











Education Resource

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Content Information, Synopsis & Themes

Content information

-Strong language.

Synopsis

Beans is the coming-of-age story of a Mohawk girl named Tekehentahkhwa, who more often goes by her quirky nickname, Beans (Kiawentiio). She's a loving big sister to her constant sidekick, Ruby (Violah Beauvais), as they play in the woods and carefully avoid the rough and tough kids of their neighbourhood on the Mohawk reserve of Kahnawà:ke, Quebec. Her father, Kania'tariio (Joel Montgrand), rides her hard because he worries her sensitivity is a dangerous weakness. But her mother, Lily (Rainbow Dickerson), has great aspirations for her and is an even bigger force to be reckoned with. They don't agree on whether she should leave the reserve for high school, and Beans isn't brave enough to speak up for what she wants. This debate is pushed to the side when a peaceful protest at a neighbouring reserve turns into an armed stand-off to protect a burial ground from being desecrated for a golf course expansion. Beans' community quickly joins the battle in what becomes known as the Oka Crisis. Overnight, her community is cut off from the outside world. Beans seeks out the toughest girl she knows, April (Paulina Alexis) to transform into the brave Mohawk warrior that she needs to be to survive. She gains acceptance with the cool clique, but that doesn't prepare her for the racism and violence she confronts as the conflict escalates. Unable to cope, she descends into a dark, rag-filled existence focused on revenge. It's not until her reckless actions put everyone, she cares about into peril that she wakes up to what's really important in her fragile world.

Themes

- -First Nations struggle
- -Childhood and adolescence and growing up
- Protest and chaos

Genre:

Drama, Coming-of-Age

Country +Year:

Canada, 2020

Runtime:

92 mins

Languages:

English

Director:

Tracey Deer

Cast:

Kiawenti:io Tarbell, Violah Beauvais, Paulina Jewel Alexis

Screenplay:

Tracey Deer, Meredith Vuchnich

Cinematography:

Marie Davignon

Editor:

Sophie Farkas Bolla

Music:

Mario Sévigny

Executive Producer:

Anne-Marie Gélinas



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The Australian Curriculum and links with activities

This education resource has been developed with links to the Australian Curriculum. Activities have been created to reflect each of the achievement standards, depending on the year level, including content descriptions within each learning area and the general capabilities. The resource aims to provide teachers with information to help prepare students before attending the movie, as well as structured learning activities for the classroom after viewing the movie.

General Capabilities - specific learning activities are linked with the following icons:



Literacy



Critical and Creative Thinking



Numeracy

Ethical Understanding



Personal and Social Capability

Year 10 Civics and Citizenship

Band Description

Students develop skills to manage their emotions, understand the physical and social changes that are occurring for them and examine how the nature of their relationships changes over time.

Content Description

Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues ACHCSO97 **Achievement Standard**

Students develop and present evidencebased arguments incorporating different points of view on civics and citizenship issues.

Year 10 History

Band Description

The Year 10 curriculum provides a study of the history of the modern world and Australia from 1918 to the present, with an emphasis on Australia in its global context. The content provides opportunities to develop historical understanding through key concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability. These concepts may be investigated within a particular historical context to facilitate an understanding of the past and to provide a focus for historical inquiries.

Content Description

Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present) Students investigate struggles for human rights in depth. This will include how rights and freedoms have been ignored, demanded or achieved in Australia and in the broader world context. ACDSEH023

Background to the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for rights and freedoms before 1965, including the 1938 Day of Mourning and the Stolen Generations ACDSEH104

Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 10, students refer to key events, the actions of individuals and groups, and beliefs and values to explain patterns of change and continuity over time. They analyse the causes and effects of events and developments and explain their relative importance.

SACE - Stage 1 Politics, Power, and People

Students develop an understanding of expressions of power and politics and the effect of these on individuals, schools, families, workplaces, communities, governments, law, media, and institutions in the commercial world. Through inquiry and reflection, students challenge their existing political understanding and move from 'right or wrong' thinking towards appreciating nuances that are 'grey'. They explore abstract ideas, then put this learning into action as they move to understand the various themes and concepts related to politics, power, and people at local, state, national, and international levels.

Students explore the themes by collaboratively critiquing political ideas and transferring their learning to other situations and cultural contexts. They explore the boundaries and conflicts between social power and civil disobedience.

SACE - Stage 2 Politics, Power, and People

Students develop an understanding of expressions of power and politics, and the effect of these on individuals, families, schools, workplaces, communities, governments, and institutions in law, media, and the commercial world.

Students develop a broad understanding of political events and their impact through the integration of historical, legal, cultural, philosophical, geographical, and economic perspectives. Insights into these factors allow students to develop an understanding of how power is constructed in different contexts.



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The Australian Curriculum and links with activities

SACE - Stage 1 Media Studies

Knowledge and Understanding

KU2 Knowledge and understanding of how audiences influence and are influenced by forms and content of media texts.

Research and Analysis

RA2 Research into and analysis of the ways in which groups and individuals are represented in media.

Producing

P1 Design and planning of media texts. P2 Use of appropriate production techniques and technologies.

Communication

C1 Reproduction of the forms and features of media texts, to convey meaning.
C2 Fluency of expression and use of appropriate media terminology.

SACE - Stage 2 Media Studies

Knowledge and Understanding

KU3 Understanding of facts, opinions, and bias in media texts or products.

Research and Analysis

RA2 Research into and analysis of the ways in which groups and individuals are represented in media.

Producing

P1 Design and planning of media products for selected audiences.

Use of appropriate production techniques and technologies, and media conventions.

Communication

C1 Reproduction of the structural and conventional features of different media texts, to convey meaning.
C2 Fluency of expression and use of appropriate media terminology.



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Before the Movie

Visual/Screen Literacy

Students today are more connected to media than any previous generation and the screen has become a new kind of page for them to read and make meaning from. Visual or screen literacy are the skills, knowledge and understanding students can build to support them 'read' images. By engaging in discussions different interpretations of the film may emerge. These discussions can form the basis for students to have alternative interpretations.

Being literate in reading films requires students to be able to:

- watch a film and analyse its content, cinematography, and technical aspects
- · use the language of creative moving image productions
- · understand the content of the film.

You can build visual/screen literacy knowledge, skills and understanding by asking students to:

- explain their response to a film by providing evidence to justify their reason/s
- observe what techniques the director uses to tell the story
- · think about the reasons the film was made
- · identify how colour used for costumes, sets and lighting affects how the story is told.

Film Content Questions

- How does it make you feel and why?
- What is it about?
- Who is it for?
- What do you think the purpose of the film is?
- What does it make you wonder?
- Have you seen anything like it before?
 (Make connections)
- Would you add anything else to the story?
- Why is the story presented in this genre?

Film Technique Questions

- Do you notice a movement from longer to closer shot distances?
- When are the various shot distances used, is it during a conversation between two characters or in the opening of a scene? What other examples are there? What does
 - this convey to the audience?
- How does the use of lighting shape our perception of character, space or mood?
- How do the camera angles shape our view of the characters or spaces?

Film Design Questions

- What do the costumes and make-up tell us about the historical setting of the story?
- How do the costumes and make-up convey character?
- What is the purpose of the music in the film?
- How do the settings and sets help the viewer to understand the story?

Martin Scorsese talking about the importance of visual literacy:

youtube.com/watch?v=I90ZluYvHic

Martin Scorsese's message to teachers

"You're training the eye and the heart of the student to look at a film in a different way by asking questions and pointing to different ideas, different concepts, and suggestions. You're training them to think about a story that is told to them in visual terms in a different way and to take it seriously."





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Before the Movie

Content Advice

It is important for teachers to preview all materials associated with the series of activities and the trailer for the movie as this is a violent conflict in recent history and may trigger some students. Be aware that this is a sensitive topic and be prepared to refer students for support if necessary.

Beans is inspired by true events. The story is about a Mohawk girl on the cusp of adolescence who must grow up fast and become her own kind of warrior during the armed stand-off known as the 1990 Oka Crisis. The activities are developed to support students to develop an awareness and knowledge of the issues addressed in Beans by researching and analysing the events and historical background that led up to the Oka Crisis.

What's in an image?

Individually students view the photograph of Patrick Cloutier and Brad Larocque and write a response to the following questions:

- What questions do they have about the photograph
- What do you think the two men were thinking?
- Who do you think has the most power in this photograph?

More information

Shaney Komulainen composed and shot the photograph of the two men. Listen to an interview with her as she shares the story behind the image. https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2675820643

Imagery is everything

- What does the image suggest to the viewer about the struggle?
- Who appears to be taller in the photograph?

- Who appears to be armed in the photograph?
- Does the photograph suggest what the ratio of solders to Mohawks was?

Group reflection

In small groups students discuss their responses to the photograph.

 Did finding out more information change what they thought?

Interesting fact about the photograph

The protestor was originally misidentified and described as a Mohawk warrior. In fact, Larocque was an economics student at the University of Saskatchewan who had come to support the Mohawk people.

Ratio of soldiers to Mohawks at Oka. Soldiers: 1500 Canadian soldiers Mohawks: 50 Mohawks

A photograph that shaped how everyone saw the Oka crisis.

Canadian soldier Patrick Cloutier and protester Brad Larocque come face-to-face during a standoff at the Kanehsatake reserve in Oka, Que., on Sept. 1, 1990. (Shaney Komulainen/The Canadian Press)





AFFYouth.org

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Diving deeper

The Oka Crisis was a 78 day (11 July – 26 September 1990) armed standoff between Mohawk protestors and Quebec police, the Royal Mounted Canadian Police and the Canadian Army.

It all began when the town of Oka, Quebec (population 1600) decided they wanted to expand their gold course from nine holes to 18 holes, along with a condominium development. In order to do this, they would need to level an ancient forest, known on the adjacent Kanesatake Mohawk reserve as The Pines. To prevent this encroachment on their territory, Mohawk residents occupied the Pines in a peaceful protest. For months, they camped out to ensure that bulldozers would not topple the majestic old trees or disturb a burial ground.

A previous land claim filed by the Mohawk people in 1986 had been rejected by the Government of Canada's Office of Native Claims for not meeting legal parameters. A court decision that allowed the golf course construction to go ahead was matched by the erection of a barricade blocking access to the land.

As a whole class – students watch the award–winning documentary Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance – Documentary (1 hour 59 minutes). The documentary was released in 1993 and won several international awards. https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of-resistance/

At the end of the documentary ask students to respond to the question – **What should** we do today about the Oka crisis?

Students move to a corner of the room based on their response to the question.

Corner 1 – Sign the land to the Mohawk immediately.

Corner 2 – Establish a Memorial Day to recognise the Oka crisis.

Corner 3 – Provide education programs for all young people and adults on the issues of land rights and to counter stereotypes of First Nations people.

Corner 4 – Recognise the conflict but don't offer any response at all.

Students discuss why they have chosen the option they did with others who are in the same corner as them.

Write to the Prime Minister of Canada

Individually students:

- Write a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada
- The letter should explain their view of the Oka crisis
- Outline a plan to improve relationships with First Nations people.

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance

Documentary

119 minutes

https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/

Released in 1993 winning multiple awards international awards.

Snapshots in History: July 11: Remembering the Oka Crisis

https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/albert-campbell/2013/07/snapshots-in-history-july-11-remembering-the-oka-crisis.html





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As a whole class:

- · Watch and listen to Ziggy Ramo's Little Things.
- Discuss the connections they make with the video/song and the issues the Oka Crisis raises.

Ziggy Ramo – 'Little Things' featuring Paul Kelly https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pk6dgf0EnmU

In a cinematic journey tracking forward and backward in time, Ziggy Ramo makes his directorial debut with the music video for his new single Little Things featuring Paul Kelly. From the top of the Sydney Opera House sails to the harbour shores, Ramo performs his reinterpretation of Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody's land rights inspired classic From Little Things Big Things Grow in a multigenerational act of truth telling.

Ziggy Ramo





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Thirty years on

Beans is inspired by Tracey Deer's, (the Director) own coming of age journey. As a 12-year-old, living through the Oka Crisis had a profound impact on her understanding of herself and her identity as an indigenous woman. She drew both positive lessons about the importance of standing up for what you believe in and learned firsthand about the incredible resiliency of her people, but she also learned that the world was a dangerous place because of her difference.

Tracey Deer's work to date has centred on the goal of bridge building by fostering greater awareness, compassion and solidarity towards Indigenous people so that the world doesn't have to be such a hostile place for her people, or for anyone vilified as "Other" by the ruling majority.

With Beans she wants audiences to experience the complex reality of being an Indigenous person through the heartbreaking and disturbing experiences of racism, hate and exclusion and the toll it can take. The best way to accomplish this was through an innocent child's point of view, during the highly charged, divisive summer of the Oka Crisis.

The film is "inspired by true events" because it is the story of a fictional family placed in actual historical events.

Mohawks of Kahnawake Mohawk group with William Workman, Mayor of Montreal, Kahnawake QC, 1869 (Wikimedia Commons)





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Create and film a scene

Working in creative teams of five students:

- select a scene or a major figure from the documentary Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance OR other information read about the Oka Crisis
- watch and listen to the interviews and information
- discuss the emotional response to the figure/character
- role play/improvise the character and present the views, motivations and actions of that person
- other members of the creative team take on the roles of other characters and reporters interacting with that character.
- What questions could they ask to find out more about the characters views, motivations and activities during the event?

Create a scripted scene using improvisation

After completing the improvised scenes, the creative teams:

- discuss what happened and the dialogue in their scene
- · write down the basics for their script
- act out the scene using the basic script to see if their ideas work
- · refine the script
- · rehearse the scene.

Filming the scene

Each creative team:

- Using a single camera shoot from wide to close-ups.
- Recording audio working with two people in a static position is the less challenging option.

Editing the scene

- · The main goal when editing is to:
- clearly present who is speaking
- arrange shots so that time and space appear uninterrupted.

To improvise

Create and perform without preparation.

Improv example

Look at the photograph of the soldier and protestor. What would the conversation be between the two men?

Camera shots to consider for a two-person dialogue

- · A wide two-shot
- OTS of each subject (over-the-shoulder)
- Close-ups of each person talking
- Close-ups of each person listening and reacting
- Cutaways (aspects of the scene for cutaways in the edit).

Cutaway

A cutaway shot is a shot that "cuts away" from the main action to any shot that adds visual information, and then returns to the original shot with new meaning.

A cutaway shot can:

- · Build tension in a scene
- · Help the viewer get into the character's head
- · Control time and space in a scene.



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Getting ready to write a review

Individually students write their response to the movie. This could include responses to the following provocations:

- How is racism and discrimination shown in this film?
- At one point in the film, residents of Quebec are shown throwing rocks at Indigenous people who are trying to leave Kanehsatake. The police at the scene do not respond. How did it make you feel?
- What issues faced by Indigenous peoples and communities are shown in the film?
- · What did the film make you wonder?
- Are these issues the same or different from the issues faced by First Nations people in Australia?
- Do the struggles of First Nations peoples in Australia play a large part in your life? Did viewing *Beans* make you think differently about the struggles of First Nations people in Australia?

Writing the review

The information students have written and the template – **Guide for writing a film review** – will assist them to write a review of the movie and rating the movie.



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Guide for writing a film review

Movie details: Title: approximately 600–1200 words usually written in past tense, in third person voice uses technical and descriptive language pirector: provides an objective analysis of the film's formal techniques and thematic content provides information about interesting elements of

the film: - formal techniques

- thematic content

• uses the full name or last name when referring to the director or cast.

Paragraph 1 Headline – only limited by your imagination. Here is an example: Spider-Man

Actual Headline: *Spinning An Amazing Web*Provide a few details that give the reader insight into the type of movie you are reviewing.

Paragraph 2 Summary of movie

- · Where and when does the movie take place?
- · Who are the most important characters?
- What is the movie telling the audience? Be careful to not provide any spoilers for your reader.

Paragraph 3 Opinion/Analysis

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the movie:
provide specific details and scenes.

Paragraph 4

Conclusion evaluation and recommendation

- · Who would you recommend the movie to, including:
 - relate this to the rating of the movie
 - how many stars would you give the movie?



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Final refinement before screening

Prior to seeing *Beans*, students worked in creative teams to create their own scene. By comparing and contrasting with what they have seen they are now able to make decisions that will refine and improve their scenes.

Working in original creative teams' students:

- review what they have created for their film
 AND
- · contrast it with the story created in Beans.

Creative teams:

- discuss and make any changes as if they were the Production Designer for Beans
- · complete in final filming and editing.

Don't forget to include a title name and credits to the movie.

Once the creative teams have finalised their media product students complete a producer's statement reflecting on the elements of the production, including the:

- central idea of the production
- use of different production techniques
- suitability of the final media product for its intended audience
- ways in which the media product uses or challenges the conventions of the selected text.

Read the Producer's Statement/Notes from Beans

"The first time I understood that Tracey had lived through the Oka Crisis from the inside as a 12-year-old, and that this is when she decided to become a filmmaker/storyteller, I understood the power and potential of this film. Too few films discuss the subject of First Nations people's resistance in Canada. There are great documentaries such as the amazing Alanis Obomsawin's KANEHSATAKE 270 YEARS OF RESISTANCE; or newcomer Michelle Latimer's RISE. There has also been a TV mini-series: INDIAN SUMMER: THE OKA CRISIS; but as of yet no narrative feature. So, we are especially excited for BEANS. At EMAfilms, we have given a voice to many new filmmakers over the past 10 years, and Tracey's talent as a storyteller shines through her first film. I believe that this story is an essential film that needs to take its long overdue place in Canadian cinema. I feel fortunate to be part of this journey and witness first-hand the courage and resilience Tracey had to first put this story into words, and then bravely transform her ideas into images. It was an incredible experience to help build a cast and crew to provide her with the means to achieve her vision. It was rewarding to see each of them instantly understand the importance of the film and understand Tracey's unique approach to telling her story."



Production Designer

In charge of making sure each shooting location is perfect, prepared, and on point with the vision of the film. The locations, sets, costumes, lights, etc all work together to create a world on screen.

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Tracey Deer

Mohawk filmmaker Tracey Deer led the acclaimed dramedy MOHAWK GIRLS to five award-winning seasons as its co-creator, director, and co-showrunner. She received four consecutive Canadian Screen Award nominations for Best Direction in a Comedy Series for MOHAWK GIRLS, and she has been honoured at TIFF with the Birks Diamond Tribute Award. This year, she is the recipient of the TIFF Emerging Talent Award, presented by L'Oréal Paris and supported by MGM. She recently returned from Los Angeles, where she was a writing co-EP on the Netflix/CBC series ANNE WITH AN E. She's currently working on INNER CITY GIRL, a feature about Aboriginal gang life, with Original Pictures. Tracey's work has been honoured with two Gemini Awards and numerous awards from multiple film festivals, including Hot Docs. She has worked with the CBC, the National Film Board, and numerous independent production companies throughout Canada in both documentary and fiction. Tracey chairs the Board of Directors of Women in View, a non-profit that promotes greater diversity and gender parity in Canadian media. She has mentored emerging talent as leader of the Director Training Program at the imagineNATIVE Film & Media Arts Festival, as a guest at the National Screen Institute (NSI) New Indigenous Voices Program, and as a mentor at NSI's new IndigiDocs training.

Anne-Marie Gélinas

Anne-Marie Gélinas - Producer, founder of EMAfilms, works with innovative and ambitious writers and directors from around the world. In 2020, SLAXX, a dark comedy/slasher with political tones directed by Elza Kephart, was selected to premiere at Fantasia and Sitges. In 2019, she produced THIRD WEDDING, a feature narrative by David Lambert (HORS LES MURS, JE SUIS À TOI), a Canada-Belgium-Luxemburg coproduction starring Rachel Mwanza (WAR WITCH) and Bouli Lanners (LES GÉANTS). The same year, Hélène Choquette's documentary LEPAGE AU SOLEIL- (2019) was also released. In 2017, RADIUS played many genre festivals, was released theatrically and was also broadcast on Super Channel. And in 2015, the famous TURBO KID premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, and was selected at SXSW, winning

the Audience Award. The film played in more than 60 festivals, garnering 23 international prizes, including Best International Film at the Saturn Awards 2016.

Kiawentiio | Beans

Kiawentiio is a young Mohawk from the Akwesasne community. She is a talented singer, songwriter, and accomplished artist, who especially loves painting. A tremendously creative individual, she found herself at an open call one day for a major recurring character in the last season of the CBC/Netflix's popular series, ANNE WITH AN E. Unknowingly competing with 235 young girls across the country, Kiawentiio won the role. Her character is an independent and resilient young girl, like 'Anne', who becomes a kindred spirit with the girl from Green Gables. "There is an energetic charisma and undeniable intelligence to Kiawentiio. [We] can't wait for Anne With an E fans to meet her." - Miranda de Pencier, Producer In addition to her many artistic pursuits, Kiawentiio also enjoys playing sports such as softball, volleyball and ping-pong.

Rainbow Dickerson | LilyRainbow

is a screen and stage actor trained in London and New York City, along with various stunt training from LA Stunts. To date, her acting career spans over 70 stage productions, nine world premieres, and a dozen film and television shows. Selected credits include THE PATRON, CHICAGO FIRE, GONE, and BANSHEE. On stage she has worked on Broadway – playing Johnna in AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; also worked with the American Repertory Theatre, the Mixed Blood Theatre, the Purple Rose, Native Voices and many others. If not on stage or set, you might find her on a horse or motorcycle, on a long Sunday drive without a map, savoring a beautiful meal, crafting something by hand, or enjoying the great outdoors in some way or another.

Violah Beauvais | RubyViolah

is a young Mohawk actress from Kahnawà:ke, Quebec, who is a natural performer. She's been obsessed with acting and directing since she was four years old, using her parents' cellphones to make her own movies. Violah's friendly personality, intense focus and complete comfort in front of the camera make her an incredibly talented actress and a joy to work with. Her nuanced and genuine performance captures the hearts of all who see it. She's trained in both a workshop setting as well as one-on-one with acting coach Melee Hutton. Her other artistic pursuits include hip hop dancing, ballet, violin lessons, comic bookmaking, and painting.

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A Political Crisis and its Legacy - Written by Harry Swain about the Oka standoff in 1990 from the perspective of someone inside the government.

https://www.amazon.com/Oka-Harry-Swain/dp/1553654293

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanehsatake:_270_Years_of_Resistance

The Oka Crisis: A Mirror of the Soul – book written by John Ciaccia. It is a story of how history led to the fateful events of 11 July, how some leaders looked beyond their self-interest and worked for peace. For Ciaccia, the journey was personal as well as political.

People of the pines: the Warriors and the legacy of Oka. Written by Geoffrey York. https://www.amazon.com.au/People-Pines-Warriors-Legacy-Oka/dp/1552780600
People of the Pines is the insider's account of the amazing events at Oka and Kahnawake in the hot summer of 1990. Written by two journalists who li8ve at the warrior encampment in the final weeks of the military siege.

Kanhsatake: 270 Years of Resistance – Documentary (1 hour 59 minutes) https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/

Released in 1993, this landmark documentary has been seen around the world, winning over a dozen international awards and making history at the Toronto International Film Festival, where it became the first documentary ever to win the Best Canadian feature award – it was identified as a watershed film in the history of First Peoples cinema.

Oka Crisis, 25 years ago, Inspired
Native Movements Around The World
https://ilc.sd63.bc.ca/mod/book/view.
php?id=3051&chapterid=3351.
read the article, which appeared in 2015,
marking the 25th anniversary of the Oka
Crisis. Note the point of view given in the
article so that you can form an opinion as to
how balanced it is.

Different day, same issue: What the Oka Crisis can teach us about the pipeline protests https://www.tvo.org/article/different-day-same-issue-what-the-oka-crisis-can-teach-us-about-the-pipeline-protests

https://www.suzannemethot.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Oka-Legacy2018.pdf