

The Komagata Maru and Canada's Anti-Indian Immigration Policies in the Twentieth Century

Examining historical causation

- A. Identify the various underlying and immediate causes of a particular event.
- B. Determine the three most important contributing factors to the event.

Key topics

In exploring the immediate and underlying causes related to the Komagata Maru incident and Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies, the following events are most important:

1. Causes of Indian immigration to Canada from 1857 to 1914: pp 5–6, 14–23.
 - a. Push factors: famine, poverty, increased taxation, British oppression.
 - b. Pull factors: promise of being welcomed anywhere in the British Empire, employment opportunities, a better life for their families, encouragement from Indian immigrants already in Canada.
2. Causes of the government's decision to restrict Indian immigration in 1908 and deny landing rights to the passengers of the *Komagata Maru*: pp. 5–6, 36–42, 56–57.
 - a. Societal and government-sanctioned racism.
 - b. Union concerns about job competition from Asian immigrants.
 - c. Anti-Asian sentiments that resulted in the Vancouver Riot of 1907.
 - d. Political opportunism.
3. Causes of the government's decision to acknowledge the injustice of the Komagata Maru incident and Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies in the twentieth century: pp. 74–75, 80–83, 88–91.
 - a. Pressure from descendants of the *Komagata Maru* passengers and others.

- b. Indo-Canadians in political positions of power within the Canadian government.
- c. Increase in political activism amongst Indo-Canadians.
- d. New attitude of multiculturalism and a commitment to a society that ensures equality and justice for all.

Identifying consequences

- A. Identify the obvious and less obvious direct and indirect consequences resulting from the historic injustice for the featured group(s).
- B. Rate the severity of the collective impact on the featured group in each of the following categories: political, social, economic, psychological/emotional.

Key topics

1. Obvious and less obvious direct and indirect consequences of the Komagata Maru incident and Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies in the twentieth century:
 - a. Direct consequences: pp. 42–65.
 - b. Indirect consequences: pp. 65–66, 80–83, 88–94.
2. When determining the severity of the collective impact of the consequences of the Komagata Maru incident and Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies in the twentieth century, consider the following areas:
 - a. Psychological and emotional consequences.
 - b. Social and cultural consequences.
 - c. Economic consequences.
 - d. Political and legal consequences.

Tracking continuity and change

- A. Identify the similarities and differences between the experiences of two groups or a single group over two time periods.
- B. Identify the most important similarity and difference between the compared groups or time periods.

Key topics

When tracking continuity and change between the experiences of Indo-Canadians and one or more groups, consider the following topics:

1. Racism experienced by Indian immigrants in Canada: pp. 21–23, 26–32, 36–43, 48–61.
2. Experience of those held captive on the *Komagata Maru*: pp. 50–61.
3. Consequences of anti-Indian Immigration policies: direct consequences: pp. 42–64; indirect consequences: pp. 65–66, 80–83, 88–94.
4. Government acknowledgement of historic injustice and apology to Indo-Canadians: pp. 88–94.

When comparing a single group at two different time periods, consider the following topic:

1. Attitudes towards and treatment of Indo-Canadians before the immigration ban of 1908 and after the ban was lifted in 1918: pre-1908: pp. 5–6, 20–23, 26–41; post-1918: pp. 66–79, 84–94.
2. Life in Canada for Indo-Canadians before and after India's independence from British rule: pre-independence: pp. 26–47, 66–69; post-independence: pp. 70–94.
3. Experience of hopeful Indian immigrants arriving by boat to Canada in 1914 on the *Komagata Maru* compared to those who arrived in 1987 (*Amelie*) and 2010 (*Sun Sea*): pp. 48–61, 76–79.
4. Political activism within the Indo-Canadian community prior to the change in immigration laws in 1918 compared to after 1918: pre-1918: pp. 36–40, 43–61, 65; post-1918: 69–73, 80–83, 88–91.

Offering ethical assessments

- A. Write a letter to a public official assessing the adequacy of the official response to a specified historical injustice.

Key topics

Consider the following areas when assessing the adequacy of the official response of the federal government to the Komagata Maru incident and Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies in the twentieth century:

1. Experiences during, and consequences of, the Komagata Maru incident: pp. 48–65.
2. Government response to the Komagata Maru incident and Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies in the twentieth century: pp. 66–69, 74–79, 88–94.

Adopting historical perspectives

- A. Draw historically plausible conclusions about the experiences and attitudes of a featured group regarding some aspect of a historical injustice.
- B. Write a letter from the point of view of a teenage member of the group explaining the specified situation or event.

Key topics

Consider one or more of the following topics when adopting a historical perspective related to the Komagata Maru incident and Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies in the twentieth century:

- Indian attitudes towards immigrating to Canada before 1914: pp. 5, 20–22, 42–48.
- Canadian attitudes towards Asian immigration prior to the Komagata Maru incident: pp. 5–7, 20–24, 26–32, 36–47.
- Canadian attitudes towards Asian immigration after the Komagata Maru incident: pp. 66–69, 74–91.
- Attitudes of Indian immigrants aboard the *Komagata Maru*: pp. 48–61.
- Indo-Canadian culture prior to the Komagata Maru incident: pp. 32–35, 44–47.
- Indo-Canadian culture 1918–1967: pp. 66–73.
- Life in Canada for Indo-Canadians after immigration opened up in 1967: pp. 74–91
- Political activism in the Indo-Canadian community prior to the Komagata Maru incident: pp. 42–48.
- Political activism in the Indo-Canadian community following the Komagata Maru incident: pp. 62–66, 70–73, 76–83, 88–91.
- Reasons offered by government officials and politicians to justify the anti-Indian immigration policies: pp. 5–6, 36–41, 54, 57.
- Attitudes towards the federal government's apology: pp. 7, 88–91.

Determining historical significance

- A. Identify the historically significant aspects or dimensions of your assigned event.
- B. Design a commemorative piece (e.g., coin, collage, museum exhibit, statue, video, memorial epitaph, poem, song) featuring the most significant aspects of the historical injustice.

Key topics

When identifying historically significant aspects of Canada's anti-Indian immigration policies and the Komagata Maru incident, consider the following criteria:

1. Recognition of anti-Indian immigration policies: pp. 5–7, 36–65.
2. Consequences of anti-Indian immigration policies and the Komagata Maru incident: direct consequences pp. 42–64; indirect consequences: pp. 65–66, 80–83, 88–94.
3. Iconic status and insights about the past: pp. 74–75, 88–94; how the Komagata Maru incident has been memorialized by different groups: pp. 73, 92–94.

Author Biographies

Dr. Roland Case is executive director and co-founder of The Critical Thinking Consortium. He was a professor of Social Studies Education at Simon Fraser University. Roland has edited or written over 100 published works. Notable among these are *Understanding Judicial Reasoning* (Thompson Publishing, 1997), *The Anthology of Social Studies: Volume I and II* (Pacific Educational Press, 2008), and *Critical Challenges across the Curriculum*, the award-winning series of TC² teaching resources. In addition to his teaching career as an elementary school teacher and university professor, Roland has worked with many classroom teachers across Canada and in the United States, England, Israel, Russia, India, Finland, and Hong Kong to support the infusion of critical thinking. Roland is the 2006 recipient of CUFA's Distinguished Academics Career Achievement Award.

Ilan Danjoux is a recent PhD graduate that examined the predictive power of Middle East political cartoons. His forthcoming book on political cartoons and the Israeli Palestinian conflict is published by the University of Manchester Press. He has fifteen years of teaching experience and curriculum design at every level of education, ranging from preschool to Masters programs. Ilan helped develop York University's first online courses, operated an online education website, and designed online learning modules for the University of Leicester.

Lindsay Gibson is a PhD student in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia, currently working on his dissertation proposal and research that will focus on teaching historical thinking. Lindsay is also involved with the Canada-wide Historical Thinking Project and is a member of the Graduate Committee for The History Education Network (THEN/HiER). He has taught social studies methods courses to pre-service teachers in the Bachelor of Education program at the University of British Columbia and the University of British Columbia Okanagan for the past three years. Lindsay taught secondary school history and social studies in Kelowna, BC for ten years and returned to the classroom part-time in the spring of 2012.