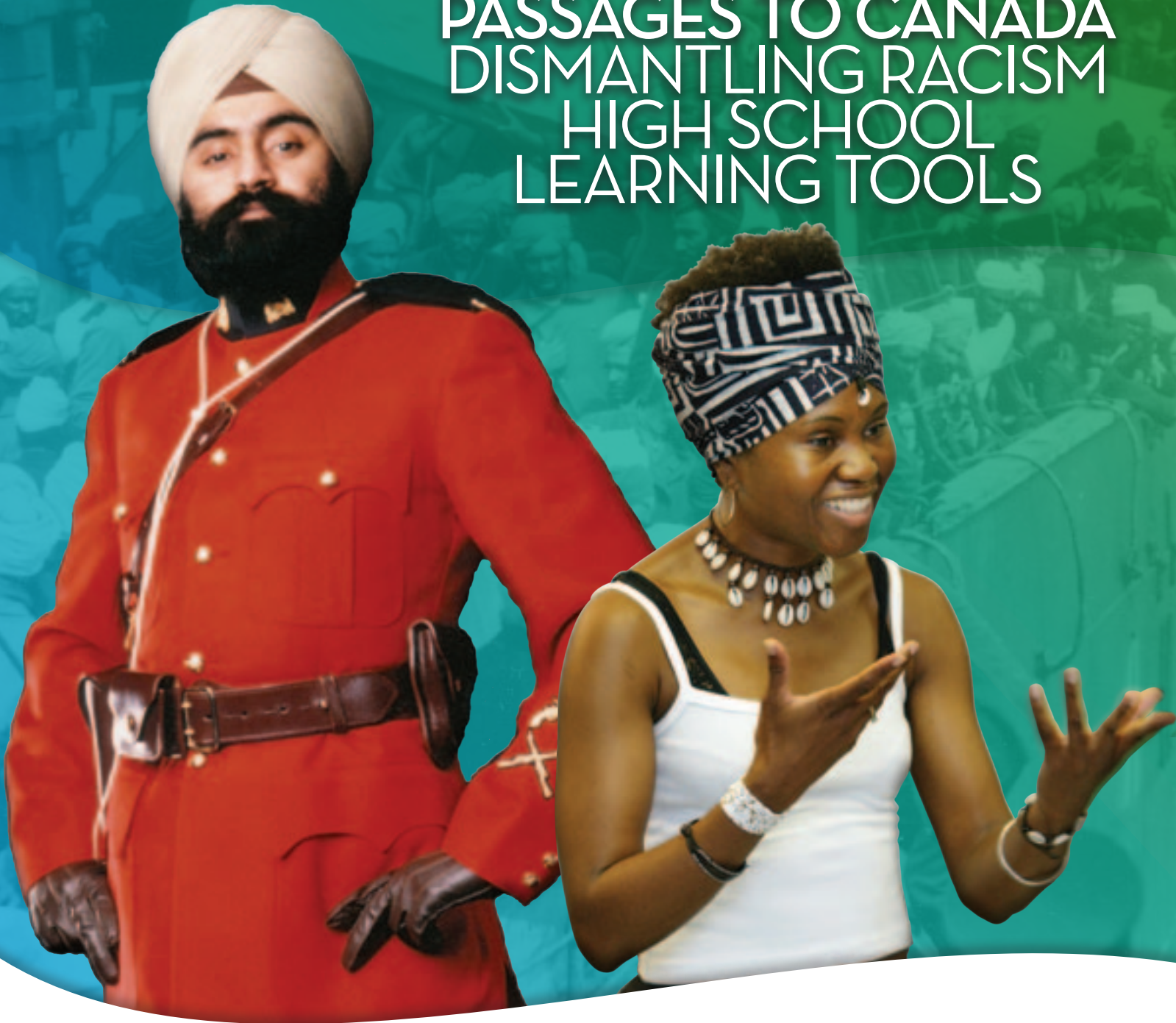


PASSAGES TO CANADA
DISMANTLING RACISM
HIGH SCHOOL
LEARNING TOOLS



www.PassagesToCanada.com



An initiative of The Historica-Dominion Institute

MARCH 21

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Education Guide From Passages to Canada: Dismantling Racism

www.passagestocanada.com

March 21st is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Without a doubt, one of the most effective ways of diminishing, and hopefully eliminating, racism is education. We need to be made aware of racism, sensitive to its various forms, legal redress against it, and perhaps most significantly, to celebrate those who have either fought against it or have overcome it in their own lives.

This is precisely what March 21st aims to do. These educational materials share the same aims – in addition to promoting respect, tolerance, understanding, and inclusion. Hopefully, you and your students will find the enclosed materials informative, engaging, and challenging.

These materials profile successful community leaders who are immigrants to Canada and members of the Passages to Canada Speakers' Bureau. Each profile is followed by questions which you can use to further explore their stories.

The final pages offer some activities and discussion questions which can be used by your classroom to further explore March 21 and engage in its celebration.

Passages to Canada is a FREE storytelling program of The Historica-Dominion Institute. We invite you to further stimulate debate and discussion by inviting a Passages to Canada speaker into your classroom.

Visit www.passagestocanada.com and invite a speaker today!



EXERCISE 1

CANADIAN WORK EXPERIENCE

Hakam Bhaloo Country of Origin: Tanzania

I came here in 1974 after finishing my university studies, and I started looking for a job. As is normal with anybody, I guess, is to take their educational credentials - and in my case a Bachelor of Commerce degree and post-graduate in Business Administration - I was very proud to take my degrees when I was looking for a job. Everywhere I went, one thing they said was, "You need Canadian experience." Some others said, "You need BC experience." And with my degrees, I was overqualified for almost any job here, and because of lack of local experience that they were looking for.

One fine morning I went to Canada Manpower, which is now HRDC and I talked to a consultant there. Surprisingly, she asked me to lie about my education. But that my lying was in the reverse in that rather than saying I had this and that, I was asked to say that I don't have what I actually have. I had degrees, but I was told to hide my degrees and to say that I was just a grade 12 graduate. As soon as I came out of the office I went, again, looking for a job, and I told them, "Grade 12," and hey, presto, I got a job starting at \$2.75 an hour.

What Canada means to me is a land of opportunity where one can come into the country, and if you're hard working and qualified - you can go a long way.

EXERCISE 2

SETTLING IN CANADA

Tu Nguyen Country of Origin: Vietnam

Canada chose me. I came to Canada under my father's sponsorship. He was one among thousands of Vietnamese boat people who escaped the communist government in the 1980s.

I still remember the first day arriving at the Calgary airport. A cold and snowy November night. The snow and quietness did not look and feel as poetic and beautiful as I had imagined when I was in Vietnam. I almost burst into tears when a custom's officer asked me some questions. I had no idea what he was saying. Then I looked at some English signs around, and couldn't figure out what they meant. Only that moment I bitterly realized that my life would never be the same any more. An established journalist and writer for 10 years in Vietnam, now I became nobody in Canada.

"I still remember the first day arriving at the Calgary airport. A cold and snowy November night."

Activities:

- 1 Split the class into two groups A and B. Student A: Imagine you are Hakam Bhaloo and are looking for a job. Student B: Imagine you are an employer looking for an employee with Canadian experience.
- 2 Set up a station in one part of the class where people come to you for a job. Students mingle with Students A looking for work and Students B telling them what kind of workers they are looking for.
- 3 Follow-up—Students A tell the class the frustration they had trying to find a job. Students B tell the class what they could be missing by not giving them the job.

Activities:

Read Tu's story at passagestocanada.com and imagine you leave Canada to move to another country.

- 1 What parts of Canadian culture will you take with you?
- 2 Which ones will you leave behind?
- 3 What difficulties do you think you'll have trying to keep these traditions alive in a foreign country?



EXERCISE 3

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Baltej Singh Dhillon Country of Origin: Malaysia

Activities:

Look at the picture of Baltej Singh Dhillon who caused controversy when he applied and entered the RCMP

- 1 What arguments do you think were made to keep him out of the RCMP?
- 2 What arguments were made for allowing him to join?
- 3 How do you convince someone that his skills will benefit the police force? How do you convince someone that his turban will not take away from the uniform?

EXERCISE 4

STORIES OF IMMIGRATION

Chris Pullenayegem Country of Origin: Sri Lanka

My thoughts go back to the time in 1983 when pressure was on us to leave the country because of some of the problems that arose. Problems in terms of civil rights. In 1983, I had just been married for about two years. My daughter was one year old. I belonged to the ethnic minority group, which was Tamil. In 1983, some Singhalese soldiers – Singhalese being the ethnic majority – were killed in the northern part of the country, where most of the Tamils lived. As a response to that in the south, some of the Singhalese started going after Tamil people living in the area, and either going into their homes or looking to kill them, or harm them. This was an orchestrated move, of course, and I remember way back in July, '83, when we heard of the problems, our initial reaction was to run away and hide, fearing for our lives.

Marie Rebalbos Country of Origin: Philippines

My name is Marie Rebalbos, and I immigrated to Canada in July of 1983 when I was seven years old. I moved here with my family. I have eleven brothers and sisters, and I'm the youngest of twelve. My second oldest sibling was able to sponsor us to move to Canada, and unfortunately at that time immigration policies only allowed those that were twenty-one and under to be sponsored with my parents. Therefore of the eleven children, excluding the brother that sponsored us, only myself and four other siblings were able to move to Canada.

EXERCISE 4 CONTINUED

STORIES OF IMMIGRATION

Emmanuel Okoli Country of Origin: Nigeria

It wasn't very easy for the fact that I was in my thirties when I came, and most of my cultural roots were so deep into me. So coming at that later age to adjust was a little bit tough and difficult for me. The philosophy with my people is that wherever you find human beings existing, just watch, study and follow, and you will adapt. So I tried to adjust to the Canadian environment. The areas that I had problems mostly was in terms of language and communication - things having to do with accent. So even though I taught English language to university students and people like that, when I came here it was difficult communicating with people freely. At times, they don't understand me and I have to repeat myself several times. And it's kind of a little bit depressing, frustrating – but in the end you begin to adjust gradually, with patience and a little bit of effort. Talking slowly, and trying to let people understand what you're saying. I took it in good faith, knowing that no person is deliberately wanting to punish you, just you trying to adjust.

Tung Chan Country of Origin: China

This country is made up of immigrants. This country by and large, if you look at the political system, is a very much a North American, Euro-centric political system, and the values of this country are, by and large, a Euro-centric value system. It is important that people who come from the Asian cultural background... also to voice that, and also make sure that value system – the eastern value system – also able to contribute. Also able to make an impact to Canadian society so that the Canadian political system and the Canadian culture then become a blended culture of not just Euro-centric, not just North American – or only Asian – but rather a blended uniquely Canadian culture.

EXERCISE 5

MEDIA

Activities:

In groups students create a media piece to promote anti-racist action:
the piece could be a video, song, radio spot, poster, website, board game, comic strip, picture book, etc. Show this to your class and choose the one that is the most powerful.

Activities:

- 1 Divide the students into groups.
- 2 Have each group read a story and re-tell in their own words.
- 3 What could Canada have done to make them feel more welcome in our country?
- 4 Imagine you have a friend who makes a racist comment about an immigrant group. How would you confront that person?

Some Important Milestones in the History of Anti-Racism

December 10, 1948

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Article 2 states “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

September 3, 1952

Canadian ratification of the U.N. Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

March 21, 1960

Approximately 15,000 Black protesters gathered in Sharpsville, South Africa, to protest a law, which required them to carry identity cards at all times. Police opened fire on the protesters and within minutes, 56 people were killed and nearly 200 were injured. More Africans were killed in a similar protest at Langa Township near Capetown.

March 21, 1966

The United Nations declares March 21st the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

April 17, 1982

Official signing of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Article 15 (1) states “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.”

February 2, 1990

Release of Nelson Mandela, after being imprisoned for 27 years for his opposition to South Africa’s racist policy of Apartheid.



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