Portail de l'éducation de Historica Canada

Defining Moments in Canadian History

Overview

An exploration of the events that have shaped Canada and Canadians.

Aims

In this three-part lesson, students will understand the concept of "defining moments" by identifying these moments in their own lives. Then, they will use this understanding to identify key moments in the history and development of Canada.

Activities

Time Allowance: 2 - 3 hours

Procedures:
Performance One: Defining Moments

Strategy:

1. (Knowledge/Understanding)

The teacher explains that as each of the students in the classroom have grown and developed, there have been special events in each of their lives that have influenced the person each one is today. Such events could include such things as special trips, religious traditions, family events, personal relationships, memorable moments, etc. These are known as "Defining Moments" because they are so memorable and, perhaps, they involved important decisions or choices, or they helped to develop the student in a certain aspect. The teacher asks each student to identify five or six of these defining moments in each of their own lives.

Students fill in the accompanying student worksheet.

2. (Thinking/Inquiry)

Students are asked to review and reflect upon their worksheet. They are asked to choose the 3 most important items from the worksheet. They should put a check mark beside each one of their 3 choices.

Enrichment: (Communication)
In discussion, students are asked to justify their choices. This can be done through classroom discussion or in groups.

Task:

Hamburger Paragraph: (Application)
Students develop a thesis statement and support it using the information from the worksheet in a hamburger paragraph format in response to the following thesis question: - "How important are 'defining moments' in shaping your life?" (note: it may be necessary to review/introduce the format for writing of an argumentative paragraph.)

Performance Two: Defining Moments in Canadian History

Strategy:

1. (Knowledge/Understanding)

Through class discussion/brainstorm, students identify what life is like in Canada today. (Look for answers that identify Canada's political, regional, technological, religious, multicultural, economic elements, i.e. tolerance, bilingual, industrialized, technological advancements, 10 provinces and 3 territories, introduction of Nunavut)

2. (Comparison)

Teacher draws a comparison between the growth and development of each of the students and the growth and development of a nation. As each student experienced defining moments in their own histories that led to who they are today, Canada also experienced defining moments in its history that have brought it to the point where it is today.

The United Nations Standard of Living Report ranked Canada as the #1 country in the world in 1993-2000 in which to live.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada, 1896-1911 "Canada has been modest in its history. In my estimation, it is only commencing. It is commencing in this century. As the nineteenth century was that of the United States, so I think the twentieth century shall be filled by Canada." "The twentieth century shall be the century of Canada and of Canadian development."

Task:

Research: (Thinking/Inquiry)
From a grab bag of names of defining moments (people and events) (master list attached), students randomly make one selection. The class then spends time in the library researching their selections and fill in the worksheet for their defining moment. Note: This time in the library can also be used as reinforcement for skills previously taught, such as note taking, bibliographic format, time management, conduct in the library, etc.

Performance Three: Timeline

Task:

Timeline (Application)
Using illustrations, symbols, limited words, and lots of colour, students demonstrate their knowledge of their respective defining moments by creating a visual timeline for the twentieth century. Students place their person/event on a classroom timeline to be mounted on the wall for the duration of the course. The timeline should be displayed in the classroom for the duration of the course and be continually referred to.

Hints - colour coordinate the timeline according to category for easy referral and so students can identify the importance of politics, economics, culture, the social, and religion.

- Use a large sheet of bristol board for each decade which will make the timeline more visible for everyone to see

Resources

The Canadian Encyclopedia