



BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English - Reader 4

BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English - Reader 4

SHANTEL IVITS

BCCAMPUS
VICTORIA, B.C., CANADA



BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 4 Copyright © 2015 by Shantel Ivits is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

© 2015 Shantel Ivits

The CC licence permits you to retain, reuse, copy, redistribute, and revise this book—in whole or in part—for free providing the author is attributed as follows:

[BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 4](#) by Shantel Ivits is used under a [CC BY 4.0 licence](#).

If you redistribute all or part of this book, you must include the following on the copyright page:

Download for free from the [B.C. Open Collection](#).

This textbook can be referenced. In APA citation style, it should appear as follows:

Ivits, S. (2015). *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 4*. Victoria, B.C.: BCampus. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/>.

Cover image attribution:

[Community March Against Racism](#) by [Caelie Frampton](#) is used under a [CC-BY 2.0 licence](#).

Visit [BCcampus Open Education](#) to learn about open education in British Columbia.

This book was produced with Pressbooks (<https://pressbooks.com>) and rendered with Prince.

Contents

Accessibility Statement	vi
About the Book	ix
Acknowledgments	x
Notes to the Instructor	1
<u>Main Body</u>	
The Story of Our Human Rights	2
The Story of Viola Desmond	5
The Story of Nellie McClung	8
The Story of Tommy Douglas	13
The Story of Joy Kogawa	16
The Story of Jim Egan	19
The Story of Elijah Harper	22
The Story of Gabor Maté	26
Standing Up for Your Human Rights	29
Audio Book	33
Appendix 1: Glossary	35
Appendix 2: Recommended Films	36
Bibliography	37
About the Author	38
Versioning History	40
List of Links for Print Users	41

Accessibility Statement

BCcampus Open Education believes that education must be available to everyone; this means supporting the creation of free, open, and accessible educational resources. We are actively committed to increasing the accessibility and usability of the textbooks we produce.

Accessibility features of the web version of this resource

The [web version of BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 4](#) includes the following features:

- It has been optimized for people who use screen-reader technology:
 - all content can be navigated using a keyboard
 - links, headings, tables use proper markup
 - all images have text descriptions
- It includes an option to increase font size. (See tab on top right of screen titled, “Increase Font Size.”)

Other file formats available

In addition to the web version, this book is available in a number of file formats including PDF, EPUB (for eReaders), MOBI (for Kindles), and various editable files. Here is a link to where you can [download this book in another file format](#). Look for the Download this book drop-down menu to select the file type you want.

Known accessibility issues and areas for improvement

There are no known accessibility issues at this time.

Let us know if you are having problems accessing this book

If any of the above accessibility issues are stopping you from accessing the information in this textbook, please contact us to let us know and we will get it fixed. If you discover any other issues, please let us know of those as well.

Please include the following information:

- The location of the problem by providing a web address or page description
- A description of the problem
- The computer, software, browser, and any assistive technology you are using that can help us diagnose and solve your issue
e.g., Windows 10, Google Chrome (Version 65.0.3325.181), NVDA screen reader

You can contact us through the following form: [Report an Error](#)

This statement was last updated on July 18, 2019.

About the Book

BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 4 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.

Open textbooks are open educational resources (OER); they are instructional resources created and shared in ways so that more people have access to them. This is a different model than traditionally copyrighted materials. OER are defined as teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others ([Hewlett Foundation](#)).

Our open textbooks are openly licensed using a [Creative Commons license](#), and are offered in various e-book formats free of charge, or as printed books that are available at cost.

For more information about this project, please contact opentext@bccampus.ca.

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

Acknowledgments

These books 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.

Huge thanks to Lauri Aesoph of BCcampus for introducing me to the exciting open textbook movement and managing all aspects of the publication of these books — from layout and image selection to copyediting and print — so adeptly.

I am incredibly lucky to work with and have the support of the Basic Education Department at Vancouver Community College: Cynthia Bluman, Andrew Candela, Lynn Horvat, Alayna Kruger, Jo Lemay, Edie Mackenzie, Rene Merkel, Tara Mollé, Linda Rider, Mary Thompson-Boyd, Jan Weiten, our Program Assistant, Nadia Kawas, and our Dean, David Wells. I am also deeply grateful to the basic education students at Vancouver Community College for all that you teach me about dreams, resilience, and perseverance.

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

As a basic education instructor, I find that my students crave reading materials that lead to deeper understandings of, and connections to, the world that we live in. My students tend to have plenty of knowledge of human rights issues from lived experience. These issues are often closely linked to the reasons they find themselves in my classroom.

This reader contains nine original stories written specifically for adults, and is designed to accompany the [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#). This level 4 reader, one of a series of six readers, is roughly equivalent to grades 4.5 to 6 in the K-12 system.

New vocabulary is highlighted throughout each story, and then summarized and defined in a Glossary placed in the appendix at the end of the book. 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. In addition, an [audio book](#) is available to allow students to listen as they read. This reader has been reviewed by subject experts from colleges and universities.

I hope these pages help learners to reach their individual literacy goals, while building capacity to create positive social change in our communities.

-Shantel Ivits

The Story of Our Human Rights

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=5#oembed-1>



Human rights

Human beings like us have been around for about 100,000 years. In the last 7,000 years, we have built a world with big cities, powerful governments, **rapid** trade, special traditions, and beautiful art. Depending on where we live, we eat different food, wear different clothes, live in different houses, speak different languages, worship different gods, and play different games. These many differences are what make human beings so amazing. But history has shown that these differences can also lead to **conflict** and war.



Conflict and war

After World War II, people around the globe began to wonder – in a world of so much difference, how can we promote peace, life, freedom, and **respect**? This is how the United Nations was born. One of the first jobs of the United Nations was to decide on a list of rights that belong to every human being. A right is something that everyone deserves to have, just because they are human. The list of rights was called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



United Nations

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says:

- It doesn't matter how rich or poor we are. It doesn't matter what colour our skin is or what country we are from. It doesn't matter what gender we are or what gender we are attracted to. It doesn't matter if we have a disability. We all have **equal** rights. No one can legally treat us as less than human.
- We have the right to be safe from harm.
- We have the right to believe what we want and to express ourselves.
- We have the right to work.
- We have the right to vote and to disagree with the government.
- We have the right to get help from our government if we are out of work, sick, disabled, or old.
- We have the right to food, housing, and health care.
- We have the right to a free basic education.



Canada

Canada created many laws to make sure Canadians would have all the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But did you know that our government has not always stood up for **equal** rights? In the history of Canada, people have often been treated as less than human. So how did we get to where we are today? In these pages, you will read the stories of Canadians who dared to stand up for our human rights.

See [The Story of Our Human Rights](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [Photo montage](#) © geralt is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [War](#) © hucky is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [United Nations](#) © geralt is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Canada Day](#) © Monam is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license

The Story of Viola Desmond

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=30#oembed-1>



Viola Desmond

Viola Desmond was an African Canadian woman from Nova Scotia. She lived in a time when black women were expected to be servants in houses, and black men were expected to be servants on trains. From a young age, Viola dreamed of having her own business. By 1946, she was making her dreams come true. Viola was only 32, yet she had her own beauty salon. She had set up a school to train other black women to work in the beauty business. She also had her own line of beauty **products**.



Beauty salon

One day, she was driving across Nova Scotia to make a delivery. But then her car broke down in New Glasgow. She decided to go see a movie while she waited for her car to be fixed. She went to the Roseland Theatre. It was a brick building with a big sign that lit up at night. She paid for a ticket and went inside. The theatre had a main floor and a balcony. Viola sat on the main floor because her eyesight was poor and she needed to be close to the screen.



Theatre

Just as the movie started to play, she felt a tap on her shoulder. A staff person told her she could not sit there. Her ticket was for the balcony. Viola went back to the ticket booth. She asked for a ticket for the main floor. The ticket seller said, “We don’t sell tickets on the main floor to you people.” That’s when she realized that the balcony was for black people. The main floor was for white people. Viola said that she could not see from the balcony. She put the extra money for a main floor ticket on the counter. The ticket seller would not take it, but she went back to her seat anyway.

That’s when the manager came. He told her to move to the balcony, or he would call the police. Viola told him to go ahead. She wasn’t moving. She was doing nothing wrong. Sure enough, the police came. They asked her one more time to move. Viola said no. So the police grabbed her by the arms and took her from the theatre. They had to drag her. “I just sort of went **limp**,” Viola said. “I wasn’t going to make it easy for them.”

The police took Viola to prison. She sat up awake the whole night.

The next day, she was taken to court. Nobody had told her she could call a **lawyer**, so she had to argue for herself. She didn't know how courtrooms worked, and she was found **guilty**.



Court room

Her husband begged her to forget about what had happened and move on. But Viola bravely took the case back to court. Sadly, she lost once more. But Viola's case brought people together to fight for equal rights in Nova Scotia. They kept up the battle, and, in 1954, the province finally got rid of the laws that made it legal to treat black people differently from white people.

People of colour are now equal under the laws of Canada. However, racism is alive in many Canadians' hearts and minds. Viola's story invites us to ask: What can we do to make sure that history does not repeat itself?

See [The Story of Viola Desmond](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [Viola Desmond](#) © Hantsheroes is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Barber Invite](#) © FaceGuard is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [The Hoyts Regent Theatre](#) © John Vandenberg is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Interior of the old Supreme Court of Canada](#) © Skeezix1000 is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license

The Story of Nellie McClung

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=32#oembed-1>



Picnic

In 1882, a nine-year-old girl from the Prairies was at a community picnic. The summer sun was high in the sky. People sat on tablecloths spread over the green grass. They ate sandwiches and watermelon. They drank tea and lemonade. And boys were lining up for a race. The nine-year old girl wanted to run in that race. But she was told that races were for boys only. It was not nice for girls to run. Their skirts might fly up and their legs might show. A fire was lit inside her that day. One day, she would see to it that women could do the things that men could do — like vote. Her name was Nellie McClung.

Running in races wasn't the only thing girls weren't allowed to do. Back then, it was illegal for women to vote, be in government, own property, or go to university. This is because men were thought to be more reasonable than women. Only men were reasonable enough to take part in the world of government and business. Women were seen as emotional. This made them "more fit" for the world of homemaking and childcare.



Nellie McClung

When Nellie grew up, she poked holes in these old ideas. She spoke to large crowds in favour of women's right to vote. Some Canadians worried that women's rights would lead to the breakdown of the family. With a colourful hat on her head and a charming sense of humour, Nellie changed hearts and minds.

Women's rights activists in Europe and America often used violence to get their point across. Nellie used humour, instead. She starred in a play where she **debated** men's right to vote. She began by telling the men how nice they looked. Then she pointed out that most of the people in prison were men, and men made up only a small number of the people who went to church. How could these people be trusted with politics? Big crowds came to see Nellie's play. They roared with laughter. It became fashionable to support women's rights.



Women learning to vote

White women were finally allowed to vote in federal elections in 1918. As a result of racist laws, women of colour and Aboriginal women would not be allowed to vote until much later.

In 1921, Nellie served as one of the first female MLAs in the government of Alberta. It was often said that women's involvement in politics would lead to divorce. Nellie and her husband Wes proved those claims wrong. Wes was proud of his wife. "I don't mind being Mr. Nellie McClung," he'd say with a smile.



Nellie McClung (front, far right) with her friends and Prime Minister W.L. MacKenzie King

One day, Nellie’s friend Emily Murphy invited some friends to her house for tea. They talked about how unfair it was that women were not allowed to sit in the **Senate**. This is because women were not seen as “persons” in the eyes of the law. The women decided to take the matter to court. After a long battle, they won the case in 1929 – but Nellie wasn’t finished. “The end is not yet!” she said.

Even though women had won many legal rights, they were still not treated as equal to men. This was especially true for women of colour. Unlike most women’s rights activists of her time, Nellie called for an end to racism.

Even as she grew older and her health **declined**, she kept writing and speaking for equal rights. Nellie said, “Because I’ve got a bad heart my doctor has told me not to write. I assume he meant books so I keep busy on letters, **editorials**, and messages.” If she hadn’t died in 1951, she would probably still be fighting for women’s rights today.

See [The Story of Nellie McClung](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [Picnic in a wooded area](#) © Tangerinehistory is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Nellie McClung](#) © JKelly is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Women voter outreach 1935 English Yiddish](#) © Kheel Center is licensed under a [CC BY \(Attribution\)](#) license

- [WLMK_unveiling_plaque_to_Valiant_Five](#) © JKelly is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license

The Story of Tommy Douglas

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=36#oembed-1>

In 1919, Tommy Douglas was a teenager standing on a rooftop in downtown Winnipeg. He was looking down on a huge crowd of workers protesting low wages. They could not give their families a good quality of life, even though they worked very hard. Suddenly, the police pulled out their guns and shot over 20 of the protesting workers. Two people died. Many more were hurt. Tommy was deeply affected by what he saw that day. He believed everyone should have a good quality of life, whether they were rich or poor. He thought it was wrong that people who fought for their rights were being killed.

When he was 26, he became a minister so he could help people. His first job was in Saskatchewan. When the miners in his town went on strike, he brought them food and blankets. Once more, the police came in. They shot and killed three people. Tommy had seen enough. He decided to go into politics to make life better for poor people.



Tommy Douglas joins the CCF

He joined a **socialist** party called the CCF. People tried to scare voters by saying he was a **communist**. So Tommy told a story about a place called Mouseland. In Mouseland, the mice kept voting for fat black cats who made laws that were only good for cats. To make a change, next time the mice voted for the fat white cats. Of course, nothing changed. Finally one day, a mouse got the idea to vote for other mice. The story ends with everyone calling him a **communist**! This story helped people understand socialism. The cats were like the rich people who were in government at the time. On the other hand, the mice were the working class people that Tommy wanted to see in government. With his bold ideas and ability to speak to a crowd, Tommy connected with voters. He became **premier** of Saskatchewan in 1944. He had this job until 1961.



Tommy Douglas

During that time, Tommy kept his promises to make life better for everyone in Saskatchewan. At the time, only big cities had power for heat and lights. Tommy brought in power across the province. He made a law that bosses had to give workers at least two weeks of paid vacation. He made a bill of rights saying people of all races and genders are equal. The biggest change of all was that he brought in free health care for everyone in the province.

Health care was personal for Tommy. When he was a young boy, he got an infection in his leg. His family was poor and could not afford health care. He was going to lose his leg. Thankfully, a doctor agreed to operate on his leg for free. Most people were not as lucky as he had been in his time of need. In 1959, Tommy brought in free health care for everyone in Saskatchewan, rich and poor. Before long, many people across Canada wanted the same health care rights that people in Saskatchewan had.



Canada's Parliament Buildings

In 1961, Tommy was voted into the **federal** government. The **federal** government put many of Tommy's ideas in place for the rest of Canada. These ideas included money for seniors, minimum wage, and even health care.

In a country-wide vote, in 2004, Canadians named Tommy Douglas as the greatest Canadian of all time.

See [The Story of Tommy Douglas](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [Flag-Billboard-Forward_with_CCF,_1944](#) © Jwkozak91 is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Tommycropped](#) © Samuell is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Canada_Parliament_Buildings](#) © Jonathankslim is licensed under a [CC BY-SA \(Attribution ShareAlike\)](#) license

The Story of Joy Kogawa

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

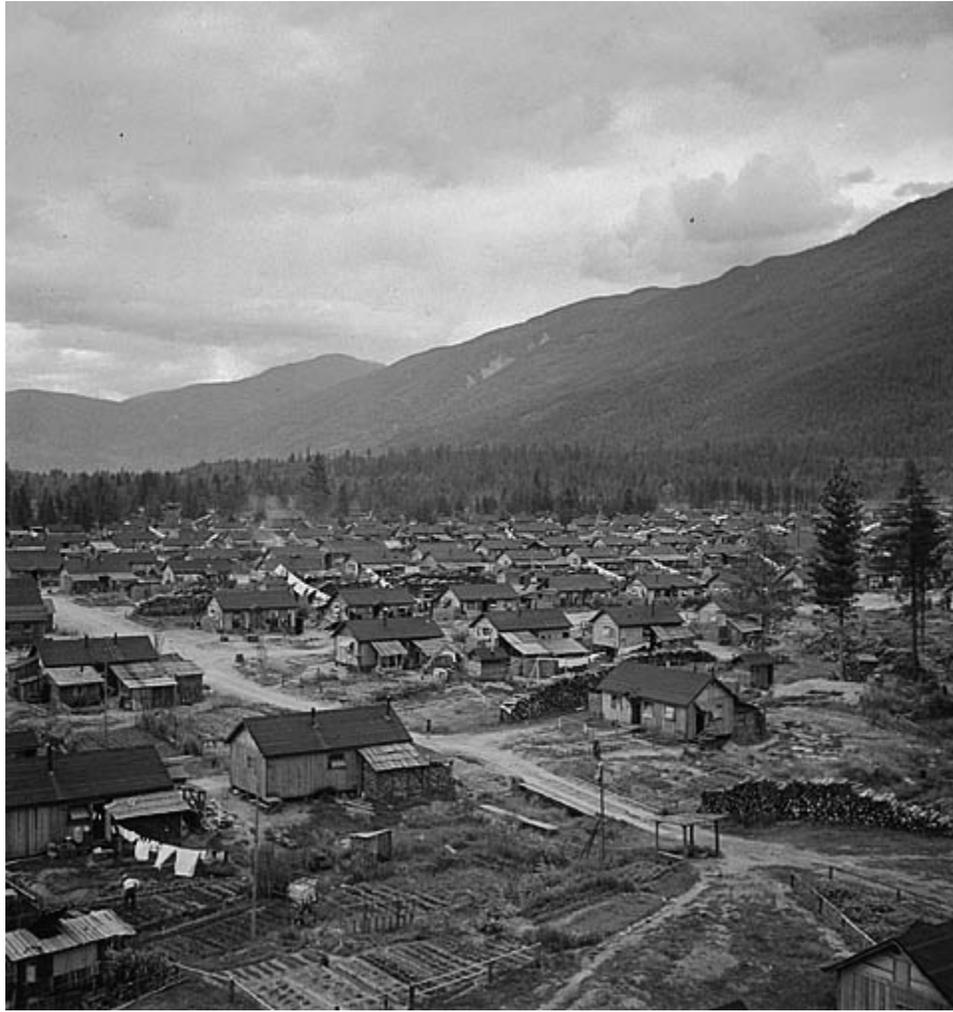
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=38#oembed-1>

Joy Kogawa remembers her childhood home in Vancouver **fondly**. The house always had the smell of wood burning in the fireplace. The walls were covered with paintings, photos, and bookcases. The sounds of music, storytelling, and laughter sailed through the air. Her bedroom had toy boxes filled with cars, dolls, and games. A cherry tree stood in the yard outside her window. But her happy days there were cut short.



Waiting to be sent to a camp

In 1941, a warplane from Japan dropped a bomb on the United States. Canada went to war with Japan. The prime minister of Canada thought that Japanese Canadians might be spies. So he had all Japanese Canadians taken from their homes. They were sent to live and work in camps. To pay for the camps, their homes and belongings were sold. Most of the people sent to the camps were born in Canada. Half of them were under the age of 19. Both the **RCMP** and the **military** agreed the prime minister's decision did not make sense. But the prime minister did it anyway. He wanted Canada to be mostly for white people. He hoped the Japanese Canadians would just go back to Japan.



Japanese camp in British Columbia

Joy Kogawa was six years old when her family was forced from their home. They were put onto a train and shipped to a camp in Slocan, British Columbia. The family had to live in a one-room shack. It was a heat trap in the summer and an ice box in the winter. Her family was forced to work on a farm. Joy had to work alongside them in the beet fields – often instead of going to school. She dreamed of going back to her home in Vancouver.

After the war, Joy did not want to be thought of as Japanese. She thought of herself as a white person. It was a way of trying to forget the painful past. One day, Joy came across some letters. They were written by a Japanese Canadian woman from Vancouver and sent to her brother in Toronto. The letters were about how terrible it was to live in a time of so much racism. The writer called for justice. These letters gave Joy an idea. She decided to write a story based on what had happened to her family. She wrote a book called *Obasan*. As she wrote it, she began to accept herself as Japanese Canadian. And she began to want justice, too.

Joy began to work for justice for the Japanese Canadians who had been put in camps. She worked with others to hold meetings, write letters, and organize rallies. Her book, *Obasan*, helped people across Canada to understand the terrible things that had happened. Finally, in 1988, the federal government said it was sorry for what had happened. It paid back part of what it had taken from Japanese Canadians. It promised to work to make sure such a terrible **injustice** never happens again.



Joy Kogawa

In 2005, Joy's childhood house in Vancouver was going to be torn down. Joy helped raise enough money to buy it back. To this day, the house still stands in Vancouver. It stands as a reminder of the **injustice** of racism and war. If we remember our past, we can avoid making the same mistakes in the present.

See [The Story of Joy Kogawa](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [A young evacuee of Japanese ancestry waits with the family baggage before leaving by bus for an assembly center.](#) © U.S. National Archives and Records Administration is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Japanese internment camp in British Columbia](#) © JKelly is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- [Joy Kogawa & Places That Matter plaque](#) © monnibo is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-ND \(Attribution NonCommercial NoDerivatives\)](#) license

The Story of Jim Egan

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=44#oembed-1>



Rainbow flag

At one time, the word “**queer**“ was an insult. Today, it is a word many people proudly use to describe themselves. The road to pride began with Jim Egan.

Jim was born in Toronto in 1921. As a young man, he began visiting bars quietly known to be gay meeting places. He had to be careful. The police in Toronto often went to these places. They would trick gay men by pretending to be gay, too. Then they would arrest them. The men’s names would be printed in newspapers. They often lost their jobs, their family, and their friends. Landlords would not rent to them. Being gay meant being left out by the world. Jim met a man named Jack in one of those bars. They fell in love. The world seemed like a less lonely place.

Jim loved to read. He noticed **queer** people were being written about a lot more in the newspapers. But queer people were always talked about as being sick and immoral. This upset Jim. He could not stay silent. So, in 1949, he began writing letters to the newspapers. He protested the way they talked about gay people. He called for equal rights under the law. This was at a time when no one else was speaking up. Over the next 10 years, his letters appeared in many places, including TIME magazine. In 1963, a reporter from Maclean’s magazine wrote a story about Jim. It was the first positive report about **queer** people by a major Canadian news company. Jim used a fake name to avoid arrest.

Jack was uncomfortable with Jim’s **activism**. He was worried that one day they might be thrown in jail. So Jim agreed to give up his **activism**. They moved across the country to Vancouver Island and started a new life.



Activism

In 1969, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau finally got rid of the law that made **queer** relationships illegal. Trudeau said, “There’s no place for the **state** in the bedrooms of the nation.” Jim and Jack no longer had to worry about being put in prison.

In the 1980s, AIDS began taking the lives of gay men. Gay men whose partners died of AIDS did not have the same rights as everyone else whose partners were sick or had passed away. Jim returned to **queer** activism — and this time, Jack was right by his side. They helped run an AIDS organization. They also ran a drop-in group out of their home for **queer** people.

Jim retired in 1987. The government would not give him and Jack the same amount of money that married men and women get when they retire. Jim and Jack had been together for over 40 years. They took the government to court. It took eight years, but the courts made it illegal to **discriminate** based on who people are in love with. This was the first time **queer** people in Canada had human rights.



Wedding

In 2005, Canada became the fourth country in the world to make same gender marriage legal. Canada became a worldwide leader in **queer** rights. Just think – it all began with one man who decided to write a letter!

See [The Story of Jim Egan](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [Rainbow flag breeze](#) © Benson Kua is licensed under a [CC BY-SA \(Attribution ShareAlike\)](#) license
- [Marchers at Toronto Pride 2014](#) © Stacie DaPonte is licensed under a [CC BY-SA \(Attribution ShareAlike\)](#) license
- [Wedding-chantelois-gomez](#) © Mm.toronto is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license

The Story of Elijah Harper

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=46#oembed-1>

An eight-year-old boy named Elijah sat in the forest with his grandfather. He lived on a **reserve** in Manitoba called Red Sucker Lake. His grandfather was showing him how to make a beaver trap. Elijah loved spending time on the land. He had learned all about hunting and fishing from his grandfather.



Red Sucker Lake

One day, a small plane landed on the lake. A white man stepped out. He was sent by the government. His job was to take Elijah from his grandparents and bring him to **residential school**, or boarding school. Elijah didn't want to get on the plane, but he had no choice. At that time, First Nations people didn't have any rights. They weren't allowed to vote or be in government. The laws said that First Nations children had to go to residential school, so they would become more like white people.

Elijah spent the next 10 years in residential school. The teachers cut his hair. They told him that the things he had learned from his grandfather were the ways of the **heathens**, or godless people. He was punished if he tried to speak his own language. During that time, many of his classmates tried to run away. But they were always caught and brought back.



Residential school

By the time Elijah became an adult, the laws keeping First Nations people out of government had changed. Elijah had an idea. If he was in government, he could help First Nations people stand up for their rights. So, in 1981, he ran to be an **MLA**, or member of the government. He won! He was the first **Aboriginal** MLA in the history of Manitoba.

Even as an MLA, it was hard to make change. The students who went to the residential schools didn't know about their culture anymore. They didn't feel like they belonged anywhere. They also had to deal with a lot of racism. Elijah was starting to feel powerless. But his chance to make a difference was just around the corner.

In Ottawa, the prime minister of Canada wanted to pass a **bill**, or a suggested law. The bill was supposed to help the country stay united. It said that Canada was created by the English and the French. It protected French language and culture. But it didn't say anything about the role of First Nations people in building Canada. It did nothing to protect First Nations cultures or languages.

The prime minister needed all of the MLAs in Manitoba to agree to the bill to make it a law. But when it was Elijah's turn to vote, he held up an eagle feather and spoke the word, "No." He felt that Canada had a duty to protect First Nations language and culture, too. With that, the prime minister's bill did not pass.



Elijah Harper (right) with Menno Wiebe

A picture of Elijah holding an eagle feather was soon on the front page of newspapers across the country. It was a moment that put First Nations issues front and centre in Canadian politics. If the country wanted to stay united, First Nations rights couldn't be ignored.



Idle No More

Elijah Harper **inspired** a new wave of First Nations people to take part in politics. He paved the way for **movements** like Idle No More, which was just getting started when he passed away in 2013. The eagle feather that was laid to rest the day he died has been picked up once more.

See [The Story of Elijah Harper](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [Red Sucker Lake First Nations](#) © Timkal is licensed under a [CC BY-SA \(Attribution ShareAlike\)](#) license
- [Residential School](#) © BiblioArchives / LibraryArc is licensed under a [CC BY \(Attribution\)](#) license
- [Elijah Harper And Menno Wiebe](#) © Mennonite Church USA Archives has no known copyright restrictions.
- [Idle No More 2013 Ottawa 1](#) © Moxy is licensed under a [CC BY-SA \(Attribution ShareAlike\)](#) license

The Story of Gabor Maté

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=48#oembed-1>

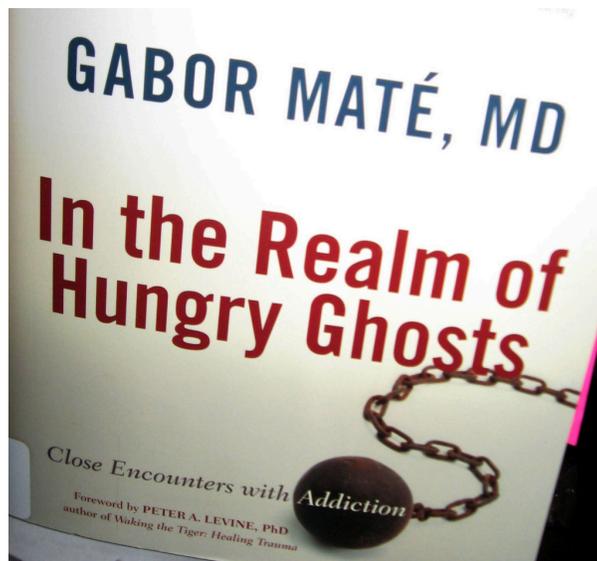
A baby boy named Gabor lay crying in his crib. No matter what his mother did, he would not stop crying. So his mother called the doctor. The doctor told her that all of the Jewish babies he knew were crying. This was in Hungary during World War II. The **Nazis** had taken over the country. They were doing terrible things to Jews. Gabor's family was Jewish. The **Nazis** had just killed Gabor's grandparents. Gabor's dad was forced to do hard work every day for the **Nazis**. Gabor's aunt was missing. Gabor was only a baby, so he could not have known these things. But he could probably feel his mother's deep sadness and stress. So he cried and cried. The doctor could not really help.

Today, Gabor Maté lives in Vancouver. He still struggles to feel at peace. He goes shopping to feel better. He spends lots of money on music records. His wife gets mad at him. They cannot afford for Gabor to keep buying new records. There is no space in their house for more records. But he can't stop. Gabor has developed an addiction to shopping. An addiction is a strong and harmful need to do something.



Gabor Maté

Gabor is now a doctor and he works with people who have drug addictions. People with drug addictions face a lot of **judgment**. They often get blamed for their addiction. Gabor thinks that this is wrong. He says addiction is usually the result of a stressful childhood. People with addictions have lived through **trauma**, such as violence or loss. Yet, the government treats them like criminals. They are put in jail because drug use is illegal. This does nothing to help them get better.



In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts

Is there a better way? Gabor calls on everyone to treat people with addictions with **compassion**. He writes books, gives speeches, and goes on talk shows to spread this message. He says we must stop judging people for the ways they cope with their difficult lives. We must make a world where people can get their needs met and everyone is treated with respect. If we lived in this kind of world, more children would grow up healthy. Fewer people would need to do drugs to cope.



Insite

We have not built this kind of world yet. Until we have, Gabor works to reduce the harm done by addiction. He keeps people with addictions alive – and as healthy as possible. British Columbia is a worldwide leader in this approach. For example, BC is home to a place called Insite. Drug users can get clean needles from Insite. They can also do drugs at Insite. If they overdose, a nurse will make sure they do not die. There is no other place like it in North America. When the government tried to close Insite, Gabor was one of many people who spoke out. Today, Insite's doors are still open and it continues to save hundreds of lives.

But as a doctor, Gabor Maté is not just saving lives. He is helping to build a world where every life is worth living.

See [The Story of Gabor Maté](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [Gabor Maté - 01](#) © Gabor Gastonyi is licensed under a [CC BY-SA \(Attribution ShareAlike\)](#) license
- [In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts](#) © elycefeliz is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-ND \(Attribution NonCommercial NoDerivatives\)](#) license
- insite – Operation Phoenix © Stephen Dyrigas is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-ND \(Attribution NonCommercial NoDerivatives\)](#) license

Standing Up for Your Human Rights

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader4/?p=51#oembed-1>



Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, “**Injustice** anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” What would you do if your human rights were being ignored? Many people want to stand up for themselves, but don’t know where to start. If you decide to stand up for your rights, here are some questions that will help you make a plan:

How are your rights being ignored?

Write down your problem in a sentence. Here are some examples of human rights problems:

- Someone at work often makes racist jokes. You have asked him or her to stop, but the problem continues.
- The bathroom in your house has had a mould problem for a long time, and your landlord will not fix it.
- The government raised the fees for your education, and you can no longer afford them.
- You receive **income assistance**, and the money is not enough to meet your basic needs, like food and housing.

What is your goal?

Be clear about what you want to happen. For example:

Problem	Goal
Someone at work often makes racist jokes. You have asked him or her to stop, but the problem continues.	Your boss will make a rule about workplace bullying. There will be training for staff members about safe work spaces.
The bathroom in your house has had a mould problem for a long time, and your landlord will not fix it.	Your landlord will have repairs done in the next month.
The government raised fees for your education, and you cannot afford them.	The government will put more money into education so the fees will be lower.
You receive income assistance , and the money is not enough to meet your basic needs, like food and housing.	The government will give more money to people on income assistance .

Who should you speak to?

Always try to speak to the person who has **responsibility** for the problem you face. Find out the “chain of command,” or levels of people who make decisions. If the first person in the chain of command does not help you, go up to the next person in the chain.

What might get in your way?

Be creative to find ways to deal with these **challenges**.

Challenge	Solution
I don't know enough about the problem.	Find an organization that tries to solve problems like yours. See if it has someone who can help you learn more.
I haven't stood up for myself much before.	Find a friend, a family member, or someone from an organization who will help you with your writing or go with you to meetings.
English is my second language.	
Fixing this problem will take more reading and writing skills than I have right now.	
I worry that people will judge me.	Think about what matters to you most. What do you need to do to stay true to the things you believe in? How can you do this in a way you can be proud of?

What can you use to make your point?

- Keep notes about the 5 W's of the problem – who, what, where, when, and why.
- Keep any letters or forms related to the problem.
- Ask friends, family, doctors, or support workers to write letters that back up what you are saying.

- For some problems, you might want to take photos.
- Try to stay calm, be clear about what you need, and be respectful.

How will you speak up?

You can:

- write a letter
- send an email
- make a phone call
- book an appointment
- join an **organization**
- vote for people who share your beliefs

Who can you turn to for support?

Your support people might be:

- family
- friends
- an MLA or MP
- an **organization**
- a support group

What will you do if this plan doesn't work out?

It's a good idea to have a back-up plan. This will help you stay strong and not give up. Are you willing to:

- change your goals?
- speak out in a different way?
- talk to different people in the chain of command?
- get help from different people?



Jack Layton's words

As you work to make the world a better place, remember the words of a Canadian named Jack Layton, "My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. **Optimism** is better than **despair**. So let us be loving, hopeful, and optimistic. And we'll change the world."

See [Standing Up for Your Human Rights](#) in [BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4](#).

Media Attributions

- [martin-luther-king-25271_640](#) © Nemo is licensed under a [Public Domain](#) license
- Layton quote © unknown

Audio Book

In 2022, this book was made into an audio book. This audio book is available as an **audio-only version** or as a **video version**, which allows you to listen to the audio while you read the text in the video.

The audio versions are embedded at the beginning of each story in this book. In addition, all of the audio and video versions have been uploaded to a media-hosting platform where they can be accessed online: [BC Reads: Reader 4 Audio Book](#).

How to Download

While all of the files can be played online, you can also download them for offline use:

1. Open the playlist: [BC Reads: Reader 4 Audio Book](#)
2. Click the title of the video or audio that you want to download, which will open up a page with a media player.
3. Find the “Download” tab underneath the media player.
4. Click the download icon (see the below screenshot).

This will download either an .mp4 file (for videos) or an .mp3 file (for audio).

Sweetgrass Video

♥ 0 ▶ 0

From [Alaysha Daniel](#) July 19th, 2022

Details Attachments **Download** Share 🔍

Name	Size	Actions
Source	(38.09 Mb)	 

Appendix 1: Glossary

Appendix 2: Recommended Films

If you would like to learn more about the people in this book, check out these great online films and clips:

1. [Long Road to Justice: The Viola Desmond Story](#)
2. [Greatest Canadian: Tommy Douglas](#)
3. [Heritage Minutes: Nellie McClung](#)
4. [The Power of Addiction and the Addiction to Power](#)

Bibliography

- Brant, J. (2006). *The Aboriginal literacy curriculum toolbox: Cultural philosophy, curriculum design, and strategies for self-directed learning*. Owen Sound, ON: Ningwakwe.
- Corbet, B. (Producer) & Unwin, P. (Director). (2007). *Elijah*. [Motion picture.] Canada: CTV.
- Egan, J. (1998). *Challenging the conspiracy of silence: My life as a gay Canadian activist*. Toronto: Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives.
- Goodman, A. (2001, June 6). *Dr Gabor Mate: More compassion, less violence needed in in addressing drug addiction*. [Television series episode]. In Kouddous, S. A. & Salazar, N. (Producers). *Democracy Now*. New York: Pacifica Radio.
- Gray, C. (2008). *Nellie McClung*. Toronto: Penguin.
- Hacker, C. *The kids book of Canadian history*. Toronto: Kids Can Press.
- Harris, M. (1996). *Joy Kogawa and her works*. Toronto: ECW.
- Heyer, S. (2011). *More True Stories Behind the Song: A High-Beginning Reader*. White Plains, NY: Pearson.
- Jim Egan. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved March 12, 2015 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Egan_\(activist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Egan_(activist))
- Kissock, H. (2010). *Citizens and the political process*. Calgary: Weigl.
- Kissock, H. (2010). *Protecting rights in Canada*. Calgary: Weigl.
- Knight, M. (Producer) & O'Sullivan, G. (Director). (2004). *The greatest Canadian* [Motion picture]. Canada: CBC HomeVideo.
- Kogawa, J. (1981). *Obasan*. Toronto: Penguin.
- Lemay, J. (2012). *Certificate in community capacity building: Skills for strengthening community health*. Vancouver: Simon Fraser University.
- Macdonald, F & Weaver, C. (2003). *Human rights*. North Mankato, MN: Chrysalis Education.
- Mason, A. (2002). *People around the world*. New York: Kingfisher.
- National Geographic. (2009). *Every human has rights: A photographic declaration for kids*. Washington, DC: National Geographic.
- North Vancouver School District. (2004). *Reading 44: Intermediate*. North Vancouver: Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre.
- Nova Scotia Government. [nsgov]. (2012, Feb 6). *Long road to justice: The Viola Desmond story*. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI00i9BtsQ8>
- Pezzi, B. (2008). *Tommy Douglas*. Calgary, AB: Weigl.
- Reid, M. et al. (2009). *100 photos that changed Canada*. Toronto: HarperCollins.
- Robson, W. (2010). *Sister to courage: Stories from the world of Viola Desmond*. Wreck Cove, NS: Breton.
- Wells, D. (2005). *Canadian citizenship*. Calgary, AB: Weigl.

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!

Media Attributions

- ivits_shantel_15_0056_bw

Versioning History

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.01. If the edits involve substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted by this book always reflect the most recent version. If you find an error in this book, please fill out the [Report an Error](#) form.

Version	Date	Change	Details
1.00	November 9, 2015	Book published.	
1.01	June 12, 2019	Updated the book's theme.	The styles of this book have been updated, which may affect the page numbers of the PDF and print copy.
2.00	July 18, 2019	Entire book revised for accessibility.	Accessibility remediation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Image descriptions added.• Link text edited to be descriptive.• Added an Accessibility Statement Other changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added pop up feature for glossary• Added a list of links for print users
2.01	January 21, 2022	Updated broken video links.	Updated links to videos about Tommy Douglas and Nellie McClung in Appendix 2: Recommended Films .
0.01	Aug 8, 2022	Added audio book.	An audio version was embedded at the beginning of each story. A back matter section titled "Audio Book" was added explaining how to access and download all of the audio book files.

List of Links for Print Users

- BC Reads: *Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 4*: <http://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/>.
 - Standing Up for Your Human Rights: <http://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/162/>
 - The Story of Elijah Harper: <http://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/the-story-of-elijah-harper/>
 - The Story of Gabor Maté: <http://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/the-story-of-gabor-mate/>
 - The Story of Jim Egan: <http://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/the-story-of-jim-egan/>
 - The Story of Joy Kogawa: <http://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/the-story-of-joy-kogawa/>
 - The Story of Nellie McClung: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/the-story-of-nellie-mcclung/>
 - The Story of Our Human Rights: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/chapter-1/>
 - The Story of Tommy Douglas: <http://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/the-story-of-tommy-douglas/>
 - The Story of Viola Desmond: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealf4/chapter/64/>