



CANADA 2.0

Big Question:

If we were to conduct the Confederation Conference over again, what would Canada look like today?

Assignment:

In this activity, you will stage a reenactment of the Confederation. This will be done with any individuals the class decides should have been represented at the London Conference. Each representative will be selected and prepared by small groups.

Step 1: Background

Review the history of Confederation and write a brief summary of the events. What was Confederation and how did it happen?

Step 2: Select Groups

Through talking with your small group and teacher, select one of the following groups to research and represent at the new Confederation Conference. Choose from any of the following, or one of your own:

- The 10 current provinces
- 3 Territories
- First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit groups
- New Canadians (recent immigrants)
- Special interests groups: Women's Rights, Environmentalists, Activists

Your group will have the responsibility of

1. Researching information about their selected group/region;
 2. Preparing for their arguments, and priorities to present at the Conference;
 3. Attending and participating in the Conference so that their group/region is heard and has the opportunity to be presented in the negotiations.
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Step 3: Researching and Brainstorming

Begin researching and brainstorming about the special interests, values, and ideas your selected group/region would want from a new Canada. Use the questions on the next page to help you:



- What are the most important things to you, and what are things you're willing to bargain to let go? (Remember that Confederation was a give-and-take process).
- List of as many reasons as possible why your group/region would, or would not, want to be a part of Canada in the 21st century. What kinds of concessions, or deals, would they be willing to take? What kinds of things would they refuse to change?

List the resources, assets, and needs of your group. What things do they need from other groups to keep their economy working and to keep their people happy? What do they have to offer other groups in exchange?

Step 4: Vision

You should also come to the conference with a prepared vision of what the new Canada would be like. What are your values and hopes for the would be new country? Think of the following things:

- What rights should be included in the constitution? Free speech? Access to clean water? Equal rights? The right to vote or making voting mandatory?
- What style of government should we adopt? Proportional representation? A democracy? A dictatorship? Nation Confederacies?

You can research styles of governments and look at human rights foundations online for further ideas.

Prepare a statement outlining your region/group's vision. List out any rights and governance styles you would like to see in the new constitution.

Step 5: Speeches

Select a representative (or two) who will speak on behalf of your group. Together, write a short speech that this speaker will give at the start of the Conference. This speech should encompass all the decisions and priorities you made for your region/group during the preparation steps and research phase. The speech should include:

- Your stance on a new Confederation (or no Confederation)
- How you hope to benefit from this new Confederation
- What strengths/resources you bring to the table
- What style of government you would like
- Two rights that you want included and protected by this new Confederation and why



Step 6: A New Canada: Confederation Conference

Delegates from the regions/groups who will make up the new Canada are welcomed to represent their communities at a Confederation Conference.

Teacher Note: *this could be held in a classroom set up for debates, or in a special location such as the gymnasium.*

The selected representatives should introduce themselves and the groups they represent. At this time, their brief introduction/vision statement should be read. Delegates who are not speaking should be writing notes on each group, so that they compare/contrast values and special interests.

After the opening introductions, discussion and debate will open.

Instructions for Discussions and Debate:

- Each group may bring a point of order or discussion, one at a time, or in appropriate groupings of ideas, for discussion. A note taker should keep track on whiteboard or large note paper what points the conference agrees to, and which are the 'deal' breakers.

- Delegates should focus on the following discussion points
 - What are the major differences between groups? What areas are there 'issues' of contention (disagreement)?
 - What topics are open for negotiation? Which groups will opt out no matter what? What can be done to keep Canada whole in the face of differences?
 - Are there enough groups participating to form a country that is socially and economically viable?
 - What groups are difficult to bring into the "fold"?

- The end of this debate should result in a list of values and agreements for trade and resources that can be 'signed' by each delegate to be a part of the new Canada



Step 7: New Government of Canada

Now that the groups have agreed on the major ideas and resources that would bring them together, you will now require a government to enact this agreement and any rights/laws you agree upon.

As a class, discuss what time of government would best represent this new Canada you have formed. Use the questions on the next page to guide your discussion:

- Will it be a democracy? A monarchy? A republic? Etc...
- Who (Federal government, Provincial government, First Nation governments, etc.) will be responsible for the following:
 - The Military
 - Taxes
 - Natural resources
 - Foreign Corporations
 - Education
 - Health
 - Immigration
 - Environmental laws
 - Etc
- Reach an agreement on how government would work either by voting, or through compromise.

Step 8: Concluding Reflection

Individually, reflect on the process it took to form a country and government based off of multiple values and ideas. Discuss what was easy to decide on, and what was difficult for the group to agree to. Answer the following questions as you write:

- As a citizen, would you be happy with the new government your class created?
- Are your rights and values represented in that government? Why or why not? Explain.
- What about the current Canadian government? Are your rights/values represented in the current government?
- What would you change about how Canada works today?