Hastings Park + Tashme

Media Lessons

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS

A Brief History of Canadians of Japanese Descent

People of Japanese heritage have a long history in Canada. During the late 19th century and into the 20th century, many people came from Japan to work in industries such as fishing, mining, logging, and farming. Japanese communities existed in various places on the west coast of British Columbia and on Vancouver Island, with the largest community centred around Vancouver's Powell Street on the east side of the city.

On December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in the United States. The United States declared war on Japan, and Canada followed suit. In Canada, concerns were raised that the Japanese Canadian population living near the coast would spy on or sabotage Canadian military and security measures for the Japanese. However, experts in the military and the RCMP did not believe that Japanese Canadians posed any threat to safety or security. Despite this, the Canadian government responded to the public's racism, and ordered all "persons of Japanese racial origin" to be removed from the "restricted zone" within 100 miles of the west coast of British Columbia. Almost 22,000 people were affected by this order. Most of them were Canadian citizens, and more than half of them were born in Canada. Most of the Japanese nationals had been living in Canada for over twenty-five years. Men, women, and children were forced to leave their homes, many with only two days' notice or less to prepare.

With severe restrictions on luggage, they left behind not only significant assets such as homes, cars, and boats, but also treasured heirlooms and many other precious possessions. These were later sold by the government without the owners' consent. The largest number of Japanese Canadians were sent to hastily built camps in the BC interior, where they lived in tiny, crowded shacks with no insulation. This is often called the internment. Men aged 18-45 were forced to leave their families to work in road camps, or, if they protested this, were sent to prisoner of war camps. Some families, in order to stay together, went to sugar beet farms on the prairies, where they worked very long hours and lived in poor conditions for almost no pay, or went to other provinces.

Nikkie National Museum 1994-76-3

In 1945, Japan surrendered, and the Second World War ended. But even though no one could argue they were still a security threat, Japanese Canadians were still not allowed to return to the coast. Instead, they were told to either move east of the Rocky Mountains (outside of BC) to show cooperation for the government's policy of forced dispersal for Japanese Canadians, or go to Japan. Around 4,000 people went to Japan, over half of them for the first time. The others still had to find a way to start their lives over again for the second time since 1942. It wasn't until 1949 that Japanese Canadians were finally allowed to return to the coast, and given the same rights as other Canadian citizens, such as the right to vote.

In the 1980s, people in the Japanese Canadian community started to organize and lobby the government to apologize for their actions against Japanese Canadians from 1942-1949. This movement is known as the fight for redress. On September 22, 1988, the Government of Canada signed an agreement with the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC). The government formally acknowledged their unjust treatment of the Japanese Canadian community in the 1940s, and as compensation, awarded $21,000 to every surviving Japanese Canadian who had been affected by the unjust policies of forced dispersal and dispossession, as well as a $12 million community fund to the NAJC.

This excerpt is copied from the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre within the following link: **http://centre.nikkeiplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/JC-history-intro-and-reading_v2.pdf**

Curricular Links

CORE COMPETENCIES

Communication, Creative and Critical thinking, Positive Personal and Cultural Identity, Personal Awareness and Responsibility, and Social Responsibility

CURRICULAR LINKS TO GRADE 5 AND 6 SOCIAL STUDIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

BIG IDEAS

- Canada's policies and treatment of minority peoples have negative and positive legacies. (Social Studies 5)
- Immigration and multiculturalism continue to shape Canadian society and identity. (Social Studies 5)
- Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and freedoms. (Social Studies 6)
- Exploring text and story helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world. (English Language Arts 6)
- Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking. (English Language Arts 6)

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to text and develop understanding of self, community, and world (English Language Arts 5)
- Recognize and identify the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in text (English Language Arts 6)
- Recognize how language constructs personal, social, and cultural identity (English Language Arts 5+6)
- Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world. Respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways (English Language Arts 6)

CONTENT

- Past discriminatory government policies and actions such as the Head Tax, the Komagatu Maru Incident, residential schools and internments (Social Studies 5)
- Human rights and responses to discrimination in Canadian society (Social Studies 5)
- Global poverty and inequality issues including class structure and gender (Social Studies 6)

Curricular links to Grade 10 Social Studies

(Copied from the Ministry of Education curriculum guide)

BIG IDEA

Political decision-making and societal change are influenced by interactions between, individuals, groups and institutions.

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

Students are expected to be able to do the following

Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to: ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions

CONTENT

Students are expected to know the following

Injustice, oppression, and social change in the development of human rights

Curricular links to Grade 11/12 Social Justice

(Copied from the Ministry of Education curriculum guide)

BIG IDEAS:

- Social justice issues are interconnected.
- The causes of social injustices are complex and have lasting impacts on society.
- Social justice issues have both individual and systemic effects.

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES:

Students are expected to be able to do the following

- Use inquiry processes and skills to: ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
- Assess and compare significance of people, events, and developments at particular times and places, and examine what it reveals about social justice issues
- Create and implement an action plan to address a particular social justice issue

CONTENT

Students are expected to know the following

- Past and present social injustices in Canada and the world, their possible causes, and their lasting impact on individuals, groups, and society
- Roles of governmental and non-governmental organizations in issues of social justice and injustice

OVERVIEW

In this unit students will consider the idea of bias and the use of word choice in the construction of historical accounts, as well as in the reporting of current events. The unit consists of three lessons that use the experience of Canadians of Japanese descent during WWII as a case study for a larger discussion on bias, discrimination and media literacy.

Lesson 1

MEDIA LITERACY AND BIAS

INQUIRY TASK: Consider if it is possible to create an unbiased historical account

Begin with a class brainstorm on the word 'bias.'

A dictionary definition is: "A positive or negative attitude toward something, often based on preconceived prejudices or viewpoints rather than evidence."

The teacher should encourage students to come up with their own definition, as well as lots of examples of words that imply negative or positive attitudes. They may also brainstorm examples of where deliberate bias is used (ie, advertising, news, social media, history textbooks etc).

Introduce and consider the saying "History is written by the victors."

Teacher may lead a short class discussion to connect the above saying with the idea of bias in the study of history.

Sample questions teacher may use to guide discussion (or use these questions as a quiet reflective writing activity).

1) What is history?
2) Does history change over time?
3) Do historical 'facts' change depending on who is telling the story of the past?
4) If 'facts' or stories are omitted, is this a form of bias?
5) Historical accounts and textbooks contain ideological messages. What are the social and/or political messages in your history textbook? Can you detect bias in your socials studies or history textbook?

Encourage students to look at the photos, names, and events that are highlighted in their textbooks. (An extension to this could be a library research project to review older text books and history books to detect bias and/or point of view.)

WRITING ACTIVITY: Creating a biased account

Ask students to write two historical accounts of their first day of high school. One account should be titled: Victory: The Best Day Ever. The other account should be titled: Defeat: The worst Day Ever.

Encourage students to consider their word choice and what 'facts' they describe for each account. Also allow them to embellish, exaggerate, or understate if they wish. Encourage them to include answers to the 5Ws in their reporting.

When they are done writing, have students share their accounts in groups of four, choosing one 'positive' and one 'negative' account to share out with the entire class.

After the class sharing, discuss word choice and the creation of bias in their accounts. Challenges them now to write a balanced historical account of their first day of high school (this could be told in third person) without any bias. Is this possible? Are there words that are neutral? Or do all descriptive words reveal a negative or positive outlook?

Lesson 2

BIAS AND EUPHEMISMS

Introduce the concept of 'euphemisms' as a form of creating bias in the media and in historical accounts.

Euphemism definition:
The substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt. For example, the expression so substituted: "To pass away" is a euphemism for "to die.".

Brainstorm examples of euphemisms that are used in everyday language.

Explain that euphemisms are used often in current events and historical accounts. These euphemisms often replace the truth and harsh facts of reality. Critics of euphemistic language say that euphemisms are often used deliberately to create bias by hiding the truth and do not accurately account for what has happened. Many historians believe that it is important to use precise, accurate and detailed accounts of the past and to avoid euphemisms.

The teacher may wish to lead a class brainstorm. The following are a few examples regularly used in media reporting:

Collateral damage = killed and wounded civilians

Enhanced interrogation = torture

Friendly fire = accidental shooting of own troops or civilians

Air campaign = bombs dropped from drones or airplanes

Detainees = imprisonment without charge or trial

Short think/pair/share activity

Teacher should write the following quotation on the board and have students take a moment to jot down and then share their refection on this concept.

"Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we think about."
Benjamin Lee Whorf. (American Linguist 1897-1941)

This lesson refers to the history of Canadians of Japanese ancestry during WW2. Teachers and students should be familiar with this history. The following link provides a good background (link to history in a nut shell)

Handout 1: Synopsis of the “Power of Words Handbook”

Students will review and discuss Handout 1. Teacher may use guiding question on the handout.

Handout 2: Government document (primary source) that uses some of the euphemistic language discussed

And questions for students to answer

Handout 3: Copy of the order notifying Japanese Canadian to “evacuate”

And questions for students to answer

Handout 4: problematic historical account that uses some of the euphemistic language discussed and avoids the details.

Critical task using ‘Handout 4’
Students will read the historical account provided in Handout 4, identify the euphemisms and rewrite the account, using the more precise language that is provided in the ‘Power of Word’ Handout.

Lesson 3

DETECTING BIAS IN NEWS SOURCES

One purpose of history is to make sure that we, as a society, learn from incidents of injustices of the past and ensure that we hold our governments accountable so that similar laws and policies are not repeated now or in the future. It is important to continue to question the use of language in media sources and how language and other forms of media bias is used to shape public opinion. The following lesson guides students in how to question media, and provides a short research project for students to hone their skills of media literacy.

Introduce the article on How to Detect Bias in News 'Handout 5'. Read it together and discuss the questions. Teacher may refer back to the class brainstorm is lesson one and discuss the similarities to the class list and the article.

Divide the class into 4 to 6 groups and provide each group with a different, but recent, print newspaper (The Globe and Mail, The National post).

Have students evaluate the newspapers they have and record their finding using the Bias Detection Worksheet (Handout 6). 'Bias through omission' may be difficult unless students are up on current events. If it is a national paper the teacher may wish to point out that certain regions of the country may not be represented in the paper, while other areas may have disproportionate coverage.

Groups should make a poster or powerpoint to share their findings with their class. Students may wish to cut up the newspaper for their posters.

Optional activity: Detecting bias in a historical primary source – Using the skills and understanding from this lesson, students will look at primary source documents related to the Japanese Canadian Imprisonment during WW2.

This could include a look at the photographs on both Tashme and Hastings Park website.

Through a library and online search old newspapers (the New Canadian as one souce – include the link to the SFU archives), political cartoon and government policies, research the media representation of a war-time government declared "enemy." Students may use Handout 6 to record their research and complete the assignment with a poster or powerpoint class presentation.

Lesson 4

Have each student select an Equity-seeking group. For a period of one week, have students follow their chosen group and make note of every story or articles that involves members of their chosen equity seeking group (e.g., women, people with disabilities, ethno-cultural and racial minorities, immigrants and refugees, faiths, the socio-economically disadvantaged, Indigenous peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered persons). At the end of the week, student should analyze what they have found using the Bias Evaluation Worksheet (remind students that a lack of coverage is itself a form of bias).

Students should use their findings to create a final project.

HANDOUT

The Power of Words

Euphemistic language used in the History of Canadians of Japanese ancestry during WWII

The Japanese American Citizens League created a handbook titled *Power of Words* that explores the use of euphemistic and misleading vocabulary in the WWII history of persons of Japanese ancestry living outside of Japan. Although this is an American publication, much of the same history and language is similarly used in the Canadian experience. The full handbook can be found online at **https://jacl.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Power-of-Words-Rev.-Term.-Handbook.pdf**. The purpose of this handbook is to point out the euphemistic language and to "suggest vocabulary that facilitates a more accurate understanding of events and actions experienced . . . during this tragic time." The following are excerpts from the handbook with added Canadian examples.

Euphemism defined: "a mild word or expression substituted for one considered blunt or embarrassing."

Euphemism	More Accurate Term
Evacuate/Evacuation By using these words, the government made it seem that these individuals were being helped.	**Forced Removal** This term more accurately describes the lack of choice provided to Japanese Canadians who were ordered to leave their homes
Relocate/Relocation These terms suggest that people voluntarily moved from one location (private homes) to another (war camps).	**Forced Removal** The phrase 'forced removal' should be used instead – which more accurately describes the lack of choice provided to Japanese Canadians who were ordered to leave their homes.
Internment/ Internment camp The legal definition of internment refers to the confinement or impounding of enemy aliens in a time of war. However most of the people of Japanese ancestry that were imprisoned were Canadian citizens, and thus the term does not apply.	**Incarceration/Incarceration camp** This term reflects the prison-like conditions faced by Japanese Canadians as well as the view that they were treated as if guilty of sabotage, espionage, and/or suspect loyalty. Some Japanese Canadians still call the period the internment period. Both terms are acceptable to be used.
Assembly Centre When many Japanese and Japanese Canadians were initially forced to leave their homes, they were directed to live temporarily in "assembly centers." These make-shift detention facilities were often crudely fashioned from animal stalls at racetracks and fair grounds still emitting the stench of animal waste but surrounded by barbed wire to contain the people of Japanese descent (ie. Hastings Park Assembly Center). The euphemistic nature of this term hid the degrading lack of amenities and very crude living spaces in these facilities.	**Temporary detention Centre** A detention center is generally a place where prisoners are temporarily held pending some further placement.

During WWII, the U.S. (and Canadian) government used euphemistic language to control public perceptions about the forced removal of citizens of Japanese descent from their West Coast homes to desolate camps further inland. The public was told that [Japanese Canadian] were being “evacuated” to “relocation centers” and “internment camps.” Terms like “evacuation” of people sounded like they were being rescued from some kind of disaster (like an earthquake).

QUESTIONS

During WWII, the Canadian government used euphemistic language to describe the treatment of Canadians of Japanese descent. Describe the effect of those euphemisms on how that treatment was portrayed to the general public.

Why is it important to use accurate and precise language in historical accounts?

Consider the quotation, “Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we can think about.” In a short paragraph using specific examples explain how this quotation could connect to the history of Canadian of Japanese descent during WWII.

Another source for terminology: **http://japanesecanadianhistory.net/glossary.htm**

HANDOUT

Bias in News Sources Background Information

Every news story is influenced by the attitudes and background of the people involved in its creation. You can become more aware of bias by watching for the following journalistic techniques that allow it to "creep in" to the news.

BIAS THROUGH SELECTION AND OMISSION

A journalist can express a bias by choosing to use or not to use a specific news item. Within a given story, some details can be ignored, and others included, to give readers or viewers a different opinion about the events reported. For example, if, during a speech, a few people boo, the reaction can be described as "remarks greeted by jeers" or they can be ignored as "a handful of dissidents."

Bias through omission is difficult to detect. Only by comparing news reports from a wide variety of outlets can this form of bias be observed.

BIAS THROUGH PLACEMENT

Readers of papers judge first page stories to be more significant than those buried in the back, while news websites place the most important stories on their home page. Television and radio newscasts run the most important stories first and leave the less significant for later. Where a story is placed, therefore, influences what a reader or viewer thinks about its importance.

How the story is organized is also significant. Most news stories are written in what is called "inverted pyramid" style, beginning with what is considered the most newsworthy facts, followed by the important details relating to those facts, and finally background information to provide context. The last part of the story contains information that readers are least likely to read and editors are most likely to cut. This can be a form of bias because context often helps you fully understand a topic: for example, if an article about the number of sufferers of mental illness in prison (the newsworthy facts) waits until the fourth paragraph to note that sufferers of mental illness are no more likely to be violent than anyone else (context), readers who only read part of the story may come away with a very inaccurate view of mental illness and violence.

BIAS BY HEADLINE

Many people read only the headlines of a news item. Most people scan nearly all the headlines in a newspaper or website. They can summarize as well as present carefully hidden bias and prejudices. They can convey excitement where little exists. They can express approval or condemnation.

Bias by word choice and tone

The use of words with a positive or negative connotation can strongly influence the reader or viewer: consider how a hockey game might be seen differently if it's described as a "loss," a "close game" or a "near-win."

BIAS BY PHOTOS, CAPTIONS AND CAMERA ANGLES

Some pictures flatter a person, while others make the person look unpleasant. A paper can choose photos to influence opinion about, for example, a candidate for election. On television, in a magazine or on the Web the choice of which visual images to display is extremely important. The captions newspapers run below photos are also potential sources of bias.

BIAS THROUGH USE OF NAMES AND TITLES

News media often use labels and titles to describe people, places and events. A person can be called an "ex-con" or be referred to as someone who "served time 20 years ago for a minor offense." Whether a person is described as a "terrorist" or a "freedom fighter" is a clear indication of editorial bias.

BIAS THROUGH STATISTICS AND CROWD COUNTS

To make a disaster seem more spectacular (and therefore more newsworthy), numbers can be inflated. Compare "More than 900 people attended the event" with "Fewer than 1,000 people showed up at the event."

BIAS BY SOURCE CONTROL

To detect bias, always consider where the news item "comes from." Is the information supplied by a reporter, an eyewitness, police or fire officials, executives, or elected or appointed government officials? Each may have a particular bias that is introduced into the story. Companies and public relations directors supply news outlets with "fluff pieces" through news releases, photos or videos. Often news outlets depend on pseudo events (demonstrations, sit-Ins, ribbon cuttings, speeches and ceremonies) that take place mainly to gain news coverage.

QUESTIONS

- Which of these forms of bias is the easiest to detect?
- Which of these forms of bias might be difficult for people to notice if they are not aware of them?

BIAS DETECTION WORKSHEET

For your news source, list all examples you can find of each form of bias along with a quote of other evidence that show that the bias is there.

Bias through selection and omission

Bias through placement

Bias by headline

Bias by word choice and tone

Bias by photos, captions and camera angles

Bias through use of names and titles

Bias through statistics and crowd counts

Bias by source control

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