



A Timeline of Canada's Constitutional Evolution

An activity for use with the *Canada in the Making* site

Teacher Guide

The history of the written Canadian Constitution is a process that could be described as being evolutionary. Sometimes, dramatic events have spurred changes in legislation, which have in turn shaped future events. Ultimately, this led to the Constitution that Canadians enjoy today. This activity will give students the opportunity to analyze primary sources (historical documents) and draw conclusions from evidence. They will make a presentation of their findings and contribute to a timeline of documents and events.

Subject/Grade	Social Studies (History) and Language Arts Ages 15 and up
Overview	<p>This learning activity will enable students to see the evolution of the Canadian Constitution by examining individual historical documents and answering questions. It is a group activity with discussion. The entire activity should take between three and four hour-long sessions.</p> <p><i>Note that the sources used in ECO can be printed from the browser and then photocopied.</i></p>
Outcomes (WCP, APEF) Expectations (ON) Objectives (QC)	See the table and the summaries for each province.
Materials/Resources Required	Computers with Internet access. Coloured card/paper for timeline and paper backing. Student Work Sheet Suggested Assessment Criteria Student Extension Sheet
Links	Early Canadiana Online: <i>Canada in the Making</i> http://www.canadiana.org/ Essay writing resources can be found in the <i>Writing An Essay</i> 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 research and presentation skills.
- A basic understanding of the basic shape of Canadian history, especially from the 18th century on.

Lesson Opener

Ask students what the biggest issue in governing Canada is today. Possibilities include: separatism, regionalism, division of powers between levels of government, etc. Discuss:

- How long do they think it has existed?
- How did this problem come about?

Draw them to the conclusion that the issues we face today have deep roots that can be traced back in history.

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

Assign each group a particular document to read and examine. They may look at background material on the ECO site or other sites.

Step 3

Students search for the required information for each document. They should discuss answers and try to make balanced comments about the documents. Extra credit could be given for comments about the documents not specifically identified on the Student Work Sheet.

Step 4

When all information has been gathered, drafted, reviewed and printed as a final draft, groups should make short presentations to the class.

Step 5

Work should be assembled on the timeline. All work can be collated and used for the extension essay. Students could assess one another's work using a rubric created as a class.

Summary

Review consensus: Considering the shape of Canada and its politics today, which document has the greatest impact on:

- The status of Quebec?
- Provincial-federal relations?

- Individual rights and freedoms?

Evaluation

See the Suggested Assessment Criteria.

Homework/Extension

Hold a debate: Considering the shape of Canada and its politics today, which document has the greatest impact on:

- The status of Quebec?
- Provincial-federal relations?
- Individual rights and freedoms?

Students can champion their document or any other. Reach a consensus and take a vote.



A Timeline of Canada's Constitutional Evolution

An activity for use with the *Canada in the Making* site

Student Guide

The history of the written Canadian Constitution has been a process that could be described as being evolutionary. Sometimes, dramatic events have spurred changes in legislation, which have in turn shaped future events. Ultimately, this led to the Constitution that Canadians enjoy today. This activity will give you the opportunity to analyze primary sources (original historical texts). You will make a presentation of your findings and contribute to a time line of documents and events.

The first part of this activity is to create a timeline of important documents. Though there have been many constitutional amendments over the years, some documents stand out. You will be using the following documents available through the *Canada in the Making* site or other sites:

1. The **Articles of Capitulation**, Montreal, 1760
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution5_e.html
2. The **Royal Proclamation, 1763**:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution6_e.html
3. The **Quebec Act, 1774**:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution7_e.html
4. The **Constitutional Act, 1791**:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution8_e.html
5. The **Union Act, 1840**:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution11_e.html
6. The **British North America Act, 1867**:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution13_e.html
7. The **Statute of Westminster, 1931**:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution15_e.html
8. The **Constitution Act, 1982**:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution16_e.html
9. The **Meech Lake Accord** of 1987 and the **Charlottetown Accord** of 1992:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution16_e.html

For each of these documents, you will need to research and present information all of the following, if applicable:

- **The major issue or events addressed by the document.**
What events led to this document? Briefly describe them. For example, did the framers intend to establish the rule of law over a captured territory, or did they seek to unify the British North American provinces into one nation?

• **Where does it fit in the movement toward the democracy we have now?**

The general evolution of Canadian democracy has gone as follows:

- Conquest, military rule
- Government by governor and select few
- Elected assemblies created
- Development of the “Family Compact” and “Château Clique”
- Responsible government won
- Confederation; division of power into federal and provincial spheres
- Gradual movement to autonomy from Britain
- Patriation of the Canadian Constitution and the creation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights*

• In addition, there have been two forces acting in the Canadian federal system:

- A push to greater power for central government
- A push for greater power in the provinces

For documents written in 1867 and after, **comment on whether the document and events leading to it favored provincial power, federal power, or neither.**

• **How did this document affect the status of Lower Canada/Canada East/Quebec and the rights of French Canadians in Canada?**

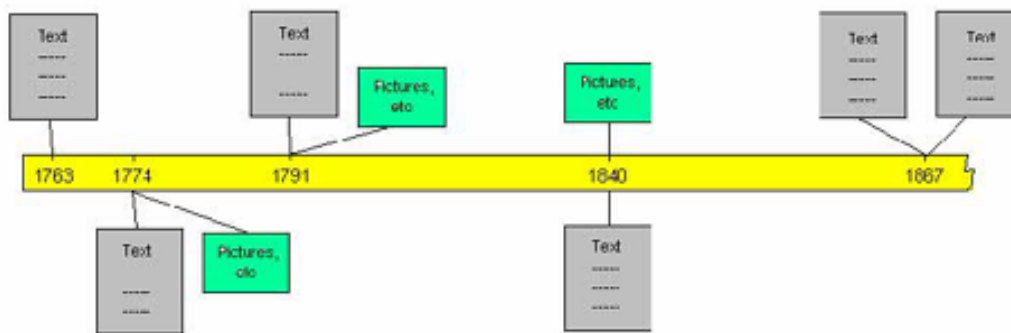
• **Was there anything that might offend certain parts of the country in this document?**

Note what they are, and why they would be offensive.

• **What do you think was the effect of each document for**

- Canadian unity?
- Aboriginal rights?
- Individual rights?

Discuss all answers with your group. Put your answers on a sheet of paper and create a timeline that looks something like this:



Your work may be presented in point form or as paragraphs. The use of illustrations is encouraged.

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.

The Written and Unwritten Constitution

Canada in the Making: The Written and Unwritten Constitution
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/written/written_e.html

Representative Government

Canada in the Making: Representative Government
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/representatif/representatif_e.html

Responsible Government

Canada in the Making: Responsible Government
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/responsable/responsable_e.html

General

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/>



A Timeline of Canada's Constitutional Evolution Suggested Assessment Criteria

Program Area: Social Studies, History, Canadian Studies

Criterion: Understanding Concepts

Attainment Descriptors:

- Prepared information for presentation demonstrates understanding of the different perspectives surrounding events around the relevant document.
- Prepared information for the presentation demonstrates an understanding of the implications of the events and documents on the governance of Canada.
- Prepared information for the presentation demonstrates an understanding of the implications of the events and documents on different groups.

Program Area: Social Studies, History, Canadian Studies

Criterion: Research Methods

Attainment Descriptor:

- Locates, gathers and organizes research materials from the *Canada in the Making* Web site and other sources.
- Personal opinions and arguments expressed in the debate are supported by clearly communicated evidence from the *Canada in the Making* Web site and other sources.

Program Area: Language

Criterion: Reading

Attainment Descriptor:

- Reads and demonstrates an understanding of texts from various time periods.
- Analyses and assesses ideas, themes, concepts and arguments.

Program Area: Language

Criterion: Oral and visual communication

Attainment Descriptor:

- Speaks clearly and uses appropriate variety in volume, rate, tone and pitch, pause, stress and emphasis, inflection, fluency.
- Presentation of the information for the timeline is engaging and uses arrangements of images and text to communicate effectively.

Program Area: General

Criterion: Cooperative Group Work

Attainment Descriptor:

- Contributes to group work; works well with others.



A Timeline of Canada's Constitutional Evolution

Extension Work Sheet

Rules of Debate:

A debate is stated as an affirmative proposition. A debate is generally broken down as follows:

- **First speaker:** in favour of the resolution (7 minutes)
- **Second speaker:** in opposition to the resolution (7 minutes)
- **Short break**
- **Third speaker:** in favour of the resolution (7 minutes)
- **Fourth speaker:** in opposition to the resolution (7 minutes)
- **Short break**
- **Fifth speaker:** opposition rebuttal (5 minutes)
- **Sixth speaker:** affirmative rebuttal (5 minutes)

Possible subjects for debate:

Considering the shape of Canada and its politics today, the document _____ had the greatest impact on the status of Quebec/provincial-federal relations/individual rights and freedoms.

Debate Assessment Criteria

	Group 1 Rating	Group 2 Rating
Are their facts accurate?		
Are the arguments organized logically?		
Do they support their arguments with evidence?		
Did they stay on topic?		
Was their rebuttal on target?		
Do they follow the rules of the debate (finish in the time given, without finishing too early, not interrupting)?		
Do they speak clearly and appropriately (varying tone, pitch, etc., without distracting from the arguments)?		
Did they maintain good eye contact, posture, etc.?		