

ACTIVITY ELEVEN: ARTISTS AND ATHLETES

Objectives:

- To compare Canadian and American sports events
- To use literature and literary accounts to understand personal experiences for Canadians

Materials:

- Text, pp. XXX
- Reading Four: Literary Accounts of Canadians
- Selected literature by Canadian authors
- Map of Canada
- American newspaper

Procedures:

1. Brainstorm with your class the names of Canadian artists (entertainers) and athletes. List the responses on the board and classify in terms of area of notoriety. Refer to list on page XXX to add to class list if they cannot identify anyone. Sometimes they will be surprised by who is Canadian!
2. Hand out Reading Four: Literary Accounts of Canadians. Have students select words or a passage from each account that reflect individual feelings and points of view. Identify the individual or group described.
3. Share a passage from a book written by the following authors: L.M. Montgomery, William Kurelek, Roch Carrier and Farley Mowat. Discuss the viewpoints of each of these authors from the standpoint of representing very different cultural experiences. Locate where these stories took place on a map of Canada and have the students mark these places on their own maps. Write the title of the book beside the mark, and continue to add to this map as students find other books about Canada. Where do most of the marks fall?
4. Read “The Hockey Sweater” by Roch Carrier. Discuss his feelings about the sweater and feeling different. Ask the students if they can find a correlation with the same feelings of students of today.
5. Ask students to prepare a report on one of the following: ice hockey, Canadian football, curling or lacrosse.

Notes for Teaching:

The intent of these activities is to have students appreciate Canadian literature and how it illustrates and reflects Canadian life and Canadian interest in sports.

Exercises two and three portray early and contemporary Canadian life. They allow students to see how authors illustrate meaning and significance of physical and cultural differences in Canada.

The exercise about *The Hockey Sweater* shows students that Canadian students share their American neighbors' interest in sports heroes and the desire to fit in with their peer group.

The final activity is related to sports played in Canada. Local newspapers, TV, magazines or the Internet can be helpful resources to students. Reread Account Two of a boy's passion for hockey. Ask students to write a similar account of either basketball, football, baseball or soccer in the United States.

READING FOUR: LITERARY ACCOUNTS OF CANADIANS

Account One:

He made this declaration in an amused tone of voice, as if to show his cousins from the back country of Quebec that he belonged now to the American nation, to that terrifically vital race which is composed of the overflow from all the other nations, like those colourful patchwork quilts made up from scraps sewn together anyhow.

But he hesitated a moment before going on.

"It's the same way with our family name, Lariviere. Course we didn't give it up. But folks could never get it. So we just sort of translated it into English. It's Rivers in English and that means the same thing. Lariviere, Rivers, there ain't no difference."

"Then you ain't hardly a Canadian any more!"

"Well, what of it! If you live down there, well, you have to act like they do in the States. Everybody does. There's the Bourdons, they're called Borden; and one of the neighbours, a Lacroix, he calls himself Cross."

Ringuet, THIRTY ACRES, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1940, p. 116

Account Two:

Now he's added to his collection a helmet and hockey stockings, which he dons every time he goes to the basement. He pours over every edition of HOCKEY NEWS, grabs the newspaper for the sports page and shushes everyone who goes near him when the NHL scores are being read on the radio. He talks hockey, dreams hockey, and indeed lives hockey. But the topper came last Saturday morning when his cousin who was visiting decided it was time to go home to lunch. "Hey Steve," he shouted, "It's five to twelve." Steve, who was leaning against the wall dreaming over his hockey stick, asked quickly, "Who for?"

Helen Portor, "The Confessions of a Hockey Mother," in Kevin Major, DORYLOADS, Portugal Cove, Nfld.: Breakwater Books, 1975, p. 137.

Account Three:

We are all in this together. For Canadians, the question is how to survive it. For Americans there is no question, because there does not have to be. Canada is just that vague, cold place where their uncle used to go fishing, before the lakes went dead from acid rain.

How do you like Americans? Individually, it's easier. Your average American is no more responsible for the state of affairs than your average man is for war and rape. Any Canadian who is so narrow-minded as to dislike Americans merely on principle is missing out on one of the good things in life. The same might be said, to women, of men. As a group, as a foreign policy, it's harder . . .

Margaret Atwood, "Canadians: What do They Want?" in Ronald Conrad (ed.), THE ACT OF WRITING, CANADIAN ESSAYS FOR COMPOSITION, Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1983, p. 135.