



**Grades 7 to 9 | Social Studies and ADST**

# **Activity Plan: Design a South Asian Museum Exhibit**

**SOUTH ASIAN CANADIAN  
LEGACY PROJECT**



**SOUTH ASIAN  
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OF THE FRASER VALLEY**

# Activity Plan: Design a South Asian Museum Exhibit

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**Visit the Saffron Threads website for more educational resources:**

[www.saffronthreads.ca](http://www.saffronthreads.ca)

## Activity Plan: Design a South Asian Museum Exhibit

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### Overview

#### Big question

What is the best way to tell the story of the South Asian community's experience in our community, town, city, or province?

#### Activity description

Students will discuss their local community, town, city or province with an emphasis on the existence of South Asian culture and create a museum exhibit (physical or virtual) looking at items such as history, culture, geography and mapping.

#### Grades and curricular area(s)

- Grade 7 to Grade 9
- Social Studies/ADST

#### Big ideas

	ADST	Social Studies
<b>Grade 7</b>	Complex tasks require the acquisition of additional skills.	Geographic conditions shaped the emergence of civilizations.
<b>Grade 8</b>	Complex tasks require the acquisition of additional skills.	Human and environmental factors shape changes in population and living standards.
<b>Grade 9</b>	Complex tasks require the sequencing of skills.	The physical environment influences the nature of political, social, and economic change.

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### Curricular competencies

	ADST	Social Studies
<b>Grade 7</b>	Generate potential ideas and add to others' ideas	Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places
	Choose an idea to pursue	
	Identify and use sources of information	
	Identify and use appropriate tools, technologies, and materials for production	
	Evaluate their product against their criteria and explain how it contributes to the individual, family, community, and/or environment	
<b>Grade 8</b>	Generate potential ideas and add to others' ideas	Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places
	Choose an idea to pursue	
	Identify and use sources of information	
	Identify and use appropriate tools, technologies, and materials for production	
	Evaluate their product against their criteria and explain how it contributes to the individual, family, community, and/or environment	
<b>Grade 9</b>	Take creative risks in generating ideas and add to others' ideas in ways that enhance them	Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places
	Choose an idea to pursue, keeping other potentially viable ideas open	
	Identify and use sources of inspiration and information	
	Identify and use appropriate tools, technologies, materials, and processes for production	
	Critically evaluate the success of their product, and explain how their design ideas contribute to the individual, family, community, and/or environment	

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### Materials/Resources

- Computer and projector
- Student computers, tablets, or other devices
- Library books
- Chart paper or white board
- Poster paper and felt pens
- Additional resources from home

**Note:** Online resources for students are listed under specific activities.

### Kick Off and Connect

Throughout this series of lessons, students will be creating a museum focusing on the South Asian community within the class's chosen context (such as their neighbourhood, town, city, or province). For this kick-off, you'll be looking at students' prior knowledge of both community and museums.

#### Step 1

Start the activity by asking students to define community. They may provide examples (e.g., their neighbourhood, culture, school or religion), characteristics (e.g., sharing a common interest, a sense of belonging) or even stories. Explain to students that community is complex and we are all part of multiple communities. Communities are people.

#### Step 2

Once students have defined community, ask them what they know or wonder about the South Asian community. Depending on your class location and demographics, students may have a lot or a little to say. You may share pieces of the South Asian community definition (below) to prompt more discussion. The goal of this activity is to identify areas within the South Asian community on which to focus their museum project.

#### Background

The **South Asian community** encompasses people who are immigrants or have ties to a series of countries located in South Asia, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives. The South Asian community also includes regional groups, such as people from the Punjab region, or religious groups, such as

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people who are Muslim or Sikh. (More information can be found in the [South Asian Canadian backgrounder](#), which can be given to students to help guide their research.)

### Resources

Resources for students on the South Asian community:

- [Community Stories](#), Khalsa Diwan Society, Abbotsford
- [Everything You Need to Know about the Indian Community in Canada](#), Experience Canada
- [History of South Asians in Canada: Timeline](#), South Asian Studies Institute
- [South Asian Canadian map](#), Heritage BC
- [The Punjabi Experience in British Columbia](#), Royal BC Museum
- [South Asian Canadian Backgrounder](#), Saffron Threads

## Explore and Engage

“A good display should convey information; use language the visitor can understand and have something interesting to say. This display should include images, objects and an invitation for the visitor to do something, such as to think further or take an action.”

*Royal BC Museum*

### Activity 1: Brainstorming

#### Step 1

Introduce students to virtual museums (using the resources provided below or having students do their own online research) and what they look like. This is also a great opportunity for students to use tablets/iPads and do augmented reality museum tours, which will allow students to understand what a museum has and provide them with some options for what they could include in their own museums.

### Resources

Some virtual museums tours for students to explore:

- [20 World Online Museums](#), Ecobnb
- [Anne Frank House](#)
- [Museo Frida Kahlo](#)

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- [Museum of Vancouver—History Galleries](#)
- [Online Exhibits](#), NASA

### Step 2

After the virtual tour, have a class discussion. Questions could include:

- What types of museums are there (such as online, travelling, small community, large provincial museums)?
- What are some local museums?
- What museums do you know about or have you visited?
- What is unique about a virtual museum exhibit?

### Resources

Resources for museum discussions/research:

- [Catalyzing Change Through Museum Exhibits](#), Margaret Hermanson, TEDxMSU
- [Take a Virtual Field Trip](#), Google Arts and Culture
- [Why Do We Have Museums?](#) J.V. Maranto, TED-Ed

### Step 3

Have students break into small groups to brainstorm some criteria for successful museums. Try to answer the question, “What makes an effective museum exhibit?”

Have each group share their top three criteria and write them on the board. If duplicates are shared, add a star next to them. From the generated list, select 5-10 criteria to guide their exhibit creation.

### Step 4

Explain to students that this activity will focus on researching one element of South Asian Canadian history, heritage and culture within a chosen location. (**Note:** You may want to choose the location based on what you know about your city/region’s demographics.)

### Step 5

Form students into groups of four to seven students to generate ideas for exhibits. For example, they may have a foods exhibit, a sports exhibit and an arts exhibit. Alternatively, they use time periods.

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### Step 6

Bring the class back together and have the groups share their ideas to generate a list of exhibit ideas. Once the list has been generated, have the class vote on which exhibits will fit together well for a museum, choosing the same number of exhibits as there are groups. The class may want to form a cohesive museum by having each group take a time period or a different topic, such as food, sports, clothing and so on.

### Step 7

Have students form new groups based on shared exhibit interests. If there are many people interested in one topic, you can choose to do two exhibits on that topic or assign students to other groups.

### Step 8

As a class, brainstorm what roles would be helpful for their museum to succeed. For example, students may choose to have someone tackle the artistic portion while another student may want to be responsible for writing. Here are some role ideas:

- **Exhibit designers:** Your skill is style. You are concerned with how the exhibit looks and how it works. Your job is to mock up or sketch your display and create lists of materials needed.
- **Curators:** Your skill is storytelling. Your aim is to identify powerful objects, create storylines and relay information. Your job is to write an exhibition label. If your team hasn't decided on at least one object or photograph for your exhibit, you must make the decision.
- **Visitor engagement specialists:** Your skill is creativity. Your focus is on creating opportunities for visitors to engage with the exhibition. Your job is to think about the needs of your visitor, to come up with something for them to do and to engage more than one of their senses.

Explain to students that although they each have roles, they should also collaborate on all elements of the museum. Once the roles have been determined, have students choose who will take on which role in their groups.

### Step 9

As a class, work to generate a few broader questions that could be addressed in each exhibit (such as "I wonder how South Asian Canadian culture has changed since the first South Asians came to Canada").

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### Step 10

Have each group draft three to five questions on their topic. Use sentence starters such as:

- I wonder...
- Why is...
- How is this different...
  - (such as, from other cultures, from something in their culture)
- How is this similar...
  - (for example, to another culture, to something in their culture)

### Step 11

Have groups discuss or peer review each other's questions, with the goal of each group choosing one inquiry question to focus their exhibit on.

## Activity 2: Making the Museum

### Step 1

As a class, discuss the importance of properly citing where their museum elements come from.

### Step 2

Using their chosen inquiry question, have students do some initial research to identify what type of exhibit they will make (you may also make this choice for the class) and how they will structure their exhibit.

- For a physical museum: Students will print images and news stories, and/or make models of artefacts to use in their exhibit
- For a virtual museum: Students will find images, news stories, websites and so on to use in their museum.
- Students can create their exhibit using found objects/printed pictures or virtually.
- Each exhibit should be connected with elements and/or people in the community, town, city and/or province.

Have students refer to the class exhibit criteria as they make choices and begin development.

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### **Step 3**

Have students start to research content for their museums in their groups, aiming to answer their inquiry question. Students may generate additional questions as they do their research. Encourage students to use online sources, books, interviews with community members (if appropriate) and any other resources available to them. They may also have some speakers (e.g., from the community or the school) in their museum project.

### **Step 4**

Once students have completed their exhibits, have them create an item to advertise their exhibit, such as a bookmark, poster, or magnet.

### **Step 5**

Museum exhibit presentations could be done in the classroom or the gymnasium, depending on how many students are participating.

## **Wrap-Up and Assess**

To conclude the lesson, ask students to reflect on the following questions:

- What did you learn about the community around you?
- How does the diversity of our community make it exciting?
- What significant people, events, cultural elements and so on interested or surprised you?

### **Peer Assessment**

- Two Stars and a Wish: Have students rotate through the exhibits and write two stars (things they like) and a wish (what could be improved) on sticky notes for each exhibit.
- Have groups complete assessments based on their roles and contributions.

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### Summative Assessment

Evaluate students' participation throughout class using a single-point rubric:

Areas to improve	Criteria	Successes
	Generated inquiry questions to guide exhibit research	
	Collaborated with group members to develop plan	
	Actively listened to group members	
	Took a lead in assigned role to help complete exhibit	

Use the class-created criteria to evaluate the exhibits. **Note:** This can also be used as a peer assessment tool.

### Extend and Transform

- Share museum exhibits with a local museum for display.
- Have a guest speaker from a local museum talk to the class.
- Explore other communities and cultures.
- Take field trips to local museums.
- Map out local communities.
- Evaluate current news stories (considering biases).
- Research farmer protests in South Asia in modern history, looking at:
  - Government and the role of democracy
  - Roles of the media
  - How the protests are being presented by media around the world