

Komagata Maru Episode Apologies Lesson Plans

Suggested Time: 1 class, 80 minutes

Course	Big Idea	Curricular Competencies	Content	Core Competencies
Social Studies 9	Disparities in power alter the balance of relationships between individuals and between societies.	<p>Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and determine appropriate ways to remember and respond (ethical judgment)</p> <p>Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their historical significance at particular times and places, and from group to group (significance)</p>	discriminatory policies, attitudes, and historical wrongs	<p>I am an active listener; I support and encourage the person speaking</p> <p>I present information clearly and in an organized way</p> <p>I can recount simple experiences and activities and tell something I learned</p> <p>I can explore materials and actions</p> <p>I build on others' ideas and add new ideas of my own, or combine other people's ideas in new ways to create new things or solve straightforward problems</p>
Social Studies 10	Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.	<p>Assess how underlying conditions and the actions of individuals or groups influence events, decisions, or developments, and analyze multiple consequences (cause and consequence)</p> <p>Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and assess appropriate ways to remember and respond (ethical judgment)</p>	<p>discriminatory policies and injustices in Canada and the world, including residential schools, the head tax, the Komagata Maru incident, and internments</p> <p>domestic conflicts and co-operation</p>	<p>I can imagine and work toward change in myself and the world</p> <p>I can analyze complex social or environmental issues from multiple perspectives. I can take thoughtful actions to influence positive, sustainable change</p> <p>I can clarify problems or issues, generate multiple strategies, weigh consequences, compromise to meet the needs of others, and evaluate actions</p>
Social Justice 12	The causes of social injustice are complex and have lasting impacts on society	<p>Determine and assess the long- and short-term causes and consequences, and the intended and unintended consequences, of an event, legislative and judicial decision, development, policy, or movement (cause and consequence)</p> <p>Make reasoned ethical judgments about controversial actions in the past or present after considering the context and standards of right and wrong (ethical judgment)</p>	<p>social injustices in Canada and the world affecting individuals, groups, and society</p> <p>processes, methods, and approaches</p> <p>individuals, groups, and institutions use to promote social justice</p>	<p>I take action to support diversity and defend human rights and can identify how diversity is beneficial for my community, including online.</p> <p>I understand I will continue to develop new abilities and strengths to help me meet new challenges</p>

Note: You may be able to use this lesson in Interpersonal and Family Relationships 11 with minor changes

## First People's Principles of Learning

- Learning takes patience and time

### Tags:

- Komagata Maru
- Historical Injustices
- Apologies
- Relationships
- Community
- Government Responsibility

### Essential Questions

- What does it mean to apologize?
- What are the facets of an effective apology?
- Who judges if an apology is satisfactory?
- Why is it important to publicly recognize historical wrongs?
- Has the Canadian Government done enough to address the historical injustice of the Komagata Maru?

### Included in this lesson:

- Lesson Plan
- PowerPoint
- Worksheets for students

### **Part 1 - Hook/Introduction:**

1) Think about an event that occurred in your life that you thought was unfair or where you were hurt or treated badly.

How did you feel?

- What would have helped in this scenario?
- Would an apology have been enough?

2) Inform students that there are multiple examples of injustices happening in Canadian history. Today, we will look at the long term repercussions of one of them specifically.

### **Part 2 – Setting the scene:**

1) Definition: What is a historical wrong?

- a historical injustice or a past moral wrong that directly impacted the community in the past and has a lasting impact on the wellbeing of currently living people.

2) Brainstorm/Discussion: What are some historical wrongs that you can think of?

- Indian Act, Chinese head tax, Japanese/Ukrainian internment, holocaust, slavery, Doukhobors
  - leading students towards the Komagata Maru

3) Follow up question: What can be done about these historical wrongs today?

- Acknowledgement
- Apologies
- Awareness/education
- Reparations
- Legislation/Policy changes

4) Examples of attempts to right these wrongs

- 9 federal apologies since 1988
  - 1988:
    - Prime Minister Brian Mulroney formally apologizes in the House of Commons for the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War
  - 1990:
    - Brian Mulroney apologizes to Italian Canadians declared “enemy aliens” when Italy declared war on Canada in 1940 and detained during the Second World War.
  - 2001:
    - Ron Duhamel, the minister of veterans’ affairs, apologizes in the House of Commons for the executions of 23 Canadian soldiers during the First World War and says their names will be added to the country’s book of remembrance
  - 2006:
    - Stephen Harper apologizes in the House of Commons for the head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants
  - 2008:
    - Stephen Harper apologizes in the House of Commons for Canada’s residential-schools system
  - 2016:

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologizes in the House of Commons for the Komagata Maru incident.
  - 2017:
    - Trudeau apologizes in the House of Commons for past state-sanctioned discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited people in Canada that he said cost people their “livelihoods and in some cases, their lives.”
  - 2018:
    - Trudeau apologizes and exonerates six Tsilhqot’in chiefs invited by colonial officials for peace talks more than 150 years ago
    - Trudeau apologizes in the House of Commons for Canada’s decision in 1939 to reject an asylum request from more than 900 German Jews
  -
- Truth & Reconciliation Commission
- \$12.5 million to educate Canadians about anti-Chinese discrimination.
- \$20,000 compensation for Head Tax survivors/their spouses

### Part 3 – Komagata Maru Episode:

#### 1) The Komagata Maru Episode

- Quick summary/ exploration of the Komagata Maru incident
  - Options below – videos, articles, lesson plans etc.
- Discussion Question: If you were a part of the Canadian government, what would you do to make it up to these passengers/their descendants?
  - Follow up: If you had a personal connection to the matter, like ancestry, would your intentions change or be impacted more, or less, greatly?

#### 2) What did Canada do?

- Multiple plaques
- Special stamp
- Komagata Maru Museum
- Funding educational resources
- Government Apologies

#### 3) What were the apologies?

- August 6, 2006: PM Harper attends Ghadri Babayan da Mela at Bear Creek Park and says that we will make it right.
- May 23, 2008: BC Government apologizes for its participation in the incident.
- August 3, 2008: PM Harper attends Ghadri Babayan da Mela again and apologizes.
  - Leads to outcry/dissatisfaction from the community.
  - Believe that it should have been done in parliament like other apologies.
  - Jason Kenny: “An apology has been given and it won’t be repeated”
- May 18, 2016: PM Trudeau gives “full apology” in the House of Commons.
- May 2020 - City of Vancouver

## Part 4 – Komagata Maru Apologies:

### 1) Jigsaw Activity

- Students are split into 3 groups (or, depending on size, 6) and assign one of the three topics below to research and summarize
  - Once completed, students share with the rest of the class
    - Small groups or presenting in front of class

### 2) Examining Apologies

- Discussion - Were these apologies 'good' apologies?
  - Use specific examples from the apologies that we have looked at
- What could make these apologies even better?

### 3) Evaluating responses to historical injustices

- What strategies can governments use to address historical injustices?
  - What are the pros/cons of each strategy?
  - Which of these has the Canadian government used with the Komagata Maru episode?
- Has the Canadian Government done enough to address the historical injustice of the Komagata Maru?

### 4) Connection to Personal Lives

- What are some traits of good apologies?
  - Indigenous perspective of a true apology is in 3 parts
    - say you're sorry = recognize
    - stop what you are doing that related to that apology = cease
    - what actions will you take to ensure that you follow through with the apology = action piece, mobilization piece)
- How could you implement these in your own lives?

Expert Groups Links:

- May 23, 2008
  - [B.C. apologizes for Komagata Maru incident | CBC News](#)
  - [Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia](#)
  - [B.C. legislators apologize for Komagata Maru incident | The Star](#)
  - Transcript of the federal apology: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2016/05/18/komagata-maru-apology-house-commons>
  
- August 3, 2008
  - [Sikhs unhappy with PM's Komagata Maru apology | CTV News](#)
  - [Harper apologizes in B.C. for 1914 Komagata Maru incident | CBC News](#)
  - [BBKomagataMaruResp.pdf \(tc2.ca\)](#)
  - Dr. Alia Somani transcribed the 2008 apology: <http://komagatamarujourney.ca/node/4830>
  
- May 18, 2016
  - [Justin Trudeau apologizes in House for 1914 Komagata Maru incident | CBC News](#)
  - [Canadian Sikh reacts to apology from Prime Minister Trudeau for historic wrong](#)
  - [Komagata Maru apology in the House of Commons | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](#)
  - [Komagata Maru: Why the apology matters, more than a century later | CTV News](#)

## Resources

- General Overviews
  - [Komagata Maru Journey](#)
  - <https://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/a-timeline-of-official-apologies-from-the-federal-government>
- Videos:
  - [Komagata Maru - YouTube](#)
  - <https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/watch-justin-trudeau-apologizes-for-1914-komagata-maru-incident/>
- Articles on Komagata Maru Apologies:
  - [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/naveen-girn/komagata-maru-apology\\_b\\_10006896.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/naveen-girn/komagata-maru-apology_b_10006896.html)
  - <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/descendants-of-komagata-maru-passengers-pleased-by-apology/article30057004>
  - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/what-s-the-point-of-yet-another-apology-for-a-historical-wrong-1.5659597>
  - <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2016/05/18/opinion/milan-singh-and-mo-dhaliwal-why-does-komagata-maru-apology-matter>
- Newspaper Articles on Komagata Maru Apologies Komagata Maru Journey Lesson Plans:
  - [Microsoft Word - Lesson Plan 1 - May 3 \(komagatamarujourney.ca\)](#)
  - [Lesson: The Punjabi Experience in British Columbia \(royalbcmuseum.bc.ca\)](#)
  - [Komagata Maru Incident - BC Lesson Plan | Law Lessons](#)
- Teacher Resources
  - <http://www.whatiflearning.com/example/righting-historical-wrongs/>
  - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/historical-injustice>
  - [The story of the Komagata Maru | CMHR \(humanrights.ca\)](#)
  - [B.C. regiment that once forced out the Komagata Maru is now commanded by a Sikh - The Globe and Mail](#)
  - "Unmooring the Komagata Maru Charting Colonial Trajectories"  
[https://www.ubcpres.ca/asset/29301/1/9780774860673\\_ Excerpt.pdf](https://www.ubcpres.ca/asset/29301/1/9780774860673_ Excerpt.pdf)
  - What makes a good apology?
    - [The Three Parts of an Effective Apology \(berkeley.edu\)](#)
    - [No Job Name \(stanford.edu\)](#) - Political Psychology: Government Apologies for Historical Injustices
    - [Anatomy of Apology and Forgiveness: Towards Transformative Apology and Forgiveness | International Journal of Transitional Justice | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)
  - Are Apologies Enough?
    - <https://www.facinghistory.org/stolen-lives-indigenous-peoples-canada-and-indian-residential-schools/chapter-5/are-apologies-enough>