

Date Reviewed

February 2023

Course

[Social Studies 10](#)

Topic

Internments in Canada

Big Idea

Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.

Essential Question

How have past governments of Canada used laws to discriminate against Canadian citizens?

Learning Standards**Content:**

Students are expected to know the following:

- discriminatory policies and injustices in Canada and the world

Curricular Competencies

Students are expected to be able to do the following:

- make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and assess appropriate ways to remember and respond

Core Competencies

[Communication](#) - I can describe how the War Measures Act discriminated against some Canadians based on their race, ethnicity, religion, and political beliefs.

[Thinking](#) – I can make judgements about past discriminatory policies and assess how current legislation protects rights and freedoms.

[Personal and Social](#) – I can explain the importance of balancing individual rights with the need to protect security and order.

First People's Principles of Learning

- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Introduction

- Show the video (11:16) [Japanese Canadian Internment](#) narrated by David Suzuki.
- Have students complete the **Viewing Guide: Japanese Canadian Internment**. Go over using **Answer Key—Viewing Guide: Japanese Canadian Internment**.
- Engage students in a discussion of whether Japanese Canadians posed a real threat during World War Two.

Pre-Assessment

- Explain that the term “enemy alien” referred to people from countries, or with roots in countries, that were at war with Canada.
- Have students list countries that were at war with Canada during World War Two. (*Germany, Italy, Japan*) Then do the same for World War One. (*Austria-Hungary, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire/Turkey*)
- Ask students to predict if any of these groups, besides those of Japanese ancestry, were considered “enemy aliens” in Canada.

Interactive Learning Activities

Part 1: Internment

- Explain that during wartime, some people were interned in Canada because they were prisoners of war (usually captured enemy soldiers) while others were considered “enemy aliens” (civilians with roots in countries that Canada was at war with). Sometimes these two groups were sent to the same camps.
- Use a [Barometer Activity](#) to have students take a stand on the question: Was it reasonable for civilians to be treated the same as enemy soldiers?
- Provide students with the handout **Internment Camps in Canada During the First and Second World Wars** and access to the Library and Archives of Canada in order to determine if each group was placed in internment camps of prisoners of war, enemy aliens, or both.
- Provide students with the handout **Internment Camps in Canada During the First and Second World Wars** and access to the Library and Archives of Canada's [Thematic Guides - Internment Camps in Canada during the First and Second World Wars](#) in order to determine if each group was placed in internment camps of prisoners of war, enemy aliens, or both.
- Afterward use a [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy to have students discuss:
 - o What do you notice about the groups that were interned as enemy aliens?
 - o What role did religion, ethnicity, race, or political beliefs play in internment?

Part 2: War Measures Act

- Explain that the [War Measures Act](#) was a federal law adopted by Parliament in 1914. It gave broad powers to the Canadian government to maintain security and order during war. Significantly, it allowed the government to detain or imprison people without a fair trial. Many feel the law was used unethically to suspend the rights of Canadians belonging to certain

ethnic and religious groups during the two world wars.

- Provide each student with the graphic organizer **Internment in Canada** and access to the digital resources linked to the handout.
- Students can work with a partner or in small groups to conduct research and complete the graphic organizer.
- Afterwards, have students share their findings. The **Answer Key—Internment in Canada** can be used to help students fill in any gaps in their research.
- Lead a class discussion about the following questions:
 - Why did the Canadian government provide redress for the internment of Ukrainian Canadians during WWI and Japanese Canadians during WWII?
 - In what ways was the internment of these two groups similar or different from the internment of other groups?
 - Are there any other groups who were interned who should receive an apology and/or compensation?

Part 3: Emergencies Act

- Remind students that the Canadian Government has attempted to right historic wrongs through apologies and compensation. Explain that abolishing the War Measures Act was the most significant aspect of the redress for the internment of Japanese Canadians. In 1988, the War Measures Act was repealed and replaced with the Emergencies Act.
- Pose the question: How does the Emergencies Act differ from the War Measures Act?
- Provide students with the handout **Comparing the War Measures Act and Emergencies Act** and access to the Canadian Encyclopedia article [Emergencies Act](#). Have them research both acts and record their findings in the chart.
- Lead a class discussion about the following question: How does the Emergencies Act balance the rights of the individual with the need to provide protection, security, and order for all Canadians?

Post-Assessment

- Engage students in a [Carousel Activity](#) by creating four groups and having them rotate around the room to respond to the following questions:
 - How can we prevent discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, and political beliefs during times of crisis?
 - What are the benefits and limitations of government apologies and compensation for past injustices?
 - How can we balance the rights of individuals with the need to provide security and order?
 - What circumstances would justify the use of the *Emergencies Act* today?

Extension Activities

- Have students research the benefits and challenges of using the Emergencies Act during a public welfare emergency such as the COVID-19 health crisis. The following resources are a good place to start:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-emergencies-act-premier-1.5507205>

<https://www.lawnow.org/the-emergencies-act/>

- Then have students write an opinion paragraph about whether or not the Emergencies Act should be used.

Additional References

Canada. 2020. “Japanese Canadian Redress Campaign.” *Library and Archives Canada*.
<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/history-ethnic-cultural/Pages/Japanese-redress-campaign.aspx>

Canada. 2022. “Thematic Guides - Internment Camps in Canada during the First and Second World Wars.” *Library and Archives Canada*.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20220707172219/https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/politics-government/Pages/thematic-guides-internment-camps.aspx>

Canada. Public Order Emergency Commission. 2023. “[Report of the Public Inquiry into the 2022 Public Order Emergency](#).”
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<https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/site-content/item/24039-the-japanese-canadian-redress-agreement>

Canadian War Museum. “The Internment of Ukrainian Canadians.” [n.d.]
<https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history/life-at-home-during-the-war/enemy-aliens/the-internment-of-ukrainian-canadians/>

Critical Thinking Consortium. 2017. “Changes to the War Measures Act.” *Background Brief: Historic Injustices and Redress in Canada*.
<https://tc2.ca/uploads/backgroundbriefs/BBChangestowarmeasuresact.pdf>

Japanese Canadian History. 2002. “Internment and Redress: The Japanese Canadian Experience: A Resource Guide for Social Studies 11 Teachers.”
<https://japanesecanadianhistory.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Secondary-Guide-Complete.pdf>

Mah, Spenser. 2017. “The History of the Emergency Act: What Are We Willing to Sacrifice?” *NATO Association of Canada*.
<https://natoassociation.ca/the-history-of-the-emergency-act-what-are-we-willing-to-sacrifice/>

McRae, Matthew. [n.d.] “Japanese Canadian Internment and the Struggle for Redress.” *Canadian Museum for Human Rights*.
<https://humanrights.ca/story/japanese-canadian-internment-and-the-struggle-for-redress>

Millette, Dominique, Yarhi, Eli and McIntosh, Andrew. 2020. "Internment in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/internment>

Petawawa Heritage Village. 2011. "Canadian Internment Camps."

<https://www.petawawaheritagevillage.com/history/canadian-internment-camps>

Book

Miki, Roy and Kobayashi, Cassandra. "Justice in Our Time: The Japanese Canadian Redress Settlement." Vancouver: Talon Books, 1991.

Field Trip

Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre in Burnaby, BC.

Materials and Resources

(handouts, graphic organizers, rubrics ...)

Viewing Guide: Japanese Canadian Internment

Before Viewing

1. What signs of racism towards Japanese Canadians existed prior to World War Two?

During Viewing

2. What event sparked the internment of Japanese Canadians?
3. Why did the government take away fishing boats and radios from Japanese Canadians?
4. How did the Battle of Hong Kong increase racism against Japanese Canadians?
5. How were Japanese Canadians treated like criminals?
6. How did the government justify selling the property of those who were interned?
7. What happened to many Japanese Canadians after the war?

After Viewing

8. Did Japanese Canadian pose a real threat to Canada during World War Two?

Answer Key

Viewing Guide: Japanese Canadian Internment

Before Viewing

1. What signs of racism towards Japanese Canadians existed prior to World War Two?
 - Asians in BC could not vote
 - Anti-Asian riots in Vancouver
 - Limits on immigration from Japan

During Viewing

2. What event sparked the internment of Japanese Canadians?
 - Japan's attack on United States' naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941
3. Why did the government take away fishing boats and radios from Japanese Canadians?
 - Afraid they would use them to communicate with Japan
4. How did the Battle of Hong Kong increase racism against Japanese Canadians?
 - Japan attacked Hong Kong (British Colony)
 - 2000 Canadian troops were stationed in Hong Kong—800 dead and remainder taken as prisoners of war
 - Japanese Canadians seen as the enemy
5. How were Japanese Canadians treated like criminals?
 - rounded up
 - photographed
 - finger-printed
 - forced to move into camps
6. How did the government justify selling the property of those who were interned?
 - Used to pay for imprisonment / internment
7. What happened to many Japanese Canadians after the war?
 - Repatriated (sent back) to Japan

After Viewing

8. Did Japanese Canadian pose a real threat to Canada during World War Two?
 - Student responses may vary but there is no evidence that Japanese Canadians acted as spies for Japan

Internment Camps in Canada During the First and Second World Wars

Instructions: Use information from the [Library and Archives Canada](https://www.libraryandarchives.ca) to research these groups that were interned in Canada. Determine if they were placed in internment camps as prisoners of war or

as resident enemy aliens or both. Add any details about citizenship to the chart.

First World War

	Prisoners of War	Resident Enemy Aliens
Austro-Hungarians (mainly Ukrainians)		
Germans		

Second World War

	Prisoners of War	Resident Enemy Aliens
Germans		
Japanese		
Italians		
Jewish		
Mennonites		

What do you notice about the groups that were interned as enemy aliens? What role did religion, ethnicity, race, or politics play in internment?

Answer Key:
Internment Camps in Canada During the First and Second World Wars

Instructions: Use information from the [Library and Archives Canada](https://www.libraryandarchives.ca) to research these groups that were interned in Canada. Determine if they were placed in internment camps as prisoners of war or as resident enemy aliens or both. Add any details about citizenship to the chart.

First World War

	Prisoners of War	Resident Enemy Aliens
Austro-Hungarians (mainly Ukrainians)		many Austro-Hungarian citizens
Germans	many	some German citizens

Second World War

	Prisoners of War	Resident Enemy Aliens
Germans	large numbers including Jewish refugees from Germany	
Japanese		Canadian residents of Japanese origin
Italians		many Italian citizens and some Canadian of Italian origin suspected of Fascism
Jewish		refugees from European countries Canada was at war with
Mennonites		Many interned for being pacifists (anti-war)

What do you notice about the groups that were interned as enemy aliens? What role did religion, ethnicity, race, or politics play in internment?

Internment in Canada

Directions: Research the following groups of people who were considered enemy aliens and interned under the War Measures Act:

Internment in Canada	Ukrainians	Japanese	Italians	Jews
Who? Were all people in this group included? Women & children?				
When? WWI? WWII? Dates internment began and ended?				
Where? What parts of Canada had they been living in? Where were they sent for internment?				
What? What were the living conditions in the camps? What work were they required to do?				
Why? What was the official reason for interning these people? Did ethnicity, race, or religion also play a role?				

Did the government of Canada apologize to any of these groups? If so, when and why?

Answer Key--Internment in Canada

Directions: Research the following groups of people who were considered enemy aliens and interned under the War Measures Act:

Internment in Canada	Ukrainians	Japanese	Italians	Jews
Who? Were all people in this group included? Women & children?	Mostly men, but a few women and children.	More than 90% of all Japanese Canadians including women & children.	Men suspected of supporting Italy in war.	Young (16-20 years old) men refugees from Nazi Germany
When? WWI? WWII? Dates internment began and ended?	WWI 1914-1920 (held after war ended)	WWII 1942 (after Pearl Harbor) - 1945	WWII 1940 (after Mussolini joined Germany in war) - 1945	WWII 1940-1943 (although some returned to Britain to fight against Germany)
Where? What parts of Canada had they been living in? Where were they sent for internment?	Mostly farmers on the prairies. Taken to camps across Canada from BC to Nova Scotia	Removed from BC's west coast. Taken by train to camps in BC interior, Alberta, and Manitoba.	Men separated from families and put in camps.	Deported from refugee camps in Britain. Imprisoned in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick
What? What were the living conditions in the camps? What work were they required to do?	Forced to work in national parks building roads & golf course. Also worked in logging & mining. Low pay. Brutal conditions. Property & money taken and not returned	Worked on sugar beet farms. No running water or electricity. All property & businesses sold to pay for internment.		"Camp boys" imprisoned behind barbed wire
Why? What was the official reason for interning these people? Did ethnicity, race, or	Suspected of spying for Austria Hungary. Considered peasants, not "white" and like "animals".	Suspected of spying for Japan. Long history of anti-Asian racism in BC.	Viewed as fascists and spies.	At first suspected of spying for Germany. Then anti-Jewish immigration policy prevented them from being accepted in

religion also play a role?				Canada
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Did the government of Canada apologize to or compensate any of these groups? If so, when and why?

War Measures Act repealed (July 1988)

- Government of Canada apologises for internment of Japanese Canadians during WWII
- Symbolic financial compensation

Ukrainian Canadian Restitution Act (November 2005)

- Created a fund for commemorative and educational projects

Comparing the *War Measures Act* and *Emergencies Act*

Directions:

Use this article <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/emergencies-act> to research the War Measures Act and Emergencies Act. Record your findings in the chart below.

<i>War Measures Act (1914)</i>		<i>Emergencies Act (1988)</i>
	Scope of Powers	
	Role of Parliament	
	Compensation	
	Charter & Bill of Rights	

How does the Emergencies Act balance the rights of the individual with the need to provide protection, security, and order for all Canadians?

Answer Key--Comparing the *War Measures Act* and *Emergencies Act*

Directions:

Use this article <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/emergencies-act> to research the War Measures Act and Emergencies Act. Record your findings in the chart below.

<i>War Measures Act (1914)</i>		<i>Emergencies Act (1988)</i>
Gave government broad power to during times of war or uprising	Scope of Powers	Gives government limited and specific powers during 5 types of emergencies
Cabinet can invoke Act	Role of Parliament	Parliament must review Cabinet cannot act on its own
No consideration of compensation	Compensation	Provides for compensation of those affected
Rights and freedoms are not protected	Charter of Rights and Freedoms	Rights and freedoms are protected Cannot discriminate on protected grounds

How does the Emergencies Act balance the rights of the individual with the need to provide protection, security, and order for all Canadians?