

ACTIVITY FOUR: A REGIONAL LANDSCAPE

Objectives:

- To know the physical regions of Canada
- To understand the economic importance of the regions to Canada and the United States
- To appreciate the physical landscape of Canada

Materials:

- Text, pp. XXX
- Figure Six: Map of Physical Regions
- Figure Seven: Map of Nine Nations of North America
- Figures Sixteen or Seventeen: Outline Map of Canada
- Reading One: WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND, by W.O. Mitchell

Procedures:

1. Using Figures Six and Sixteen or Seventeen, ask students to:
 - a. List the six physical regions in order of largest to smallest. Include for each region a list of the provinces and their economic importance.
 - b. Identify those regions which are shared with the U.S.
2. Have students draw in the boundaries of the physical regions on Figures Sixteen or Seventeen: Outline Map of Canada. Compare your regional map with the provinces and your population map from Activity Two.
3. Have students individually or in small groups provide a prospectus on which region they would select to establish one of the following: a game fishing camp, a pulp mill, a ski lodge, a manufacturing plant for a new line of sporting apparel, and a steel mill.
4. Read the passage from W.O. Mitchell, WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND. Ask students to identify words and phrases that describe the character of a particular region. Discuss which region it might be and why.
5. Hand out Figure Seven: Map of Nine Nations of North America. Make a class list of the advantages and disadvantages of such a social and economic division. Assign groups of students to represent each of the nine nations. Ask each group to prepare a set of conditions for establishing a North American Constitution. Have group presentations and class discussion concerning the establishment of a North American constitution. Debate the issue "Should there be a North American federation of Canada, the United States and Mexico?"

Notes for Teaching:

The purpose of the activity is to enable students to understand the physical diversity of Canada and to appreciate, through literature, the grandeur and beauty of the Canadian landscape.

The order (largest to smallest) of the six regions is: Canadian Shield; Interior Plains; Western Cordillera; Arctic Islands; Appalachian Highlands and the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes Lowlands.

Stress the similarity of Canadian physical features with areas in the U.S., for example, Western Cordillera extends into Pacific Northwest states. This enables students to realize how physical features influence what people do and where they live. Comparing physical regions with provinces allows students to see similarities and differences. For example, most of British Columbia is part of the Western Cordillera whereas Ontario includes at least two physical regions.

Developing a prospectus of a region allows students to pull together what they have read and heard about Canada. The prospectus should include writings and drawings. Magazines describing various industries, economic and tourist activity would be helpful for student work.

Reading One: WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND helps students appreciate the seasonal differences of the Canadian prairies region. Discussion could focus on the literary way in which the writer depicts seasonal change—images, metaphors, informality, etc. Having students describe seasons where they live helps them appreciate the diversity of landscape and the role of literature.

The final exercise reviews the idea of region by introducing jobs and life styles as a way of looking at the similarities among Canadians and Americans—see Figure Seven: Map of Nine Nations of North America. The point to make is that by dividing up Canada and the U.S. in terms of economic similarities and common life styles students are better able to appreciate regional similarities and differences. The "Nine Nations" idea suggests how North America 'works,' illustrates certain outlooks that are common to regions today and draws political boundaries around language groups. Disadvantages are the destruction of existing political boundaries, national identities and ways of life peculiar to existing countries. The intent of having small group and class discussions is for students to discuss how changing social and economic conditions might influence the formation of a present day constitution.

READING ONE: WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND*

Spring came with the suddenness of a meadow lark's song. Overnight the sky traded its winter tang for softness; the snow, already honeycombed with the growing heat of a closer sun, melted—first from the steaming fallow fields, then from the stubble stretches, shrinking finally to uneven patches of white lingering in the barrow pits. Here and there meadowlarks were suddenly upon straw stacks, telephone wires, fence posts, their song clear with ineffable exuberance that startled and deepened the silence . . . The sky was ideal blue. Crows called; farmers, impatient as though it were the only spring left in the world to them, burning with the

hope that this would not be another dry year, walked out to their implements, looked them over, and planned their seeding—barley here, oats there, wheat there, summer fallow there . . .

The rain had stopped, and the air had the clear coolness that belongs to it after rain. Over the (land), shallow sloughs were filled to their edges; the thirsty earth had drunk up the water and left much of it to lie in clear puddles between the hummocks; summer fallow fields were welters of gumbo mud; clear drops beaded the foxtail, wild oats, and buckbrush; they sparkled diamondlike from the lupine that spread a purple shadow . . . Sean, with his weathered hat sodden and his fierce red mustaches dripping, stared down at the crop soaked with moisture that had come too late to do it any good . . .

Goose-gray above him, the sky had a depthless softness undetermined by its usual pencil edge, melting invisibly into the spread and staring white of the land. He walked . . . his ankles turning to the frozen curst of hummocking summer fallow and stubble fields . . . These things filled his mind against his will. Sun glinting from a wild rosebush caught his eye; looking more closely he saw that it was crowded with crystals, each one pointed and veined, all of them growing away from him. He kicked at the branch and watched the frost drop in a white shower.

*From: W.O. Mitchell, WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND
Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1978, pp. 102-103, 57-58, 298.