

## Rising anger of Canada's First Nations over living conditions

### Mögliche Schülerleistungen

1. *Outline the living conditions of most indigenous people in Canada as described in the text.*

Schüler sollten Basissatz (*umbrella sentence*) mit Angabe zu Textsorte, Titel, Erscheinungsort / -jahr und Thema formulieren.

Example:

The online article *Rising anger of Canada's First Nations* ... published at [www.guardian.co.uk/world](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world) on December 21, 2012 deals with the increasing unrest among Canada's native people about the government's unwillingness to implement contracts agreed on.

### Description:

- The text describes the dramatic circumstances under which the majority of the First Nation people have to live.
- Hit by a housing crisis people have to live in tents or huts without sanitary facilities.
- Reserves suffer from a desolate financial situation, which causes severe cuts in basic social services and a total breakdown of infrastructure.
- This has a deep impact on health, development and morals of the people, who are far more likely to commit suicide, to be prone to addiction or to be unable to find a job than the average Canadian.
- Particularly schooling is underfunded, leading to the widening of the educational gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal kids.
- Moreover, many worry about a possible loss of their protected territory for economic purposes.

2. *Analyse the cartoon. Relate it to the text.*

**Description:**

- The cartoon by Malcolm Mayes criticizes the feeble attempts of the Canadian government to stick to existing treaties between federal and aboriginal administration.
- In the centre of the drawing: two men are placed behind a lectern equipped with two microphones.
- One man resembles prime minister Stephen Harper, the other, wearing an "AFN" button on his suit, could represent Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of AFN (Assembly of First Nations).
- The cartoon image of Harper is addressing an invisible audience with the words "This government will honour commitments and respect past agreements made with First Nations".
- Above the words "First Nations", the names "Saskatchewan", "Newfoundland" and "Nova Scotia" can be seen, all of which are crossed out.
- While Harper shows an optimistic facial expression, the representative of the AFN looks rather sceptical.

**Analysis:**

- The cartoon conveys the impression that the federal government doesn't keep its promises.
- The discrepancy between claims and action is demonstrated by the crossed-out names of different regions in Canada, whose individual rights had been guaranteed and then later violated.
- The cartoonist makes his point by underlining the interchangeability of "First Nations" with the other names, implying that a similar treatment of the First Nation agreements is likely.

**Relation to the text:**

- The cartoonist's opinion gets support by the recent development in Canada, which triggered the hunger strike of Chief Theresa Spence.
- Harper's conservative party tries to evade unfavourable parts of former agreements between First Nations and government by silently removing guaranteed rights, thus endangering the aboriginals' position.
- His refusal to meet Spence must be understood as an obvious contradiction to his emphasized respect of Indian rights.

3. *Not all native Canadians favour affirmative action by the state. In an interview on Spence's action a member of her tribe claimed: "State funded assistance does more harm than good as it keeps my people in eternal dependence."*

*Discuss this statement.*

Die Schüler sollten einen ausgewogenen Kommentar formulieren, in dem Vor- aber auch Nachteile von Maßnahmen dargestellt werden, die zum Ausgleich früherer Ungerechtigkeiten getroffen wurden.

**Introduction:**

Die Einleitung sollte das Zitat aufgreifen, die Problematik herausarbeiten und zu einer zentralen Fragestellung gelangen.

Example:

Canada's history is burdened with the maltreatment and exploitation of the country's native inhabitants, the First Nations. To compensate the aboriginal tribes for the injustice of the past, different affirmative action have been taken to close the gap between them and the non-aboriginal population. Although these measures are widely appreciated, they have also led to criticism. Even some beneficiaries believe that they prevent an independent life of First Nation people. Does this mean that affirmative action does more harm than good?

**Main Part:**

Mögliche Ideen und Schwerpunkte:

- Advantages: helps young people to gain easier access to higher education
- By a quota system: jobs for indigenous people who normally are seldom chosen by "white" employers
- Through education and employment: rise in the economic situation which is achieved by own means and not through federal funding
- Leads to feeling of pride and self-confidence
- Are basic pre-requisites for self-determined life
- Affirmative action: symbolic expression of apology for the wrongs of the past
- Disadvantages: favouring someone means discrimination against someone else: new wrong
- Makes people lazy to strive for the best as they believe that they are cared for anyway
- Could lead to doubts and lack of self-esteem, if personal success can't be clearly attributed to one's own achievements
- Could be seen as a gift of the government which demands gratitude
- Could stir negative sentiments among "white" population: fans racism rather than diminishing it

**Conclusion:**

Der Schüler sollte zu einer eigenen Position zur zentralen Frage gelangen, die er logisch nachvollziehbar begründet.