



Overview

This project invites students to write a fact-based, geographical story about a Parks Canada-administered place that they discover through the Our Country Parks Canada Explorer Map. The project emphasizes tracking project progress through discrete steps, starting with map exploration of geographical features, story ideation, research, writing, and publishing. Students will connect geographical and historical facts to the imaginative work of storytelling. Finished stories will highlight and celebrate Canada's special places for their peers.

Time

Approximately one week or 5 sessions of working time.

Subject/topic

Social studies, geography, history, Canadian studies, narrative, storytelling, writing

Grade

6-8

Materials

- access to devices for Our Country Explorer Map
- Finding Canada Project Toolkit printouts
- paper for optional printing
- pens and other art materials for illustrations and good copy preparation

1. Reflection and Prediction

1. Use the **Project: Finding Canada Storymap** to introduce the scope and purpose of the project. Lead students through the **Launch Organizer** to access prior knowledge and experiences and set a baseline for what they will be looking for in their exploration of the Our Country Parks Canada Explorer.
2. Take time to review what goes into telling a good story. To develop working concepts of effective storytelling, use one of the **Map Stories** to carry out a shared reading together. Before the reading starts, ask students what they think makes a good story. You can also use one of the **Media Stories** as an example of non-fiction storytelling in magazine articles.
3. Before reading, ask:
 - What are the most important elements of a story?
 - What makes a story interesting?Answers can include interesting characters, detailed setting, creative description, a clear sense of conflict and resolution, and a coherent plot.
4. During the reading, pause periodically to ask what they think about different sections of the story. After the reading, revisit the features they named before reading and ask if they would like to change them, and whether the story they read met the criteria for a good story.
5. Let them know that for this project, they will be creating a fact-based geographical story, and that this means their story will be imaginative but grounded in accurate facts and features about a real place that is administered by Parks Canada. Provide access to the **Finding Canada Project Organizer**. Guide students through the steps for project completion, including researching and writing their story, as well as the criteria for excellence that will help them create a powerful geographical story.
6. Then, step back to have a longer discussion about what makes a geographical story different from other forms of storytelling. Help students arrive at the idea that in addition to the fundamental traits of good storytelling, geographical stories contain accurate facts and descriptions of geographical features, including landforms, climate, habitat and species relationships, as well as cultural elements such as politics and history.
7. Revisit the **Launch Organizer** and ask students to reconsider their choices about what makes a place special. Let them know that they will be choosing a special place connected to Parks Canada to write about next, and that their choices here can help guide their decision.

2. Select, Research, and Organize

1. Students can use the **Explorer Quiz** independently, in groups, or in a teacher-led class setting to learn more about how Parks Canada protects and promotes special places across the country, and to hear stories from different people about their personal perspectives on different sites. The **Theme Storymaps** provide information and examples of the wide range of experiences that define Parks Canada-administered places. Students can explore these in sequence or based on their results from the quiz.





Learning Objectives

- explore and reflect on first-person narratives about Parks Canada places
- use maps and geographic thinking (location, region, human-environment) to organize and reflect on different places and experiences
- choose one Parks Canada site using the Explorer to be the basis and inspiration for a fact-based geographical story
- write a story that includes the most important features of their Parks Canada site
- choose photographs or create art to support their story and cite sources
- show evidence through portfolio: facts, stories, and geography (map/locator)

Related Resources

Protecting Nature and Culture with Parks Canada: Giant Floor Map and Resource Guide

2. Provide access to the **Project Launch: Choosing a Site** worksheet. After walking through the criteria in the worksheet, introduce students to the interactive map. Allow students 45-60 minutes to navigate the interactive map, engage with sites and stories, and complete the steps outlined on the worksheet. When finished, they should have chosen a site and be ready to proceed to the next step of the project.
3. Provide access to the **Project Focus 1: Map** worksheet. Review the geographical features that they can research and integrate into their maps. Students will need access to an art or image editing app on their devices to complete the custom map worksheet image or print it out to modify as a hardcopy. Allow 45-60 minutes for students to complete their map worksheet.
4. The next step of the project is for students to connect their choice of place to a plausible experience to form the narrative basis of their story. Provide access to the **Project Focus 2: Story Experience**. To provide context about the kinds of experiences connected to their place, invite students to revisit the **Theme Storymaps** and to explore additional information about Parks Canada through **Media Stories** and **Related Resources**.
5. Students can next use **Project Focus 3: Details** to research and develop fact-based, descriptive language for the key elements of their story. To build student capacity, you may choose to model examples of the descriptive, sense-based language in the worksheet.
6. To integrate a meaningful Indigenous connection to their story planning, provide access to **Project Focus 4: Indigenous Connections**. Review the **Indigenous Voices Storymap** and revisit the related Map Stories. Review the protocol for consulting and acknowledging Indigenous sources and voices and the importance of respect, humility, and care when representing Indigenous communities. For additional support on respectful engagement with Indigenous perspectives, see **What Does Respectful Representation Look Like?**

3. Create and Finalize

1. Now that students have completed the pre-writing steps of the project, they should have all of the parts they need to create a complete draft. Provide access to **Project Focus 5: Story Structure** and ask students to bring together the work they have completed in previous steps into a story draft.
2. Once they are satisfied with their draft, students can pair up and do a round of peer editing using the **Revise and Share** worksheet.
3. Allowing time for a gallery walk or showcase event is a great way to celebrate student work.
4. Provide access to the **Exit Ticket** as a final reflection on the project experience.

