

Refuge Canada School Program

Can I be proud of Canada's response to refugees?

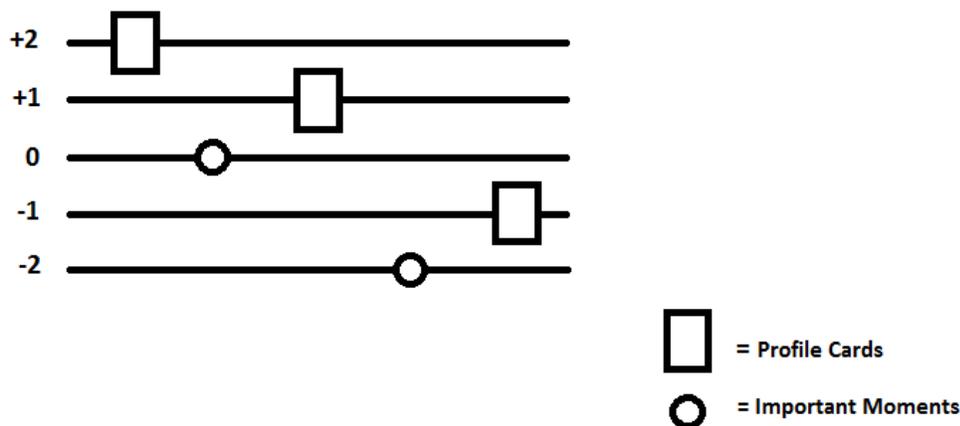
Students will apply their [historical thinking skills](#) to answer this question and challenge their own preconceptions about the acceptance of refugees in Canada. Compare and contrast different groups of refugees to Canada and explore the historical context to construct opinions founded in fact. This interactive and thought-provoking educational program brings components of our travelling exhibit *Refuge Canada* into your classroom to answer the driving question: Is Canada's response to refugees something I can be proud of?

Introduction

In this program, students will build a timeline of Canada's historical response to different refugee crises, as represented by Profile Cards and Important Moment cards. The students will give a grade to each card based on the driving question - **is Canada's response to refugees something I can be proud of?** As the program unfolds, the students may change the grades that they give to the cards as they learn about other points on the timeline.

The end result is a graded timeline, where time advances left to right, and grades are represented vertically (see diagram below). The grades are then averaged to give an over-all score to Canada's historic response to refugees.

Suggested layout of the timeline with example placements of Profile Cards and Important Moments



Set-Up

1. Before the activity, draw five horizontal lines on a whiteboard or blackboard and write +2, +1, 0, -1, and -2 next to the lines in descending order.
2. Adjust the dimensions of the lines depending on how many Profile Cards and Important Moments are to be used in the activity. More cards will require longer lines in order to fit them all.
3. Print the Profile Cards and Important Moments cards.



Program Instructions

1. Divide the class into groups of 2 - 3 students.
2. Hand out the Profile Cards.
3. Ask the students: **Is Canada's response to refugees something I can be proud of?**
4. Read and rate Canada's response either as +2, +1, 0, -1, or -2.
The following questions may help students to decide their rating:
 - a. Were a lot of people affected?
 - b. Was it an immediate threat?
 - c. How many people did Canada accept?
 - d. How quickly did Canada respond?
5. Once the groups have decided on their ratings, they go up to the board, and place their Profile Card on the line representing the rating.
6. Starting with the earliest Profile Card, have the students present their Profile Card and explain their reasoning for the rating. Note: Students may want to change their rating as more information is shared. Let them know that they will be able to do this later.
7. Once all groups have presented, ask the students if they want to change their rating, now that they see the other Profile Cards and the different waves of refugees to Canada.
 - a. Encourage discussion
 - b. Compare and contrast waves that fall into the same rating.
8. Tally the average rating of the Profile Cards and note what it is.
9. Next, introduce the Important Moments cards.
 - a. Read each Important Moment to the class
 - b. Have the class vote on what the rating would be for each Important Moment
10. Ask if anyone wants to change their Profile Card rating based on the newly introduced information contained in the Important Moment cards. Encourage students to share their reasoning for their decisions.
11. Re-tally the final average score, this time including the Important Moments in the calculation. Compare this second average score to the first average score. Ask students what they think or feel about the final score.
12. Wrap-up the activity by encouraging student discussion. The following suggestions may be used to foster conversation:
 - a. The importance of critical thinking and being open to new information.
 - b. Are there any general patterns in the ratings? What would influence these trends?
 - c. Consider the impact that one person or a group of people can have.

General note for teachers:

Remember that when people arrive here, their journey is not over. Adjusting to a new life, having left everything behind and facing possible racism and discrimination in Canada - these factors and more continue to be challenges that a person may still have to face on a daily basis.

In addition, mention that students may have moments of discomfort or feel upset about the information that they will be encountering, and that it is ok to feel this way. Discomfort can indicate that how someone understands the world is being challenged or made to change, and this can be difficult to accept. Encourage students to foster curious minds and open hearts when learning, and if they need time and/or space to process new concepts, that it is ok for them to take a moment to themselves.



Suggested classroom adaptations from fellow educators

- If you have a map or globe in your classroom, bring it out so students may get a sense of the distance between Canada and the countries of their profile cards.
- Break this program down so that it is completed over a few days. Give students an opportunity to research their profiles so they have a deeper understanding. This may include challenging students to find out the response of other countries to different waves of refugees and compare to what was done by Canada.

Additional Resources

Since 1869, Canada has had laws and regulations governing the admission of immigrants. Immigration legislation is ultimately a reflection of society's beliefs and attitudes, revealing Canada's history of inclusion and exclusion.

<https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-immigration-acts-and-legislation>

The Canadian government's exclusion of the passengers of MS St. Louis reveals the anti-Semitic public and official climate of Canada in the 1930s, and underscores the harsh restrictions of Canada's Depression-era immigration policies.

<https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canada-and-ms-st-louis>

An article by The Canadian Encyclopedia about the history of refugees and asylum seekers coming to Canada.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/refugees>

The Making of the Mosaic: A history of Canadian immigration policy by Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, published by University of Toronto Press

Post Program Activity

What rating did your classroom give Canada? Would you like to share it with us at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21? Curious about what other classrooms have to say? Take a photograph of your timeline with the final score and email it to learn@pier21.ca!

Refuge Canada will be on display in the Ralph and Rose Chiodo Gallery from March 10, 2018 to November 11, 2018 and is included with Museum admission. If you would like to plan a visit to see *Refuge Canada* with a class or would like more information about the selection of school programs offered by the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, please contact Caroline Gaston by email: learn@pier21.ca or by telephone 902-425-7770 ext. 255.

