



Grades 4 to 6 | Social Studies

Activity Plan: South Asian Canadians: People over Policy



**SOUTH ASIAN CANADIAN
LEGACY PROJECT**



**SOUTH ASIAN
STUDIES INSTITUTE**
University of the Fraser Valley



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www.saffronthreads.ca

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Overview

Big question

Are Canada's immigration policies fair?

Activity description

Students will participate in research about past discriminatory government policies toward South Asian Canadians through a jigsaw learning strategy. They present their learning to "home groups" and co-operatively develop a timeline representing information from the provided resources. Individual students will reflect on their own opinions and values.

Grades and curricular area(s)

- Grade 4 to Grade 6
- Social Studies

Big ideas

Social Studies	
Grade 4	Demographic changes in North America created shifts in economic and political power.
Grade 5	Canada's policies and treatment of minority peoples have negative and positive legacies.
	Immigration and multiculturalism continue to shape Canadian society and identity.
Grade 6	Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and freedoms.

Curricular competencies

Social Studies	
Grade 4	Make ethical judgments about events, decisions, or actions that consider the conditions of a particular time and place
Grade 5	Make ethical judgments about events, decisions, or actions that consider the conditions of a particular time and place, and assess appropriate ways to respond
Grade 6	

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Materials/Resources

- Map of the world
- Chart paper, poster board, markers, Post-it notes
- Laptops/iPad for sharing information with class
- [South Asian Canadians backgrounder](#)
- [Time Shuffle Card game](#)

Articles

Group	Article
A	Komagata Maru Backgrounder or The Sikh Migrants Who Challenged Canadian Immigration Law , Historica Canada (7:01)
B	Canadian Immigration Policy Backgrounder
C	Early Immigration of South Asian Canadians Backgrounder

Videos

- [A Short Documentary on the Gur Sikh Temple, National Historic Site and Sikh Heritage Museum](#) (6:12)
- [Komagata Maru: Why the Apology Matters a Century Later](#), CTV News (1:49)
- [The Sikh Migrants Who Challenged Canadian Immigration Law](#), Historica Canada (7:01)

Templates

- [Who Are South Asian Canadians—5Ws](#)
- [Jigsaw Reading: Expert Group](#)
- [Jigsaw Reading: Home Group](#)

Kick Off and Connect

Step 1

Begin with a quick class discussion on what countries students' families are from, if known, to introduce the term "immigration."

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Step 2

Have students participate in a “blind vote” on immigration, putting their heads down, closing their eyes, or voting through an anonymous polling system (virtual or paper). Students answer yes or no to the following questions, and you record the numbers on the board or virtually:

- Does Canada welcome people who want to come here?
- Has Canada always welcomed people who want to come here?
- Does Canada now treat immigrants fairly when they arrive here?
- Has Canada always treated immigrants fairly when they arrive here?

After students vote, have a class discussion on the experiences of immigrants from South Asia by using an “I do, we do, you do” approach (teacher demonstrates, class does together, students do alone or in groups).

Step 3

As a class, read through the South Asian Canadians backgrounder, stopping along the way to so students can record the key points on their [“Who are South Asian Canadians—5Ws”](#) handout.

Model adding some information to the sheet (e.g., Who? South Asian Canadians). Then, as the activity progresses, prompt students so they know what information to fill in. This will also help students understand what to do in the jigsaw activity. By the end of the activity, students may be adding their own information to the sheet. Mention that students will fill in the ‘what’ at the end of the activity.

You may also choose to have students play the [Time Shuffle card game](#) to learn about South Asian Canadians.

Explore and Engage

Step 1

Introduce the jigsaw activity and the topic, South Asian Canadians: People over Policy.

- We’ll be looking at three articles on South Asian Canadians to learn more about their experiences immigrating to Canada. Each member of your home group will read one article. You’ll then meet up with readers of the same article from other groups to discuss it. The discussion will help you understand what you’ve read and summarize the key points, making you the “expert” on that article. You’ll then present a summary of your article to your home group.

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Step 2

Assign each student to a home group of 4 to 6 students with a range of reading abilities.

Step 3

In each home group, assign one of the three articles (A–C) listed in the [Materials/Resources](#) section to each student. Each group will have at least one article being read by two people.

Step 4

Create “expert groups” consisting of students from across the home groups who will read the same selection (i.e., all “A” students from across home groups will gather to read article A together, all “B” students will gather to read article B, and so on.)

Step 5

As a class, develop a schedule for the various parts of the jigsaw activity. For example, 30 minutes to read individually, 30 minutes to discuss in their expert groups, and 1 hour to discuss in their home groups. students a framework for managing their time on the various parts of the jigsaw activity.

Step 6

Give students the Jigsaw Reading: Expert Group handout for gathering key information from their article.

Step 7

Students return to their groups. Each group member presents to their group what they learned from their reading. Remind students that they are responsible for learning all of the content provided by their home group members.

Step 8

Each home group records their information on the Jigsaw Reading: Home Group handout. The group will then create a timeline of events based on information from all of the articles.

Wrap-Up and Assess

Step 1

Ask students to imagine that they are a South Asian person living in the time they have just learned about. Provide each student with a Post-it note and have them write details about their person on their Post-it note, such as name, age, gender and job.

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Step 2

Have each group display their timeline around the room. Then have students do a gallery walk of the timelines. Each student chooses one event on one timeline to add their Post-it note to.

Step 3

Ask students to think about their person and the time they (the person) lived in. Ask, “What one word comes into your mind about your experience? Take a minute to feel into the word that wants to be spoken.”

You may want the whole class to sit in a circle and have the students speak their word into the circle, one by one. Students do not need to raise their hand. It will happen organically. When you sense a pause, say your word. You may want to go first.

Students then complete their Who are South Asian Canadians —5Ws by filling in the Fill ‘what’ column.

Step 4

Have students respond to the following questions, either in their journal or on chart paper or whiteboards around the room. Students add their responses under each question:

- How did Canada’s immigration policies of the time affect your person?
- Do you think the policies should have been different? In what way?
- Were there other ways in which your person was unfairly treated? How did this affect you?
- Does unfair treatment of people in Canada still exist today? Is there unfair treatment in our community or school?
- What can you do to help change this?

Step 5

Have the class vote again on the questions you asked at the beginning of the activity:

- Does Canada welcome people who want to come here?
- Has Canada always welcomed people who want to come here?
- Does Canada now treat immigrants fairly when they arrive here?
- Has Canada always treated immigrants fairly when they arrive here?

Discuss how and why votes may have changed based on the information the students have learned.

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Assessment

With students, co-create a peer assessment rubric for their timelines.

Assess students on their participation and determine their understanding through their journal entries or class participation.

Extend and Transform

To help students develop more complex understandings of the histories and lives of South Asian Canadians, consider moving beyond the research portion of the activity plan. Ask them what they wonder about the experiences of South Asian Canadians, both in the past and present times. Provide the class an opportunity to extend their learning with a project of hope, excellence, and resilience.

With the class, watch this video:

- [A Short Documentary on the Gur Sikh Temple, National Historic Site and Sikh Heritage Museum](#) (6:12)

Ask students:

- How might I apply my learning about South Asian Canadian experiences to my community?
- What can I do for my community that honours South Asian Canadians?
- What is your vision of Canadian identity after learning about the mistakes of the past?

You may want to brainstorm and reach a consensus on a whole class project or allow students to work on separate group projects.

You may also choose to show all (or part of) [Solidarity Lives \(14:04\)](#), a longer video about historic sites in BC.

Grade 5 and 6 students may want to investigate other violations of human rights and different human rights laws and conventions (e.g., Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Name: _____

Who Are South Asian Canadians—5Ws

WHO?	
WHERE are the countries that South Asian Canadians come from?	
WHEN did they first come to Canada?	
WHY did they come?	
WHAT were their experiences as new immigrants to Canada?	

Name: _____

Expert group: _____

Jigsaw Reading: Expert Group

WHO	
WHAT	
WHEN	
WHERE	
WHY	

Name: _____

Jigsaw Reading: Home Group

Article	Main idea(s)	I still wonder...
A		
B		
C		