

Shared Histories and Shared Lessons? Canada's Immigration: Past, Present, and Future

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By

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Background to this Session

We live in interesting times and face some interesting issues today and for the foreseeable future. These involve our relationships with the world as well as issues connected to our diverse, pluralistic, multicultural society. As a result of a grant from the federal government's Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP) I have just written a new resource to explore some of these current and pressing issues under the direction of the National Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research.

See <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/programs/community-projects.asp> for information on this and related programs.

Welcome to Canada? (The question mark is deliberate.) offers an opportunity for high schools to supplement existing text books with material that looks critically at Canada's restrictive wartime immigration policies, with a focus on the St. Louis tragedy. The new material asks key questions about the past development and future course of Canadian immigration policy for civics, history, politics, law and economics courses. The Teachers' Guide is designed to enhance the student resource bringing events and issues to life.

The MS St. Louis was a ship carrying refugees from Nazi Germany that was refused safe harbour in Canada, with tragic consequences. This episode will form the lynchpin of the new Student Resource, providing a Canadian case study that will have relevance to a range of communities and dilemmas. Through this case, as well as discussion of other injustices from different eras in Canadian history, the student will gain insight into how government policy on immigration is set, the role of civil society in influencing the development of these policies, and issues of personal responsibility and activism on human rights issues.

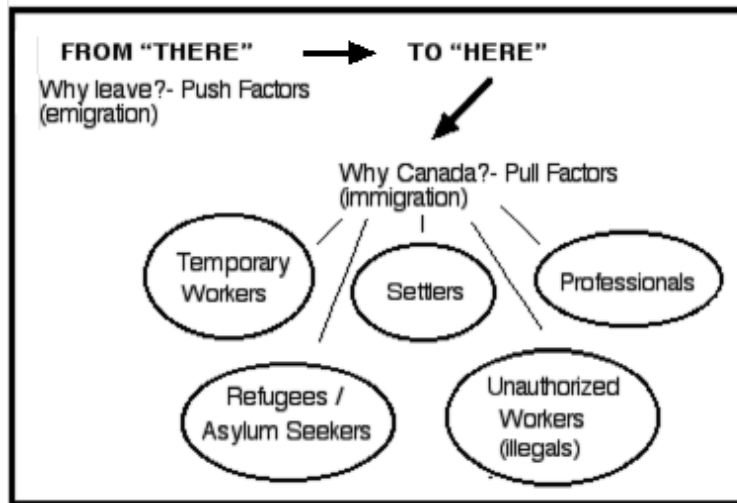
"Should we apologize for past 'sins'?" is but one of the critical questions posed in the case studies from the Loyalists to the Roma. In accordance with the CHRP mandate, *Welcome to Canada?* Helps students examine a variety of cases from the late 1700s through to today and beyond.

Government funding enables us to provide a number of these Student Resources and Teachers' Manuals free of charge to selected schools and educators under the initial pilot project. Please contact Tema Smith, Project Coordinator (tsmith@bnaibrith.ca) to indicate your interest in receiving these materials.

As you may know Canada's reaction to the St. Louis paralleled American policy. What other parallels might we have in the area of immigration policy? The remaining sections present sample content connected to Canadian immigration history.

For each of these ask yourself:

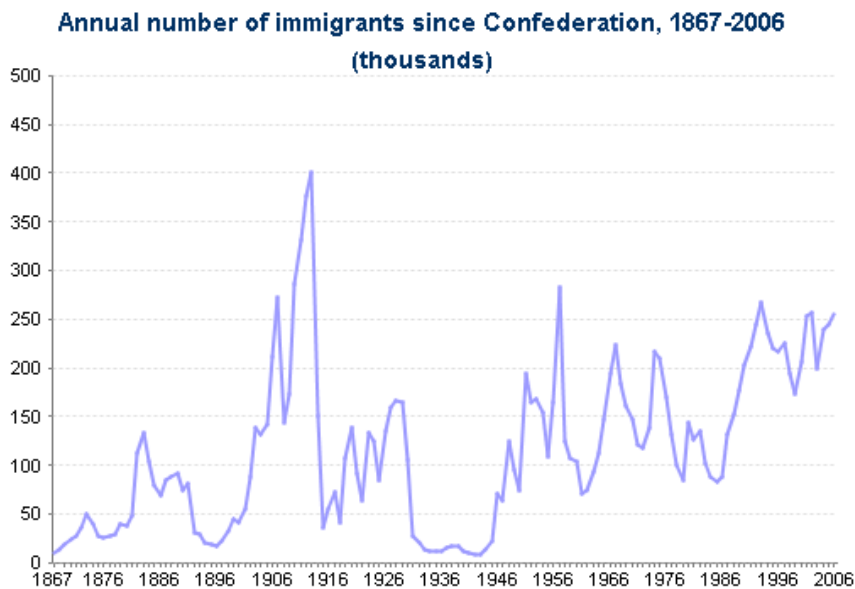
- Is the Canadian experience similar to my understanding of the American experience?
- Is it quite different? If so how?
- Do I need to dig further to see if our experiences are similar or different?



With modern communications and other technology it is impossible to just walk into most countries and not be noticed and investigated. For a variety of reasons governments are concerned about who gets in.

Content Samples to Compare to American Experiences

Sample 1: Immigration Patterns in Canadian History



Sample 2: Events In Canada’s Immigration History (selected highlights)

1872 The entry of any immigrant with a record of criminal conviction is prohibited.

1885 A \$50 head tax is implemented to reduce Chinese immigration. This is increased to \$100 in 1900 and to \$500 in 1903. This is the same year Canadian Pacific Railway construction is completed.

1896-1905 Under the administration of Sir Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, Canada begins screening immigrants to satisfy its own settlement needs. Farmers are the first choice, with preference for immigrants from the British Isles, then from Germany and Scandinavia, and finally from Slavic countries.

1910 The Immigration Act is passed, allowing the government to regulate volume, ethnic origin, or occupational composition of immigrants. Though no groups are specifically mentioned in the Act, Section 38 gives the government the power to restrict any immigrant of a race deemed unsuited to Canada's climate. (This remained on the statutes book until 1978, even though by 1967 virtually all discriminatory legislation had been repealed.)

1919-1922 The entry of Doukhobors, Mennonites, and Hutterites is prohibited because of "their peculiar customs, habits, modes of living . . ." and their assumed inability to assimilate.

1923 The Chinese Immigration Act is passed, prohibiting almost all Chinese immigrants from entering Canada. This is not repealed until 1946. A total of approximately 25 Chinese enter Canada between 1923 and 1946.

1931 Only British subjects and U.S. citizens with enough capital to sustain themselves until employment is found are permitted to enter Canada, including farmers with enough means to establish themselves, farm labourers with guaranteed employment, miners, loggers, and lumberers with guaranteed employment, and families of men already in Canada.

1933-45 Canada allows 5000 Jewish refugees to enter, compared with 200,000 by the United States, 70 000 by the United Kingdom and 15 000 by Australia.

1942-45 Canada interns 23,000 Japanese-Canadians, 13,300 of whom were born in Canada.

1945 After decades of being shunned, Italian immigrants are welcomed to help with the post-Second World War construction boom.

1956 Canada welcomes 37,000 Hungarian refugees following the Soviet invasion of Hungary.

1967 Points system established to replace ethnic based criteria for admission into Canada.

1971 The federal government declares a "multiculturalism" policy recognizing the validity of ethnic and cultural diversity in Canada. By so doing, Canada affirmed the value and dignity of all Canadian citizens regardless of their racial or ethnic origins, their language, or their religious affiliation. The 1971 Multiculturalism Policy of Canada also confirmed the rights of Aboriginal peoples and the status of Canada's two official languages <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp>. We are still exploring the extent to which this diversity should be "Reasonably accommodated".

1978 Refugees are recognized as a distinct class of immigrants, and a percentage of each year's immigrants is set aside for refugees.

1978 Amendments to Immigration Act officially end Canada's ability to select on basis of race.

1979 Canada accepts Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees through a program of private sponsorship. Over 60 000 are accepted, giving Canada the highest per capita acceptance of this group of refugees.

1985 Singh et al. v. Minister of Employment and Immigration is heard by the Supreme Court. The Court rules that all refugees have virtually the same social and legal protections as Canadian citizens under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, meaning all refugees are entitled to a full oral hearing before the Immigration and Refugee Board.

1986 Canada is awarded the Nansen Medal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

1994 The immigration processing fee (\$500 per adult, \$100 per child) is extended to refugees applying for permanent residence.

Sample 3: Sources of Immigrants in Canadian History

These and other statistics come from the 2006 Canadian Census.

- Top 10 source countries for immigrants coming to Canada (1867-1981) were:
 1. United Kingdom
 2. Italy
 3. U.S.
 4. Germany
 5. Portugal
 6. Netherlands
 7. India
 8. Poland
 9. China
 10. Countries of former Yugoslavia.
- Many of these “traditional” sources of immigrants now have low birth rates and aging populations so they are no longer major sources for Canada.

The Top 10 countries of origin for immigrants to Canada between 2001 and 2006 are:

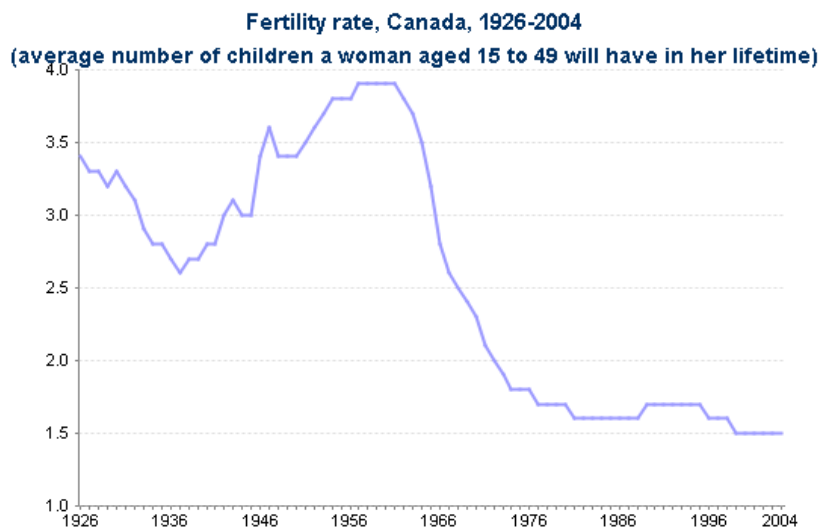
1. China - 155,105
2. India - 129,140
3. Philippines - 77,880
4. Pakistan - 57,630
5. United States - 38,770
6. South Korea - 35,450
7. Romania - 28,080
8. Iran - 27,600
9. United Kingdom - 25,655
10. Colombia - 25,310.

- Between 2001 and 2006, Canada admitted 1.1 million immigrants. For the first time in 75 years, one in five Canadian residents was born outside the country. Canada's per-capita immigration rate is roughly double that of the United States.

Sample 4: Additional Statistics

- Where do they go? In 2006, new immigrants lived in:
 - * Ontario: 52.3 per cent (mostly Toronto)
 - * Quebec: 17.5 per cent (mostly Montréal)
 - * British Columbia: 16.0 per cent (mostly Vancouver)
 - * Alberta: 9.3 per cent
 - * Manitoba: 2.8 per cent
 - * Other provinces and territories: 2.1 per cent
- While immigration has been seen as a major source of economic growth in Canada, many newcomers also contribute to the economies of their former homes by sending money (remittances) to relatives. Statistics Canada has noted that for the years 2001 to 2005:
 - Roughly 4 in 10 immigrants who arrived in Canada during 2000/2001 sent money to family or friends abroad at least once during their first four years in the country.

- Over the entire period, about 41% of immigrants sent money home at least once. Within 6 to 24 months of landing, 23% of immigrants had sent remittances to their home country; within two to four years after landing, about 29% had done so.
 - Among those who sent money home, the average amount was \$2,500 in the first period, and \$2,900 in the second period.
 - The incidence of sending money varied considerably from country to country. The proportion was highest among immigrants from the Philippines and Haiti, and lowest among those from France, the United Kingdom and South Korea.
 - The likelihood of immigrants remitting depended on three additional factors — their income, family obligations in Canada and abroad and demographics.
- According to World Bank figures for 2004, remittances represent an important source of revenue for people in developing countries. They accounted for about 20% to 30% of gross domestic product (GDP) in countries such as Haiti, Lesotho and Jordan, and for about 10% to 19% in several others, such as Jamaica, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic.



Source: Statistics Canada, unpublished data.

Sample 5: Some Key Regulations in Force Today

- The Points System is still a mainstay of immigration policy. Applicants need 67 points. These are awarded in the following six categories
 1. Education (maximum 25 points)
 2. Languages (English and/or French maximum 24 points):
 3. Work Experience (maximum 21 points)
 4. Age (maximum 10 points between ages 21-49 / 0 points under 16 or over 54 years of age)
 5. Arranged Employment in Canada (maximum 10 points)
 6. Adaptability (maximum 10 points including previous work or study in Canada, arranged employment, relative in Canada and partner's education).
- In 2006 applicants were expected to have sufficient funds available for settlement in Canada as follows:

Number of Family Members	Funds Required
1	\$10,168
2	\$12,659
3	\$15,563
4	\$18,895
5	\$21,431
6	\$24,170
7	\$26,910

Powerful Pedagogy for Studying These Issues

Here are two of many approaches we can take to examine these issues.

I. Clipping Thesis

Much of what we know or learn about immigration and the role governments and citizens can play comes from the media. So it's important to learn how to analyze media treatment of any issue. A thesis is a statement about an issue supported by evidence and based on clear criteria. This can be a component of the culminating end-of-unit task to be displayed or handed in if there is a current event that has attracted the class's interest.

1. Students either individually, in small groups, or as a whole class select a problem or issue in Canada today they wish to explore (see snowball technique below).
2. They collect stories, pictures, or information, about the topic over a three or four week period from the local newspaper or other media, including appropriate and online sources approved by you. Some of the more websites linked to the federal government such as Parks Canada, Statistic Canada, and the National Archives may also serve as media to investigate.
3. They prepare an analysis which might include such aspects as the following:
 - historical background to the issue (as reported in the newspaper and in the text),
 - the perspective(s) taken by the newspaper or other media examined,
 - a weighting of the different perspectives in order to arrive at a defensible conclusion on the issue in question.

On this and the next page are just some of the topics and questions that students may use for developing theses based on readings from their local paper and other media sources.

Topic	Critical Question
Refugees from Haiti	Should we bring them to Canada? Under what conditions?
Emigration	Why would people choose to leave their country or region of their birth to move to a new place?
Immigration	Why would people choose to live in Canada?
Illegal Immigration	How serious a problem is this for Canada?
Immigration Consultants	Help or Hindrance to newcomers?
Public opinion	What does the public in your community / province / territory think of issues in immigration? What does the Canadian public think as a whole on immigration issues?

Topic	Critical Question
Role of Government	What is current government immigration policy? What influence should the provinces and territories have on immigration policy?
Refugees	What groups coming to Canada are claiming refugee status? How strong are the arguments for and against admission of refugees?
Global migration	Where are the places where there is massive migration? Why are these occurring? What can / should Canada do about the issues causing such migration?
Canada's economy	Should the health of Canada's economy affect immigration and refugee policy?
Border security	How secure are our borders? How secure should they be?
Challenges to newcomers	What challenges do newcomers to Canada face?
Temporary Workers	How important are they to the Canadian economy? What are our obligations for this group?
Hopes and realities	What has happened to immigrants who came to Canada in the past?
Multiculturalism	Contributor or hindrance to Canadian identity?
Studying immigration	Is it better to study immigrants as groups of people or concentrate on individual stories to learn more about the issues?

The clippings can be included as a portfolio or cited in an essay on the topic and question. Some school libraries have signed on to data bases of various news media, including newspapers, magazines, television, and cable news sources. Some are free of charge such as <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com> and <http://www.thepaperboy.com>.

Students can compare daily front page coverage from a dozen Canadian newspapers and hundreds from more than 50 countries by checking <http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages> from DC's Newseum.

The clipping thesis helps students go beyond the headline to trace the story. If the news story is the first draft of history it will not be the last.

Online selection can be part of a "media file" to develop the clipping thesis. Here you might begin by working with your students to develop: 1) search techniques, in addition to just "googling"; 2) questions for any online investigation or webquest; and 3) criteria for evaluating the usefulness of the website itself.

II. Historical Graph: Timeline with Attitude!

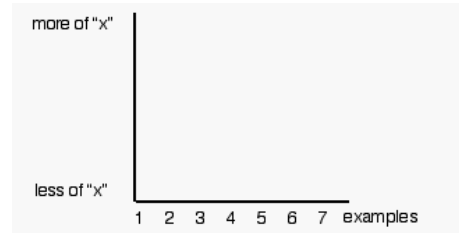
Students often construct graphs exploring the relationships between price and demand in economics and sets of demographic data in geography.

Historical graphs add a dimension to traditional timelines by helping students explore the nature of significance and chronology (change over time) in rigorous and meaningful ways. Students can see patterns over time and recognize that history is not an unbroken line of progress. Historical graphs push

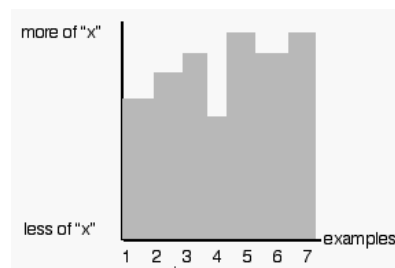
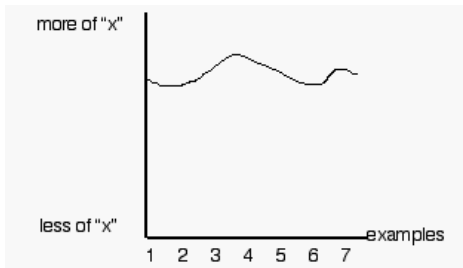
students to construct meaning from the graph through making connections between the abstract nature of data and the people and events that lay behind it. Begin with a blank 9 1/2" x 11" or 11'x14" paper.

Procedure

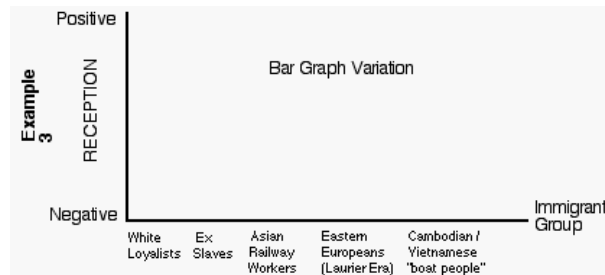
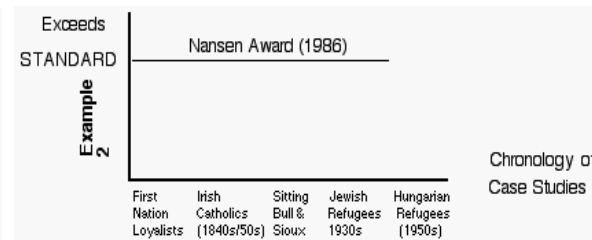
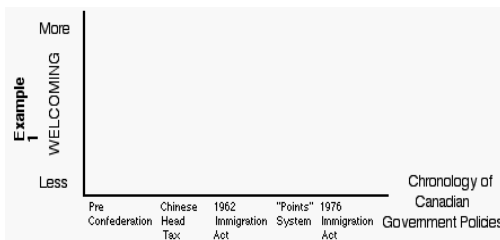
- The horizontal axis usually represents an element of chronology such as:
 - decisions by a leader or a group
 - a series of events around a common theme; e.g. strikes, inventions, diary entries or public speeches by an historical figure.
- The vertical axis represents some comparative criteria such as:
 - unimportant - very important
 - more push factor – more pull factor
 - good example - poor example
 - strongest influence - weakest influence.
 - more or fewer of _____
 - more welcoming – less welcoming



- Students place the events or a number corresponding to each event on the graph depending on their assessment of the degree to which the event, quote, feeling, decision, etc. meets the vertical axis criteria.



- The events or examples can be connected by a line or drawn as a bar graph as the above examples show. The samples below represent additional variations.



The historical graphs are very flexible. When students construct these in pairs, the discussion generated in trying to reach consensus promotes further thinking and mirrors constructive behaviors we might wish to see in any public discussion in a pluralistic democracy such as in Canada or the United States.

1879 The entry of paupers and destitute immigrants is prohibited.

1908 The Continuous Passage Act is passed, which states that all immigrants must arrive from their country of origin in one continuous journey. Since uninterrupted transport from Asia is not possible, this Act prevents Indian immigrants from entering Canada.

1914 *Komagata Maru*, a Japanese steamliner carrying Sikh migrants came to British Columbia to challenge the Continuous Passage Act. It was refused landing and eventually returned to Asia.

1930 European immigration is suspended, except for those who have sufficient capital to support themselves on farms, and to those families of whom the head of the family is already in Canada.

1968 Canada welcomes 12 000 Czechoslovakian refugees following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

1972 Canada provides refuge for 5600 Ugandan-Asian refugees expelled from Uganda by dictator Idi Amin. This is the first significant resettlement effort for non-whites into Canada. Primarily, well-educated Ugandan-Asians are accepted.

1995 A Right-of-Landing Fee in the amount of \$975 is imposed on all new immigrants and refugees.

2007-8 A provincial commission in the province of Québec looked at the issue of reasonable accommodation for citizens and newcomers in the areas of religion and other aspects of culture and belief.

2010-11 In August of 2010 The MV Sun Sea landed off the BC coast carrying hundreds of Tamil refugees. The fate of the passengers and crew are still to be determined. Do they stay or are they returned to their country of origin, a country in which a violent civil war recently ended.