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# LESSON 2: CANADIAN IDENTITY AND THE GRAND CANADIAN NARRATIVE

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## OUTCOMES

Students will be able to . . .

- explain the concept of a grand narrative;
- identify the short & long term causes of historical events (Cause & Consequence);
- identify the immediate and delayed, intended and unintended consequences of historical events (Cause & Consequence);
- describe Canadian identity as it relates to the grand Canadian narrative (Evidence).

## MATERIALS

- **BLM #2.1** – Event Graphic Organizer (one per student)
- **Rubric #2.1** – Event Graphic Organizer (1 per student)
- World map (large classroom map is preferable)
- Post-it notes
  - Arrows
  - Squares
- List of personality trait adjectives (should contain both positive and negative traits)
- Chart paper
- **BLM #2.2** – Assessing Claims (1 per student)
- **Rubric #2.2** – Assessing Claims (1 per student)

## SUGGESTED TIME FRAME

- 160 minutes (2x 80 minute blocks)
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## LESSON OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will be introduced to the concept of a “grand narrative” and explore some of the events traditionally included in Canada’s grand narrative.

## PROCESS

### 1. Introduction (*Day 1 - 3 minutes*)

- Explain to students that a grand narrative is a single story to describe an experience. This experience could be that of a single person, group or even nation. These stories are shaped by the events we choose to acknowledge and how we interpret them. On a larger scale, national narratives are portrayed through textbooks, literature, art and even film.
- Explain that in this lesson students will be looking at some of the events from the First World War to the Second World War that are typically included in the grand Canadian narrative.

### 2. Creating a class timeline (*Day 1 - 40 minutes*)

- Before students arrive, have a timeline set up along one or more walls of the classroom. There should not be any events on the timeline and it should begin at 1914 (beginning of the First World War) and end in 1945 (opening of the Second World War).
- Assign each student one of the following events of the grand Canadian narrative. As there are 16 events, it is likely that each event will be investigated by at least 2 students. Ask them to explore the secondary source material that accompanies each event on the digital timeline. As they do so they should complete **BLM #2.1** for their assigned event. Students should note that in many event articles, other events are



mentioned (e.g. the Halifax explosion mentions the War Measures Act). Students should also be creating additional BLM #2.1s for these events.

- iii. Be sure to hand out a copy of “**Rubric #2.1** – Event Graphic Organizer” so that students understand the assessment criteria.

FIRST WORLD WAR EVENTS	INTERWAR YEARS EVENTS	SECOND WORLD WAR EVENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Beginning of the First World War</i></li> <li>• <i>Second Battle of Ypres</i></li> <li>• <i>Beaumont Hamel and the Battle of the Somme</i></li> <li>• <i>Battle of Vimy Ridge</i></li> <li>• <i>Battle of Passchendaele</i></li> <li>• <i>Halifax Explosion</i></li> <li>• <i>Hundred Days Offensive and Armistice Day</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>First election where women can exercise the right to vote</i></li> <li>• <i>Founding of the Canadian Legion</i></li> <li>• <i>The 1930s (Great Depression and Statute of Westminster)</i></li> <li>• <i>Unveiling of the Vimy Memorial and the Vimy Pilgrimage</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Canada declares war and joins the Second World War</i></li> <li>• <i>Dieppe Raid</i></li> <li>• <i>Invasion of Sicily and the Italian Campaign</i></li> <li>• <i>D-Day and the Normandy Campaign</i></li> <li>• <i>Victory in Europe Day</i></li> </ul>

- iv. Once all students have completed their graphic organizers, place them in the appropriate order on the class timeline. Additionally, students should use an arrow post-it note to indicate on the classroom map where their event occurred.

**3. Defining a Canadian Identity (Day 1 - 37 minutes)**

- i. Divide students into groups of 3-4 and hand them a stack of small post-it notes and a list of personality traits (various lists can be found via an internet search). Explain to them that they will be analyzing each event on the timeline in order to determine how it influenced Canadian identity.
- ii. Ask the groups to read the event graphic organizer for each event on the class timeline. As a group, discuss what the event might indicate about a Canadian identity. Choose one personality trait from the list and write it on a post-it note. If the trait is positive, stick it above the event on the timeline. If the trait is negative, stick it below the event on the timeline. Repeat the process until all students have analyzed each event. Try to ensure that as students progress through each event they are selecting different adjectives to describe identity. For example, if the first group selected “brave” as their trait, future groups should not write “brave.” They must choose a different word (e.g. determined, courageous, etc.).
- iii. Once students have explored all the events on the timeline, ask them to locate the event they were responsible for in Task #2. Ask students to read all the traits on the post-it notes and select the one they believe best reflects the Canadian identity in reference to that event.
- iv. Create an identity chart for Canada on a piece of chart paper at the front. Ask students to contribute the trait they chose from all the post-its related to their event. As students share they should also explain their rationale for choosing that particular trait to the class.

**4. Supporting claims of Canadian identity (Day 2 – 65 minutes)**

- i. Tell students that they will now be investigating the trait they put forth in the Canadian identity chart activity (i.e. the trait associated with their assigned event). More specifically, they will be working backwards from the secondary source material to assess the veracity of the identity trait. If there is evidence to support the claim we call it corroborating evidence. If there is evidence to refute the claim we call it contradictory evidence.



- ii. Ask students to revisit the class timeline to identify four events where they think Canadians displayed the assigned trait. Encourage students to choose events from First World War, the Interwar Years, and the Second World War - they should not stick to just one era. Once they have identified their four events they must explore the secondary sources related to each event to help prove or disprove this hypothesis of the Canadian identity trait. They should use **BLM #2.2** to record their findings.
  - Be sure to hand out a copy of “**Rubric #2.2 – Assessing Claims**” so that students understand the assessment criteria.
- iii. Once students have conducted their research they should briefly share their findings with the class and refine the Canadian identity chart that the class constructed.

**5. Reflection (Day 2 – 15 minutes)**

- i. Either as a class discussion or individual written compositions have students reflect on one of the following questions:
  - Does your personal Canadian identity (see Lesson #1) match with what the class determined Canadian identity to be? Explain.
  - Do you think identity is formed more through conflict or peacetime? Explain.