

ANALYZING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN A TIMELINE

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Activity Description: Analyze the events in a timeline to make inferences about what themes, time periods, and scales are most historically significant to the creator(s) of the timeline.

Historical Thinking Concept(s): Historical significance

ACTIVITY	INSTRUCTIONS
Launch the inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Display one Snapshots in Time (SIT) card and explain to students that each card focuses on a historical event that the creators of SIT decided is historically significant. Read out the text on the front and back of the card and ask students to consider the following inquiry question: Why did the creators of the SIT cards select this event as being historically significant?• Invite students to share their initial thoughts about why the event was selected as being historically significant, and the evidence and reasoning that supports their conclusion.• Inform students that decisions about historical significance are unavoidable when describing the past. The past is everything that has ever happened to anyone anywhere, but we cannot study, describe, or remember everything. History by its nature is selective, and each time we tell stories about the past, we make decisions about which events or people to focus on, what should be said about them, and how they are connected to other events and stories. For instance, a timeline of women in Canada might not include Japanese-Canadian internment during the Second World War, but could include events like the founding of the National Council of Women of Canada in 1893. Thus, it is impossible to judge the historical significance of an event without identifying how it is connected to other events and larger narratives.• Explain that in this activity students are asked to analyze events in a timeline to make inferences about why they were selected as being historically significant.
Introduce and model thinking strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a different SIT card, display it for students, and distribute copies of the Blackline Master (BLM) <i>Analyzing historically significant events in a timeline</i>.• Explain to students that are going to analyze the historical events included in a timeline by considering their theme, time period, and scale. Begin by providing definitions and examples of the themes and ask students to identify the theme(s) that the card focuses on (there can be more than one theme for each event). Ask students to share their responses.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Economic:</i> events that focus on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services (e.g., trade, jobs, wealth, money, standard of living, technological innovation).• <i>Indigenous:</i> events that focus on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and their relationships with non-Indigenous people (e.g., treaties, laws, conflicts, residential schools).• <i>Migration:</i> events that involve the movement of people from one place to another with the purpose of settling there.• <i>Military:</i> events that focus on wars, armed conflicts, and their impacts.• <i>Political:</i> events that focus on government actions, practices, and policies, and the people who influence them. Includes the creation of laws, treaties, territorial acquisitions, elections, and political participation.• <i>Social:</i> events that involve relations between individuals and groups, including social movements and trends, social change and conflict, social groups and classes, traditions and customs, and equality and justice.

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ACTIVITY

INSTRUCTIONS

Introduce and model thinking strategy (continued)

- The second way to analyze events is by time period. Ask students to identify the time period the event occurred in, and share their responses.
 - 20,000 BCE–1533 AD
 - 1534–1763 AD
 - 1764–1867 AD
 - 1868–1913 AD
 - 1914–1945 AD
 - 1946–2020 AD
- The third way to analyze events is by the scale of their significance. Introduce the following scale and invite students to identify the scale of significance for the event on the card. Ask students to share their responses and reasoning.
 - *Global*: Almost everyone in the world should know about it.
 - *National*: Almost everyone in the country where it occurred should know about it.
 - *Regional*: Almost everyone in the region (e.g., province, territory, region) where it occurred should know about it.
 - *Local*: Almost everyone in the local city, town, or area where the event occurred should know about it.
 - *Not at all significant*: Few people need to remember it.

Practise thinking strategy and check understanding

- To provide students with an opportunity to practise using the *Analyzing historically significant events in a timeline* BLM, select three SIT cards from a particular theme and/or time period, display them for students, and ask students to identify the theme(s), time period, and scale of significance for each card.
- Invite students to share the themes, time periods, and scale of significance for the three cards and the evidence that supports their conclusions.
- Invite students to share what conclusions they can make about the themes, time periods, and places that are most historically significant to the creators of the timeline. For example, students may conclude that the creators of the cards think politically themed events that occurred between 1764–1867 and had an impact on many people in Canada were most significant because all three cards focus on this theme, time period, and scale of significance.
- Ask students to use the assessment criteria on the *Assessing understanding: Analyzing historical significance in a timeline* BLM to self- or peer-assess their ability to make conclusions about historical significance from a timeline. Invite students to share any questions or challenges they have.

Apply learning

- Select a set of cards from a particular theme and/or time period you would like students to analyze. We suggest selecting a minimum of ten cards for students to work with. It is possible to analyze an entire set of 50 SIT cards (Set 1, 2, or 3) by dividing the cards among groups of students.
- Ask students to use the *Analyzing historically significant events in a timeline* BLM to identify the theme(s), time period, and scale of significance for each event they are analyzing, tally the totals, and make inferences about the themes, time periods, and scales of significance that are most historically significant to the creators of the timeline.

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ACTIVITY

INSTRUCTIONS

Apply learning (continued)

- Teachers can use the *Supporting teacher assessment: Analyzing historical significance in a timeline* chart to make observations about students' learning, initiate conversations with students, and assess students' demonstrations of learning. Teachers should focus on the evidence and reasoning students offer to justify their conclusions about the themes, time periods, and scales of significance that are most historically significant.

Reflect and assess thinking

- Invite students to reflect on the following questions and discuss with others:
 - Which themes, time periods, and scales of significance were most and least common in the timeline?
 - What does the evidence reveal about what was historically significant to the creator(s) of the timeline?
 - What recommendations would you make to the creator(s) of the timeline to make it more representative of different themes, time periods, and scales of significance?
- Invite students to use the assessment criteria on the *Assessing understanding: Analyzing historical significance in a timeline* BLM to self- or peer-assess their abilities to critique the significance of historical events featured on the cards.

Extend understanding

- Teachers can extend students' understanding of analyzing significance by using the following methods:
 - Ask students to analyze the historical significance of historical events and people included in a textbook chapter or a different timeline.
 - Increase the number of events students are asked to analyze.
 - Ask students to suggest other themes, time periods, or scales of significance for analyzing the events included in a timeline.
 - Invite students to propose additional events to be included in a set of SIT cards to make them more representative of different themes, time periods, and scales of significance.

ANALYZING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN A TIMELINE

Analyzing historically significant events in a timeline

Instructions: Count the number of times each theme, time period, and scale of significance is addressed by each event in a timeline.

	Frequency	Total
Themes		
<i>Economic:</i> events that focus on producing, distributing, and consuming goods and services (e.g., trade, jobs, wealth, standard of living, technological innovation).		
<i>Indigenous:</i> events that focus on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and their relationships with non-Indigenous people (e.g., treaties, laws, conflicts, residential schools).		
<i>Migration:</i> events that involve people moving from one place to another with the purpose of settling there.		
<i>Military:</i> events that focus on wars, armed conflicts, and their impacts.		
<i>Political:</i> events that focus on government actions, practices, and policies, and the people who influence them. Includes the creation of laws, treaties, territorial acquisitions, elections, and political participation.		
<i>Social:</i> events that involve relations between individuals and groups, including social movements and trends, social change and conflict, social groups and classes, traditions and customs, and equality and justice.		
Time Periods		
20,000 BCE–1533 AD		
1534–1763 AD		
1764–1867 AD		
1868–1913 AD		
1914–1945 AD		
1946–2020 AD		
Scales of Significance		
Global: Almost everyone in the world should know about it.		
National: Almost everyone in the country where it occurred should know about it.		
Regional: Almost everyone in the region (e.g., province, territory, region) where it occurred should know about it.		
Local: Almost everyone in the local city, town, or area where the event occurred should know about it.		
Not at all significant: Few people need to remember it.		
Conclusions		
What conclusions can be made about the themes, time periods, and scales of significance that are most historically significant to the creators of the timeline?		

ANALYZING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN A TIMELINE

Assessing understanding: Analyzing historical significance in a timeline

I can identify relevant theme(s) that historically significant events focus on.

Evidence:



I've got it

I'm still working on it

I can identify the time periods that historically significant events focus on.

Evidence:



I've got it

I'm still working on it

I can make reasoned judgements about the scale of significance for historically significant events.

Evidence:



I've got it

I'm still working on it

I can make reasoned conclusions about the themes, time periods, and scales of significance that are most historically significant to the creator(s) of a timeline.

Evidence from sample answer:



I've got it

I'm still working on it

ANALYZING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN A TIMELINE

Supporting teacher assessment: Analyzing historical significance from a timeline

The table below provides prompts to help teachers make observations about students' learning, provoke conversations with students, and assess students' demonstrations of learning.

Observation What teachers should look and listen for when observing students.	Conversation Question prompts for teachers to initiate a conversation with students.	Demonstrations of Learning Criteria for assessing students' products or demonstrations of learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do students identify relevant theme(s) for the events in a timeline? • Do students accurately identify the time periods the events focus on? • Do students make reasoned judgements about the scale of significance for events in the timeline? • Do students make reasoned conclusions about the themes, time periods, and scales of significance that are most historically significant to the creator(s) of the timeline? • Do students provide relevant evidence to support their conclusions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What theme(s) are relevant to this event? • What time period is this event from? • What is the scale of significance for this event? • Which themes, time periods, and scales of significance are most historically significant in the timeline? • What evidence supports your conclusions? • What themes, time periods, and scales of significance are missing from the timeline? • What themes, time periods, and scales of significance should be included in future sets of SIT cards? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students identify relevant theme(s) that historically significant events focus on. • Students accurately identify the time periods the events focus on. • Students make reasoned judgements about the scale of significance for events in the timeline. • Students make reasoned conclusions about the themes, time periods, and scales of significance that are most historically significant to the creator(s) of the timeline?