

A Tale of Two Families

Middle School Lesson Plan

Lesson 1

Introduction: Talk about the importance of stories from older people. What can we learn by listening to stories from family members or other people in the community talking about their experiences when they were younger? Elicit ideas such as understanding our roots or understanding why things might be done a certain way by people.

Play the video “A tale of two families” (the video is in English because that is how it was recorded). Introduce French vocabulary for important ideas introduced in the video.

Both families emphasize education, intercultural community building and kindness as family values. During times of extraordinary challenges, such core values can shape people’s response. The stories of the Guichon and Louie families exemplify resilience through hard times in British Columbia history.

Lesson 2

Discuss how to write a biography or a story based on real events. Look at some examples of biography writing. Talk about the importance of key facts, such as when and where the person was born and what their childhood experiences were like, to give context to the biography.

Explain to the students that they are going to interview a French speaking adult who lives in their community. If you approach the ‘Société francophone,’ you should be able to set up video or live interviews with some francophone adults from the community. You could also ask other French Immersion teachers from the school or any other contacts you might have. The students could conduct these interviews in pairs or individually.

Lesson 3

Brainstorm together a list of questions that would elicit stories. Questions such as ‘tell me a story about someone who was important to you when you first went to school’ or ‘tell me about why you chose the career path you followed’ are better than questions that are too big and vague such as ‘what was your childhood like?’ or too closed such as ‘what was the name of your school?’.

Lesson 4

You will need to provide time for the students to carry out the interviews and get a recording of what was said. Interviews carried out online can be recorded relatively easily. Those carried out 'live' should be recorded on a device that allows easy upload so the recordings can be accessed in class.

Lessons 5-7/8/9 (depending on how long you want the piece to be)

Students write up the story of the person they interviewed. Many students will benefit from models and sentence starters to help them organize their writing.

As an extension piece, students can create a final product to gift back to the person who told them the story. This can be, for example, an illustrated booklet, a digital document or a video.