

# Across Cultures

## Unit Guide for the Theme

### Why did we come to Canada?

By Jackie Underhill, Teacher  
S. Bruce Smith Junior High, Edmonton, Alberta

#### Overall Objective

In this unit students will acquire an in-depth understanding and appreciation for the reasons why people immigrate to Canada. Although political or economic factors are often mentioned, every story is unique and often inspiring.

#### 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  
Social Studies  
English  
Language Arts  
Media Studies  
Math

#### Content items used

NFB Film excerpts:

*A Scent of Mint*, 2002 (4 min 0 s – 7 min 0 s)

*The Tree that Remembers*, 2002 (2 min 37 s – 4 min 55 s)

*When Strangers Re-unite*, 2002 (25 min 52 s – 29 min 35 s)

*No Time to Stop*, 1990 (10 min 56 s – 14 min 3 s)

*Strangers for the Day*, 1962 (14 min 56 s – 17 min 3 s)

NB: Content items can be viewed online free of charge at <www.nfb.ca/acrosscultures> under the theme **Why did we come to Canada?**

#### Materials Required

Access to a computer lab, Internet connection, data projector, flip chart paper or whiteboard, paper and pencils, map of the world, push pins, some recent political cartoons.

---

## Summary

The goal of this unit is to present stories of individuals who have left their country of origin to settle in Canada. Students learn about the push-pull factors\* that uproot families and the reasons that Canada becomes their preferred destination. Some must overcome overwhelming obstacles on their journey to a new life. Film excerpts, CBC archival materials and charts and graphs on Canadian immigration will help develop an appreciation for the variety of reasons people immigrate to Canada.

\*push factors: reasons individuals leave a country of origin

pull factors: factors that may draw an individual to Canada

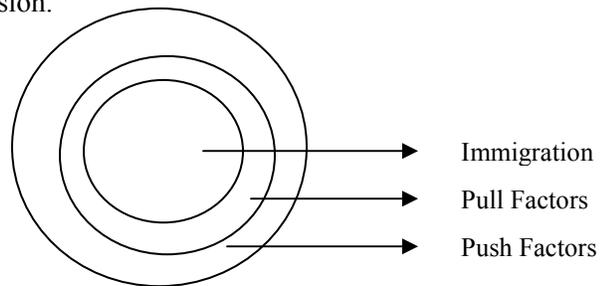
## Introduction Activity - The Story Begins (15-30 minutes)

Using a world map and coloured push pins, ask volunteers to identify their parents' or ancestors' country of origin by placing a pin on the appropriate place. Students could also mention which family member made the journey and add any other interesting details about that decision. After watching the film clips, this activity could be repeated to identify locations mentioned in the excerpts (Iran, Philippines, Jamaica).

## Activity 1: Reasons for coming - the Push and Pull Factors (2 x 60 minutes)

### Step 1: Brainstorm

- In groups of three, students brainstorm reasons for leaving one's country and write them down.
- Students watch the film clips and also look at the CBC archives sites to add to their list of ideas. They should also include reasons for choosing Canada.
- Students draw a triple circle graphic organizer (see below) and place the word *immigration* inside the smallest circle. Label the outer ring *push factors* and the middle ring *pull factors*. Discuss the concept.
- Students use their notes to fill in the outer ring and middle ring with appropriate information.
- After several minutes ask students to share what their group learned and expand on the push and pull factors in a class discussion.



**Step 2: Clarifying the Concepts**

- Using the film excerpts as their starting point, the groups will create a poster, with graphics and text, to illustrate the various reasons immigrants come to Canada. Posters should define some of the following concepts:
  - Peace/war, quality of life, refugee, economics, freedom, repression, artistic freedom, political oppression, foreign domestic worker, etc.
- The poster can also highlight environmental concerns and religious factors. The poster will be evaluated on accuracy and insight, as well as layout and design.

**Activity 2: Linking the Film Clips to Trends and Patterns in Canadian Immigration (60 minutes)**

The individuals in the films identify a variety of reasons for leaving their homeland, such as the desire to improve economic opportunities and to flee political oppression and warfare. In the past one hundred years, have the reasons for immigrating remained substantially the same?

- The Statscan article entitled “One Hundred Years of Immigration in Canada” and other graphs and charts will help explain historical trends. See this Web page: [www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/100yr3.pdf](http://www.statcan.ca/english/kits/pdf/social/100yr3.pdf)
- In their groups, have students record observations on charts and present them to the class to share their findings.
- If grade appropriate, students can complete the graphing activity from Statscan found at [www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/teacher%27s\\_kit/ten.pdf](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/teacher%27s_kit/ten.pdf).

**Activity 3: Create an Editorial Cartoon Illustrating Reasons for Coming to Canada (60 minutes)**

**Step 1:** Discuss the aims of an editorial cartoon. Show some examples from recent newspapers and talk about how artists get their message across. Point out techniques used by the cartoonist such as caricature, symbolism, play on words, irony and other strategies.

**Step 2:** Student work in teams of three to choose and view another film excerpt from [www.nfb.ca/acrosscultures](http://www.nfb.ca/acrosscultures) in the **Why did we come to Canada?** theme. They can then discuss the related questions (see online question panel by each excerpt or the appendix). Inspired by the film clip, brainstorm ideas for an editorial cartoon that illustrates why the people in the film came to Canada. Assure students that they will be assessed on the content of their cartoon, not their ability to draw.

**Step 3:** Students spend the rest of the period working on a rough copy of their cartoon. Either provide more class time to produce a good copy, or assign it for homework.

**Bonus Activity: Canada's Citizenship and Immigration Policies** (180 minutes)

Becoming a Canadian citizen involves filling in forms and meeting specific criteria. The immigrants in the film clips fall into various categories, including those of refugee and skilled worker. Examine Canadian immigration policies to better understand the criteria for citizenship.

**Step 1:**

- The Citizenship and Immigration Web site explains the different categories of immigrants, the refugee category and the economic category which includes skilled workers and business class. See: <[www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizen/look/look-00e.html](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizen/look/look-00e.html)>.
- Forms are also at the same site, including the Application for Canadian Citizenship- Adult and Child.
- In small groups have students analyze the forms to find out why the Canadian government requires this type of information. Have the students create their own form. Would they add or change any part of the immigration process?
- Students could participate in a mock immigration interview where they assume various roles hoping to qualify to enter Canada and eventually become citizens.

**Closure Activity: Editorial Cartoon Sharing** (20 minutes)

Students can combine their editorial cartoons, charts and posters in a display to be shared with the class and if appropriate with the rest of the school.

**Check for Understanding** (15 minutes)

After completing the unit, have students write a paragraph that reflects their learning. Ask them to imagine what their life would be like if they had to move to another country.

### Evaluation Rubrics

#### Poster Rubric Total /15

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	Excellent 5	Satisfactory 3	Limited 1
Organization	Clear evidence of organization.	Some evidence of organization.	Very little evidence of organization.
Appeal and Layout	Poster is very appealing and well laid out.	Poster is appealing and formatted correctly.	Minimal appeal; layout does not consider audience.
Content	Many well-chosen facts and interesting information.	Few facts and little interesting information.	Almost no facts and/or or incorrect information.

#### Editorial Cartoon Rubric Immigration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

	5	3	1	
Message	Message is clear, informative and thoughtful. Audience understands the meaning.	Message is generally clear but may lack originality or is simplistic. Audience understands the general message.	Message is vague and audience is unsure of the meaning.	X2
Relevancy	The cartoon clearly describes factors related to immigration. Displays awareness of editorial cartoon technique. Point of view is evident.	The cartoon makes some attempt at displaying factors related to immigration. Displays some awareness of editorial cartoon techniques. Some point of view evident.	The cartoon is not related to immigration. Little or no evidence of editorial cartoon technique. No point of view.	X2
total				/20

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_



## References and Resources

**Archival Images:** The Across Cultures Web site, under the theme **Why did we come to Canada?** also contains excerpts from NFB and CBC archives, along with photographs and illustrations of artefacts. You might want to integrate some of these items into your planning.

### Online Resources:

Statistics Canada <<http://estat.statcan.ca/>>

Library and Archives Canada <[www.collectionscanada.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.ca)>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada <[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)>

**Text Resource:** Any recommended text for Social Studies.

## Appendix

Film excerpt questions in the **Why did we come to Canada?** theme.

*A Scent of Mint*, 2002 (4 min 0 s – 7 min 0 s)

Using sound and visuals, filmmaker Pierre Sidaoui depicts life in Lebanon during the civil war of the 1980s. Describe why his father left the country in 1988.

*The Tree that Remembers*, 2002 (2 min 37 s – 4 min 55 s)

What are the push/pull factors (reasons that an individual leaves their homeland and the factors that would draw them to Canada) for the three people profiled in the film excerpt? Why did the three leave Iran? What were their first experiences upon arriving in Canada?

*When Strangers Re-unite*, 2002 (25 min 52 s – 29 min 35 s)

Explain the emotional, physical, social and economic hardships experienced by Este and her parents after the move to Canada from the Philippines.

*No Time to Stop*, 1990 (10 min 56 s – 14 min 3 s)

What difficulties do immigrant women in general, and foreign domestic workers in particular, face in the workplace when they want to move ahead?

*Strangers for the Day*, 1962 (14 min 56 s – 17 min 3 s)

Given that this is a train full of immigrants, what might the strangers on the train have in common?