

Commemorate Canada - 100th Anniversary of the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act

Overview

Students will complete a series of word games and puzzles to learn about the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act of 1923 and its effect on Chinese residents in Canada.

Time required

40 minutes

Grades

7-12

Subjects

Geography, history, immigration, racism

Learning goals

Students will be able to:

- Identify the time period of the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act.
- Understand why this act came to be and why it was repealed.
- Identify the impact of this act on Chinese communities in Canada.

Materials

- Pens/pencils
- Spare paper
- Projector/SMARTboard
- Puzzle 1: Crossword (1 per pair or electronic copies)
- Puzzle 2: Cipher (1 per pair or electronic copies)
- Puzzle 3: Scavenger hunt (1 per pair or electronic copies)
- Teacher answer sheet
- Devices with internet access
- Print or digital copy of "[Reflecting on the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act](#)" from *Canadian Geographic*

Lesson implementation

Minds on

Explain to students that today they will be learning about an act in Canada's history that discriminated against Chinese people in Canada. If students have learned about other groups in Canada that have been discriminated against with government policies, you can take some time to have them recall that information (e.g. the Japanese during the Second World War, Indigenous communities). If necessary, define, review, or clarify for students the following terms that they will come across in this lesson: discrimination, racism, intimidation, immigration, deportation, and social/economic inequality.

Play the [Chinese Exclusion Act GeoMinute](#) for students to introduce them to the topic of the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act. Ask students if any of them have heard of this act and, if not, if they are surprised by it. Ask students what they know already about Chinese immigration to Canada.

Action

Divide students into pairs. Explain that they will be completing a series of puzzles and word games that will help them learn about the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act and its impact on the Chinese community in Canada. Once students have completed one puzzle, they will have a code word that they can give to the teacher to obtain the next puzzle.

Distribute pens/pencils, paper, an electronic device with internet access, and **Puzzle 1: Crossword** to each pair and have students complete the activities. All the information they need to complete the puzzles is on the worksheets or will direct them to a website.

For students that finish early: Have them visit [The Paper Trail collection](#) from the UBC Library to look at examples of certificates.

Conclusion and consolidation

Bring students back together and ask them to share some facts they found interesting or surprising about the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act. Write these on the board. As an exit ticket or as a self-reflection activity, have students write a reaction to the quote in the *Canadian Geographic* article from Louey King:

"If they don't understand the history and the significance of what we did, then they won't be able to defend our rights in the future if they are taken away again. It's not a birthright, believe me. Somebody paid for it."

How did this quote make students feel or what does it make them think about?

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Connection to the Canadian Geography Learning Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Patterns and trends
- Interrelationships
- Geographic perspective
- Spatial significance

Inquiry Process

- Formulate questions
- Interpret and analyze
- Communicate

Extend your geographical thinking

- If you are in Vancouver, consider a visit to the [Chinese Canadian Museum](#).
- Have students virtually explore Chinatowns across Canada using [Google Earth](#) and Street View.
- Have students learn about their family's journey to Canada — is it fairly recent or have they been here since time immemorial?

Modifications

- To make these activities more difficult, remove the informative text on puzzles 1 and 2 and have students search for answers online.
- To make these activities easier, complete them as a class, or divide up each puzzle, giving each student one piece of the puzzle to solve.

Assessment opportunities

- Teachers can collect student worksheets and exit tickets for assessment.

Additional resources

- [“Reflecting on the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act”](#) by *Canadian Geographic*
- [1923 Exclusion Act](#)
- Parks Canada: [Exclusion of Chinese Immigrants \(1923-1947\) National Historic Event](#)
- Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21: [Chinese Immigration Act, 1923](#)
- The Canadian Encyclopedia, [Chinese Immigration Act](#)

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Puzzle 1: Crossword

Instructions: Read the paragraph below about the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 in Canada. Use the information to help you complete the puzzle below. Bring the code word to your teacher to get your next puzzle!

On July 1, 1923, the Chinese Immigration Act (also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act) came into effect in Canada. Chinese people living in Canada called it Humiliation Day. This act replaced the “head tax,” which forced Chinese immigrants to pay to enter Canada. Many white Canadians (particularly in British Columbia, but later in the rest of Canada) felt that the head tax did not slow down immigration enough and demanded more action from the government. The act made it nearly impossible for Chinese to immigrate to Canada and required all Chinese residents in Canada to register with the government. If they did not, they risked a fine, going to jail, or deportation. Some Chinese immigrants were still allowed in Canada, including Chinese diplomats, government representatives, Christian missionaries, teachers, students, merchants, children born in Canada who had left, and immigrants who were returning. This act meant that Chinese residents in Canada could not bring their families over from China, which separated families and it made it difficult for Chinese communities in Canada to grow. Chinese people found it extremely challenging to participate in society and the economy because of the discrimination and racism that was rampant in the communities where they lived, which caused social and economic inequalities for Chinese residents.

Down:

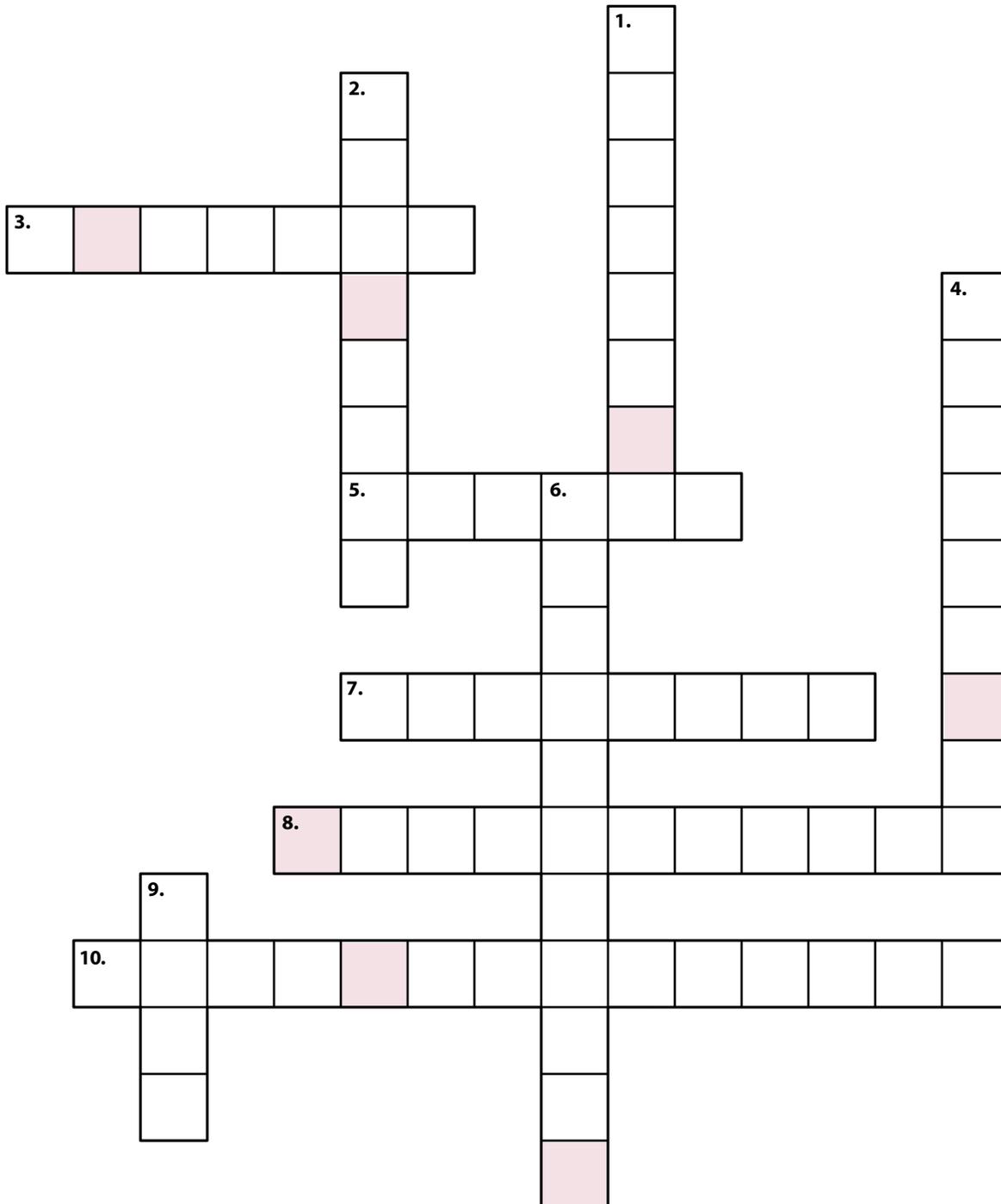
1. Chinese residents in Canada were separated from their _____ in China because of the act.
2. This is one of the categories of Chinese immigrants who were still allowed to enter Canada.
4. The Chinese Immigration Act was also known as the Chinese _____ Act.
6. What was the act trying to prevent?
9. In which month was the act established?

Across:

3. The Chinese Immigration Act replaced this “fee” in 1923. (two words)
5. The act was fueled by _____.
7. What did the act require Chinese residents to do to avoid penalties?
8. Chinese residents in Canada were threatened by this if they didn’t comply with the act.
10. What did Chinese in Canada call the day the Chinese Immigration Act took effect (two words)?

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Puzzle 1: Crossword



Code word instructions: Take all the highlighted letters and unscramble them to fill in this missing word.

This act caused a _____ in the Chinese population in Canada between 1923-1947.

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Puzzle 2: Cipher

Instructions: Reveal the missing words by using the code below. Next, take the highlighted letters and rearrange them to solve the code word.

■ = A	▲ = E	◇ = I	● = M	○ = Q	▣ = U	◆ = Y	➤ = 3	↻ = 7
■ = B	▶ = F	◎ = J	◐ = N	▲ = R	▣ = V	◇ = Z	➤ = 4	↻ = 8
□ = C	▮ = G	◎ = K	◐ = O	▼ = S	▣ = W	↗ = 1	⇐ = 5	↪ = 9
□ = D	◀ = H	● = L	◑ = P	○ = T	▣ = X	→ = 2	⇒ = 6	↩ = 10

Before the Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act of 1923, many Chinese immigrants were welcomed to Canada to help build the **▲■◇●▣◆**. Before the act, the Canadian government still required Chinese residents to have many different **□▲▲○◇▶◇□■○▲▼** for things like identification and travel **■□○◀●▲◇◇■○◇●●▼**. When the act took effect on **◎■□◆ ↗, ↗↗→➤, ◑●▼○▲▲▼** were put up telling Chinese residents what they had to do. It was a **▼□■▲◆** period for Chinese residents in Canada — a time of **▼■▲■▲◇●●■□▲, □●○▲●●, and ◇●○◇●◇□■○◇●●**. The act was repealed on **●■◆ ↗▶, ↗↗▶↻** after years of campaigning by Chinese men and women, including veterans and the Committee for the Repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act. It is estimated that only **↗⇐** Chinese were accepted into Canada during the act.

Code	Word
▲ ■ ◇ ● ▣ ◆	_____
□ ▲ ▲ ○ ◇ ▶ ◇ □ ■ ○ ▲ ▼	_____
■ □ ○ ◀ ● ▲ ◇ ◇ ■ ○ ◇ ● ● ▼	_____
◎ ■ □ ◆ ↗	_____
↗ ↗ → ➤	_____
◑ ● ▼ ○ ▲ ▲ ▼	_____
▼ □ ■ ▲ ◆	_____
▼ ■ ▲ ■ ▲ ◇ ● ● ■ □ ▲	_____
□ ● ● ○ ▲ ● ●	_____
◇ ● ○ ◇ ● ◇ □ ■ ○ ◇ ● ●	_____
● ■ ◆ ↗ ▶	_____
↗ ↗ ▶ ↻	_____
↗ ⇐	_____

Code word: In 1947, Chinese residents received _____.

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Puzzle 3: Scavenger Hunt

Student names: _____

Instructions: Use the *Canadian Geographic* article, "[Reflecting on the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act](#)" to help you find answers for this scavenger hunt.

1. Which authority issued certificates?

2. What most likely happened to most of these certificates?

3. What did some Chinese residents in Canada hang on their doors when the Chinese Immigration Act took effect?

4. Find the photo of Dea Mon Quong. What information does this piece of paper give?

5. What is the quote from Louey King?

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Teacher Answer Key

Puzzle 1: Crossword

1. FAMILIES
2. TEACHERS
3. HEAD TAX
4. EXCLUSION
5. RACISM
6. IMMIGRATION
7. REGISTER
8. DEPORTATION
9. JULY
10. HUMILIATION DAY

Code word: **DECLINE**

Puzzle 2: Cipher

1. RAILWAY
2. CERTIFICATES
3. AUTHORIZATIONS
4. JULY 1, 1923
5. POSTERS
6. SCARY
7. SURVEILLANCE
8. CONTROL
9. INTIMIDATION
10. MAY 14, 1947
11. 15

Code word: **CITIZENSHIP**

Puzzle 3: Scavenger hunt

1. Department of immigration and colonization
2. Lost or thrown out, either accidentally or because they were a reminder of discrimination for those who held them.
3. Mourning wreaths
4. A number, a photo, name, city, date, signature of Controller of Chinese Immigration, stamp
5. "If they don't understand the history and the significance of what we did, then they won't be able to defend our rights in the future if they are taken away again. It's not a birthright, believe me. Somebody paid for it."