

ACTIVITY SIX: EVOLUTION OF A COUNTRY

Objectives:

- To be aware of the events that led to the development of Canada
- To recognize differences and similarities in the establishment of the Canadian Confederation (BNA Act) and the American Constitution

Materials:

- Text, pp. XXX
- Butcher paper, felt marking pens
- Any available American history textbook.
- CANADA PAST AND PRESENT, by John Saywell
- Figure Eight: North America in 1713

Procedures:

1. Have class discuss the French and English presence in North America. Highlight on the blackboard the major historical events and their significance to the evolution of Canada.
2. Use an American history text to review events in American history. Make comparisons with Canadian history.
3. Divide class into small groups. On butcher paper have each group construct a timeline illustrating key events in Canadian and American history. Construct timelines side by side to emphasize comparisons.
4. Have students write paragraphs discussing a) "Canada as a nation is a product of evolution, rather than revolution." b) How has the American Civil War influenced the thinking of Canadians? c) How has French and English settlement made Canada different from the United States?

Notes for Teaching:

The intent is to have students understand the evolution of Canada and make comparisons with the American experience. Emphasize the importance of the French and English colonial experiences in Canada and the fact that Canada was settled by the French and English.

Highlight important events (i.e., American Revolution, Civil War) and indicate how they influenced Canadian thinking about the establishment of a federal union of provinces. The Canadian term for this union is Confederation—established by the British North America (BNA) Act in 1867. It should be pointed out that the BNA Act which united Canada was a British Act. Canadians finally established their own constitution in 1982. It must be stressed that not having their own constitution did not restrict the lives of Canadians. It meant that for 115 years the British government had to approve most changes Canadians wished to make in the BNA Act.

Construction of the timelines requires group planning and spacing, scale and ways of illustrating events. It is important that the scale of the two timelines be the same. Once completed, the timelines should be displayed for class discussion. The timelines should extend

from early European settlement to present day. Some recent events to include are: Newfoundland joining Canada in 1949; Alaskan and Hawaiian statehood in 1959 and 1960; the new Canadian Constitution in 1982; and the creation of Nunavut in 1999.

The final exercise is difficult but excellent for better students. Some review of Canadian and American historical events as well as class discussion of how history shapes human thought will be necessary before students write their paragraphs.