

The Battle of Chateauguay: 1812's Vimy Ridge

by Elizabeth Freeman-Shaw

Suggested grade level: Intermediate/Senior

Suggested time: 2 class periods

Brief Description of the Task

In this task students will explore the concept of identity. They will investigate how the Battle of Chateauguay is unique and has the potential to be considered a defining moment in building Canadian identity during the War of 1812. Parallels can be made to the World War 1 Battle of Vimy Ridge to address the historical thinking concept of **Continuity and Change**.

Historical Thinking Concepts

- Historical Significance
- Working with Evidence
- Continuity and Change

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- participate in an activity that allows them to understand the concept of **continuity and change** and **historical significance**
- identify key elements of identity
- identify the elements of the Battle of Chateauguay that define it as a uniquely 'Canadian' battle in the War of 1812
- use sources to make conclusions

Materials

Each student will need copies of Worksheets 1-3.

Teacher will need an Internet connection.

Prior Knowledge

It would be an asset for students to be familiar with:

1. Events of the War of 1812 up to the Battle of Chateauguay
2. Historical Significance and Continuity & Change
(www.historicalthinking.ca)

Assessment

Students may be evaluated on:

- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3
- Teacher feedback on student discussion
- Performance task on Significance of Chateauguay (rubric created by teacher/student)

Detailed Lesson Plan

Focus Questions: What defines Canadian identity? To what extent is the Battle of Chateauguay a defining moment for Canadian identity in the War of 1812? How does it compare to Vimy Ridge?

Note to Teacher:

In the study of the War of 1812, the focus of lessons has been on Britain versus the United States. Military forces in battles studied to this point will have included 'Canadians' as part of the local militia and regular forces, but those soldiers would have fought under the command of British Generals or other British officers. This activity has students look at a significant battle, not in terms of casualties or sensational events, but in terms of who the defenders of Canada were and the role that the victory at Chateauguay (along with Crysler's Farm) played in stopping an American advance into the St. Lawrence and Lower Canada region.

Much has been made in the media about the significance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in 'defining' Canada as a nation. While students will not have studied World War 1 yet, they will do so in later years of study. Additionally with the recent 95th anniversary

and upcoming 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge there may be some familiarity with this topic outside of history curriculum.

The premise of the performance task activity is to have the students consider whether the Battle of Chateaugay can be viewed as the War of 1812's Vimy Ridge through the preparation of a dramatic performance that might take the form of a Heritage Moment, play, monologues of significant individuals, poetry ballad, song etc.

The following instructions provide a possible introduction into the task.

Part A - Activating Learning

Building The Canadian Identity

1. The teacher will ask students to identify things/events that make them proud as a Canadian. Ask students to consider physical aspects of the country, as well as accomplishments by Canada or Canadians. This may be done individually or using a group strategy such as think, pair, share, or placemat.

If this is difficult for the students, the teacher may use visual or verbal cues to initiate discussion such as: pictures of Sidney Crosby's goal at the Vancouver Olympics, Canadian medics working in an emergency situation like Haiti, playing K'naan's Waving Flag song that became the anthem for the World Cup, Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, or the Mars lander. The idea is to have students consider a variety of things that make them proud about Canada.

2. Ask students to categorize their list according to different types/characteristics: sports, military, humanitarian, cultural, scientific, legal, or technological.

3. Next, ask students to consider the reasons, or general criteria, as to why those events/things make them proud. Such criteria might include improving the lives of Canadians/others; making Canada

and/or the world more fair and equitable; or resulting in Canada's growth as a nation. [Visit the website of The Critical Thinking Consortium for support on developing criteria, <http://www.tc2.ca/>]

4. Generate discussion and deeper reflection by asking the following:

- What is the difference between things that make us proud and things that help to build the Canadian identity?
- Are there elements of the events that they have identified that define Canada's identity?
(For example: Does Canadian humanitarian assistance define Canadian character? Does Canadian military assistance in Afghanistan define Canada as a nation that cooperates in the international community? Does K'naan's music represent Canada's diversity and contribution to world culture?)

5. Consolidate this portion of the lesson by generating with the class a list of what it takes to build or define Canadian identity.

Part B - Action: Defining Military Moments in Canadian Identity

1. The teacher will show a government advertisement about the War of 1812 to the class and will present a number of quotes for the class to consider. Have the students explore whether the War of 1812 is a defining moment in the development of the Canadian identity.

Federal government advertisement:

The Fight for Canada - War of 1812 (200th Anniversary)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4i_qe9W6Dk

Quotes:

"The War of 1812 was a defining moment in the history of our nation. Had the War ended differently, the Canada we know today would not exist."

Source: The War of 1812. National Defence and the Canadian Forces.

www.forces.gc.ca.

"The War of 1812 set Canada on the slow path toward nationhood..."

Source: The Historica-Dominion Institute. The War of 1812 Teacher's Resource Guide. https://www.historica-dominion.ca/1812/pdf/1812_english.pdf

"The heroic efforts of those who fought for our country in the War of 1812 tell the story of the Canada we know today: an independent and free country with a constitutional monarchy and its own distinct parliamentary system. The 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 is an opportunity for all of us to take pride in our history, and we look forward to taking part in the events and activities that will mark this important anniversary for Canada."

-- James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages

Source: Harper Government Invests in Legacy Projects to Commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812, <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1318628168481>

2. Ask students to share aloud their responses to the advertisement and the quotations. Is the War of 1812 a defining moment in Canadian history? Do they need to know more to make this determination?

Part C - Making Connections (Continuity & Change)

1. Show students the Heritage Moment "The Battle of Vimy Ridge" and allow students to read a short summary of Vimy. Based on their reading, have them complete jot notes on the significance of Vimy, and make conclusions on why it is considered to be a defining moment in Canadian Identity.

The teacher should work with students to support them as necessary to complete **Worksheet 1 - Historical Significance of Vimy Ridge**. Support will vary depending on how familiar students are with Assessing Historical Significance.

Resources on Vimy:

- Veterans Affairs. The Battle of Vimy Ridge

http://veterans.gc.ca/eng/history/firstwar/fact_sheets/vimy

- The War Museum of Canada
http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/vimy/index_e.shtml
- Historica-Dominion Institute. Vimy Ridge
<https://www.historica-dominion.ca/content/heritage-minutes/vimy-ridge>

2. Have the students think back to the government video, or replay it. Ask them what moments it highlighted?

3. Tell the students that they will be investigating a battle in the War of 1812 that featured General D'Salaberry, who was featured in the video, and that is considered to be unique in defining Canada.

Also mention that this battle, The Battle of Chateauguay, has not been highlighted or written about extensively in school textbooks.

Part D - Consolidation: The Culminating Performance Task

Focus: A case for the significance of the Battle of Chateauguay in the development of Canadian nationhood.

In order to develop an interest and list of characters, the teacher could read excerpts aloud from Pierre Berton's book *Attack on Montreal*.

1. In small groups students will research and collect information on the individuals and events of the Battle of Chateauguay. In order to assess significance students will use the template **Worksheet 2 - Historical Significance of Chateauguay**.

Additionally, they should employ the criteria for building identity established earlier.

Finally, in order to make the case for Chateauguay's significance they can try to draw a parallel with Vimy Ridge using **Worksheet 3 - Continuity and Change**.

2. Using their research data (refer to list of references provided) students should develop a performance that explores whether or not the Battle of Chateauguay (or individuals and components of the battle) is Historically Significant, or a defining moment in Canadian history.

3. Performance tasks might take a number of different forms that should be selected based on student interest and learning styles. Some suggestions might include:

- Heritage minute modelled on the those produced by the Historica-Dominion Institute
- Museum display on events, individuals
- Monologues or mock interviews with key individuals (D' Salaberry, soldiers in the Voltigeurs or the Canadian Fencibles, the American generals General James Wilkinson or Major General Wade Hampton, local residents who prepared defenses, spies Jacob and David Manning)
- Mock news reports
- Reconstructed moving models video recorded (eg. Claymation or lego) to show key military strategies.
- A student suggested performance

Assessment/Evaluation would be based on a full performance task rubric

Worksheet 1 – Continuity and Change

Name: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____

List the characteristics you are comparing in the left column. Title the other two columns with whatever it is you are investigating. This may be two time periods, two documents, two items, two events, etc. Record information that helps you to identify what has changed and what has remained the same.

Characteristic	#1. Canadian Soldiers in Afghanistan	#2. Soldiers 1812

To what degree was there continuity and to what degree was there change between #1 and #2?

Worksheet 2 – Historical Perspective-Taking

Name: _____ Date: _____

What are the event(s) and time period you are investigating?	
List the various groups and people involved, and circle the one that you are recording on this page (use additional pages to record information on others).	
Describe their position/role in society.	Evidence?
How is their position/role different from a similar person or group today?	Evidence?
Compared to what we face today, what relevant circumstances were different for them in the past? (Some examples might include technology, media, economy, religion, family life, communication, recreation, etc.)	
How do you think the above factors influenced their thoughts and/or actions?	