

Course Introduction Activity

Defining Citizenship: What Does It Mean to Be Canadian?

Overview

Citizenship is the condition of being vested with the rights, duties, and responsibilities of a member of a state or nation. Throughout the course, students will learn that these rights, duties, and responsibilities can be divided into three major areas: informed citizenship (understanding the lessons of the past); purposeful citizenship (integrating these lessons with contemporary values and perspectives); and active citizenship (applying new strategies to address the challenges and possibilities of the future). Before they embark on this journey, however, students should take a moment — at the outset — to consider what being a Canadian citizen means to them. In other words, as the course begins, they should ask themselves how they might define their identities as Canadians.

Teacher Support Material

- Blackline Master 1: Canadian Symbols Organizer
- Blackline Master 2: Citizenship Chart

Related Readings, Videos, and Web sites

- *A Look at Canada*. Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1999. A handbook published by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration containing important information on the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.
- Fretts, Donald. *Canadian Citizenship in Action*. Edmonton: Weigl Educational Publishers, 1992. A thought-provoking text, with an emphasis on active citizenship.
- Quinlan, Donald. *Participating in Canada*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999. An investigation of the ways in which Canadians can work individually or collectively to make a difference.
- “Who is a Real Canadian?” (Video) *News in Review*. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1994. This video explores Canada’s multicultural landscape.
- Civitas Web site: <www.civnet.org> An international non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting civic education and civil society. Contains links to other civics Web sites.
- Gage Civics Web site: <www.gagelearning.com>

Teaching Suggestions

1. Distribute BLM 1: Canadian Symbols Organizer. Ask students to think about all of the symbols that come to mind when they hear the word “Canada.” Symbols can range from the widely recognized to the more non-traditional. Students should be prepared to defend their choices.
2. Invite students to begin a civics journal in which they can record their thoughts and reflections throughout the course.
3. Have students brainstorm questions about the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities of Canadian citizens. Post the questions on chart paper and refer back to each one as it is addressed during the course. Alternatively, distribute BLM 2: Citizenship Chart and have students fill in the appropriate information.
4. Ask each student to begin a portfolio in which he/she can file work in progress/work completed during the course. You can use the portfolio for assessment purposes.
5. On page 3 of the Student text, the following quote by Canadian author Neil Bissoondath is cited: “Citizenship, whether through birth or naturalization, implies belonging. It implies a commitment of intellectual and emotional loyalty.” Have students reflect on the quote, then ask them to provide examples of the “intellectual and emotional loyalty” alluded to by Bissoondath.
6. Chair a round table discussion on the subject of what it means to be a Canadian citizen and/or on the characteristics of Canadian identity. Encourage students to think locally, provincially, nationally, and globally. On chart paper, make a note of students’ comments and post them throughout the classroom. At the end of the course, revisit students’ ideas. How have they evolved? To what extent has their understanding changed?

Assessment Strategies

- This lesson allows you to assess students’ existing knowledge of one of the major themes of the course (i.e., the rights and responsibilities of citizenship). Use this assessment to structure future lessons, based on your students’ level of understanding.
- Inform students of the civic literacy skills they will be required to develop during the course (e.g., analysing and evaluating information; thinking critically; making informed decisions). Ask students to define these skills in their own words.

InfoTech Links

- Challenge students to create and complete their Canadian Symbols organizer for Teaching Suggestion 1, using a word processing program.
- Have students prepare a cover page for their civics journals using a computer drawing tool.
- Invite students to use e-mail and/or the Internet to research issues surrounding the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship. Encourage them to share their findings with the class.

Modifying Instruction for the Open-level Classroom

ESL/ELD

- Suggest that students begin a civics dictionary, defining terms in both English and their first language. You might consider doing this as a wall chart that encompasses every language in the class. Encourage the addition of illustrations where appropriate. Students should add terms to their dictionaries as the course proceeds.
- Pair or group students with bilingual classmates.
- Consider a one-on-one approach for students less comfortable in group settings.

Remediation

- Ensure that less skilled learners are grouped with more skilled ones.
- Allow students additional time to complete assignments.

Enrichment

Have students prepare a short speech or poem about the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship and/or the characteristics that define Canadian identity. Invite them to present their speeches or poems to the class. Ask students to add their work to their portfolios and revisit their initial thoughts and feelings at the end of the course. Would they change anything they said initially?

Blackline Master 1 - Canadian Symbols Organizer

This page is designed to help you keep track of important Canadian symbols. In the left-hand column, explain the symbol. In the right-hand column, provide an illustration of the symbol.

Symbol	Illustration
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Blackline Master 2 - Citizenship Chart

Think carefully about the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities that are an integral part of Canadian citizenship, and complete the following chart.

Freedoms	Rights	Responsibilities