

# Developing understanding through drama

*What were the challenges, opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants?*

## CRITICAL CHALLENGE

Create a collage of powerful words and phrases to accurately represent the challenges, opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada between 1891 and 1914.

## SUMMARY

In this lesson, students analyze selected paintings by artists William Kurelek and Peter Shostak to learn about some of the experiences of Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada between 1891 and 1914. Students begin by identifying powerful words to describe what they observe in a sample painting. Students then develop lists of possible challenges, opportunities and achievements revealed by observing details in the paintings. Students use the criteria for powerful phrases to refine their lists of challenges and opportunities. Students then examine sample word collages to help them plan and create word collages that represent the possible challenges, opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada before the First World War. To conclude the lesson, students view the collages in small groups and suggest what may have been the most significant possible challenges, opportunities and achievements for Ukrainian immigrants.

## OBJECTIVES

### Broad understanding

Knowledge of the daily life of Ukrainians and other Europeans who immigrated to Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s

### Requisite tools

#### Background knowledge

- knowledge of the conditions of life in Canada for Ukrainians and other European immigrants before the First World War
- knowledge of the living and working conditions in internment camps

#### Critical thinking vocabulary

- observation
- inference



### Criteria for judgment

- criteria for powerful words and phrases
  - use clear and interesting words
  - accurately describe the details in the picture they are representing
  - evoke pictures in the viewer's mind



### Thinking strategies

- making observations
- drawing inferences
- applying a design process



## MATERIALS

### Briefing sheets

Understanding European immigration to Canada, 1891–1914 (Briefing sheet #3)

### Activity sheets

Inferring possible challenges, opportunities and achievements (Activity sheet #I-1)

Creating powerful phrases (Activity sheet #I-2)

Planning my word collage (Activity sheet #I-3)

Reflecting on challenges, opportunities and achievements (Activity sheet #I-4)

### Images

*The Ukrainian Pioneer (No. 4)* by William Kurelek (Image #I-1)

*Where Could We Escape To?* by Peter Shostak (Image #I-2)

Sample word collages (Image #I-3)

### Background information for teachers

For more information on European immigration to Canada, consider reading *Background information for teachers: European immigration to Canada, 1891–1914* (Briefing sheet #1). This briefing sheet is intended to support teachers with historical details related to the content of this lesson and is not intended for student use.

This lesson is based on a series of six paintings collectively called *The Ukrainian Pioneer* that were created in 1971 and reworked in 1976 by Ukrainian-Canadian artist William Kurelek. These paintings were inspired by events in the lives of the artist's grandparents and parents, who immigrated to prairie farming communities.

## Suggested Activities

### Share initial thinking

1. Show students Painting #2 from the *The Ukrainian Pioneer* series by William Kurelek (see <http://kurelek.ca/gallery/gallery-05/the-ukrainian-pioneer-no-2>). Record the following list of words for students to consider:
  - long journey
  - people
  - new beginnings
  - vacation
  - courage
2. Pose the question: “Which three of these words or phrases most powerfully describes what is happening in the painting?” Discuss both the selections made by students as well as the reasons why some words were not considered. Student responses may include:
  - I chose “courage” because I think they might have been afraid to leave their homes and they would need courage to live in a new country.
  - I didn’t choose “people” because it didn’t really sound like a powerful word or give any important information.
  - I didn’t choose “vacation” because that isn’t what is happening in the painting. They aren’t going on a trip. They are making the choice to leave everything behind to make a home in a new country.
3. Explain to students that this painting is one in a series painted by Ukrainian-Canadian artist William Kurelek, and that he created the paintings to share some of the experiences Ukrainian immigrants to Canada had in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
4. Share and discuss the critical challenge with students: *Create a collage of powerful words and phrases to accurately represent the challenges, opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada between 1891 and 1914.*

### Infer challenges, opportunities and achievements

1. Provide students with a copy of *Inferring possible challenges, opportunities and achievements* (Activity sheet #I-1).
2. Direct students to observe details in the painting that suggest experiences that may have presented challenges for Ukrainian immigrants. For example, they may notice the suitcases and belongings of the people in Painting #2 and infer that the journey by ship may have been a long one or that they may have had to leave some of their possessions behind.

Lesson 1

Activity sheet #I-1

### Inferring possible challenges, opportunities and achievements

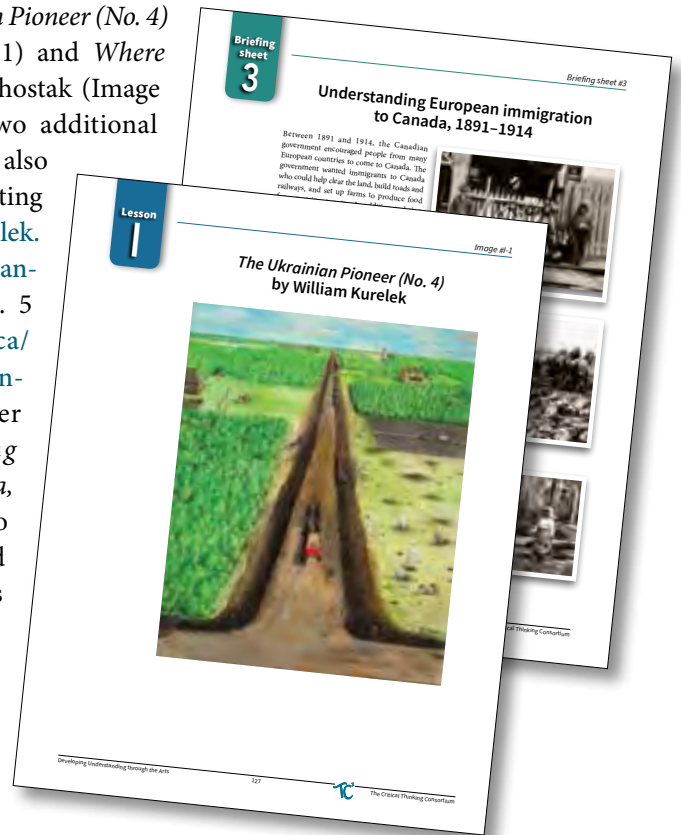
What might have been possible challenges for Ukrainian immigrants?	What might have been possible opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants?

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**Draw additional inferences**

3. Prompt students to record this information under the heading “What might have been possible challenges?” on the activity sheet.
4. Direct students to observe details in the painting that suggest experiences that may have presented opportunities or achievements for Ukrainian immigrants. For example, they may notice that everyone in the painting is looking at the land on the horizon and infer that the people may be excited about starting a new life or thinking about becoming landowners.
5. Instruct them to record this information under the heading “What might have been possible opportunities and achievements?” on the activity sheet.

1. Distribute copies of *The Ukrainian Pioneer (No. 4)* by William Kurelek (Image #I-1) and *Where Could We Escape To?* by Peter Shostak (Image #I-2) for students to view. (Two additional paintings by William Kurelek are also available on-line. Kurelek’s Painting No. 3 is available at <http://kurelek.ca/gallery/gallery-05/the-ukrainian-pioneer-no-3>; and Painting No. 5 is available at <http://kurelek.ca/gallery/gallery-05/the-ukrainian-pioneer-no-5>.) **Note:** Consider distributing *Understanding European immigration to Canada, 1891–1914* (Briefing sheet #3) to help students develop background knowledge before viewing if this is their first introduction to the topic.
2. Prompt students to add additional words or phrases to their list of challenges, opportunities and achievements after viewing each of the paintings.



**Discuss the criteria for powerful words and phrases**

1. Instruct students to review the words and phrases recorded on their activity sheet. Ask them to decide which of their words are the most powerful descriptions of the challenges, opportunities and achievements that Ukrainian immigrants faced. Invite students to share the words they identified from the activity sheet.
2. Explain to students that choosing powerful words and phrases can help create strong thoughts, feelings or images in the minds of people reading them.

## Create powerful phrases

3. Ask students to suggest what makes some words and phrases more powerful than others. Share the criteria for powerful words and phrases. Powerful words and phrases:
  - use clear and interesting words;
  - accurately describe the details in the picture they are representing;
  - evoke pictures in the viewer's mind.
4. Prompt students to revisit their lists and to use the criteria to select the three most powerful words and phrases.

1. Provide each student with a copy of *Creating powerful phrases* (Activity sheet #I-2). Ensure that students have access to the ideas they recorded on *Inferring possible challenges, opportunities and achievements* (Activity sheet #I-1).
2. Review the criteria for powerful words and phrases and draw students' attention to the two columns on the activity sheet.
3. Invite students to select one of their previously recorded ideas that they feel could be more powerfully worded and record this under the heading "Original wording" on the activity sheet.
4. Inform students that their next task is to turn these words into more powerful phrases to describe the challenges, opportunities and achievements experienced by Ukrainian immigrants. The following prompts might be useful in helping students make their revisions:
  - "How might we create a phrase that expresses that idea in an interesting way?"
  - "What is the most descriptive and expressive phrase we could use to describe that idea?"
  - "What might the artist have wanted us to think or feel about what is happening in this painting?"
5. Instruct students to rework their existing wording into five to ten more powerful phrases.

**Lesson** 1

Activity sheet #I-2

### Creating powerful phrases

Apply the criteria to revise some of your original word choices into more powerful phrases.

**Powerful phrases:**

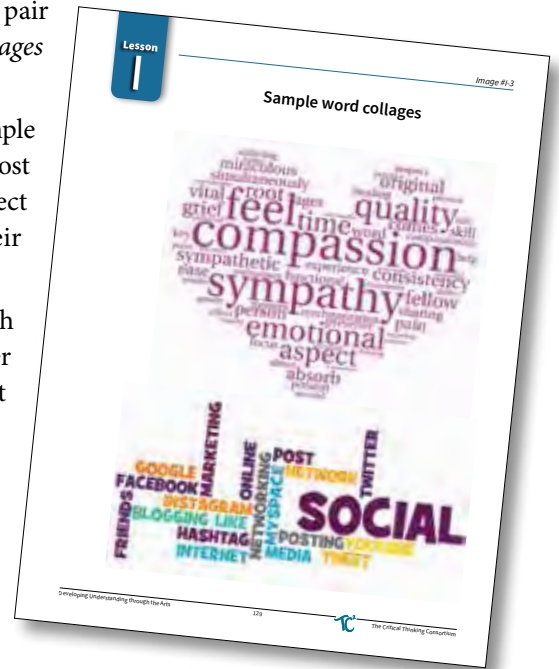
- use clear and interesting words;
- accurately describe the details in the picture you are representing;
- evoke pictures in the reader's mind.

Painting	Original wording	Powerful phrases
Painting #2		
Painting #3		
Painting #4		
Painting #5		

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## Examine word collages

1. Divide students into pairs and provide each pair with a copy of the image *Sample word collages* (Image #I-3).
2. Instruct students to compare the two sample collages by asking: “What are the three most important features of a word collage?” Direct students to discuss the collages with their partner.
3. Invite students to share their decisions with the class. Record their observations for later reference during the design phase. Student responses may include:
  - They are both made using only words.
  - They both use a variety of fonts and sizes for the words.
  - They use coloured words.
4. Ask students to notice how the two sample collages differ. Encourage them to once again discuss the collages with their partner. Record their observations for later reference during the design phase. Student responses may include:
  - One of the samples organized the words to form a picture of a heart.
  - The second collage arranged the words vertically and horizontally.
5. Encourage students to consider how they might effectively use similar styles and organizational elements to highlight their most powerful words and phrases. For example, they might discuss how they could use vertical lettering or change the colour or size of the words.



## Create the collage

1. Remind students of the lesson challenge: *Create a collage of powerful words and phrases that accurately represent the challenges, opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada between 1891 and 1914.*
2. Provide each student with a copy of *Planning my word collage* (Activity sheet #I-3).
3. Encourage students to consider each of the design elements listed on the activity sheet. Instruct students to record their planning ideas beside each of the elements listed on the design table.
4. Invite students to draft the visual form of their word collage by sketching it in pencil in the blank box at the bottom of the activity sheet.

Possible design elements	Planning ideas
Colour	
Size/Style (bold, italic, lettering, typeface)	
Organization (horizontal, vertical, diagonal, circular, spiral)	
Other elements	

Rough sketch of my word collage

## Reflect on the learning

5. Provide materials for students to use in the creation of their finished collage. Consider providing everyday materials such as magazines, newspapers or advertising flyers for students interested in creating a mixed media collage. You may also wish to introduce the free software at [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) to students who may be interested in creating digital word clouds.
6. Remind students that their collage should focus on communicating the challenges, opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants.

1. Direct students to select the painting that their word collage best represents or matches.
2. Arrange students in small groups and provide each group with a copy of *Reflecting on challenges, opportunities and achievements* (Activity sheet #I-4). Assign each group one of the paintings and the collages that have been created to reflect the meaning of the painting.
3. Ask students to examine each of the collages for recurring words and phrases. Direct them to select three important words from each collection that best expresses the challenges, opportunities and achievements of Ukrainian immigrants.
4. Invite students to share the words they selected and discuss them as a class. Prompt students to propose what this collection of words suggests about the experiences of Ukrainian immigrants in Canada.

Lesson 1

Activity sheet #I-4

### Reflecting on challenges, opportunities and achievements

View each of the paintings and associated word collages. Select three important words from each collection that best expresses the challenges, opportunities and achievements faced by Ukrainians and other European immigrants.

Collection	Our three selected words and phrases
Painting #2	
Painting #3	
Painting #4	
Painting #5	

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