

Lesson Plan

Title: Seeking Safety in Canada: Analyzing Canada’s Immigration History Through Stories

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Magazine: This lesson is inspired by the article “Seeking Safety” in the December 2020 issue of *Kayak: Canada’s History Magazine for Kids*.

Grade Level: 5/6, 7/8, 9/10

Themes:

- Canada & the Global community
- Canadian Identity
- Peace & Conflict
- Settlement & Immigration
- Social Justice

Subject Area: Social Studies/History/Geography/ELA/Civics

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students will examine various events in Canadian immigration history. Students will be asked to select the most significant events and evaluate Canada’s actions in a report card style task.

Time Required: 1-2 lessons.

Historical Thinking Concept(s):

- Establish *historical significance*
- Analyze *cause and consequence*
- Identify *continuity and change*

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Select significant events from Canada’s immigration history and evaluate them as contributing to progress or decline throughout Canadian history.

Background Information:

First Peoples have lived in the territory we now call Canada since time immemorial. As time went on, people have come from all over the world to live in Canada, settling on traditional Indigenous territory. Many simply came because they wanted to. Many came to escape discrimination, hunger, war or lawlessness. Canada offered a safe

place to live. Of course, that doesn't mean that everyone who escaped here was welcomed, or that they were all treated as well as they should have been. But over the centuries our country has welcomed millions of new Canadians and offered them freedom, democracy and a new life. Read the stories of just some of them in the December 2020 issue of *Kayak: Canada's History for Kids*.

The Lesson Activity:

Activating: How will students be prepared for learning?

Minds on activity: Ask students to read the article, "Seeking Safety in Canada." Ask students to discuss with a partner the story they find most compelling or interesting, and one question that they have about the story they have selected. Ask students to share their responses with the class. The responses can also be recorded on sticky notes and posted at the front of the class.

Acquiring: What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?

Explain to students that they will evaluate Canada's immigration record using a school report card format, and may have to conduct additional research about the events in the article. They can visit [Pier 21's website](#) to learn more about the short stories in the article.

Have students work in pairs to complete the report card on Canada's immigration record. Students will establish historical significance by choosing 10 events from the article, and analyze each event by assessing it as demonstrating progress or decline in immigration history.

Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?

Have students share their thought process and overall assessment of Canada's immigration record with the rest of the class.

Materials/Resources:

- "Seeking Safety in Canada," December 2020 issue of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*
- [Pier 21](#)
- Report Card on Canada's Immigration History

Extension Activity:

Ask students to form pairs and research other significant events¹ or groups² related to immigration history that are not included in the article. Students can explain the events to the class, including why they are historically significant and whether they led

to progress or decline for Canada over time. These could also be added to the report card activity.

For historical context, students can begin by researching broader questions:

- Has Canada's immigration record changed or stayed the same over time?
- Were these developments an improvement (i.e. progress) or setback (i.e. decline) in how we treat immigrants?
- Did the changes improve Canada (i.e. progress), or did they make it worse (i.e. decline)? Progress/decline for whom?
- How did Canada's immigration policy affect Indigenous peoples? How did life change for Indigenous peoples as more settlers came?
- What factors influence immigration policies in Canada? (examples: economic, security, political factors)

¹ Events may include: Komagata Maru, Chinese Exclusion Act, M.S. St. Louis, Vietnamese Boat People, temporary foreign workers, U.N. Nansen Medal 1986 for providing aid to refugees.

² Groups may include those fleeing from war or persecution (e.g. Serbia, Iran, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan) or groups related to activism related to immigration policy such as The Sleeping Car Porters or Madhu Verma.

Report Card on Canada's Immigration History

Did Canada do the Right Thing Over Time?

Background:

First Peoples have lived in the territory we now call Canada since time immemorial. Over the centuries, Canada has welcomed millions of newcomers who were seeking safety and refuge. However, not everyone was welcomed or treated the way they should have been. Often, Indigenous Peoples were displaced and pushed off much of their land to accommodate those looking to resettle in Canada.

Tasks:

Step 1: List up to 10 historically significant events related to immigration history from the article, "Seeking Safety in Canada." Provide a one-sentence description for each event, identifying its historical significance in Canadian history. You may also include the experiences of historically significant people like Sarah Frost and Harriet Tubman. Include a date or dates for each event.

Factors to consider when determining historical significance:

- Prominence: Was the person or event recognized as significant at the time? Why or why not? What did it mean to be "significant"?
- Consequences: What effect(s) did the person or event have?
- Impact: How widespread and long-lasting was the person or event's impact?
- Revealing: What does the person or event reveal about the larger historical context or current issues? How do they inform our understanding of a historical issue or period?

Step 2: Give Canada a grade based on progress or decline and justify your mark. Did the event lead to progress in Canadian history, or was it a sign that Canada did not make the right decision? Remember: progress for one people may be decline for another.

A Canada did the right thing; good progress over time

B Canada did the right thing, but could have done better; some progress over time

C Canada could have made a better decision; decline over time

D Canada did not make the right decision; significant decline over time

Step 3: Give Canada three comments related to the nation's overall track record on immigration. One comment should commend Canada on good progress. Another comment should include a suggestion for an area of improvement. A final comment can be any of your choosing. Include one piece of evidence from your learning in each comment.

Report Card on Canada's Immigration Record Over Time

	EVENT OR PERSON	HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE	GRADE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

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8			
9			
10			

Overall Grade:

Reason for grade:

Positive comment with supporting evidence:

Comment for improvement or next steps with supporting evidence:

Any other comment with supporting evidence: