

Commemorate Canada - The Canadian Citizenship Act

Overview:

The purpose of this activity is to provide students with a better understanding of the concept of citizenship and, more specifically, to help them answer the question: What does it mean to be a Canadian citizen? Students will be asked to discuss an article and a video, and they will compare their understanding of citizenship with definitions provided by the *Citizenship Act*.

Time:

60 mins

Subject/topic:

History, Geography, Social studies, Civics

Grade:

7 - 12

Materials:

- Print or digital copies of *The Great Equalizer?* by Michela Rosano in the January/February 2022 issue of *Canadian Geographic* (page 27)
- A projector, SMART board, or another way of sharing the article and video
- Citizenship Act worksheet
- Paper
- Writing utensils

Learning objectives:

Students will:

- Understand the main components of the Canadian Citizenship Act.
- Develop definitions of the words "citizen," "refugee" and "permanent resident."
- List examples of the rights that all Canadian citizens share.

Lesson Description

Minds on:

Students will watch the GeoMinute video *The First Canadian* and will read the *Canadian Geographic* article *The Great Equalizer?*. Then, they will list any words or concepts that they do not understand and the teacher will lead a class discussion, providing clarification as needed. The teacher will guide the discussion towards the topic of citizenship.

Action:

As a class, students will reflect on the question, "What does it mean to be a Canadian citizen?" They will work together to build a list of rights they think all Canadian citizens should share. They will list the differences between a Canadian citizen, a refugee, and a permanent resident. In small groups, they will research the steps involved in obtaining Canadian citizenship.

Conclusion:

Students will regroup to share what they have learned and will consider how the information they found in their research compares to their initial class discussion on citizenship and the rights of Canadians.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Begin the lesson by explaining to students that they will be learning about the origins of the *Canadian Citizenship Act*, a federal law that came into effect in 1947 and outlined the criteria for obtaining Canadian citizenship.

As a class or individually, have students read *The Great Equalizer?* and watch *The First Canadian*. Have students write down words or concepts that they did not understand or that they wish to discuss further. Also, have students write down questions they have about Canadian citizenship.

Invite students to share what they wrote down with the class, and use their ideas to have a discussion about Canada's history and its residents. If students bring up questions about Indigenous Peoples living in Canada, explain that Indigenous Peoples were the very first residents of this land and that they followed rules around community membership that were established long before European settlers came to Canada and enacted the Canadian Citizenship Act. If students ask about the status of immigrants as Canadian citizens, inform them that there are certain eligibility criteria that must be met in order for them to apply for Canadian citizenship. Students will learn more about this in the next part of the lesson.

Next, make connections between students' ideas/questions/concerns and point out that the concepts they discussed are all important facets of citizenship, which is the legal relationship between an individual and a country. If students have specific questions regarding Canadian citizenship, remind them they will have the opportunity to research their questions in the next part of the lesson.

Commemorate Canada - The Canadian Citizenship Act

Connection to the Canadian Geography Framework:

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Patterns and trends
- Geographic perspective
- Spatial significance

Inquiry Process

- Formulate a question
- Gather and organize
- Interpret and analyze
- Evaluate and draw conclusions
- Communicate

Action

Now that students have an understanding of the origins of the *Canadian Citizenship Act*, ask them the following question: What does it mean to be a Canadian citizen? Have them each write down three ideas in answer to this question and invite them to share their ideas with the class or in groups while you make a master list or a spider diagram for later reference.

Next, ask students: What are the rights and freedoms of Canadian citizens? Write students' answers on the board as a word cloud.

For the final step in this research activity, have students come up with definitions for the words "refugee," "permanent resident," and "Canadian citizen." Invite students to share their answers and construct a single definition for each of the three words based on the class' input. Encourage students to research two other Canadian statuses or visas, and have them create definitions using the websites in the Sources and additional resources section at the end of this lesson plan for guidance.

Explain to students that they will compare their definitions against the government of Canada's official rulings on the matter. Break students into pairs or small groups, and instruct them to research:

- The official eligibility criteria for Canadian citizenship
- Examples of the rights and freedoms of Canadian citizens

Print out the Citizenship Act worksheet for your students to help them complete this part of the activity.

Conclusion and Consolidation

After the students have completed their research, ask them how the information they found compares to their initial class discussion, using their research to formulate objective responses. Lead an open discussion, inviting students to share any surprises they came across, any concerns that arose, or any additional questions they were left with after their research. The following questions can be used to stimulate discussion:

1. What have you learned about the differences between Canadian citizens, refugees, and permanent residents?
2. How does the Canadian Citizenship Act influence multiculturalism in Canada?
3. What is one thing that you didn't know about the Canadian Citizenship Act?

Extend your geographical thinking

- Students can use the Statistics Canada website to extend their learning by researching which areas of Canada have the highest numbers of immigrants.
- Have students choose another country and research their citizenship act, comparing the differences and similarities between Canada and the other country.
- Have another lesson with the students on why people choose to immigrate to Canada (push/pull factors).
- Students can use the Government of Canada websites to learn more about the Canadian Citizenship Act.



Commemorate Canada - The Canadian Citizenship Act



Modifications

- Students can complete this activity virtually.
- Students can complete this activity independently, rather than having class discussions, and they can complete the discussion questions at the end.
- Students can complete the discussion questions in small groups.

Assessment Opportunities

- Assess students' learning based on their participation in class discussions throughout the lesson.
- Assess students' learning based on completion of the discussion questions.
- Assess students' learning based on research and comparison.

Sources and additional resources

- [Government of Canada - Canadian Citizenship](#)
- [Citizenship Act](#)
- [Canadian Multiculturalism](#)
- [Government of Canada - Your rights and freedoms in Canada](#)



Citizenship Act worksheet

Canadian Status/Visa

Definition

Permanent resident	
Refugee	
Canadian citizen	
Choose a status or visa: _____	
Choose a status or visa: _____	

Official eligibility criteria for Canadian citizenship:

Examples of rights and freedoms: