



# INTRODUCTION





**H**uman Rights in the Asia-Pacific 1931-1945: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship is a resource guide to support aspects of senior Social Studies including History 12, Law 12, and Social Studies 11. The learning outcomes identified in “Curriculum Connections” are part of the mandated curriculum contained in Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs). Designed to provide support for approximately five to eight hours of instruction, this resource includes:

- a rationale for teaching about justice and humanity
- guidelines for teaching about controversial issues
- a teacher backgrounder on the Asian-Pacific War
- detailed lessons
- teacher and student resources and handouts

### Unit Goals

The overall goals for students in this teaching resource are:

- to develop an appreciation, as Canadians, of being part of a larger human community
- to develop a better understanding of some of the historical events of the Asia-Pacific War
- to foster empathy and a sense of justice regarding the suffering of others
- to gain confidence in the possibility of improving human existence through understanding the roles individuals and nations can play in international justice
- to encourage meaningful participation in the development of a future in which such atrocities are prevented from ever happening again

*“In South Africa under apartheid we knew the humiliation of being thought of as less than fully human, second-class citizens without rights who could be uprooted from our homes in the name of ethnic order and purity. We endured a regime of injustice and oppression which mercifully fell short of the “final solution.”*

Desmond M. Tutu, 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

## WHY TEACH ABOUT JUSTICE AND HUMANITY IN WAR?

*“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”*

George Santayana

*“Hope is the mainspring of human existence.... Without hope, there is no incentive for learning, for the impulse to learn presupposes confidence in the possibility of improving one’s existence.”*

Philip Phoenix, 1974

**P**eople around the world hoped for a bright and peaceful future after the triumph of the Allies over the Axis powers of Germany, Japan, and Italy in World War II. These hopes were, at best, only partially realized.

Since the end of World War II, millions of people have lost their lives to war, and millions have become victims of crimes against humanity. From Korea to Vietnam, from Rwanda to the former Yugoslavia, war-related atrocities have continued, with women and children often suffering particular cruelties.

If we are to break the cycle of violence, humankind must constantly remind itself of its own capacity for evil and, more importantly, must educate itself on how to prevent crimes against humanity. Through our government, we as Canadians have committed ourselves to upholding and promoting human rights and peace. These are noble commitments, but Canadians are not immune from committing injustices abroad. The brutal killing of a Somalian by Canadian troops while on peacekeeping duties in Somalia in 1993 is a stark reminder that we too must be vigilant.

This resource examines the lessons learned from World War II in Asia and related conflicts. Why a resource on this particular topic?

- Traditionally, Canadian textbooks have focused on the European theatre in World War II, and the war in Asia has often been neglected.
- As Canada’s gateway to the Pacific, British Columbia has an increasing number of students of Asian heritage, and their family histories include the war in Asia (1931–1945).
- Canadians had a small but significant role in the Asia-Pacific theatre during and after the war, and we can learn from this experience.

- Many grievances related to the war have not yet been resolved, and a movement for redress has emerged.
- Finally, this resource offers an opportunity to better understand the relationship between the war and the post-war evolution of international regulations regarding human rights, justice, and armed conflict.



## GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

*“Hope falters when content learned by students does not lead to better understanding.”*

Walt Werner, 1995.

**S**ome ideas presented in this resource are controversial. Such treatment of subject matter may give rise in students’ minds to anxiety and questions about the future. However, protecting students from controversial issues and global problems is not the only way to preserve or nurture their sense of hope for the future. Part of the solution rests in encouraging students to explore all sides of an issue, finding out about those who are working to lobby for improved policies and new laws, and considering solutions and actions they and others might take to improve the world. Most importantly, awareness of the issues can help them guard against allowing acts of injustice or inhumanity to recur.

A controversial topic has two important characteristics:

- It contains one or more issues that have no clear resolution on which all parties can agree or for which there are no readily available solutions.
- The issue(s) have public prominence and have received media attention over time.

Before teaching a controversial topic, teachers need to clarify their own values. They can do this by conducting a self-reflection activity to identify their own biases, recognizing and listing them before and during teaching. It is important for the teacher to present the facts as objectively as possible.

The following “ground rules” will also help to ensure that the topic is presented fairly and with sensitivity.

- A classroom is not a platform.
- Controversy is best taught through discussion rather than direct instruction.
- Discussion should protect divergence of views among participants.
- Exploring issues should promote better understanding and not be merely an exchange of intolerance.

The lesson plan for teaching a controversial topic should include:

- ground rules for interaction and discussion such as respect and the valuing of each other's offerings
- clear division of tasks and responsibilities
- time to deal with the students' concerns and questions

In implementing strategies such as large and small group discussions, independent research, and/or role plays, students should be encouraged to analyse the issue by asking questions such as the following:

- What is the issue about?
- What interest groups are involved and what views do they promote?
- What are the arguments for the various views?
- What is assumed?
- How are the arguments manipulated?

Adapted from the BC Teachers' Federation video and discussion guide, "*Shaking the Tree*" and Facilitator's package for the "*Teaching Controversial Issues*" workshop.

This resource provides documents and information about events that took place prior to and during World War II in the Asia Pacific Area. The documents and information are intended to allow students to investigate issues related to war crimes and crimes against humanity.



## UNIT OVERVIEW

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Instructional Focus</b>
Lesson One: War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity	Students use excerpts from various agreements, including the Geneva conventions, the Hague conventions, United Nations conventions, and the Charter of International Military Tribunal, to understand legal definitions and responsibilities related to war crimes and crimes against humanity.
Lesson Two: Nanking Massacre and Other Atrocities	Students investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Japanese Imperial Army to identify which international agreements were breached. Students express personal views about the crimes of war.
Lesson Three: Canadian Hong Kong Veterans	Students investigate the treatment of Canadian Hong Kong prisoners of war and the war crimes committed by the Japanese Imperial Army. Students identify which international agreements were breached. They differentiate between civilian and military victims and make explicit the connection to Canada.
Lesson Four: International Law, Reconciliation, and Redress	Through the vehicle of a mock justice tribunal, students weigh evidence provided to determine whether Japan has settled its obligations with regard to war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Japanese Imperial forces.
Lesson Five: Making a Difference	Students respond to a topic that will cause them to reflect upon individual and collective responsibility for preventing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

<b>Resources and Handouts</b>	<b>Suggested Time</b>
<i>Handout 1.1</i> (War Crimes and International Law)	60 minutes
<i>Handout 2.1</i> (Timeline of Origins and Events of the Asia-Pacific War) <i>Handout 2.2</i> (Rape of Nanking and Other Atrocities)	60–90 minutes
<i>Handout 3.1</i> (Canadian Prisoners of War) <i>Handout 3.2</i> (Response Guide for Canadian Prisoners of War)	60–90 minutes
<i>Handout 4.1</i> (Organizing a Mock Justice Tribunal) <i>Handout 4.2</i> (What Victims and Survivors Want) <i>Handout 4.3</i> (International Agreements Related to Compensation Claims) <i>Handout 4.4</i> (Japan’s Responses)	60–120 minutes
<i>Handout 5.1</i> (Unit Self-Assessment)	60 minutes



# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



**W**e expect that teachers will select from and adapt the material from the resource to suit the needs of their classes. The learning outcomes achieved in each class will depend on the activities selected and the nature of the adaptations made.

## **History 12**

The History 12 curriculum is designed to give students a range of experiences and opportunities to develop skills that will increase their understanding of their lives as Canadians and as global citizens, and prepare them for further study in history and related disciplines. The scope of the curriculum is sufficiently broad to allow students to see the development of major trends in the 20th century, while maintaining a perspective that is relevant to students as citizens of Canada.

If teachers wish to focus on developments in the Asia Pacific between 1931 and 1945, the following learning outcomes from History 12 can be addressed using this resource:

- analyse historical evidence to
  - assess reliability
  - distinguish between primary and secondary sources
  - identify bias and point of view
  - corroborate evidence
- draw conclusions about the influence of individuals and mass movements on historical developments
- demonstrate historical empathy (the ability to understand the motives, intentions, hopes, and fears of people in other times and situations)
- apply knowledge of history to current issues

- demonstrate an understanding of the struggle for human rights, including the civil rights movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa
- evaluate the role of the United Nations in advancing international co-operation

Teachers wishing to extend students' learning about the Asia-Pacific theatre, could use this resource to address the following learning outcomes from the organizer "Turmoil and Tragedy: 1933-1945":

- compare the nature of democratic and totalitarian states and their impact on individuals
- identify causes of the outbreak of World War II in Europe and the Pacific
- explain how World War II resulted in a realignment of world power

## **Law 12**

Law 12 fosters skills and attitudes that enhance students' abilities to address legal, social, and ethical issues, and reflect critically on the role of law in society. The study of law also promotes the skills and abilities needed to clearly express ideas, argue effectively and logically, and accurately interpret the written word.

If teachers wish to focus on applications of law at the international level, the following learning outcomes from Law 12 can be addressed using this resource:

- define law and evaluate its purposes in society
- distinguish between moral and legal issues
- demonstrate an understanding of legal principles such as the *rule of law* and *natural justice*
- describe how and why laws change and the consequences of such changes on society

- describe the processes involved in resolving disputes, including
  - litigation
  - hearings before tribunal
  - arbitration
  - mediation
  - negotiation
- analyse why society criminalizes certain behaviours

### **Social Studies 11**

With its focus on historical and contemporary social, cultural, political, legal, economic, and environmental issues, Social Studies 11 contributes to the important goal of preparing students for their lives as Canadian citizens and members of the international community. The curriculum is designed to engage students in critical, reflective inquiry into the challenges facing Canadians at the beginning of the 21st century.

The following learning outcomes from Social Studies 11 can be addressed using this resource:

- demonstrate the ability to think critically, including the ability to define an issue or problem and to develop hypotheses and supporting arguments
- recognize connections between events and their causes, consequences, and implications
- describe Canada's role in international conflicts, including World War I and World War II, and assess the impact on Canada
- describe and assess Canada's participation in world affairs
- identify and assess social issues facing Canadians
- recognize the importance of both individual and collective action in responsible global citizenship
- identify and use approaches from the social sciences and humanities to examine Canada and the world
- communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression, as appropriate to the social sciences
- develop and express appropriate responses to issues or problems