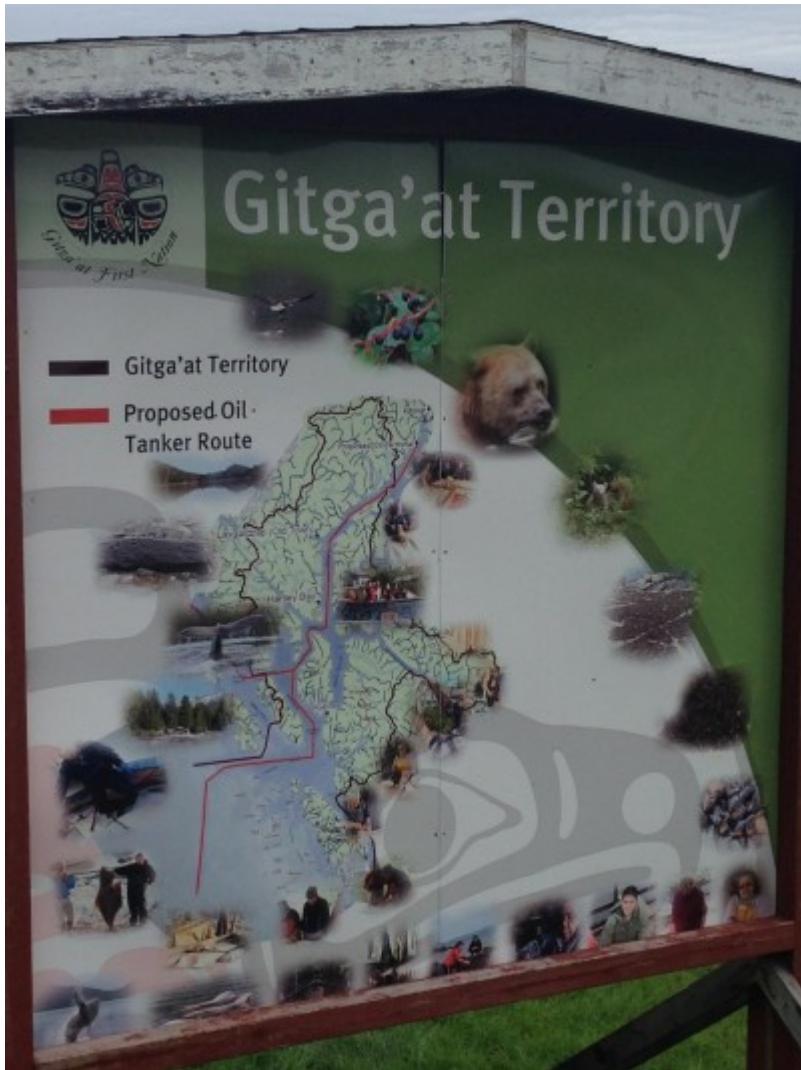
Spirit bears, like other black bears, eat plants such as berries, nuts, and fruits. They also eat small animals such as **baby** deer and **baby** moose. Most of all, they love salmon. Spirit bears have an easier time than black bears at catching salmon. Their white fur makes them harder for the salmon to see. After getting nice and fat over the spring, summer, and fall, the bears sleep in their dens all winter. During the winter, spirit bears can go without food for up to seven months.



*Spirit bear cub*

Spirit bears **mostly** live alone. They mate in the summer but do not stay with their partner. The mother gives birth in **January** or **February**. By the time the cubs are a **year** and a half old, they are **ready** to go out on their own.

The Great Bear Rainforest is the traditional land of 12 different First Nations. These First Nations groups have never hunted the spirit bear. It is now against the law for anyone in British Columbia to hunt a spirit bear. Without the threat of people or **any** other animals, spirit bears can live to over 25 **years** old.



*Gitga'at Territory*

Yet many people say the spirit bear is at risk. A **company** called Enbridge would like to put a pipeline through the Great Bear Rainforest. The pipeline would **carry** oil. The oil would then be shipped across the sea to Asia on oil tankers. Some people are worried about oil spills. A big oil spill in the Great Bear Rainforest would destroy the place where most of the spirit bears on earth live. A big oil spill would kill **many** plants, fish, and animals that the spirit bear eats. Oil spills are difficult to clean up.



*Pipeline*

Enbridge says the spirit bears are not at risk. They say pipelines and oil tankers are **very** safe. They also say that the pipelines will help people in lots of ways. Building pipelines will create jobs for local people. Enbridge will pay taxes to the government, which can be used for schools and hospitals.

Is the spirit bear at risk? What do you think should become of the home of the spirit bear?

### *Word Patterns*

The letter **y** can make lots of different sounds, depending on where it shows up in a syllable.

A syllable that begins with **y** usually makes a /y/ sound like in **yellow** and these words from the story:

- **year**
- **yet**

A one syllable word that ends in **y** usually makes a long /i/ sound, like in **cry** and this word from the story: **by**.

If the word has more than one syllable and ends in a **y**, the **y** usually makes a long /e/ sound, like in **baby**. The story has these words, too.

- **mossy**
- **many**
- **only**
- **mostly**
- **January**
- **February**
- **ready**
- **any**
- **company**
- **carry**
- **very**

See [The Rare Spirit Bear](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3](#).

## *Attributions*

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### **Great Bear Rainforest**

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### **Spirit bear eating**

Kermode bear near Lava Lake by [miguelphotobooth](#) is used under a [CC BY 2.0](#) license.

### **Spirit bear cub**

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### **Gitga'at Territory**

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### **Pipeline**

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# The Journey of the Salmon



*Salmon*

For many **First** Nations people in British Columbia, the salmon is a symbol of trusting your senses and working hard at your goals. Salmon sense the right time to leave the sea. **Starting** in the fall, they swim thousands of kilometres to **return** to the same place where they **were** born. It is a difficult journey. They must swim **upriver**. They must leap up **waterfalls**. They must avoid bears and eagles. If they are lucky, they make it back to the place where they **were born**. They **turn** bright red to show that they are ready to mate. The female digs a nest. Then she lays thousands of eggs. The male puts **sperm** on the eggs at the same time. Both of the salmon die soon after.

Only a few of the eggs hatch. The young salmon leave the nest after a couple of days. They swim **downriver** to the sea. On the way, the bears and eagles are a



*Very young salmon*

threat once more. Many salmon do not make it to the sea. Those that do make it live in the ocean until they are about four years old. Then they **return** to their **birthplace**, just like their parents did. The amazing cycle of life continues.

Scientists do not know how salmon **are** able to find their way to their **birthplace**. Some say they can smell their way back.

**Birds**, bears, and even trees depend on the salmon. Dead salmon left on the **forest** floor by animals act like food for the trees. Salmon is also a traditional food for many **First Nations** people in British Columbia. They have fished salmon from the **rivers** and oceans since the beginning of time. Some communities hold a ceremony to welcome the salmon as they **return** to their **birthplaces**.

In recent years, people have **started** building salmon fish **farms**. Fish **farmers** drop nets and cages into the ocean. They fill the nets and cages with salmon. They raise the salmon for food. Fish **farmers** say that fish **farms** are good for



*Salmon hanging in a smokehouse*



*Fish farm in the ocean*

people and good for the earth. Fish **farms** are keeping wild salmon safe from **overfishing**. Fish **farms** are making jobs for people.

But some people say that fish **farms** are bad for the earth. Fish **farms** are spreading sea lice. The drugs that fish **farmers** give the salmon are doing **harm**.

to other sea life. Finally, many seals and sea lions are getting stuck in the nets of fish **farms** and drowning.



*Closed fish farm tanks*

Fish farms are a hot topic in British Columbia. Some **First** Nations communities may have found an **answer**. A few communities are building fish farms on land, **rather** than in the ocean. They are using closed tanks, **rather** than nets and cages. This may be a way to protect the earth and make money at the same time.

### *Word Patterns*

An **r-controlled syllable** is a syllable that has a vowel followed by the letter **r**. The **r** changes the vowel sound. The vowel sound is neither short nor long.

Read these words:

- her
- bird

- burn

The **-er**, **-ir**, and **-ur** in the middle of these words all make the same sound. That means there are three ways to spell this sound: **-er**, **-ir**, and **-ur**. The **-er** is the most common. Examples of these sounds in this story are below:

- **first**
- **return**
- **were**
- **upriver** or **rivers**
- **waterfalls**
- **turn**
- **sperm**
- **downriver**
- **birthplace**
- **farmers**
- **birds**
- **overfishing**
- **answer**
- **rather**

The letters **-ar** can make many sounds. For now, think of their sound as the one you hear in the word **car**. Examples of this sound in this story are:

- **starting** or **started**
- **farms**
- **farmers**
- **harm**

The letters **-or** can also make many sounds. For now, think of their sound as the one you hear in **horn**. Examples in this story are:

- **born**
- **forest**

See [The Journey of the Salmon](#) in BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3.

## *Attributions*

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### **Very young salmon**

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### **Salmon hanging in a smokehouse**

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### **Fish farm in the ocean**

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### **Closed fish farm tanks**

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# Spy-Hopping with Orca Whales



*Orca whale*

Did you know that there are about 300 orca whales living off the coast of British Columbia year-round? Orca whales show up in many First Nations stories. In some tales, orca whales take people from canoes and turn them into whales, too. An orca whale near the shore is sometimes seen as one of these people trying to talk to their family.



*A pod of orca whales*

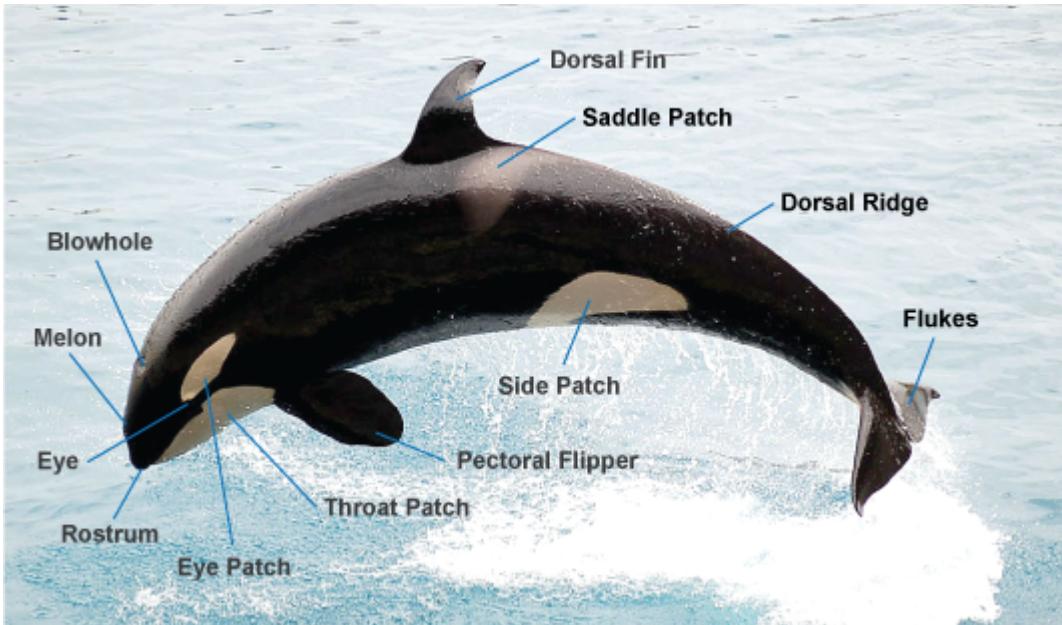
Whales live in family groups called pods. A pod has between 5 and 30 whales. Pods always stay together. A female orca whale is called a **cow**. She is the head of the family. A male orca whale is called a **bull**. Cows and bulls mate for life. Cows will have about five babies in their lifetime. When a baby is born, it comes out tail first. The mother brings it to the **surface** of the water. The baby takes its first breath of air. After a half an hour, the baby can swim on its own. By age two, it can hunt. A bull will live up to 50 years. A cow will live up to 90 years.

The orca whales in the pod talk to each other. They talk using fast, high clicks. The sounds can be as loud as a jet. Each pod has its own sounds.



*Whale shooting water out of its blowhole*

Did you know that orca whales cannot breathe underwater? They must breathe air through a blowhole on top of their head. They can hold their breath for up to 15 minutes as they dive deep into the ocean.



*Parts of a whale*

Orca whales are one of the fastest animals in the world. They have tails called **flukes**. Their flukes give them power when swimming. Their two flippers help them steer. Their fin keeps them **stable** when they go fast. Orca whales usually swim close to shore and near the surface of the water. Sometimes they **spy-hop**. This means they stay **upright** in the water to look around. Sometimes they **breach**. This means they jump right out of the water and land with a big splash.

In British Columbia, orca whales do something no one understands. They come onto some beaches and rub their bodies on the smooth, round **pebbles**. Sometimes they do this for hours. They do not do this in other parts of the world.

Orca whales are good hunters. To hunt, they send out sound waves. Then they listen as the sound waves come back. This tells them where to find food. They eat fish and small sea mammals. Salmon is their favourite. They eat about 50 kilograms of salmon a day. They work together to hunt. They slap the water with their tails to stun or kill the fish. They also herd fish into a small area and then

gulp them down. Up north, they tip floating sea ice so that seals, walruses, and sea lions will slide into the mouth of another whale who has been waiting there.

The biggest **threat** to orca whales is people. People build dams on rivers. The dams kill many salmon. With less salmon to eat, orca whales die, too.



*Oil tanker*

People move lots of oil across the sea in big ships. Sometimes oil leaks out of ships. The oil is soaked up by small animals. Then the orca whales eat those small animals and get sick. Also, the loud noises from the engines of oil tankers make it hard for whales to use sound waves to find food.

People take orca whales out of the wild. About 150 orca whales have been taken out of the wild. They are put in pools for shows. Often the fins of whales that are



*Orca whale in an aquarium*

kept in pools flop to one side. This is a sign of stress. An orca whale taken from the sea will only live about five more years.

Many people want to help orca whales. They say we should not build dams on rivers. They say we should not allow more oil tankers along the coast of British Columbia. They say we should not allow people to keep whales in pools. They can't imagine a British Columbia without orca whales. Can you?

### *Word Patterns*

When we read, we sometimes come across words we cannot sound out or do not understand. Sometimes writers put a definition of a word in the text so that you don't have to look it up in a dictionary.

Here are some examples you will see in the reading above:

- A female orca whale is called a **cow**.
- A male orca whale is called a **bull**.

When the writer does not give us the meaning, we can make a guess based on what makes sense. To make a good guess, we have to think about the other words around it. Read this sentence:

- Orca whales must breathe air through a \_\_\_\_\_ on top of their head.

What word might make sense in the blank? Once you make a guess, you will likely find it easier to read this sentence:

- Orca whales must breathe air through a **blowhole** on top of their head.

See [Spy-Hopping with Orca Whales](#) in BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 3.

### *Attributions*

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#### **A pod of orca whales**

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#### **Whale shooting water out of its blowhole**

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## About the Author



Shantel Ivits is an instructor in the Basic Education Department at Vancouver Community College, on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Shantel has designed curricula for the National Film Board of Canada, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, and many community-based projects.

Over the past decade, they have taught in literacy programs, university bridging programs, an ESL academy, and K-12 public schools.

They hold a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Trent University, as well as a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Arts in Educational Studies from the University of British Columbia.

Shantel identifies as a queer and trans person with white settler privilege. Their goal as an educator is to help people build their capacity to reach their goals and create more socially just communities.

Shantel also enjoys raising awareness that “they” can be used as a singular pronoun!