

# Explaining the significance of historical events

*using criteria to explain the significance of a historically important person, event, place, or idea*

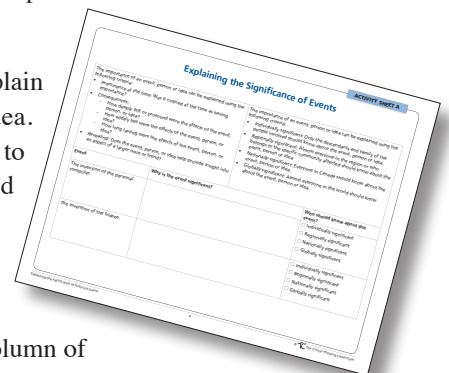
- Objectives:**
- understand the concept of significance and how it can be used to learn more about local histories
  - understand how to use the criteria for significance to help explain the importance of person, event, place, or idea
  - understand how to use the criteria for significance to help explain who should know about an important person, event, place, or idea

## Why should people know about this person, event, place, or idea?

### Use the following activities to introduce this strategy

#### Introduce the strategy

- Ask students to decide which of two prominent people, events, places, or ideas is the more important. For example, ask students which was more important:
  - the Confederation of Canada or the Battle of Vimy Ridge?
  - the discovery of insulin or the invention of the personal computer?
  - Louis Armstrong or The Beatles?
- Invite students to share their decision and reasons with the class. As students share, co-develop or present the the criteria for explaining the importance or significance of a person, event, place, or idea:
  - *Prominence at the time*: Was it noticed at the time as having importance?
  - *Consequences*: What effects did it have?
    - Magnitude of impact: How deeply felt or profound were the effects?
    - Scope of impact: How widespread were the effects?
    - Duration of impact: How long lasting were the effects?
  - *Revealing*: Does the person, event, place, or idea help us better understand an important issue?
- Explain that the criteria can be used to help explain the significance of a person, event, place, or idea. Demonstrate the use of the criteria by using the criteria to explain the significance of the two examples presented at the beginning of the lesson.
- Organize students into pairs and provide each group with *Explaining the Significance of Events (Activity sheet A)*. Draw students' attention to the left-hand column of the activity sheet. Ask students to use the middle column to note the reasons why each event might be considered significant, reminding them to refer to the criteria.



- Invite students to share their reasons with the class.
- To conclude this part of the lesson, it may be important to highlight that the criteria should be used to explain significance, rather than to rank the significance of events. While the criteria can be used to rank historical events, there may be situations where this would be inappropriate. For example, rather than ranking the experiences of survivors of residential schools, the criteria could be used to thoughtfully explain the significance of the experiences.
- Prompt students to recall the two examples discussed at the beginning of the lesson. Ask students to suggest who should know about each example. As students share their suggestions, introduce the scale 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 or who belongs to a specific group(s) should know about it
  - *Individual*: only the descendants and families of the people involved need to know about it
- Inform students that the scale of significance can be used to explain who should know about an important person, event, place, or idea.
- Direct students' attention to the right-hand column of the activity sheet. Prompt students to use the criteria and the scale of significance to decide who should know about each event.
- Invite students to share their decisions and reasons with the class.
- Inform students that in this lesson they will learn how to use criteria to help explain the significance of people, events, places, or ideas from local histories.

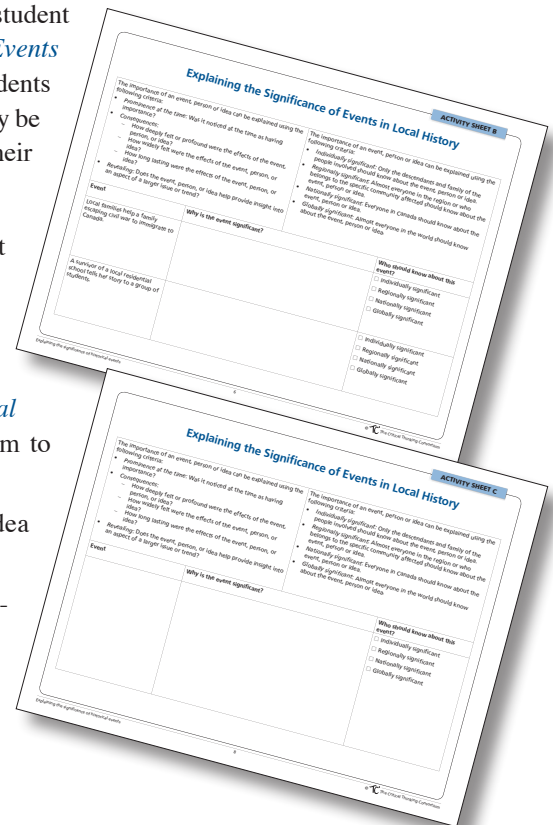
**Practise the strategy**

- Organize students into pairs and provide each student with a copy of *Explaining the Significance of Events in Local History (Activity sheet B)*. Instruct students to use the criteria to explain why each event may be considered significant. Invite students to share their explanations with the class.

- Ask students to indicate who should know about each example. Invite students to share their decisions and thinking with the class.

**Apply the strategy to learn more about a local history**

- Provide students with a blank copy of *Explaining the Significance of Events in Local History (Activity sheet C)* and encourage them to use the strategy when:
  - selecting a local person, event, place, or idea for further research.
  - determining what important lesson all Canadians might learn from a local person, event, place, or idea.



- Assess use of the strategy ➤ Encourage students to use *Assessing My Understanding: Explaining the Significance of Historical Events* to self-assess their use of this strategy by using the following procedures:
- Allow students opportunities to apply the strategy two or three times without assessment.
  - Guide students in interpreting and using the rubric to assess their own responses.
  - Encourage students to use the rubric whenever they use this strategy.
  - To use the rubric for teacher assessment of student work, remove the first person (student) reference from each descriptor.

**ASSESSMENT MATERIAL**

**Assessing My Understanding: Explaining the Significance of Historical Events**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use the scales below to assess your understanding of the strategy for explaining the significance of historical events. Include examples of how you have met the success criteria. Remember to describe the next steps in your learning.

Success criteria	How am I doing?				
	1	2	3	4	5
I can use criteria to explain the significance of a historically important person, event, place, or idea.					
Examples:					
Next steps (e.g., add more evidence, use criteria, ask for help):					
I can use the scale of significance to decide who should know about an event, place, or idea.					
Examples:					
Next steps (e.g., add more evidence, use criteria, ask for help):					

Supporting the development of historical events

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## Explaining the Significance of Events

The importance of an event, person or idea can be explained using the following criteria:

- *Prominence at the time*: Was it noticed at the time as having importance?
- *Consequences*:
  - How deeply felt or profound were the effects of the event, person, or idea?
  - How widely felt were the effects of the event, person, or idea?
  - How long lasting were the effects of the event, person, or idea?
- *Revealing*: Does the event, person, or idea help provide insight into an aspect of a larger issue or trend?

The importance of an event, person or idea can be explained using the following criteria:

- *Individually significant*: Only the descendants and family of the people involved should know about the event, person or idea.
- *Regionally significant*: Almost everyone in the region or who belongs to the specific community affected should know about the event, person or idea.
- *Nationally significant*: Everyone in Canada should know about the event, person or idea.
- *Globally significant*: Almost everyone in the world should know about the event, person or idea.

Event	Why is the event significant?	Who should know about this event?
The invention of the personal computer.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant
The invention of the frisbee.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant

## Explaining the Significance of Events

Event	Why is the event significant?	Who should know about this event?
Canadian scientist Frederick Banting discovers insulin		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant
Canada wins four gold medals at the 2016 Summer Olympics		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant
Ten years ago a local high school student invented an app to help students organize their daily activities.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant

## Explaining the Significance of Events in Local History

<p>The importance of an event, person or idea can be explained using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prominence at the time</i>: Was it noticed at the time as having importance?</li> <li>• <i>Consequences</i>:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How deeply felt or profound were the effects of the event, person, or idea?</li> <li>– How widely felt were the effects of the event, person, or idea?</li> <li>– How long lasting were the effects of the event, person, or idea?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Revealing</i>: Does the event, person, or idea help provide insight into an aspect of a larger issue or trend?</li> </ul>	<p>The importance of an event, person or idea can be explained using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Individually significant</i>: Only the descendants and family of the people involved should know about the event, person or idea.</li> <li>• <i>Regionally significant</i>: Almost everyone in the region or who belongs to the specific community affected should know about the event, person or idea.</li> <li>• <i>Nationally significant</i>: Everyone in Canada should know about the event, person or idea.</li> <li>• <i>Globally significant</i>: Almost everyone in the world should know about the event, person or idea.</li> </ul>
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Event	Why is the event significant?	Who should know about this event?
Local families help a family escaping civil war to immigrate to Canada.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant
A survivor of a local residential school tells her story to a group of students.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant

## Explaining the Significance of Events in Local History

Event	Why is the event significant?	Who should know about this event?
50 years ago a large deposit of oil was discovered just outside of town.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant
A local man grows a 225 kg pumpkin, the largest ever from the community.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant
The elementary school is celebrating the tenth anniversary of a volunteer reading program that has supported more 2,000 students.		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant

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		<input type="checkbox"/> Individually significant <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally significant <input type="checkbox"/> Globally significant



