

Lesson Plan

Title: Flying and Spying: The Life of Kam Len Douglas Sam

Author: Dawn Martens 

This lesson is inspired by the [History Bits video *Flying and Spying*](#).

Grade Levels: 3/4, 4/5

Themes:

- Canada & the Global Community
- Canadian Identity
- Exploration & Geography
- National Politics
- Peace & Conflict
- Religion & Spirituality
- Settlement & Immigration
- Social Justice
- War and the Canadian Experience

Subject Area: Social Studies/History/Geography

Overview (Summary): Through exploring the life of Kam Len Douglas Sam, students will discover why Sam was the most decorated and highest-ranked Chinese Canadian in history. Students will also explore the role that racism played in his life.

Historical Thinking Concept(s):

- Establish historical significance
- Use primary source evidence
- Identify continuity and change
- Take historical perspectives
- Understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretation

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Inquire: using pictorial and written data, students will explore material related Kam Len Douglas Sam
- Collect: collect historical data from articles and pictures and draw conclusions by reflecting upon the historical perspectives presented in this data
- Analyze: using written and pictorial data, students will gather information about Kam Len Douglas Sam and analyze the immediate and long-lasting historical significance of his life experiences
- Understand: demonstrate an understanding of the historical significance of Kam Len Douglas Sam
- Communicate and Apply: summarize the significance Kam Len Douglas Sam's life and relate it to the experience of other Canadians

Background Information

The following links can be shared with students after the initial kick-off lesson plan activities have been explored:

- [Kam Len Douglas "Doug" Sam](#) (Canadian War Museum)
- [Douglas Sam](#) (The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society)

Starting Prompts

As students enter the room, make available the image of Kam Len Douglas Sam (see last page of PDF) for students, either on a classroom screen, individual devices, or hard copy pictures.

Ask the students to tell you everything they observe from the photo. If the observations do not come spontaneously, try these questions:

- Who do you think he is?
- What do you think he does?
- When and where do you think the photo is taken?
- Who do you think is taking the photo?
- Why was the photo taken?
- What details can you pick out in this photo?

After this brainstorming session, reveal the details about the man in the photograph by accessing the Background Information (see above).

Ask the students what assumptions they made about the man in the photograph. (Assumption: something that you accept as true without question or proof, Cambridge Dictionary)

Did they think he was Canadian? Why or why not?

Tell your students that if they assumed that he was not Canadian, they are not the first people to think this.

Lesson Activity

Show the [History Bits video *Flying and Spying*](#).

For younger grades (3/4): Pick four dates mentioned in the “Flying and Spying” video. Have students fold a piece of paper to create four squares. In each section, write a date at the top, then instruct students to illustrate this date in Kam Len Douglas Sam’s life.

For older grades (5/6): Using the [Establish Historical Thinking template](#) from The Historical Thinking Project, have students work in pairs or individually on the historical significance of Kam Len Douglas Sam’s life.

For all grades: As a closing whole class discussion, refer to the first scene in the *Kayak* video of the Royal Canadian Air Force Office in Victoria, BC, in 1941. Ask: why do you think Sam was rejected by the Air Force? Ask students if they have ever been rejected for something based upon their appearance. Do students think there are other cases in Canadian history where Canadians were judged based upon their ethnicity? Chart these thoughts as a whole class or individually.

Materials/Resources:

- Electronic devices, chart paper, markers
- [History Bits video *Flying and Spying*](#)
- [Establish Historical Thinking template](#)
- [Kam Len Douglas “Doug” Sam](#) (Canadian War Museum)
- [Douglas Sam](#) (The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society)
- [Chinese Canadian History](#) (The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society)

Extension Activities

- For older grades, look at [Chinese Canadians of Force 136](#). The video “Force 136: Chinese Canadian Heroes” is very informative, but suitable for older viewers due to the sensitive nature of some content. At the end of this video, Catherine Clement of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum says: “The Chinese had a double victory.” Have students research why this quote is applicable to Chinese Canadians.
- Learn more about the [history of Chinese Canadians in military service](#).
- Access the [University of British Columbia’s Open Library](#). What do students learn about Kam Len Douglas Sam with this primary source? What is a primary source? (Primary source: original materials in different formats such as letters, diaries, photographs, artefacts, etc.). See if students can find another primary source related to Sam on this site.
- Once declared missing in action, Sam was able to do espionage work in Europe. What do students think are the characteristics of a good spy? Why was Sam valuable to the Allies’ cause? Have students list characteristics that they think would make a good spy. Research other Canadian spies in WWII.
- Using a comic book template, have students create their own comic book of Sam’s life.
- In the video, Sam’s grandmother burns joss sticks. Have students research what these are and why she would use them. Are there any other Chinese traditions that can be explored? Are there other students in the class that have traditions that are part of their ethnicity? Research different traditions celebrated by different groups in Canada.
- Read “[The Many Wars of Doug Sam](#),” an article written by Sam’s son, Trevor Sam, for *Canada’s History* magazine.

