

# CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP: RESPECT

**GRADES:**

7 TO 10

**SUBJECTS:**

HISTORY  
SOCIAL STUDIES  
CITIZENSHIP  
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP  
CIVICS

**DURATION:**

6 TO 8 CLASSES

*We are humbly thankful for being part of Canadian society. We recognize all the blessings of freedom, peace, harmony and appreciation that we live in here. We are also blessed to be part of the vast Canadian mosaic, as a Rainbow full of colours and variety.*

– Max Aranguiz, Canadian citizen formerly from Chile


**KEY CONCEPTS & ISSUES**

This lesson plan explores the idea of respect as it relates to the law, the environment, and each other. How do we make active citizenship a relevant question for youth? How do we bring this idea into their consciousness? Using this lesson plan is a good start.


**BACKGROUND**

The Canadian Citizenship Act has reached its 75th anniversary and beyond. The purpose of this lesson plan is to help establish a dialogue with youth that will stimulate thought and debate about citizenship. More to the point, it is vital that youth become actively engaged in citizenship-based activities, take an active role in their respective communities, and explore and understand what it means to fully be a Canadian citizen.

Canada is a magnet for immigrants, as one of the most culturally diverse countries in the entire world. For those who are new to our country, citizenship may mean everything. But for the second generation and beyond, the importance of citizenship may get lost in the hectic scramble to succeed in school, at work, in life.

Youth must understand that citizenship includes certain rights, and with these rights comes an obligation to participate in the community. Citizens bear the responsibility for helping to run their communities; helping give a society its life and vigour. Any democratic nation is only as strong as its citizens. Without active commitment and participation, the community suffers and grows weak.



The rights of Canadian citizens:

- Equality rights: equal treatment before and under the law, and equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination
- Democratic rights: the right to participate in political activities, to vote and run for political office
- Legal rights: the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, the right to retain a lawyer and be informed of that right, and the right to an interpreter in court proceedings
- Mobility rights: the right to enter and leave Canada, to move and take up residence in any province or territory
- Language rights: the right to use either the English or French language in communications with Canada's federal government
- Education rights: French and English minorities in every province and territory have the right to be educated in their own language



With rights come responsibilities:

- Understand and obey Canadian laws
- Participate in Canada's democratic political system
- Vote in elections
- Allow other Canadians to enjoy their rights and freedoms
- Appreciate and help preserve Canada's multicultural heritage

#### CASE STUDY:

Molokai emigrated from Somalia with his family ten years ago. Somalia is a country that is politically unstable and frequently suffers from terrible droughts. It was split by catastrophic tribal warfare that saw at least 300,000 civilians die from violence or lack of adequate food and water. It is also an arid land with little clean water. Due to the civil unrest, the country's infrastructure is fragmented and dysfunctional. Molokai was co-opted as a child soldier. His father and two of his brothers were killed in the ongoing struggles between the warring tribes. Finally, Molokai's mother, his sister, an aunt, and an uncle were able to emigrate to Canada. Molokai is now 18 years old. He is in his second last year of high school. He didn't have the opportunity to go to school for a number of years because the schools were closed periodically in Somalia. Molokai and his family live in a high-rise building in the west end of the city. Many Somalis live there. Some call it an urban ghetto where the Somali immigrants have been warehoused to keep them out of the way. Some live there because they feel more comfortable with those from their own community who speak the same language and understand the culture and customs of Somalia.

Molokai says it is difficult for him to fit in here. His attitude and perspective is very different from those outside of the Somali community. He still has feelings of anxiety even though he has been removed from his homeland for quite some time. In Canada, he feels physically safe but has difficulty fitting in. Here in Canada, you can argue, you can discuss, and debate. There is no

need to be afraid of such things. There is no need to wonder if water will flow from the taps or if a drought will eradicate the crops. It is peaceful and secure yet he still feels uneasy and restless. At least in Somalia, he was accepted for what he was, not viewed with suspicion or disbelief by others. Despite these unsettling feelings, Molokai knows that for him to be successful and help his family, he needs to do well in school, go on to study at college or university, then get a decent job. Here, he can dream of a career. Here, he knows there is a future. In Somalia, the future was dark and forbidding. No one knew what would happen from day to day. But still there are many barriers.



### STEP ONE

#### TEACHER DIRECTED DISCUSSION

Divide the class into small groups so that they can read and discuss the story of Molokai. Can they relate to his feelings and sense of alienation? What can Molokai do to help himself feel more like he is part of the community at large? Alternatively, what can others do to help him feel accepted, to help ease the unsettling feelings that he still carries within him? There may be students in the class who have emigrated recently or whose parents emigrated from another country. How did they cope with a new country, new values, and different perspectives? Do they have any suggestions as to strategies that someone like Molokai might employ to help him feel better about his situation? Have students consider the following scenarios:

- Molokai goes to buy a chocolate bar from a variety store. The store owner eyes him suspiciously. Molokai feels like a criminal even though he hasn't done anything wrong.
- Molokai routinely burns garbage in the back parking lot of his apartment building. When a neighbour objects because the smoke is blowing onto his balcony and it smells bad, Molokai states that he is doing no harm, merely getting rid of unwanted waste.
- Molokai gets into an argument with a classmate. Instead of listening to his point of view, the classmate shoves him to the ground, and the "debate" has to be broken up by a hall monitor. Molokai and the classmate both end up in the principal's office and receive a suspension for fighting.



### STEP TWO

#### STUDENT LED EXPLORATION

Keep the same small discussion groups. Have each group select one of the scenarios and devise some solutions to Molokai's dilemma. The group will then present an oral report to the rest of the class. Make a list of the solutions and strategies on the board for everyone to read. Now introduce the concept of respect into the discussion. Do the student responses involve this idea? For example, is it reasonable to expect Molokai to have respect for the law if he feels like a criminal even though he's done nothing wrong? That if he had respect for his neighbour and for the environment, he wouldn't burn garbage behind his apartment? That if both Molokai and his classmate had respect for each other's point of view, the discussion wouldn't have ended up as a shoving match

that got them both into trouble? Have students consider inserting some respect into each of the scenarios at the beginning. What difference would it have made?



## OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. The way in which people interact is represented in their use of language. Language reveals perspective and attitude. Students will take the following terms and phrases and use them in a written context that illustrates how they can be used to demonstrate either respect or disrespect. A separate short paragraph must be written using three of the following words or phrases.

Terms/Phrases: contempt, hatred, trust, violation, admiration, name-calling, discriminate, using your own judgement, blazing a trail, taking pride in, resolution, protest against, out of control, narrow-minded, misunderstanding, and coming to terms.

2. Divide students into pairs and have them consider the following scenarios:

- A young black man is stopped by the police and questioned for no apparent reason while walking down the street;
- Two girls who are friends are talking and one tells the other she is being sexually harassed by her boss at her part-time job;
- A land developer wants to build a new subdivision on a fragile wetland.

You are a futurist who makes predictions based on known factors. Select one of the above scenarios and write a detailed description (half page minimum) of what takes place with the statements above as the starting point. What happens next and how does the situation end?

Since you are a futurist and have some measure of control over the scenario, try writing about it from a different perspective. Inject some mutual respect into the scenario (mutual being between the characters you have created), and then write out the scene as fully and with as much detail as possible. Include some dialogue to make it even more realistic (half page minimum).

3. Divide the students into teams. Have each team member read his/her scenarios to the others in the group. Each group should discuss what they liked/disliked about each member's scenarios. Remember, there is a before and after scenario for each situation and each must be read. Have the group then select one set of scenarios written by a member of the group. That member will then direct the others to "act out" or at least "read out" the two scenarios that have been selected. These performances will be presented to the rest of the class. If feasible, record the presentations on a mobile device, tablet, or digital camera and play them to the class.

