BC First Nations 12

Mr. Goldsack

**Potlatch Assignment**

**Use primary source evidence to complete this.**

**Your task is to develop a deeper understanding of the potlatch and the cultural impact of the 1884 ban, using primary sources and critical thinking skills…show me what you know**

**Part A:** Learn about the potlatch by finding the answer to the following… **please do not hand in the answers for the questions…use them to complete part B.**

* What is the purpose of the potlatch?
* What was celebrated?
* Who took part in potlatches?
* Historically, in which region did potlatches take place?
* Historically during what time of the year did potlatches occur?
* What kinds of things had to be done to prepare?
* What kinds of gifts were given and why were they given?
* What is the social purpose?

**Part B:** Using the information from the textbook and your notes, **write a firsthand account of what it would be like at a potlatch. Answer the following questions in your paragraph(s): (hand this in!)**

1. Who are you?

2. Why are you there? (purpose)

3. Who else is there?

4. What is going on? (music, dances, ceremonies etc.)

5. What are people wearing?

6. What are people doing?

7. What kind of food is being served?

8. What is the general feeling of the people there? (this should relate to the purpose)

Include the answers to these questions in a well-written paragraph (or paragraphs). Your writing should be no less than 500 words, detailed, and informative. Be descriptive (what do you see, smell, taste, feel, etc.)

**Part C: Using the Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts…**

To think historically, students need to be able to:

1. Establish ***historical significance***
2. Use ***primary source evidence***
3. Identify ***continuity and change***
4. Analyze ***cause and consequence***
5. Take ***historical perspectives***, and
6. Understand the ***ethical dimension***of historical interpretations.

Taken together, these concepts tie “historical thinking” to competencies in “historical literacy.” In this case, “historical literacy” means gaining a deep understanding of historical events and processes through active engagement

*In the late 1800s, the Canadian government felt First Nations’ traditions were keeping Native people from becoming “civilized.” The government saw Native culture as a threat and enacted a law to shut down the ceremonial potlatch. The anti-potlatch proclamation was issued in 1883; it became law January 1, 1885. It read:*

***“EVERY INDIAN OR OTHER PERSON WHO ENGAGES IN OR ASSISTS IN CELEBRATING THE INDIAN FESTIVAL KNOWN AS THE ‘POTLATCH’ IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR, AND SHALL BE LIABLE TO IMPRISONMENT...”***

Use ***primary source evidence*** and the Big Six to **explain the potlatch, the government ban, and the impact of ban on all Canadians:**

Why was the potlatch important to First Nations? **(*historical significance)***

Why was it viewed as bad by Europeans? **(historical perspectives)**

Why was it important for Canada to “civilize” aboriginal people? How did the potlatch prevent “civilization”? **(historical perspectives)**

What happened after the government banned the potlatch? How did the ban affect First Nations? (***cause and consequence)***

Is the potlatch important today? Is it carried out in the same way? ***(continuity and change)***

What did we (as a society) learn from the banning of the potlatch? **(ethical dimensions)**

**Find some good sources. Cite your sources. Analyze your sources. Think about what a potlatch was/is, and how not having it might impact the people.**

**A good source and how to cite it!!**

**Holland, Sarah. Living Tradition. The Kwakwaka’wakw Potlatch on the Northwest Coast. 2017.** [**https://umistapotlatch.ca/potlatch\_interdire-potlatch\_ban-eng.php**](https://umistapotlatch.ca/potlatch_interdire-potlatch_ban-eng.php)**.**