

# Grade 6 - Our National Identity: Canada's Diverse Communities

Social Studies, Grades 1-6; History and Geography, Grades 7-8 (2013) Grade 6, Heritage and Identity: Communities in Canada, Past and Present

## Overview of Module

This teaching and learning example (TLE) allows students to explore the Aboriginal origin story of Turtle Island and Aboriginal perspectives on “Canadian identity.” Students will create a visual representation of their own identity, will reflect on the collective identity of all the students in the class, and consider how diverse communities have contributed to Canada’s national identity.

## Connections to Curriculum

The curriculum expectations addressed in this TLE are identified within the teaching and learning plan. The curriculum expectations, including examples and other supporting information, can be located in the Ontario Curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1-6; History and Geography, Grades 7-8 (2013), Grade 6, Heritage and Identity: Communities in Canada, Past and Present.

## Opportunities for Cross-curricular Connections

- Language: Grade 6 Media Literacy: students demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts
- The Arts: Grade 6 Visual Arts: students will apply the creative process to produce art works in a variety of traditional two- and three-dimensional forms, as well as multimedia art works, that communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings, using elements, principles, and techniques of visual arts as well as current media technologies

## Considerations for Planning

- Teachers may choose to begin the TLE with a short introductory task: “Whose land are you on?” Many students and community members are unaware of which traditional lands their school is located upon. Maps include: The [First Nations and Treaties Map of Ontario](http://www.ontario.ca/aboriginal/treaties) – a copy of which was sent to all schools – available at: <[www.ontario.ca/aboriginal/treaties](http://www.ontario.ca/aboriginal/treaties)>; or a historical map such as the one found at the [Canadian Museum of History](http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/VMNF/premieres_nations/en/map/index.shtml) web page: <[http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/VMNF/premieres\\_nations/en/map/index.shtml](http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/VMNF/premieres_nations/en/map/index.shtml)>

- It is important to remember that the Turtle Island origin story does not represent the beliefs of all Aboriginal communities. The Inuit and Aboriginal communities on the west coast of Canada have different origin stories.
- Teachers should be aware, and should state explicitly, that many Aboriginal communities do not necessarily see themselves as part of the "cultural mosaic" of Canada, but instead as a foundational nation with a distinct and separate world view and identity.
- Teacher may wish to designate a large space (e.g. bulletin board) to display the completed class mosaic in the shape of Turtle Island. Single mosaic tiles should be large enough for students to record adequate text and illustration (e.g. roughly 20cm/20cm).
- In order for rich and authentic sharing to occur during this lesson, the teacher must ensure a safe and caring environment exists; in which all cultures are acknowledged and celebrated. During the sharing stage of this lesson, teachers should encourage opportunities for students to elaborate on their own personal identity by modelling an inclusive class discussion. Teachers are encouraged to access [Stepping Stones: A Resource for Youth Development](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthopportunities/steppingstones/youth_policy.aspx), available at [http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthopportunities/steppingstones/youth\\_policy.aspx](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthopportunities/steppingstones/youth_policy.aspx). This resource provides information on the development of identity among children and youth.
- Students use the components of the social studies inquiry process to investigate, and to communicate their findings about, significant events, developments, and issues. By applying the inquiry process, students develop skills that they need in order to think critically, solve problems, make informed judgements, and communicate ideas.
- The social studies inquiry process consists of five components: formulating questions, gathering and organizing information, evidence, and/or data, interpreting and analysing information, evidence, and/or data, evaluating information, evidence, and/or data and drawing conclusions, communicating findings.
- It is important for teachers to understand that the inquiry process is not necessarily implemented in a linear fashion. Not all investigations will involve all five components; moreover, there are different entry points within the process.

## **Connections to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples and Perspectives Curriculum Connections**

North America is referred to as Turtle Island by many Aboriginal peoples. In the teachings of the Oneida people, a single turtle sacrificed its back for the formation of the land. It is one of several creation stories among Aboriginal communities that share a common theme of acknowledging and understanding the integral relationship that people share with the environment.

The Turtle Island story is a reflection of Aboriginal peoples' worldview of the land.

The story says that Aboriginal peoples shared Turtle Island with explorers and early settlers who relied on their knowledge and expertise of the land for survival. Though North America has since been divided into various countries, states, provinces and territories, it is important to acknowledge that these are political boundaries, and do not align with the Aboriginal view of Turtle Island.

The turtle mosaic that is created in this lesson is intended to illustrate that Turtle Island has been shared by Aboriginal peoples with diverse citizens.

**Cultural Implications:** Many different communities have made contributions to Canada’s development. As Canada’s first peoples, Aboriginal peoples shaped both historic and contemporary Canada. Concept of Social Studies Thinking (Continuity and Change) – What are the three most significant ways that Aboriginal peoples shaped Canada historically and currently? How has the relationship between Aboriginal communities and Europeans changed since the period of contact? Which culture or group – Aboriginal or European – now has impact on the other?

**Social Implications:** Many Aboriginal communities do not necessarily see themselves as part of the “cultural mosaic” of Canada, but instead as a foundational nation with a distinct and separate world view and identity. Concept of Social Studies Thinking (Interrelationships) - What images have become synonymous with Canada’s national identity? How do the media assist in developing a country’s national identity? How does your geographic region define and shape your own personal identity? What factors contribute to changing the identity of a region?

**Political Implications:** The voices of some communities are more influential than others in the development of national identity. Concept of Social Studies Thinking (Significance) – Why do we know more about some communities and their contributions to Canada than others? Should the Turtle Island origin story be taught alongside other creation stories in schools? Should it be mandatory for all students to learn about Aboriginal peoples and their contributions to Canada, past and present? How do we determine which communities are reflected in our national identity? How can identity serve to perpetuate positive and negative stereotyping? How does a nation’s identity impact citizen behaviour?

| Curriculum Overall Expectations   | Curriculum Specific Expectations  |
|---|---|
| <p>Social Studies – Grade 6: Strand A Heritage and Identity: Communities in Canada, Past and Present</p> <p><b>A1.</b> Application: assess contributions to Canadian identity made by various groups and by various features of Canadian communities and regions</p> <p><b>A1.1</b> explain how various features that</p> | <p>We are learning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe what a “Canadian identity” means and explain how it affects us personally</li> <li>• understand an Aboriginal origin story and Aboriginal perspectives on identity</li> <li>• identify how different groups and communities shape Canadian identity</li> </ul> <p><b>Sample Success Criteria</b></p> |

| Curriculum Overall Expectations  | Curriculum Specific Expectations   |
|--|--|
| <p>characterize a community can contribute to the identity and image of a country, and assess the contribution of some of these features to Canada’s image and identity</p> <p><b>A1.2</b> evaluate some of the contributions that various ethnic and/or religious groups have made to Canadian identity</p> <p><b>A3.</b> Understanding Context: demonstrate an understanding of significant experiences of, and major changes and aspects of life in, various historical and contemporary communities in Canada</p> <p><b>A3.3</b> identify various types of communities that have contributed to the development of Canada</p> <p><b>A3.8</b> identify and describe fundamental elements of Canadian identity</p> | <p>I will know I am successful when I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain the concept of national identity, and where I fit in that identity</li> <li>• consider how Aboriginal peoples may view a particular topic</li> <li>• explain how different groups and communities shape Canadian identity</li> </ul> |

## Getting Started

### Learner Readiness

- Students should have a basic understanding of how to identify implicit and explicit meaning.
- Students should know how to determine if all points of view are represented in the source material as a whole, and which, if any, are missing.
- Students will build upon their pre-existing knowledge of Aboriginal peoples in Canada as developed in the grade five curriculum, but teachers may choose to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the diversity within Aboriginal communities.

### Terminology

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turtle Island</li> <li>• diversity</li> <li>• inclusiveness</li> <li>• identity</li> <li>• heritage</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nation/national</li> <li>• implicit (what is implied)</li> <li>• explicit (what is obvious)</li> <li>• stereotypes</li> <li>• cultural mosaic</li> </ul> |
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## Materials

- large Turtle Island outline (Bristol board) cut into the same number of tiles as there are students in the class (including an additional tile that will be used to record the portrayal of Canada’s national identity depicted in the Minds On video)

| Minds On   | Connections   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Whole Class – What is our “Canadian identity”? (Brainstorm/Reflect)</b></p> <p>Teacher explains the concept of “Canadian identity” and then asks students to work in pairs or groups to generate ideas. Teacher may choose to show students a recent video clip that links to the issue of Canadian identity (e.g., on YouTube there are clips from the opening ceremonies of the Vancouver Olympic Games and the Toronto Pan Am/Parapan Am Games).</p> <p>The teacher debriefs and models how to collate responses to come up with a single comprehensive class definition.</p> <p>The teacher then asks students to think about their own personal and/or family identity and how that links to the Canadian identity. Students could record their reflections on a ‘my identity’ mind map. Debrief with large group could summarize common points that were linked to identity (i.e. Where I live, Where my family comes from, Foods I eat, etc.)</p> | <p>(Assessment; Tips; Differentiated Instruction)</p> <p><b>Learning Goal</b></p> <p>We are learning to describe what “Canadian identity” means and explain how it affects us personally.</p> <p><b>Differentiated Instruction</b></p> <p>ELL students may need support around new vocabulary in this TLE. Learning Goal</p> <p>We are learning to describe what “Canadian identity” means and explain how it affects us personally.</p> <p><b>Differentiated Instruction</b></p> <p>ELL students may need support around new vocabulary in this TLE.</p> |

| Action!  | Connections   |
|--|---|
| <p>The teacher begins by explaining the Aboriginal origin story of Turtle Island. Teacher and students reflect on how this compares to the concept of “Canadian identity” the class explored previously.</p> | <p>(Assessment; Tips; Differentiated Instruction)</p> <p><b>Learning goal</b></p> <p>We are learning to identify how different groups</p> |

| <b>Action!</b>   | <b>Connections</b>   |
|--|--|
| <p>In what ways is the story different? In what ways is it the same?</p> <p>The teacher should then tell and model the task to come – which is that students will create a mosaic tile that represents their own identity. When all the class tiles are combined, the class will have created the “Canadian identity” for the class, represented through all the tiles on the turtle.</p> <p>On chart paper, groups of four students generate a list of groups, people, places, events and other factors that shape the identity of Canada. Students then rank these factors from the most significant factor (in shaping our identities as Canadians) to the least and prepare to explain their rationale for their ranking to the rest of the class.</p> <p>Large group debrief of each group’s work. Students identify the criteria they used to determine the ranking.</p> <p>Students then will reflect on their earlier work on personal identity, and revise that description based on this new learning.</p> | <p>and communities shape Canadian identity.</p> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <p>Teacher will create a large-scale turtle cut into the same number of tiles as there are students in the class. (tiles should be roughly equal in size).</p> <p>Success criteria for each of the Social Studies, History and Geography Thinking Concepts has been produced by OESSTA and is available at</p> <p>Teacher writes criteria on chart paper for students to use throughout the lesson as reference.</p> <p><b>A for L:</b> Teacher should circulate and check students understanding of significance criteria. Redirect as required</p> |

| <b>Consolidation</b>  | <b>Connections</b>  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Whole Class – Acknowledging Diversity in Canada (Class Discussion)</b></p> <p>Students will be asked to translate their own personal identity using a combination of illustrations and text onto a pre-cut mosaic tile. During consolidation all tiles will come together to form Turtle Island.</p> <p>Teacher will ask students to come up to the front</p> | <p>(Assessment; Tips; Differentiated Instruction; Learning Goals)</p> <p><b>Tip:</b></p> <p>During student observation of class mosaic, the teacher may wish to guide student thinking by having students compare, contrast and connect to what they observe.</p> |

| Consolidation  | Connections   |
|--|---|
| <p>of the class to assemble the collective mosaic. Teacher will provide students with enough time to explore the variety of contributions to Canada's national identity made by their classmates. Teacher gives each student 2-3 sticky notes to record anything students see as different or common amongst the tiles. Teacher models sorting the sticky notes into broad observations and guides students in drawing conclusions about Canadian identity of the class.</p> <p>Teacher will explain why the turtle was used as a symbol of the class' collective identity.</p> <p>Teacher should state explicitly that most Aboriginal communities do not necessarily see themselves as part of the "cultural mosaic" of Canada, but instead as a foundational nation with a distinct and separate world view and identity.</p> | <p><b>A for L:</b> Teacher will give feedback on the student's responses to the questions based on the success criteria.</p> <p><b>A as L:</b> Students can be asked to reflect on how their understanding of personal and Canadian identity grew and/or changed during this TLE. As well, how did the tasks match their learning style? How could they better prepare for similar tasks in future?</p> |

## Related Websites/Resources

8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada and the Way Forward. (2012). CBC video series.

Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework. (2007). Ontario Ministry of Education.

Saul, John Raulston. (2008). A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada. Toronto: Viking Canada. (Academic book that amongst other things explores the misappropriation of Aboriginal culture in Canada.

Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development. (2011). Ministry of Children and Youth Services Ontario.

[Turtle Island Indigenous Education Corporation](http://turtleislandeducate.com/about/turtle_island), <[http://turtleislandeducate.com/about/turtle\\_island](http://turtleislandeducate.com/about/turtle_island)>

Yolen, Jane, and David Yannen. (1996). Encounter. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Mifflin. (Picture book)