



Lesson Plan

It's An Honour!

Objective of the lesson plan

This document is for teachers and educators across the country. The objective of this lesson is to teach students about the Canadian Honours System and to foster a renewed sense of national pride and identity in the lead-up to the 150th anniversary of Canadian confederation.

Activities and grade level

This lesson plan proposes several activities designed for different grade levels. Pick and choose one or a combination of activities that will meet your class's needs.

Links with curricula across Canada

Canadian identity; community engagement; personal and societal values; social studies; prominent citizens; Remembrance Day; arts and culture; research, writing, speaking and presentation skills.

Learning outcomes

After completing a combination of the proposed activities, students will:

1. Be familiar with some of Canada's national honours, such as the Order of Canada and the Medal of Bravery;
2. Know that the governor general plays an important role in celebrating excellence;
3. Recognize the importance of honouring those who deserve our gratitude; and
4. Appreciate and feel proud of the exceptional accomplishments of some of their local and national heroes.

Teacher's preparation

For background information on national honours and on the governor general of Canada, please visit the following sections of our website:

- gg.ca/Responsibilities
- gg.ca/GovernorGeneral
- gg.ca/Honours

Introductory Activity: Defining the Canadian Honours System

The goal of this activity is to familiarize students with the notion of honours and with the role of the governor general in granting national honours. The activity is a class discussion. Below you will find a series of steps to help you conduct the discussion with your students.

Level: Grades 7 to 9 / Secondary 1 to 3

The vocabulary and some of the content can be adapted for younger students.

Students who already are familiar with the role of the governor general may begin directly with a discussion on the significance of granting honours.

Duration: 30 minutes

You will need: Access to the Internet (for step 5)

Note: For an in-depth educational resource on the role of the governor general, download our edukit on the subject, available at gg.ca/InClass.

Step 1

Share with students the following information:

- Canada is a constitutional monarchy, where the duties of head of State and head of government are distinct.
- Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Queen of Canada and head of State.
- The governor general represents The Queen in Canada and exercises the duties of Canada's head of State here and abroad.
- The governor general of Canada is His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston.
- One of the governor general's responsibilities is to encourage excellence by granting honours.

Step 2

Engage students in a reflection on what "granting honours" means to them. Lead them in their reflection by asking questions about awards they are familiar with at school or in their community. Then ask them what kind of actions or achievements they think deserve to be rewarded or honoured in a special manner. Finally, ask their opinion on who should present the award or the honour to the recipient.

Step 3

Compare the results of this reflection with the following statements and information:

- New honours are created on the recommendation of the prime minister.
- The Queen approves all new honours.
- The governor general presents honours on behalf of The Queen.
- Granting honours is a gracious, tangible and lasting way to pay tribute to people whose achievements are exceptional, who have performed outstanding acts of bravery, or who have benefited Canada or humanity.
- Each year, hundreds of Canadians earn our applause and gratitude: from community volunteers to astronauts, from actors to members of the military, from scholars to athletes. The Canadian Honours System gives them the opportunity to join an order or to be granted a decoration or a medal in recognition for their tremendous contributions to our society.



- Some examples of national awards and honours:
 - *The Victoria Cross*: Canada’s highest honour, given to members of the Canadian Forces for exceptional bravery and valour in a combat situation;
 - *The Order of Canada*: given for sustained and significant contribution, dedication and service;
 - *Decorations for Bravery*: given to those who have risked their lives to save or protect another;
 - *The Governor General’s Caring Canadian Award*: given to volunteers;
 - *Meritorious Service Decorations*: given for outstanding contributions in a particular field;
 - *Exemplary Service Medals*: given for long and outstanding service (for police, firefighters, etc.);
 - *The Governor General’s Academic Medal*: given to the student graduating with the highest average in his or her school;

There are many other national honours: to discover them, visit gg.ca/Honours.

Step 4

Mention that His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston’s personal mandate is to bring Canadians together to build a smarter, more caring nation. Then ask students to explain in their own words how granting honours can contribute to this mandate.

Step 5

In groups or individually, ask students to look up a few local recipients from their community using our search page at gg.ca/Recipients. Discuss in class what these recipients did to receive their award or honour.

Discovery Activity: Scavenger Hunt

The goal of this activity is to apply students’ skills in researching precise information on a website. While searching for clues, students will learn more about Canadian honours. All the answers are on our website (gg.ca).

Level: Grades 4 to 12 / Grade 4 to Secondary 5.
 For junior students, allow more time to complete this activity.
 For senior students, make it a race against the clock.

Duration: 10 minutes.

You will need: 1. Activity sheet 1: “Scavenger Hunt” (download from gg.ca/InClass).
 2. Pencils and erasers.
 3. Access to the Internet.

Part A – Matching game

Answer key: 1. D 2. F 3. B 4. A 5. E 6. C

Part B – Questions and answers

Answer key:

1. The Victoria Cross.
2. Governors general Adrienne Clarkson, Michaëlle Jean or Jeanne Sauvé.
3. A snowflake. Every snowflake is unique, just like each person who is invested into the Order of Canada.
4. For possible answers, go to gg.ca/Recipients.
5. Tianah Auger rescued two young girls from drowning in the Heart River, in Peace River, Alberta.
6. A Caring Canadian Award is given to someone who volunteers his or her time to help others.



7. The Canadian National Vimy Memorial, in France.
8. The red and white colours refer to the Canadian flag and to Canada in general.

Quiz Activity: Test Your Knowledge

The goal of this activity is to review some of the basic information acquired during the introductory activity and the scavenger hunt. All of the answers can be found on our website (gg.ca).

Level: Grades 4 to 12 / Grade 4 to Secondary 5.

Duration: 10 minutes or less.

You will need: 1. Activity sheet 2: “Test Your Knowledge” (download from gg.ca/InClass).
2. Pencils.
3. Access to the Internet.

Answer key: 1. A 2. A 3. A 4. B 5. B 6. C 7. D 8. B

Research Activities: From Local Heroes to Nominating Someone

The goal of these activities is for students to take what they learned about honours and apply it to their community. Choose the activity appropriate for your class. Each activity sheet provides detailed instructions for the students. Students can work on these research projects individually or in teams.

Local Heroes

Level: Grades 4 to 6.

Duration: 30 to 60 minutes.

You will need: 1. Activity sheet 3: “Local Heroes” (download from gg.ca/InClass).
2. Pencils and erasers.
3. Access to the Internet (gg.ca/Honours) or to a list of honours and awards.

Specific goal: To get students to reflect upon extraordinary people who have made a difference in their school or in their community, and to appreciate how these “heroes” can impact their lives.

Steps: 1. Ask students to fill in Part One of the activity sheet (identifying personal heroes).
2. Conduct a class discussion to share and compare each others’ personal heroes.
3. Ask students to work in teams to select one hero and decide which honour would best suit that hero’s accomplishments. Students will need to have a list of possible honours and awards (give them access to gg.ca/Honours or post a list on your classroom board).
4. Each team presents the result of their work to the rest of the class.



Recipients in My Community

Level: Grades 7 to 9 / Secondary 1 to 3.

Duration: 60 to 90 minutes.

You will need:

1. Activity sheet 4: “Recipients in My Community” (download from gg.ca/InClass).
2. Paper, pencils and erasers, or a computer.
3. Access to the Internet.
4. Access to a library (optional).
5. Art supplies (optional, for step 3).

Specific goal: To get students to find and learn about recipients from their community who have received one of our national honours and to appreciate the exceptional contributions they have made to our society.

Steps:

1. Give students access to the search page gg.ca/Recipients, and ask them to find three recipients from their community.
2. Ask students to research one of these recipients and fill in the chart on their activity sheet.
3. Have students prepare and present their findings to the rest of the class using a variety of media.

Nominate Someone

Level: Grades 10 to 12 / Secondary 4 and 5.

Duration: 120 minutes.

You will need:

1. Activity sheet 5: “Nominate Someone” (download from gg.ca/InClass).
2. Activity sheet 4: “Recipients in My Community” (optional, for Step 1).
3. Paper, pencils and erasers, or a computer.
4. Access to the Internet.
5. Access to a library (optional).

Specific goal: To get students to reflect upon, write about, feel proud of, and possibly nominate someone who deserves one of Canada’s national honours.

Steps:

1. (Optional) Ask students to complete Part One of activity sheet 4, “Recipients in My Community,” to familiarize themselves with the accomplishments of recipients who received national honours.
2. Ask students to follow the instructions on activity sheet 5, “Nominate Someone,” and write an essay on someone who they think deserves one of our national honours or awards.
3. (Optional) Have students review the eligibility criteria and nomination process (at gg.ca/Nominate) and submit their chosen candidate for one of our national honours.
4. Conduct a class discussion on how all these deserving people can become role models for others and on the effect role models can have on our lives.

Teacher Feedback

We value your feedback. Please let us know what you thought of the materials provided. How would you improve them? Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated. Email us at eduzone@gg.ca.

