

Historica Canada Education Portal

LaFontaine, Baldwin and Responsible Government Education Guide

To celebrate the 175th anniversary of the election of Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin, Historica Canada, the country's largest organization dedicated to enhancing awareness of Canada's history, culture and citizenship, has created this education guide.

Using the concepts created by Dr. Peter Seixas and the Historical Thinking Project, this guide complements Canadian middle- and high-school curricula. It invites students to explore the history of democracy and equal language rights in Canada, and asks them to investigate the unique nature of the country's diplomatic transition from colonial dominion to autonomous nation.

This guide also asks students to explore the friendship that brought Responsible Government, a remarkable relationship between two extraordinary — and often overlooked — men. Baldwin and LaFontaine refused to use force in the face of violent dissent in hopes of creating a nation based on reason and moderation. Their pioneering vision — a world that gains strength from peaceful change rather than armed insurrection — has endured and spread.

Note that this guide focuses on how Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine brought Responsible Government to the Province of Canada. It does not concentrate on the advent of the first Responsible Government in British North America, which was won by Joseph Howe in Nova Scotia months before it arrived in the Canadas.