



Lesson:
Tradition in Felicities
Celebrating the History of Victoria's Chinatown

OVERVIEW

This lesson plan is to be used when viewing *Tradition in Felicities*, a film documenting Victoria's Chinatown in the early 20th century. The short film highlights the 2013 Royal BC Museum exhibition *Tradition in Felicities* that marked the 155th anniversary of Victoria's Chinatown, the oldest in Canada. It revealed a close-knit community of families developing new identities as Chinese Canadians.

This lesson invites students to learn about Chinese Canadian arts, culture, and everyday life through first-hand accounts of community members who grew up in Victoria's Chinatown.

KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Chinese New Year, Diversity, Chinese Canadian, Chinatown, Cultural Identity, Multiculturalism

ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED One 60 minute period

SUBJECT Social Studies

GRADE LEVEL Secondary

OBJECTIVES

Students will observe and analyze primary and secondary sources to understand the arts, culture, and daily life in Victoria's Chinatown and the Chinese Canadian community at the start of the 20th century.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- Identify, observe, and evaluate primary and secondary sources relating to Victoria's Chinatown.
- Analyze Canadian society in the 20th century in terms of ethnicity, daily life, and cultural identities.
- Describe the factors that contributed to a changing national identity.

MATERIALS:

Tradition in Felicities film (length 15:00) on the Learning Portal, Student Viewing guides, Image Observation Activity sheet, Research Inquiry sheet

ACTIVITY

1. Tell the class that today they will observe first-hand conversations from community members of Victoria's Chinatown about their experiences growing up there. The people interviewed touch on their family lives and community events, art and culture, and the history and importance of Chinatown itself. Ask students what they already know about Chinatowns in Canada and Chinese Canadian Culture.
2. Tell students that before viewing the video, they will look at three photographs taken around the early 20th century in Chinatown, to notice any trends within Chinese Canadian cultural identities over time. Hand out the Image Observation Activity sheets, have students pair up and let them discuss the questions on the sheet. Invite students to share what they noticed in the photographs. Discuss the answers as a class and record any key points on the board.
3. Explain that students will be using primary resources to find out about three different topics during the video: the History of Chinatown, Arts & Culture, and Daily Lives (this topic can include jobs, family life, contributions to the community etc..) Hand out the viewing guides. During the video, students are to find facts or ideas relating to each topic and record them under the 'facts' heading.
4. When the film is over, have students pair up and let them discuss and swap facts collected from each topic. Ask students to make connections to themselves or previous knowledge, and to think of questions for each topic that they still have (they might want to think of broad questions that could relate to Chinese Canadian communities across BC or Canada). Afterwards, open the discussion to the whole class, compiling the facts and connections collected. Discuss questions that students have about the history of the Chinese Canadian community and record them on the board for further research.

Discussion Prompts and Ideas:

- Why do you think Victoria's Chinatown is the oldest in Canada? How old are other Chinatowns in Canada or North America?
- Chinese immigration to Canada began in the West and travelled eastward. What transportation would be available for people to move? What do you think prompted communities to move? How does this relate to other immigrations to Canada?
- How does the history of Victoria's Chinatown compare to the history of other communities that you know about (or other Chinatowns)? Did they face similar struggles? What were reasons people started migrating there?

HOMEWORK

From the class responses, choose three questions to keep. Students can choose one of these questions and research it by using the links provided. In a follow-up discussion, have students share what they found out about Chinese Canadian history from each website, and if it helped contribute to answering their question.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Chinese Canadian Genealogy: History & Pioneers**
hosted by the Vancouver Public Library
http://www.vpl.ca/ccg/History_Pioneers.html
- **Chinese Canadian Stories Project**
hosted by the University of British Columbia
<http://ccs.library.ubc.ca/en/resources.html>
- **Critical Thinking Consortium: Chinese Canadian history**
<http://sourcedocs.tc2.ca/history-docs/topics/chinese-canadian-history.html>
- **Victoria's Chinatown**
hosted by the University of Victoria Libraries
<http://chinatown.library.uvic.ca/>

BOOKS

- Amos, Robert and; Wong, Kileasa. *Inside Chinatown : Ancient Culture in a new World*. Victoria, B.C: Torchwood Editions, 2009.
- Harry Con et al. *From China to Canada: A History of Chinese Communities in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Steward Ltd., 1982.
- Lai, Chuen-yan David. *The Forbidden City within Victoria*. Victoria B.C.: Orca Book Publishers, 1991.
- Lai, Chuen-yan David. *Chinatowns : Towns within Cities in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988.
- Lai, Chuen-yan David and; Madoff, Pamela. *Building and Rebuilding Harmony : the Gateway to Victoria's Chinatown*. Victoria, B.C: Western Geographical Press, 1997.
- Lim, Shirley and; Yuen, Karen; and Cox, Lauren Y. *Through the Harmonious Gate*. Victoria BC: 1986.
- Lawson, Julie. *White Jade Tiger*. Victoria: Beach Holme Pub., 1993.
- Yee, Paul. *Chinatown: An Illustrated History of the Chinese Communities of Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax*. Toronto: J. Lorimer, 2005.

A



Lee Family, about 1903. BC Archives A-02348

B



Lee Family, 1911. BC Archives F-08202

C



Lee Family, about 1920. BC Archives D-05823

Image Observation Activity

Discussion Questions

- What and who do you see in the three pictures? What is in the background?
- What can you tell about the people in this family by the way they are dressed?
- Who do you think might have taken the photographs? Why do you think they were taken?
- Do you see a connection between the photographs? What is the same? Has anything changed? Why?
- What do you think is the most important change that you see over time in the family's portrait? Why?

Tradition in Felicities Viewing Guide

Name: _____

Facts (from video)	Connections (to what you know)	Questions (for further inquiry)
Arts & Culture		
History of the Town		
Daily Lives		

***Tradition in Felicities* Research Inquiry**

Name: _____

-Choose a question that came up from discussing the *Tradition in Felicities* film. Go to the following websites, and try to find out more information from their images, activities, stories or timelines.

-Record any facts that relate to your question AND/OR any facts you find interesting.

Question:

Resource: Milestones of Chinese Canadian Genealogy hosted by the Vancouver Public Library

<http://www.vpl.ca/ccg/Milestones.html>

Notes:

Resource: Critical Thinking Consortium: Chinese Canadian history

<http://sourcedocs.tc2.ca/history-docs/topics/chinese-canadian-history.html>

Notes:

Resource: Chinese Canadian Stories Project hosted by the University of British Columbia

<http://ccs.library.ubc.ca/en/resources.html>

Notes:
