

## **Across Cultures Unit Guide for the Theme Canada: A welcoming land?**

By HERNIS PIERRE-JÉRÔME, Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute, retired teacher  
Toronto District School Board, Toronto (Ontario)

### **Overall Objective**

Canada's immigration policy has oscillated between facilitating and restricting the influx of newcomers. The changes were related to the search for a balanced response by successive Canadian governments to this country's economic needs, social pressures, political realities and international events. This unit guide outlines major change and continuity in Canada's immigration policy over the 20th century with an overview of historical contexts and effects on immigrants.

### **Grade level**

Advanced 9–12 and beyond. This unit can be adapted to younger grades and different courses of study in various Canadian provinces and territories.

### **Content Areas**

History  
Geography  
Citizenship  
Social Studies  
Media Studies

### **Content items used**

NFB Film excerpts:

*A Scent of Mint*, 2002 (28 min 51 s – 30 min 44 s)

*Lost Dreams*, 1999 (0 min 55 s – 3 min)

*When Strangers Re-unite*, 1999 (3 min 16 s – 5 min 39 s)

*A Sense of Family*, 1980 (12 min 36 s – 16 min 2 s)

Content items can be viewed online free of charge at <www.nfb.ca/acrosscultures> under the theme **Canada: A welcoming land?**

### **Material Required**

Access to Internet connection, data projector, flip chart paper or whiteboard, and pencils.

---

## Summary

This unit guides students through the historical circumstances of Canada's immigration policies over the 20th century and how immigration has been dealt with by the Canadian public and successive Canadian governments. Students will explore the evolution of Canada's immigration policy from its 'open door' decades (how open was it really?) to the contemporary period with a view to factors that led to changes in the aftermath of World War II. In addition to the 'open door' era, the Immigration Acts of 1952 and 1978 will be considered as responses to Canada's economic needs, social demands and political realities in a changing international environment.

## Introduction Activity (50 minutes)

Background to the 'open door' policy: a quick review of the various factors that brought the Laurier government to introduce this policy. Brainstorming, discussion and note-taking exercise will highlight the opportunities in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, trade and transportation that Canada sought to exploit by attracting immigrants to the vast lands of the Canadian Prairies.

## ACTIVITY 1: A not so open 'open door' policy (70 minutes)

**Step 1:** View excerpt 3, *Lost Dreams*. Using this excerpt, ask students to take notes briefly describing the following events: Canada opened its doors to a particular group of immigrants; others were barred from coming even if their ability to contribute to the settlement of the West was demonstrated shortly before the 'open door' policy came into being; life was difficult even for those who had been accepted; major promises made to encourage people to settle in Canada were broken and immigrants were treated with suspicion, resentment and eventually as foreign enemies when WW1 broke out. (35 minutes)

**Step 2:** Complete this overview of difficulties faced by various ethnocultural groups using excerpt 10, *A Sense of Family*. Help students identify major concepts and evaluate their historical significance in relation to Canada's immigration policy and Canadian attitudes toward non-British settlers and newly established ethnocultural communities. For example, particular attention will be given to the Exclusion Act, the Continuous Passage policy and the Komagata Maru incident. (35 minutes)

## ACTIVITY 1: Bonus activity (70 minutes)

**Step 3:** Using their textbooks, and working notes on Canada's 'open door' policy, immigration and immigrants of the pre-war years, students will refine their notes and work on creating a chart to illustrate the factors that 'pushed' people out of Europe and Asia and those that 'pulled' them to Canada. Help students to develop a list of the most important concepts related to this theme and common to various subject areas, e.g., discrimination, prejudice, ethnocultural communities, mutual aid societies, networking etc. Some flexibility in listing concepts is needed in terms of practicality, pre-knowledge and preparation for evaluation.

**ACTIVITY 2: A flexible immigration policy for a rapidly changing world (2 x 70 minutes)**

- Skills development and knowledge acquisition are important objectives in this activity. Students will be able to work on their note taking, research and communication skills (both oral and written) as well as their ability to make multimedia presentations and role-play.
- These activities will help students to prepare for a final evaluation. Therefore, introducing them to the two assessment rubrics provided will familiarize students with the evaluation strategies you will use and the key to successful work and academic progress.

**Step 1:** View excerpt 1, *When Strangers Re-unite*, and excerpt 4, *A Scent of Mint*, and any other written documents to stimulate interest in the topic. Ask students to outline, from those excerpts, the following events: Canada has implemented a real “open door” policy that is flexible, considerate and fair to various groups of immigrants, the Immigration Act of 1952 and the Immigration Act of 1978. Discuss these concepts with the entire class: sponsorship, universal point system, family reunification, financial support, dual citizenship, refugee status and reprieve on humanitarian grounds.

**Step 2:** Each student will work in a team of three to select and view an additional film excerpt available in the Across Cultures Website, **Canada: a welcoming land** theme and discuss the related questions (see online question panel by each excerpt) or Appendix. Each partner will be assigned one particular section or one specific task in the group’s final project. This project will consist of a multimedia oral presentation and a written composition on the chosen question. The final project will serve to assess individual student and group mastery of related knowledge and skills.

**ACTIVITY 2: Bonus activity (70 minutes)**

**Step 3:** After viewing the two excerpts, students will explore their historical context, discuss some of the views expressed about the new immigration policy, and build a list of related concepts. Examples of opinions that can be discussed are: “Obtaining immigration papers has never been easy anywhere”(A *Scent of Mint*); “If all we wanted was to be together and live quietly, where is the harm with that?”(A *Scent of Mint*) and “I have submitted all the papers and I have paid all the fees. I keep calling immigration...”(When *Strangers Re-unite*). Comment on perceptions about immigrating to Canada reflected in the two cases. In teams of 2 students can role-play a telephone conversation between a new immigrant in Canada and their family in another country. They should discuss the difficulties faced in re-uniting. It may become obvious that confusion over Canada’s immigration requirements is often a source of misunderstanding and frustration. This activity encourages active viewing, understanding, thinking and detecting bias.

**Closure Activity (20 minutes)**

Ask students to continue to explore the changing economic needs, demands and pressures by Canadian interest groups and the general public, Canadian political realities and international events that might still be shaping Canada’s immigration policy today. Are we equally welcoming to those in need as we are to those we need?

### Check for Understanding

Ask students to continue to observe Canadian immigration issues in the media and leave them with the question, could Canada be considered a welcoming land based on recent immigration policies.

### Evaluation rubric

#### ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: RESEARCH REPORT

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group # \_\_\_\_\_

Topic/ Question # \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge/ Understanding of facts and relationships	Demonstrates limited knowledge of the theme	Demonstrates some knowledge of the theme	Demonstrates considerable knowledge of the theme	Demonstrates thorough knowledge of the theme
Thinking and Inquiry	Demonstrates limited use of thinking and inquiry skills	Demonstrates some use of thinking and inquiry skills	Demonstrates competent use of thinking and inquiry skills	Demonstrates most competent use of thinking and inquiry skills
Communication skills	Communicates research results with limited effectiveness	Communicates research results with some effectiveness	Communicates research results with considerable effectiveness	Communicates research results with a high degree of effectiveness
Application	Makes connections with limited effectiveness	Makes connections with some effectiveness	Makes connections with considerable effectiveness	Makes connections with a high degree of effectiveness



ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:  
ORAL PRESENTATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group # \_\_\_\_\_

Topic/ Question # \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge/ Understanding of facts and relationships	Demonstrates limited knowledge of the theme	Demonstrates some knowledge of the theme	Demonstrates considerable knowledge of the theme	Demonstrates thorough knowledge of the theme
Thinking and Inquiry	Demonstrates limited use of thinking and inquiry skills	Demonstrates some use of thinking and inquiry skills	Demonstrates competent use of thinking and inquiry skills	Demonstrates most competent use of thinking and inquiry skills
Communication skills	Communicates research results with limited effectiveness and some discomfort	Communicates research results with some effectiveness and comfort	Communicates research results confidently and with considerable effectiveness	Communicates research results with a high degree of confidence and effectiveness
Application	Makes connections with limited effectiveness	Makes connections with some effectiveness	Makes connections with considerable effectiveness	Makes connections with a high degree of effectiveness

**References and Resources**

**Online Resources:**

- Canada Archives <<http://www.archivescanada.ca/car/menu.html>>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Cultural Profiles Project <<http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/>>
- The Canadian Encyclopedia <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/>>
- Statistics Canada <<http://estat.statcan.ca/>>
- Documentary Lens <<http://www.nfb.ca/doclens>>
- Aboriginal Perspectives <<http://www.nfb.ca/aboriginalperspectives>>

**Text Resources:**

- J. Bradley Cruyton and W. Douglas Wilson, *Spotlight Canada*: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- G. Newman et al., *Canada: A Nation Unfolding*: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2000.
- Any recommended textbooks for Grades 10, 11, 12 in History and Contemporary Studies.



## Appendix

### NFB Film excerpt questions in the theme Canada: A welcoming land?

*A Scent of Mint*, 2002 (28 min 51 s – 30 min 44 s)

Evaluate the extent to which Canada's reputation as a welcoming land is deserved. Base your judgment on past practices and the immigration policy that restricted some members of the Lebanese family from staying in Canada, as well as the domestic and international circumstances that led the Canadian government to accept successive waves of immigrants from 1970 onwards.

*Who Is Albert Woo?*, 2000 (12 min 31 s – 14 min 47 s)

Discuss the strategy for successful integration into Canadian society outlined in this excerpt and the actions and situations presented by Herb Lim to demonstrate the value of that strategy. To what extent will being competent, hard-working, dedicated and ready to serve, even under difficult circumstances, make it possible for Canadians of ethno-cultural backgrounds to succeed, be appreciated or at least accepted by ordinary Canadians?

*Lost Dreams*, 1999 (0 min 55 s – 3 min)

Analyze the circumstances under which the Ukrainian family immigrated to Canada, the goals the father pursued when he first arrived and how he applied himself, unsuccessfully, to achieve them.

*When Strangers Re-unite*, 1999 (3 min 16 s – 5 min 39 s)

Explore the immigration provision under which Fe came to Canada, and elaborate on the conditions she had to meet to be considered for landed immigrant status as well as the challenges associated with her daily life in Canada and her dealings with Immigration Canada.

*Shepherd's Pie and Sushi*, 1998 (8 min 32 s – 11 min 31 s)

Evaluate the main points presented in this excerpt about franchise and treatment of visible minorities in Canada in light of the treatment of Japanese Canadians during and after World War II. Which of the views presented seem justified?

*Barbed Wire and Mandolins*, 1997 (1 min 7 s – 2 min 14 s)

Outline how Prime Minister W.L.M. King justified ordering the RCMP to intern immigrants from countries that Canada was at war with, including some who were Canadian citizens, and describe the effects on those interned.

*Barbed Wire and Mandolins*, 1997 (21 min 20 s – 23 min 42 s)

To what extent was Prime Minister Mackenzie King justified in *not* taking measures to protect basic rights and freedoms because of suspicions that the Axis Powers could infiltrate immigrant groups linked to Axis countries and incite them to undertake hostile actions against Canada's security? Take into account the well-documented abuse suffered by Canadians of foreign origin during World War II and this excerpt.

*Bamboo, Lions and Dragons*, 1981 (3 min 43 s – 5 min 20 s)

Describe the Exclusion Act and evaluate the circumstances that led the Canadian government to introduce the legislation and its effects on Chinese immigration to Canada.

*A Sense of Family*, 1980 (12 min 36 s – 16 min 2 s)

Describe the Komagata Maru incident and explain how the Continuous Passage policy was only a contributing factor in the way it started, evolved and ended.

*Strangers at the Door*, 1977 (5 min 25 s – 6 min 35 s)

Use appropriate written and internet resources to explain how the attitude and actions of the on board con-man in his dealing with that Ukrainian immigrant are not uncommon nowadays.