
PROLOGUE

WHAT IS HISTORY?

PROLOGUE OVERVIEW

Prologue Focus

Students will

- consider the importance of studying history to learn about the past, to understand the present, and to plan for the future
- be introduced to two aspects of historical inquiry, asking essential questions and using criteria to make judgments
- be introduced to the six Historical Thinking Concepts, which will be the lens through which they investigate the events that shaped Canada

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

As this is the Prologue to the course, and contains essential information regarding students gaining an understanding of the Historical Thinking Concepts, and how they are infused throughout this course, it is strongly recommended that you complete all the suggested lessons for this section of the book.

APPENDIX: SKILLS TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL THINKING

You are encouraged to refer students to the Skills to Support Historical Thinking Appendix (pp. 548–559 in *Shaping Canada*) as they progress through the questions and activities in the lessons. The Skills to Support Historical Thinking Appendix provides assistance to students as they develop their historical thinking skills during this course.

LESSON 1

WHAT IS HISTORY?

In this lesson, students will explore the concept and purposes of history, its implications for understanding the forces that have shaped Canada, and some of the challenges of historical inquiry.

ESTIMATED TIME: 70 minutes

GETTING READY

Photocopy blackline masters.

- BLM P.1.1, What is History?
- BLM P.1.2, Why Do We Study History?

Create a transparency or slide of BLM P.1.1, What is History? and BLM P.1.2, Why Do We Study History?

Book a projector if necessary.

RESOURCES

Shaping Canada, pages 2–3

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

You may assess students' participation in a variety of activities. These may include:

- Completing BLMs P.1.1, What is History?, and P.1.2, Why Do We Study History?
- Participating in class discussions and group activities

PRIOR LEARNING

Students may have prior knowledge of definitions of history and events of the past, but detailed knowledge of either is not expected or necessary.

SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. Distribute a copy of BLM P.1.1, What is History? to each student and display a transparency or slide of the BLM. Ask students to turn to page 2 of *Shaping Canada* and read aloud the quotations on the left side of the page.
2. Ask students to use the top half of the “Definition” box of BLM P.1.1, What is History? to brainstorm on a definition or answer for the question, “What is History?”
3. Have students share their responses with a partner. Ask volunteers to share their responses with the class, and record these on the transparency or slide. Students may identify ideas such as history is a story about the past, that it is sometimes written to reflect one perspective, and that it is not always accurate.

4. Read aloud the introductory paragraphs on page 2 of *Shaping Canada*. Ask students to look at their definitions and consider what they would revise having read these two paragraphs. Ask volunteers to offer suggestions, and record them on the transparency or slide. Students may offer responses such as that history is sometimes a big picture and at other times includes minute details; that it tries to explain our past so we can understand our future; and that it may offer different answers to the same questions.
5. Organize the reading of page 3 of *Shaping Canada* as a think-pair-share activity. Instruct students to read the sections titled “Interpreting Evidence” and “Why Study History?” With their partners, students should use the paragraphs to generate three or four characteristics to record in the top-right box, “Characteristics,” on BLM P.1.1, What is History? Ask volunteers to share ideas with the class, and record them on the transparency or slide. Students may identify characteristics such as that history is based on evidence; that evidence is interpreted by historians; that interpretations will be influenced by the context of the historian; and that our understanding of history is constantly changing.
6. After students have generated a list of characteristics, the pairs can design an illustration that depicts the concept of history, or identify examples from prior knowledge they may have. Ask for volunteers to share examples or come to the projector to draw their illustration.
7. Have students discuss in their pairs how history relates to their own experience. They may want to start by trying to think of things in their community (large or small) that have been influenced by history. Ask students to share ideas and record them on the transparency or slide. Students’ answers will vary, but may include ideas such as practices (e.g., Remembrance Day ceremonies), government policies (e.g. a stimulus package to prevent an economic depression), or locations (e.g., a geographical location being named to commemorate a prominent person or event, or a public memorial in their community).

After discussion of their examples, point out to students that generating these examples is the beginning of the process of developing an answer to the overall course question: “How has Canada’s history shaped the Canada of today?” Draw their attention to the chart on page 4 of *Shaping Canada*, and ask them to predict where their examples might fit within the course clusters.

NOTE: Teachers may use the following activity after or instead of the previous activity.

8. Distribute a copy of BLM P.1.2, Why Do We Study History? to each student and display a transparency or slide of the BLM. Ask students to turn to page 3 of *Shaping Canada* and if they have not already done so, read aloud the paragraphs on that page.
9. Ask students to individually generate ideas about what purposes there might be to know about the examples in the boxes in the centre column of the sheet. Ask volunteers to share responses, and record them in the left-hand “Purposes” column of the transparency or slide. Answers will vary, but may include ideas such as to learn why things are the way they are now, to learn how to avoid a problem, to learn how to solve a problem, and so on.
10. Put students into pairs or small groups and have them brainstorm for ideas about the kinds of challenges or difficulties that face us when we investigate history, such as the examples in the middle column of the sheet. Ask groups to share responses and record them on the transparency or slide. Answers will vary, but may include ideas such as lack of primary evidence, lack of some perspectives on the matter, and bias in the person investigating the event.

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

1. During this lesson, circulate and observe students as they work in pairs. Make note of those who seem to be natural leaders and those who find group work challenging because they do not have the necessary skills for the activity. This information will help you plan for future group activities.
2. Collect one or both completed BLMs from each student for formative assessment. Note which students are having trouble processing and responding to written text. These students may need to be paired with more skilled students in future pair or group activities.
3. Encourage interested students to find out any specific examples that would fit the descriptions given on BLM P.1.2, *Why Do We Study History?* through Internet research, and to report to the class on what they find.

LESSON 2

UNDERSTANDING HISTORY THROUGH QUESTIONS

This lesson introduces one of the fundamental skills of history inquiry—asking questions.

ESTIMATED TIME: 45 minutes

GETTING READY

Photocopy the blackline master.

- BLM P.2.1, Practise Creating Essential Questions

Create a transparency or slide of:

- BLM P.2.1, Practise Creating Essential Questions

Book a projector if necessary.

RESOURCES

Shaping Canada, pages 5–6

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

You may assess students' participation in a variety of activities. These may include:

- Completing BLM P.2.1, Practise Creating Essential Questions
- Completing the exit slip
- Participating in class discussions and group activities

PRIOR LEARNING

This lesson draws on students' knowledge of critical thinking and awareness of international organizations with which Canada is involved from previous grades..

SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. Divide the class into small groups and instruct the groups to work together to read page 5 of *Shaping Canada*. Ensure that they also read the box at the bottom of the page “Practise Identifying and Asking Essential Questions.” Instruct the groups to complete the activity in the box on page 5. Then either discuss responses as a class or ask each group to join one other group to discuss their responses.
2. Remind students that generating essential questions is a challenging and important part of beginning an inquiry. Distribute BLM P.2.1, Practise Creating Essential Questions. Instruct the groups to use the worksheet and complete the activity. Tell students to aim to include questions that resemble the questions from both Set 1 and Set 2 on page 5. Invite students to share and discuss the questions that they generated, and their ratings for each question. Record a question from each group on the transparency or slide.

3. Point out that responding to essential questions requires critical thinking. This means that students will consider evidence and use clear criteria as they formulate their responses. Ask students to read page 6 of the Prologue. After they read, instruct students to complete the activity in the box at the bottom of the page “What Criteria Would You Use?” in their notebooks.
4. Conclude the lesson by asking students to complete an exit slip (see page 36), responding to the question: “When conducting an inquiry into history, what are the most important skills a historian must use? Why?”

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

1. During this lesson, circulate as students are working individually or in groups to assess what kinds of accommodations may be necessary. You might also collect students' worksheets to assess their skills and abilities.
2. If, after step 2 in the Teaching and Learning Strategies, you determine that students will benefit from working with partners or small groups, you may do step 3 as a think-pair-share or small group activity instead of having students work individually.

LESSON 3

LEARNING TO THINK HISTORICALLY

This lesson focuses on the six Historical Thinking Concepts that will provide the basis on which students will build their understanding of the events of Canada's past.

ESTIMATED TIME: 70 minutes

GETTING READY

Photocopy the blackline master. If possible, you may wish to expand the photocopy to fit 11 x 17" paper, to give students more room to record ideas and information.

- BLM P.3.1, Historical Thinking Concepts

Create a transparency or slide of:

- BLM P.3.1, Historical Thinking Concepts

Book a projector if necessary.

Put small-sized sticky notes or pieces of paper on the transparency or slide to cover up the names of the Historical Thinking Concepts.

RESOURCES

Shaping Canada, pages 7–13

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For all Web Connections listed in the student edition of *Shaping Canada*, visit www.shapingcanada.ca for links to the recommended web sites. You may also wish to share the web sites listed here with students. As web site addresses, locations, and content continuously change on the Internet, be sure to check all web site recommendations listed here for accuracy before distributing to students.

www.histori.ca/benchmarks

Benchmarks of Historical Thinking—This web site presents the work of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness and the Historica-Dominion Institute (supported by the Canadian Council on Learning). It provides more in-depth information on the HTC's, and links to assessment ideas that promote historical thinking.

Denos, Mike, and Roland Case. *Tools for Historical Understanding: Teaching about Historical Thinking*. Vancouver: The Critical Thinking Consortium, 2006.

This resource gives further information about teaching the interrelated concepts that students will use to think critically about history.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

You may assess students' participation in a variety of activities. These may include:

- Completing BLM P.3.1, Historical Thinking Concepts
- Completing an exit slip
- Participating in class discussion and group activities

PRIOR LEARNING

This lesson draws on any understanding students may have of how history is written, investigated, and taught.

SUGGESTED TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. Place the transparency or slide of BLM P.3.1, Historical Thinking Concepts on the projector. Uncover one of the Historical Thinking Concepts (HTCs) and ask students how they think this concept might be defined or what key issues historians would be considering when this concept is being applied to a historical event. Record students' responses in the Key issues/definition box on the transparency or slide.
2. Repeat this procedure for each of the other five concepts.
3. Distribute photocopies of BLM P.3.1, Historical Thinking Concepts, and tell students that they are going to be learning more about these concepts and how HTCs influence our understanding of history. Instruct them to turn to page 7 of *Shaping Canada*, and read aloud the paragraphs on that page. To focus the reading, you may wish to write on the board questions such as the following:
 - What are some of the ways we can approach a historical event or personality?
 - How and why does our understanding of history change over time?
4. Have students read through the descriptions of the six HTCs on pages 8 to 13, and complete BLM P.3.1. You may wish to organize this activity as a task to be completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups, depending on the needs and abilities of the students. Instruct them that if they choose to illustrate each concept, the illustration should be clear and relevant (e.g., for "Historical Perspective" a student could draw a man wearing a woman's shoes, to represent "Walking a mile in someone else's shoes."). If a student chooses to give a written example, it should similarly be evident how the example connects to the HTC (e.g., a student may cite the example of how women in the past could not vote, for the HTC "Continuity and Change"). Students can choose to use a combination of written and illustrated examples.
5. When students have completed BLM P.3.1, Historical Thinking Concepts, invite volunteers to share their definitions and examples. You may wish to invite students to draw illustrations on the transparency or slide.
6. To close the lesson, ask students to complete an exit slip (see page 36) on the following question: "How has your understanding of history been challenged or confirmed? Explain."

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

1. Instead of having the whole class work together to produce the definitions, you may wish to have students do this process in small groups first, and then share their responses as a class. In this case, prepare extra copies of the BLM P.3.1, Historical Thinking Concepts, so that each group has one to record their results.