

Heritage Fair

Lesson 1: What is Heritage Fair

Culminating Task

Students will...

- Understand what the word “Heritage” means, and connect to a Canadian perspective.
- Develop the ability to narrow down topics through the 5W questions.
- Explore topics of interest connected to Canadian heritage and focus one chosen topic to a researchable idea.

Materials:

- Chart paper/markers
- White Board/Chalk Board
- **Choose Your Topic** worksheet package

Definitions

- Within the lesson, please see the definitions for the following terms: **Heritage, Heritage Fair**

Setting the Stage

Write the word “Heritage” on a piece of chart paper or the classroom board. Ask students if any have an idea about what heritage means. Record ideas around the word on the board. If students are having difficulty coming up with ideas, or as they begin slowing down on contributions, rephrase the question to ask, “If someone asked about your heritage, what things might you answer?”. This should help activate new ideas. Continue to record ideas.

When students are done, write the definition for heritage on the board:

Heritage: those things which are passed down that combine together to help explain the history or identity of something.

Ask students what sorts of things can be passed down. While there will be many physical things students may identify, make sure that they understand that many things are also not tangible, such as language, stories, culture, traditions, etc. Our heritage helps define us, based on those things which have been both physically and intangibly shared with us.

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Have students individually create a list of personal interests, family stories and connections. It may help to start the off by asking for them to share ideas out loud, and some of the teacher's as well. In this case, interests can range from historical to present day – snowboarding, Fortnite, Dungeons & Dragons, Girl/Boy Scouts, 4H, favorite author/musician/entertainer, etc.

Direct Instruction

Inform students that for this unit, they are going to be preparing for Heritage Fair. If students are familiar with Science Fairs, explain that they are similar in nature except that Heritage Fairs look at Canadian elements of both historical and present-day interests (to the students). The organization, Canada's History, explains Heritage Fairs as:

The Heritage Fair Program encourages students to explore Canada's heritage and history in a fun and engaging learning environment. Students select a topic, decide on a key inquiry question, complete research, and summarize their findings through a format of their choice. Students present their findings to their classmates, families, and members of their community in a school- or community-based event.
<https://www.canadashistory.ca/education/heritage-fairs-and-young-citizens>

Instead of doing experiments, students research their topics, make connections, and present their results/findings.

Sometimes topics can be very broad. A good example of this would be a student choosing World War I as their topic. While easy to research, without narrowing it down to a more specific inquiry question, a student would be overwhelmed and have difficulty in being able to finish it. There are whole university courses and textbooks around the topic, and even those only touch on the possibilities. Students must learn how to narrow down their topic.

Narrowing down a topic is about asking questions, and we often assume students can do that. They do ask questions naturally on their own, but more often than not it is instinctual and not an actual thought out process.

Questions are naturally formed from **Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why**. One can play a few rounds of "Question" period to help students engage in asking good questions. There are different possible set-ups:

- a) Use a six-sided dice, each number corresponding to a type of question (5Ws+H)
- b) Write one of each of the question types on multiple cards, and randomly hand out

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- c) Write each question type on the board. As students come up with questions, put a tally mark under the type asked. The challenge is an equal amount have to be under each before that type may be asked again – only one **When** question can be asked until all of the others have been as well.

Once set up, provide the class with a single vocabulary word or idea. This may be from previous units or other classes, so that all students have some familiarity with the concept:

Example word: Mi'kmaq

Example questions: **Who** were the Mi'kmaq?

What did the Mi'kmaq eat?

When did the Mi'kmaq first come to Nova Scotia?

Where did the Mi'kmaq live?

Why did the Mi'kmaq move around during the seasons?

How did the Mi'kmaq survive the winter?

Record questions on the board or on chart paper, so that students can see them as examples (chart paper allows for later posting, or record online and create a document which students can access to see examples of each type of question if need be).

Once the class has a number of questions, the teacher may choose a new word, or add a new concept or theme to the previous one. For example, a grade 7 seven teacher may add the idea of Netukulimk to Mi'kmaq, to help students have narrower questions.

Guided Activity

As a class, have students revisit their topics of interest, and decide which ones they believe have a Canadian connection – allow them to add to their lists as well if they have new ideas. Ask students to share their topics - not all topics need to be historical, but should have a Canadian connection. All topics may be recorded on the board or chart paper, and after the process students may decide if some are distinctly not Canadian and circle/remove them (this can spark an interesting debate for students to justify the Canadian connection others might not be aware of).

Once suggestions have been offered, hand out the “Choosing Your Topic” worksheet. Students may choose topics from the board, or come up with new ones, that interest them and record them on their sheet. For each topic, they should try to come up with one question that helps narrow down the topic (and their potential research).

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Reflection

Students may reflect in writing or orally about the lesson through the following question:

Why is it important for me to be able to narrow down the focus of a topic?

How does asking questions help me to narrow down a topic?

To extend this activity, all student ideas may be simplified into one- or two-word answers, and entered online for a class word cloud for each question

Evaluation

Focus for this lesson should be on the activity and generating ideas.

If a student is having difficulty making a connection to the ideas, an interview activity could be added between students as a “Get to Know You” activity. This could tease out a student’s likes and dislikes and help give them a direction in their interests.

This lesson connects to most English Language Arts outcomes around idea planning and development. Educators may choose to use the reflection as an Exit Slip activity, as well as the reflective piece of the Choosing a Topic activity (Step 5: Looking Ahead).

Name: _____

Date: _____

Homeroom: _____

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Choosing Your Topic

You've brainstormed a lot of ideas for possible Heritage Fair projects. Now let's work together to find the best one for you!

Step 1: Brainstorm Your Favourites

Using your own ideas or those from the board, record eight ideas that you would be interested in exploring on your own. These can be big ideas, people, events, or anything related to history or heritage that interests you. Create a question for each topic that would help you focus your research?

Topic: _____

Question: _____

Topic: _____

Question: _____

Topic: _____

Question: _____

Topic: _____

Question: _____

Topic: _____

Question: _____

Topic: _____

Question: _____

Topic: _____

Question: _____

Topic: _____

Question: _____

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The Topic Filter

Now that you have brainstormed a number of topic ideas, it is time for you to narrow your ideas down, and come up with a final Heritage Fair question!

Step 2: Choose Your Top 3

Look over your list/web and choose the top three topics that you are interested in and want to look at more carefully.

Choice A:

Choice B:

Choice C:

Step 3: The Topic Filter

You will have one period to explore your three topics. You are searching the internet to see if there is **enough information and multiple websites** about each of your topics. You may wish to create a Google doc to record a short summary of each website and it's url so that you can revisit them easily for your final chosen topic.

As you complete your brief exploration, ask yourself the following questions for each idea:

1. Does this topic connect to Canadian history, heritage, or culture?
2. Am I really interested in learning more about this topic?
3. Is there enough information available for me to research it?
4. Can I create something exciting to share with others based on this topic?

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For each of your ideas, circle “Yes” or “No” in the table below:

Topic	Canadian Connection?	Personally Interesting?	Researchable?	Creative Possibilities?
	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

Step 4: Make Your Decision

Which topic scored the highest? Write your final choice below. If there’s a tie, think about which topic excites you most or feels most meaningful to explore.

Top Choice:

Step 5: Looking Ahead

Reflect on your choice by answering these questions:

1. What are you most excited to learn about this topic?
2. What challenges might you face when researching or presenting this topic?
3. What is one idea you already have for how to present your project?