

IC-3 Cultural Symbolism in Franco-Canadian Flags

SUBJECT

FSL Classroom

GRADE

6-12

LENGTH

~2 hours

OVERVIEW/RATIONALE

This lesson aims to have students be more aware of symbols and their significance. Enabling students to decipher symbols is an essential skill that is relevant in everyday life. The vehicle for this concept is the symbolism behind the Franco-Canadian flags, notably the Québécois, the Franco-Albertan, the Franco-Manitoban, the Franco-Newfoundlander, the Franco-Ténois (NWT), and the Franco-Nunavik flags. Cultural symbols can mean a wide variety of things, just as cultures hold dear a wide variety of norms, traditions, and ways of behaving. More often than not, these customs are shared through symbolic representations. Therefore, understanding symbols can help learners better understand people and their traditions.

This lesson will also introduce students to the notion of universals of language. These easily translated words will enable them to build their vocabulary and develop linguistic confidence.

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OBJECTIVES	Students will be able to use universals of language to decipher a written text. Students will be able to explain a flag's meaning to others. Students will be able to explain the meaning of different cultural elements of a particular flag using a corresponding story.
MATERIAL	Print off copies of resource IC-3.1, enough for 1 copy per pair. Print off copies of resource IC-3.2. 1 copy will be enough for 4 pairs, but print as required. To increase difficulty or workload, give each pair 2 stories. Print off copies of resource IC-3.3. 1 copy will be enough for 4 pairs, but print as required. To increase difficulty or workload, give each pair 2 stories. Ensure to give the story to the pair with the accompanying flag. Print off one copy of resource IC-3.4 for each pair. Optional: Audio files IC-3.11, IC-3.31, IC-3.32, IC-3.33, and IC-3.34 can be used at the teacher's discretion as support or to promote an oral-based approach.
ACTIVITIES	Have the Cardinal Direction image up on the projector (see resources). Ask students to think about which animal represents which cardinal direction. Have them do this individually then discuss as a class or in small groups. Continue by asking students what the cardinal directions are in French. Move on to address the image of the Native American representation of the cardinal directions. Ask students for their guesses of which animal represents which cardinal directions along with their explanations behind them. The representations are included below.

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Visit the website (see resources) for detailed information about each symbol.

nord (North) → **le bison/le buffalo** (bison/buffalo)

est (East) → **l'aigle** (eagle)

sud (South) → **le loup** (wolf)

ouest (West) → **l'ours** (bear)

Break up the class into pairs. Each pair will be given a flag from IC-3.1 (Franco-Alberta flag and Quebec flag). The two flags will each be explored using a table for students to list French words they understand and to draw a small picture that explains the word in question. Note that the two flags have descriptions written on them that describe the elements of each flag. These are written in French but use mainly universals of language (French words that are essentially exactly the same word in English). As students receive their worksheet, explain that some words may look very close to English words they know, and in this context, they probably share the same meaning. Tell them it is not always so, but it is a good strategy for understanding words from another language. Have them complete the activity by reading the paragraph aloud, alternating sentences in pairs. After, they should revisit the paragraph and underline all the words that look like English words they know. They may then fill out the table with the desired words, the English counterpart of the word, and add a drawing to reinforce the meaning using as much French as they can manage orally. This is a good time as a teacher to observe and notice any struggles.

Once finished, students will have to visit another pair (regardless of flag choice) and share the words they have found to be very close to English words. They will also share the meaning of the paragraph. Students should evaluate each other in that if the meaning does not make sense to them, the group sharing should revisit their paragraph and try to decipher more universals of language.

Once this activity is finished, proceed to the next level of cultural symbol deciphering. Hand out one flag (there are 4) from IC-3.5 to each pair accompanied by a copy of IC-3.2. Try to evenly spread out the flags amongst the pairs. Have pairs look at the flag they received from IC-3.5, predict what the story will be about, and jot it down in English on IC-3.2 with an explanation. Have them use elements of the flag (objects and colors) to prime their imagination. Next, have students jot down words they will have to know to read this story. They will deduce the words needed based on the flag and its elements. For example, on Nunavut's francophone flag, there is a polar bear, white, blue, grey, yellow, and green colours, an inukshuk, and a flower. These words students should be writing down in the section, "Words I need to know" on IC-3.2. They may then use a French-English dictionary to look up these words, find their French equivalent and jot them down on the right hand side of the colon provided in the "Words I need to know" section with its English counterpart on the left. While students work, pass out IC-3.3 Flag Stories to each pair corresponding with their flag.

Once pairs are ready to proceed, they will engage in reading the stories provided. You may want to remind students to look for universals of language

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(words that look similar and mean the same thing in different languages - “des mots qui se ressemblent et on le même sense”). Prior to letting students read the stories, inform them that they will complete IC-3.4 once they have finished. They will have two things to do:

1) They will have to summarize the story in English (they can use the back of their paper to write notes of all the universals of language and words they do not understand).

2) They will explain three symbols from their flag in French (one to three word answers or point form should be the expectation depending on their level of competence).

Let them read their stories (at this point, the teacher may introduce the audio support to the groups if the teacher has chosen to use it – IC-3.31, IC-3.32, IC-3.33, IC-3.34), circulate, and help students with vocabulary that may be troubling them. Remind students that some of the words they searched in their prediction portion of the task may prove to be helpful.

When students finish filling out IC-3.4, they will have their short summary and 3 symbols ready to share. Students can share their symbols and summaries with other pairs. Tell them while they are sharing, they should look for the differences and similarities between each other’s’ stories (this can even be extended into the next lesson as an introduction). As the teacher, you may want to take note of the differences for a future lesson.

Bring all students back together for a whole group discussion. Discussion questions could revolve around the symbols students pulled from the stories. For example, was it difficult to pull out the symbols? Why or why not? Was finding the cultural meaning of each symbol more difficult than recognizing the symbol itself? How so? What were the symbols both you and your peers had in common? Which were unique and different? Why do you think they were different? We’re the differences products of what defines the individual who came up with the difference?

Conclude the lesson by discussing the key points addressed in class revolving around universals of language and the different symbols that represented a flag. Future lessons may take the shape of case studies to investigate in more detail each of these Franco-Canadian locales.

RESOURCES

- <https://www.buildingbeautifulsouls.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Four-Cardinal-Directions-North-South-West-East-MED-1000x997.jpg>- Cardinal Direction Image
- <http://wearewildness.com/four-directions-medicine-wheel-affect-life/> - Indigenous Meanings of the Cardinal Directions

NOTES

This lesson plan can easily be split up into sequential lessons.