

Mewa Singh Lopoke and Criminality

Suggested Time: 1-2 80-minute periods

Courses	Big Ideas	Curricular Competencies	Content	Core Competencies
Social Studies 10	Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.	<p>Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas and data; and communicate findings and decisions</p> <p>Explain and infer different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs (perspective)</p> <p>Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present, and assess appropriate ways to remember and respond (ethical judgment)</p>	domestic conflicts and co-operation	<p>I recognize that there are different points-of-view and I can disagree respectfully</p> <p>I can work with others to achieve a common goal; I do my share</p> <p>I can represent my learning, and tell how it connects to my experiences and efforts</p> <p>I deliberately learn a lot about something (e.g. by doing research, talking to others or practicing) so that I am able to generate new ideas or ideas just pop into my head</p>
Law Studies 12	<p>A society's laws and legal framework affect many aspects of people's daily lives.</p> <p>Laws are interpreted, and these interpretations may evolve over time as a society's values and worldviews change.</p>	<p>Assess the justification for differing legal perspectives after investigating points of contention, reliability of sources, and adequacy of evidence (evidence)</p> <p>Make reasoned ethical judgments about controversial decisions, legislation, or policy (ethical judgment)</p>	Canada's correctional system and principles of rehabilitation, punishment, and restoration	<p>I build the skills I need to make my ideas work, and usually succeed, even if it takes a few tries</p> <p>I can tell the difference between facts and interpretations, opinions, and judgments</p>
Philosophy 12	While philosophical questions often examine issues with no definitive answers, logic and reasoned arguments can show which answers	Use philosophical inquiry processes and reasoning skills to respond to arguments and questions related to major issues in philosophy	methods of reasoning and argument in philosophy	<p>I can reflect on and evaluate my thinking, products, and actions</p> <p>I take the initiative to inform myself about controversial issues</p>

	have more or less value			I can analyze complex social or environmental issues from multiple perspectives. I can take thoughtful actions to influence positive, sustainable change
Social Justice 12	Individual worldviews shape and inform our understanding of social justice issues	Assess and compare the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places, and determine what is revealed about issues of social justice in the past and present (significance) Make reasoned ethical judgments about controversial actions in the past or present after considering the context and standards of right and wrong (ethical judgment)	governmental and non-governmental organizations in issues of social justice and injustice processes, methods, and approaches individuals, groups, and institutions use to promote social justice	I can clarify problems or issues, generate multiple strategies, weigh consequences, compromise to meet the needs of others, and evaluate actions

First People’s Principles of Learning:

- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions

Tags:

- Debate
- Mewa Singh Lopoke
- William C Hopkinson
- New Westminster
- Morality
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Essential Questions:

- How did the Canadian government benefit from having an individual like William C Hopkinson?
- Given the circumstances of the time, was Mewa Singh justified in his actions?

Included in this lesson:

- Lesson Plan
- PowerPoint

Part 1: Introduction

- Intro Question: What would you do if you witnessed a horrible crime being committed and the person you held responsible was going to get away with it?
 - Think, pair, share
- Follow up questions: what if this wasn't the first time that this had happened? What if they had ordered someone to kill a person that was important to you?
- Intro:
 - Share with students that we will be looking at an incident that happened in 1914 where a man was hung to death because he wanted justice for what had happened to his friends
- Basic Information PPT:
 - This is meant to just set the context and provide a brief overview.
 - Students will be completing their own research later

Part 2: Activity – Posthumous Exoneration Debate

- Mewa Singh's actions were wrong according to the law at the time and the present law but if you look at the context of it, it may not be as clear cut.
- Students are split into 2 groups – depending on the size of the class, you may want to split this into 4 groups and have 2 debates running simultaneously/ one after the other
- Debate Preparation
 - Statement:
 - **Setting aside the legalities of his actions, Bhai Mewa Singh should be posthumously exonerated for the murder of William C Hopkinson on moral, ethical and compassionate grounds.**
 - Students break up into their groups and research their side using the graphic organizer provided
 - They will need to research the incident, government policies of that time, Mewa Singh's statement at his trial other facts and current legal basis for a posthumous exoneration
- There has only been one posthumous exoneration in Canadian History and that was for the six leaders of the Tsilhqot'in Nation: [Prime Minister delivers a statement of exoneration for six Tsilhqot'in Chiefs | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](#)
- Debate
 - Can be done in a variety of ways
 - **Informal debate:**
 - Advocate Decision-Making Debate – Students are placed into groups of three and assigned a topic to debate. One person is in support of the topic, one is against, and one acts as the judge. The judge, or "decision maker," will create a list of questions to ask the advocates, which students will use as their debate outline. Then the judge will decide at the end of the debate who the winner is. This can be done in front of the class or in groups.
 - **Formal Debate**
 - First, the affirmative group receives two minutes to present their case to the audience.
 - The negative group then receives two minutes to present their case.
 - After both sides have a chance to speak, both teams receive two minutes to prepare a rebuttal and summary.
 - The order of speech is reversed now, and the negative side presents their rebuttal and summary for the first two minutes.
 - The last to speak is the affirmative team who then presents their rebuttal and summary for two minutes. The debate is now concluded.

- **Silent Debate**

- Students are split into groups of four and then into twos
- Students work with their partners (1A with 1B, 2A with 2B) to research and gather evidence supporting their side
- Debate
 - The partners split up and each pair with someone from the other side (1A with 2A and 1B with 2B)
 - Students debate silently (written) but they may discuss with their team member between rounds. This works best if each student uses a different coloured writing instrument
 - Once all the rounds are completed, students may give their sheet of paper to another group so that they can judge who 'won'

Extra Information/ Teacher Resources:

- Primary Resources
 - In the court of Oyer & Terminer & General Gaol Delivery. Vancouver Fall Assizes. (Before The Honorable Mr. Justice Morrison.) Vancouver, B.C. Oct. 30th, 1914. Rex vs. Mewa Singh. (Murder.) A. D. Taylor, Esq., K. C. for the Crown. E. M. N. Woods, Esq., for the Accused. [Proceedings at trial]. Page 16 | Komagata Maru Journey
 - Radical Objects: Photo of Mewa Singh's Funeral Procession 1915 – History Workshop
- Overviews
 - [sikhchic.com | Article Detail](#)
 - Mewa Singh, Lopoke (c. 1881-1915) | Komagata Maru Journey
 - Shaheed Bhai Mewa Singh | Khalsa Diwan Society (kdsross.com)
- Newspaper Articles
 - [City of New Westminster expected to proclaim Mewa Singh Day to honour martyr who murdered immigration inspector | Georgia Straight Vancouver's News & Entertainment Weekly](#)
 - [Gurpreet Singh: Now it's time for Canada to exonerate Mewa Singh for a century-old murder in Vancouver | Georgia Straight Vancouver's News & Entertainment Weekly](#)
 - <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/corvette/article/download/19012/8164>
- Journal Articles
 - Journal Article that examines the facts of the case in an easy to understand format
 - [Martyr or Murderer: Mewa Singh and the Assassination of William C. Hopkinson | The Corvette \(uvic.ca\)](#)
 - Journal article that examines the case from a facts-based perspective and investigates subjectivity in historical writing --> uses mewa singh as an example and argues that the power of storytelling can greatly affect how people see an incident
- Podcast
 - <https://jugnistyle.com/episode-8-mewa-singh/>
 - Podcast- parts can be used in the classroom but there are numerous references to other individuals