

# TEACH

LE PROF

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019 \$3.85

EDUCATION FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW - L'ÉDUCATION - AUJOURD'HUI ET DEMAIN

## The EVOLVING Role of LIBRARIANS



FEATURES

SUSPENDING SUSPENSIONS  
THE EVOLVING ROLE  
OF LIBRARIANS

COLUMNS

FIELD TRIPS: Arts & Crafts Workshops  
WEBSTUFF: Black History Month

CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVES:  
THE PURPOSE OF WRITING

## TEACH MAGAZINE • LE PROF

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**D**eep in the heart of winter, much of the country is thawing out from frigid temperatures and resounding snow. A gentle reminder that we live in the northern hemisphere. The pulse of education never stops, however. The beat goes on. As do we here at TEACH Magazine despite wrapping up in scarves and shawls to continue the work we do.

In this, the winter issue, Meagan Gillmore, one of our premier feature writers, explores the evolving role of libraries, many of which, are transforming from the traditional incarnation into a more modern learning commons. No longer are libraries quiet zones where anything above a whisper draws stern looks from those in charge. Within the learning commons concept, libraries become dynamic spaces that may be filled with the hubbub of students engaged in a wide range of hands-on projects while working in maker spaces cobbling together all manner of devices and objects. Even more interesting, some of the commons space has been cleared of books, those that haven't been utilized over a period of time. All to make room for the hosting of these other hands-on activities. So the school library certainly isn't what it used to be.

In our other feature, written by Adam Stone, the topic of suspensions is introduced. Always a contentious subject, schools and school districts handle these situations in different ways. Do suspensions work? Do they produce the desired outcomes? If not, what are the alternatives? Stone explores the current research and speaks with practitioners about their experiences and best practices concerning a tricky subject confronting human emotions and behaviours.

Our column on **Field Trips** acknowledges winter might curtail outdoor activities focusing on a range of Arts & Crafts related expeditions offered in communities across the country. February also marks the beginning of Black History Month and we list a range of useful and compelling resources for teachers to coopt when covering this topic in class. **CURRICULA** explores the life of one of Canada's most celebrated Prime Ministers and the first Francophone in that role, Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Please do check out our latest teacher-student resources:

The Life and Times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, ([www.sirwilfridlaurier.com](http://www.sirwilfridlaurier.com)),  
Suffrage: Canadian Women and the Vote ([www.canadiansuffrage.com](http://www.canadiansuffrage.com)),  
The Road to Confederation ([www.roadtoconfederation.com](http://www.roadtoconfederation.com)) and  
Dystopia 2153 ([www.dystopia2153.com](http://www.dystopia2153.com)).

Until next time,  
Wili Liberman, Editor  
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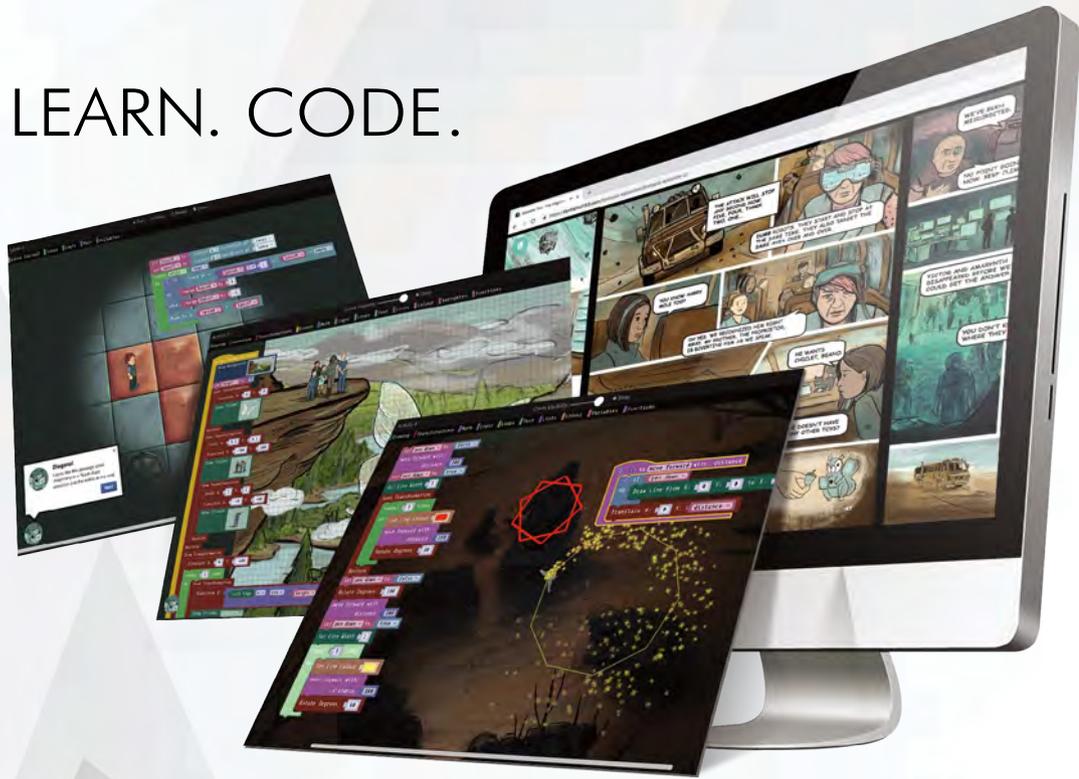
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Dystopia 2153 allows my struggling readers to shine with coding skills while challenging my high-level students. I cannot recommend it enough!"

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The artwork is exquisitely dark and beautiful. The coding lessons are well thought out and I appreciate all the opportunities to practice while levelling up.

- Iain Brodie, Educator, Toronto, Canada

### ABOUT TEACH

Dystopia 2153 is developed and produced by TEACH (teachmag.com), a national, educational publishing company based in Toronto, Canada.

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**CURRICULA**

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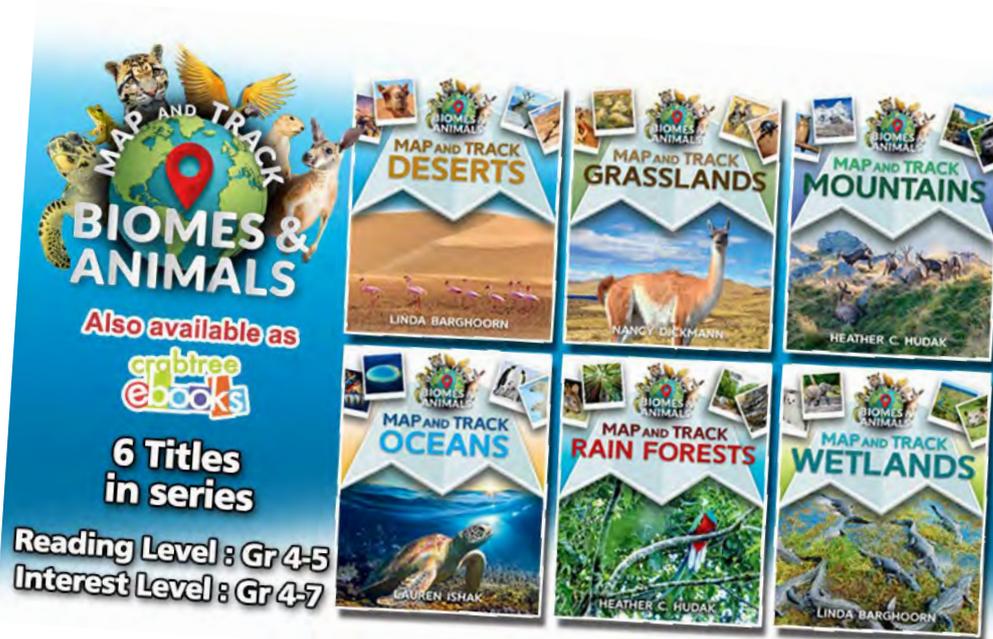
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# Making Connections with Animals and Their Environments

The *Animals Back from the Brink* series is an essential book collection for classrooms and libraries. It supports the science curriculum in understanding life systems related to habitats and communities. The series explains how different animals around the world, once on the brink of extinction, are now surviving and improving. Students are prompted to consider the impact of humans on natural environments and the strategies aimed to help animal species recover.

A link printed inside each book in the *Animals Back from the Brink* series gives readers access to *Crabtree Plus*, a website with supplemental digital content and activities that reinforce and extend key concepts. A Teachers Guide is also included to support instruction.



While the *Animals Back from the Brink* series focuses on featured animals and their recovery from extinction, the *Map and Track Biomes & Animals* series expands learning to biomes and the animals that live within them. Threats to habitats are considered here, as well as where animals live, feed and breed. Maps that locate biome features and track animal movements support geo-literacy and encourage readers to make connections between animal movement and geographical or environmental factors.



# Learn About Biomes Around The World

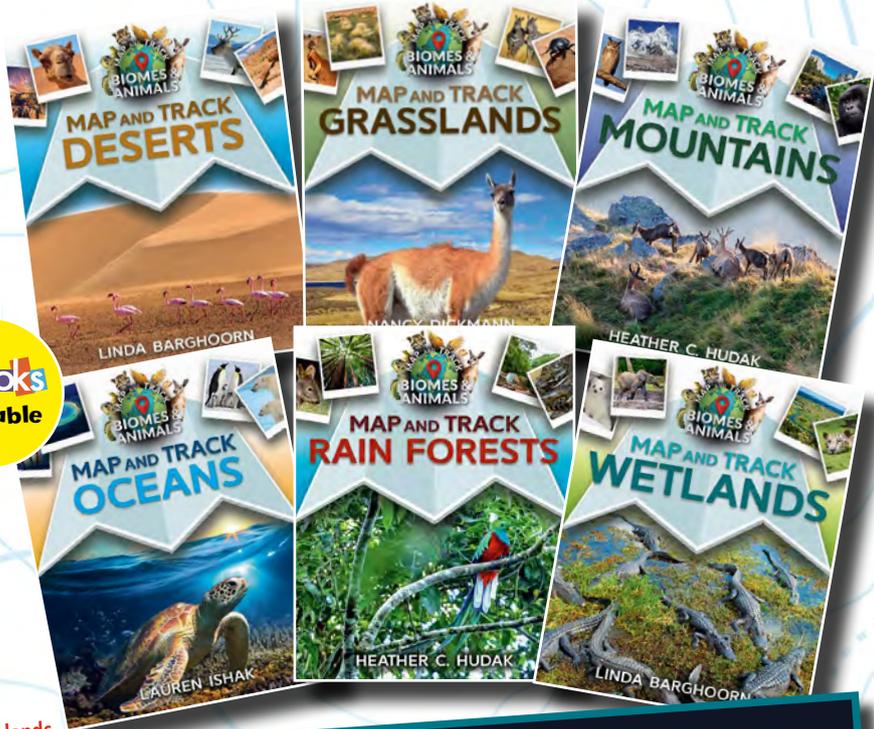


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Biomes and their animals are the focus of this colourful and appealing animal life series. Each book tracks one particular biome, describing its important features and which animals live there. Maps throughout each book show readers information such as where the animals live, feed, and breed, and their migration routes. Other important information includes animal life cycles, food sources, and threats to habitats. Readers are asked to engage in a biome mapping activity to help reinforce understanding of the fragility of these habitats.



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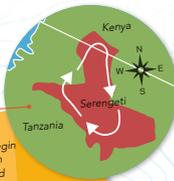
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## The African Savannah

The Serengeti in Africa may be the most famous savannah in the world because of the large animals that live there. Herds of elephants, giraffes, and zebras roam this grassland. Lions and other predators hunt them for food.

### Wet and Dry Seasons

The savannah covers large parts of Africa. These regions separate the rain forest in the center of the continent from the drier areas to the north and south. Unlike many other grasslands, the savannah has quite a few trees. It is warm all year round. For most of the year, it stays dry, but there is a rainy season in the summer months.



### WANDERING WILDEBEESTS

Wildebeests begin moving north in April, then head south in November.

Wildebeests (also called gnus) are large antelopes that graze on the savannah. They travel in large herds through Kenya, Tanzania, and other countries in Africa. Every year, millions of wildebeests migrate to find grass to eat. Grass grows only where it rains, so the herds follow the rains. This is known as the Great Migration. The route they travel is like a large loop. It takes them across several large rivers, where crocodiles lie in wait for prey.



Wildebeest calves must learn to run as soon as they are born to escape from lions and other predators.

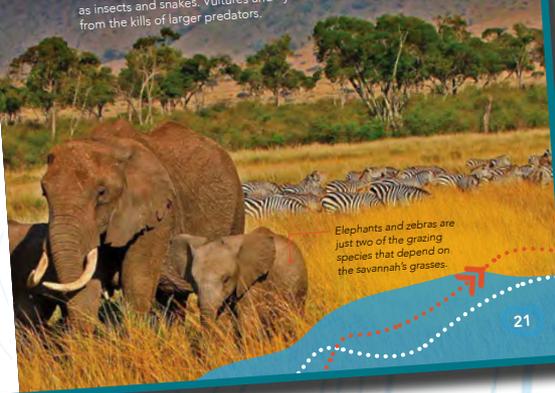
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### Grazers, Big and Small

Huge numbers of other kinds of animals also graze on the savannah. These herds travel together with the wildebeests on their migration. It is safer to travel in great numbers, and the different animals don't compete for food. Smaller animals, such as antelope, eat grasses. Giraffes use their long necks to reach high up into acacia trees for leaves. Their long tongues are able to avoid the acacia's sharp thorns. The leaves taste bitter, so the animals do not destroy the tree completely. The tree can regrow to supply more food.

### Savannah Predators

Grazing animals provide plenty of food for the predators of the savannah. Groups of lions, called prides, work together to hunt large prey, including giraffes and buffalo. Cheetahs are the fastest animals on land. These big cats use their speed to chase down fast prey, such as gazelles. Secretary birds hunt smaller prey, such as insects and snakes. Vultures and hyenas **scavenge** their meals from the kills of larger predators.



Elephants and zebras are just two of the grazing species that depend on the savannah's grasses.

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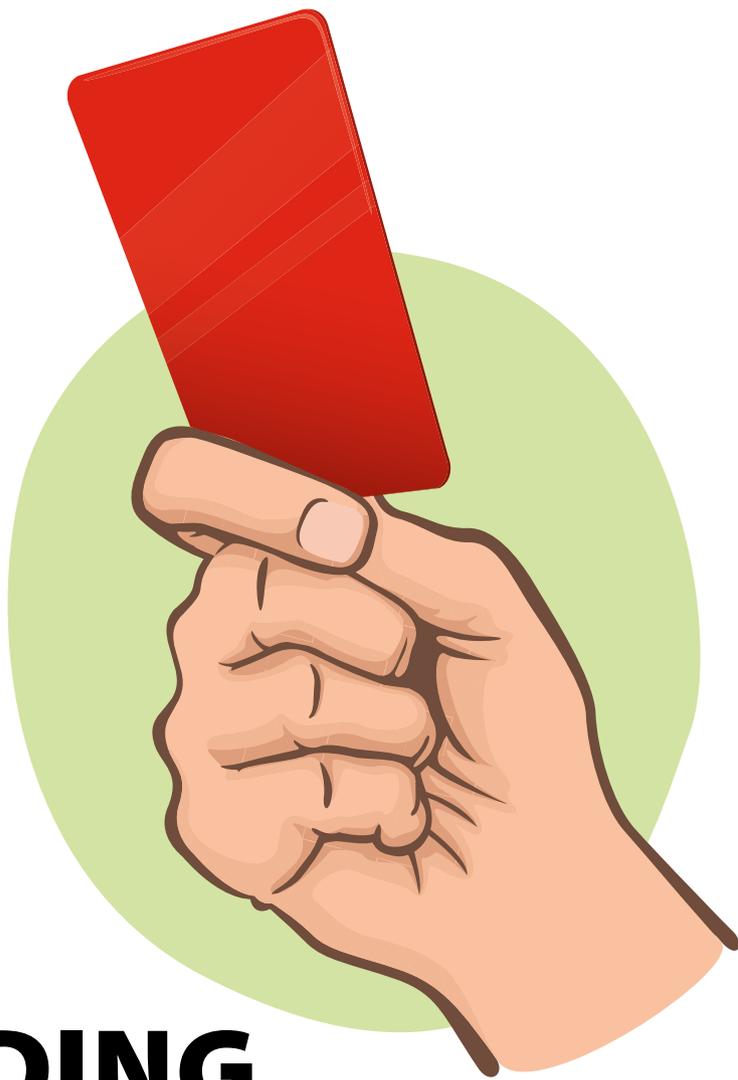
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# SUSPENDING SUSPENSIONS

by Adam Stone

**B**riana Robinson is no big fan of suspension as a disciplinary tool.

“For me, it is best for students to be in class,” said Robinson, a teacher of 5th grade English Language Arts at The Key Academy, a public charter school in Washington, DC. “They come to school to learn and I want them to be in school as much as possible. When a student is suspended, they are no longer in that learning environment.”

She is not alone in this. A growing chorus of educators and researchers have lately come together to urge schools away from suspension as a way to tame repeat classroom offenders. A range of studies suggest suspension is often unfair—skewed by race and gender—and also unproductive, leading to worse rather than better academic outcomes.

Moreover, advocates say, there are better ways to deal with discipline issues. Communication, caring, and

inclusivity can reshape the classroom for the better. Here we’ll take a look at some of the concerns that have been raised around suspension and then consider emerging alternatives.

## The Research

A preponderance of evidence suggests suspension does not work, and may do more harm than good:

- When researchers Johanna Lacoe and Matthew P. Steinberg looked at 3rd- through 12th-graders in Philadelphia district schools, they found that being suspended negatively impacted math and reading achievement.
- Researcher NaYoung Hwang investigated 7th- through 11th-graders in an anonymous suburban California school district over a period of several years. That study showed

that multiple suspensions correlated to lower math and English language arts achievement.

- A study by Elizabeth M. Chu and Douglas R. Ready looked at a group of New York City high school students. It found that suspended students were 3 and 4 percentage points less likely to pass math class and English classes, respectively, compared to semesters when those same students weren't suspended.

Clearly there is a significant correlation between suspensions and academic achievement. The research reinforces what most teachers know intuitively: Kids who are not in class will eventually fall behind.

Some also have raised concerns that suspension is not used evenhandedly in schools where it is part of the disciplinary routine. For instance, Zibei Chen, a research fellow at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, reports that boys and African-American students are more likely to be suspended than girls and white and Hispanic students.

The New Center for American Progress looked at data from the two largest school districts in the U.S.—the New York City Department of Education and the Los Angeles Unified School District—which together suspended or expelled students for a total of 47,558 days in the period studied. The center uncovered wide racial variations: White students are 15 percent of the NYC district, for example, but only account for 8 percent of the days lost due to suspensions. African American students account for 27 percent of the district, but make up almost half (47 percent) of days missed because of suspensions.

Constance Lindsay, a researcher at the Urban Institute, points to U.S. Department of Education statistics that

confirm the trend: Black kids are 16 percent of school enrollments but account for 34 percent of one-time suspensions and 42 percent of multiple suspensions. “There are huge disparities by race in terms of how often kids are suspended,” she said.

Some child-development experts warn that all of this could lead to disastrous long-term consequences. The American Academy of Pediatrics warns that students who experience suspension may be 10 times more likely to ultimately drop out of high school. “The student who does not complete high school can expect to earn considerably less over a working career and to have far fewer educational and employment opportunities from which to choose than a student who has completed high school,” the Academy says.

In the more immediate sense, some experts say, suspensions fail to make the grade as a classroom management tool.

“First and foremost, it doesn’t work. Study after study has shown that when children return from suspension their behavior does not change,” said Dr. Rosemarie Allen, Metropolitan State University of Denver assistant professor of Early Childhood Education.

“When we think about classroom discipline or management, we have to think about what we can do to really impact or change student behavior. I think of suspensions more as a weapon than as a tool,” she said.

Teachers have nonetheless relied on suspension as a measure of last resort, a way to maintain order in the classroom when all other efforts have failed. Rather than fall back on this most extreme action, some say, teachers would do better to reorient their classroom around a different set of behavioral principles.



## A Better Plan

Behavior management. Restorative justice. Community learning. All sorts of phrases get tossed around in conversations about classroom order and discipline. What they come down to is this: Forget about order and discipline. The way to manage acting-out behaviors is to treat students as individuals; to dig deep into their personal needs; to build an inclusive community that fosters a sense of personal responsibility and accountability.

"It's about having good student-teacher relations, having teachers who are able to talk to their students and understand where they are coming from," said Francis Huang, associate professor in the University of Missouri College of Education. "Certainly, those things take times to build, but building those bonds is critical to good classroom management."



**"The idea is to find strategies that allow disruptive kids to stay in the classroom, to redirect their behaviors around more positive elements like restoring the community."**

Briana Robinson says she tries to embody this spirit. "I am really proactive when it comes to the management of my classroom," she said. "It's about having a sense of trust between me as a teacher and them as students, having a classroom where you can be totally honest without judgement. Communication is key. My first move when a student is not behaving is to not yell at them, but to have a conversation with them: 'Hey, this is important, I know your potential, please show it.' I want to give them positive reinforcement for the things that I do want them to bring to the classroom."

For this kind of dynamic to exist, the educator must lay down a basis of trust, something Robinson strives to do early on. "There is a sense of vulnerability that I bring in the first couple of weeks of school. I share personal things, the fact that I have a little brother, the fact that I had difficulty making friends growing up. I've sat in that seat, I am a human being with feelings," she said.

"Then you have to listen. If students come in and they are not in the best mood, I will meet them at eye level and ask how they are feeling before I just dive into classwork. That makes them want to meet with me at a human level. They hear that I am coming from a place of love and concern, even if I am strict," she said.

This may sound like a lot of heavy lifting, a lot of hand-holding, but those who are wary of the adverse impact of suspensions say this kind of intimate bonding is a necessary remedy to a disciplinary system badly in need of repair.

## Building Bonds

At the Urban Institute, researcher Lindsay talks about classroom management techniques founded in restorative justice: Building classroom communities that are rooted in clear agreements, authentic communication, and specific tools that can help to resolve conflicts in a meaningful way.

"The idea is to find strategies that allow disruptive kids to stay in the classroom, to redirect their behaviors around more positive elements like restoring the community," she said.

In the restorative model, a bully might be asked to reflect on what happened and how it may have impacted the other student. By talking through feelings of shame and hurt, it becomes possible to reintroduce the offender into the community, sometimes with the help of supportive third parties such as family members or a trusted friend.

Rosemarie Allen at Metropolitan State University of Denver is a big proponent of this approach—and she comes to this from a place of experience. She was frequently suspended from school for climbing on the roof (to get a better view of the playground), dismembering baby dolls (to see how the pieces fit together), and sharpening pencils down to their erasers (to see how long it would take).

How should we deal with kids like her? "It is about the student acknowledging the harm they have caused to our community and the community deciding how to repair this harm. It's about holding students accountable," she said.

For this approach to work, teachers may need to focus closely on specific student experiences. Why is the student acting out? What message is he or she trying to convey?

"A starting place is in finding out what is going on. We have to connect with students on a level that allows us to understand why they are behaving the way they are," she said. "It is time consuming—in the beginning. But if we invest the time up front, if we can build a community, if we can talk about expectations and about consequences, then we can work together as a community to make sure this is a safe space."

**A seasoned journalist with 20+ years' experience, Adam Stone covers education, technology, government and the military, along with diverse other topics.**

## Black History Month

Learning about Black History is much more than slavery and civil rights. It's also about celebrating the achievements of many Black Canadians. In 1995, the government of Canada officially recognized the month of February as Black History Month. Here are some websites and resources to help you and your students learn more and commemorate.

### The Canadian Encyclopedia Timeline

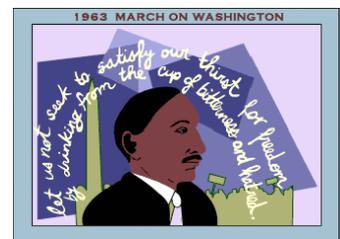
The Canadian Encyclopedia offers a digital timeline that details the stories, experiences, and achievements of people of African origin. It begins in 1608 when it was believed the first Black person arrived in Canada and brings users up to the present-day, marking the accomplishments of contemporary African-Canadians. To browse this free resource, visit [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/black-history](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/timeline/black-history).

### BC Black History Awareness Society

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the BC Black History Awareness Society is a non-profit society that celebrates and stimulates interest in the achievements of Black people in British Columbia, both past and present. Their website contains a Learning Centre that offers many resources for students and teachers, including a Biographical Stories section as well as a Places of Interest Guide. Visit [www.bcblackhistory.ca](http://www.bcblackhistory.ca) to start exploring their website.

### Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum

The Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum's mission is "To preserve and celebrate the heritage of people of African descent in Saskatchewan." Through research, collecting and documenting, the contribution of African and African descent persons in Saskatchewan over the previous 100 plus years is now available through their virtual museum. Sections of interest include, Early Pioneers, Sports, and Military. To learn more: [www.sachm.org](http://www.sachm.org)



### PBS Kids Ecards African American World

For students who may be interested in learning more about African American history, try the African American World microsite by PBS Kids. Although an older site, this resource contains a fun "e-cards" section that still can be used today. Each e-card teaches students about a moment in African American history and is accompanied by an evocative illustration. Students can briefly learn about topics such as the Harlem Renaissance and Martin Luther King Jr. Check out the e-cards at: [www.pbskids.org/aaworld](http://www.pbskids.org/aaworld).



The first Black person thought to have set foot on Canadian soil was Mathieu Da Costa, a free man who was hired by Europeans to act as a translator.

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# TEACHING THE REAL PURPOSE OF WRITING

by Ashley Yarbrough

As teachers, we know that students need to be motivated in order to learn. Especially in English where it requires students to sit and read for an extended period of time, I find it to be frequently challenging to get my students to WANT to do their work. “Challenging” is really an understatement if we are being honest; it’s more like “nearly impossible” at times. I have taught homeless kids, kids from multi-million dollar homes, 6th graders, 10th

graders, 12th graders—you name it. They’re all the same in this way. They need purpose, and due to their maturity and the instant gratification age, that purpose needs to apply to them right now.

Every year that I’ve taught, my students read 30-45 minutes at least three times a week. We read short stories, novels, and other pieces of literature. For most students, getting a good grade is their motivating factor. For others, it is avoiding the wrath of their parents. Almost none of them read for joy or curiosity. It’s a shame and a very

serious problem, because reading, as we know, increases intelligence, ups social understanding (like empathy, appreciation for diversity, etc.), heightens knowledge—the list goes on.

Even if I motivate most of my students to read and even excite them about our current book, there are always a few students who just won't do it. They're apparently satisfied with failing the quizzes and tests. Their parents' wrath or disappointment in them is not motivation enough. They'd rather sit and stare at the book than read a single word.

One year, I had such a student. I'll call him "Dylan." He would literally spend 45 minutes every day staring at his desk. He was failing my class badly—like 21% failing. I tried getting him to read smaller chunks. I tried calling home. I tried having him read aloud to me. Nothing was working. I had to ask myself, "What can I do to motivate this kid?"

I had noticed that Dylan really liked cartoon, comic-type shows. He liked shows such as, Dragonball Z and Batman. So I had this random idea to ask him write to a review of one of the shows, instead of the book. My expectations were low, but at the least, I hoped he'd produce something minimally acceptable that I could enter into the gradebook. My goal was to show him how much his grade would change if he simply turned something in, because at that point, anything above a C would drastically boost his grade.

The next day, as he was studying his desk's wood grain pattern, I asked if he had decided what show to review. He said, "Why should I bother? No one will ever see anything I write."

I replied, "You'll use writing everyday as you get older—emails, job applications, social media statuses. Anything, really."

He replied, "Yeah, but I don't want a job where I have to read or write, and I don't use social media."

Suddenly, I had another idea. I asked, "Do you want someone to see what you write?"

He said, "I guess."

I told him, "We can make that happen. I'll show you something tomorrow in class. We'll have the whole class do it."

During the planning period, I looked up some websites that offer submissions. There are tons! Popular places like BuzzFeed, The Atlantic, and Story Magazine accept submissions. I narrowed my search and found a listicle of (appropriate) fanfiction sites, especially those geared toward anime/cartoon stories and I printed it out. I found another listicle of places that publish book reviews and printed that out as well. I called Dylan's parents and asked if they'd allow him to submit his writing to a website, sharing with them my list of publications.

The next class, I handed Dylan the listicle of fanfiction sites, and told him to write a story using his show's characters.

I told him that if it was good, we could submit it. One of the sites would pay if it was accepted. I reminded him that anyone could see his story. His eyes widened and he asked, "You can get paid for writing?"

"Yeah! Definitely! You just need to be accepted. Sometimes that takes a ton of tries, but the more you write, the better you get. If it doesn't get accepted, we can ask why and try again, using their advice."

I presented the other listicle to the class for book reviews and sent a permission slip home to the parents.

Dylan—and the rest of the class—really knocked it out of the park. Dylan came back the next day with a 10 page story while the others handed in their stories over the next two weeks. We held workshops to improve the writing and allowed parents time to return the permission slip. Only one parent did not want her child's work submitted publicly, but she was fine with it being submitted to the school's newsletter.

After two weeks, the students worked together in the computer lab to submit their revised work to various websites. I required them to choose three sites to better their chances of acceptance, but really, I just wanted to them to see for themselves what's out there. It took the entire class period, mostly, because I required them to read and follow the instructions for submission, that usually requires email addresses and often a blurb for the submitter's profile.

It was so awesome to see their excitement. I had to keep reminding them that they may not hear back for months, and they will likely need to try again several times, learning how to meet the editors' expectations. They were highly motivated by having a purpose for their writing outside of the classroom or even home. They realized that writing has a REAL purpose. They also learned how to revise drafts, how to write for an audience, about author's purpose, etc. It was a fantastic learning experience for them.

Over the years, I've found as many ways as possible to have my students write for someone besides myself and their parents. We've submitted pieces online—with parent and administration approval, of course. Local papers tend to have online versions and will often not have age limits! I used this for nonfiction writing, as well as persuasive writing. We've also written guides for incoming students, informing them of "need-to-knows" from students' point of views. The important thing is, they know what they are writing has a purpose and what they are reading applies—not in the future, but right now.

**Ashley Yarbrough is a secondary English teacher, mother, writer, and gardener. She has taught students from diverse backgrounds in both public and private schools. She keeps a blog at [www.mamahoodmemoirsblog.wordpress.com](http://www.mamahoodmemoirsblog.wordpress.com). Feel free to visit and reach out to her!**



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Rachel Collishaw, Elections Canada

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Rachel Collishaw is an award-winning teacher with over 20 years' experience. She has been seconded to Elections Canada.



## ÉLECTIONS ET DÉMOCRATIE POUR DIVERS NIVEAUX D'APPRENTISSAGE

Rachel Collishaw, Élections Canada

En tant qu'enseignants, nous savons que tous les élèves apprennent différemment. Et, trouver des outils stimulants pour répondre aux divers niveaux d'acquisition linguistique de ces derniers peut représenter un défi. Défi qui n'est pas tombé dans l'oreille d'un sourd lorsqu'Élections Canada a développé ses nouvelles ressources éducatives.

En effet, Élections Canada a non seulement mis au point des ressources pédagogiques utilisant un langage clair et simple, nous avons également créé des versions supplémentaires au contenu adapté afin qu'elles puissent être enseignées dans toutes les salles de classe. Résultat : les leçons sont conçues pour appuyer le développement du vocabulaire et l'acquisition linguistique de divers niveaux d'apprentissage, tout en étant divertissantes et appropriées aux différents groupes d'âge. Ai-je mentionné quelles sont gratuites?!

Que ce soit pour les classes d'immersion ou les élèves ayant des difficultés en lecture, le contenu simplifié facilitera l'animation des activités.

Voici quelques aspects clés des nouvelles ressources :

- Vocabulaire simplifié, phrases plus courtes, emploi de verbes d'action
- Contenu développé avec l'aide de spécialistes en alphabétisation
- Liste de définition incluse dans certaines ressources
- Le nombre d'éléments dans les activités est réduit (par exemple, moins de cartes d'activité à lire à haute voix)
- Durée des leçons plus courte

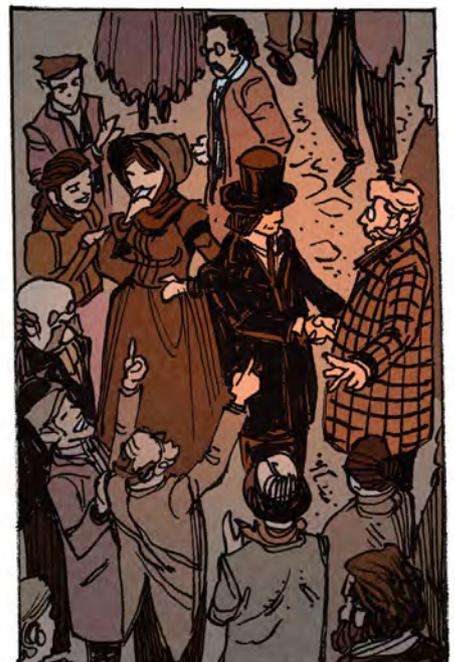
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Rachel Collishaw est une enseignante primée avec plus de 20 ans d'expérience. Elle travaille présentement auprès d'Élections Canada.





# CURRICULA

## LESSON ONE

# WILFRID LAURIER AND THE NATIONAL IDENTITY

When Wilfrid Laurier first entered politics, he was as a Francophone living and working within a Francophone community and representing predominantly Francophone issues. As Wilfrid ascended to national politics eventually becoming Canada's first Francophone Prime Minister, things changed. Even as a young boy in school, he wanted to understand the English point of view and culture. In this way, and because of his liberal upbringing, he developed a broader perspective, looking outside his Francophone roots. Wilfrid walked the line of compromise and in some instances, satisfied neither side. Nonetheless, for much of his political career he remained popular, revered as an accomplished orator and a figure who thought of himself as a true Canadian. He won four consecutive elections, served in government for 45 years and led the Liberal party for over 31 years. All in all, these were remarkable achievements, particularly in light of contemporary times when political careers come and go with much greater frequency. Wilfrid ascended to power at a time when the Francophone community held considerable influence inside and outside Quebec. He saw himself, however, as a bridge between the two. Wilfrid's motivations focused on policies and solutions for the greater good. What, ultimately, was best for Canada and how could he help this young nation grow and prosper?

## SUBJECTS

Canadian History,  
Canadian Politics

## GRADE LEVEL

Grades 9 to 12

## DURATION

3 to 4 classes

## KEY CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Students will learn how Canada viewed itself as a nation during Wilfrid Laurier's early years in politics and as Prime Minister. Was the vision one that remained cohesive or was there a rupture in the national fabric of nationhood? Students will examine how Wilfrid responded to this challenge and whether he was, ultimately successful, in unifying the country within a single, connected vision.

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

- *The Life and Times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* graphic novel
- Computers or devices with Internet access
- Materials needed for preparing presentations

## EXPECTATIONS/OUTCOMES

The overall expectations listed below serve as an entry point for teachers. Teachers are encouraged to make connections to specific expectations in their region and grade.

Students will:

- Increase their knowledge of Canadian history;
- Analyze the social, and political implications of different ideas and beliefs about Canada's national identity;
- Examine Wilfrid's early years to determine what effect it had on his own perspective and outlook on Canada and Canadian society;
- Explain how certain key events and personalities affected Canada's national identity and whether or how it might have changed;
- Demonstrate an understanding of Canadian politics and the Canadian political system;
- Describe the relationship between Canada and Great Britain and the latter's influence on Canadian life, society and government and;
- Communicate their ideas, arguments, and conclusions using various formats and styles, as appropriate for the audience and purpose.

## BACKGROUND

When thinking about a political figure like Sir Wilfrid Laurier, an important question one might simply ask is, how did he come to view the world this way? Why was Wilfrid—raised in a Francophone household in a Francophone community—so interested, concerned, and passionate about ensuring that the 'two solitudes' of English and French Canada worked together to make a better country? In this perspective, Wilfrid may owe a debt to Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin, his predecessors, who, for a time, led government in Upper and Lower Canada fifty years earlier. They formed an unprecedented partnership where each advocated for the views and beliefs of the other, moving French-English relations forward to a great degree. Or was it simply Wilfrid's upbringing, raised in a liberal household where his father, Carolus, encouraged him to learn English and understand the culture? Young Wilfrid was encouraged to maintain an open mind that permitted the careful consideration of different views and perspectives. To get at Wilfrid's attitudes and convictions that governed him in his actions, we need to examine what influenced him and why. Throughout his political career, Wilfrid's resolve to till the middle ground met with mixed results but, ultimately, he was a man who stuck to his principles and beliefs, no matter the consequences.

## STEP ONE

### TEACHER-DIRECTED DISCUSSION

When Wilfrid Laurier became Prime Minister in 1896, the country remained vastly different from what we know today. What do students know of Canada in 1896? What did it look like? How many provinces were there? What was the population? Who was the Prime Minister? What political party was in power? Divide students into teams to discuss these questions generally among themselves. Have each team prepare a snapshot of Canada in 1896 with a focus on the personalities of the time. Through research, they will document the key issues swirling around the election of 1896. Each team will provide a short, written analysis examining why they think the Conservatives lost the election and the Liberals won. This analysis will be submitted to the teacher.

## STEP TWO CREATING A PROFILE

Have students research and write a profile of one of the following people who influenced Wilfrid in his early years into young adulthood, while discussing how they influenced him:

- Carolus Laurier
- Oscar Archambault
- Marie Marcelle Martineau (his mother)
- Adeline (his step-mother)
- Zoe LaFontaine
- Joseph Papin
- Thomas Scott
- Louis Riel
- Joseph Lavergne
- Émilie Barthe
- Alexander Mackenzie

## STEP THREE BRINGING A CHARACTER TO LIFE

The characters listed in Step Two all played a role in Wilfrid's life and development with a focus on his early years and career. Yet, each was a complete human being with a full life of their own. Have students, individually, select one of the characters (not one researched in the previous group activity) for the purpose of bringing that character to life. This may be done in the form of a character sketch, a short scene written in play form, a short scene or monologue performed or acted out in front of the class, a series of sketches or illustrations (could be in graphic novel format), poem, song, podcast, vlog, PowerPoint or Prezi, and so on. Students will then present their piece and emphasize something significant about the character.

## STEP FOUR CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Have students select a country from the following list: China, United Kingdom, France, India, Russia, South Africa, Israel, Brazil, Germany, Iceland, Morocco, or New Zealand. Students will research the country they have selected and write a short paper concerning that country's national identity. What is it? How is national identity determined? What are the specific factors? If possible, students will highlight a timeline of development for the national

identity of the country they selected. Often, the creation of a national identity is spurred by an individual or individuals. For example, is Canada's national identity bound up in ice hockey? Are Canadians actually nicer than other people? Or are these examples merely stereotypes? The purpose of this exercise, is to penetrate the true national identity, not focus only on the surface stories perhaps promoted by contemporary myths and legends. Once these profiles have been completed, they will be presented orally to the class.

## OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Have students compare the national identity of the country they selected to that of Canada. What are the similarities and the differences?
- Is it possible to make a case for a single individual who influenced Wilfrid the most? If so, who might that be and why? Students will write a one-page analysis citing the reasons for their choice.
- What are the symbols of national identity? Have students draw or illustrate Canada's symbols of national identity alongside those of the country previously selected. Have these symbols changed since Wilfrid's time? If so, how?
- **The Student Debate:** Have students form into debating teams. Here is the question to be debated: Be it resolved that Canadians only become aware of their national identity when they travel abroad and encounter strangers from other countries. One team shall take the Pro side and the other, the Con side. Formal debating rules will be followed: [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame\\_found\\_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf). Those class members not on the two teams will act as judges and select the winner of the debate. The teacher shall act as moderator.
- **Role Play:** Have members of the class take on the personas of Laurier, Zoe, Émilie, Carolus, etc. In an interview style format, have each of these 'characters' speak about their lives and the events that shaped them.
- **Literary Assessment:** Each student will write a critical review of *The Life and Times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier* graphic novel. The review will run up to two pages and will look at elements such as plot, character, illustrations, quality of illustrations, and the effectiveness in the way the story was told and depicted. Did the characters appear realistic? Did Wilfrid come across as a 'real' person? Could

the reader identify and empathize with the characters? The reviews will be handed in/submitted to the teacher for assessment.

## ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Each lesson plan has a comprehensive approach to assessment and evaluation. Teachers will be required to assess prior knowledge of each topic by referring to the questions listed for “before” the lesson and “after” the lesson has been implemented.

### STUDENT EVALUATION QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE LESSON PLAN

#### Before (Pre-Implementation)

- Do students have a general understanding of Canada’s national identity?
- Do students have a clear understanding of the significance of the early influences on Sir Wilfrid Laurier?
- Do students have any prior understanding of Wilfrid’s importance to Canada’s history?
- Are students familiar with the history of the British empire, how widespread and powerful it was and what role it played in ruling Canada among other colonies?

#### After (Post-Implementation)

- Students will describe the symbols of Canadian identity and list their significance.
- Students will reflect an understanding of the importance of Sir Wilfrid Laurier who helped shape Canada with his beliefs.
- Students will reflect on, and explain their ideas about the legacy of Sir Wilfrid as Canada’s seventh Prime Minister.

## TEACHER EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### Before (Pre-Implementation)

- Do you have a general understanding of Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s role in building Canada?
- Do you have a clear understanding of the significance of Wilfrid as Canada’s first Francophone Prime Minister?
- Do you have any prior understanding of Laurier’s early influences?
- Are you familiar with Wilfrid as a renown conciliator?

### After (Post-Implementation)

- Describe Wilfrid’s early influences and their impact.
- Have a clear understanding of Laurier’s contributions to Canadian politics and history as Prime Minister.
- Understand why Laurier is still thought of as one of Canada’s great leaders.

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# The EVOLVING Role of LIBRARIANS

by Meagan Gillmore

**S**andra Harnum was pleased when Botwood Collegiate in Botwood, NL, removed most books in its library. “It’s really changed—quite a transformation,” says Harnum, the school’s only teacher-librarian.

Harnum is not in the library full-time, but she has been changing it into a library learning commons since September 2017. She arrived three years ago to a cluttered space, even though her colleagues had started cleaning it and getting rid of books that weren’t being used. They’re not abandoning books altogether, just updating the collection. “Books are a form of technology,” she says. “They still have a place in the learning commons.” The shelves are now placed against the wall to make space in the middle of the room. There is also increased internet access for computers and more makerspaces.

More schools are creating learning commons. In 2018,

the Newfoundland and Labrador government released “Extending the Classroom: The Library Learning Commons.” This curriculum support document clarifies what learning commons are and gives guidance about creating them.

In a library learning commons, sometimes called learning commons, it is not quiet. Students collaborate and participate in learning. “Within a library learning commons, new relationships are formed among learners, new technologies are realized and utilized, and both students and educators grasp new ways to learn,” the government’s document says. Libraries, it says, play an “essential role in this innovative vision for education.”

Creating a learning commons begins by reimagining education. Technology demands school libraries become places where students collaborate to create learning environments. “Libraries used to be a place to consume

information, and now they are spaces to create new information,” Angela Monk says, describing how she has seen school libraries change during the last decade.

She began transforming the library at Fraser Heights Secondary in Surrey, BC into a learning commons in 2009. “(Students) used to come to the library to get information,” she says. “They do that still, but now it’s more of a place where they come to create information, to create different things.”

Karen Belter, president of the Alberta School Learning Commons Council and a school librarian at Centre High Campus in Edmonton, AB, describes the learning commons “as a collaborative kitchen, as opposed to a pantry. The libraries of the past would be a place where you picked up information: you picked up books, then you left. Now it is this great collaborative space where so many other things are happening.”

The whole school needs to collaborate, says Carol Koechlin, chair of Canadian School Libraries. A former school librarian with the Toronto District School Board, she has long advocated for technological innovation. A library, she says, “is a place where learners go to be inspired, where they go to learn and innovate and even play a little bit.” Information and resources, whether physical or virtual, need to flow between the classroom and library learning commons.

“Ideally, (the learning commons) is a change agent for the school,” says Koechlin. “It’s a place for teachers and kids to experiment with ideas and information.” This means strategically preparing the space.

When Melanie Mulcaster designed the library learning commons at Hillside Public School in Mississauga, ON, she only wanted furniture that could easily be rearranged. Shelves have wheels. Tables can be moved easily. “You use that space in so many different ways,” she explains. Making maps of Ontario on the floor requires lots of room, for example.

“Different learning situations require different spaces,” she says. “The sooner you can organize your space, the more learning you can experience. It’s just adapting to the needs of your students—because that’s where the curriculum is. The curriculum is our students.”

“Furniture is meant to move,” says Carlo Fusco, teacher-librarian at Waterloo Collegiate Institute in Waterloo, ON. “Whatever location it’s found during the day is the right location for that day.” He has designed his learning commons with different sections. Students can work together at desks or in individualized study spaces. Fusco also wants places where introverted students can be alone. There are couches and soft chairs to give students a break from hard chairs and stools for students who fidget.

Technologies must meet students’ needs. Fusco, a former science teacher, became interested in school libraries

because he saw them as a place to integrate technology into learning. He noticed the rise in students owning hand-held devices decreased the need for desktop computers. He traded in 30 desktop computers for 50 mobile devices. This allowed more students to work in the space and gave them more room. It also required new technologies. Fusco has increased the library’s electrical outlets so students can charge their devices. Students can also sign out chargers for the day. Students who can’t afford their own mobile devices can take them home. Arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, he explains.



**“A learning commons is ever-evolving, and it has to meet the needs of that community.”**

In Surrey, Angela Monk has also filled the learning commons with technology her students can’t readily access. “A learning commons is ever-evolving, and it has to meet the needs of that community,” she says. Many of her students already have chargers or mobile devices. Instead, she created a digital makerspace with equipment for recording music or editing and filming videos. Music classes have recorded there, while language classes have filmed newscasts in various languages. “The makerspace is something that they would not have at home,” she says. “Who has a recording booth in their house?”

Creating space for this new technology often requires weeding out unused books. Monk explains that when she began creating the learning commons, she eliminated approximately 100 boxes of books, mostly non-fiction. Fusco also reduced his non-fiction collection, replacing much of it with digital resources. Some say, however, that physical books will always be key to promoting a love of reading, something important for all libraries.

“This is still the gateway of literacy,” says Karen Belter, explaining why books are crucial to learning commons. For students to love reading, librarians must invest in high-quality books, she continues. Sometimes, this means buying a classic book with an updated cover and easy-to-read font. Other times, it means offering popular and new titles. “If you want (students) to read, you’ve got to have great books,” says Belter.

“Fiction is still really big,” says Monk, noting students at her school still prefer to read fiction from paper books. The learning commons at Hillside Public School is used to teach many subjects, but literacy remains key.

“We always try to tie everything to a text,” Melanie Mulcaster says. When she read students *The Little Boy Who*



*Lived Down the Drain*, a children's book by Carolyn Huizinga Mills, she asked them to make drains using different angles they'd learned about in math.

Digital resources can increase access to books. Just ask students in New Brunswick who now have access to the SORA app. It allows users to download audiobooks and e-books, including books that highlight text while a narrator reads. Students can download the resources to their devices so they are available without an Internet connection.

"I see students who before were reluctant readers coming in and wanting to read," says Catherine Glencross, a Grade 6 teacher at Port Elgin Regional School in Port Elgin, NB, just a couple weeks after the school launched the app last fall. She says the first thing many students ask to do with their tablets is read. The availability of books is especially important because the school is located about a half hour's drive from the nearest town and local library.

**"It doesn't matter if it's listening to a book or if it's reading from an actual book. I just want them to be lifelong readers and enjoy books."**

The app can also help students who are learning English or have learning disabilities enjoy reading. "Those are the kids that I worry about at night," says Jean Anne Green, a language arts teacher at Florenceville Middle School in Florenceville-Bristol, NB. "You're always looking for that book at a garage sale that will match up for them, that book that turns them into a reader. For a teacher, the most exciting thing is when you see they can't get enough of books."

Students can look up definitions of words, and reading

while listening to the book may help English language learners. Students can enlarge the font or make it bolder. This can make focusing on words easier. Some students may be embarrassed if they're reading below grade level, but their classmates can't see what they're reading on a tablet, explains Glencross.

Students' love of reading is more important than the format they use to read, says Heidi Muise, a Grade 8 teacher at Ridgeview Middle School in Oromocto, NB. The school launched the app on Halloween, with teachers, Muise included, dressing up as characters from books. "My goal is to have lifelong readers and for them to be reading," she says. "It doesn't matter if it's listening to a book or if it's reading from an actual book. I just want them to be lifelong readers and enjoy books."

Many students began using the app immediately. The government said in an email to TEACH that by the next evening, Ridgeview students had checked out 74 books using the app. In total, almost 2,000 books had been checked out three weeks after the program launched at several schools. Despite the immediate interest, creating a learning commons takes time, and requires patience. "There is no definitive jump from a traditional library to a learning commons," says Carol Koechlin.

"There is no cookie cutter," she continues. "It's about the big ideas of participatory learning environment and having good professional leadership and working towards enabling students to achieve and grow and be the best they can be." Sandra Harnum reminds herself of this while transforming her school's library space. "Some days, you go through a rough patch where you don't know where the budget is going to come from to get a collection or the technology that you would like to see," she says.

She however, perseveres. "It's worthwhile to stay with it and see if every student can achieve having a school library learning commons in their building."

Meagan Gillmore is a freelance writer in Toronto, ON.

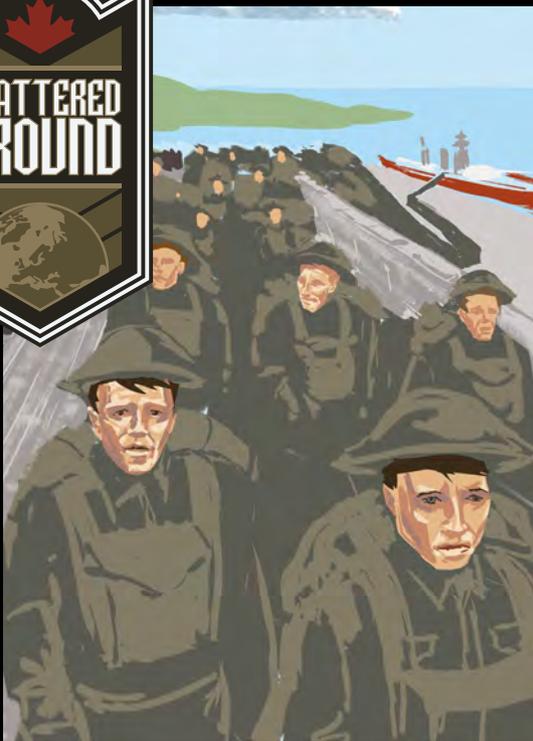


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## Arts and Crafts Workshops

While the winter season may narrow your field trip options, a visit to an indoor arts and crafts workshop may be a great way for students to release some of their pent-up energy. Not only do art workshops help stimulate creative thinking, they can also offer meaningful curriculum connections. Check out the following suggestions for your next field trip!

### Art Gallery of Ontario – Toronto, ON

The AGO holds a variety of hands-on art workshops delivered by highly trained teaching staff. In the “Environments and Habitats” workshop designed for grades K-3, students can learn about animal habitats in the urban environment, and use sculpting clay and coloured paper to create a 3-D animal house. Students in grades 4-8 can explore environmental topics through experimental printmaking, for example. They may create posters inspired by the Anthropocene exhibition in the workshop “Posters for Social Change”. For grades 9-12, there is an “Experimental Marks” workshop, where students use acrylic paints, palette knives, cardboard, and textured materials to create abstract expressions on raw canvas.

For more information, visit:

[www.ago.ca/learn/school-groups-jk-12](http://www.ago.ca/learn/school-groups-jk-12).

### Richmond Art Gallery – Richmond, BC

Richmond Art Gallery offers sessions that include a tour of a current exhibition followed by an art workshop in an in-house classroom. Programs are designed to make curriculum connections in areas such as art, applied design, technology, language arts, math, social studies, and drama. In an ongoing workshop called “Living Pictures”, students engage in an exhibition that re-imagines the 19th century practice of tableaux vivants in a series of works that places living participants in recreations of historical artwork. Using a mix of digital and traditional media, students re-imagine an historical event, famous artwork, or scene from a story through the creation of a photo collage in which they themselves will pose as the subjects.

For more information, visit: [www.richmondartgallery.org/learn-and-create/schools/current-workshops](http://www.richmondartgallery.org/learn-and-create/schools/current-workshops).



### St. Albert Place Visual Arts Studios – St. Albert, AB

At St. Albert Place Visual Arts Studios, there are over 50 visual art field trip workshops led by professional art instructors. Programs include Huichol Yarn Painting, where students use contrasting colours of yarn to emulate traditional symbols such as people, animals, and nature, following the tradition of the Huichol people of northwest Mexico. There is also an array of interesting clay workshops, such as “Storytellers”—a field trip based on contemporary and traditional clay figurines made by potters in New Mexico and South America. Students then learn to tell their own stories through clay making.

For more information, visit:

[www.artgalleryofstalbert.ca/learning/field-trips](http://www.artgalleryofstalbert.ca/learning/field-trips).

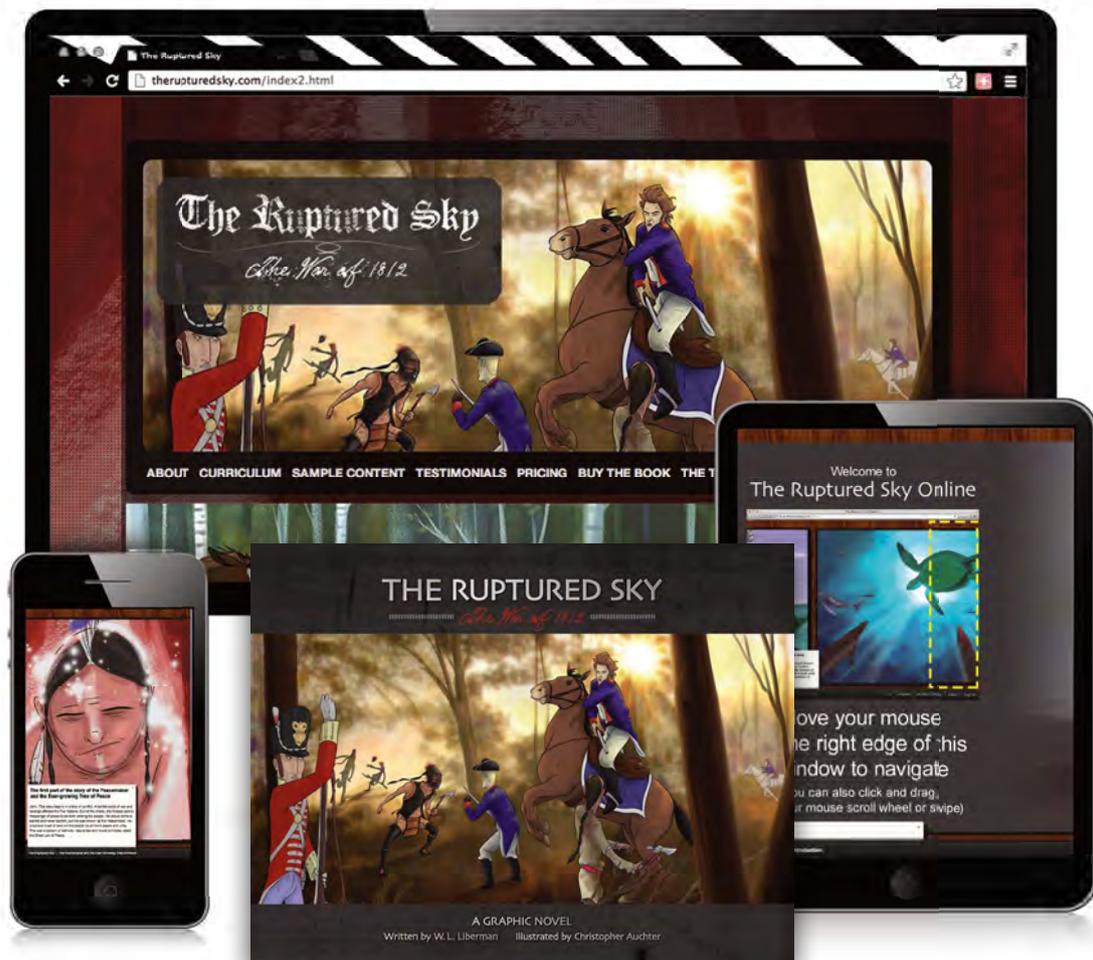
### Winnipeg Art Gallery – Winnipeg, MB

The Winnipeg Art Gallery offers specialized 90-minute art making workshops, each focusing on a specific artwork or exhibition. In “Who Am I?” for grades K-4, students explore ways to express their personal experiences and feelings through original self-portraits using a colourful variety of art materials and techniques. For grades K-12, there are print making workshops, where students design their own block prints inspired by Inuit art. Students in grades 5-12 can also attend the “Power in the 80s Poster” workshop. They reflect on aspects of social issues about which they are passionate by creating their own 1980s-inspired multi-media activist posters.

For more information, visit:

[www.wag.ca/learn/schools/education-packs](http://www.wag.ca/learn/schools/education-packs).

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