

## REVIEW

### Snapshots in Time: Significant Events in Canadian History

This is a set of 50 cards that form a visual timeline. It can be used as a learning game, teaching resource, or assessment tool. It is produced by The Critical Thinking Consortium <<https://tc2.ca>> and sells for \$23.95 per deck or \$22.95 for orders of 5+. Set 1 is available now (first 50 events), with plans for two additional sets.

Some Social Studies teachers sat down to have a look and discuss ways we could use the Snapshot Cards in our classrooms. As part of a “thinktank” of Social Studies teachers beyond the school walls (the Pacific Slope Consortium), we have developed a similar unpublished resource concept for BC Social Studies. Our project involved a box of Industrial Revolution “objects” including large cards, and card set of sorts that examined Canada at War (multiple conflicts throughout our history) and we were glad to see that someone has taken this kind of idea to the production level. We see these Snapshot cards as a missing link in Social Studies -- a kind of “manipulative” for historical and geographic inquiry, a tactile learning resource that provides more versatility than a textbook or handouts in terms of teaching, learning, and assessment.



*Snapshots in Time  
Set 1*

*Card-based learning resource from  
The Critical Thinking Consortium*

*photo by G. Thielmann*

#### **We noticed**

Great selection of events -- they represent a balance between the “canon” of Canadian history (Confederation conference, Klondike Gold Rush, etc.) and events that sometimes don’t get the coverage they deserve (e.g. Harper apologizes for residential schools)

Front side has a high quality image and a quick overview, backside provides more detail and nuance, explains what is significant about the event, and provides the date/s.

events span from pre-contact to near present, thus a range of topics that will come up in BC Social Studies 8, 9, and 10

#### **Wishes**

The deck includes suggested gameplay for three variations on a timeline activity. These each have potential, but there are many more uses for the cards. No doubt the author/s will develop a teacher guide with further suggestions related to teaching, learning, and assessment using the cards. We think teachers would like to see a document listing each of the events, so they can weave the cards into their instructional design.

If sets 2 and 3 (events 51-100 and 101-150) are also from Canadian history, the decks could be combined and then split into course grouping -- Social Studies 8, 9, and 10. Perhaps the other sets will deal with world history. We noticed the absence of many wartime events -- perhaps one of the decks will feature conflict.

## More uses

We brainstormed additional ways the cards could be used. Some of these are activities we use with our prototype/amateur resources (card activities, box sets, etc.) and we're happy to share these ideas and invite others to do the same -- how might you use Snapshots in Time? Note that some of these activities will require having more than one deck per class. This is a quick list we came up with in less than an hour -- "spitballing" as they say -- so forgive any redundancies or obvious misses.

1. Weekly Snapshot. Students get a card at the beginning of the the week. They have some time to conduct further research, perhaps develop and respond to an inquiry question, and at the end of the week either submit something (not necessarily written) or present back to the class with their inquiry related to the card's topic or theme.
2. Build Out. Student takes a card and sets out to find additional sources that help build understanding of the event. These could be restricted to primary vs secondary evidence. The selection should not be random but aimed at a purpose, e.g. offering conflicting vs corroborating viewpoints, highlight the ethical dimensions of the event, etc.
3. Wall Timeline. Make space on the classroom wall or bulletin board (or school display case) for pinning cards. each day, a card is picked at random and discussed by the teacher and students. 5Ws, 6 Historical Thinking Concepts, why should we care, etc. -- whatever teachers like to do. 5 minutes or a whole class. After, the card is pinned on the wall according to it's place on a timeline.
4. Theme Board. Same as Wall Timeline, but the cards are pinned according to other categories, perhaps after some debate about how it fits. Historical Thinking Concepts could be used, also kinds of significance (social, political, human rights, geographic/environmental. Could also use content themes, e.g. in Social Studies 9 these would be Revolution & Change, Imperialism & Colonialism, Migration & Shifting Population, Nationalism & Nation-Building, Regional & Global Conflict, Injustices & Rights, Land & People.
5. Debate Prompt. In groups or as a class, student (or partners) take a card (or pick one; this makes a difference), and build points to defend why "their" event should be considered the most significant compared to others in the group or class. Could be a judge/vote process or just comparative arguments. Finish with a discussion on how significance is established.
6. Causality. Groups get a number of cards and set out to find ones that have a cause/consequence relationship. Discuss how the relationship works, etc. (lots of other steps could be included here). Share out the pair that the group thinks shows the strongest link.
7. Patterns. Same as Causality but look for Continuity and Change connections. This could also be done for other concepts such as connections to the environment, things linked by a modern event or news story, etc.
8. New Cards. Have students develop their own cards to address events they think should be added to the list (especially after discussing what might be missing), or events that are significant in the place they live (City, Region, Province), or cards that fits a different purpose, e.g. events that are connected to Geographic Significance, or are evidence of other thinking concepts such as ethical judgment.
9. Narrative. Students get a group of 6 cards (or any number) and have to build a story that connects them all. Could be whimsical (see where it goes) or purposeful (addressed a question, e.g. is there a "Canadian Identity," Has Canada learned from its own past?, etc.) Share stories and discuss the limits of making connections between events. Addresses multiple competencies.

10. Article match. Students each get a card. They have to find a modern article or news story that discusses this event, e.g. Sir John A has been in the news, Riel comes up every year or two, Residential schools, Quebec nationalism, health care issues, etc. Student could either share the article, review it, find others with differing perspectives, etc.

### **Snapshots in Time Rummy-like games**

#### **11. Six Degrees of Separation**

Each player get six cards and have to arrange them in order so that each one links to the next in line. They can place only one card down per turn onto their own line, and the first player with a line of six wins. If they can't make a link they draw a cards until they can make a link. These links could be connections based on the Historical or Geographical Thinking concepts, or other forms of association, and must be explained verbally for the other players. Groups could either challenge the connections, or help each other make links (cutthroat vs cooperate mode). Turns can be timed if players are fishing for links.

#### **12. Chain of Connections**

Building on **Six Degrees of Separation**, players get six cards, with the rest of the deck on the table and one card drawn. In turns, each player has to place one card down on the drawn card and state a connection between the cards based on historical (or geographical) thinking concepts. The soundness of this connection must have the consensus of the other players -- it should be clear why they are linked, and can't just be based on a theme (e.g. these are both about conflict). If there is dissent, or if the player can't make a connection, they pick up a card and pass their turn. First player out of cards win. "Dutch Blitz" version -- first person that can make a sound connection calls out the thinking concept they will use to play their card, and attempts to do so, rather than going in turn.

#### **13. Association Rummy**

Each player gets eight cards, with the rest of the deck on the table. Each person has to create runs of at least three cards until they are out (for the win). Each run has to be themed on a single historical (or geographical) thinking concept. The instruction cards can be used as wild cards. To start, a player has to have place down a their own run of three of more cards, but after that, they can add to other people's runs or break up runs to create new runs of three or more cards. Helpful to have some sticky notes to identify which concepts are in play. For each run, there needs to be a linear connection from one card to the next (in either direction), based on sound associations as per **Six Degrees of Separation** or **Chain of Connections**. The concept in play for each run, and the connections between cards, must be stated as cards are played. Turn-based. Soundness checks can be cooperative or cutthroat.

With the principles described above in play, other activities come to mind such as:

14. Causality or Patterns, groups (of 5?) students get a hand of cards and place on in the centre. Go in turns and place a card from the hand on the table if one is able to make a sound connection. Any player can challenge a connection, and the remaining players vote on whether to accept it or not. Turns can be times so that players can't just stall until they come up with a link. Players can't make a link pick up a new card to add to their hand. First player out of cards wins.

15. Solitaire. Similar to Rummy, students have to make sound connections between events. Place 6 cards in a row, and flip through the remaining deck, three cards at a time, and try to place cards on the columns if they think they can make a link. They can also combine columns if they both link, and start a new column.

16. Battletaire. Same as Solitaire, but head to head with 2+ players going in turns. A judge observes and arbitrates any challenges.

**Assessment**

We discussed a few ways to use the Snapshots in Time cards to assess learning -- formative or summative, but we'll have to get to that another time. Most of the activities above could result in a written or oral report, but the cards could also be used directly as assessment objects -- what is this? why is it significant, etc. Make arguments about Canada or an essential question in the course and use the cards to build a case, or challenge an assumption. Or, building on Suggestion #9, students are given a cards and need to address a focus question using (at least) those cards as evidence in their response.

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