

Indigenous Studies Unit
Children's Literature: The Residential School experience

Books: **Shin-chi's Canoe** and **Shi-shi-etko**

Shin Chi's Canoe: Questions:

4. What are the features associated with going to the Residential school? Brainstorm answers to this question and then, based on your understanding of First Nations ways of living, write about why this environment is so foreign to these children.

5. Why did Shin-chi's parents allow him to be taken away to school?

6. What is the main idea in the story?

7. How does power and authority play a role in your life?

After reading Shi-shi-etko" and Shin-chi's Canoe, write 2 paragraphs in response to the following:

- a) Discuss how the two children cope with their residential school experience. What is the author able to portray in her story? Provide example quotations and explain.
- b) Discuss the illustrator's technique. What is gained by the darkness of the drawings in Shin-Chi's Canoe? Look at the way the children are portrayed (the darkness of their faces etc). What does this indicate about the residential school experience? Also look at the depiction of the environment. Interestingly, the illustrations in Shi-shi-etko, are much brighter. Discuss the significance of the illustrator's choice.