

Assessing historical commemorations

judging the appropriateness of a commemoration of a historically significant event or person

- Objectives:**
- understand what makes a historical commemoration appropriate
 - use criteria to assess the appropriateness of commemorations of local history

What makes a appropriate historical commemoration?

Use the following activities to develop the strategy

Introduce the strategy

- Organize students into small groups (2-3 students) and provide each group with a copy of *Reconsidering the Commemoration of Sir Langevin* (Source material A).
- Explain to students that commemorations, much like images and pieces of text, can be “read.” As a group review the details about the naming of the bridge.
- After students have described the main details of the commemoration, ask if naming the bridge after the politician was an appropriate commemoration. Guide the conversation by asking why a commemoration that was once considered appropriate might now be viewed as inappropriate.
- Encourage students to share their responses and thinking with the class. As students share, invite them to suggest the qualities of an appropriate commemoration. Use student ideas to co-develop or present the criteria for an appropriate commemoration:
 - **Content:** What is being remembered? Is the information presented historically accurate? Are multiple perspectives fairly presented?
 - **Design:** What form is used to remember the important event or person? Does the form of the commemoration match the significance of what is being commemorated?
 - **Placement:** Where is it located? Does the location or placement match the significance of what is being commemorated?
- Explain to students that commemorations once thought to be appropriate may no longer be appropriate. This often occurs when research reveals more information about a person or event.
- Review the criteria with students, helping them understand that questions related to the criteria such as “What is the commemoration?” (design), “Where is the commemoration?” (placement), and “What message does the commemoration send?” (content) can guide thinking about the appropriateness of a commemoration.



- ### Rating the Appropriateness of a Commemoration

ACTIVITY SHEET A

Source of class content	Observations	Rating
Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is being commemorated? Is the information presented historically accurate? Are multiple perspectives fairly presented? 		1 - highly appropriate 2 - fairly appropriate 3 - somewhat appropriate 4 - inappropriate
Placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where is it located? Does the location or placement enhance the significance of what is being commemorated? 		4 - highly appropriate 3 - fairly appropriate 2 - somewhat appropriate 1 - inappropriate
Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What forms is used to remember the important event or person? Does the form of the commemoration stress the significance of what is being commemorated? 		4 - highly appropriate 3 - fairly appropriate 2 - somewhat appropriate 1 - inappropriate
Overall rating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 - highly appropriate 3 - fairly appropriate 2 - somewhat appropriate 1 - inappropriate 	Reasons	

Calgary's Langevin Bridge to be Renamed

SOURCE MATERIAL B

Calgary is changing the name of one of its historical bridges in an effort to recognize and honor the city's Indigenous community – the decision to remove colonialist names from public spaces and places has been a controversial choice, while many have called for the final report.

Calgary's city council voted Monday night to rename the Langevin Bridge in response to a call from the public after the 2015 release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's the damning report blamed by historic Louis Langevin – one of the fathers of Confederation and the bridge's namesake – "causing the pain of the Indigenous residential school system, which you now inherit as part of 'cultural genocide'." If passed, the education system, which has been criticized for its role in the residential school system, will be renamed in honor of the late, former mayor of Calgary, who was a vocal advocate for Indigenous rights, and the city's Indigenous community.

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Practise the strategy

- [illegible]

Apply the strategy to learn more about a local history

- Provide students with a blank copy of *Rating the Appropriateness of a Commemoration* (Activity sheet A) and encourage them to use the strategy in a variety of situations:

- Exploring commemorations of historical events or people found in a community. For example, airports named after famous politicians, or statues of military leaders,
- Proposing ideas for a new commemoration of a historically significant event or person,
- Suggesting how an existing commemoration of a historically significant event or person might be made more appropriate.

Assess use of the strategy

- Encourage students to use *Assessing My Understanding: Assessing Historical Commemorations* (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.

The image shows two overlapping activity sheets. The top sheet is titled 'Rating the Appropriateness of a Commemoration' and is labeled 'ACTIVITY SHEET A'. It contains a table with columns for 'Criteria', 'Observations', and 'Rating'. The criteria include: 'Context' (What is being commemorated? Is the information presented historically accurate? Are multiple perspectives fully presented?), 'Placement' (Where is it located? Does the location or placement match the significance of what is being commemorated?), and 'Design' (What form is used to remember the important event or person? Does the form of the commemoration match the significance of what is being commemorated?). The rating scale ranges from 1 (Inappropriate) to 4 (Highly appropriate). The bottom sheet is titled 'Assessing My Understanding: Assessing Historical Commemorations' and is labeled 'ASSESSMENT MATERIAL'. It contains a rubric for assessing historical commemorations, with criteria such as 'I understand what an appropriate commemoration looks like' and 'I can apply criteria for an appropriate commemoration when assessing a historical commemoration'. The rubric uses a 5-point scale from 'I'm not there yet' to 'I'm all in'.

Reconsidering the Commemoration of Sir Langevin



Image from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconciliation_Bridge

The **Langevin Bridge** is a bridge in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. It spans the Bow River and connects downtown Calgary with many north-central Calgary communities. The bridge was opened in 1910 and was named for Sir Hector-Louis Langevin, a Canadian lawyer, politician, and one of the Fathers of Confederation.

Long after Sir Langevin was commemorated with the naming of the bridge in his honour, more became known about his role in supporting residential schools in Canada.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report quoted comments from a speech that Sir Hector-Louis Langevin gave to Parliament in 1883: "If you wish to educate these children you must separate them from their parents during the time that they are being educated. If you leave them in the family they may know how to read and write, but they still remain savages, whereas by separating them in the way proposed, they acquire the habits and tastes ... of civilized people."

While Langevin did not lead the work to establish residential schools, his comments suggest that Langevin supported the views and policies of the prime minister at the time, Sir John A. Macdonald. Macdonald is widely considered the architect of residential schools in Canada.

Calgary's Langevin Bridge to be Renamed Reconciliation Bridge

Calgary is changing the name of one of its historical bridges in an effort to recognize a dark stain on Canada's history – the decision to remove aboriginal children from their homes and force them to live in residential schools, where many suffered abuse.

Calgary's city council voted Monday night to rename the Langevin Bridge in response to calls from the public after the 2015 release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report.

The damning report quoted Sir Hector-Louis Langevin – one of the Fathers of Confederation and the bridge's namesake – defending the government's residential school system, which the commission called an act of "cultural genocide." "If you wish to educate these children you must separate them from their parents during the time that they are being educated. If you leave them in the family they may know how to read and write, but they still remain savages, whereas by separating them in the way proposed, they acquire the habits and tastes ... of civilized people," Mr. Langevin said in a speech to Parliament in 1883. He was public works minister at the time.

Of Calgary's 14 councillors, 13 voted in favour of renaming the bridge Reconciliation Bridge as "a sincere act of reconciliation on behalf of the citizens of Calgary." "Mr. Langevin was a very progressive thinker in many, many ways. But it's important for us to recognize that having him named in the TRC report, what impacts his name has on others in our community," said Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi in a speech to city council. "It's about acknowledging that history is complicated."

After the release of the TRC report, social media users, including Tsuut'ina Nation spokesman Kevin Littlelight, urged Mr. Nenshi to change the name of the bridge so it wasn't connected to Mr. Langevin and his "racist" ideals. City council asked the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee to examine how the city should respond to the TRC report. Among its recommendations, it suggested the Langevin Bridge be renamed. Mr. Littlelight says city council's decision Monday to rename the bridge is an acknowledgment of the residential school era and "the first steps of healing." "It's so symbolic that it's a bridge because that's bridging aboriginal Canadians with Canada in a very positive way," Mr. Littlelight said. Calgary Councillor Druh Farrell, who supported Monday's motion, agreed the renaming of the bridge is only a first step on the long path to reconciliation. While Ms. Farrell acknowledged Mr. Langevin's role as a Father of Confederation, she said it is also important to tell the "brutal" residential school story. For that reason, a plaque will be placed on the bridge explaining the story of Mr. Langevin, the history of the residential school system and its impact on Canada's indigenous community.

"We don't want to erase history," Ms. Farrell said. "Mr. Langevin also contributed to the country. So this plaque won't be vilifying him. It will be talking about his role in public works but also his role in the residential schools."

Source: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/alberta/calgarys-langevin-bridge-to-be-renamed-reconciliation-bridge/article33713816/>

Reconsidering the Commemoration of Sir John A. Macdonald

SOURCE 1

Name change for Waterloo's Sir John A. MacDonald school no quick decision

Trustees for Sir John A. MacDonald Secondary School in Waterloo to ponder name

The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario put a motion calling for school boards to rename any schools named after Sir John A. MacDonald, including one in the Waterloo Region. The Waterloo Region District School Board says it will talk about the idea at a meeting in September. "We think that the debate around historical figures like Sir John A. MacDonald and their place in our Canadian history is an important one," said Nick Manning, chief communications officer with the board. "We think as a public board of education, it's a really important place to be having that debate and that dialogue."

Excerpted from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/sir-john-a-macdonald-waterloo-school-name-etfo-indigenous-record-1.4261962>

SOURCE 2

John A. Macdonald was the real architect of residential schools

...Macdonald, as Canada's founding prime minister, played the instrumental role of initiating, supporting, and defending the residential school system in the late 19th century. In the late 1870s, Macdonald dreamed of creating an organized system of federal schools for Indigenous children that could be used to disrupt Indigenous lifeways and control over the land to accelerate successful settler colonialism.

[Macdonald] appointed a friend, Nicholas Flood Davin, to investigate the success of boarding schools for Indigenous peoples in the United States and determine how it could be replicated in Canada. Impressed by American policies of "aggressive assimilation" through residential schooling, Davin published his report in 1879. Beginning shortly thereafter, Macdonald adopted Davin's recommendation to create residential schools to help eradicate Canada's so-called "Indian problem."

...Macdonald laid out the aim of the schools in the House of Commons. He argued, "When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write ... [T]he Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men."

Macdonald backed up his talk by defending the expansion of the residential school system to all parts of the country, despite many problems with the first schools, including a high number of student deaths, truancy, and inadequate housing and poor educational conditions.

Excerpted from: <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2017/07/09/john-a-macdonald-was-the-real-architect-of-residential-schools.html>

Rating the Appropriateness of a Commemoration

Source of clues	Observations	Rating
Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is being commemorated? Is the information presented historically accurate? Are multiple perspectives fairly presented? 		4 – Highly appropriate 3 – Very appropriate 2 – Somewhat appropriate 1 – Inappropriate
Placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where is it located? Does the location or placement match the significance of what is being commemorated? 		4 – Highly appropriate 3 – Very appropriate 2 – Somewhat appropriate 1 – Inappropriate
Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What form is used to remember the important event or person? Does the form of the commemoration match the significance of what is being commemorated? 		4 – Highly appropriate 3 – Very appropriate 2 – Somewhat appropriate 1 – Inappropriate
Overall rating 4 – Highly appropriate 3 – Very appropriate 2 – Somewhat appropriate 1 – Inappropriate	Reasons	

Assessing My Understanding: Assessing Historical Commemorations

Name: _____

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

Success criteria	How am I doing?
<p>I understand what an appropriate commemoration looks like.</p> <p>Examples:</p>	<div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div>5</div> </div> <div> <div>I'm still working on it</div> <div>I've got it!</div> </div> <p>Next steps (e.g., add more evidence, use criteria, ask for help):</p>
<p>I can apply criteria for an appropriate commemoration when assessing a historical commemoration.</p> <p>Examples:</p>	<div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> <div>4</div> <div>5</div> </div> <div> <div>I'm still working on it</div> <div>I've got it!</div> </div> <p>Next steps (e.g., add more evidence, use criteria, ask for help):</p>