



Lesson Plan

It's An Honour!

INTRODUCTION

Lesson objective

This lesson plan is for teachers and educators across the country. The objective of its lesson is to teach students about the Canadian Honours System and to foster a renewed sense of national pride and identity.

Activities and grade level

This lesson plan proposes six 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; research, writing, speaking and presentation skills.

Learning outcomes

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

1. Be familiar with some of our 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;
4. Appreciate and feel proud of the exceptional accomplishments of some of their local and national heroes.

Teacher's preparation

For background information on honours and on the governor general of Canada, visit our website at www.gg.ca/en/honours/canadian-honours and www.gg.ca/en/governor-general/role/responsibilities.

Your feedback is important

Please send us your comments, questions and suggestions at guide@gg.ca. Indicate “Educational Resources” in the subject line.

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.

Grade level

For students in grades 7 to 9 (Secondary 1 to 3).

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

Duration

30 minutes

You will need

- Access to the Internet

Optional

- Educational kit on the role of the governor general, available at www.gg.ca/en/educational-resources/role.

Step 1

Note: Students who are familiar with the role of the governor general may go directly to step 2.

Share with students the following information:

- Canada is a constitutional monarchy, where the duties of head of State and head of government are distinct.
- His Majesty King Charles III is King of Canada and head of State.
- The governor general of Canada is Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon.
- The governor general represents The King in Canada and exercises the duties of Canada's head of State here and abroad.
- 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 King approves all new honours.
- The governor general presents honours on behalf of The King.
- 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;
 - *Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers*: given to recognize the exceptional volunteer achievements of Canadians from across the country in a wide range of fields;
 - *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 (note: it is an award and not an honour).

There are other national honours: discover them at www.gg.ca/en/honours/canadian-honours.

Step 4

Ask students to look up a few local recipients from their community using our online directory at www.gg.ca/en/honours/recipients. This exercise can be done in group or individually. 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 at www.gg.ca/en/honours.

Grade level

For students of 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

- *Activity Sheet 1: “Scavenger Hunt”* (download from www.gg.ca/en/educational-resources/honours)
- Pencils and erasers
- Access to the Internet

Answer key for Part A – Matching game

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

Answer key for Part B – Questions and answers

1. The Victoria Cross.
2. Governors General Jeanne Sauvé, Adrienne Clarkson or Michaëlle Jean.
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 www.gg.ca/en/honours/recipients.
5. Tianah Auger rescued two young girls from drowning in the Heart River, in Peace River, Alberta.
6. This medal 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 at www.gg.ca.

Grade level

For students in grades 4 to 12 (Grade 4 to Secondary 5).

Duration

10 minutes or less

You will need

- *Activity Sheet 2: “Test Your Knowledge”* (www.gg.ca/en/educational-resources/honours)
- Pencils



- Access to the Internet

Answer key

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

GOAL OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES BELOW

The goal of the three activities below 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.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY 1: LOCAL HEROES

Grade level

For students in grades 4 to 6

Duration

30 to 60 minutes

Specific learning outcome

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.

You will need

- *Activity Sheet 3*: “Local Heroes” (www.gg.ca/en/educational-resources/honours)
- Pencils and erasers
- Access to www.gg.ca/en/honours or to a list of honours and awards

Steps

1. Ask students to fill in Part One of *Activity Sheet 3* (“My heroes at school or in my community”).
2. Conduct a class discussion to share and compare each other’s personal heroes (Part Two of the activity sheet).
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 (www.gg.ca/en/honours or list posted on the classroom board). They can enter the results of their findings in Part Three of *Activity Sheet 3* (“Our Hero”).



- Each team presents the result of their work to the rest of the class.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY 2: RECIPIENTS IN MY COMMUNITY

Grade level

For students of grades 7 to 9 (Secondary 1 to 3).

Duration

60 to 90 minutes

Specific learning outcome

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.

You will need

- *Activity Sheet 4*: “Recipients in My Community” (www.gg.ca/en/educational-resources/honours)
- Paper, pencils and erasers, or a computer
- Access to the Internet
- Access to a library (optional)
- Art supplies (optional, for step 3)

Steps

1. Give students access to our online directory (www.gg.ca/en/honours/recipients). Ask them to find three recipients from their community and to fill in the chart titled “Recipients in My Community” on their copy of *Activity Sheet 4* (page 2).
2. Ask students to research one of these recipients and fill in the chart titled “Recipient’s profile” on their copy of *Activity Sheet 4* (page 3).
3. Have students prepare and present their findings to the rest of the class using a variety of media.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY 3: NOMINATE SOMEONE

Grade level

For students in grades 10 to 12 (Secondary 4 and 5).

Duration

120 minutes



Specific learning outcome

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

You will need

- *Activity Sheet 5*: “Nominate Someone” (www.gg.ca/en/educational-resources/honours)
- *Activity Sheet 4*: “Recipients in My Community” (optional, for Step 1)
- Computer or paper, pencils and erasers
- Access to the Internet
- Access to a library (optional)

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 www.gg.ca/en/honours/nominate-someone and submit their chosen candidate for one of the following national honours:
 - The Order of Canada;
 - Decorations for Bravery;
 - Meritorious Service Decorations (Civil Division);
 - The Polar Medal;
 - The Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers.
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.

