

# A HISTORY OF MULTICULTURALISM IN CANADA

EDUCATION GUIDE



## The Christie Pits Riot

— Une opinion française sur la tentative de descente d'immigrants hindous à Vancouver.

"We can, indeed we must, do better."  
— Irving Abella, Historian

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# MULTICULTURALISM EDUCATION GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

**H**undreds of Indigenous nations and cultures had long since been interacting and flourishing on the continent by the time European explorers first set foot in what we now call Canada. In the centuries since, settlers and immigrants from around the world have found a home in the land that is now Canada. As racist barriers to immigration have been dismantled, the population has become increasingly diverse. Today, cultures from every corner of the world share in creating Canada's history and culture; the fabric of our society. Though the history of multiculturalism in Canada stretches back much farther than many realize, it has by no means been an easy road. As with most of Canada's history, the story of multiculturalism in this country is complex, and still evolving.

This education guide examines some key moments and figures in our history as part of an introduction to multiculturalism in Canada. By learning the history of how multiculturalism has grown and been treated in Canada, we can better understand our society today.

## MESSAGE TO TEACHERS

**T**o mark the 50-year anniversary of Canada's Multiculturalism Policy, Historica Canada, the country's largest organization dedicated to enhancing awareness of Canada's history and citizenship, created this education guide to help teachers and students learn about the history and modern reality of multiculturalism in Canada.

The guide is aligned with current Canadian curricula, and has been produced for use in middle and high school history and social science classrooms. The complicated nature of recorded history (and curricular requirements) does not allow us to tell everyone's stories, and students are encouraged to remember that the experiences of one group are not representative of all peoples in Canada. We hope that teachers will share other perspectives, experiences, and stories to provide a more complete understanding of multiculturalism in Canada.

Immigrants arriving in Montreal, 1910 (Montreal and Toronto: Valentine & Sons' Publishing Co., Ltd./1267/Library and Archives of Quebec).



It is also necessary to examine the legacy and consequences of colonialism and the repressive policies to which Indigenous peoples and many immigrants have been subjected. Some groups are still fighting for their rights in Canada. The Government of Canada has often changed our laws to meet such demands. Although Canada is known as an international leader in human rights, much work remains to be done to ensure human rights and equality are legally protected and enjoyed by everyone in Canada.

No single guide can capture the full range of the human experience. Each story contains only snapshots of important moments in history, leaving thousands of others unexplored. Our job as historians and students is to continue to investigate those stories. This guide includes activities and resources to help you explore Canada and the people of its past and present. The guide will help you reflect on Canada's people, history, culture, and what it means to be Canadian.

Nyla, "Maki" from the film "Nanook of the North," Inukjuak, QC, ca. 1920 (Samuel Herbert Coward/Notman Photographic Archives/McCord Museum/MP-0000.1802.3.57).



Many of the topics covered in this guide could trigger a strong emotional response, especially among youth who are affected by intergenerational trauma. Teachers must be sensitive to both individual and group dynamics to ensure the classroom remains a safe environment for all learners. Set ground rules for respectful discussions and consult your school guidance counsellor for additional support, if needed.

The activities included here may be used in sequence or can stand alone. Additional free, bilingual resources on multiculturalism in Canada are available on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Canada's education guides are part of a collaborative process that engages history educators, academic historians, and community stakeholders in content creation and lesson planning. This guide was developed in collaboration and consultation with Lan Chan-Marples, Dr. Samantha Cutrara, Dr. Natasha Henry, Dr. Tricia Logan, Dr. Marcel Martel, and Dr. Jan Raska.



## NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

**T**eachers may wish to take this opportunity to engage in a broader conversation with their students about the concepts and language around race and racism. Pay attention to grammar, including the use of tenses, articles, and capitalization. This guide uses primarily contemporary language when referring to Canada, provinces, and cities. When it is appropriate, please discuss the historical language connected to the time frame you are examining.

**MULTICULTURALISM:** According to the Government of Canada, multiculturalism is about “ensuring that all citizens keep their identities, take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging.”

**MULTICULTURALISM VS. DIVERSITY:** Diversity is about individual differences, such as differences in religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomics, ability, age, or ethnicity, while multiculturalism is about societal characteristics and the interactions between different societies (cultures). Put simply, multiculturalism is the diversity of culture.

**TIME IMMEMORIAL:** A period of the distant past, out of memory, not defined by specific historical dates.

**FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES** in Canada were initially called “Indians” by colonial Europeans, who at first believed they had landed in India. While “Indian” is no longer considered an appropriate term to describe Indigenous peoples, it is still a legal definition, primarily in reference to the *Indian Act*. “Aboriginal,” meanwhile, is a political and legal umbrella term that includes status and non-status First Nations, as well as Métis and Inuit. “Aboriginal” and “Indigenous” are often used interchangeably, but as the current preferred term is Indigenous, it is used throughout this guide.

**CEDED TERRITORY:** Lands granted to a party, whether as a result of a treaty, through purchase, or through other means. Lands were often ceded as a result of military or political pressure, and were the principal means that Europeans used to acquire control over territory. In Canada, Indigenous peoples and Europeans frequently had different understandings of the land ownership provisions included in treaties.

**COLONIALISM** can be defined as the practices and policies of establishing control by one people or place over other people or places, or by nations and institutions over distant lands and peoples. A key element of colonialism is taking control and getting rid of anything already in place. This includes not only land, but people and their culture. Colonialism is an active and purposeful process, not an accidental one.



1998 stamp series depicting types of housing in Canada (Dreamstime.com/Meisterphotos/ID 182401423).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Videos, podcasts, and articles from *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (TCE) mentioned in this guide can be found at [thecanadianencyclopedia.ca](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca). Search for relevant videos and articles by their titles, and find more activities and resources on multiculturalism.

All worksheets mentioned in this guide can be downloaded from the Historica Canada Education Portal at:

[education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/695](https://education.historicacanada.ca/en/tools/695)

Other relevant guides can be found at:

[thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/educators#education-guides](https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/educators#education-guides)

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports:

[nctr.ca/records/reports](https://nctr.ca/records/reports)

Map of Territories, Languages, and Treaties:

[native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca)

Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada:

[indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca](https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca)





# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

**M**ulticulturalism has many interpretations and definitions. Canada's Library of Parliament provides three interpretations of a multicultural society, all of which refer to the management and celebration of Canada's cultural diversity. That a multicultural society can be thought of *sociologically*, as an *ideology*, or as a *policy*, means that people have different ideas of what it means for Canada to be multicultural. Read the full definition [here](#).

## ACTIVITY: MY OWN CULTURE

Culture involves many things, from art and food to customs and behaviours. We live in and with multiple cultures daily, but often we don't think of our own practices as part of a "culture." It is important to understand our own cultures as well as those of the people around us. When we understand that we all have multiple cultures, we can see similarities and accept differences, and adapt and evolve to be more inclusive of those who are different than us.

1. Either as a class or as an individual writing assignment, define multiculturalism and what multiculturalism means to you. Bring everyone's answers together in a discussion of how multiculturalism has changed over the years. Think about ideas like "tolerance" and "assimilation" that were related to past approaches to multiculturalism, and whether we have a more inclusive view of multiculturalism today.
2. As a class, create a list of things that are often considered to be "Canadian" or part of "Canadian culture." Individually, look up the origins of one of those items and present your findings to the class (e.g., hockey comes from Britain, poutine is Québécois, Tim Hortons started in Hamilton, Ontario, and inuksuit are Inuit).
3. As a class, pinpoint the origins of each item on a class map. You may also place a pin (or multiple pins) denoting where your family originates.
4. Review the map of cultures represented in the classroom, the list of items you defined as "Canadian," and your first definitions of multiculturalism. Have a class discussion: Who is represented in these items, and do they indicate a homogeneous or multicultural state? What is the nature of the relationships among them? Do you think this represents your experience in Canada or is anything missing?

Blue Bird, a Nakoda girl. Banff, Alberta, 1930 (Provincial Archives of Alberta).



Assiniboine camp, Alberta, 1910 (Provincial Archives of Alberta).

## ACTIVITY: INDIGENOUS DIVERSITY IN CANADA

Canada covers a huge piece of territory, and many different groups have lived and thrived on the land over the centuries. Because people create culture as a way to express themselves and the world around them, the presence of many people on this land also means many cultures exist on this land.

1. Individually or as a class, watch this excerpt from the opening ceremony of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver ([17:26-26:10](#)).
2. Take notes while watching: Pay attention to differences in language, style of dress, colours, symbols, and dance/movement. Do any other details or features stand out?
3. As a class, discuss what you observed. Were there more differences or similarities than you expected? What did you learn about the reality of Indigenous peoples in Canada today?

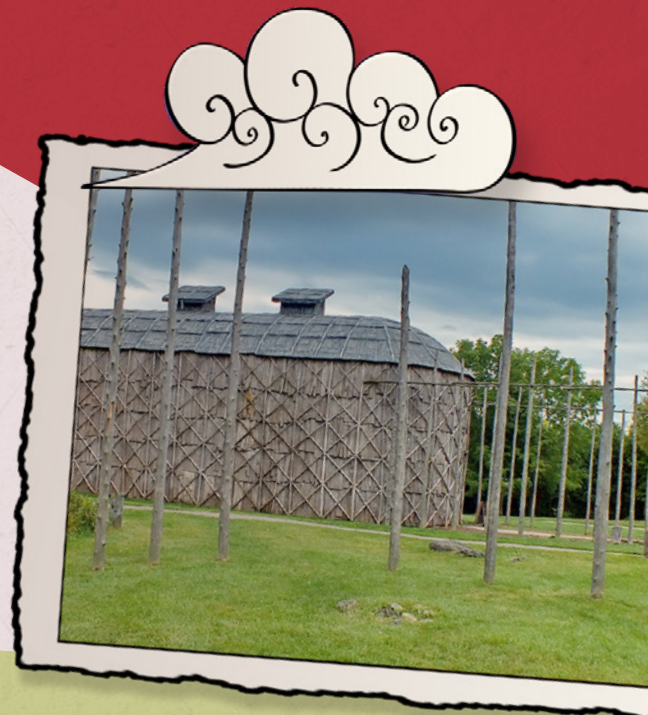
**TEACHER TIP:** Ask students to consider the significance of including this segment in the opening ceremony. Include the audience and scale of the event in your discussion. Point out that the peoples represented here are merely a fraction of those who lived here before colonization.



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CANADIAN?

As this guide aims to show, there are many different ways to be, and identify as, Canadian. For example, Indigenous-Canadian, French-Canadian, Afro-Canadian, and Chinese-Canadian (among many other examples) are all Canadian identities. Hyphenated identities acknowledge one's unique culture and heritage, as well as the struggles and challenges that accompany that heritage.

A longhouse in the reconstructed 15th century Crawford Lake Iroquoian Village (Dreamstime.com/Bobhilscher/ID 158758789).



## SECTION 2: INDIGENOUS PLURALISM AND EARLY COLONIALISM

Since time immemorial, hundreds of nations have been living on the land known as [Turtle Island](#), forming complex civilizations with intricate social, political, economic, and cultural systems. Aside from a brief Norse settlement in present-day Newfoundland in the late 10th or early 11th century, interactions with Europeans began near the end of the 15th century. This is often referred to as the point of “first contact,” although first contact took decades and assumed many different forms across the continent.

As settlers continued to arrive in what we now call Canada, Indigenous peoples' relationships with Europeans grew increasingly complex. Europeans attempted to establish dominance over lands and resources, and these early encounters often had negative consequences for Indigenous groups. Over time, the structure of their relationships became more formalized through agreements, treaties, laws, and acts that would (and often still do) govern the lives of Indigenous peoples according to European laws and conventions. One of the many negative side effects was the suppression and criminalization of many aspects of Indigenous cultures. Other cultural elements were appropriated by Europeans.

### ACTIVITY: PRE-CONTACT MULTICULTURALISM

This land was (and is) inhabited by hundreds of Indigenous nations and cultural groups, each with distinct cultural features. Learn more about the people upon whose traditional lands you live now.

1. Working in small groups, choose an area in Canada to explore. Use a website such as [native-land.ca](#) to identify which Indigenous group(s) call this area their traditional territory.
1. Once you've determined who lived (and perhaps still lives) there, research the culture(s) of these people(s), using [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) to start. Take notes as you go. Who were the people who lived on this land before European colonists? What were elements of their cultures before contact? What was the cultural landscape before the area was colonized? Have these cultural elements survived? If so, how have they changed?
2. In your group, create a short presentation and share it with the class.

**TEACHER TIP:** Provide local resources for more specific information on First Nations, Indian Bands, etc.

Map telling the story of the Beothuk, Newfoundland (Library and Archives Canada/Maps, plans and charts/e011161242).



## SECTION 3: COLONIAL NEW FRANCE AND BEYOND

The history of French-speaking Canada is extensive and includes much more than stories of settlers from France coming to modern-day Quebec. At its peak, New France stretched from Newfoundland in the east to Alberta in the west and Louisiana in the south. It was populated by Indigenous peoples, enslaved peoples, and settlers, all with different cultures. From the 16th century until 1763, when New France was ceded to the British, these settlers, traders, missionaries, explorers, enslaved peoples, and the original inhabitants of Turtle Island played key roles in building Canada's cultural landscape.

Stamp of Pedro da Silva dit le Portugais, First Courier in New France, 1705 (Dreamstime.com/Alexander Mirt/ID 215356812).



An Acadian Farmhouse (Dreamstime.com/Sandi Cullifer/ID 147881164).

Music of the Métis, by Amber Wilkinson, 2012 (Indigenous Arts & Stories and Historica Canada).

Samuel de Champlain's first detailed map of New France, published in 1613, was created with the help of First Nations (Library and Archives Canada/e010764733).

Acadia stamp, ca. 1981 (Dreamstime.com/Sergei Nezhinskii/ID 113965021).



### ACTIVITY: DIFFERENT CULTURES OF NEW FRANCE

Many assume, because of its name, that New France was a monocultural society of French settlers. In reality, not every colonist was from France. Many others of numerous cultural and linguistic backgrounds came to what is now Canada. These colonizers added to the original inhabitants of this land, who made up the majority of the population.

- In small groups, investigate one cultural group of people who lived in New France. Use *The Canadian Encyclopedia* to begin your research on one of the groups listed below. Make sure each study group chooses a different cultural group. Consider:
  - How did cultures change and modify once they interacted with the others in this list? What is a cultural exchange? How did Indigenous nations' cultures influence French culture(s)? How did French settlement influence Indigenous nations? How and in what ways were there power imbalances?
  - For settler cultures: What elements of their culture did settlers bring from home? Would all settlers have the same cultural elements? What would be shared? What would be unique? How does being in a new place change a culture?
  - How did these people together make up New France? Take note of changes over time.
- In your group, make a presentation on this cultural group. As a class, discuss how people in these groups would have interacted.

#### Groups to research:

- Algonquians
- Mi'kmaq
- Acadians
- Fur traders (coureurs des bois)
- Non-French European settlers
- Voyageurs
- Religious figures (missionaries, priests, nuns)
- Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)
- Inuit
- French military officers and soldiers
- Enslaved Indigenous peoples
- Enslaved African peoples
- French settlers
- Filles du Roi

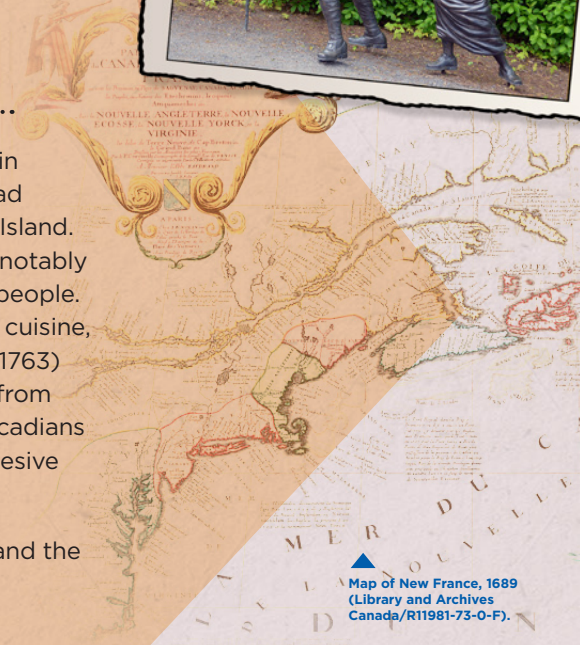


**Métis** peoples, generally speaking, are of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry. They live mostly in the Prairie provinces and Ontario, but also in other parts of the country. Their cultures incorporate elements from both sides of their heritage. Fiddling and jigging, bright floral beadwork, and language (**Michif**) are some of the most recognizable elements of Métis culture. The Métis have long struggled with the Canadian government for recognition and the right to self-governance.

Note: The definition of Métis can be contentious. Read more on [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#).

**Acadia** was founded as a French colony in the 17th century. Largely concentrated in what would later become the province of Nova Scotia, Acadian communities spread throughout the Maritime provinces to New Brunswick and parts of Prince Edward Island. Learning about the land and survival techniques from local Indigenous peoples — notably the Mi'kmaq — the early Acadians eventually became a self-sufficient agricultural people. They farmed, fished, and hunted, and their lifestyle allowed them to preserve their cuisine, language, traditions, and celebrations for centuries. **The Acadian Expulsion** (1755–1763) marked a huge upheaval in the history and life of the thousands who were forced from their homes, many of whom died in the process. Despite this tragic event, many Acadians eventually returned, and today a strong, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically cohesive community thrives in Canada.

Learn more about Acadia by watching the [Acadian Deportation](#) Heritage Minute and the [Who are the Acadians](#) video, or by reading more on [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#).



Map of New France, 1689 (Library and Archives Canada/RT1981-73-O-F).

## SECTION 4: ENSLAVEMENT IN NEW FRANCE AND BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

One often-forgotten part of Canada's colonial history is the enslavement of Black, African, and Indigenous peoples. Enslaved Africans began working and living in what is now Canada by the early 1600s. The first documented enslaved Black person was a six-year-old boy. At least several hundred enslaved Black people were living in New France when it was taken over by the British in 1759. This number more than doubled when white Loyalists brought enslaved people with them to the area from what is now the United States during the War of Independence. Many free Black Loyalists also arrived in Nova Scotia in this era. In 1793, the *Act to Limit Slavery in Upper Canada* prohibited the importation of enslaved people into Upper Canada, but it did not prevent their sale within the province or into the United States, nor was any enslaved person freed as a result of the legislation.

In 1807, the slave trade was banned in the British Empire, and by 1834 slavery was abolished in Canada altogether. Slavery was practised for over 200 years under both the French and the British. However, it is important to remember that even after abolition, Black and African people in Canada continued to face many challenges due to racism and discrimination that affect many communities to the present day.

Black and African people were not the only enslaved people in Canada. While Black and African people made up the majority of slaves in British North America, Indigenous people made up two-thirds of the enslaved residents of New France. Many were also traded from New France to the Caribbean. The average age of these slaves was 14, and most were women and girls who were sent to work in urban centres like Montreal. Understanding the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples, and working toward reconciliation, involves learning about the history of their enslavement by European settlers.

Learn more about the experiences of enslaved people in colonial times through the lives of [Marie-Josèphe Angélique](#), [Olivier Le Jeune](#), and [Chloe Cooley](#), or through [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) articles on [Black](#) and [Indigenous](#) enslavement in Canada.

Still from *Marie-Josèphe Angélique: Montreal on Fire from the Strong and Free* series, 2021 (Historica Canada).





## SECTION 5: 1600-1800 BUILDING A DIVERSE SOCIETY

It is a common misconception that the early stages of colonialism in Canada involved only English and French settlers. While they were certainly the majority, many other nationalities and cultures crossed the ocean in the 1600s and 1700s. Some chose to settle in Montreal and other growing urban centres, embracing an increasingly cosmopolitan society. Others chose to build new communities with their fellow countrymen, such as Nova Dania and Lunenburg.

Not everyone settled right away. Fishermen were sometimes seasonal visitors, and fur traders were constantly on the move, travelling hundreds of kilometres to hunt, trade, and sell products, primarily beaver fur to make fashionable (at the time) felt hats. The drive for furs and other goods, and continued exploration and settlement, led to increased contact between the original inhabitants of the land and the new European arrivals.

All non-Indigenous people in Canada can trace their roots to somewhere else — a fact that is important to remember as we continue to shape our society and make Canada a welcoming home for all.

Moravian Mission settlement, Port Burwell, QC-NU, 1925  
(Frederick W. Berchem/McCord Museum/MP-1984.127.132).



Opechesagt people in a house at Ahaswinis village in the Alberni Valley, 1906 (Leonard Frank/Vancouver Public Library/9287).



Indigenous village on shore with Russian church in the background. Yukon, 1890 (Vancouver Public Library, 32921).



"The Landseekers" and their train in Rivers, Manitoba, ca. 1910 (Library and Archives Canada/C-003569).

### ACTIVITY: MAPPING SETTLEMENTS

We know that settlers from several different countries came to Canada in the 17th and 18th centuries, but where did they go? In the activity below, read about some of the earliest settlers to Canada: where they chose to make their home, and the places that stand out in their history.

1. On your own, follow the links below to read about the early histories of each group's settlement in what we now call Canada. Supplementary research may be necessary.
  - [Moravian Missionaries](#)
  - [Scots](#)
  - [Irish](#)
  - [Swiss](#)
  - [Germans](#)
  - [Danes](#)
  - [Spaniards](#)
  - [Mennonites](#)
  - [Jews](#)
  - [Jamaican Maroons](#)
  - [Chinese](#)
2. Using the information you gathered, choose a location (or more than one) for each group's arrival and/or settlement in Canada, then mark it down on the map located in the [Mapping Settlements worksheet](#). Accompany each marker with a short explanation of why you have chosen that location.
3. In partners or small groups, share the locations you chose, and your reasoning for each one. Discuss any differences, either in the chosen location, or the reasoning behind them.
4. In a couple of paragraphs, share any thoughts you have on what you have learned. Did you know about these early settlements? Which early settler history did you find the most interesting? Looking at the map you have created, what does it tell us about the evolution of multiculturalism in Canada?



## SECTION 6: 1800–1914 A GROWING POPULATION AND A CHANGING SOCIETY

As populations expanded within what we now know as Canada, migrants and immigrants continued to arrive from across the globe. However, the white European settler majority often did not want to accommodate different groups, and measures were taken by the government, and at times individuals, to control certain communities and prevent them from expanding. Measures such as the Chinese Head Tax (1885), the *Indian Act* (1876), Residential Schools, and voting restrictions based on ethnicity were just some of the policies that had disastrous impacts on the affected populations. Despite such obvious inequalities, some progress on inclusivity occurred in this period. A change in immigration requirements to promote “the Last Best West” led to Southern and Eastern Europeans (and Americans) settling in Western Canada. Although many faced difficulties immigrating, other communities also began arriving, including Sikhs and Doukhobors, and groups such as the Anti-Slavery Society were formed in response to the arrival of Black refugees.



Miss Guilmartin,  
Montreal, 1877  
(Associated Screen  
News Ltd./McCord  
Museum/11-45957.1).



Galician immigrants,  
Québec, 1911 (William  
James Topley/Library  
and Archives Canada/  
PA-010401).



### LOUIS RIEL AND THE FOUNDING OF MANITOBA

Often forgotten in the popular history of Canada is the key role the Métis people played in the creation of the province of Manitoba. In 1869, the fight for their rights and land culminated in a resistance known as the [Red River Resistance](#). One of the central figures in this resistance was [Louis Riel](#) (1844–1885), the leader of a provisional Métis government who negotiated with the burgeoning Canadian government. As a result of the resistance and these negotiations, the province of Manitoba was formed, and Riel is now considered its founder. In response to the increasing loss of their land and way of life, in 1885 some Métis communities and their First Nations allies launched a five-month resistance against the Canadian government, known as the [North-West Resistance](#). As one of the leaders, Riel was arrested and executed by the Canadian government for high treason. His execution had a lasting effect on the Métis people, as well as on French-Canadian nationalism. He is now remembered as a Father of Confederation and protector of Métis and minority rights.

### JOHN WARE AND BLACK SETTLEMENTS IN CANADA

Of the many settlers and cowboys living in the West during the 1800s, one of the most famous is John Ware (1845/50–1905). Ware was enslaved in the United States before becoming a free man and moving to Canada to work as a cowboy. A successful rancher, he lived with his family on his own ranch near Calgary, Alberta. He is remembered for his courage, physical strength, and horsemanship. Ware is one of many Black Canadians who were able to prosper despite widespread anti-Black discrimination at both the public and governmental levels. Watch the [John Ware video](#) and listen to the [John Ware podcast](#) to learn more about this legendary rancher. Ware settled near Calgary, and he was far from the only Black person in the area. In fact, many primarily Black communities sprang up in the Prairies, and indeed across the country. Do some research to find a historically Black settlement near you. What is the history behind this community's settlement? How did it develop? Is it still standing today? If not, what happened?

Kahnawake Lacrosse Club, Montreal, 1867 (William Notman/  
Notman Photographic Archives/McCord Museum/1-29099.1).





## CANADA AS A BILINGUAL COUNTRY IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

Linguistic plurality is a cornerstone of modern Canadian identity, but the history of language in Canada is not a simple story. Language has been used historically by Indigenous peoples and French-Canadian communities (and other diverse language communities) to resist an English-speaking Canadian society determined to create a homogeneous British-Canadian national state. This history of resistance has helped define our social and political climate. For nearly a century after the formation of modern-day Canada, French-language education was restricted or banned in several provinces. Despite this attack, francophone communities were determined not to give in. Finally, in 1963, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson launched the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to explore ways to put English and French on equal footing. The Commission's findings eventually led to the *Official Languages Act* in 1969. For more information on the history behind the *Official Languages Act*, check out our [Official Languages Act Education Guide](#).

## ACTIVITY: DIGITAL STORY

As new immigrants arrived in Canada through the 19th century, cultural diversity grew. Not everyone welcomed these differences in ethnicity and nationality, and many immigrants faced discrimination when they arrived. But Canada's population was changing. Who were the people who changed the face of our country? What motivated them to migrate?

1. Pair up and pick an (im)migrant group from the 19th century to research.
2. Focus your research on the push and pull factors of migration. Who were these immigrants? Where did they settle? What cultural elements did they bring with them, and did they change once they settled? How did Canada's stance toward this group affect migration or settlement? Who was welcome, who wasn't, and why? What policies or laws did Canada develop regarding these migrants? Is there a cultural artifact that represents their journey?
3. Present this research in a digital story. A digital story is a multimedia presentation that has narrative elements. Your story should include independently written text drawn from your research, archival materials and primary sources, and quotes from secondary sources. A digital story can be made simply on PowerPoint slides, or through social media such as an Instagram reel or a TikTok video. You can even add voiceovers and artistic interpretations.

Possible groups to research:

- |                             |                           |                                |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Belgian</a>     | <a href="#">Dutch</a>     | <a href="#">Chinese</a>        |
| <a href="#">Italian</a>     | <a href="#">Polish</a>    | <a href="#">Jewish</a>         |
| <a href="#">Ukrainian</a>   | <a href="#">Swedish</a>   | <a href="#">French</a>         |
| <a href="#">Japanese</a>    | <a href="#">Scottish</a>  | <a href="#">Irish</a>          |
| <a href="#">South Asian</a> | <a href="#">Doukhobor</a> | <a href="#">Black Loyalist</a> |
| <a href="#">Métis</a>       |                           |                                |

### PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

**Push Factors:** why people might want or need to emigrate from their home country and live elsewhere

**Pull Factors:** why people might choose to immigrate to Canada

Scottish family emigrating from Great Britain to Canada, ca. 1927 (Canadian Pacific Railway Archives/McCord Museum/CPR-NS.8454/©CPRC/CFCP).

Mrs. Wing Sing and son, Montreal, ca. 1890-95 (Madame Gagné/Notman Photographic Archives/McCord Museum/MP-1984.44.1.2).

Three generations of Croatian settlers. Kenaston, Saskatchewan, ca. 1910 (Fred Taylo/Library and Archives Canada/C-089701).





## ACTIVITY: CANADA'S SCHOOLS QUESTIONS AND BILINGUALISM

The so-called “Schools Questions” — limitations and bans on teaching French in schools — were detrimental to many communities across Canada, and inspired many stories of resistance.

The *British North America Act* of 1867 and the subsequent creation of new provinces and territories formed the Canada we know today. But the linguistic balance set out at Confederation soon deteriorated, leaving francophones living outside of Quebec (and other minority-language populations elsewhere in Canada) at risk. Not only did these communities face discrimination, but threats to their continued survival abounded. Cuts to language education were the weapon of choice: New Brunswick, Manitoba, and Ontario all saw the restriction — or even complete erasure — of French-language education in their respective school systems. Controversial laws disallowing French in schools lasted for decades and had disastrous effects on francophone communities. In 1871, New Brunswick restricted access to separate schools used by Acadians. In 1890, Manitoba abolished funding for Catholic schools as well as the legislative and judicial bilingualism negotiated by Louis Riel. The acts that created Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905 restricted public funding for separate schools. From 1912 to 1927, Ontario’s Regulation 17 severely restricted the use of French as a language of instruction. The beleaguered francophone communities were under attack from an active and vocal English-speaking Canadian society, but they were determined not to give in.

1. Divide the classroom into three groups. Each group will be assigned one of the three “Schools Questions.” Read *The Canadian Encyclopedia* article assigned to your group:
  - a. [New Brunswick Schools Question](#)
  - b. [Manitoba Schools Question](#)
  - c. [Ontario Schools Question](#)
2. Together, complete the [Schools Questions 5Ws Chart](#) for the crisis you studied.
3. In your group, discuss the following:
  - a. What did these measures mean for the French-speaking communities they affected? What was the significance for language rights in Canada?
  - b. What happened? What led to the crisis, and what was the result?
  - c. Why was it important to people on both sides of the equation to fight for the removal or the preservation of minority-language instruction?
  - d. Why do you think having access to education in one’s own language is essential for the survival of that language?
  - e. What did the crisis reveal about attitudes toward and values about language in Canada at the time?
4. Together, write a news exposé on the crisis. Choose one person to act as newscaster, and record the exposé to share with your class.

**MODIFICATION:** Pair language learners with stronger readers and rephrase the discussion questions using simpler wording. Provide a handout with sentence starters that match key words in the article. Give students the option to share their results orally, using a slideshow tool, or visually.

Part of Lutheran colony from Nebraska [U.S.A.] leaving Scott for Tramping Lake, Saskatchewan, 1910 (Canada. Dept. of Mines and Resources/Library and Archives Canada/C-005092).



St. Nicholas Greek Catholic Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, ca. 1890-1910 (G.F. Ridsdale/Library and Archives Canada/PA-122667).

### BATTLE OF THE HATPINS

Ontario’s Regulation 17 severely restricted the use of French as a language of instruction and communication in schools. By 1916, Franco-Ontarians in Ottawa had had enough, and decided to resist. Learn more about the Battle of the Hatpins with the [video](#) and [podcast episode](#).



## SECTION 7: 1914-1945 GLOBAL CONFLICT AND MOVING POPULATIONS

This period is commonly marked by three global events: the First World War (1914-1918), the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the Second World War (1939-1945). The World Wars are often cited as having helped build a sense of national identity among Canadians, resulting in further independence from Britain. Yet, despite the common narrative of national unity and heroism, this period was rife with policies that reflected Canada's ongoing selectivity regarding the "types of people" it wanted within its borders. During both World Wars, the Government of Canada was suspicious of Canadians who had immigrated from countries it was fighting, which led to restrictions on their freedom of speech and movement within and to the country. Many of these Canadians were forced into internment camps. Other discriminatory policies included the 1923 [Chinese Immigration Act](#), the 1919 amendment to the [Immigration Act](#), and the [Indian Act's enfranchisement clauses](#).



Doukhobors protesting 'Cruel and inclement justice,' 1922 (Geo. M. Meeres/Vancouver Public Library/9865).

C.I.I. Italian Branch, Friends of Ethiopia, and a Swedish group marching in a May Day parade in 1930 (Vancouver Public Library/8792).

### ACTIVITY: THE WORLD WARS

Often when we learn about the World Wars, we focus on the military. The forces, and the nature of the propaganda recruiting for them, were primarily Anglo-Canadian. But, as we know, many people lived on this land who were not Anglo-Canadian or aligned with British culture and who nevertheless enlisted and fought for their country.

1. Begin by looking at First and Second World War recruitment posters and propaganda materials in the [World Wars worksheet](#). Take note of the prominence of the British flag in these materials, keeping in mind that Canada did not have its own flag until 1965. Ponder how these materials promoted a British-Canadian identity, and consider:
  - How are other identities portrayed?
  - What do they tell us about the war effort?
  - What do the posters tell us about how different identities were understood in this era?
2. Answer the questions for each poster in the worksheets.

3. In small groups, look at the response to war from and toward cultures other than the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture. Did the whole country support the war effort? Some groups wanted to participate but could not. What barriers stood in their way? How did they overcome these obstacles? Conversely, some groups may have not wanted to participate but were forced to do so. How did they react? Groups and topics may include French Canadians and the conscription crises, Quakers as conscientious objectors, the creation of the No. 2 Construction Battalion for Black Canadians, Indigenous soldiers, and the internment of "enemy aliens." For ideas on what group or topic to research, check out the [First World War Collection](#) and the [Second World War Collection](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
4. As a class, discuss how these different perspectives affect your understanding of Canada's war efforts. Were these challenges apparent in the propaganda materials examined earlier? Why might these stories be excluded from the popular war narrative? Did the way recruitment was framed evolve during the Second World War, or did it still largely reflect the white Anglo-Canadian population?



## ACTIVITY: THE CHRISTIE PITS RIOT

In 1933, one of the worst outbreaks of ethnocultural violence in modern Canadian history occurred in Toronto. The Christie Pits Riot erupted in the aftermath of a baseball game between a primarily Jewish- and Italian-Canadian team and an Anglo-Canadian side. Over the course of two games, a pro-Nazi group had flashed the swastika and shouted “Heil Hitler,” prompting more than 10,000 people from both sides to take to the streets and join the fight. The riot resulted in one of the first policies prohibiting hate speech in the country. Unfortunately, hateful actions and policies persisted. In 1939, a ship called the MS St. Louis, carrying more than 900 refugees – almost all of whom were Jewish – was denied entry to Canada. Many of the passengers would later be sent to concentration camps, and 254 would perish in the [Holocaust](#).

In Ontario, a few years after these events, the policies prohibiting hate speech would be further backed up by the 1944 *Racial Discrimination Act*, as the horrors of the Second World War may have fueled a change in attitudes.

1. As a class, share what you think you know about Canada’s perception and reception of Jewish people before the Second World War.
2. Watch the [Christie Pits Riot](#) video. Take notes on culturally or historically significant information. Who was involved? Was the riot prompted by external or internal factors? What does the response tell you about Canada’s mindset toward multiculturalism (and anti-Semitism) at the time?
3. Compare the information you found in the video with your thoughts before watching. Have a class discussion. Had you heard about this riot before? What surprised you, and why? How does it change your understanding of Canada’s position and mentality in the run-up to the [Second World War](#)? Why is it important for Canadians to know about this aspect of our history? Can you think of any similar, more recent events?

## INTERMENT IN CANADA

During the First World War, Canada forced many people of German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ukrainian descent, as well as Turks and Bulgarians, into labour camps. Another 80,000, most of them Ukrainian Canadians who were not interned, were forced to register as “enemy aliens,” and had to report regularly to the police. During the Second World War, Canada again forced thousands of people from their homes and into internment camps. German Canadians, Italian Canadians, and anyone perceived to have “fascist tendencies” were interned. More than 3,000 Austrian and German Jews who had come to Canada as refugees were also interned during the war.

After the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces in December 1941, many Canadians feared an attack on the West Coast. As a result, anti-Japanese racism, persistent for years, grew to a fever pitch and more than 22,000 Japanese Canadians were declared “enemy aliens” and forced from their homes into internment camps. With Japanese Canadians in these camps, their possessions — including fishing boats, land, homes, and businesses — were auctioned off by the government to white Canadians at bargain prices. In 1944, the government ordered Japanese Canadians to settle east of the Rocky Mountains, or to be deported to Japan. The freedom of thousands of Canadians was restricted, and their dignity ignored.

The expulsion of Japanese-Canadians from Atlin, 1902  
(Vancouver Public Library/30671).

Two Japanese Canadian girls in traditional dress participating in Bon Festival at Sandon Camp, 1942 (University of British Columbia Library/Rare Books and Special Collections/Japanese Canadian Research Collection/JCPC\_10\_015).





## ACTIVITY: 20TH CENTURY IMMIGRATION

The [A Place to Belong podcast series](#), as well as the [multiculturalism video series](#), give many examples of how, until after the Second World War, Canada's immigration policies were focused on creating and maintaining a "white Canada." In this activity, you will learn about policies and laws that were enacted for those purposes, as well as ways in which discriminated people fought against these policies and laws, and how they developed strong communities within Canada.

1. As a class, watch the [Komagata Maru video](#) on "the Sikh migrants who challenged Canadian immigration law." Take notes in the form of a timeline. On one side of the timeline, mark the dates of policies and laws that barred these immigrants from entering Canada. On the other side of the timeline, plot the dates of resistance activities.
2. Once you have finished the video, add to your timeline by doing some further research on the [Komagata Maru](#) and [immigration policies](#) using *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
3. Next, research and compare the immigration policies from the first half of the 20th century to those of the second half of the century. What changed? And how did these changes shape the Canada we know today?

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY:** Use your timeline to discuss how racism has been built into Canadian laws and policies. Would you have engaged in resistance activities? What might these resistance activities look like in today's digital world?

## SECTION 8: 1945–2000 A MODERN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY?

The Post-War period saw many changes in the Canadian cultural landscape, and the introduction of a range of new public policies. After the Second World War, demand for labour prompted Canada to gradually re-open its doors to European immigration. At first, this included immigrants traditionally preferred by Canada — those from the United Kingdom and Western Europe — but ultimately those from the rest of Europe were welcomed as well. On the home front, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson launched the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 to investigate ways to create equality between citizens of English and French heritage. Due to one of the Commission's preliminary findings, the *Official Languages Act* was passed in 1969. Two years earlier, a new system for immigration, known as the "Points System," had been introduced. This system removed many of the barriers preventing non-Europeans from coming to Canada. By 1971, the majority of immigrants to Canada were of non-European ancestry.

In 1971, the work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism led to "a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework," making Canada the first country in the world to adopt a multiculturalism policy. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's government described it as a way to increase cultural diversity and support the maintenance of the country's diverse cultural heritage. In 1988, this policy was enshrined in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

The first of its kind worldwide, the act addressed the recognition and promotion of multiculturalism as a necessary element of Canadian identity and specified that all Canadians and their communities should have equal opportunities to thrive. However, some Indigenous people took issue with these approaches to multiculturalism because they felt it placed Indigenous cultures alongside many different cultures rather than acknowledging Indigenous peoples and their cultures as the original inhabitants and stewards of this land. Other activists thought that this policy focused more on "tolerance" than "acceptance" of different cultures.

Despite strides in inclusivity, this period was also marked by policies of discrimination and harm, including the [mass deportation of thousands of Japanese Canadians](#) in 1946, the [1950 Sled Dog Slaughter](#), the infamous [Sixties Scoop](#), and the events leading up to [the Singh Case](#).

**TEACHER TIP:** Discuss the concept of sovereignty with your class and the ongoing struggle for the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and right to self-governance and determination.





## ACTIVITY: POST-WAR REFUGEES

International migration to countries like Canada, which appeared to be politically stable and safe, increased dramatically following the Second World War. Many of these migrants were refugees, and, in 1978, a new law came into effect that affirmed Canada's commitment to resettling refugees. However, opening the borders to refugees and ensuring their safe and respectful settlement in this country are two different things.

1. As a class, watch the [Boat People Heritage Minute](#). Write a short description of what you saw. Pay attention to secondary features, such as the overall mood and what thoughts or feelings the video's creators may have wanted you to take away from it.
2. Think about what a refugee's experience may have been like coming into Canada. If you are comfortable doing so, you may want to share a personal story about someone in your family or community who came to Canada as a refugee. You can also check out one (or more) of the stories shared in our [Passages Canada series](#) on YouTube. Compare people's stories to what is shown in the Minute.
3. Using the stories you explored, work in pairs to create a storyboard for a Heritage Minute about what a settlement experience may have been like for a refugee. Think about health, education, legal, and social services, and whether they came up in your research. Post these storyboards in the classroom for further collaborative discussion and expansion.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY:** Research the [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada](#) and the current process for becoming accepted for Canadian settlement with refugee status.

**TEACHER TIP:** Note whether students picked up on the overly positive and welcoming portrayal of Canada in this Minute. If they didn't, rewatch as a class, then bring this up in a discussion. Try to stay away from debates or discussions about whether Canada should welcome refugees today. Remind students to keep the discussion to the time period in question and emphasize the ways post-war settlements continue to benefit Canada. Note that some students may be familiar with false statements and conspiracies regarding refugees. If there are common misconceptions in your community, undertake a fact-checking exercise using this [Government of Canada](#) source or an organization such as the [Canadian Council for Refugees](#) (see also [here](#)) in the early part of your discussion.

Lydia Johanson, refugee in native Estonian dress. Halifax, Nova Scotia (National Film Board of Canada/Library and Archives Canada).



Top to bottom:

New arrivals aboard S.S. ARGENTINA awaiting clearance in the Immigration Examination Hall, Pier 21, 1952 (Chris Lund/National Film Board/Library and Archives Canada/PA-152023).

Graduate nurses from Indonesia, India, and Thailand, attending McGill University, ca. 1930-60 (Canada Department of Manpower and Immigration/Library and Archives Canada/1972-047 NPC).

West Indian students in Montreal celebrated the anniversary of the West Indies Federation, 1958-60 (Canada. Dept. of Manpower and Immigration/Library and Archives Canada/C-045104).



## ACTIVITY: MULTICULTURALISM AND GEOGRAPHY

Some of the most multicultural places in Canada developed around a larger community to cater to one or many ethnocultural groups. Sometimes these places evolved by happenstance, and other times they were forcibly created by exclusionary policies or practices. Some were safe havens for people with ethnic or cultural differences compared with the majority populations, while others became targets for harassment and violence

1. In the **“Project Neighbourhood” podcast episode**, Jim Torczyner says that “Multiculturalism gets expressed in reality by how people act at the grassroots.” As a class or in pairs, make a chart comparing the ways in which multiculturalism is expressed, promoted, or protected. Devote one column to governments and policies, and another to grassroots or community efforts. According to your list, is Jim right or wrong? What other factors might we need to consider?
2. Divide each class into three groups. Each group will listen to a different episode (**Mayor of Chinatown**, **Hogan’s Alley**, or **Project Neighbourhood**) from the **A Place to Belong podcast series**.
3. Once you have listened to the podcasts, form new groups of three, with each member having listened to a different episode. Each group member will share what they learned with the new group.
4. In your groups, choose another community in a neighbourhood or city near you to research. Consider the experiences of poverty, prejudice, discrimination, and community building.
5. Create a poster or another type of display depicting the development of your chosen community. Try to show how it compares to the communities in the podcast series.
6. As a class, discuss whether what you have learned supports your original stance on Jim Torczyner’s statement or if you have changed your mind and why.

## ACTIVITY: CANADA’S FIRST MOSQUE

The story of the Al Rashid Mosque in Edmonton — the first mosque in Canada — is one of community collaboration, activism, and action. Saved from demolition by a handful of women in the community, it is but one example of how local initiatives have promoted and preserved multiculturalism in Canada.

1. On your own, watch the **Al Rashid video** and read the accompanying *Canadian Encyclopedia* articles on the **Al Rashid Mosque** and **Hilwie Hamdon**.
2. Once you have gone through the materials, conduct some research in your own community. Find out if there are or have been any initiatives to preserve an aspect of your community’s culture. Examples might include a proposed site for a commemorative mural, or (as was the case for the Al Rashid Mosque) a site in danger of being torn down. Remember that some communities are geographically widespread, so feel free to look beyond your immediate area.
  - a. Optional extension: If you are unable to find an existing initiative, create one yourself!
3. Write a short report on your initiative. Include any significance it has for the culture it represents, and what others may be able to learn about your community through it. What steps can you take to help this initiative?

Three women demonstrating a traditional dance at an event for the Greek community in Toronto, ca. 1955-65 (Canadian Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship/Library and Archives Canada/1972-047 NPC).



Competitor at the Scottish Games on Dominion Day, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1961 (National Film Board of Canada/Library and Archives Canada/1971-271 NPC).



Young boy in Africville, 14 September 1965 (Ted Grant/Library and Archives Canada/PA-170242).



Protesters during the Oka Crisis, 1990 (flickr).





# SECTION 9: MULTICULTURALISM TODAY

Ministers John McCallum and Maryam Monsef help two Syrian children pick out winter coats, February 2016 ([www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/photos.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/photos.html)).

Today, Canada is one of the most multicultural countries in the world. There are currently more than 250 ethnocultural groups living in Canada, and Canadians share a mix of cultures, ethnicities, and languages. Since the start of the century, at least 200,000 people have immigrated to Canada every year, and many go on to become naturalized citizens. This is why Canada is often called a land of immigrants. The existence and promotion of nationwide events such as Asian Heritage Month and Multiculturalism Day are testaments to a shared commitment to a multicultural society, and the desire to learn more about the cultures and people that surround us. Nevertheless, as movements such as Stop the Spread, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and Black Lives Matter have demonstrated, there is still room for improvement and reparations to be made.

Think back to what you knew or thought about multiculturalism at the start of this guide, and what you may have learned since then. How do you think multiculturalism connects with concepts involved in racism, religion, or reconciliation? What kind of steps do you think we can take to do better in the future? The way we respond to these issues, and events like 9/11, the Syrian Refugee Crisis, and the current impacts of climate change, are the true markers of our commitment to multiculturalism in Canada.



## ACTIVITY: CULTURAL COMMUNITY

How many cultures are represented in Canada today? What does your cultural community look like? If you are not Indigenous to this land, what do you know about your ancestors' journeys to Canada? We all have stories to share and are part of a community that helps make this country what it is.

1. Research a cultural community in Canada. You may choose your own, select one to research from the list below, or pick one not shown here.
2. Once you have chosen a community, research their impact on — and struggles within — Canada and their neighbourhoods.

3. Depict your findings on a bristol board. Study topics such as arrival and settlement, legislation and activism, past and current struggles, and sense of belonging. Information on celebrations and events, food, influences on their cultural landscape, and notable individuals can help readers better understand this culture.
4. Set up all the bristol boards around the classroom, then take 15 to 30 minutes to go around and read your classmates' work.

**NOTE FOR TEACHERS:** Run through the definition of “notable” with your class and consider how it differs from “famous.” Highlight that it is an optional inclusion; while significant Canadians in our history represent a myriad of cultures, people do not have to be famous or have a nationwide impact to be here.

LATIN AMERICAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER	AFGHANI	CARIBBEAN
DUTCH	ITALIAN	BRITISH	FRENCH
IRISH	SCANDINAVIAN	PORTUGUESE	GERMAN
UKRAINIAN	HUNGARIAN	POLISH	RUSSIAN
GREEK	TURKISH	ARMENIAN	IRANIAN
LEBANESE	SYRIAN	EGYPTIAN	MOROCCAN
SOUTH AFRICAN	ETHIOPIAN	SOMALI	NIGERIAN
CHINESE	KOREAN	FILIPINO	JAPANESE
TIBETAN	VIETNAMESE	INDIAN	PAKISTANI
SRI LANKAN	CAMBODIAN	JEWISH	SIKH

**TEACHER TIP:** Provide students with a chart and ask them to take notes on each display. They can then hand it in for participation credit, or keep it for future reference.



## ACTIVITY: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND GENOCIDE IN CANADA

In 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (an independent national inquiry commissioned by the Government of Canada) announced its findings. The inquiry used the term *genocide* to characterize the pattern of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada (as well as Indigenous peoples, in general) and the federal government's response to these systemic human rights violations. According to the inquiry, the primary reason for the higher rates of violence against Indigenous peoples in Canada is the "persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses." The final report argued that various colonial laws, policies, and programs, such as the *Indian Act* and the child welfare system, are intent on "destroy[ing] Indigenous Peoples." The Chief Commissioner of the inquiry, Marion Buller, said of the report, "[it] is about deliberate race, identity and gender-based genocide."<sup>1</sup>

On 4 June 2019, while speaking to a crowd in Vancouver, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recognized the inquiry's conclusions, saying: "we accept the findings of the commissioners that it was genocide."<sup>2</sup> While many in Canada recognize the atrocities against Indigenous peoples, use of the term genocide has generated some backlash among those who do not believe the term is appropriate or warranted. However, others argue that use of the term is important, and that downplaying the inquiry's findings overlooks and undervalues the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The inquiry's use of "genocide" influenced important changes. Notably, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights decided to change its description of the atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples in Canada from "cultural genocide" to "genocide."

While Canada is a multicultural country, the deliberate repression and suppression of Indigenous peoples and their cultures has long gone against this so-called inclusivity. In recent years, steps have been taken to make amends and improve the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada.

<sup>1</sup>The Canadian Encyclopedia. "Genocide and Indigenous Peoples in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Canada. Article published November 02, 2020; Last Edited November 02, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> <https://vancouver.citynews.ca/2019/06/04/trudeau-accepts-the-finding-of-genocide-but-says-focus-needs-to-be-on-response/>

**TEACHER TIP:** If students are uncomfortable expressing themselves on this sensitive topic, instead of a class discussion, ask students to write a report on their thoughts and findings.

### INTERSECTIONALITY AND MULTICULTURALISM IN QUEBEC

In Quebec, federal multiculturalism policies led to concerns about French culture being undermined and given the same weight as all other non-Anglo-Canadian groups. As a result, alternative measures and interpretations of multiculturalism were taken in Quebec. In 1977, Bill 101 was passed, making French the official language of Quebec in an attempt to replace the federal policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" with one of unilingual cultural pluralism. This was followed by a formal rejection of federal multiculturalism in 1981.

Instead, Quebec has adopted a policy of "cultural convergence" that promotes cultural integration or, in other words, "many ways of being a Quebecer," with French as the dominant language and culture.

Most recently, in 2019, Bill 21 became law in Quebec. Bill 21 is "an act respecting the laicity of the State" that emphasizes the separation of the state and religion. Controversially, it regulates how people are allowed to express their religious beliefs in the workplace. It has been criticized as disproportionately affecting already marginalized groups and for running counter to the policies of multiculturalism and freedom of expression and religion.



This includes the 94 Calls to Action that were released as part of a report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to further reconciliation efforts between Canadians and Indigenous peoples in Canada. Nevertheless, there are many ongoing setbacks, and more work needs to be done. An important place to start is by educating ourselves.

1. Read *The Canadian Encyclopedia* article on [Genocide and Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#). Then, as a class, watch the video [Lillian Elias: A Residential School Survivor's Story](#).
2. As a class, read the United Nations [definition of genocide](#). Take note in particular of the five subpoints that make up the definition, and think about how those apply to all aspects of the Canadian context.
3. Based on what you have read and watched, identify one example or story of Canada's attempts to eliminate Indigenous peoples and/or their cultures. Feel free to conduct further research on *The Canadian Encyclopedia* or using other reliable sources.
4. Use the stories to facilitate a class or group discussion on Canada's past treatment of Indigenous peoples, as well as what needs to happen next. How do we reconcile Canada as a multicultural country when we know this history? What are ways that Indigenous people retained and/or restored their culture despite these actions by the Canadian state? How do we, as Canadians and Indigenous peoples on this land, understand, respect, and acknowledge Indigenous cultures on this land? What can you do as an individual or community to help progress the [TRC Calls to Action](#) and the [MMIWG Final Report Calls to Justice](#)?
5. Follow up this research by looking at the resilience and perseverance of Indigenous communities - how have they fought to preserve or restore their land and culture?

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES :**

1. Discuss the ways in which Canada treats its Indigenous population vs. its attitude towards newcomers escaping persecution or genocide.
2. Go over the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). Why did Canada oppose the original version? What are the implications of this decision?

3. The United Nations [definition of genocide](#) includes the act of "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." This description is noticeably missing from the [Canadian Criminal Code](#). Given what you know of Canada's history, why might it have been omitted from the Criminal Code? What might be some real-life implications for Indigenous communities and Canadian society in general? Share your thoughts either in a class discussion or in a written assignment.

See *Historica Canada's* [resources on residential schools](#) to engage with this research. See also [TRC's Calls to Action](#), and [Genocide and Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

Québec "Français" sign, 1967 (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec/Fonds Jules Rochon/P743,P49).



Indigenous Festival Cultus Lake. Princess for the year Diana Dunstan of the Thompson Band, with Chief Dan George of the Capilano Band, 5 June 1960 (Don LeBlanc/Vancouver Public Library/79945).



Medicine Wheel (Littlejohn657/Wiki Commons).



First Nations Pow Wow in London, Ontario, 2011 (Dreamstime.com/Mark Spowart/ID 21635593).



## ACTIVITY: CREATE A MULTICULTURAL DISPLAY

1. Discuss the concepts of “culture” and “cultural heritage” and create a list of cultures on the board that are represented in the classroom. Ensure the discussion covers how cultural groups do not just signify a racial or ethnic identity. There are cultural groups that centre around geography, religion, gender expression, and other cultural elements. How is the culture of your school, for example, different than that of a school in a different neighbourhood or province?
2. In groups of two or three, choose one culture that you have listed as a class, or another one entirely. You may want to look into rural vs. urban culture, or a culture of a religious and ethnic community such as the Doukhobors, or the culture of a nation like the Tsuut’ina (Sarcee).
3. Using *The Canadian Encyclopedia* entry as a starting point, research customs, beliefs, arts and entertainment, foods, and special events of this culture. Examine how this culture has changed over time and how it has influenced mainstream Canadian culture. If the culture you are researching is not Indigenous, identify when it arrived or developed in Canada. Pay attention to when or how this culture faced discrimination and how its members responded or adapted to such pressures. Make sure to show how cultures evolve and how many cultures are intertwined with one another.
4. Present this research in an output such as a poster, digital exhibit, or even a social media outreach campaign. The output should be public-facing and designed for an audience who may never have encountered that culture before.
5. Following the presentations, have a discussion about culture. Have you learned anything new about the concept of “culture” from this activity? What does it mean to have this many cultures as part of Canada?

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

*Extend your research to cover elements such as cultural exchange, potential discrimination by mainstream culture, and community-building or resiliency strategies by members within these cultures.*



Still from Al Rashid: *The Story of Canada's First Mosque*, from the series *A Place to Belong* (Historica Canada).

## SUMMATIVE ACTIVITY

Discuss the different ways to define and enact multiculturalism. For example, think about what multiculturalism would look like if we didn't tie it so closely to the concept of race or ethnicity. How does multiculturalism shift when it becomes law? How might multiculturalism develop separately from law? Think about the difference between “tolerance” and “acceptance” and how these concepts might have shaped the multiculturalism policy 50 years ago.

1. As a class, decide whether your school can be considered “multicultural.” Remember that this doesn't just refer to people. Consider elements such as class artwork, which holidays are observed, what kind of food is served in the cafeteria and which language(s) you learn in or are offered. What could be done to be more multicultural?
2. Work at first in small groups to brainstorm, and then together as a class come up with a multiculturalism policy for your school. What would change if your policy was enacted? Would these changes be short-term or long-term?

**TEACHER TIP:** *Lead a discussion of policy and law vs. more organic behaviour and reflect on the ways this has shaped the experience of multiculturalism over the last 50 years.*