

Heritage Fair

Lesson 1: What is Heritage Fair

Culminating Task

Students will...

- Understand what the word “Heritage” means, and connect to a Canadian perspective.
- Learn how to use the 5Ws + How to develop focused, relevant research 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
- **Heritage Fair Introduction** PowerPoint
- **The 5W’s: From Comprehension to Inquiry** PowerPoint
- **5Ws Story Worksheets:** *The Disappearance at Maplewood Library*; *The Mystery of the Missing Trophy*; *The Secret in the Old Attic*; Answer Keys
- **Choose Your Topic** worksheet package
- **The 5Ws + How: Heritage Fair Research Planner**
- Six-sided dice

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.

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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.

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).

At this point, show the introductory PowerPoint to help students visualize what Heritage Fair is and what is expected of them. This presentation provides an overview of the program, including examples of past topics, the inquiry-based approach, and the types of presentation formats students may choose.

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.

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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.

The 5W's + How: From Comprehension to Inquiry

To help students become more comfortable with asking different types of questions, begin by practicing the **5Ws (Who, What, When, Where, Why)** using short fictional stories. This gives students a low-stress way to build confidence identifying and answering questions before applying the same thinking to their own research ideas.

Write on the board “5Ws” and ask students what they are, and record. Ask students what the purpose of the 5Ws is (you may want to hint that by asking “What”, you are completing the purpose). Students should provide answers that lead to the idea of finding out information about something.

Using the first part of **The 5W's: From Comprehension to Inquiry PowerPoint (Part 1: Learning to Ask Great Questions for Comprehension)**, read the first story to students. Show them the five questions, and then allow them a few minutes to look for the answers as you show the story again. As a class, allow students to answer and check their answers. When all students have an understanding, allow them to read the next short story and again show them the questions. Allow them to discuss in partners or small groups before sharing their answers with the class. *These are both available as printable worksheets as well.*

If all students are comfortable, handout the **5W's Story Worksheet**, based on *The Secret in the Old Attic*. Display the story on the board as well. Read the story aloud as a class or have students read independently. Have students answer the questions independently on the worksheet which may be handed in for assessment. After completing the worksheet, briefly review the class's answers to check for understanding. Emphasize that these types of questions help uncover **key details**, which is also important in research.

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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Direct Instruction: Using the 5W's + How to Focus a Research Topic

Questions are naturally formed from **Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How**. Display the second part of the **The 5W's + How: From Comprehension to Inquiry** PowerPoint (*Part 2 From Understanding Stories to Asking Research Questions*), and introduce that another question they can ask is “**How**” (this allows for better facilitation of the optional extension activities. Explain to students that they can **use the same types of questions** to learn more about a real topic that interests them. For example, if they are curious about the "Mi'Kmaq", they might ask:

- **Who** were the Mi'kmaq?
- **What** did they eat?
- **When** did they come to Nova Scotia?
- **Where** did they live?
- **Why** did they move during the seasons?
- **How** did they survive the winter?

Using the slides, walk students through the different examples and invite them to share their own questions. While the slideshow includes sample questions, students may think of many others. Emphasize that there are often several possible questions for each of the 5Ws, and having more options can help them develop stronger questions and choose the one that best fits their project.

If not doing the Optional Extension (see below), hand out to students **The 5W's + How: Heritage Fair Research Planner**. Using their chosen Heritage Fair topic, have them create different questions to help focus the direction of their project. While students may be working on individual topics, this is still an excellent opportunity to collaborate and share ideas and develop the 5W's + How skills.

Optional Extension Activity: “Question Period” (if time allows)

This optional activity encourages students to practice asking thoughtful, well-formed questions using the 5W's + How. It's a great way to reinforce the idea that good research begins with strong questions.

Explain to students that they will be playing a question-building game to help them get more comfortable asking different types of questions. There are several ways to set up the game, depending on the time and materials you have available.

One way is to use a six-sided die, assigning each number to one of the question types: 1 for Who, 2 for What, 3 for When, 4 for Where, 5 for Why, and 6 for How. Students roll the die and must create a question that matches the type they roll.

Alternatively, you could write each of the question types—Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How—on individual cards and distribute them randomly. Students then ask a question based on the card they receive. Still another option is to write all six question types on the board and keep a tally. Each time a

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student asks a question, a mark is added under that type. The goal is to keep the number of questions balanced: once a particular type has been asked, it can't be used again until each of the others has been asked as well. For example, students may only ask one "When" question until all of the other types have at least one tally as well.

Once the setup is in place, provide the class with a common vocabulary word or concept. This could be from a previous unit, another subject area, or a topic most students are at least somewhat familiar with. For instance, the word "Mi'kmaq" might be chosen. Using the method chosen, students will take turns asking questions based on that topic. Sample questions might include: "Who were the Mi'kmaq?", "What did the Mi'kmaq eat?", "When did they first come to Nova Scotia?", "Where did they live?", "Why did they move around during the seasons?", or "How did they survive the winter?"

As students share their questions, record them on chart paper or a shared digital document. This creates a visual reference of strong question types that can be revisited later. Once students have generated a good variety of questions, you can choose to introduce a new word or concept to continue the activity. You might also deepen the task by adding a second theme to the original concept. For example, a Grade 7 teacher might combine "Mi'kmaq" with the idea of "Netukulimk" to guide students toward more specific and meaningful questions about sustainability and worldview.

This game not only helps students practice forming research questions, but also encourages them to think more critically about the kinds of information they are seeking—and how to get there.

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).

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The 5 W's Comprehension Worksheet

The Disappearance at Maplewood Library

It was a quiet Friday afternoon when Emily decided to stop by the Maplewood Library after school. She needed a few books for her history project and figured she'd be in and out in no time. As she walked between the tall shelves, she noticed Mr. Harris, the librarian, looking unusually nervous. He kept glancing toward the back room and checking his watch.

Curious, Emily wandered closer. She heard a faint thud from behind the door marked "*Staff Only*." Her heart pounded. Was someone back there? As she leaned in to listen, the door suddenly creaked open. A man in a dark jacket slipped out, carrying a box. He didn't see Emily as he hurried past, disappearing out the back exit.

When Emily peeked inside the room, she saw the library's donation jar — empty. The money that had been raised for new books was gone. She rushed to tell Mr. Harris, but when they returned, the room was empty.

"I knew something felt off," Mr. Harris muttered, shaking his head. "We'll have to check the security cameras."

Emily couldn't help but wonder — who was the man? What was in that box? And why would someone steal from a library?

Instructions:

Read the story carefully and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences where possible.

1. **Who** is the main character in the story?

2. **What** happened that caused the problem?

3. **When** did the event take place?

4. **Where** did the story occur?

5. **Why** was Emily curious about the back room?

Bonus Question:

If you were Emily, what would you do next?

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The 5 W's Comprehension Worksheet – Answer Key

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Instructions:

Read the story carefully and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences where possible.

1. **Who** is the main character in the story?

The main character in the story is Emily.

2. **What** happened that caused the problem?

A man stole the library's donation money from the back room.

3. **When** did the event take place?

The even took place on a quiet Friday afternoon after school.

4. **Where** did the story occur?

The story occurred at the Maplewood Library.

5. **Why** was Emily curious about the back room?

Emily noticed Mr. Harris looking nervous and heard a noise from the back room.

Bonus Question:

If you were Emily, what would you do next?

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The 5 W's Comprehension Worksheet

The Mystery of the Missing Trophy

The annual Greenwood Middle School talent show was always the highlight of the year. This year was no different — students had been practicing for weeks, hoping to win the coveted silver trophy.

On the night of the event, the gym buzzed with excitement as performers wowed the crowd with singing, dancing, and magic tricks. By the end of the show, everyone was eager to see who would take home the prize. But when Mrs. Patel, the principal, went to retrieve the trophy from her office, it was gone.

Panic spread quickly. “Who would take it?” whispered Mia, one of the finalists, glancing around the gym.

“Maybe it’s just a prank,” said her friend Jake. “But why would someone do that?”

The janitor, Mr. Lewis, mentioned that he had seen someone near the office earlier, but it was too dark to tell who it was. Mrs. Patel decided to delay the awards until the mystery could be solved.

As Mia looked around, her eyes landed on a shiny reflection peeking out from under the bleachers. Could it be the missing trophy? And more importantly, how did it get there?

Instructions:

Read the story carefully and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences where possible.

1. **Who** noticed that the trophy was missing?

2. **What** event was happening when the trophy disappeared?

3. **When** was the disappearance discovered?

4. **Where** was the trophy supposed to be?

5. **Why** did Mia look under the bleachers?

Bonus Question:

Why might the trophy be under the bleachers?

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Instructions:

Read the story carefully and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences where possible.

1. **Who** noticed that the trophy was missing?

Mrs. Patel, the principal, noticed the missing trophy.

2. **What** event was happening when the trophy disappeared?

The event was at the annual Greenwood Middle School talent show.

3. **When** was the disappearance discovered?

The disappearance was discovered at the end of the talent show when Mrs. Patel went to get the trophy.

4. **Where** was the trophy supposed to be?

The trophy was supposed to be in Mrs. Patel’s office.

5. **Why** did Mia look under the bleachers?

She looked under the bleachers because she noticed a shiny reflection coming from that area.

Bonus Question:

Why might the trophy be under the bleachers?

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The 5 W's Comprehension Worksheet

The Secret in the Old Attic

Liam had never been in his grandmother's attic before. She always said there was nothing but old junk up there. But on a rainy Saturday afternoon, with nothing else to do, curiosity got the better of him.

Climbing the creaky stairs, Liam's flashlight swept over stacks of dusty boxes and faded furniture. As he moved deeper into the attic, something caught his eye — a small wooden chest tucked behind an old rocking chair.

He knelt beside it and tried to lift the lid. It was locked. Liam's mind raced. What could be inside? And why had his grandmother kept it hidden all these years?

When he mentioned it at dinner, his grandmother's eyes widened, and she quickly changed the subject. "There's nothing important up there, Liam," she said with a forced smile.

But Liam wasn't convinced. The next day, he was determined to find the key. What secret was his grandmother trying to keep?

Instructions:

Read the story carefully and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences where possible.

1. **Who** discovered the wooden chest?

2. **What** did Liam find unusual in the attic?

3. **When** did Liam ask his grandmother about the chest?

4. **Where** did Liam find the locked chest?

5. **Why** was Liam curious about the chest?

Bonus Question:

If you were Liam, what would you do next to discover the secret?

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The 5 W's Comprehension Worksheet – Answer Key

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Instructions:

Read the story carefully and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences where possible.

1. **Who** discovered the wooden chest?

Liam discovered the wooden chest.

2. **What** did Liam find unusual in the attic?

He found a small wooden chest that was locked and hidden behind an old rocking chair.

3. **When** did Liam ask his grandmother about the chest?

He asked during dinner that evening.

4. **Where** did Liam find the locked chest?

The chest was in his grandmother's attic, behind a rocking chair.

5. **Why** was Liam curious about the chest?

His grandmother's reaction made him suspicious, and he wondered why she was hiding it.

Bonus Question:

If you were Liam, what would you do next to discover the secret?

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?

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The 5Ws + How:

Heritage Fair Research Planner

Now that you have explored how to create questions to direct research for a research topic, take a few minutes to generate questions for your Heritage Fair topic.

Remember: *Think on the example questions you have just seen. You are not answering the questions below, but creating your own questions for each of the 5Ws.*

Step 1: Choose a Topic

(Example: The Halifax Explosion, The Underground Railroad, Canadian Inventions, etc.)

My topic is: _____

Step 2: Brainstorm the 5Ws

- **Who** is important in this topic? *(Think about people, groups, or communities.)*

- **What** important events, ideas, or facts are part of this topic? *(Think about something that happened or was discovered.)*

- **When** did this happen? *(Think about a time or a period in history.)*

- **Where** did this take place? *(Think about a country, city, or important location.)*

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- **Why** is this topic important to learn about? (*Think about why your topic matters to people today.*)

- **How** did it happen, or how did it make a difference?

Step 3: Write a Focus Question

Use your 5Ws to help create a good research question.

(Example: "Why are dinosaur fossils found in Alberta's Badlands?")

My Focus Question is:

Tip

If you can answer your Focus Question by using your research, you are ready to begin!