


## Lesson Plan

**Title:** Thérèse Casgrain: Canadian Political and Peace Activist

**Author:** Rose Fine-Meyer 

**Magazine Issue:** “Equality for All” in the Great Canadian Women issue of *Kayak: Canada’s History Magazine for Kids*.

**Grade Level:** 5/6, 7/8, 9/10

### Theme(s):

- Canadian Identity
- Discover Your Community
- French Canada
- National Politics
- Peace & Conflict
- Provincial/Territorial Politics
- Social Justice
- Women

**Subject Area:** Social Studies/History/Civics

### Lesson Overview:

Students will work in groups to explore the historical experiences of Thérèse Casgrain and the women activists who created political, cultural, and social change in Quebec and Canada. Students will use the historical thinking concepts of cause and consequence as well as historical significance to analyze the ways Quebec women mobilized to make change in Quebec, in Canada, and globally.

**Time Required:** 2 lessons

### Historical Thinking Concept(s):

- Establish *historical significance*
- Use *primary source evidence*
- Identify *continuity and change*
- Analyze *cause and consequence*

### Learning Outcomes:

#### Student will:

- Inquiry: use the social studies inquiry process to investigate Canadian social, political, economic and/or environmental issues from various perspectives and the level of government responsible for addressing the issues

- Collect: collect historical data, draw conclusions, and reflect on the meaning and impact of the historical data
- Analyze: use multiple documents, images, quotes and statistics to gather data about the historical experiences of Thérèse Casgrain and other women activists and leaders in Canada
- Understand: demonstrate an understanding of the roles and key responsibilities of citizens and of the different levels of government in Canada, including collaboration and cooperation, decision making, respect, rights and responsibilities, and stewardship.
- Communicate and apply: compare citizen and government actions in the past to citizen and government actions today

### **Background Information:**

- [Thérèse Casgrain](#) née Marie Thérèse Forget (July 10, 1896 – November 3, 1981) was the first woman head of a political party in Quebec. She was born in Montreal, and was a leader in shaping rights for women; including the right to vote, the right to hold political office, and the right to refuse forced retirement. Casgrain was also a peace activist.
- In 1946, Thérèse Casgrain joined the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and in 1948, she was chosen as one of the national vice-chairpersons of the CCF Party. When elected leader of the Quebec wing in 1951, she became the first woman to head a political party in Quebec. She served as provincial leader three times until 1957. In 1955, the provincial party name was changed to Le Parti social démocratique du Québec in order to more clearly indicate its objectives. Thérèse Casgrain later became president of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in Quebec, the strong labour-based party that evolved out of the CCF.
- In 1961 she founded the Quebec Branch, Voix des femmes, of the national organization The Voice of Women, one of Canada's oldest national feminist peace groups, which continues today to advocate for global peace. Canada boasts a long historic tradition of war resistance and The Voice of Women/ Voix des femmes has played a leadership role in advocating for peace and opposing nuclear proliferation.
- Casgrain was active politically, advocating for a better society and world and as a founding member of the Quebec provincial Franchise Committee, later the League for the Rights of Women. She was appointed to the Senate in 1970.
- Casgrain was the recipient of the Order of the British Empire; Officer of the Order of Canada, 1967; Companion of the Order of Canada, 1974

## **The Lesson Activity:**

*Activating: How will students be prepared for learning?*

Critical thinking question: **In what ways did Thérèse Casgrain help establish Canada as a peace keeping nation?**

*Acquiring: What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?*

- There are four tables and four groups of students for this lesson. Students will get into groups and each group will explore a different set of historical documents including images, charts, and statistics provided at their table. (These documents can be explored in hard copies or on a digital device/links to google docs or prezi for online work.)
- Students in each group will fill in their data collection sheets that provide an opportunity for students to record what they see in the documents as well as do some preliminary analysis of each of the documents in order to better understand the life of Thérèse Casgrain; Quebec and Canadian history.
- After 15 minutes, each group will move to the next desk of documents. They will add to their data collection sheet, each time collecting data as well as performing analysis.
- The data collection sheet has a space for students to collect information about each of the documents on their table as well as to reflect on the historical thinking concepts of *historical significance* and *cause and consequence*.

*Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?*

- Students in each of the groups will be given a sticky note, and based on the research they did the lesson before, they will place their sticky notes on the paper which they feel best describes the activism of Thérèse Casgrain.
- In this way they are making decision about historical significance, using their research data collected to draw a conclusion about her leadership and its impact on women, Quebec and Canada.
- After all students have filled in their data collection sheets, they will draw conclusions about the life of Thérèse Casgrain and attempt to answer the critical question: In what ways did Thérèse Casgrain help establish Canada as a peace keeping nation?

*Acquiring: What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?*

- The teacher will use the Quotes taken from speeches of Thérèse Casgrain and other members of the VOW, who spoke publicly in radio shows, newspapers

and in parliament and post them in the classroom or online. Students will write the quotes on pieces of chart paper. The chart paper will be placed on the four group tables.

- Students will read the quotes, highlight the key words, and discuss their meaning.

*Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?*

- Students will take the key words they pulled from the quotes and create a peace poster, banner, or button that might have been used when Thérèse Casgrain and other peace activists were protesting against war in the past. Students will consider how the posters, banners or buttons could also be used today. (*cause and consequence, continuity and change*)
- A word board will be used to share all the messages collected from the quotes.
- Students will reflect on the ways citizens in the past advocated for change through common messages, and the ways in which words today have changed or stayed the same. Students will reflect on new challenges and concerns citizens face today.
- Students will share their posters, banners and buttons with each other and reflect on citizen activism for change, past and present. (*continuity and change*) Classes may decide to share their peace messages throughout the school.
- After all students have presented their posters, banners, and/or buttons, they will draw conclusions about the life of Thérèse Casgrain and other citizens to advocate for change. This may include writing letters to members of parliament about Canada as a peace keeping nation.

### **Materials/Resources:**

- Paper, markers, digital devices, chart paper, sticky notes
- Historic Quotes
- Historic Newspaper Documents
- Historical Images
- Data Collection and Interpretation Sheet
- Assessment

## Lesson Historic Quotes

**Questions: Reading/Listening to Quotes: how are they similar or different than today? (continuity and change)**

1. Isabelle Alonso, 2001

"Tant qu'une seule femme sur la planète subira les effets du sexisme, la lutte des femmes sera légitime et le féminisme nécessaire."

(As long as only one woman on the planet will suffer the effects of sexism, the struggle of women will be legitimate and feminism necessary.)

2. Thérèse Casgrain, *A Woman in a Man's World*, 1972

In 1946, Thérèse Casgrain joined the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) because she "had long seen how badly Canada needed a political party centred upon the common good rather than on the promotion of personal interests."

"Today women do not have to face the same difficulties as of old; they can make their influence more widely felt and they are listened to a little more, but in a world in which men and women are completely equal is still far from being realized. All my life, I have recommended that one must ask questions, take a position, and act upon it."

3. VOW National president Kay Macpherson

"Our work for peace, human rights, will be attacked by smear tactics because there is no reasonable argument for war, for social injustice or against peace, human rights, international cooperation...We must refuse to be drawn into this "guilt by association."

4. Lise Casgrain (Thérèse Casgrain's granddaughter)

Although today we remember mainly Thérèse Casgrain's role in advancing women's rights, Lise Casgrain points out that her grandmother also fought for men, families, minors, the living conditions of prisoners, textile workers, the miners of Asbestos and the elderly. She wanted to change Quebec society and Canada as a whole and improve the living conditions of all citizens.

"You could not say no to her. On the contrary, when she was told no, it was enough to motivate her even more to pursue the cause she wished to defend!"

5. Ursula Franklin (Canadian award winning Scientist and VOW peace activist)

"I define peace not as the absence of war, but as the presence of justice and the absence of fear. There's peace when people don't have to be afraid. And people don't have to be afraid when there is genuine justice."

## Lesson Data Collection: Historic Newspaper Articles

These articles come from the 1960s when the Voice of Women/ Voix des femmes first organized political activism in Canada.

One of the articles reports when approximately 200 members travelled by train from Montreal to Parliament Hill, November 1962. The Globe and Mail noted in the article the strong leadership of Thérèse Casgrain and the organization.

\*\* Please note, these articles are available through ProQuest. Many local libraries and institutions grant access to this database.

"Women Entrain On Peace Mission"

*The Globe and Mail*, Nov 1, 1962, pg. 17, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail, pg. 17

"Tired of War: Urges Women Act In Politics, Peace"

*The Globe and Mail*, Oct 29, 1962, pg. 17, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail

"NDP Refused Official Backing By VOW Heads"

*The Globe and Mail*, Feb 28, 1963, pg. 9, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail

"300 Irate VOW Delegates Demand Canada Voice Stand on Arms"

Kay Rex, *The Globe and Mail*, Nov 2, 1962, pg. 13, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail

"Approach Ottawa: Voice of Women Is Stronger"

*The Globe and Mail*, Nov 6, 1962, pg. 17, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail

## Lesson Data Collection: Historical Images

Image 1:

Thérèse Casgrain lectures at the Family Consumer Cooperative Saint-Hubert Street in Montreal, January 14, 1945. (Conrad Poirier/BAnQ Vieux-Montréal/P48,S1,P12345)



Image 2:

Three guests from the show "Your opinion Ladies" under the direction of Ms. Pierre Casgrain (Thérèse Casgrain), gathered around a table in the studios of the station C.B.C. (Radio-Canada) in Montreal. From left to right, we see Madame Germain Parrot, President of the Saint Vincent de Paul Women, Mrs. Juliette Dupont-Perron, Librarian at the International Service of the CBC, Ms. Thérèse Casgrain and Mrs. Daniel de Yturalde, Secretary of Montreal BCS Clinic. (Conrad Poirier/BAnQ Vieux-Montréal/P48,S1,P23134)



Image 3:

Thérèse Casgrain and Tommy Douglas, 1955. (Thérèse Casgrain / Library and Archives Canada / PA-178155)



Image 4:

Women on steps holding signs "No Nuclear Arms for Canada - Pas d'armes nucléaires pour le Canada". 1961. (Duncan Cameron / Library and Archives Canada / PA-209888)





## Data Collection and Interpretation Sheet

<b>Historic Newspaper Articles</b> Who wrote the article, when, why, and what is the message?	<b>Historic Images</b> Who is in the image, who created the image, when, why, and what is the message	<b>Observations</b> Explore and Assess: What did you observe? What are your interpretations?

