

The Chinese Head Tax and Anti-Chinese 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 Chinese Head Tax and Canada's anti-Chinese immigration policies, the following events are most important:

1. Causes of Chinese immigration to Canada from 1858–1923: pp 5, 8–17, 22–25
 - a. Push factors: famine, poverty, foreign occupation in China
 - b. Pull factors: gold rush; employment opportunities, especially in railway construction; possibility of earning money that could be sent back to China for their families; encouragement from labour employers in Canada
2. Causes of the government's decision to restrict Chinese immigration in 1885: pp. 20–21, 26–27, 42–47
 - 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 Chinese Head Tax and Canada's anti-Chinese immigration policies in the twentieth century: pp. 64–67, 69–75
 - a. Pressure from the Chinese Head Tax payers, their descendants, and others.

- b. Chinese Canadians in political positions of power within the Canadian government.
- c. Increase in political activism amongst Chinese 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 Chinese Head Tax and anti-Chinese immigration policies in the twentieth century
 - a. Direct consequences: pp. 32, 40–41, 44–47, 52–54, 74–75
 - b. Indirect consequences: pp. 35, 48–49, 68–69, 74–83
2. When determining the severity of the collective impact of the consequences of the Chinese Head Tax and anti-Chinese 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 periods of time.
- 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 Chinese Canadians and one or more groups, consider the following topics:

1. Racism experienced by Chinese immigrants in Canada: pp. 5–6, 13–15, 20–29, 31–32, 34–36, 41–59, 63, 67–69, 72–73.
2. Consequences of anti-Chinese Immigration policies: direct consequences: pp. 32, 40–41, 44–47, 52–54, 74–75; indirect consequences: pp. 35, 48–49, 68–69, 74–83.
3. Government acknowledgement of historic injustice and apology to Chinese Canadians: pp. 76–87.

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

1. Attitudes towards and treatment of Chinese Canadians before the Head Tax in 1885: pp. 5–6, 13–15, 20–29, 31–32, 34–36, 41–59, 63, 67–69, 72–73; and after the immigration ban was lifted in 1947: 64–67, 70–72, 76–77, 78–87.
2. Life in Canada for Chinese Canadians before and after Canada and China become allies in World War Two: pp. 20–57 (pre-WW2), pp. 64–77 (post-WW2).
3. Political activism within the Chinese-Canadian community prior to the change in immigration laws in 1947 compared to after 1947: pp. 34–37, 52, 57 (pre-1947), pp. 64–77 (post-1947).

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 Chinese Head Tax and Canada's anti-Chinese immigration policies in the twentieth century:

1. Experiences during, and consequences of, the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act: pp. 26–32, 40–41, 44–47, 52–54, 74–75.
2. Government response to the Head Tax and Canada's anti-Chinese immigration policies in the twentieth century: pp. 64–66, 70–71, 75–83, 87.

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 Chinese Head Tax and Canada's anti-Chinese immigration policies in the twentieth century.

- Chinese attitudes towards immigrating to Canada before 1885: pp. 8, 12, 16, 23–24
- Canadian attitudes towards Asian immigration prior to the Head Tax: pp. 5–6, 13–18, 20–25
- Canadian attitudes towards Asian immigration after the Head Tax: pp. 42–52
- Life in Canada for Chinese Canadians after the Exclusion Act was eliminated in 1947: pp. 65–72, 84–87
- Political activism in the Chinese-Canadian community prior to, and during, the Head Tax and Exclusion Act: pp. 34–37, 52, 57
- Political activism in the Chinese-Canadian community following the repeal of the Exclusion Act: pp. 64–77
- Reasons offered by government officials and politicians to justify the anti-Chinese immigration policies: pp. 20–22, 26
- Attitudes towards the federal government's apology: pp. 76–77

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-Chinese immigration policies and the Chinese Head Tax, consider the following criteria:

1. Recognition of anti-Chinese immigration policies: pp. 5–6, 74–83.
2. Consequences of anti-Chinese immigration policies and the Chinese Head Tax: direct consequences: pp. 32, 40–41, 44–47, 52–54, 74–75; indirect consequences: pp. 35, 48–49, 68–69, 74–83.
3. Iconic status and insights about the past: pp. 70–83; how the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act have been memorialized by different groups: pp. 78–83