

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Commemorate Canada - British
Columbia joining Confederation'
Issue July/August 2021



Time:

60 minutes

Developed by:

Canadian Geographic Education

Overview/focus question:

Why was it important for British Columbia to join the Dominion of Canada? What different opinions were there about the future of British Columbia before it joined the Dominion of Canada? What physical geography made British Columbia important to Canada? What would Canada look like now if British Columbia never joined Canada?

Subject/topic:

Geography, History

Grade level:

Grade 6-10

Learning Goals

Students will

- Learn why British Columbia was an important piece in forming the Dominion of Canada.
- Explore the different perspectives of those countries who wanted British Columbia to join them before the colony ultimately joined Canada.
- Consider what Canada would have been like without British Columbia.

Materials Needed

- Print or online copies of "A crucial piece" by Leslie Anthony in the July/August 2021 edition of *Canadian Geographic* (pages 26-27)
- A projector
- Computers or devices for internet research (optional)
- British Columbia: The Crucial Piece of the Puzzle worksheet

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Commemorate Canada - British
Columbia joining Confederation'
Issue July/August 2021



Connection to the Canadian Geography Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Spatial significance
- Patterns and trends
- 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 look at a map of the Dominion of Canada when it was first established and as provinces began to form. The class will then read "A crucial piece" by Leslie Anthony and have a discussion about the map that shows the electoral districts of British Columbia.

Action

Students will be assigned to either represent Canada, the United States or the United Kingdom to come up with reasons for why British Columbia should be a part of their nation. In groups, students will present their ideas to the class.

Conclusion

Students will consider what Canada would be like today if British Columbia was not a part of our country.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Start the lesson by talking about the 13 provinces and territories of Canada. Ask your students to name all 13 and start brainstorming things that make each province or territory unique. These things can include the physical and natural landscape, where it is located in Canada, what natural resources it has available, what drives its economy, the different cultures present in the province or territory, etc. Explain that when Canada was first established as a country in the British Commonwealth, its formal title was the Dominion of Canada, but now we just refer to our country as Canada.

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Commemorate Canada - British
Columbia joining Confederation'
Issue July/August 2021



Using [The Atlas of Canada - Territorial Evolution](#) map, you are going to explore the development of the provinces. To do this, use the play or pause button to control which time period to stop and look at. You can stop and read the information displayed on the map as a class. Begin with the first time period and display the map of Canada in 1867, when the Dominion of Canada was first formed, and then view the map of Canada in 1870 when Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories were incorporated into Canada and Manitoba was created as the fifth province. Give students some time to look at these two maps. After students have seen these two maps, ask them what part of our current Canada was next to join. Ask them if it was important for British Columbia to join next or if they believe another province or territory would have been more important. Let students brainstorm reasons why and share with the class.

As a class or in small groups, have your students read "A crucial piece" by Leslie Anthony in the July/August 2021 edition of *Canadian Geographic* (pages 26-27). Encourage students to take notes throughout reading to remember important information. Project the article so that students can see the crucial piece of Canada, British Columbia. Once students have all read the article, have another discussion on the importance of British Columbia as this puzzle piece. As a class, explore the map pictured in the article, which displays the first electoral districts of British Columbia in 1871.

Action

Now that students understand that there was a chance that British Columbia could not have joined the Dominion of Canada in 1871, they are going to consider the perspectives of each country that wanted British Columbia, which included Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom (who wanted to keep British Columbia under them as a colony). Students will also reflect on what our country would look like now if British Columbia never joined the Dominion of Canada.

Assign students individually or in pairs to either consider the perspective of Canada, the United States or the United Kingdom in 1871. They are going to come up with at least five reasons why British Columbia should belong to their country as if they were pitching this to British Columbia before the colony joined Canada. Students should consider the physical and cultural geography while coming up with their reasoning. Students can do research to support their ideas using a computer or an electronic device.

Now that students have created their lists, instruct all students assigned to the same country to join together and share their ideas. Give students approximately 10 minutes to discuss their ideas as a group before asking each group to present their reasons as to why British Columbia should join or stay with their country. Have a discussion as a class about each perspective and have a vote, based on groups' reasons, on which country they would choose for British Columbia to join if it was 1871.

Conclusion and Consolidation

After students have created their list of reasons why British Columbia should join their country and shared their ideas, have them use their worksheets to brainstorm how our country would be different if either the United States or the United Kingdom had taken or kept British Columbia. Have students hand in their worksheets as an exit slip at the end of class.

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Commemorate Canada - British
Columbia joining Confederation'
Issue July/August 2021



Extend your geographical thinking

- Students can create posters for their country and try to sway their classmates for British Columbia to join them.
- Organize a friendly debate between the three groups.

Modifications

- Complete the worksheet as a class or in the three groups.
- Students can complete this activity virtually.
- Students can complete the whole activity independently rather than having class discussions.

Assessment Opportunities

- Assess students' learning based on their participation in discussion throughout the lesson.
- Assess students' learning through the completion of the worksheet.
- Assess students' group presentations and their ideas.
- The worksheet could be handed in for a formal assessment.

Sources and Additional resources

- Visit the [Atlas of Canada - Territorial Evolution from 1867 to 2017](#) to explore the evolution of political boundaries in Canada.

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Commemorate Canada - British Columbia joining Confederation'
Issue July/August 2021



BRITISH COLUMBIA: THE CRUCIAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Perspective: _____

Why British Columbia should be a part of my country:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Consider the following:

- Physical geography
- Trading routes
- Cultural geography
- Tourism
- Imports/exports

What Canada would be like without British Columbia:

