Atlantic Canadian Culture

Developed By: Kelly Stewart  
Suggested Length: Five 40 minute periods  
Suggested Grade Level(s): Nine  
Subject Areas: Social studies, visual arts, language arts

Overview

In this unit, students will develop appreciation for the people of Atlantic Canada through exploration of their land, cultures, languages, and ethnicities.

Links to Curriculum Outcomes

Students will (be expected to)

- examine the size and physical features of Atlantic Canada (social studies)
- understand the nature of cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups in Atlantic Canada (social studies)
- use, with confidence, experiences from their personal, social, cultural, and physical environments as a basis for visual expression (visual arts)
- develop approaches and strategies to conduct their research (language arts)

Links to Telling Stories: Themes / Key Words

- culture  
- Acadian  
- Atlantic Canada

Art Works

- *L’argent*, Robert Harris, CAG H-1623  
- *Old Acadian Woman of Prince Edward Island*, Robert Harris, CAG H-418  
- *French Acadian Sitting in Doorway*, Robert Harris, CAG H-102  
- *Lazare Buotte (Acadian)*, Robert Harris, CAG H-576  
- *In French Acadian House Rustico*, Robert Harris, CAG H-109  
- *Charlottetown Arabs*, Robert Harris, CAG H-1389  
- *Young Acadian Woman*, Artist Unknown, CAG H-2319
Lesson #1: The Land of Atlantic Canada

Objective  Students will explore and develop a better understanding of the region referred to as Atlantic Canada.

Materials  
• map of Canada  
• pen  
• paper  
• computers

Activities  
1. Draw students’ attention to a map of Canada. Have a volunteer point out the region of Atlantic Canada. In a brief discussion, discover what is already known about the region.  
   • What provinces are included in the Atlantic Provinces?  
   • What are the capital cities of each?  
   • Does anyone know other cities in these provinces?  
   • What might the population of each province be?  
   • Has anyone ever visited or traveled in these provinces? What were they like?  
   • Share any memorable experiences you might have of traveling in Atlantic Canada.

2. With students, compare the sizes of the Atlantic Provinces with each other and with the other provinces and territories.  
   • Which is the smallest? The largest?  
   • How can their combined size be compared to the size of Ontario? Quebec? British Columbia?

3. Discuss the physical features of Atlantic Canada.  
   • What type of landscape is likely to exist in each province?  
   • Does the map indicate any physical features?  
   • Which provinces are connected? Which are not?  
   • How are those provinces that are not connected accessible from the other provinces?

4. Have the students form groups of two and research the Atlantic Provinces. Students should keep notes for sharing and studying purposes. Groups might discover the following:  
   • What provinces are the Atlantic Provinces?  
   • What is the capital of each?  
   • What is the population of each?  
   • What is the combined population of the Atlantic Provinces?  
   • What is the provincial flower of each?
• Who is the Premier of each?
• What are the official languages of each?
• What are three physical features of each?
• What is the size of each? (km²)

5. Reunite the groups and verify that all of the groups found the correct information for the above questions.

Ideas for Assessment

Play a game of Atlantic Canada trivia by challenging students to answer questions much like those above. Break the class into two groups for a competitive twist.

Lesson #2: An Atlantic Canadian Culture

Objective

Students will develop an understanding of and an appreciation for the Acadian culture. You might choose to do this lesson over two periods.

Related Art Work(s)

• L’argent, Robert Harris, CAG H-1623
• Old Acadian Woman of Prince Edward Island, Robert Harris, CAG H-418
• French Acadian Sitting in Doorway, Robert Harris, CAG H-102
• Lazare Buotte (Acadian), Robert Harris, CAG H-576
• In French Acadian House Rustico, Robert Harris, CAG H-109
• Young Acadian Woman, Artist Unknown, CAG H-2319

Materials

• pen
• paper
• Acadian flag (or facsimile)
• Bristol board / chart paper
• markers

Activities

1. Present the Acadian drawings to the class. Examine each piece individually, looking for cultural cues and indicators. Can the people in the drawings be immediately identified as Acadian? What is Acadian? What does it mean to be Acadian?

2. Explain that the term Acadian refers to the ancestors of French settlers of Atlantic Canada. Show the students an Acadian flag. Ask
what and who it represents (It is an Acadian flag, which unifies Acadian people from all over Atlantic Canada). Acadians use the flag and the Acadian colors (blue, white, red and yellow) to decorate their communities and the homes - they are very proud of their people and their culture.

3. Invite students to investigate the Acadian culture further. Students might work in groups of 3-4 on focused research topics such as Acadian:
   - cuisine
   - festivals
   - music
   - language
   - history (deportation)
   - Evangeline (an Acadian heroine)
   - family names
   - regions and communities

4. Challenge each group to find as much information as they can on the topic. Students might organize their information on bristle board or list their factual information on sheets of chart paper, a different colour for each group.

5. Groups might present their information orally or you might post the Bristol board / chart paper on the classroom walls and invite students to circulate and read about each topic.

Idea for Assessment
Remove or cover the Bristol board / chart paper and ask students to write down at least three new facts or points that they learned about each research topic.

Lesson #3: Group Dynamics

Objective In this lesson, students will explore the variety of ethnic groups that call Atlantic Canada home.

Related Art Work(s)
   - Charlottetown Arabs, Robert Harris, CAG H-1389

Materials
   - pen
   - journal
chart paper
• marker

Activities
1. Begin by sharing your own origins with the class, and then ask students to share their own ethnicity, origins, and family roots.

2. Present Harris’ Charlottetown Arabs to the class. If necessary, note that Charlottetown is the capital city of Prince Edward Island, one of the Atlantic provinces. Make a list of ethnic groups that might be found in Atlantic Canada, starting with Arabian.

3. Students work in groups to find out more information about the ethnic groups of Atlantic Canada through key word searches on the internet, library resources, etc.

4. Now ask the students to suggest what, and how, these groups contribute to Atlantic Canadian society (e.g., suggestions re food, cuisine, arts, crafts, music, dance and language). Students might also think about ethnic groups in their own community and how their community benefits from a variety of cultures.

5. Have students make a journal entry about the ethnic group that they find most interesting. What else would they like to know about that group? What food, music or crafts of that group have they experienced? Does that group have difficulties within the broader community?

Ideas for Assessment
In groups, students could make a plan for a multicultural fair to be held in their community. They would need to list groups to contact, decide what aspects they would include, prepare an invitation letter to be sent to folks, plan a logo / poster, etc.

Lesson #4: Culture Sketch

Objective Students will choose a person from their personal, social, or physical environment to sketch.

Related Art Work(s)
• Old Acadian Woman of Prince Edward Island, Robert Harris, CAG H-418
• French Acadian Sitting in Doorway, Robert Harris, CAG H-102
• Lazare Buotte (Acadian), Robert Harris, CAG H-576
• Young Acadian Woman, Artist Unknown, CAG H-2319

Materials
• Sketching paper and pencils or charcoal

Activities
1. Together examine the four drawings of Acadian people. Draw students’ attention to the facial features of the subjects, definition of lines, and the shadow effects in the drawings. How does the artist show the subject’s feelings? How does the artist portray the subject’s culture? Innocence? Pain? Age? Status? Personality? Encourage students to remember these factors for creating their own sketches.

2. Have students choose someone they know whom they will sketch, using shading and line similar to the way Harris did. Encourage them to choose someone of an ethnic group other than their own. Photos of the person (including ones found in magazines, books, etc.) can be used as reference for their drawing.

3. Encourage students to do preliminary gesture drawings in preparation for their final sketch and to consider placement of the subject on the page for artistic effect.

Bringing it all Together
Using the sketches made by the students, create a “community cultures circle” by connecting and hanging all of the sketches together. Have students prepare signage for the display that celebrates the richness of many cultures. A local government building or community access site might be the perfect place to display this culture collage.

Possible Extensions
Invite a guest speaker from an Acadian community or from an ethnic group that the class would like to learn more about. As a follow up, or in conjunction with the visit, sample foods, listen to music, or experiment with traditional crafts from the visitor’s “community”.