
GRADE 6: HERITAGE AND IDENTITY: DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

ABSTRACT:

Teachers will use picture books to guide students to discover reasons why different groups of people came (and still come) to Canada. The task will be modeled using the story *Silver Threads* by Marsha Forchuck Skrypuch, and then consolidated using other picture books that highlight the immigrant experience.

Resource: Forchuck Skrypuch, Marsha. *Silver Threads*. Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2004. ISBN: 978-1550419030

Language Literacy Focus: Reading, Oral Communication and Writing

SOCIAL STUDIES STRAND / RELEVANT GUIDING QUESTION(S):

What experiences have shaped the stories of different communities in Canada?

Why might an event or development be important to one group but not to others?

LEARNING GOALS

In Social Studies, students will:

LG1 identify the main reasons why different peoples came to Canada. (Continuity and Change)

LG2 describe some key economic, political, cultural, and social aspects of life in settler communities in Canada (Perspective)

LG3 describe interactions between communities in Canada, including between newcomers and groups that were already in the country (Continuity and Change, Perspective)

In Language, students will:

LG5 demonstrate interpretation of a text read aloud, by using stated and implied ideas to support their interpretations.

LG6 extend understanding of a text by connecting, comparing, and contrasting ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights.

LG7 develop questions for an interview and conduct an interview.

LG8 organize information to write a summary paragraph, using the writing process

Prior Knowledge and Concepts

- Students should understand the terms immigration, emigration, as well as immigrant and emigrant. Students should be familiar with the concept of Canadian Identity

A. Instructional Strategies:

Shared Reading

Shared Reading (Picture book: *Silver Threads* by Marsha Forchuck Skrypuch, 2004)

1. Artifact Table: Students will walk by an artifact table and look at various artifacts related to the picture book. Examples of artifacts which could be displayed include chains, a knitted or woven shawl, a door hinge, a rubber spider, a small Christmas tree, a candle. Students will look at the artifacts and discuss how they might relate to the story.

Describe the cover of the book – Use “I think, I see, I wonder”. Students can use sticky notes to hold their thinking. Ask students what they think the book might be about. Discuss the title. Why might the book be called *Silver Threads*?

2. Before beginning to read:

- a) Ask students to list some reasons people might leave their homeland and choose a different one. Make a list on the board.
- b) Guide students to “look for” the reasons Anna and Ivan left their homeland in Ukraine, as well as the hardships they faced in their new home in Canada. Provide students with sticky notes or a graphic organizer to record their questions. **(Formulate Questions)**

3. Read aloud the book, stopping at points to ask questions. These questions could be discussed using the “turn and talk” strategy of briefly discussing each point with an elbow partner.

- Why do you think Ivan and Anna removed the pane of glass and the hinge from their house in Ukraine?
- What do you think is the significance of the spider?
- What are some positive things that Ivan and Anna discovered in Canada? What are some negative things?

Read the postscript of the book to the students and discuss this injustice during World War I. Ask students if they know of any other situations similar to this one. (Examples may include Japanese Internment camps, discrimination faced by escaped African slaves, Chinese head tax, etc.)



B. Student Activities:

Shared reading



1. Place students in groups of 4 and assign each group a picture book to read together. For the purposes of this task, it is not essential that each group have a different book. Their task is threefold:

- a) List reasons why the character(s) in the books left their homeland for Canada or the USA. Have students write each reason on a separate index card or strip of chart paper. (Students will end up with several reasons, such as "better job opportunities" or "escaping famine", each written on a different card or strip of chart paper. Set these aside for a later activity.)
- b) List challenges they faced in their new country.
- c) List ways they overcame these challenges. (Gather and Organize)

Assessment Suggestions: Use the information gathered by students during the reading of their own text to assess their ability to understand the main reasons that groups of people come to Canada as well as their understanding of the text. (LG1, LG5)

2. Have a whole class discussion about the reasons why people choose to emigrate. Make a chart on the board with the broad headings of "Push Factors" and "Pull Factors". Pull factors are reasons people leave their homeland (e.g. war, famine, lack of opportunity) and are generally considered negative. Push factors are reasons people choose a new country (e.g. better opportunity, freedom, better climate) and are generally considered positive. Discuss the difference and, using the same strategy the students employed while reading their group books, write reasons on cards or chart paper strips for the whole class book, *Silver Threads*, as an exemplar. The chart will now have some reasons under each category. Students will then add to the chart the cards or chart paper strips they made for their picture book. (Interpret and Analyse)

Assessment Suggestions: Have students stage dramatic "interviews" in role. Have one partner play the role of a reporter and the other play the role of a child whose family has come to Canada for one or more of the reasons on the chart. Have students write the script together so both partners are involved in formulating reasons, or have them conduct two interviews and switch roles, if using improvisation. (LG1)



3. Discuss challenges faced by new immigrants and ways that challenges can be overcome. Record the challenges and how they are overcome in a T-chart to anchor your discussion. Focus on the interactions between newcomers and those who already live in the country. To help students understand these challenges, you may remind them of what it's like in a new school. Children who have moved and switched schools may be able to relate to this experience. **(Evaluate and Draw Conclusions)**

Assessment suggestions: Generate a list with students of possible outcomes of immigration and have them sort them into a graphic organizer (e.g. Venn diagram) listing Positive Outcomes and Challenges and those that overlap. This list should be student generated and can be started and added to throughout the lessons. Remind students that each immigration experience is unique and not all immigrants will face all of these positive outcomes and challenges.

Positive outcomes:

- better opportunities for employment
- improved education
- access to clean water
- freedom from war

Challenges:

- language barriers
- lack of understanding of cultural differences/discrimination
- difficulty finding familiar foods, places of worship, etc.
- loneliness, missing family back home (LG 2 and 3)

4. Have students interview a family member or friend who has immigrated to Canada. Brainstorm some questions as a class (using questions generated from reading to help formulate questions) and have students conduct interviews and write a summary paragraph, which highlights the reasons for migration and the challenges faced by newcomers, focusing on those related to interactions. Alternately, students could role-play an interview with each other if family interviewees are not available. If the role-play option is selected, there may need to be a research component as students assume the roles of immigrants from different countries and time periods. **(Communicate)**

Assessment suggestions: Conference with students and provide descriptive feedback on their interview notes prior to writing the paragraph(s). Develop a list of co-constructed criteria to assess paragraphs. The Achievement Chart on pages 20 and 21 of the Language curriculum may act as a guide. (LG 1, 2, 3)

5. Discuss the challenges faced by new immigrants. Have students share the ones they discovered in their reading, and add to that list based on personal experience, or the results of interviews. Discuss ways that Canadian policy seeks to make newcomers feel welcome (e.g. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Heritage Language classes, community welcome centres etc.). Discuss ways that individuals and classes can make newcomers feel welcome (e.g. inviting a new student to join your table at lunch, playing outside at break with a newcomer, etc.). Have students reflect on this subject in their personal journals or a class blog. **(Communicate)**

Assessment suggestions: Provide feedback to students in the format used (e.g. in the journal or blog). (LG 3)

A note about assessment: The achievement chart on pages 32 and 33 of the Ontario Curriculum Social Studies document and the achievement chart on pages 20 and 21 of the Ontario Language curriculum will prove helpful when assessing the various components of these activities.

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

Social Studies:

Application: A1

Inquiry: A2

Understanding Context: A3

Language:

Oral Communication: 1, 2

Reading: 1

Writing: 1, 2

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

Social Studies:

Application: A1.3

Inquiry: A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4, A2.5, A2.6

Understanding Context: A3.1, A3.2, A3.3, A3.5, A3.7, A3.8

Language:

Oral Communication 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.1

Reading 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8

Writing 1.3, 1.5, 2.1

OTHER RESOURCES

Books suggested: (Note that any story of immigration may be used, as long as it fits with the activities.)

Fleischman, Paul. *The Matchbox Diary*. Somerville: Candlewick, 2013.

Forchcuk Skrypuch, Marsha. *Silver Threads*. Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2004.

Hoffman, Mary. *The Colour of Home*. London: Frances Lincoln, 2002.

Munsch, Robert. *From Far Away*. Toronto: Annick, 1995.

Williams, Karen Lynn and Khadra Mohammed. *My Name is Sangoal*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Yin. *Coolies*. Puffin, 2003