

# Exploring Canada in Group Activities

Learning about Canada's Geography

TESL Ontario

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## **Group Activities** *at a Glance*

1. 'We Are Building Canada Together' – Making the Map of Canada
2. Indigenous Map of Canada
3. Save the Town – Designing Proposals
4. Places in Canada in Vacation Packages
5. Let's Move to Small Towns – Communities in Ontario
6. Be My Tour Guide – Exploring Our Local Community, Toronto

## **CLB Levels**

These group activities have been successfully implemented in L 5/6 (CLB 4-7) hybrid classes. Group activities #1 and #6 were implemented in L 2/3 (CLB 1-3) and L 3 (CLB 2-4) classes as well.

## **Benefits** of doing tasks in group setting (*What the students said*)

- Shared motivation to achieve common goal
- Promoting learners' creativity
- Providing platforms for diverse perspectives
- Opportunities for speaking
- Increased accountability; taking ownership of own learning
- Engagement in structured learning environment
- Collaboration with peers; learning from each other  
(student-led, roles assigned to members)
- Learning experience less stressful (relying on the help of group mates)
- Having fun, more relaxed learning
- Gaining confidence

## Group Activity #1: 'We Are Building Canada Together' – Making the Map of Canada

### Description of Task L 5/6 Class

1. The students were divided into 5 groups (to learn about the 5 regions in Canada).
2. Each group did research on a Canadian region (provinces / territories / capitals & main geographic features) using selected online resources.
3. Each group presented their region to the other groups.
4. The class built the map of Canada. The students:
  - worked collaboratively
  - felt more connected to the topic
  - learned how to appreciate their new 'homeland'.

Map -hand-drawn using dry, non-perishable food materials and recyclable materials.

Reflection: *"We spent a whole week on building the map, but it was worth because it is not only a map, but also a symbol of creation, cooperation, team-work, and weaving friendship. We will remember it many years later as it fuelled a great spirit in our hearts to encourage us to move forward bravely and with determination."* – Alex



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Description of Task L 3 Class

The students practised map skills, expressing directions (e.g. Ontario is to the east of Manitoba; Yukon is the northwestern corner of Canada). Also, they practiced spelling and pronouncing the names of the provinces and territories. They made tags and labeled the geographical areas.



## Group Activity #2: Indigenous Map of Canada (3D Map)

### Description of Task L 5/6 Class

The students worked in 5 groups. Each group researched on and presented a topic:

- 1) Typical features of the 6 Indigenous regions: **1) Arctic 2) Subarctic 3) Northwest Coast 4) Plateau 5) Plains 6) Eastern Woodlands**
- 2) 12 selected geographical places from Indigenous words (e.g. Toronto, Kamloops)  
*sample shared below*
- 3) First Nations
- 4) Metis
- 5) Inuits

### Culminating Task: Creating the 3D Indigenous Map

- The students chose a leader; they all worked together while creating the map. They assigned tasks to each other. They showed what they had learned from the group presentations by creating hand-made objects and using other visuals.
- The students invited the other classes at the school and presented the map. Taking turns, they had more opportunities to tell about their learning experience and the map project.
- The learners wrote a script to share their learning experience and recorded a video.



## Map with Indigenous Geographical Names

## Group #2

**Canada's** Canada – Iroquoian language: settlement, village

Name of Place (Province /Territory; City; Provincial Park; Other)	Indigenous Language	Meaning
Manitoba	Cree Assiniobine	the strait of the spirit or manitobau Lake of the Prairie referring to Lake Manitoba
Nunavut	Inuktitut	our land
Ontario	Huron	beautiful lake, sparkling water
Quebec	Míkmaq	strait, narrows
Saskatchewan	Cree	swift flowing river
Yukon	Athabaskan (Dene)	named after the river
Medicine Hat	Blackfoot (Algonquin)	headdress of a medicine man (translated)
Kamloops	Shuswap	where the rivers meet
Kelowna	Okanagan	male grizzly bear
Toronto	Mohawk Huron	'tkaronto', place where trees stand in the water 'toranto', meeting place
Ottawa	Algonquin	'adawe', to trade
Mississauga	Anishinaabe Ojibwe	'Misi-zaagiing', river of many mouths similar meaning (Mississaugas are subset of Ojibwe nation)
Algonquin Provincial Park		<i>unclear, several sources, meanings</i>

### Group Activity #3: Save the Town – Designing Proposals

Task: Working in groups of 3 to 4 students, you will prepare a proposal to the provincial government to save the smallest town of Canada, Tilt Cove in Newfoundland.

#### Steps to follow

1. Read the online article:  
[As 'smallest town in Canada' empties out, former residents recall its vibrant past](#)
2. Discuss the content of the reading with your group members.
3. Do more research (online) to learn more about this town.
4. Come up with a plan, a proposal, to save this town. In this plan include:
  - how you will revive this town
  - what facilities / employment opportunities you will create and offer
  - how you will attract newcomers to move to this place / tourists to boost the economy
  - do an interview with a resident who will tell about the vibrant past of this place
5. Make a flyer to advertise this town.
6. Present your proposal to the class.
7. After seeing all proposals, vote for the best one. Explain, why.

Sample of an Interview (with a former resident of Tilt Cove)

Name: Marie

Age: 58

Current Location: Newfoundland

Interviewer: What do you remember most about Tilt Cove?

Marie: The silence. Not in a lonely way, but peaceful. And the ocean—always right there, just beyond your doorstep.

Interviewer: What made you leave?

Marie: There was no work. The mine was gone, and so were the young people. I didn't want to go, but I had to.

Interviewer: Would you return if the town came back to life?

Marie: Absolutely. Tilt Cove is home. Always has been.

#### **Group Activity #4: Places in Canada in Vacation Packages**

Task: Working in groups of 3-4 people, you will design a vacation package to visitors. (You choose a group leader and assign tasks - who is doing what - in your group.)

##### Steps

1. Do research about the given place and its attractions to gather information.
2. Decide on the type of vacation you will be offering (e.g. honeymoon, family vacation with children, romantic getaway, tourist groups, a group of friends).
3. Make an attractive program including the price and specific details.
4. Create a flyer to promote your offer.
5. Present your vacation package in the class.
6. Feedback / Peer Assessment

##### Places

A: Prince Edward Island      B: British Columbia      C: Quebec      D: Ontario

#### **Group Activity #5: Let's Move to Small Towns – Communities in Ontario**

Task: Working in groups of 3-5 people you will do research on a given town (A-D) in Ontario. Your group will prepare a promotional speech (with appealing visuals such as flyers) to attract newcomers to visit the town and eventually get settled there.

##### Criteria to consider

1. Check out at least two different websites (e.g. the homepage of the town, Wikipedia) to gather information.
2. Assign each member of the group to a subtask (e.g. browsing websites, reading online, taking notes, designing the flyer, presenting the outcome at the end).
3. In your promotional speech (presentation) include these areas:
  - a) Community life, how family / newcomer-friendly the town is
  - b) Facilities, amenities, attractions
  - c) Employment opportunities
  - d) Housing, rental prices
  - e) Education, health care, transportation
  - f) Entertainment
  - g) Environment
4. Present your group project in the online class
5. Peer assessment / Feedback

##### Towns in Ontario

A) Welland      B) Peterborough      C) Guelph      D) Windsor

## Assessment (Sample) Group Activity # 5

### Checklist (We...)

		Yes	Not sure	(Maybe) Not
Holistic	Did we succeed in carrying out the task addressing the task expectations?			
Analytic				
1.	Did we assign each member of the group to a subtask?			
2.	Did we use different sources for gathering information?			
3.	Did we include the listed items in our presentation?			
4.	Did we provide adequate (CLB 5) / detailed (CLB 6) description?			
5.	Did we speak clearly using topic-relevant vocabulary?			

### Reflection (I...)

1. How, to what extent, did I contribute to the outcome of our group activity?
2. What did the audience learn from our group presentation?
3. How satisfied am I with the result of our group activity? Why?
4. What would I do differently, if any, next time? Why?

## Group Activity #6: Be My Tour Guide – Exploring Our Local Community, Toronto

Task: Working in small groups of 3 people, you will take on a role of a tour guide.

Scenario: Your mutual friend is arriving in Toronto for a few days. Take the person to three different places to show the city and make them experience the vibe of Toronto. You need to consider places you have visited and need to draw upon your personal experiences. As you share your experiences in your group, at the end you need to select three you all agreed on. Each group member has to contribute with one place.

Outcome (example):

Group A: High Park, Toronto Island, Toronto Zoo

Group B: Downtown Toronto, Bloor Street, NoFrills

Group C: Casa Loma, Lakeshore walk to see Lake Ontario, High Park

Group D: 360 The Restaurant at the CN Tower, Queen’s Park, Toronto Public Library