Overview of Simulation

Critical Challenge

As representatives of a British North American colony at a hypothetical 1864 Ottawa Conference, students decide whether or not to join a proposed Canadian Confederation under the conditions outlined in a draft British North America Act which they have helped to negotiate.

Synopsis

This 8 - 13 hour simulation can be used as the cornerstone for an entire unit of study on Confederation. Students are assigned to one of six groups, each representing a British North American colony at the time of Confederation. They simulate the negotiations that led to Confederation by participating in a fictitious Ottawa Conference held in 1864. The simulation unfolds in five stages as summarized in the following chart

Orientation (1.5 - 2.5 hours)	In the introductory lesson students begin to think about the terms of Confederation by considering current difficulties facing Canada and by discussing the idea of re-visiting the original terms of the union of Canada. Students are introduced to the main tasks of the simulation and assigned to represent one of the six colonies that will take part in the conference.
Preliminary Proposals (3 - 6 hours)	Based on supplied briefing sheets and independent library research, each delegation composes a preliminary list of conditions, with accompanying justifications, for joining the proposed federal union. Students explain and defend their preliminary proposal in a written submission and a five-minute rehearsed presentation. Other delegations ask the presenting colony one question about a pertinent issue.
Final Proposals (2 - 3 hours)	Each delegation discusses the preliminary proposals from the other colonies. Individual representatives become experts on one other colony and then brief fellow delegates on that colony's needs and issues. Students discuss and re-negotiate their preliminary requirements in order to write a final proposal that would appeal to the other colonies but still serve their colony's essential interests. Each delegation prepares and delivers a five-minute presentation on its final proposal. The colonies then respond to each of the other colonies' proposals.
Voting on the Bill (1 hour)	The teacher prepares and presents to the colonies a Confederation Bill based on the final proposals from all the colonies. This bill outlines the terms and conditions of a proposed federal union. Each delegation deliberates and must eventually decide whether or not to accept the terms of the Canadian Confederation. Students are encouraged to reach a consensus decision within their delegations. Those colonies deciding to join Confederation sign the re-negotiated British North America Act, 1867.
Debriefing (1 hour)	Students are encouraged in the final debriefing stage to reflect on their experiences as participants in the exercise and on lessons learned about negotiating agreements. They also undertake a peer- and self-assessment of individual contributions to their group during the simulation.

Blackline Masters

Briefing Sheets

1 The Ottawa Conference
2 Canada East—Background
3 Canada East—Viewpoints
4 Canada West—Background
5 Canada West—Viewpoints
6 New Brunswick—Background
7 New Brunswick—Viewpoints
8 Newfoundland—Background
9 Newfoundland—Viewpoints
10 Nova Scotia—Background
11 Nova Scotia—Viewpoints
12 Prince Edward Island—Background
13 Prince Edward Island—Viewpoints
14 Maps of the colonies in 1864
15 Annotated bibliography on Confederation

Student Activities

16 Father of Confederation profile
17 Colonial perspective
18 Preliminary proposal
19 Final proposal
20 Decision on Confederation bill
21 Reflecting on the experience

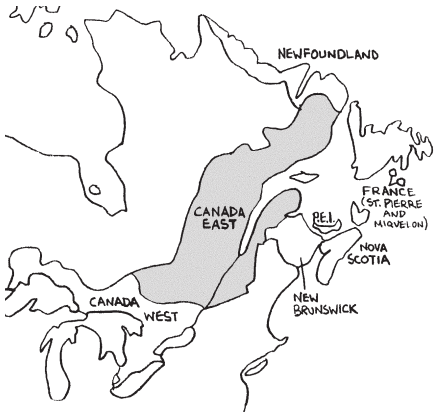
Support Materials

22 Conference agenda
23 Conference materials
24 Representatives' name tags
25 Confederation Bill, 1867

Assessment

26 Knowledge of colonial perspectives
27 Preliminary proposals
28 Final proposals
29 Final decisions
30 Individual contributions
31 Assessing student assessments

Canada East — Background



Population (circa 1860): 1,112,000

Urban centres: Montreal (107,225)
Quebec (59,700)

Key figures: George-Etienne Cartier (1814-1873)
Alexander T. Galt (1817-1893)
Thomas D'Arcy McGee (1825-1868)
Hector L. Langevin (1826-1906)
Etienne P. Taché (1795-1865)
Jean Charles Champais (1811-1885)

By the 1860s, the Province of Canada (encompassing both Canada East and Canada West) is the most populous, the largest in size and the most powerful of the British North American colonies. Canada East is dominated by the lumbering industry and an agricultural economy. The colony's urban centre, Montreal, is the most populous city in British North America. It is, in fact, almost double the size of Quebec, the second largest city in the colonies. The wealthy lumber merchants are central members of the city's elite, along with a rising group of industrialists: owners of iron and steel plants, flour mills and steamship lines. This group, dominated by Scotsmen, have built grand mansions along the slopes of Mount Royal, in the centre of the city. Though English speaking Protestants make up only 15 percent of the colony's population, they dominate the commercial and political life of the colony.

It is the rural habitant, however, the French Canadian farmer, who makes up the bulk of the rural population. Living, by and large, along the shores of the St. Lawrence River, the French speaking, Roman Catholic habitant lives a traditional way of life, producing potatoes, rye, buckwheat and livestock.

A serious problem, magnified by the recent growth in Canada West, is the political deadlock in the Canadian Parliament. The inability to form a majority government led to three different administrations between 1861 and 1864. In 1864, however, the Great Coalition was formed. Made up of Conservatives, Clear Grits and Reformers from Canada East and Canada West, the Great Coalition called for, among other things, a federal union of the British North American colonies. Many feared the destruction of French culture in any union of the British North American colonies. But George-Etienne Cartier, the French Canadian member of the Coalition, believed that only in a federal union of the colonies would French Canadian culture survive and, in turn, flourish. In the new federal union, he argued, French Canadians would still control all matters concerning language, religion, civil law and education within the province.

The Grand Trunk is the colony's central railway line. With its headquarters in Montreal, and an impressive network of lines (including the Victoria Bridge, which spans the St. Lawrence and is the world's longest bridge), transportation is still hampered by two factors. Not only does the colony lack a year-round, ice-free port, but also one cannot travel from Canada East to the Maritime colonies without travelling through the United States. For six months of the year, Canadian imports and exports are carried on American railways, on American soil and, often, shipped in and out of American ports. The solution, in many Canadian minds, is an Intercolonial Railway. If the Intercolonial were built, it would run

through New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and end in Halifax. Canada East's commercial potential would be immense.

The Intercolonial Railway would also help in the defence of British North America. Great Britain's reluctance to defend the colonies has made closer ties between the British North American colonies crucial to security. The threat of Fenian raids along the Canada-United States border near Montreal, as well as the threat of American invasion during the Civil War, make an Intercolonial Railway necessary for mobilizing troops.

Canada East — Viewpoints

Drawn from R.C. Brown & M.E. Prang (Eds.), *Confederation to 1949* (Prentice, 1966); J.M. Bliss (Ed.), *Canadian History in Documents* (Ryerson, 1966); H.H. Herstein, L.S. Hughes & R.C. Kirbyson, *Challenge and Survival: The History of Canada* (Prentice, 1970); J.S. Reid, K. McNaught & H.S. Crowe, *A Source-Book of Canadian History* (Longmans, 1959) and P.B. Waite, *Confederation, 1854-1867* (Holt, 1972).

1. **Thomas D'Arcy McGee's vision of a new Northern Nation** (1860)

   I have spoken with a sole single desire for the increase, prosperity, freedom and honour of this incipient Northern Nation. I call it a Northern Nation—for such it must become, if all of us do our duty to the last . . . I see in the not remote distance one great nationality, bound, like the shield of Achilles, by the blue rim of Ocean. I see it quartered into many communities, each disposing of its internal affairs, but all bound together by free institutions, free intercourse and free commerce. I see within the round of that shield the peaks of the Western Mountains and the crests of the Eastern waves, the winding Assiniboine, the five-fold lakes, the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, the Saguenay, the St. John, and the basin of the Minas. By all these flowing waters in all the valleys they fertilize, in all the cities they visit in their courses, I see a generation of industrious, contented, moral men, free in name and in fact—men capable of maintaining, in peace and in war, a constitution worthy of such a country!

2. **French Canadian distrust of Confederation**
   (*L'Ordre* Montreal, 4 May 1860); *translation*

   What French Canadian has not in his heart cursed a hundred times the Union of the two Canadas? . . . Others have wanted in turn to *anglicize* us and *protestantize* us: after a century of ignoble hopes and base efforts, convinced of their failure, they now want to destroy our constitution. . . . What would Upper Canada be today without the Union? Nothing more or less than a forest put up for auction by British capitalists to repay their investments. The only solution is repeal of the Union. Upper Canada does not like living with us: we like it less.

3. **Provincial rights in the Union**
   (*Le Courrier du Canada* Quebec, 10 October 1864); *translation*

   Let us give to each province its own distinct autonomy, let each province be master in its own house in matters of social organization, ownership of public property, preservation of its language, laws and institutions, while protecting minorities everywhere, and let us unite all parts into a federal agreement covering matters in which a common defense and common interests see us all joined on the same ground.

4. **George-Etienne Cartier**
   (Canadian Parliament, Winter 1865)

   (I)f union were attained, we would form a political nationality with which neither the national origin, nor the religion of any individual, would interfere . . . with regard to the objection based on this fact, to the effect that a great nation could not be formed because Lower Canada was in great part French and Catholic, and Upper Canada British and Protestant, and the Lower Provinces were mixed, it was futile and worthless in the extreme. Look, for instance, at the United Kingdom, inhabited as it was by three great races. Had the diversity of race impeded the glory, the progress, the wealth of England? Had they not rather contributed their share to the greatness of the Empire? . . . In our own Federation we should have Catholic and Protestant, English, French, Irish and

Colonial perspective

Colony: _____

Major economic activities
Key groups in colony

In the left-hand column, identify the main needs and concerns of your colony and, in the right-hand column, explain how joining in Confederation may help to solve or to worsen each need/concern.

Main needs/concerns	Implications for Confederation

Student Activity 17

page 1 of 2

Potential advantages of Confederation	Potential disadvantages of Confederation
political	
social/cultural	
economic	
military	

Student Activity

page 2 of 2

17

Scotch, and each by his efforts and his success would increase the prosperity and glory of the new Confederacy.

5. **Joseph Perrault**
(Canadian Parliament, Winter 1865)

(W)ith Confederation, as we shall be in the great minority in the General Parliament, which as all the important powers in relation to legislation, we shall have to carry on a constant contest for the defence and preservation of our political rights and of our liberty.

6. **D'Arcy McGee on the American threat**
(Canadian Parliament, 9 February 1865)

These are frightful figures [U.S. military] for the capacity of destruction they represent, for the heaps of carnage that they represent, for the quantity of human blood spilt that they represent, for the lust of conquest that they represent, for the evil passion that they represent, and for the arrest of the onward progress of civilization that they represent. . . . They [the Americans] coveted Florida, and they seized it; they coveted Louisiana, and purchased it; they coveted Texas and stole it; and then they picked a quarrel with Mexico, which ended by their getting California. . . . had we not the strong arm of England over us, we would not now have had a separate existence.

7. **Alexander T. Galt on the need for Intercolonial trade**
(Canadian Parliament, 7 February 1865)

Intercolonial trade has been, indeed, of the most insignificant character; we have looked far more to our commercial relations with the neighbouring—though a foreign country—than to the interchange of our own products, which would have retained the benefits of our trade within ourselves; hostile tariffs have interfered with the free interchange of the products of the labour of all the colonies, and one of the greatest and most immediate benefits to be derived from their union, will spring from the breaking down of these barriers and the opening up of the markets of all the provinces to the different industries of each.

8. **Hector L. Langevin on the fate of French Canadians in Confederation**
(Canadian Parliament, Winter 1865)

But what would be the fate of the French Canadians in the case of annexation to the United States? Let us profit by the example of the French race in the United States, and enquire what has been the fate of the French in Louisiana? What has become of them? What has become of their language, their customs, their manners and their institutions? After the war, hardly a trace will remain to show that the French race has passed that way . . . we live in peace at the present day and are perfectly comfortable; Catholics and Protestants have the same rights and religious liberty, and they live peacefully together as there was but one religion in the land.

Final decisions

Use this rubric to assess Blackline Master #20.

Indicate which delegation is being assessed by checking the appropriate box.

- ❑ Canada East
- ❑ Canada West
- ❑ New Brunswick
- ❑ Newfoundland
- ❑ Nova Scotia
- ❑ Prince Edward Island

	Weak	Satisfactory	Very good
Identification of of resolved issues	Fails to correctly identify any key issues resolved by the proposed bill **1**	Identifies three resolved issues but either misses major ones or is somewhat confused about them **3**	Clearly identifies three or more issues resolved by the proposed bill, and no key issues are missed **5**
Anticipated benefits	Lacks plausible benefits arising from the proposed bill **1**	Identifies benefits arising arising from three issues, but either misses major benefits or they are somewhat unrealistic **3**	Clearly explains plausible benefits for at least three issues, and no major benefits are overlooked **5**
Identification of unresolved issues	Lacks correctly identified key issues unresolved by the proposed bill **1**	Identifies three unresolved issues but either misses major ones or is somewhat confused about them **3**	Clearly identifies at least three issues unresolved by the proposed bill and includes all key issues **5**
Anticipated negative consequences	Lacks plausible negative consequences arising from the proposed bill **1**	Identifies negative consequences arising from three unresolved issues, but either misses major negative consequences or they are somewhat unrealistic **3**	Clearly explains plausible negative consequences for three or more unresolved issues, and includes major negative consequences **5**
Justification for decision	Either offers no justification or reasons are largely trivial or irrelevant to the decision **1**	Offers three relevant reasons, which may be vaguely stated or ignored **3**	Offers three or more clearly articulated, plausible reasons which address the important issues for the colony **5**

TOTAL **/ 25**

Comments:

Assessment

29