

Lessons that Explore Values and Identity

Lesson 1 – What are Canadian values?

Canada is a large country with a diverse population that is continually changing. Canada accepts approximately 200,000 new immigrants a year. As educators, we are constantly helping new students negotiate Canadian culture. But at times, it is even difficult for Canadians to answer the questions “What is Canadian culture and what are Canadian values?”

Brainstorm with students a list of possible Canadian values. Some might be:

1. Multiculturalism
2. Diversity (e.g. providing gay/lesbian Canadians with full protection and equal treatment under the law including access to civil marriage)
3. Respect for human rights
4. Freedom of choice - religion, language, speech, etc.
5. Democratic values
6. Peacekeeping
7. Rule of law
8. Respect for authority
9. Bilingualism
10. Gender equality

Explore how factors such as regional differences, political ideology, religious beliefs, gender, etc. all affect a person’s values and thus there is a wide range of accepted Canadian values.

To see how others view us, you might want to look at the E-diplomat website http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_ca.htm

Lesson 2 - How are Canadian values different from and similar to the values of my homeland culture?

Building on the previous brainstormed list of Canadian values, students now have the opportunity to consider how their homeland culture’s values are similar to and different from Canadian values. Using the Venn diagram that follows, have students individually or in groups fill in the diagram. Students do not necessarily need to agree on the similarities and differences, but can use these as the starting point for an assignment on the challenges posed when two cultures hold different values. Students can discuss, write about, or visually depict the following:

Give an example of a time when one of your cultural values clashed with a Canadian cultural value. What happened? How did you address this challenge? What did you learn as a result of this experience?

Canadian Values

My Values

