

BUILD A BANK NOTE

Exploring Canada's history, land and culture through money



For Grades 4 to 8
Social Science/History/Geography and Media Studies

Overview

Bank notes are an important cultural symbol for a country. They reflect the spirit of the nation and convey messages about its past, present, accomplishments and aspirations.

Since the Bank of Canada first issued bank notes in 1935, Canadian bank notes have continuously evolved to reflect both technological advances and our changing national identity.

In this lesson, students will:

- learn all about the design of Canadian bank notes, using the Canada 150 bank note—a special \$10 note issued to celebrate 150 years of Confederation—as a guide;
- brainstorm which symbols they think should represent Canada;
- design their own bank note to illustrate what they feel best represents Canada at 150 years since Confederation;
- compare their design with the Canada 150 bank note and think critically about the ways our country can be represented.

This lesson plan is divided into three modules designed to take place over four or five sessions. Each module can also be used individually.

- **Module 1: It's all about the money (pages 2-5)**
- **Module 2: Build a Canadian bank note (pages 5-7)**
- **Module 3: Comparing notes (page 7)**

Learning outcomes

- Students will understand the importance of Canadian bank notes as cultural symbols.
- Students will be able to recognize the features that make up a genuine Canadian bank note.
- Students will understand the choices involved in designing a piece of media.

Materials

- A real Canada 150 ten dollar bank note (optional)
- Access to the Canada 150 bank note website at www.bankofcanada.ca/banknote150
- [Canada 150 Bank Note Security Fact Sheet](#)
- Sample [Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Plan Your Bank Note Worksheet](#) for each student
- [Build-a-Bank-Note Design Template](#) for each student
- Craft materials for designing the bank notes, such as pens, pencils, markers, paints stickers or photos for collage

Module 1: It's all about the money

Overview

In this lesson, students will:

- learn all about the design of Canadian bank notes, using the Canada 150 bank note—a special \$10 note issued to celebrate 150 years of Confederation—as a guide;
- research the historical, geographic and cultural symbols on the Canada 150 bank note and think about their significance to Canada's history.

1.1 Guided discussion: what makes money, money?

1. Engage the class in a discussion about money. Everybody likes money!
 - Explain that bank notes are pieces of polymer that can be used to pay for things.
 - Ask the students to provide relevant examples of when they might get bank notes, such as in their allowance or as birthday money from their grandparents.
2. Explain how certain features of a bank note help us recognize that a piece of polymer is actually money.
3. Inform the students that the Bank of Canada is responsible for designing and issuing Canadian bank notes and that it takes years to produce a new bank note!

Extra activity: If you want to go into more detail about how bank notes are produced, show these short [Bank of Canada videos on the production life cycle](#).

4. Pass around or show the class a real Canada 150 bank note (if you have one). Let the class see and touch it.
5. Ask the class to point out how they recognize that it is money. Write down their answers on the board.



6. Use the table below to make sure the class has covered all the relevant design elements. Point out each element on the real bank note.

The size and shape	The size and shape of our bank notes: If a bank note were gigantic like a billboard or tiny like a paperclip, we would not think it was real money.
The material	Canadian bank notes are printed on polymer (they used to be paper). Therefore, we know that a bank note made of cardboard isn't real.
The colour	For many years, \$10 notes have been purple. We might not recognize a pink or yellow bank note as real.
The denomination	The large number clearly tells us how much the bank note is worth; in this case, "10" and "DIX • TEN DOLLARS".
The country	We should be able to tell which country issued the money. On Canadian bank notes, the word "Canada" is printed at the top, and "Bank of Canada" appears along the side.
Design features	<p>Each Canadian bank note tells a different story.</p> <p>Typically, Canadian bank notes have a portrait on the front and designs and symbols that represent a specific theme on the back.</p> <p>For example, the Canada 150 bank note celebrates 150 years since Confederation. It has four portraits on the front and landscapes on the back.</p> <p>Information about the design and theme of the Canada 150 bank note is available here: www.bankofcanada.ca/banknote150.</p> <p>Information about the <i>Polymer</i> series of bank notes is available here: www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer.</p>
Security features	<p>Canadian bank notes have security features that make them easy to check and hard to counterfeit. Some features you can see, and others you can feel.</p> <p>A fact sheet on the Canada 150 note's security features is available here: www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/c150-security-fact-sheet.pdf.</p>
Accessibility features	The raised dots, large high-contrast numbers and distinct note colours all help people who are blind or have visual impairments determine the note's value.



1.2 Group research activity: how a bank note tells a story

Each Canadian bank note has a theme that tells a little piece of Canada's story. The Canada 150 bank note celebrates our history, land and culture.

The front of the note depicts four Canadians who played significant roles in the country's parliamentary history. They remind us that the Canada of today was shaped by people of different backgrounds who helped create a better country. The back of the note presents the rugged splendour of Canada, a land as diverse as its people. The landscapes represent different regions of the country that will forever be where our story unfolds.

Now that the class has a better understanding of bank notes, students can explore in groups how the Canada 150 bank note shows Canada's history, land and culture from Confederation to modern day.

1. Begin by showing the class the short [Canada 150 bank note video](#).
2. Divide the class into groups and assign one design element on the Canada 150 bank note to each group. Focus on the elements that tie-in with what the class has covered so far in Canadian history, geography and/or social science.
3. Give groups about 30 minutes to research their design element by exploring the bankofcanada.ca/banknote150 website and other resources provided below.

Design Element	Additional Resources
Sir John A. Macdonald	Heritage Minute from Historica Canada Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Sir George-Étienne Cartier	Heritage Minute from Historica Canada Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Agnes Macphail	Heritage Minute from Historica Canada Canadian Encyclopedia Article Grey Highlands Public Library
James Gladstone (Akay-na-muka)	Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Inuit Art by Kenojuak Ashevak	Heritage Minute from Historica Canada Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Assumption Sash	Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Memorial Chamber Arch	Government of Canada Website



Hall of Honour	House of Commons Website
The Coast Mountains	Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Wheat	Canadian Encyclopedia Article
The Canadian Shield	Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Cape Bonavista	Canadian Encyclopedia Article
Northern Lights and Wood Buffalo National Park	Parks Canada website
Canadian Flag	Heritage Minute from Historica Canada Canadian Encyclopedia Article

4. Once students have completed their research, instruct one member of each group to share what they learned with the class.

- They should describe the design element in their own words.
- Why is this element symbolic or important for Canada?

Module 2: Build a Canadian bank note

Overview

In this lesson, students will:

- brainstorm which symbols should represent Canada;
- design their own bank note to illustrate what they feel best represents Canada.

2.1 Group brainstorm: what designs should go on our bank notes?

Now that the class has examined a real bank note, it is time to start designing their own.

Pretend the students are bank note designers. They have been asked to design a bank note that celebrates their own vision of Canada and their communities.



1. Initiate a class brainstorm about what the students would like to see on a Canadian bank note.
2. Ask the class questions, such as the following:
 - What should our bank notes say about us today and for years to come?
 - How can we show our values, culture, history, traditions, achievements and heritage?
 - What symbols and images best represent Canada?
3. On the board, draw a graphic organizer with broad categories, for example,
 - people and history
 - geography
 - art, architecture and design
 - inventions and scientific discoveries
 - sports
 - culture and symbols
4. You can tie these categories to the topics students have studied this year.
5. Fill in the categories with the students' suggestions.

2.2 Individual activity: plan your bank note

In this exercise, the students will start the process of designing their bank note.

1. Hand out the [Plan Your Bank Note worksheet](#). Working alone or in pairs, the students will complete the worksheet to plan which elements they will use for their bank note.
2. Instruct them do to some research to explore what symbols they want to see on a bank note. Encourage them to think about the following questions:
 - What should our notes say about us as Canadians?
 - What is it about Canada that you want to celebrate?

Resource: Explore the design of the *Polymer* series notes at www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer.



2.3 Individual Activity: Create your bank note

In this session, students will put the brainstorming and planning sessions into action to design and create their Canadian bank note.

1. Remind them to include the elements from their planning worksheet and the ideas generated in the class brainstorm.
2. Encourage creative use of media. Students can use pens, pencils, paint, stickers or even a photo collage in their design.
3. Encourage them to think about what elements should be big, what elements should be small and why?
4. Students can create their final copy using the [template](#). The template has a special frame for display at home or at school.

Module 3: Comparing notes

In this session, the class will use critical thinking to compare the bank notes they have designed with the Canada 150 note and discuss the ways in which the interpretations of Canada are both similar and different.

3.1 Class discussion: design choices

1. Initiate a class discussion. Ask the students to explain the following:
 - What is similar about their designs and the Canada 150 bank note?
 - What makes their design different from the Canada 150 bank note?
 - If you could include something or someone else on your own bank note, what or who would it be?
 - How is Canada represented on the Canada 150 bank note? Should anyone or anything else be there? Why do you think the designers of this note chose to include these elements?

3.2 Presentations: pitch your note

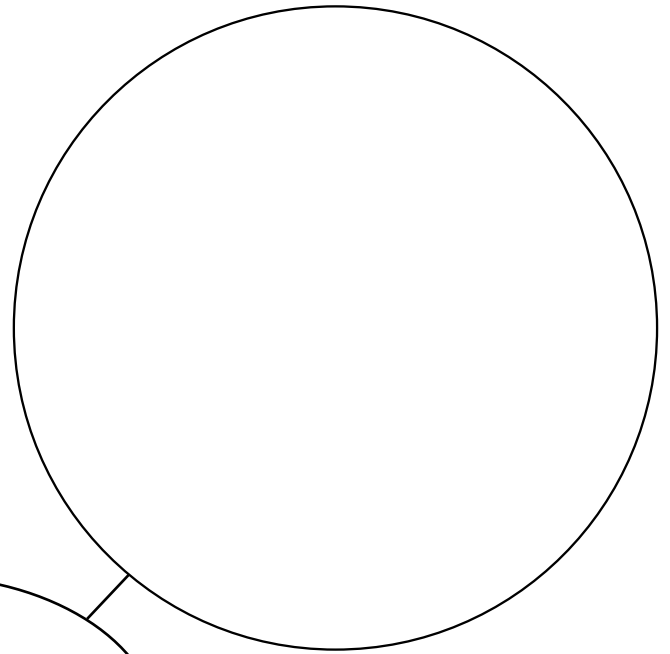
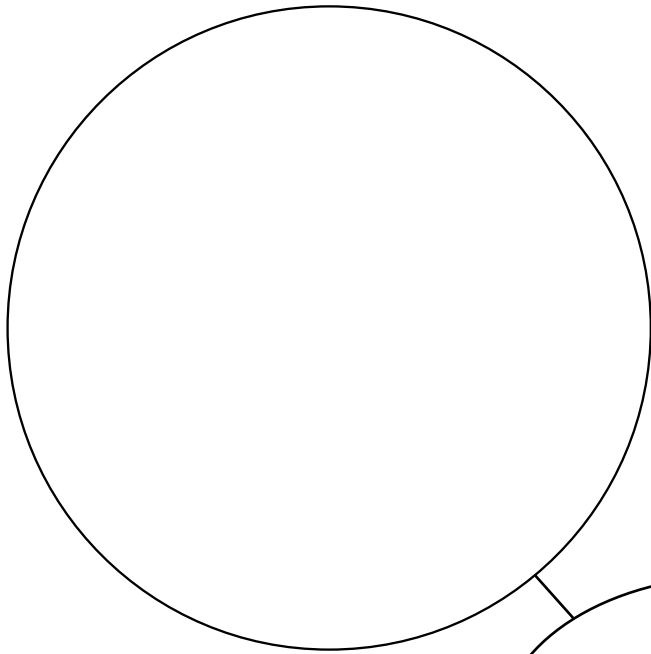
1. Have each student prepare a short presentation telling the class about their bank note and how it best represents Canada for them.



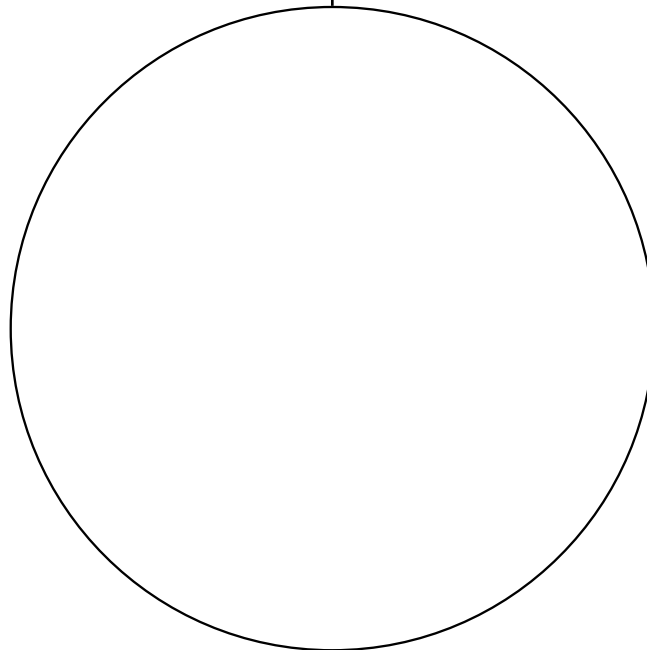
GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Theme 1

Theme 2



What do you want to see on a Canadian bank note?



Theme 3

PLAN YOUR BANK NOTE WORKSHEET

Feature	Description	Your note
Theme	Canadian bank notes have themes that tell a story about Canada.	What is the theme of your bank note?
Portrait subject on front	Canadian bank notes typically have one iconic person on the front	Who is going to be on your bank note?
Design on back	Canadian bank notes have designs and symbols on the back that show the bank note theme.	Draw or describe the designs and symbols you will use to show your theme:
Denomination	How will people know how much your bank note is worth?	Write the amount here:
Colour	Canadian bank notes are blue, purple, green, red and brown	What colour(s) will your bank note be?
Security features	Canada's bank notes have security features that are easy to use and hard to counterfeit. Some security features on your note should be checked by looking at the note, others by touching the note.	What are the security features on your bank note?
Features for the blind and partially sighted	How would someone who was blind or partially sighted tell how much your bank note is worth?	Draw or describe the feature(s)

My Bank Note

My Bank Note

My Bank Note

My Bank Note

My Bank Note

My Bank Note

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