

# LAND OF IMMIGRANTS: DESIGNING A FAMILY CREST

Ted Palmer, British Columbia

## INTENDED GRADE/SUBJECT LEVEL

Grade 7-8 History, Language Arts

## CONCEPTS

- Push-pull factors in immigration patterns and policies, Canada as a land of immigrants, our historical connection to other countries.

## INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES

Students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which their own cultural traditions have shaped them and an appreciation of their own uniqueness and that of others;
- analyse the ways in which immigration has influenced and continues to influence Canadian society;
- describe significant events in the past and ways in which they have contributed to the development of Canada;
- describe the experience of an immigrant.

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

I introduce students to Canadian immigration history and the concept of Push-Pull factors in immigration decisions. These lessons are divided into three different stages:

1. **Open Immigration: 1867-1896**, an era when there was a general open-door immigration policy and all groups were welcome
2. **Restricted Immigration: 1896-1958**, a time when a variety of restrictions on specific groups existed (Head Tax, continuous passage, etc.)
3. **Point System: talents of applicants, different categories of immigrants, etc.**

### Push-Pull Factors in Immigration

Individuals are pushed to leave their countries of origin for a host of reasons. These include such factors as: lack of economic opportunity; lack of religious freedom; racial persecution; and military service requirements.

Individuals are pulled to a host country by such factors as: experience and relation to other immigrants; receptivity of the host country to immigrants (especially those from same country); cost/difficulty/aid in transportation to potential host country; perceived and real economic opportunity; specific opportunities unique to host country (i.e., refugee status, religious freedom, non-compulsory military service).

## DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Students are asked to prepare a five-minute presentation in order to share their ethnic history with the class. Each student will be asked to prepare a family shield based on their ethnic history. They will use the shield as the visual component to their presentation.

Students are encouraged to gather as much personal information regarding their ethnic history as possible. This may involve overseas communication and so, a three to four week space between project introduction and student presentations is suggested.

In the middle of this three to four week preparation and research stage, two activities are strongly recommended. One is a library research class that will focus on researching the push-pull factors that existed for ancestors at the time of emigration/immigration. Second, a presentation progress report is also recommended at this mid-point in the preparation period.

### *SPECIAL NOTE*

*Adopted children and foster children may feel alienated by this project. The teacher should simply instruct anyone in this position to use the history of their adopted family.*

Provide students with poster size paper. Recommend lots of colour and review the concept of symbolism, i.e., tractor for farming, flag for country.

I offer a suggested approach to the family shield that is as follows:

Right Side of Shield	Left Side of Shield
Father's side symbols of:	Mother's side symbols of:
Country of origin Occupations Unique experiences Achievements	Country of origin Occupations Unique experiences Achievements
Bottom Half of Shield	Under Ribbon
Experiences in Canada Mode of transportation to and within Canada Area settled Occupations Achievements	Create a family motto in your, language of choice summarizing your family's immigration experiences.

Students will be expected to feature an explanation of the symbols on their shield, the unique push-pull factors for their family, and will conclude with a translation/explanation of their family motto.

## EVALUATION

Teacher should construct the student presentation list. Start with one or two of the more verbal, motivated students in order to set a high standard of expectation. Where considerable ethnic grouping exists, deliberately distribute students to avoid repetition.

I place an equal evaluation factor on the presentations and the family shields (place evaluations and comment on the back of shield). I then display all work in the room or Social Studies department hall.

I have a special concluding activity called Roots and Routes, which I like to include. Students are invited to use ribbon and pins on a large world map to trace their roots and the route of immigration their family used to come to this country.

A final debriefing session is also recommended. This should celebrate the effort of students, examine the collection of family crests, and review the Roots and Route map. If the project is done by several classes, then interesting sharing and comparing can take place.

The obvious conclusion to this unit should be stressed with students; regardless of where we come from or when our families came, Canada is and has always been, a land of immigrants.

## **MATERIALS/RESOURCES**

- historical documents dealing with immigration
- poster-size paper
- markers/pencil crayons
- large map
- ribbons and tacks
- examples of family crests or shields

## **About the Educator**

Ted Palmer teaches at Caribou Hills Secondary School in Burnaby, British Columbia. Ted is known for the clever use of primary source material in his history classes. He regularly transforms his classroom into a gallery of photographs and historic documents for student viewing and commentary. He has developed simulation games focussing on Canadian Aboriginal studies. These and other projects like exchange visits, Pioneer Canada Fairs, the Canadian Aid Simulation and the Canada Japan multimedia project, encourage a creative way to link the past with the present.