

# #OurStoriesOurVoices

# Educator's Guide

Presented by Canada's National History Society



**Welcome to**  
**#OurStoriesOurVoices**

Canada's National History Society is proud to introduce #OurStoriesOurVoices, a new national youth program that gives students aged 9 to 18 the opportunity to explore a story that is important in their community's past and share it with Canadians across the country through social media, an online contest, a virtual youth forum, and a special publication. By learning about and sharing these stories, Canadians will discover new people, places, and events that illuminate our diverse past and unite us as Canadians.

This program is designed for students who may already be familiar with Heritage Fairs/Young Citizens or are being introduced to historical inquiry for the first time. Students are encouraged to further share, connect, and explore their stories online using the hashtags #OurStoriesOurVoices / #NosHistoiresNosVoix.

To bolster students' applications of the Historical Thinking Concepts, particularly establishing historical significance and using primary source evidence, we have created the attached package of educational activities and posters to be used in your classroom.

After completing these activities, students will be prepared to participate in the #OurStoriesOurVoices national contest for the opportunity to attend a virtual youth forum and have their stories included in a publication. For more information about the contest, visit [CanadasHistory.ca/EnterOSOV](https://CanadasHistory.ca/EnterOSOV).

We can't wait to see your students' work!

Canada's National History Society

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## #OurStoriesOurVoices National Contest

The #OurStoriesOurVoices national contest will ask students to select a person, place, event, or object in their community that other Canadians should know about. Students will share their research and analysis in a creative format of their choosing.

Some suggested formats are:

- Video (60 seconds maximum)
- Essay (500-600 words)
- Photo essay (at least 5 images with captions)
- Illustration
- Poem
- Song
- Radio broadcast

Students will argue for the **historical significance** of their topic by connecting their local story to greater moments and movements in Canadian history and explaining why this story matters.

Students will also support their work with **primary and secondary sources** and evidence of strong historical inquiry.

Additional short answer response questions in the application will ask students to identify their choice of topic and summarize why this story is important to their community and significant to Canadian history.

A panel of judges will review the submissions and select 30 recipients from across the country to attend a virtual youth forum and have their stories included in a publication.

Deadline for submissions: **December 3, 2021**

# #OURSTORIESOURVOICES

## TEACHER WARM-UPS...

### WHAT KINDS OF PROJECTS CAN MY STUDENTS SUBMIT?

Students may submit any form of creative response, including projects they've already done in school or for a virtual heritage fair. Some examples include — but are not limited to — videos, essays, short stories, illustrations, poems, songs, and radio broadcasts.

### WHAT ARE THE CONTEST RULES AND ELIGIBILITY?

Find the complete [contest rules and eligibility](#) online.

### DO PROJECTS HAVE TO BE ON A CERTAIN TOPIC?

Projects can be on any historical person, place, event, or object in students' communities that they think other Canadians should know about.

### WHAT RESOURCES CAN I SHARE WITH MY STUDENTS?

Share and discuss the posters on community, historical significance, and primary source evidence. You can also direct students to the [guide for choosing a topic and creative response](#).

### DO STUDENTS HAVE TO COMPLETE THE IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN THE CONTEST?

The materials in this guide will help students better understand the concepts of community, historical significance, and primary source evidence, but they are not required to submit an entry.

### CAN STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IF THEY'RE HOMESCHOOLED OR LEARNING REMOTELY?

Yes!

### WHERE DO I DIRECT STUDENTS ONCE THEY'RE READY TO SUBMIT THEIR PROJECT?

Students must first create a [SurveyMonkey Apply account](#) before completing a contest submission form (which also requires a signed permission form).



FIND EVERYTHING AT THE STUDENT WEB PORTAL!

[CanadasHistory.ca/EnterOSOV](https://CanadasHistory.ca/EnterOSOV)

Sharing community stories means first identifying the communities they come from. But...

# WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

When you think about it, there's no single right answer.  
Communities can:

- be based on connections that can be seen or simply felt.
- exist across great distances or localized in one place.
- be something you are born into or choose later in life.
- change a lot over time or only change a little.
- revolve around a single shared interest, a government, or a belief system.
- have few differences of opinion or many competing viewpoints.

**What does community mean to you  
and what are some communities that  
you're connected to?**



**Which community stories do you think  
more people should know about?**

# HOW CAN I TELL IF SOMETHING IS HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT TO MY COMMUNITY?

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*Historical significance involves evaluating what is important to learn about the past. Historians use different criteria to help them make judgments about the historical significance of people, places, things, and events.*

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## ASK:

- Did it result in change for my community?
  - Did it have long-lasting consequences for my community?
  - Does it reveal something important about issues my community has faced in the past or present?
  - Does it play an important role in stories told by my community?
- 

## TIPS:

- A person who is historically significant does not need to be famous. We can examine the lives of ordinary people in the past to gain a better idea of what daily life was like.
- Historical significance is not permanent. Someone or something that was once considered to be historically significant might not be significant today.
- What one person considers to be historically significant might not be the same for someone else. Historical significance can depend on the communities you are part of.
- You must be able to explain why someone or something is historically significant. It's not enough to just say "it's in our history textbook" or "I'm interested in it."



# HOW DO I KNOW IF A PIECE OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IS RELIABLE?

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*History involves the interpretation of evidence. When primary and secondary sources are analyzed they become “evidence” which plays an important role in historical inquiry.*

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# 1

**Primary sources** are accounts, traces, relics, or records created by people who lived during the time under study (e.g., speeches, diaries, newspaper articles, monuments, songs, recipes, toys, photographs).

# 2

**Secondary sources** are created after the time period under study by someone who did not experience firsthand or participate in the events discussed (e.g., textbooks, books, blog posts, documentaries).

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*Things aren't always straightforward! Sometimes the same source can be both a primary or secondary source, depending on the questions we ask about the source.*

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## ASK:

- Did I find the piece of evidence in a repository of sources? (e.g., museum, archive, library, historical society, community knowledge keeper)
- Is the primary source authentic (i.e., not fake)?
- Is the author of the secondary source trustworthy (i.e., an expert)?
- Have experts found the primary or secondary source to be reliable (i.e., they used it as historical evidence in their own work)?



## **Designing a Commemorative Coin: Historical Significance in Canadian History**

In this lesson students learn to identify and evaluate historical significance by designing a commemorative coin that features a person, place, thing, or event in Canadian history.

**Created by:** Sara Karn, PhD Student in the Faculty of Education, Queen's University

**Grade Levels:** 4-12

**Subject Area:** History, Social Studies, Commemoration

### **Lesson Overview:**

In this lesson students learn to identify people, places, things, or events that are historically significant in Canadian history. They will use a provided set of criteria when evaluating historical significance. Students will begin by examining the historical significance of Viola Desmond, and consider why she was selected to appear on the ten-dollar bank note in Canada. Next, students will demonstrate their understanding by selecting a historically significant person, place, thing, or event and justify their reasoning for why they/it should appear on a new commemorative coin.

**Time Required:** One class period

**Historical Thinking Concept:** Historical Significance

### **Learning Outcomes:**

#### *Students will:*

- Identify people, places, things, and events that are historically significant in Canadian history
- Evaluate the historical significance of people, places, things, and events in Canadian history using a set of criteria
- Consider present-day situations in which decisions about historical significance are made

## Background Information:

“Historians establish historical significance. We can’t know all of the past – there is simply too much there. Why do we care, today, about certain events, people, and trends in the past, and not others? Particular facts become significant when we see them as part of a larger narrative that is relevant to important issues that concern us today” (Peter Seixas & Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*, p. 5).

Historical significance is the process used to evaluate what is important to learn about the past. Historians use different criteria to help them make judgments about the historical significance of people, places, things, and events. For example, historically significant people, places, things, and events often contributed to change and/or reveal something important about issues in history or contemporary life.

Important points:

- A person who is historically significant does not need to be famous – examining the lives of ordinary people in the past can give us an idea of what life was like during a particular time and place.
- Historical significance is not permanent – someone or something that was considered to be historically significant in the past might not be significant for us today.
- What one person considers to be historically significant might not be the same for someone else – historical significance can depend on someone’s background, experiences, and where they live.

## Lesson Activity:

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

Lead a class discussion to activate prior knowledge about the concept of historical significance.

- When we are learning about history, how do we decide what or who to learn about?
- What makes a person, place, thing, or event historically significant?

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

Pass around student handouts.

Provide students with a set of criteria that can be used to evaluate historical significance (explain to students that the person, place, thing, or event does not need to meet all of the following criteria)

- Did the person, place, or event result in change?
  - Number of people impacted - How many people were impacted by the change?
  - Depth of change - How strongly was the change felt?
  - Length of change - How long did the change last?
  - Pace of change - How quickly or slowly did the change happen?
- Does the person, place, or event reveal something important about issues in history or contemporary life?
  - Political importance
  - Economic importance
  - Social importance
  - Cultural importance
  - Environmental importance

Pass around a Canadian \$10 bill that features Viola Desmond (or show an image of one).

Explain that the Bank of Canada held a selection and public consultation process to choose a Canadian woman to appear on the \$10 bank note in 2018.

Read the write-up about Viola Desmond's background, experiences, and accomplishments from the Bank of Canada website.

Watch the Heritage Minutes video on Viola Desmond.

Encourage students to record details from the write-up and video under the various criteria for evaluating historical significance [see Chart 1 in student handout].

Ask: Why is Viola Desmond historically significant?

Encourage discussion and questions.

***Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?***

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students.

Read the following prompt:

*The Royal Canadian Mint has decided to issue a new commemorative coin to add to its growing collection. You have been asked to recommend a person, place, thing, or event that is historically significant in Canadian history. Using the criteria for evaluating historical significance, explain why your selection should appear on the new coin.*

Instruct students to complete Chart 2 in the handout, using sources they gather from the Internet and/or books about the person, place, thing, or event they selected.

Provide an opportunity for each group to present their selection to the class with a short 2-minute summary.

Lead a class discussion to reflect on the activity:

- How easy or challenging was it to select only one significant person, place, thing, or event for the coin?
- What other situations (besides designing commemorative coins or bank notes) require us to make decisions about the historical significance of certain people, places, things, or events? [naming streets or buildings, designing textbooks, creating lessons for students]

## Materials/Resources:

- Student Handouts
- Bank of Canada: Viola Desmond  
<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/vertical10/banknoteable-woman/>  
<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/backgrounder-canadian-woman.pdf>
- Heritage Minutes: Viola Desmond  
<https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/viola-desmond>
- New \$10 bill (or an image of one)  
<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/vertical10/>

## Extension Activity:

Have students actually design a coin (drawing or digital mock-up) featuring the significant person, place, thing, or event in Canadian history they selected. Include a short write-up that explains their design decision-making process.

Have students explore the activities "[A Noteworthy Woman](#)" and "[A Bank NOTE-able Canadian](#)" by the Bank of Canada Museum.

## Designing a Commemorative Coin

### Chart 1

Why is Viola Desmond historically significant?		
	Criteria	Details
Did the person, place, thing, or event result in <b>change</b> ?	Number of People Impacted <i>How many people were impacted by the change?</i>	
	Depth of Change <i>How strongly was the change felt?</i>	
	Length of Change <i>How long did the change last?</i>	
	Pace of Change <i>How quickly or slowly did the change happen?</i>	
Does the person, place, thing, or event <b>reveal</b> something important about issues in history or contemporary life?	Political importance	
	Economic importance	
	Social importance	
	Cultural importance	
	Environmental importance	

## Designing a Commemorative Coin

### Chart 2

Selected Person, Place, Thing, or Event		
	Criteria	Details
Did the person, place, thing, or event result in <b>change</b> ?	Number of People Impacted <i>How many people were impacted by the change?</i>	
	Depth of Change <i>How strongly was the change felt?</i>	
	Length of Change <i>How long did the change last?</i>	
	Pace of Change <i>How quickly or slowly did the change happen?</i>	
Does the person, place, thing, or event <b>reveal</b> something important about issues in history or contemporary life?	Political importance	
	Economic importance	
	Social importance	
	Cultural importance	
	Environmental importance	



## **Seeking Sources: Creating a Primary Source Database**

In this lesson students learn to locate primary sources online to create a class database for future historical inquiry projects.

**Created by:** Sara Karn, PhD Student in the Faculty of Education, Queen's University

**Grade Levels:** 4-12

**Subject Area:** History, Social Studies, Primary Sources

### **Lesson Overview:**

In this lesson students learn to locate primary sources in reliable local, provincial/territorial, and national repositories to create a class database for future historical inquiry projects. First, they learn/review the differences between primary and secondary sources by completing a mind map with definitions and examples for each type of source. Next, students follow along as the teacher demonstrates how to conduct online searches for reliable sources, using the example of historical newspapers. The lesson culminates with students developing a list of website links and short descriptions for the following types of primary sources: documents, photographs, videos, oral testimonies, and artifacts.

**Time Required:** One class period

**Historical Thinking Concept:** Evidence

### **Learning Outcomes:**

*Students will:*

- Define the terms primary source and secondary source.
- Identify examples of primary and secondary sources.
- Locate primary sources in reliable local, provincial/territorial, and national online repositories.
- Explain the process used to determine whether primary source repositories are reliable.

## Background Information:

“Ultimately, the foundations for all claims in history are the traces left over from the times in which past events occurred. If we rely on the work of earlier historians, we do so knowing that these historians (or the historians they relied on) went back to primary sources. Making an historical claim that others can justifiably believe, then, requires finding, selecting, contextualizing, interpreting, and corroborating sources for an historical argument” (Peter Seixas & Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*, p. 5).

History involves the interpretation of evidence. When primary and secondary sources are analyzed they become “evidence” which plays an important role in historical inquiry.

Primary sources are accounts, traces, relics, or records created by people who lived during the time under study (e.g., speeches, diaries, newspaper articles, monuments, songs, recipes, toys, photographs, etc.). Secondary sources are created after the time period under study by someone who did not experience firsthand or participate in the events discussed (e.g., textbooks, books, blog posts, documentaries, etc.).

It should be noted that things aren’t always so straightforward! Sometimes the same source can be both a primary or secondary source, depending on how it is used. For example, a newspaper article from 2014 that describes how the First World War began in 1914 could be a secondary source (it was created by someone who did not experience the war firsthand who relied on other sources to construct their account) and a primary source (it documents how the war was commemorated and discussed during the war’s centenary in 2014). This newspaper article would become a primary or secondary source based on the particular questions asked by historians.

## Lesson Activity:

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

Ask questions about primary and secondary sources to activate prior knowledge.

Record ideas on a mind map using a white board or virtual white board. Students complete student handout 1.

- What is a primary source? Examples?
- What is a secondary source? Examples?

Explain that sometimes it can be difficult and time-consuming to access reliable

sources so the class will develop a database of website links to use for future historical inquiry projects.

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

Project student handout 2 on the board or share the teacher's computer screen.

Explain that museums, archives, libraries, historical societies, and community knowledge keepers are reliable repositories of primary sources. Reliable means good quality and trustworthy. A repository is a place where things of historical value are stored or a person who has been trusted with valuable knowledge.

Provide an example for students:

1. Type into a search engine "newspaper archive" and "[your town/city]"
2. Search through the list of results and select a website from a reliable repository (e.g., digitized local newspapers from your town/city library).
3. Scroll through the website to locate information about the author/ organization, date last updated, and the types of primary sources available.

Encourage students to practice using their devices to search for local, provincial/ territorial, and national newspaper databases, using similar search terms as above.

Have students describe the websites to the class or share links using discussion boards or chat features in online learning platforms.

Record website descriptions and links under each column in the "newspapers" row of the chart.

Ask: How do we know these are reliable websites for accessing primary sources?

Encourage discussion and questions.

***Applying: How will students demonstrate their understanding?***

Divide the class into 5 groups.

Assign each group one of the 5 remaining types of primary sources.

Instruct students to complete their section of the chart in student handout 2. They must provide 3 website descriptions and links under each category (local, provincial/ territorial, national).

Provide an opportunity for each group to present a short 2-minute description of their links and explanations of how they know the websites selected are reliable.

Lead a class discussion to reflect on the activity:

- How easy or challenging was it to find primary sources (different types, local vs. national)?
- How might you use this class database for a future historical inquiry project?

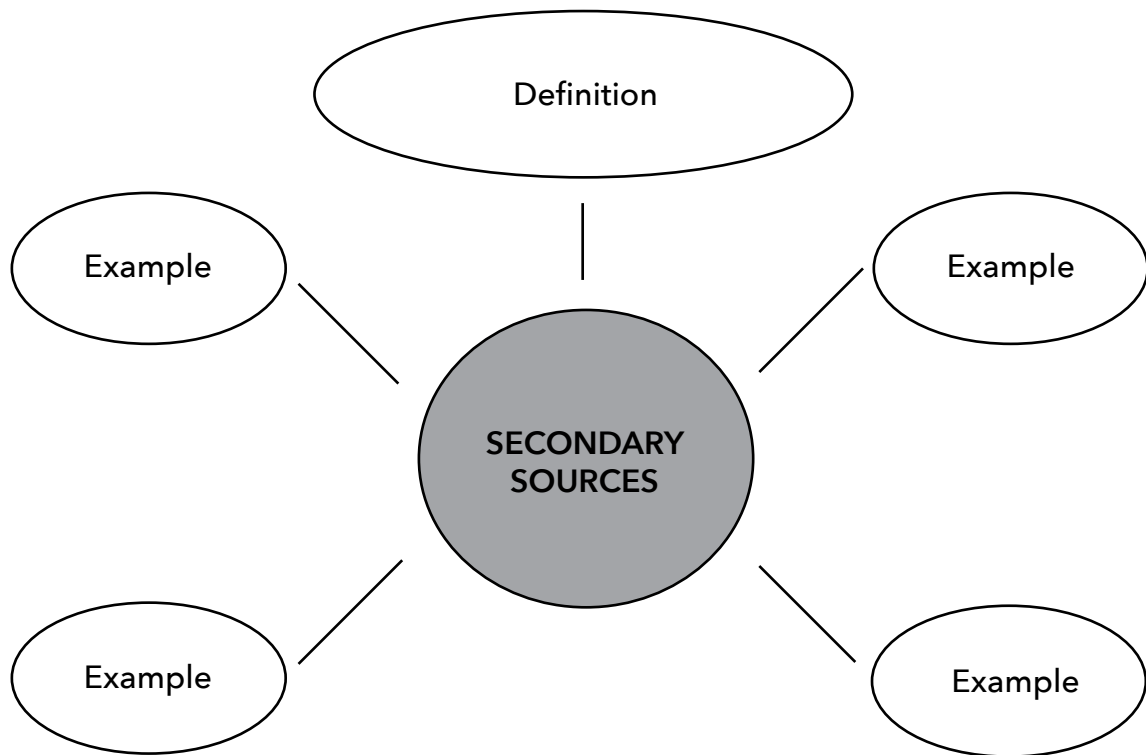
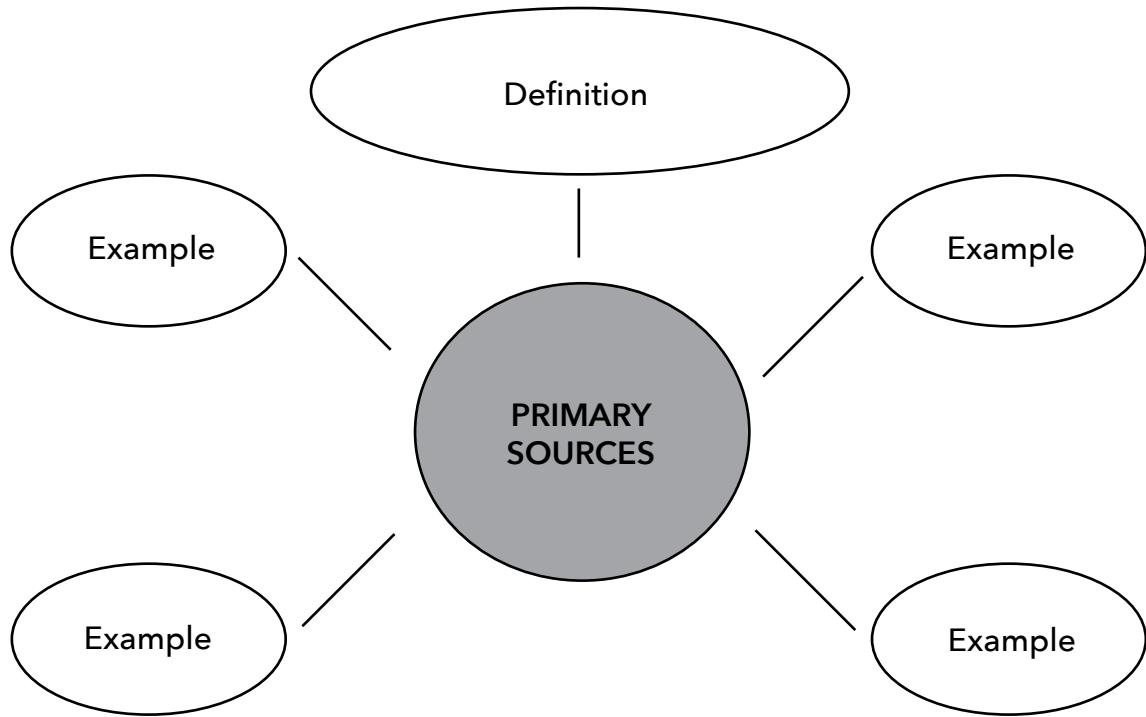
**Materials/Resources:**

- Student Handout 1 - one copy per student
- Student Handout 2 - saved as a Google Doc or on similar sharing platform
- White board or virtual white board
- Laptops or other devices (one per student)

**Extension Activity:**

Have students explore the website links provided by other groups and select one primary source they might use for a historical inquiry project.

# Seeking Sources Student Handout 1



## **Seeking Sources Student Handout 2**

Our Class Primary Source Database			
Source Type	Local	Provincial/Territorial	National
Newspapers			
Documents			
Photographs			

**Our Class Primary Source Database**

Source Type	Local	Provincial/Territorial	National
Videos			
Oral Testimonies			
Artifacts			



## **Starting off on the Right Foot (Choosing a Topic and Creative Response that Work Together)**

*Before starting, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with the #OurStoriesOurVoices national contest description and criteria.*

Did you know that some of the work for your #OurStoriesOurVoices project has already been completed? Lessons on historical significance and primary source evidence have helped orient the “what” of your project. Now, here’s how to figure out the “how.”

### **1. Choosing a Topic**

**How do I know which topic to choose?**

You are encouraged to consider a few different topics before committing to one. Sometimes, new elements come to light as you’re doing your initial research, and you may find inspiration where you least expect it. Think of research as an ongoing process that takes place before, during, and after choosing your topic rather than a single step.

Your topic should represent a person, place, event, or thing in your community (Reminder: there are varying definitions of “community”) and be interesting to you, or something you would like to learn more about. Your topic can be on anything as long as you can argue for its historical significance to Canada.

*Can you argue for the historical significance of your topic and back it up with reliable evidence?*

**What if I choose a topic and get stuck?**

Asking for help is your best resource. If after doing preliminary research (i.e. through books, the internet, etc.) you find yourself stuck, ask librarians, teachers, history experts (e.g. people who work and volunteer at museums/heritage organizations), locals, Elders, peers, or other community figures to help point you in the right direction. They may know of a great archive, database, book, newspaper article, or simply the right person to talk to.

You should incorporate the most important pieces of information about your topic in a concise manner, which can be tricky. Remember, #OurStoriesOurVoices is not about giving a broad overview of a topic, but rather arguing for its historical significance.

*What are the most important pieces of information that support your argument?*

## 2. Planning a Creative Response

Does it matter which creative response I choose?

You are encouraged to select a creative response that you think best suits your topic. Here are two different approaches you might take:

- Would your particular topic be better understood using a certain creative response? Are there any creative responses that may limit an understanding of your topic? Think sounds, visuals, style, tone (empowering, somber, quirky), whether or not the topic is personal to you, etc.
- Utilize the resources you have at your disposal and take the opportunity to hone your existing skills in video editing, writing, singing, drawing, public speaking, etc. – or challenge yourself to try something new.

### Additional Tips

- Always keep track of your sources so you can reference them properly (style guides will vary). If you are unsure about a source, ask a peer or teacher.
- Use images and music that are in the public domain or get permission from copyright holders. If you're unsure about copyright, ask a peer or teacher.
- You can use free software for video editing (e.g. iMovie, Video editor for Windows) and audio editing (e.g. GarageBand, Audacity), or any other software you're familiar with or already have.
- Look up best practices for public speaking or filming/recording to give your project an extra edge.
- Double check your submission for any spelling, grammar, or editing errors. It's a good idea to have someone else look over your submission, too.
- Have fun and let your creativity flow!

### #OurStoriesOurVoices Contest

Visit [CanadasHistory.ca/EnterOSOv](https://CanadasHistory.ca/EnterOSOv) to read the contest rules and learn how to submit an entry.