



The Principal of Responsible Government

An essay using the *Canada in the Making* site

Teacher Guide

“Responsible government” is the cornerstone of parliamentary democracy in Canada. It became a rallying cry in Canada in the first half of the 19th century as more and more citizens became disturbed by the power structures in Canada. Ultimately, the push for responsible government was one of the motives behind the 1837 and 1838 rebellions. This essay will give students the opportunity to learn what this principle meant and why it was so important at that time.

Subject/Grade

Social Studies (History) and Language Arts
Ages 13 and up

Overview

This is a report with a set outline that requires students have access to several online Web pages for information. It can be an independent or paired activity for the purposed of gathering information and will require three to four sessions online to complete.

Note that the sources used in ECO can be printed from the browser and then photocopied.

Outcomes (WCP, APEF) Expectations (ON) Objectives (QC)

See the [table and the summaries](#) for each province.

Materials/Resources Required

Computers with access to the Internet
(Extension) Coloured card/paper for timeline, and paper backing
Student Work Sheet
Suggested Rubric

Links

Early Canadiana Online: *Canada in the Making*
<http://www.canadiana.org/>
Essay writing resources can be found in the *Writing An Essay* unit on ECO:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/eco/lesson_plans/topicconc.htm
Other links can be found in the Student Work Sheet.

Previous Knowledge

Students will need

- An understanding of Web navigation symbols, tools and terminology, particularly the tools used in ECO.
- Familiarity with basic report writing skills (intro, body, conclusion, etc.).
- To understand the basic shape of Canadian history.

Lesson Opener

Ask students what they think is the most important factor in a healthy democracy. Some ideas might include freedom of speech, the right to vote, etc. Ask them whether they think such freedoms were won easily, and how they were achieved.

Procedure

Step 1

Hand out Student Work Sheets and introduce students to the *ECO Canada In the Making* Web site. Read the assignment and discuss.

Step 2

Have students search for the required information from each document. It may be efficient for individuals to conduct research together. Extra credit could be given for comments about the documents not specifically identified on the Student Work Sheet.

Summary

Discussion: Do we have responsible government today? Are there problems in our current system that limit how responsible government is today?

Evaluation

See the Suggested Rubric.

Homework/Extension

Individuals or groups could prepare a summary of key documents in the move toward responsible government, possibly using a timeline and different presentation media.



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The Report

Using the sources below, you will write a report about what “responsible government” means in Canadian terms. It could follow this outline:

1. Introduction.
2. Define and explain the meaning of “representative government.” What part of Canada was first to have representative government?
3. Define and explain the meaning of “responsible government.” How is it different from representative government?
4. Who were the main people involved in bringing about responsible government?
5. When did Canada finally get responsible government? What events proved that responsible government was here to stay?
6. Conclusion: Try to make a statement about why you think responsible government is important to Canadians today.

To cover all these areas, you will need to read these pages in *Canada in the Making*:

- Representative Government
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/representatif/representatif_e.html
- Responsible Government
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/responsable/responsable_e.html
- The Written and Unwritten Constitution
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/written/written_e.html

You will also need to read biographies of important people involved in the movement for responsible government. See the Biographies page:

- URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/reference/biographies_e.html

Essay Requirements

The report should be _____ words long. It should contain:

- A title page with the title, your name, the course name, your teacher's name and the date submitted.
- A clear introduction.
- Proper citation. (These are endnotes or footnotes telling where your quotes and information come from. Your teacher will explain what format to use.)
- A bibliography.

Note on Sources

Primary sources

Primary sources represent the most authentic resources that historians can draw upon. The documents that you will be using below may be digitized, but are still considered primary sources. Try to use the sources available on the “Canada’s Constitutional History” portion of the *Canada in the Making* Web site to strengthen your arguments.

For tips on how to use primary sources, go to the “Using Primary Sources in Your Work” page.

URL: http://www.canadian.org/citm/guide/essay_e.html

Secondary sources

Secondary sources are works that interpret or analyze an historical event or phenomenon. Generally the author is at least one step removed from the event. Although not as authentic as primary sources, secondary sources are still valuable.

Possible Sources of Information Online

Note: It is important to choose sources that are produced by reputable institutions or individuals. Such information is more likely to give you a balanced, neutral view and be prepared or reviewed by experts.

Canada in the Making: Canada’s Constitutional History

URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution1_e.html

The Canadian Encyclopedia

URL: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>

National Archives of Canada: *Canada’s Constitutional Evolution*

URL: http://www.archives.ca/05/051103_f.html (French)

URL: http://www.archives.ca/05/051103_e.html (English)

Solon Law Archives: *Canadian Constitutional Documents*

URL: <http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/>



The Principal of Responsible Government Suggested Rubric

Application of Conventions (Mechanics) (Language Arts)

Uses correct spelling, grammar and punctuation 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Organization of Ideas (Language Arts)

Has a clear and captivating introduction 0 1 2 3

Logical organization: introduction, body, conclusion, arguments organized 0 1 2 3 4 5

Has proper annotation and bibliography 0 1 2 3 4 5

Communication of Knowledge (Social Studies/History) Communication (Language Arts)

Supports arguments well 0 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates an understanding of the issues 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Understanding of Concepts (Social Studies/History) Reasoning (Language Arts)

Has a clear and logical conclusion that makes a reasoned statement about the topic 0 1 2 3 4 5

Essay Total: /40