

## **Curriculum Resource Guide: Democracy, Citizenship, and Canadian Identity/Nationhood**

One of our goals as Social Studies teachers is to help our students become critically thinking citizens. With this in mind I chose to focus my resource guide on the topic of democracy, citizenship and Canadian identity. When considering the sources for this assignment, I reflected on the quote – “Citizenship entails the understanding of what it means to be weak as well as powerful; it involves healing as much as it does pride” from Timothy Stanley’s (2000) article. I understand this need to acknowledge past collective mistakes as neglecting to do so online exacerbates the injustices and prolongs the pain of those who have and continue to be affected. Therefore, as a teacher it is crucial to not only teach students about the symbols, practices and notions of Canadian identity throughout history and how they may have changed, but also how ideas about citizenship have impacted the lives of different groups of people.

I believe that one of the major concerns about teaching students about Canadian identity is the need to refrain from giving them a narrow and Euro-centric representation of it and include alternative forms of knowledge and voices. As we have discussed in class in regards to this topic, often Canadian Social Studies textbooks describe the positive aspects of Canadian history and identity, while the injustices are minimized or excluded. Therefore, in this resource guide I have tried to incorporate content that problematizes the cookie-cutter version of Canada’s nationhood and instead brings to light the discrimination, exclusion and the harm that was inflicted on those who today are considered Canadian citizens. As such, I thought it was important in my resource choices to include the voices of those who experienced these injustices, and therefore I included sources which contain primary documents, as well as secondary sources that speak to their stories. Furthermore, the resources I have chosen are intended to enable students to think critically about citizenship and nationhood. The goal is to have students reflect on ideas about how national identity is constructed, by whom, and how this may have affected ‘Canadians’ across time.

The resources I have chosen vary from government websites, online museum exhibits, films, newspaper articles, activity guides, and lesson plans. Additionally, some of the sources I have included are intended to be used exclusively by teachers (i.e. Anderson’s scholarly work) as a means of helping them shape their thinking about how this topic of citizenship and Canadian identity should be presented to students. Overall, I feel that the variety of sources that I have selected can be effectively incorporated into a curriculum on democracy, citizenship and

Canadian identity. These sources not only invite students and teachers to think critically about these large concepts, but also vary in their perspectives, time in history, and topics, thus encompassing a varied representation of Canadian citizenship and identity.

**Anderson, S. (2017). The stories nations tell: Sites of pedagogy, historical consciousness, and national narratives. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 40(1), pp. 1-38.**

**[https://www.academia.edu/25820058/Anderson\\_S\\_2017\\_The\\_stories\\_nations\\_tell\\_Sites\\_of\\_pedagogy\\_historical\\_consciousness\\_and\\_national\\_narratives\\_Canadian\\_Journal\\_of\\_Education\\_40\\_1\\_1\\_38](https://www.academia.edu/25820058/Anderson_S_2017_The_stories_nations_tell_Sites_of_pedagogy_historical_consciousness_and_national_narratives_Canadian_Journal_of_Education_40_1_1_38)**

This is a scholarly article written by Stephanie Anderson (2017) where she discusses the need for educators to have more disciplinary tools with practices of historical consciousness that would enable students to consider the moral dilemmas of Canada's colonial legacy, as well as silenced histories and shifting identities. Anderson introduces a conceptual Framework of Canadian National Narratives which encompasses current constructions of Canadian national identity that exist in Canadian sites of pedagogy. Anderson suggests that the curricular content of history education ought to critically expose students to Canada's national narrative templates and contrast them with ones that contest and rebuke them.

Anderson's article is a useful resource for Social Studies educators to familiarize themselves with in general, and particularly when they want to teach lessons on Canadian identity, citizenship, and racism. Anderson's work presents teachers with two frameworks of Canadian national narratives: a progressive, unified, Euro-Western, colony-to nation meta narrative of Canada, and Canada as a progress-oriented, generous, tolerant, multicultural mosaic. She then puts forth a third framework which is prudent for teachers to consider when they are planning out their lessons, content and topics of inquiry for lessons. This third framework captures narratives that contrast or rebuke the other two, and provides multiple perspectives on Canadian identity. Furthermore, utilizing this framework allows for teachers to enable students to question innate, taken-for-granted notions around nationhood and national identity by presenting them with these alternative narratives.

**CBC Digital Archives. *Lesson Plan for Teachers: Canadian Identity*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/lesson-plan/for-teachers-canadian-identity>**

On this part of the CBC website there is a well-designed lesson plan for teachers on the topic of Canadian identity. It is estimated the duration of the lessons is approximately two weeks and the intended age group for this unit is grades 9-10. The lessons in this plan highlight the CBC Digital Archives website which the students and the teachers are meant to use. Throughout these lessons students would be asked to work in groups to research and analyze information in order to formulate their opinions and define key elements of Canadian identity. This research will then culminate in a final project where students will create a simulated television production that represents their group's thoughts on Canadian identity.

I feel that this is a good resource for teachers to have as it may help them frame their lessons on Canadian identity and give ideas about what possible activities to integrate into the class. Every teacher is different in their style of delivery to what information they consider as important and necessary to be taught. However, lesson plans such as this could be a beneficial source to consult, even if what one takes away from it is something small. For example, while I may not wish to teach this lesson plan verbatim, I find some of the suggested discussion questions such as, "Is there a true Canadian Identity? Why or why not?" to be quite useful.

**Government of Canada. (2020). *Monuments – Experience Canada's Capital*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/art-monuments/monuments.html>**

This subpage of the Government of Canada website has numerous links and descriptions of existing monuments in Ottawa-Gatineau. They vary from traditional ones, commemorating national heroes like Terry Fox, to ones depicting Indigenous leaders, governments officials, and ones representing historical moments in Canada's past.

I see this website being used as a supplementary resource to a discussion about collective identity and commemoration. Particularly in 2020 there has been a worldwide push to re-visit the relevance of existing monument and public displays of national identity and consider if they represent the modern values of society. Therefore, it would be interesting to have students compare the monuments the Canadian government chooses to proudly display on their website, to ones that have been sites of recent controversy such as the statue of John. A. McDonald.

Furthermore, students can be invited to reflect on this current climate of re-evaluating elements of public history and express their opinions on the topic.

**Historica Canada. (2020). *Historica Canada Education Portal: Residential Schools in Canada. Indigenous History, Intermediate – Middle School*. Retrieved from <http://education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/261>**

This resource is an educational guide for students on residential schools in Canada. This is a well-structured guide that is clearly laid out and would be simple for students to read through and understand. It begins with an introduction about the Canadian residential school system and provides a background on its history, practices, and how these schools impacted the Indigenous community. The guide also describes the legacy of Indian residential schools, provides a timeline of key events, and has a portion highlighting the need for reconciliation. Additionally, there a number of activities that teachers can have students do in order to further understand the residential school system such as a timeline activity (historical significance), analysis of historical photographs, as well as a group activity to create a museum exhibit to recognize this painful history.

The history of residential schools in Canada is an important topic to be discussed with students, specifically as a means to have them reflect on notions of Canadian identity. Indigenous children were taken from their families and forced to embody what was believed to be Canadian at the time, despite their communities living on this land for generations. It would be prudent for students to consider how ideas about Canadian identity and nationhood have changed over time, while also recognizing the legacy of these practices for the Indigenous peoples today. Teachers can choose to use this guide in full, including the activities, or take sections of it that they find the most beneficial such as the timeline.

**National Film Board of Canada. (1980). *The National Scream*. Retrieved from [https://www.nfb.ca/film/national\\_scream/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/national_scream/)**

*The National Scream* is a 28-minute film available on the National Film Board of Canada website. The film is satirical in nature and uses a pseudo-documentary style to depict Canada's search for national identity. The film explores elements of how Canada is represented as well as how and why the beaver became the country's national symbol.

I think this film would be a good resource to use with younger aged students, grades 8-10, as it is quite simple. However, despite the film's minimalism, I believe it would be a good starting point for a unit/lesson on Canadian identity. Students could be shown the film as a hook for the lesson, followed by a class discussion on symbols that represent Canada, both formally and in pop culture. Students could also be guided in their thinking to consider how these images and ideas come to embody Canadianess, who do they represent, who may be excluded, etc. Additionally, it would be interesting to have the students reflect on the changes that may have occurred in the symbols of Canada from the time the film was made (over 30 years ago) to today's present context.

**Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Center. (2020). *Online Exhibits*. Retrieved from <https://centre.nikkeiplace.org/museum-exhibits/online-exhibits/>**

This website link is the online exhibition section of Burnaby's Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Center website. Some of the titles of the available online exhibitions are: 'Witness to Loss', 'Hastings Park 1942', 'Tashme', and 'Our Mothers' Patterns'. The focus of these exhibitions range from Japanese internment camps in Canada during WWII, baseball teams, and Japanese Canadian dress makers.

I think this is a useful resource for teaching about Canadian Identity as it encompasses the changes in Japanese Canadian identity throughout time. Specifically, the exhibits on Japanese internment camps represent the drastic changes that happened in the lives of Canadian citizens as a result of global conflicts outside of the country, with which they had no connection to. A lesson incorporating these resources would present students with a contested history of Canadian identity and highlight injustices of the past, while also urging students to consider the implications for the present and the concept of nationhood. Additionally, while the museum itself is an excellent place to take students, in the current climate it is not possible to organize fieldtrips. Therefore, a museum's online exhibits are a good alternative to expose students to.

**Richmond Public Library. (2020). *Citizenship Practice Test*. Retrieved from <https://www.yourlibrary.ca/citizenship/>**

On the Richmond Public Library website there are several variations of a citizenship practice test. The official citizenship test is sanctioned by the government and ought to be taken

by new immigrants to Canada prior to becoming full citizens (with some exceptions like younger children/the elderly). The focus of the questions on the practice test vary from being on: municipal, provincial and federal government structures and responsibilities, key points in Canadian history such as the head tax or the year of Confederation, to more colloquial Canadian knowledge such as the country's animal symbol or the nation's winter sport.

For starters, I have a personal connection to the citizenship test, which although I did not take myself due to my age, I remember helping both my parents prepare for it. However, I also feel it would be very informative for students to see what aspiring citizens have to go through in order to become fully Canadian. I think it would be quite eye-opening for some students that likely if they were to take the test themselves, they wouldn't necessarily pass. Looking over the questions myself, although I am confident about most, there are definitely some questions that I would need to guess on. Overall, having an activity where students engage with the citizenship practice test I believe would be an effective means to contribute to a greater discussion about Canadian identity, nationalism, and citizenship.

**Simon Fraser University Library. (2011). *Komagata Maru: Continuing The Journey*.**

**Retrieved from <http://komagatamarujourney.ca/intro>**

This website is a collection of resources put together by the Simon Fraser University Library on the Komagata Maru incident that took place in Vancouver in 1914. A steamship filled with passengers from Calcutta (present day Kolkata) attempting to immigrate to Canada was forced to turn around after most were denied entry into the country. This website has an extensive collection of resources from this event including secondary source documents such as videos detailing the Komagata Maru incident, as well as primary documents like images, passenger lists, newspaper articles, journal entries from those on board, etc.

Aspects of the website, such as the primary source documents, could be used in the classroom to enable students to critically think about Canadian identity and citizenship. As Canada's immigration policies are drastically different today, it would be prudent for students to see that not that far in the past, Canada engaged in exclusionary practices. Furthermore, a lesson on this topic could be used as a springboard to later talk about voting rights and help students understand the evolution of voting in Canada. As an example, members of the South Asian community obtained the right to vote in 1947, 33 years after the Komagata Maru incident.

**Suzuki, D. (Reporter). (2016). Trapped in a Human Zoo [Television Series Episode]. In *The Nature of Things*. Canada: CBC Gem. Retrieved from <https://gem.cbc.ca/media/the-nature-of-things/season-55/episode-13/38e815a-00983c40208>**

On this episode of *The Nature of Things* David Suzuki tells the story of Abraham Ulrikab who was an Inuit from Labrador, Canada who with his family and others was persuaded to go to Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to become a live attraction, touring as a part of expo exhibitions featuring Indigenous peoples from across the world. Tragically, Abraham and all of the other Inuit who came on the journey including members of his family died after becoming exposed to smallpox. However, Abraham was literate and kept a journal detailing his time in Europe which provide important details about his experiences being part of a live human exhibition and how he was perceived and saw the spectators. His words are central to the episode and the voices of experts and historians are complementary.

I think this television episode would be useful to show students when discussing Indigenous histories and their relation to Canadian identity. This video resource can be used to demonstrate to students how Indigenous Canadian identity has changed throughout time. It specifically highlights how unfortunately in the past Indigenous peoples were treated unjustly and inhumanely, like animals in a zoo. It is also interesting to note to students that despite the perception of Indigenous peoples as inferior at the time in Canada, they were nevertheless used as a symbol to represent the country abroad.

**The Early Edition (February 3, 2016). Chinese head tax reparations called for by surviving families. CBC. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/chinese-head-tax-reparations-called-for-by-surviving-families-1.3432309>**

This is a brief online news article published on the CBC website that discusses the desire of some living family members of Chinese immigrants who were subjected to pay a head tax when immigrating to Canada between 1885-1923 to receive reparations. The article describes how these family members are asking for actions from the federal government to compensate for their past mistakes in the form of a letter and a financial settlement.

I think that this article could be used towards the end of a unit/lesson on Chinese rail workers, immigration, and the head tax. After learning the historical background of these events,

students would be given a present-day perspective on this topic by reading this article. Engaging with this article would enable students to consider the development of Canadian identity over time and how in the current context, it continues to be a point of discussion. Furthermore, I think it would be interesting to have a discussion with the students about the responsibility the Canadian government has to compensate for their past undemocratic, racist and exclusionary practices to citizens today.