LEARNING PORTAL

ROYAL BC MUSEUM

Lesson: The Punjabi Experience in British Columbia

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OVERVIEW

This lesson plan is a companion to the Indo Canadian oral history collections compiled by the Centre for Indo Canadian Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley found on the Royal BC Museum Learning Portal pathway, *The Punjabi Experience in British Columbia*. These interviews outline the Punjabi experience of immigrating and adapting to Canada.

This lesson invites students to use the oral histories collection to gain better understanding of the culture and everyday life of Punjabi immigrants through these first-hand accounts.

KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Punjab, Punjabi, Indo Canadian, Cultural Identity, Multiculturalism, Diversity, Historical Perspective

ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED One 40-45 minute period

SUBJECT Social Studies

GRADE LEVEL Elementary/Intermediate

OBJECTIVES

Students will work with primary sources to gain a better understanding of Punjabi experiences through the use of videos featuring historical perspectives of immigrants.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- Obtain information from a selection of primary sources

- Take historical perspective

- Students will be able to make evidence-based inferences about the ideals and values of those from the past

MATERIAL

The Indo Canadian oral history collections compiled by the Centre for Indo Canadian Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley found on the Royal BC Museum Learning Portal (six video accounts, varying in length but no longer than 16 minutes)

ACTIVITY

1. Ask students what they know about the Punjabi community in British Columbia and their culture. Explain to students that they will watch a selection of videos of Punjabi Canadians talking about their experiences moving to and growing up in British Columbia. The videos will discuss the differences they found between the Punjabi and Canadian culture and how they succeeded in maintaining their Punjabi culture and ways of being while adapting to living in Canada.

2. Divide the class into smaller groups. Assign each group a different interviewee to focus on while watching the videos. Explain that during the videos each group must focus on how their person adapted to/felt about life in Canada and that they will present a role-play on this person's life. Educators can choose to have students view the video as a class on a digital projector or individually at their own computer (which could allow students to pause the video and rewind for clarification and all view their individual interviews at once).

3. After viewing the videos, give the students 15 minutes to prepare their role-plays. Before beginning, ensure students understand they must base their role-plays in evidence presented in the videos.

4. After having time to prepare, have students share their role-plays to the class. When the presentations are finished, prompt these discussion questions.

CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Ask students to reflect on their own immigration stories in their homes or communities. How are their experiences similar to those shared in the interviews?
- How did the interviewee's experiences differ from other immigrant experiences? In what ways were their experiences similar?
- What struggles did Punjabi immigrants face adapting to Canada?
- How does the Punjabi experience of immigration compare to people of nations' experience immigrating to Canada that you may know of?
- Why might food have been an important aspect to the Punjabi experience of immigration?

ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.sikhs.org/100th/ - This website celebrates the 100 years of Sikhs in Canada (1897-1997), and gives a detailed history of their experience.

http://explorasian.org/education/sikh-canadian-history/ - A timeline outlining significant moments in Sikh-Canadian history from 1897 to 1997.

http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/sikhism/ - A detailed summary of Sikh's immigration and adaptation to Canada.

http://canadiansikhheritage.ca/ - A site dedicated to the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple, Abbotsford BC.

http://komagatamarujourney.ca/ - This website gives a history of the Komagata Maru Incident.

BOOKS

Hickman, Pamela. *Righting Canada's Wrongs: The Komagata Maru and Canada's Anti-Indian Immigration Policies in the Twentieth Century.* Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd, 2014.

Nayar, Kamala Elizabeth. *The Punjabis in British Columbia: Location, Labour, First Nations, and Multiculturalism.* Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012.