

**Language Lesson:
A Comparison of Immigrant Language Policies (Canada and the United States)**

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Description:

Both Canada and the United States have rich multicultural heritages that range from indigenous peoples to a wide range of immigrants from many areas of the world. This lesson will direct students to gather data on the range of peoples and their languages found in both Canada and the US. An examination of national policies for each nation and its impact on the urban school districts of Vancouver and Seattle is included.

Grade level(s):

High school; college level teacher training classes

Subject:

A comparison of language and language policies of Canada and the United States

Duration:

One week of research and sharing

Goal:

The goal is to develop awareness of the rich language diversity that exists in both Canada and the United States and compare approaches to language policies implemented in both countries.

Objectives:

The students will:

- 1 Obtain data regarding language diversity in both countries
- 2 Compare language policies of the two nations
- 3 Compare school district policies for Seattle and Vancouver
- 4 Select key points from a selection of readings with guiding questions for each

Standards:

This lesson meets NCSS standards regarding I Culture; II Time, Continuity and Change; III People, Places and Environments; IV Individual Development and Identity; V Individuals, Groups and Institutions; VI Power, Authority and Governance; IX Global Connections; X Civic Ideals and Practices

This lesson meets Washington State standards in EALRs for Social Studies Skills regarding: Inquiry and Information; Interpersonal and Group Process and Critical Thinking; Geography EALRs for Human Movement: Culture and the Environment, and History EALRs for Historical Research.

Background Information:

The lesson contains website locations of an array of selected materials providing background information with regard to general immigration trends, an overview of language policies, current

data on populations and their first languages residing in each country.

Materials:

A worksheet is provided with leading questions for gathering information from a pre-selected range of resource materials cited with website addresses. (See Pages 3-5)

Procedures:

This lesson can be accomplished by individuals or groups of researchers gathering the data and coming together to highlight key information to share. Procedures for sharing findings in class can be determined at the discretion of the instructor. Suggestions include: creation of power point presentations with selected information; bulletin board creation, large charts and posters with selected information, artistic renderings of data collected, creative dramatic skits, etc.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Depending on the instructor the form of presentation of information can be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 1 Creativity in presenting the comparative data
- 2 Completeness of identifying similarities and differences or the five key points for each area of study
- 3 Clarity of the presentation
- 4 Student familiarity with the data and ability to answer questions regarding it
- 5 Other criteria determined by instructor such as time limit for presentation, neatness, inclusion of additional aids like recordings, photos, images, artwork, etc.

Student Assignment:

Currently there are over 6800 languages spoken in our world today with numbers of speakers ranging from several hundred to millions, even billions. Today's countries define their own language policies and determine official languages for conducting governmental affairs and educational programs. For those whose mother tongue is different from the official language, the learning of the official language becomes necessary, sometimes mandatory, in order to fully take part in the opportunities of the country. This project is intended to help you become more aware of the range of languages and language groups found currently in the United States and Canada, and some of the policies regarding language in each country.

The following readings are provided to establish a basis for comparing the issues of language and language policies as they have evolved in Canada and the United States. Sample guiding questions are provided for each set of readings. The ones identified with an asterisk are recommended for starters

1 What indigenous languages are found in each country? Identify the 10 largest for each country.

Canada:

<http://www.itk.ca/5000-year-heritage/cultural-unity.php>

<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/peopleandsociety/lang/aboriginallanguages/bycommunity>

United States:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_the_United_States [See section on Pre Colonial Languages]

2 Immigrants bring their language to their new country. Identify three similarities and three differences with respect to immigration to each of these countries over the years?

Canada:

Multiculturalism in Canada:

*www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/english/about/multi/index.htm

United States:

Immigration to the United States: *http://www.rapidimmigration.com/usa/1_eng_immigration_history.html

http://encarta.msn.com/media_461544532_761573010_-1_1/Immigration_to_the_United_States.html

<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/cohn.immigration.us>

3 For each of the questions below, summarize your findings in five key points for each country.

Who are the new immigrants to each country?

United States:

United States Population: Where the New Immigrants

Are <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0699/ijse/frey.htm>

Canada:

*Canada's Immigration Policy <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11047/>

Canada's Immigration Way Trumps America's <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11047/>

4 What are the 10 most popular non-English languages spoken in the homes of both countries and the percentage of the population speaking each language?

Canada:

*http://www.asiapacific.ca/data/people/demographics_dataset7_bylangPrint.cfm

United States:

*http://www.mla.org/census_bargraph&state_index=0&state_id99&lang_index=5&pct=Y
<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf>, [see Figure 3, page 2]

5 What is the language policy of each country?

United States: *<http://ourworld.comuserve.com/homepages/JWCRAWFORD/langpol.htm>

Canada: *http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/biling/hist_e.cfm
<http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/french.html> (French as a Minority Language in

Bilingual

Canada by Karen Bond)

6 How are language groups distributed geographically in each country?

Canada: See Mother tongue per province at

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/LanguageComposition/Page.c...>

United States:

See Language Use and English Speaking Ability [pp 3-7] at

www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf

or Ethnic groups at <http://www.valpo.edu/geomet/geo/courses/geo200/HomePage.html>

7 What were the range of languages spoken in the homes of the US and Canada according to the 2000 census? How were they classified?

Canada: see page 312 at

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Reference/dict/appendices/92-378-XIE02002.pdf>

United States: see page 3 at

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf>

8 How do urban school districts of Vancouver, British Columbia and Seattle, Washington compare in their language policies regarding English as a Second Language and Second Language instruction?

Vancouver, BC:

<http://www.vsb.bc.ca/vsbprograms/kto12/ESL/AboutESL.htm>

<http://www.vsb.bc.ca/vsbprograms/kto12/ESL/ESLprogrammesandservices.htm>

<http://www.vsb.bc.ca/districtinfo/policies/i/igbfrseclanginstruction.htm>

Seattle, WA:

<http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/dearborn/classrooms/ell.shtml>

<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/internationalel/index.dxml>

The following selection by Mr. Ocampo provides a global overview of language and communication in the digital age with respect to the use information technology. Based on the findings from your study of Canada and the United States, what problems and opportunities do you think exist for the ability of the world's peoples to better communicate and work towards a future of peace and cooperative undertakings.

...Promoting the international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, involves ensuring that the needs and concerns of the majority of the world's people are properly addressed in the coverage and content of all media.

By current estimates ((See *Note 1*), there are some 313 billion pages on the World Wide Web, which amounts to some 50 web pages per person worldwide. Now, how much of that content is relevant to the daily reality of most of the world's people?

A basic indicator of relevance is language. Consider for a moment the six UN official languages, which have been classified by linguists as the top six of the world's 10 most influential languages (See *Note 2*). Some 17.3 per cent of the world's population speaks Chinese as their first language, 5.2 per cent speaks English, 4.8 per cent Spanish, 3.2 per cent Arabic, 2.5 per cent Russian, and 1.2 per cent French. But these six languages are the primary language of 34.1 per cent of the world's population. However, some 65.9 per cent of the world's people in fact have thousands of other languages as their mother tongue.

Moreover, of the total number of web pages, less than 20 per cent is in the many languages of the world's majority. Some 68.4 per cent, on the other hand, are in English. Only 3.9 per cent are in Chinese, 3.0 per cent in French, 2.4 per cent in Spanish, 1.9 per cent in Russian and less than one percent in Arabic.

More alarmingly, however, even if all the available content were translated, it would often not be relevant to the daily reality of the world's majority. The main challenge across the globe is to take full advantage of available "cultural policy space" to ensure that content of both ICTs [Information and Communications Technology] and the traditional and new media reflects proportionately the needs and concerns of the world's people and relates more directly to their reality....

Note 1

Data for this section was obtained from [Internet World Stats\(
http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm \)](http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm),

Note 2

George Weber: *Top Languages: The World's 10 Most Influential Languages* in *Language Today* (Vol. 2, Dec 1997): <http://www2.ignatius.edu/faculty/turner/languages.htm>

Source: http://www.un.org/esa/desa/ousg/statements/2005/20051115_wsis_media_forum.html