

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Commemorate Canada – Bluenose'
Issue March/April 2021



Time:

90 Minutes

Developed by:

Canadian Geographic Education

Overview/focus question:

In this lesson plan, students will explore symbolism and why the Bluenose is such an important symbol of Canada. What is the importance of the Bluenose? Why was it significant at the time during which it was an active vessel? What other events played an important role in people connecting with the Bluenose? What are other symbols of Canada? What could be an important symbol for people today?

Subject/topic:

Geography, History

Grade level:

Grade 6 - 12

Learning Goals

- Students will be able to identify symbols that represent all provinces and territories in Canada.
- Students will understand the importance of the Bluenose.
- Students will learn about the historical importance of events surrounding the fame of the Bluenose.
- Students will come up with a new symbol that represents our current time period.

Materials Needed

- Print or online copies of “[Behind the sails](#)” by Karen Pinchin in the March/April 2021 edition of *Canadian Geographic* (pages 40-51)
- Board or a piece of chart paper
- Computer or another electronic device for research
- Paper for posters

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Connection to the Canadian Geography Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Spatial significance
- Interrelationships
- Geographic perspective

Inquiry Process

- Ask geographic questions
- Interpret and analyze
- Communicate
- Reflect and respond

Geospatial Skills

- Foundational elements
- Spatial representations

Lesson Description

Minds on

Students will learn about the importance of symbols in the field of geography and how symbols are used as physical representations. The class will compile a list of symbols that are used to represent Canada and each province and territory, and they will learn why these are significant to each location.

Action

Students will read the *Canadian Geographic* article “[Behind the sails](#)” by Karen Pinchin and discuss the different symbols that are in the article, and why they are important to Canada. Students will read about the Bluenose’s rise to fame. Next, students will find a new symbol that could be used to unite Canada in the present.

Conclusion

Students will present their ideas to the class, and discuss the different symbols that each student chose. Students will then create a visual for their symbol to display in the class or the school.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Start by asking students the following questions to get them thinking about symbols:

- What is a symbol?
- Why are symbols important?
- What are some examples of symbols you see in your daily life? Where do you see them?

After discussing symbols in a general sense, switch the conversation to geographical symbols. Where in geography do we use symbols? Discuss how symbols are often used by cartographers while drawing maps to represent different physical features, such as shapes being used to represent cities, or different lines used to symbolize roads, rivers or elevation. Colours are used to represent areas such as water or forests.

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Next, ask students how symbols are used outside of cartography. Symbols can be things that can represent locations, such as symbols that represent Canada as a whole, or an individual province or territory. What is a symbol that could represent Canada? Some examples include the maple leaf, the beaver, the national anthem, the national flag, etc.

On the board or on a piece of chart paper, make a list of every province and territory. As a class, without doing any research, brainstorm as many symbols for each province and territory as you can, making note of why students think these symbols are relevant.

After you have compiled a list, compare the different symbols and talk about how physical and cultural geography have had an impact on the symbols of each province and territory.

Action

As a class, or independently, read the *Canadian Geographic* article “[Behind the sails](#)” by Karen Pinchin. Once everyone has finished reading, have a brief discussion about the article. Ask students to discuss any information they found interesting, specifically about symbols. What different symbols were mentioned in this article? The Bluenose itself was an important symbol of Canada during the time period mentioned in the article because it gave the country something to come together to support. It began as an important symbol of Nova Scotia but soon became something the entire country looked toward. As a class, list the reasons the Bluenose was so important at this time and the reasons Canada came together to support the Bluenose. These reasons should include the following:

- The human and economic losses of the First World War
- Spanish Flu pandemic
- Localized economic depression
- Industrial revolution
- Boom of technology

Explain that Canadians came together and cheered on the Bluenose as a symbol of hope and progress for the country. The Bluenose gave people something positive to focus on during difficult times. There were many different challenges the country was facing, and this gave them promise. There are many similarities between the 1920s and 2020/2021. As a class, come up with a list of the similarities in a class discussion. To help connect the period of the Bluenose to the present, students will complete a research project, where they are to find something that they think is a symbol similar to the Bluenose but for the year 2021 (if students wish to look back on the year of 2020 instead of 2021, they may choose to do so). Students can complete this project individually or with partners in whichever way the students want, but they must answer the following questions:

1. What is a symbol of hope for Canada in 2020/2021?
2. How would this symbol bring the country together?
3. How does this symbol connect all different physical and cultural geographies of Canada?

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Conclusion and Consolidation

After students have had a chance to come up with a new symbol, and have answered the three main questions, ask them to share their ideas with the class. Provide students with feedback and have the class discuss the different symbols that students come up with. Have students use their ideas to create a visual representation, such as a poster or a collage to display in your classroom, school, or for them to have at home. Use these posters as a constant reminder of hope and promise for a bright future.

Extend your geographical thinking

- Students can create a campaign for the school to participate in by having each class create a symbol.
- The class can agree on a symbol and use it as a class symbol.
- Students can be assigned different provinces and territories to come up with specific symbols for their location, similar to how the Bluenose is very representative of Nova Scotia.

Modifications

- Students can participate in a debate about the symbols.
- For the research project, students can choose a province or territory to focus on, rather than the country as a whole.
- Students can create a presentation and formally present their symbols to the class.
- The whole class can complete this project together.
- Students can complete this activity virtually.
- Presentations can be done as a gallery walk rather than individual group presentations.
- Have students use a graphic organizer to help them note important information in the article.

Assessment Opportunities

- Assess students' learning based on their participation in discussions throughout the lesson.
- Assess students' learning through the completion of the assignment.
- Assess students' oral presentation of their ideas.
- This activity could be handed in for a formal assessment.