

TEACH

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Don't
MAKE YOUR
CLASSROOM
FLIP A FLOP

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO
(or Waltz, Foxtrot, Rumba, or Jive)

CURRICULA

SUFFRAGE:
CANADIAN WOMEN AND THE VOTE

COLUMNS

WEBSTUFF: MEMORY APPS
FIELD TRIPS: IMAX THEATRES

CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVES:
I'M JUST NOT A GOOD WRITER

TEACH MAGAZINE • LE PROF

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Welcome back to another school year!

We know that teachers are very busy and constantly looking for ways to make the best use of their limited classroom time. Our first **Feature Story** explores the idea of flipped classrooms—where students learn concepts at home and then come into the classroom to practice them. This method allows teachers to become true facilitators of learning instead of mere dispensers. Do you prefer being a sage on the stage or a guide on the side? Read on to learn more about flipping your classroom.

In recent years, ballroom dancing has re-emerged in popular culture thanks, in part, to reality shows such as, *Dancing with the Stars*. Now, one Canadian dance company is teaching students of all ages to ballroom dance while covering many curriculum expectations. More than meeting arts education or PhysEd requirements, however, ballroom dancing teaches students important lessons—communication, respect, and especially teamwork. After all, it does take two to tango. Read our second **Feature Story** to see how ballroom dancing can change attitudes of students as they work together to learn a fun and sometimes, difficult skill—together.

“But I’m just not a good writer”—I’m sure many of you have heard this excuse before as students struggle with language arts assignments. The assertion is a fallacy. All students can become good writers, when given the right tools and guidance. In **Classroom Perspectives**, educator Deborah Rooney, describes how students panicked as soon she announced a writing assignment. They focused on clever tricks to fill up the page instead of the assignment itself. Rooney created a step-by-step process to guide students through the writing process, from one short paragraph up to an entire essay.

Back-to-school can be a drag for some students so why not start the new year off with a fun excursion to see an IMAX movie. In **Field Trips**, we present some educational and larger-than-life films playing at IMAX theatres around the country. And in **Webstuff**, we cover some memory training apps that can help students grapple with post-summer holiday brain drain.

We are excited to announce the launch of two new, totally **free educational resources** for your classroom! *The Life and Times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* (www.sirwilfridlaurier.com) and *Suffrage: Canadian Women and the Vote* (www.canadiansuffrage.com) are our latest interactive graphic novels that explore Canadian history as you’ve never seen it before. Both are bilingual and free. Make sure you sign up!

Until next time,
Lisa Tran, Associate Editor
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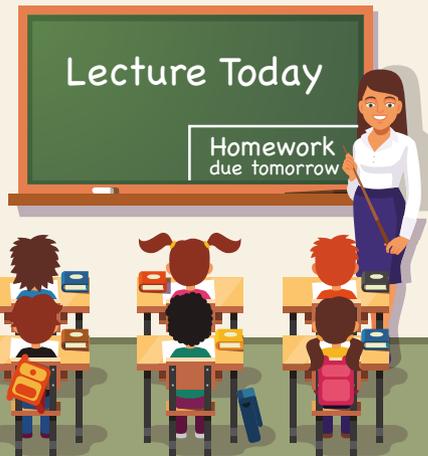
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VS

THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM

Teacher's Role: Guide on the Side



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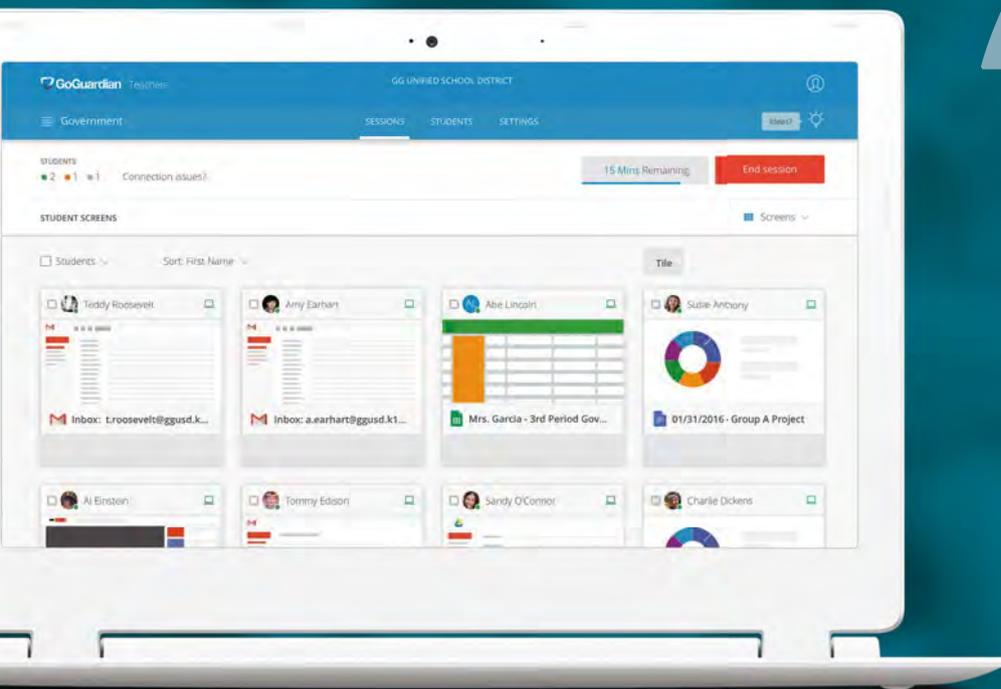
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Don't MAKE YOUR CLASSROOM FLIP

by Meagan Gillmore

Teachers constantly look for ways to make best use of their limited class time. That's one reason why many teachers have taken to "flipping" their classrooms in recent years.

"Flipped" teaching involves changing when and where students receive instruction. Instead of sitting in class listening to a teacher talk and then going home and practicing those concepts—think of the hours spent completing math problems after the final bell rings—students learn about concepts at home and come to class ready to practice them. They may discuss what they've learned in groups, solve problems on a chalkboard so teachers can see their work, or complete assignments independently. When flipped teaching first became popular, some thought instruction on screens would eliminate in-class teaching. Today, many educators agree flipped teaching shouldn't be the only method of instruction, and technology, like videos, isn't the only resource teachers can—or should—use.

No matter what teachers use when flipping their classrooms, they agree it can create more time in the classroom. Catherine Veteri, a high school math teacher in Strathroy, ON, says she started using the method in her Grade 11 university preparatory math class partly because

she realized students weren't retaining information while they were writing notes. She gives students a virtual "binder" at the beginning of the semester with access to videos and lesson notes. There's a video for each lesson. Students watch them at home then come to class prepared to practice what they learned. This has drastically slashed the amount of time she spends using traditional instruction in the classroom and allowed her more time to spend with struggling students. It also allows students to challenge themselves. Veteri says her classes have now tried the harder math questions in class, problems she previously did not have time to teach.

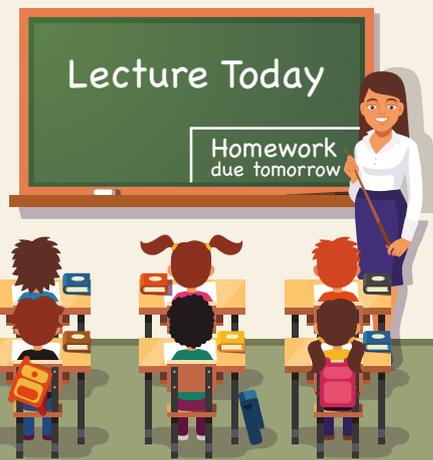
Lisa Floyd, a high school teacher in London, ON, summarizes the appeal of flipped teaching this way: "It really bothers me when class time isn't being used efficiently." Using videos allows students to learn and review information at their own pace, and they're often more engaged than they might be listening to a lecture.

To get this extra time in the classroom, teachers need to put in the work outside of it. Veteri says when she first

A FLOP

THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

Teacher's Role: Sage on the Stage



VS

THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM

Teacher's Role: Guide on the Side



started using this method a few years ago, some parents thought she was working less. They figured, she says, because she was getting paid to teach, she should be teaching during class time. What they likely didn't know is that she'd spent time each week during summer vacation making the videos, enough for each day in the course. Veteri makes all her videos because she wants students to hear her voice and see her commitment to the subject. Other teachers use videos created by colleagues.

Veteri says teachers may become excited about the idea of flipped teaching, but may hesitate to invest the time needed to make quality resources to do it well. She—and many other educators—recommend teachers introduce this method gradually. Prepare one unit in a flipped style, or even just a couple lessons in a unit. Many teachers may only use flipped teaching for a few lessons in a unit. Some educators caution against introducing entirely new concepts through flipped instruction. Instead, teachers should use flipped teaching methods, like videos, to provide context for the new material teachers will discuss at school.

Beginning small is important because meaningful flipped teaching involves more than just changing what teachers or students do. It requires challenging how teachers and students think about learning.

Components of flipped teaching—independent and critical thinking, collaboration, connecting concepts taught inside the classroom to the world outside of it—have always been part of effective education. But the ubiquitous nature of digital technology means anyone can access information anywhere. Students no longer need to rely on teachers for information. This change “allows (teachers) to become a true facilitator of learning

instead of a dispenser of knowledge,” says Garth Nichols, Vice Principal at Havergal College in Toronto. Nichols provides professional development online and face-to-face through the program Cohort 21. He often helps teachers use technology more effectively. He calls flipped teaching a “disruption” in education. Students don't need to learn at the pace teachers set for them, and in some cases, they don't even have to be in the same room as the teacher. Students who learn best visually may respond to videos better; students who are learning English can gain confidence by watching videos multiple times.

Students no longer need to rely on teachers for information. This change “allows (teachers) to become a true facilitator of learning instead of a dispenser of knowledge.

“When you allow students to learn at their own pace and place,” says Nichols, “you are giving up control of a traditional classroom.” In this model, teachers facilitate, coming alongside students, and helping them learn. This however, means that students need to take responsibility themselves. Teachers need to help them prepare.

Many of Colleen Lee's students don't know the Japanese word for “homework.” That's because in her Japanese classes at Pinetree Secondary School in Coquitlam, BC,

she doesn't tell her students they'll be doing homework. Instead, she tells them they're doing preparation at home for what they'll be learning in class. Sometimes, this means watching a video of her explaining a grammar concept, or a Japanese video. Other times, it means coming prepared to describe an object.

Homework, Lee explains, involves reinforcing concepts after class. Preparation "frontloads" learning so students come to school ready to learn. This makes students take ownership. If they aren't prepared for class, they can't participate with their classmates.

Flipped teaching extends learning outside of the boundaries of regular school hours. If teachers want students to keep learning, they need to teach in a way that motivates students to learn.

While some may have thought Veteri was going easy on students when she introduced flipped learning, they've discovered her students have greater responsibility. They have what they need to learn. Vacations and travelling for sports competitions can no longer be used as reasons for missing material.

Teachers, however, are still responsible for providing quality instruction. Jonathan So, a Grade 6 teacher in Brampton, ON, has used flipped teaching, in some format, for about eight years. At the beginning, his students watch videos at home. He has learned, though, that's not enough. Students need direction, so teachers need to provide specific questions to answer or think about.

Quizzes can be built into videos to encourage student engagement. This also allows teachers to better understand students' knowledge. Shorter videos work best; So tries to

keep the duration of the videos to five minutes.

Flipped classrooms still require good classroom management. Lisa Floyd often has students participate in small group discussions for part of her class. They can have these discussions online, but she monitors them and sometimes participates to keep everything focused. Online conversations can't be anonymous, and she discusses proper online etiquette with students.

The key to effective flipping, says So, is knowing your students. Practically, this means creating opportunities for all students to participate—even if they don't have access to technology at home. Teachers can make their classrooms available for students to watch videos during breaks or before and after school. They need to consider if students live near libraries, or if they can use the school library. Videos should be enabled for viewing on mobile devices if students don't have access to a computer. Veteri has given her students materials on a jump drive.

But flipping isn't dependent on technology. It's "more about purposely planning activities to do at home" than watching videos, says So. He asks students to find books about different cultures or look at pictures and describe what they've learned. He has taught students who asked their parents about their experiences immigrating to Canada. The class used these experiences to write a story the next day. Not all students have parents available to help them. So works with these students to find people they can talk to, like other teachers at school.

Teachers also need to respect students as people and realize they need to do things besides schoolwork, and away from screens. Leigh Cassell, a technology coach with Avon Maitland District School Board in Ontario, says she has seen students "burnout" from too much time on screens. They don't want to use screens sometimes at school because they use them so much outside of school, she says. Technology is used best when it helps connect students to the world around them. That's why she recommends teachers have students use apps and digital platforms that people use outside of the classroom, like Google or Apple products. She founded the Digital Human Library, a not-for-profit that helps connect teachers and students with experts—all vetted—via videoconferencing.

Flipped teaching extends learning outside of the boundaries of regular school hours. If teachers want students to keep learning, they need to teach in a way that motivates students to learn. "If (students) aren't buying into what we're doing in the classroom, they're not going to buy into what we want them to do at home," says Cassell. Students need to value learning, regardless of where it happens. Teachers need to respect students' voices and listen to them. Sometimes, that means tweaking a video. Other times, it means turning it off and listening while they talk.

Meagan Gillmore is a freelance writer in Toronto, ON.



“I’M JUST NOT A GOOD WRITER”

by Deborah Rooney

As soon as I utter the words “writing assignment” a look of panic appears on my students’ faces. Their hands shoot up like rockets and the questions immediately start: “How long does it need to be? Does spelling count? When is it due? What happens if I don’t finish on time?” The children don’t even know what they are writing about; however, that is not what is important to them.

As I begin to enthusiastically explain the assignment, I know my students are not listening to a word I’m saying. Instead, they’re plotting how they can complete the assignment as quickly as possible. Children have told me they use many techniques to ease the pain of the writing process: altering margins, changing the line spacing, and using Arial font rather than Times New Roman because it takes up more space. I recall smiling to myself in amazement when hearing their strategies. I must admit, wish I’d thought of all of this when I was in high school. But I didn’t have a computer, so I relied on writing large enough to fill the page as quickly as possible!

Knowing how my students feel about writing, I have found a few procedures that allow them to complete the assignment somewhat painlessly and allows me to accomplish my teaching goals. Over the years I have learned not to assume my students, even at the high school level, know how to compose a well-written paragraph. So I start by teaching how to write one paragraph at a time and eventually build to two, three, etc. This helps develop skills and boosts their confidence.

Topics my students have been asked to write have proven to be just as important as the skills I am teaching. When assigning a single paragraph I ask children to write about themselves. This enables the students to swiftly and efficiently move through the writing process, as it’s a topic in which they are experts and enjoy writing about. Some topics I have assigned: What is your favorite activity? Who do you admire? What is the best gift you have ever given someone? If you had a Saturday all to yourself, aside from



sleeping in late, how would you spend the day?

Once these skills are proficient, students move onto writing multiple paragraphs. I begin by having them compose two paragraphs with an emphasis on transition sentences. Writing about the similarities and differences of a topic is also helpful while being adaptable to a variety of learning styles, ages, and subject matter. My students have compared and contrasted topics like: the Boston Bruins and the Montreal Canadiens, country music and rock music, and Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. From this point, students are taught to write three to five paragraphs and eventually reports. When composing multiple paragraphs, one topic children at all grade levels enjoy writing is: If you could travel across the country with three people, living or dead, who would it be and why? The students’ essays are always creative, interesting, and some are even humorous.

Even though the boys and girls prefer to just jump right in and begin writing, I stress the importance of brainstorming, as undoubtedly after composing a few sentences they inform me, “I can’t think of anything else to say.” Knowing this will occur, I have students write: who, what, when, where, why, and how on the side of their paper and check off each after answering them. Once my students realize these steps saves them time when composing and eliminates a multitude of edits, they reluctantly admit, “It does help.” While the children continuously look at the number of lines still needed to be filled on the page, I provide a trick of the trade: to add length to a paper, incorporate multiple examples or quotes. My students always smile as if they have just been told the ultimate secret to the writing process.

Grammar and punctuation skills are not always taught to children. My juniors and seniors in high school have a tremendous amount of difficulty demonstrating these

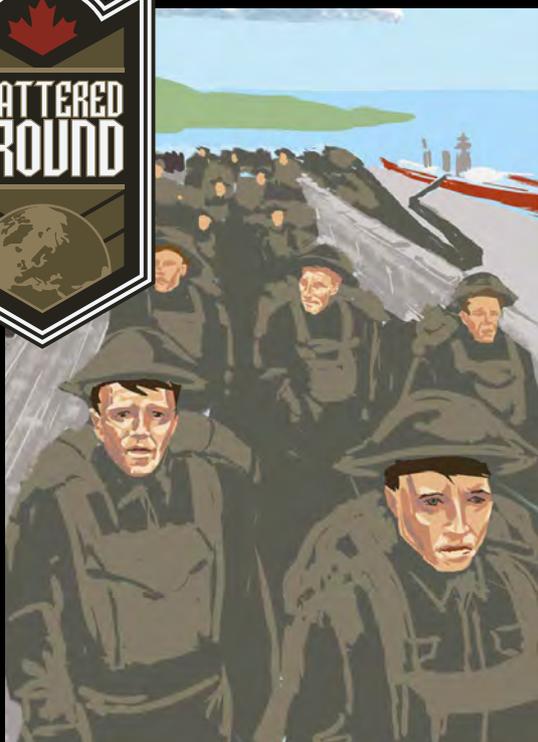
capabilities on standardized tests. They repeatedly tell me, “we never learned this” which only exasperates their frustration. This scenario extends to other grades as well. When I ask a child, “Why did you use a comma or a particular verb?” The common response is, “I don’t know, it just sounds better.” While this is occasionally true, I have found my students benefit from learning grammar and punctuation. I am a huge fan of the *Rules of the Game* workbooks. These books offer clear explanations, word lists, and a multitude of practice problems. The students do not cheer when I mention grammar work, but know it improves their writing. These lessons are especially helpful for students who compose very short sentences and struggle when required to integrate descriptive language. To encourage children to expand their thoughts and include multiple adjectives and adverbs, I ask them to compose an essay that describes in detail (sight, smell, sound, and touch) their favorite dessert. To put a fun spin on the assignment I bring my favorite dessert to class and invite them to bring in theirs too!

Finally, to eliminate any misunderstanding of what I expect from an assignment and to instill important abilities that can be used across the curriculum, I provide the children with checklists, from the moment the brainstorming begins to the moment the final edits are made. Another item on the

checklists that has been especially beneficial is: remember you’re not speaking to a peer and you’re not writing a comment on a friend’s Facebook page! And laughter always erupts when the students read: please no emojis and don’t forget spelling counts—“you” is not spelled “U” and “are” is not spelled “R”.

When the time arrives to return my students’ papers, they do not look at the comments and corrections; rather, they hold their breath and immediately look at the grade hoping their hard work and hours of writing have paid off. Smiles appear across their faces and they realize, they are good writers!

Deborah Rooney M.Ed., is an educational specialist in Massachusetts and has a successful private practice teaching and advocating for children in kindergarten through twelfth grade. In addition, she works for the Belmont Hill School and Buckingham Browne & Nichols School; and recently created a writing program for all grade levels and a study and organizational skills program for middle and high schoolers.



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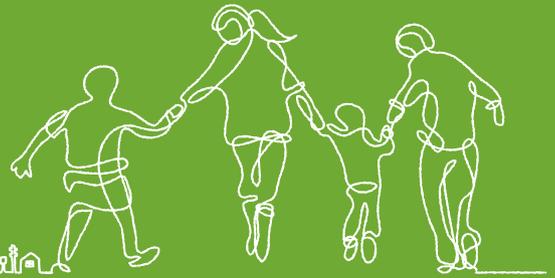
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SUFFRAGE: CANADIAN WOMEN AND THE VOTE

CURRICULA

FOR GRADES
9 TO 12

The following is a lesson plan excerpt from *Suffrage: Canadian Women and the Vote*, an interactive graphic novel and resource. To see the full lesson plans or to learn more, please visit canadiansuffrage.com.

LESSON 1: **The Rise of Feminism**

Suffrage: Canadian Women and the Vote is an interactive graphic novel and class resource that explores the origins and history of women's struggle for the vote in Canada. The story follows two teenage friends, Bridget and Shania who are apathetic and dismiss the notion of voting as unimportant. Then, after a fulsome discussion with relatives about women's struggle to win the vote in Canada, the girls reconsider their views and values and change their political and emotional responses. It is important for students to try to imagine a time when women in Canada could not vote—a time not all that distant!—and the impact that this inequity had on women as a group, and society as a whole, and why and how this inspired many Canadians to take action, such as the rise of feminism.

The foundation of this project is rooted in the upcoming 100th anniversary of (most) Canadian women getting the right to vote that occurred in 1918. It is instructive to examine how this specific struggle affected feminism in Canada and whether either movement could have, or would have, occurred without the other. Students will gain insight into why social change happens, and be inspired to make connections with current social and political movements, and predict their outcomes.

SUBJECTS

Citizenship, Global
Citizenship, Canadian
History, Social Studies,
Political Studies

DURATION

3 to 4 classes

KEY VOCABULARY

Franchise: the right to
vote

Suffrage: the right to vote
in political elections

Suffragist: a person who
supports or recommends
extending the right to
vote, especially to women

INTRODUCTION

Women did not have the right to vote in Canada for many years. This inequity was not the only one faced by women in this country. There were many other rights denied to women. The prevailing dominant attitude of the time, both political and religious, reflected a belief that women were inferior to men, were less intelligent and less capable generally, and belonged in the home. Many of the social norms and laws in Canada were transplanted to this country from Great Britain. Throughout the 18th century and then when the colonies were confederated in 1867, Britain had become the ruling power and dominant influence in Canada. Over time, women gained more rights, including the right to vote, but the change occurred slowly, over decades of women's protests and campaigning. Historians differentiate three different stages: women's rights before the war, during the war, and after the war.

Feminism took hold in Canada, but women in this first wave of feminists were divided between two distinct sets of beliefs. The larger group were "maternal feminists" who did not advocate, nor believe, that women were equal to men; they did not challenge prescribed gender roles. Rather they believed men and women were complimentary, and that women had an important role in society that was different from men. Their belief had a biological basis. They believed the woman's role was to improve social conditions, and that women were in the best position to do this because of their "maternal natures." Maternal feminists attacked the discrimination that came about from the division of men's and women's roles but they did not question the underlying causes of this inequality and women's oppression. The belief of the smaller group, the "equal-rights" or "equality feminists," was justice-based, not biology-based. They believed women and men were equal and it was only laws and attitudes that promulgated observable differences.

The first wave of feminism was centered on women achieving a greater role in public life that included women's suffrage. Although they had different motives—maternal feminists wanted to improve society; equal-rights feminists believed voting would help gain greater rights—both groups were involved in advocating for the vote.

Students will gain insight into the rise of the first generation of feminists, learn how the feminists' peers, male and female, viewed their beliefs and activism at that time, and understand how feminism and the struggle for suffrage went hand in hand.

KEY CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Students will gain insight into the origins of women's suffrage in Canada and explore its connections to feminism. What is feminism, and is this an accurate description of the "early" feminism in Canada? Did feminism give rise to the struggle for suffrage or did the struggle for suffrage engender feminism in Canada? Why weren't all Canadian women feminists? How did the public respond to the rise in feminism? Why is it important to view these changing times through the lens of historical perspective? How does learning about women's suffrage and feminism issues benefit us now?

Students will use this newfound insight and knowledge as they critically assess the value of a mandatory secondary school course on women's studies, including feminism.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- *Suffrage: Canadian Women and the Vote* graphic novel
- Computers or devices with Internet access
- A Map of Canada
- Short video by CPAC, "Telling Times – Women's Right to Vote" (9 mins): www.cpac.ca/en/programs/telling-times/episodes/21252966
- Online CBC documentary: "The 'F' word: Who wants to be a feminist?" (44 mins) www.cbc.ca/player/play/2529762228
- Materials as required for the research for exhibits, for example:
 - "Miss G Gets Gender Studies into Ontario's High Schools" (blog post) www.womeninandbeyond.org/?p=1671
 - "Ontario Schools will Offer Gender Studies, Thanks to Five Young Women" (article) www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/04/26/ontario_schools_will_offer_gender_studies_thanks_to_five_young_women_porter.html
 - "How a Few Good Women Made Gender an Issue in Ontario's High Schools" (article) www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/how-a-few-good-women-made-gender-an-issue-in-ontarios-high-schools/article11707627
 - "Feminist Studies in Schools—A Necessary Addition to the Curriculum?" (blog post)
 - www.feminartsy.com/feminist-studies-in-schools-a-necessary-addition-to-the-curriculum

EXPECTATIONS/OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Increase their knowledge of the rise of feminism in Canada and how it connects with the struggle for suffrage;
- Examine power dynamics and manifestations of the oppression of women in Canada up until the advent of women's suffrage;
- Describe the events that took place before, during, and after the First World War that led to women's suffrage;
- Learn that the efforts of individuals and organizations can be successful in addressing and eradicating gender-based discrimination and oppression;
- Gain insight into Canadian and world history and events;
- Appreciate Canada's role, and the role of Canadian women, in the First World War; and
- Communicate their ideas, arguments and conclusions using various formats and styles as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

At Confederation, laws in Canada continued to reflect attitudes that women were inferior to men. For example, the definition of "persons" in Canada did not include women; married women who earned wages had to turn them over to their husbands; married women could be beaten by their husbands; and married women who owned property did not have the right to sell it without their husbands' agreement.

During the late 19th and early 20th century women began fighting for a more active role in public life. For social, economic, religious, and political reasons, both "maternal feminists" and "equal-rights feminists" focused their efforts on gaining greater property rights, greater access to education, becoming recognized as "persons" under the law, and women's suffrage. They formed organizations such as the National Council of Women in Canada to further their causes. Despite their efforts, change came slowly. It was not until the outbreak of the First World War and their support for the cause, both at home and abroad, that women achieved some significant political support for suffrage. In addition, there was a greater public acceptance of women's right to vote. Prime Minister Borden also recognized a political advantage if he supported the cause of women's suffrage.

STEP ONE: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

After students have read the graphic novel, explain how the attitudes and laws had been "imported" from Europe, especially from Britain to Canada. Have students discuss the daily lives of Canadian men and women in post-Confederation Canada and their respective rights. Specifically discuss some examples of how women and men were not treated equally by the laws or within society, and why. (Discuss the connection between laws, attitudes, and public will.)

Students may find it difficult to imagine how anyone could believe that people of different genders should not have the same rights. Discuss historical perspective and remind them of the importance of trying to understand ideas and influences of a particular time within the context of that time. Have students look for specific examples in the graphic novel of power dynamics in Canadian society and manifestations of the oppression of women. As you discuss attitudes of the time with students, be sure to assist them in trying to understand the times through the lens of historical perspective.

Consider providing students with primary sources prior to and during the First World War, for example, poetry, short stories, and first-hand accounts and essays, and allowing time to read.

STEP TWO: CREATE TIMELINES

As a class, watch this short (under 10 min) video about the history of women's suffrage in Canada: www.cpac.ca/en/programs/telling-times/episodes/21252966. Ask them to jot down any quotes about women that strike them as significant. (Example: "we must keep our women within their sphere.") Discuss the video as a class. Ask the students how it compares with the information they read in the graphic novel. Discuss the quotes they noted, and have them comment on historical perspective.

Have students watch the video again in pairs, using it and the graphic novel to create a timeline of key events in the struggle for suffrage. Have them research the first wave of feminism in Canada and create a timeline of key events in feminist activism.

Ask the student pairs to refer to their research and timelines as they write responses to these questions: What events took place before, during, and after the First World War that

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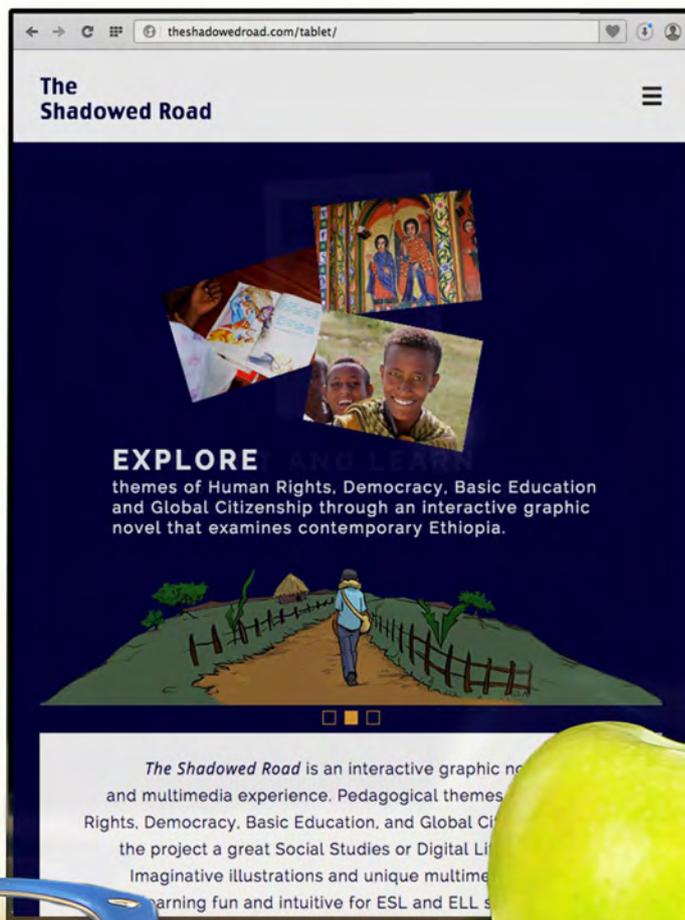
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led to women's suffrage? What can you learn about how the rise of feminism in Canada and the struggle for suffrage connects by comparing these timelines?

Students will hand in or post this assignment for the teacher.

STEP THREE: FEMINISM

Have a class discussion about the definition of the word "feminism" as it applied during the first wave of feminism in Canada. (Students will likely end up with two definitions, one for maternal feminism and one for equal-rights feminism.) Explain that the "second wave" of feminism occurred in the 1960's and 70's, the third and fourth "wave" happened in the late 20th and early 21st century. Have students share their views on what today's definition of feminism might be, and why. Briefly discuss how and why words such as feminism change their meaning over time. (Tell students they will discuss "modern" feminism further in Lesson 2.)

Have students work in pairs to research early feminism (1867-1960) (for example, articles such as www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/early-womens-movements-in-canada/).

Have students watch the CBC documentary "The 'F' word: Who Wants to be a Feminist?" [www.cbc.ca/player/play/2529762228] that examines the question, What is a feminist? and whether or not women have achieved their goals. Ask them to listen for, and jot down, the "three levers of power" (money, electoral process, the media) [min 20:52]. Ask students whether or not they agree that the electoral process should be included as a "lever of power," and why?

Afterwards, ask the student pairs to reflect on questions such as: Why were some women (and men) living before and during the First World War, feminists, and what did that mean to them? Why weren't all women feminists? How were early feminists treated by others (media, political leaders, friends and family)? Who were the early feminists? (gender, social roles, rural vs. urban, religion, etc.) How did the concerns of individual women come together to unite into a growing movement? How were the struggle for gaining the right to vote and the rise of feminism connected?

Then have the pairs reflect on the history of suffragism and the early history of feminism, and the influence of social attitudes on these social movements. Ask them to write a brief essay of 500 words that summarizes their thoughts.

Students will hand in or post this assignment for the teacher.

STEP FOUR: A MANDATORY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE CHECKLIST

High school courses are not created and implemented without great consideration and debate. Many courses reflect an effort to impart a foundation of knowledge to students so they can be effective and independent citizens. And so that they have the ability to enjoy and appreciate life in this society, to understand Canada's past, and to think critically and compassionately about Canada's present and future.

Discuss with students who they think makes decisions about what courses should be offered in high schools across Canada and how these decisions are made. For example, explain that each province decides what courses are mandatory; this is because education is a provincial, not a federal, responsibility. As well, you may wish to tell students, as an example, that in June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools recommended that the government "make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students." Discuss why this subject is now (slowly) being incorporated into the curriculum, including in high schools.

Ask students to look at the course offerings in different provinces and discuss why there are differences. (Ensure that they recognize that economics and efficiency, as well as politics, play a role.) Have them check to see which ones are mandatory and discuss why they may have received this designation. Have students create a checklist of requirements they think a course should have before being considered for high schools and provide thoughtful and reasonable reasons for each item on the list. Have them create a second checklist of requirements they think a course should have in order for it to be considered as a mandatory course for high school and provide thoughtful and logical reasons for each item on the list.

STEP FIVE: GROUP EXHIBIT: MANDATORY FEMINIST COURSE OR NOT?

Have students use what they know about both the history of women's suffrage and the feminist movement to assess

whether or not feminism (or women’s rights) should be a potential topic for a high school course. Tell them about the five-year struggle of two Ontario students, who, through their grassroots Miss G Project, successfully, and recently, introduced a Gender Studies course in the Ontario secondary school curriculum. (You may wish to provide them with print-outs of articles such as these or have students access them online:

“Miss G Gets Gender Studies into Ontario’s High Schools” www.womeninandbeyond.org/?p=1671

“Ontario schools will offer gender studies, thanks to five young women” www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/04/26/ontario_schools_will_offer_gender_studies_thanks_to_five_young_women_porter.html

“How a few good women made gender an issue in Ontario’s high schools” www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/how-a-few-good-women-made-gender-an-issue-in-ontarios-high-schools/article11707627

In addition, consider having them read “Feminist studies in schools -- a necessary addition to the curriculum?” www.feminartsy.com/feminist-studies-in-schools-a-necessary-addition-to-the-curriculum

Pose the broader question, “Should a women’s studies course that includes the topic of feminism, be a mandatory course in high school?” Ask students to research the topic in groups, arrive at a conclusion, and prepare a stand-alone exhibit to reflect their conclusions.

Student teams will use any archival and digital resources at their disposal and should be encouraged to be creative and innovative in their exhibits. For example, students may produce a video, storyboard, Prezi presentation, or other presentation program.

When the exhibits are complete, have students circulate among the exhibits discussing their opinions with one another.

STUDENT EVALUATION QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE LESSON PLAN

BEFORE (PRE-IMPLEMENTATION)

- Do students have a general understanding of women’s struggle for suffrage in Canada and the rise of feminism in Canada?

- Do students have a clear understanding of the connection between women’s suffrage in Canada and feminism?
- Do students have any prior understanding of the circumstances that led up to women’s suffrage in Canada?
- Do students have an appreciation for the importance of women’s suffrage in Canada or an opinion about feminism?

AFTER (POST-IMPLEMENTATION)

- Students will describe the events that led to women achieving the right to vote in Canada, and how feminism in Canada evolved alongside these events.
- Students will reflect an understanding of how differences in beliefs and attitudes, and an inequity in power relationships, resulted in the oppression of women in Canada.
- Students will reflect on, and explain their ideas about, the importance of all Canadians having a basic understanding of women’s active role in achieving the right to vote and other rights.

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It's back-to-school again, which can be a drag for some students, so what better way to enliven the spirit than going to the movies? Give your lesson plans a boost with an educational IMAX film delivering a larger-than-life learning experience where giant screens, breathtaking visuals, and phenomenal surround sound immerse them in cinematic adventure. Here are some IMAX theatres that offer educational screenings:

Ontario Science Centre IMAX Dome

At the Ontario Science Centre IMAX Dome, films project over a gigantic rounded ceiling 4,500 times bigger than the average television screen, delivering 13,000 watts of sound. Students may journey through the biodiverse Amazon rainforest in *Amazon Adventure*, experience fascinating underwater locales such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Triangle in *Under the Sea*, learn about the world's engineering marvels in *Dream Big*, or uncover the history of the nation's first transcontinental railway in *Rocky Mountain Express*. To learn more, visit: www.ontariosciencecentre.ca/imax.

IMAX Victoria

Nestled in the world famous Royal British Columbia Museum, the 408-seat Imax theatre in Victoria, is home to the largest IMAX screen in British Columbia, soaring more than six stories high, spanning 85 feet in width. The Royal BC Museum and IMAX Victoria work in tandem to deliver an interesting lineup of educational films such as *Hubble*—a space voyage that sweeps viewers across the cosmos, *D Day: Normandy 1944*—an epic documentary about the largest allied operation of the Second World War, *To the Arctic*—a tale of survival in the changing Arctic, and *Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk*—a breathtaking expedition across the Colorado River exploring water conservation issues. Teacher resource guides are available with every group booking. To learn more, visit: www.imaxvictoria.com.

Telus World of Science Edmonton IMAX Theatre

The Telus World of Science Edmonton IMAX theatre features the largest screen in Alberta, measuring an impressive four stories high and six stories wide. Students may encounter some of the earth's most iconic hunters in *Incredible Predators*, experience the insect kingdom from



a bug's eye view in *Bugs! A Rainforest Adventure*, explore the mysteries of ancient cities in *Jerusalem* and *Mysteries of China*, or learn all about the sounds of our planet in a highly interactive new program, *Journey of Global Soundscapes: Mission to Record the Earth*. To learn more, visit: www.telusworldofscienceedmonton.ca.

IMAX des Galeries de la Capitale Theatre

This IMAX theatre in Quebec City brings images to life on a screen six stories high, with a diverse collection of educational fare ranging from scientific and historical films, to the latest adaptations of on-screen novels and productions from the Stratford Festival such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and other school favorites. Teacher resource guides and activity sheets are available to facilitate the learning experience. School groups may even bring their own original content (i.e. a movie created by students or a filmed school production) for a group screening. Translation headsets may also be provided. To learn more, visit: www.cineplex.com/Theatre/cinema-cineplex-imax-aux-galeries-de-la-capitale.



IT TAKES TWO TO Tango

(or Waltz, Foxtrot,
Rumba, or Jive)

Photos are courtesy of Ryan Kenner Photography

by **Martha Beach**

Imagine a gymnasium filled with a grade seven students. They're scattered around the room in mixed pairs of girls and boys. They're holding hands. They're looking each other in the eye. They're stepping in unison to classical music, communicating silently, and playing their role in the duo. This isn't your typical awkward middle school dance. It's a ballroom lesson and students are dancing as part of their education. Only a couple weeks ago, these same kids were reluctant to learn a dance only their grandparents knew. Some even sat on the sidelines; their initial discomfort, however, soon turned into excitement.

Over the past few years, ballroom dance has garnered attention as an extremely useful yet entertaining educational tool that levels the social playing field and carries extremely important life lessons. The current popularity of traditional partner dances started with the 2005 documentary *Mad Hot Ballroom*, about New York City schoolchildren preparing for ballroom competitions. Shows like *Dancing With the Stars*, now in its 25th season, are so popular that viewers can create their own Fantasy League as they tune in to episodes. And just this past summer, Mirvish Productions mounted a musical version of the 1992 Australian flick, *Strictly Ballroom*. But teaching school kids traditional ballroom dances—from the Rumba and Cha cha, to the Waltz and Tango—is not just for their entertainment. Ballroom dance embodies lessons of

physical communication, teamwork, discipline, focus, and respect for your fellow classmates.

Future Steps is one company teaching ballroom dancing to schools throughout southern Ontario. Started by Carole Simmons nine years ago, the instructors break down old-school choreographed dances into easily digestible sections of movement patterns. Over the course of five to eight lessons, kids learn their section, learn to work together, and perfect the moves. It culminates in a performance for the school community.

Simmons and her team teach 40 to 80 programs per year to roughly 5,000 - 8,000 students. The program is affordable, with some schools choosing to cover the cost while others pass it on to the families. What's more, ballroom dance lessons fit snugly into Ontario curriculum. "We get a large portion of our marks from her program—dance, participation, teamwork. It's a good opportunity to get the evaluation in," says Antony Caruso, a grade seven teacher at Holy Spirit Catholic School in Aurora, ON.

Velia Viola, principal at Holy Family Catholic Elementary School in Bolton, ON, signed her entire school up (kindergarten to grade eight) last year and incorporated it right into the dance mark. "We had some students who didn't want to participate but it wasn't optional," she says. "By the end, everyone was enjoying it."

Franco Troiani, principal at St. John Paul II Catholic

Elementary School in Boulton, ON, signed up his entire school—800 kids from kindergarten to grade eight—after hearing about it from a fellow educator. “I was looking for something to get the kids out of their shells and building relationships with their peers,” he says. His students put on three evening performances. “Parents always want to see what kids are doing and showcasing.”

The most important things students are gaining can’t be seen by the audience. “It’s all about discipline, etiquette, respect, communication,” Simmons stresses. “We have zero tolerance for disrespect or lack of teamwork.” They are learning to play their role in a situation. They are learning life skills: confidence, body language, and patience. “They have to know about facial expression, posture, eye contact,” Simmons explains. To work with someone new at such a young age is of utmost importance. “Sometimes the teamwork is like pulling teeth. But doing it is so good for creativity and respect,” she says.

In the world of ballroom dancing, everyone is equal. “The whole purpose of what we do is to level the playing field,” Simmons says. Caruso has seen this in action, “They have to work with people they have never worked with before. In the end, you can’t tell who is the nerd and who is popular,” he says. Ballroom dancing is something new to the vast majority of kids these days. They all start at the beginning and move forward at the same pace, step by step, count by count. The students learn a new—and fairly difficult skill—



all together. And they need each other to succeed. After all, the old saying is absolutely correct: it takes two to Tango (or Waltz, Foxtrot, Rumba, or Jive). Such adamant attention to teamwork effects social attitude and interactions throughout the program.

These attitude alterations often also carry on past the end of ballroom dancing lessons. “We see the difficult kids in grade six, but these trouble kids are different when we see them in grade seven and grade eight,” Simmons says. Their personalities start to change. Their confidence shifts. “Especially with bullies. We flatten them out. We level the playing field. We give them something to make them feel good, to give them success and then we reward them and then have them help other students,” says Simmons.

Valerie Soper, a librarian and planning time teacher at Centennial Public School in Guelph, ON, has noticed that students really enjoy ballroom dancing. “Maybe it’s because ballroom is new to them. It’s mathematical. It’s different. It’s patterns.” In the beginning, they may not be so enthused, but “by the end they’re giving up recesses to dance more,” Soper says.

Viola notices a similar carry-over. “Often, the girls and boys don’t play with each other. Now they are playing together. They’re playing soccer and other organized games together,” Viola explains. She notes how much more respect exists between the students. “It is a huge positive outcome of how they behave and support and how they collaborate and work together.”

These outcomes are often the best part of ballroom dancing. “The main point for me was to build a community of inclusiveness,” says Troiani. He also notices a large amount of individual change as well. “It’s nice to see, when there is that hesitation or a reluctance, they still try something new,” Troiani says.

Caruso has even had a couple students tell him about a wedding they attended where they were able to ask their parent or grandparent to dance. Ballroom dancing can bring together different generations.

Ultimately, ballroom dance lessons are a fun way to get students moving and learning fundamental real-life skills. “We give them the ability to ask someone to dance. We give them confidence and respect,” Simmons says. Caruso agrees. “It’s another art form to express themselves,” Caruso says. “Plus it’s great for physical activity.” So far, Future Steps is the only program of exactly this type in southern Ontario. Researching within the local arts community to see what is on offer and what may be brought into the school is well worth the effort. Sometimes, students just need to be carefully instructed on how to participate in this performance we call life.

Martha Beach is a graduate of Ryerson University’s journalism program. Currently, she is a freelance writer and factchecker in Toronto.

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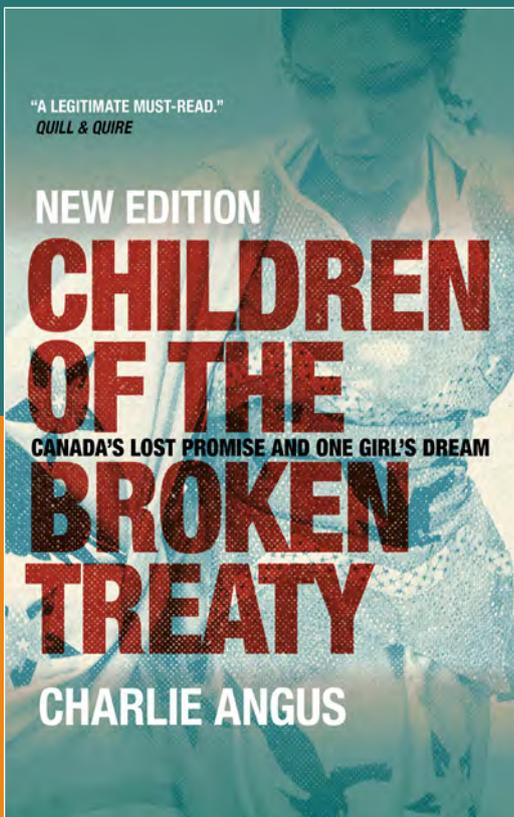
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Memory Training

As students grapple with post-summer holiday brain drain, getting back into study mode can be a struggle, especially when they are expected to remember much of what they learned last year. To get those memory wheels turning again, here are some apps that can help.



Jungle Memory

Intended for ages 7 to 16, Jungle Memory is a game-based website that specifically targets working memory efficiency. It's scientifically proven to boost learning outcomes for students, including students with a wide range of learning difficulties such as Dyslexia and ASD. The games all have a fun safari theme with three categories to choose from: CodeBreaker—a game that will challenge spatial skills, Quicksand—a mental processing activity with letters and words, and River Crossing—which aims to improve working memory with math. Bonus features include a 10-part video series and training booklets on working memory. For more information, visit: junglememory.com

HAPPYneuron Brain Training

(iOS & Android – Free)

Created by cognitive psychologists, the Happyneuron website offers a variety of interactive games designed to improve working memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory. There are activities where players can attempt to retrace their on-screen route through great cities across the world, reconstitute the configuration of objects, memorize a long list in 60 seconds, or match animal sounds with the right photo. Players are provided feedback on their cognitive performance as the results are analyzed at the end of each game. For more information, visit: happy-neuron.com



Brainscape

(iOS & Android – Free)

Brainscape adopts a flash-card approach to help users learn specific subject matter. What is unique, however, is users rate their difficulty of recall on a scale of 1-5 after viewing the correct answer for each flashcard. Cards with “harder” concepts are repeated more frequently until the user reports a higher confidence. Students can learn from a wide range of subjects, ranging from languages to science and music theory. Teachers and students can even create and share their own flashcards, or use flashcards created by other educators.

For more information, visit: brainscape.com



Fit Brains Trainer

(iOS & Android)

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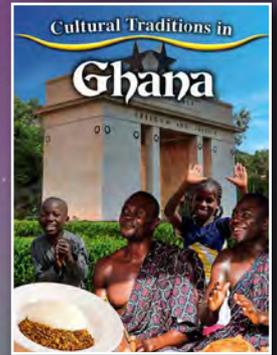
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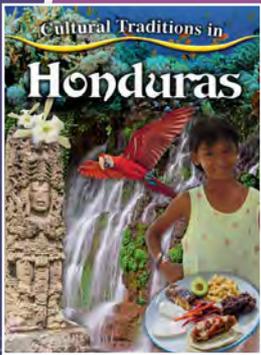
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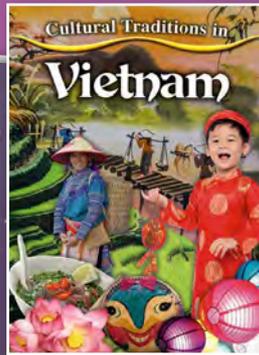
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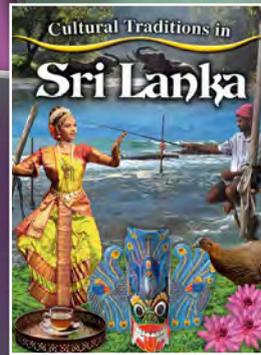
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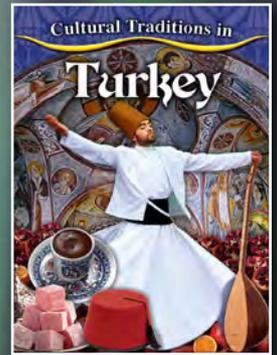
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▶ from Cultural Traditions in Poland

Harvest Festival

Poland's Harvest Festival is also known as Dożynki. This tradition dates back to a time when rural peasants did all the fieldwork by hand. The farmers brought in the harvest during the last weeks of summer. When they were finished, they carried big bundles of herbs and vegetables to church. These were blessed by the priest.

In this small village, fruits, grains, and flowers are displayed on Harvest Festival.

After church mass, everyone enjoyed a feast of the harvest's foods. This was followed by a celebration of singing and dancing. A harvest crown was woven of the most important grains of wheat and rye. It was decorated with flowers and ribbons and presented to the landowner who owned the fields. Traditional Polish costumes are often worn to celebrate this tradition.

Did You Know?
The wreath is a symbol of a plentiful harvest.

Did You Know?
Costumes are part of peasant culture. Traditional costumes from different regions of Poland are brightly colored with detailed embroidery.

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