



The Rise of Responsible Government

An essay using the *Canada in the Making* site

Teacher Guide

“Responsible government” is the cornerstone of parliamentary democracy in Canada. It became a rallying cry in Canada in the first half of the 19th century as more and more citizens became disturbed by the power structures in Canada. Ultimately, the push for Responsible Government was one of the motives behind the 1837 and 1838 rebellions. This essay will give students the opportunity to learn how Canada moved toward responsible government during the turbulent period from 1774 to 1849.

Subject/Grade

Social Studies (History) and Language Arts
Ages 16 and up

Overview

This is an essay requiring that students research information online, as well as become familiar with several documents relevant to responsible government’s emergence in Canada. It can be an independent or group/paired activity for the purposes of gathering information and will require four to five sessions online to complete.

Note that the sources used in ECO can be printed from the browser and then photocopied.

Outcomes (WCP, APEF) Expectations (ON) Objectives (QC)

See the [table and the summaries](#) for each province.

Materials/Resources Required

Computers with Internet access.
(Extension) Coloured card/paper for timeline, and paper backing.
Student Work Sheet
Suggested Rubric

Links

Early Canadiana Online: *Canada in the Making*
<http://www.canadiana.org/>
Essay writing resources can be found in the *Writing An Essay* unit on ECO:
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/eco/lesson_plans/topicconc.htm
Other links can be found in the [Student Work Sheet](#).

Previous Knowledge

Students will need

- An understanding of Web navigation symbols, tools and terminology, particularly the tools used in ECO.
- Familiarity with basic essay writing skills.
- To understand the basic shape of Canadian history.

Lesson Opener

Ask students what they think is the most important factor in a healthy democracy. Some ideas might include freedom of speech, the right to vote, etc. Ask them whether they think such freedoms were won easily, and how they were achieved.

Procedure

Step 1

Hand out Student Work Sheets and introduce students to the *ECO Canada In the Making* Web site. Read the assignment and discuss.

Step 2

Students search for the required information from the *Canada in the Making* Web site (and other sources, if desired). They should try to make balanced observations and anticipate opposing arguments. It may be efficient for individuals to conduct research together. Extra credit could be given for comments about the documents not specifically identified on the Student Work Sheet.

Summary

Discussion: Do we have responsible government today? Are there problems in our current system that limit how responsible government is today?

Evaluation

See the Suggested Rubric.

Homework/Extension

Individuals or groups could prepare a summary of key documents in the move toward responsible government, possibly using a timeline and different presentation media.



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The Topic

The topic of this essay is the emergence of responsible government. Examples of possible thesis statements are:

- The most important event(s) and documents leading to responsible government was/were _____.
- The movement toward responsible government was irreversible by the middle of the 1830s.
- The rebellions of 1837 and 1838 helped/hurt the movement toward responsible government.

You may also develop your own thesis statement. Be sure to have the approval of your instructor before continuing.

The essay could also be a timeline of events and important documents leading toward the granting of responsible government.

The Research

In order to complete this essay, it will be useful to read these Web pages on the *Canada in the Making* Web site dealing with representative government, responsible government, and the written and unwritten constitution:

- Representative Government
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/representatif/representatif_e.html
- Responsible Government
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/responsable/responsable_e.html
- The Written and Unwritten Constitution
URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/specifique/written/written_e.html

It may also be necessary to review the thematic section Canada's Constitutional History (URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution1_e.html). Try to use references to primary source texts to support your arguments.

You will also need to read biographies of important people involved in the movement for responsible government. See the Biographies page:

- URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/reference/biographies_e.html

The Essay

For your essay, be sure to include the following:

1. A definition of responsible government. Explain the difference between representative and responsible government. Explain how government in the mid-1830s was different from that of today.
2. A short summary of any important acts or other documents to which you refer. If relevant, comment on how each document represents a step toward or away from the concept of responsible government.
3. Identify key figures in the fight for or against responsible government.
4. In your conclusion, state how you think that the gaining of responsible government affects our government today.

To gain an understanding of the events around these documents, read some of the essays on the Essays page of the *Canada in the Making* site. The ECO database also contains many other useful documents.

Essay Requirements

The report should be _____ words long. It should contain:

- A title page with a title, your name, the course name, your teacher's name and the date submitted.
- A clear introduction with a thesis statement.
- Proper citation (footnotes/endnotes or APA/MLA style, as determined by your teacher).
- A bibliography.

Make an effort to use primary sources to support your arguments. These can be found on the *Canada in the Making* Web site.

Note on Sources

Primary sources

Primary sources represent the most authentic resources that historians can draw upon. The documents that you will be using below may be digitized, but are still considered primary sources. Try to use the sources available on the “Canada’s Constitutional History” portion of the *Canada in the Making* Web site to strengthen your arguments.

For tips on how to use primary sources, go to the “Using Primary Sources in Your Work” page.

URL: http://www.canadiana.org/citm/guide/essay_e.html

Secondary sources

Secondary sources are works that interpret or analyze an historical event or phenomenon. Generally the author is at least one step removed from the event. Although not as authentic as primary sources, secondary sources are still valuable.

Other Possible Sources of Information Online

Note: It is important to choose sources that are produced by reputable institutions or individuals. Such information is more likely to give you a balanced, neutral view and be prepared or reviewed by experts.

The Canadian Encyclopedia

URL: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>

National Archives of Canada: *Canada’s Constitutional Evolution*

URL: http://www.archives.ca/05/051103_f.html (French)

URL: http://www.archives.ca/05/051103_e.html (English)

Solon Law Archives: *Canadian Constitutional Documents*

URL: <http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/>



The Rise of Responsible Government Suggested Rubric

Application of Conventions (Mechanics) (Language Arts)

Uses correct spelling, grammar and punctuation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Follows format of a formal essay (title page, double-spaced, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5		

Organization of Ideas (Language Arts)

Has a clear and captivating introduction with a thesis statement	0	1	2	3				
Logical organization	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Has proper annotation and bibliography	0	1	2	3	4	5		

Communication of Knowledge (Social Studies/History) Communication (Language Arts)

Examines topic from perspective chosen, and stays on topic	0	1	2	3	4	5					
Supports argument well using different sources	0	1	2	3	4	5					
Demonstrates an understanding of the issues	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Understanding of Concepts (Social Studies/History) Reasoning (Language Arts)

Has a clear and logical conclusion that makes a reasoned statement about topic	0	1	2	3	4	5			
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Essay Total: /50