



BUILDING CONTEXT

Building Context:

Purpose: To build a foundation of introductory information on the BC Punjabi-Sikh population in order to support respectful conversations, dispel misinformation and create an entry point for future units. (*Significance*)

First Peoples Principles of Learning: *Learning is focused on connectedness and a sense of place*

Curricular Competencies- Significance

- **Social Justice 12:** Assess and compare the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places, and determine what is revealed about issues of social justice in the past and present.
- **Human Geography 12:** Assess the significance of places by identifying the physical and/or human features that characterize them (sense of place).
- **Law 12:** Assess and compare the significance and impact of legal systems or codes.
- **History 12:** Assess the significance of people, locations, events, and developments, and compare varying perspectives on their historical significance at particular times and places, and from group to group.
- **SS10:** Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their significance at particular times and places, and from group to group.
- **SS9:** Assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments, and compare varying perspectives on their historical significance at particular times and places, and from group to group.

Notes on *Building Context*:

This section is foundational to the rest of the resource. Students will be exposed to respectful language, with an emphasis on what should and should not be used when discussing Punjabi-Sikh peoples. Students will have opportunities to discuss larger themes of immigration and population movement in the context of India to Canada migration. Finally, students will be asked to think about the nature of history (who writes it, how do we know what we know?) and the power of language (place names, names of peoples, etc.). This is also a great time to set up some of the items that will be cumulative throughout the learning of the guide, like the class glossary.

The historical thinking concept explored in this section is: **Historical Significance**.

Question: What do you know about the BC Punjabi-Sikh population?

- Explore the timeline(s) of Punjabi-Sikh Canadians as a class
 - **Resource** | [Vancouver Asian Heritage Month: Sikh Canadian History](#)
 - **Resource** | Timeline Attached pg. 96-97 *Hickman, Pamela. Righting Canada's Wrongs: The Komagata Maru*, 2014.

- Have students identify *flashpoints* in the timeline(s) that are:
 - o Known to them already
 - o Known to them, but not in the context of Punjabi-Sikh involvement.
 - o Brand new
- Debrief as a class the outcome of this first engagement with Punjabi-Sikh Canadian history?
 - How much was known/unknown- why could that be?
 - What are the consequences when history goes unknown?
 - What are the consequences when untold history becomes known?
- Share the following quote page with the purpose of students beginning to build their foundational knowledge. Individually or in small groups have them read each quote to pull out key information, connect to their prior knowledge, and formulate questions. It may be useful to use the three prompts:
 - **Connect** - How are the ideas and information presented *connected* to what you already knew?
 - **Extend** - What new ideas did you get that *extended* or broadened your thinking on this topic?
 - **Question** - What *questions* do you have or what do you need to know more about from the ideas and information presented?
 - **Strategy**| [Making Thinking Visible](#)

“All of the Sikhs living in Canada today – more than 200, 000 (*1994 statistic) men, women and children – can trace their roots to the courageous pioneers who first came to British Columbia at the beginning of this century. It was these early immigrants, many of whom had never before left their farming villages in the Punjab, who first undertook the arduous journey from India to Canada and faced the myriad of challenges that awaited them here.”*

Jagpal, Sarjeet Singh. “*Becoming Canadians: Pioneer Sikhs in Their Own Words*”. 1994, PDF file. Access [here](#)

“Canadian Sikhs are on Canada’s largest non-Christian religious groups and form the country’s largest South Asian ethnic group. The vast majority of Sikhs live in Asia and approximately 2.6% live in North America. Census figures suggest that there were 455,000 Sikhs in Canada in 2011, more than double the 1991 population estimate of 145,000... Sikhs account for approximately 5% of the 1.8 million new immigrants who came to Canada during the 1990’s, and today almost half of Canada’s Sikh population lives in British Columbia.”

Buchignani, Norman. “*Sikhism in Canada*”. The Canadian Encyclopedia. 2020. Access [here](#)

“The first people from India to migrate to British Columbia were Sikhs from Northern India (mainly from Punjab). These men were actually on an official trip as part of the Hong Kong army regiments who were travelling through Canada in commemoration of Queen Victoria of England’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897... a second contingent of Punjabi soldiers visited British Columbia [in 1902] ... it was this group of South Asians who became intrigued at the possibilities of residing in British Columbia. Even in terms of hospitality and reception they received, the larger British Columbia community tended to treat the Punjabi soldiers with respect as the local papers exclaimed, “Turbaned Men Excite Interest: Awe-inspiring men from India held the crowds”.

Khalsa Diwan Society, “*Settler History*”. Website. Accessed 2020. Access [here](#)

Timeline

Scale document up

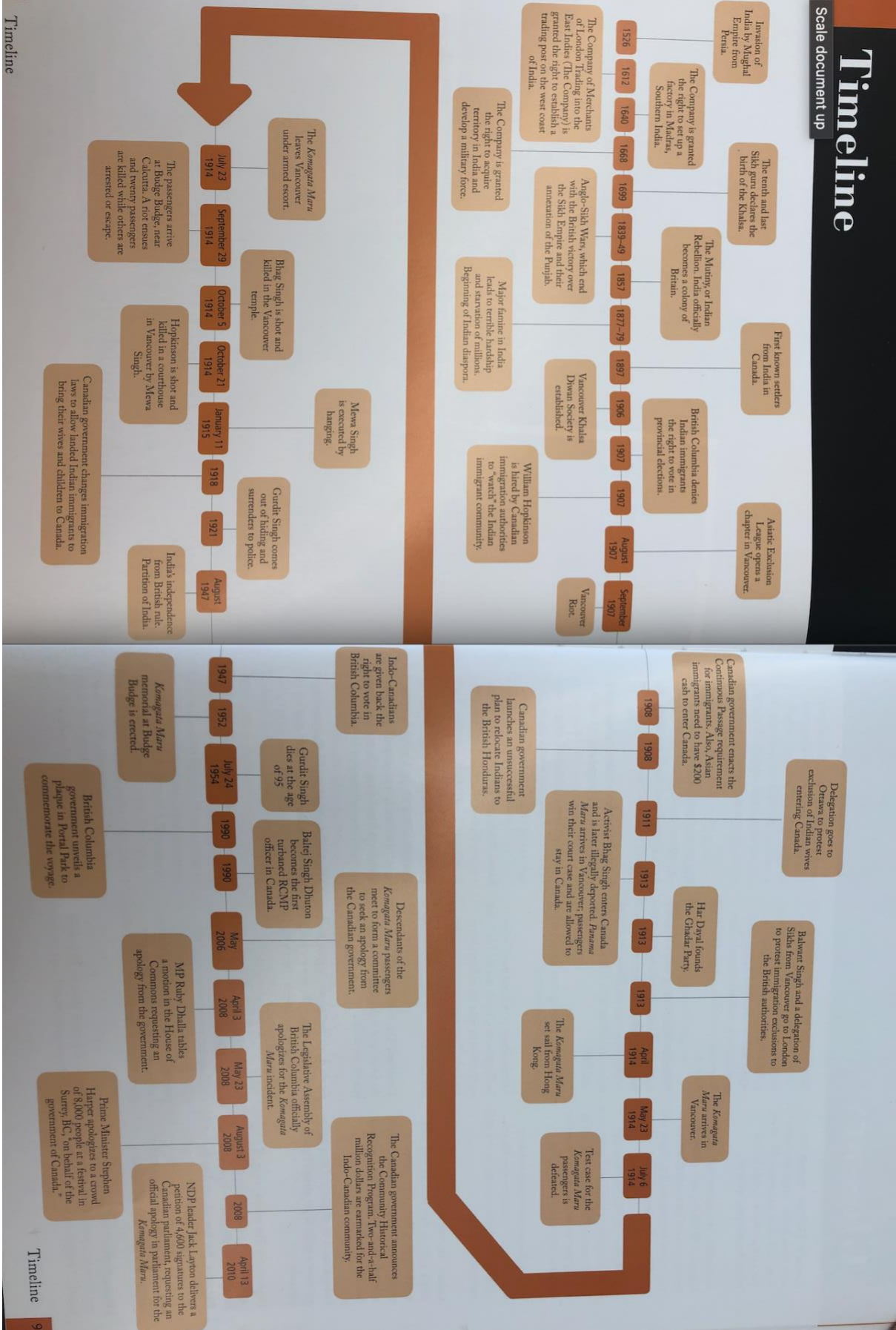


Figure: Hickman, Pamela. Righting Canada's Wrongs: The Komagata Maru, 2014.

Question: How do names reflect relationships in/to the past?

- Brainstorm with students about their name, its origin, nicknames, or ways they feel attached to their name (name bar in sports, named after someone in family, does their name have a story? Etc.)
 - Have students share or develop an activity where within pairs someone shares about them.
- Brainstorm the names that exist that represent the community in which you live.
 - For example: Langley, Fraser Valley, Lower Mainland, West Coast, British Columbia, Canadian, North American (all are applicable to same group of people)
 - Which names do students feel most connected to?
 - What happens the more you branch out? Get general?
 - What do these names suggest about our collective identity? What does this collective identity communicate?
 - How are these names connected to history? (ex. Fraser Valley= Simon Fraser the explorer)
 - How do these names erase identity? (These names have erased Indigenous naming, how do place names contribute to stereotypes?)
- Explore this quote with students on the origins of naming:

“When they first arrived in Canada, Indians were called Hindus, although most were not. In census reports and in other publications they were referred to as East Indians, to distinguish them from the people that Columbus met. The creation of four countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka), where once one [country] existed has led to the somewhat confusing term South Asian... Columbus complicated our vocabulary because he did not know where he was, and, to compound the problem, the Canadian context has pushed a common identity on people who are not all the same.”

Johnston, Hugh, *The East Indians in Canada*. 1984. Access [here](#)

- Read the Info Page attached with students- you may choose to do a note-taking strategy of your choice to unpack the many important details provided.
- You may choose to emphasize pre-reading, for students to focus on the relationship between land and identity as well as the terms both claimed and imposed on the Punjabi-Sikh population. This will support the debrief, sharing out of understanding after the content has been read.

Opportunity to connect/embed FPPL for this unit - *Learning is focused on connectedness and a sense of place*

What place (geographically, land based– not a building or structure) do you feel connected to? Why?

How does our relationship to the land make us feel? Dictate our actions?

How does our treatment of the land reflect details about us?

What do geographic labels (from the Valley, Langley, Lower Mainland etc) mean to us? Mean to outsiders?

How does where we live, impact how we live?

Punjabi Ethnicity: Is it Punjabi, Sikh or Punjabi-Sikh?

Punjabi is a term that is used to refer to people who are originally from the geographic region of the Punjab in present-day India and Pakistan. The term Punjab (five waters) was first used by the Persians to refer to the geographic region of the north-west part of the Indian subcontinent, where five rivers (Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) merge into the Indus River, the major river flowing into the Arabian Sea. Punjabi culture grew out of the settlements situated along these five rivers, which served as an important trade route. Agriculture has been the major economic feature of the Punjab and has therefore formed the foundation of Punjabi culture, with one's social status being determined by landownership.



The Punjab was and is an important agriculture region. In fact, the state of Punjab in present-day India, has been described as the “breadbasket of India”. Besides being known for agriculture and trade, the Punjab is also a region that over the centuries has experienced many foreign invasions due to these resources and trade opportunities and consequently has a long-standing history of warfare. Punjabis are often referred to as *Sher Punjabi* (Punjabi Lions); they are similarly regarded as the “shield and sword arm of India”. As a result, Punjabis have developed a character of resiliency:

“Consequently, a great part of the Punjabi’s life was spent in fighting and gaining perfection in the art of war, and in building up his physique. It was therefore, natural for the Punjabis to become sturdy, exuberant and adventurous people.” Even when under British rule (1849-1947), the Punjabis continued to serve in large numbers in the army, and they fought in both the First and Second World Wars; 20 per cent of the British Indian army consisted of Punjabi-Sikhs. Indeed, it is precisely this adventurous and resilient character of the Punjabi people that has aided them in migrating to, and settling in, Canada, especially during the period when Canada was nativist in its immigration policy.



While Punjabis share a common territory, ethnicity, and language, they are likely to be followers of one of several religions, most often Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam. Hinduism is the oldest of the religions practiced by Punjabis and was born out of Indian soil, while the Islamic presence in the Punjab is a result of the various waves of Muslim invasions and their consequent rule through the centuries. In contrast the Sikh religion emerged in the sixteenth century, out of Punjabi soil and was therefore a bearer of Punjabi culture. There is a complex relationship between the Sikh religion and Punjabi culture. Historically, the culture preceded the religion. Punjabi culture, which is over two millennia old, has a strong hold over Punjabis. Sikhism also includes aspects of both Hinduism and Islam. Regardless of the religious background of the Punjabis, much of their culture has been shaped by Punjabi folk tradition.

At the advent of India gaining its independence in 1947 from British control, the Punjab territory was divided between India and the new country of Pakistan. This was a tragic turn of events for Punjab, since not only was the geography region divided into two, but the largest mass migration in history took place because of approximately six million people shifting in each direction, during which over one million people lost their lives. Almost all the Hindus and Sikhs who had been in Pakistan left to settle in India, while many Muslims left India to live in Pakistan.



It is interesting to note that, in the BC Lower Mainland (Vancouver and surrounding municipalities, including Burnaby, New Westminster, Richmond, and Surrey), Sikhs raised outside of Punjab refer to themselves as Punjabi and use the term interchangeably with “Sikh,” understanding the two as synonymous. In reality, there is an ironic reversal of ethnic identification here: on the one hand, “Hindoo” was the term used by Anglo-Canadians to refer to all Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims during the early years of “East Indian” migration to Canada in order to distinguish “East Indians” from “Native Indians”; on the other hand “Punjabi” has come to be used by Sikhs to refer to themselves alone, even though there are also Hindu and Muslim Punjabis in Canada. Most research on Punjabis in Canada has been primarily based on the Sikhs, especially those in British Columbia.

Source: Nayar, K.E. (2012) *The Punjabis in British Columbia: Location, labour, First Nations, and multiculturalism* (5-9)

- Debrief Questions for Info Page:
 - What did you learn about the significance of place/land in this reading?
 - What factors impacted the identity of Punjabi-Sikh?
 - What do you notice about identifying terms in this reading? Difference between self-identifying and being named by others?
- Review terms and language used to identify individuals arriving in Canada. The purpose is to ensure all students have the language to respectfully engage in topics, with the best language possible. This will also help students identify systemic racism and/or outdated sources when analyzing evidence.
- Emphasize that terms that identify a community or people:
 - Often evolve/ change – a term that is a best fit now, may change in the future
 - Should be determined by the community it describes
 - Commonly involves identifying improper, disrespectful, or outdated terms
- Utilize glossary at the beginning of this resource to support this process. Build a class glossary.
- Identify with students the importance of pronunciation
 - Correct Pronunciation of Sikh: Access [here](#)
- Watch these two videos discussing the correct pronunciations

Video | [How to pronounce Sikh?](#)

Video | [Language Matters! Why I'm Reclaiming the Correct Pronunciation of Sikh](#)

 - What do these videos teach about the pronunciation of the term Sikh?
 - What do these videos teach about the impact/consequences of mispronunciation?

Image:



Figure
<https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-10-17/captain-america-sikh-you-got-problem>

Gather information:

Use resources below to build a beginner understanding of the Sikh belief system and worldview.

Resource | [Chapter Seventeen: Teaching about Sikhism](#)

Resource | A Note on the Sikh Religion pg. 15 [Becoming Canadians](#)

Extension: Read **Leaving Home** and **British India** sections in *Righting Canada's Wrongs* to gather information and gain context to the colonial impact of Britain on India.

Resource | Hickman, Pamela. *Righting Canada's Wrongs: The Komagata Maru*, 2014. pg. 14-20

Summative Task: What have you learned?

Have students use their learning from this introductory unit to express their understanding of this question through an Annotated Mind Map or Significance Sketch. This could be done in groups or individually. Could be done large scale on chart paper, or on smaller paper as well. Students should be encouraged to group ideas together, synthesize information and connect across categories. Students should also be encouraged to include questions or further areas of inquiry.

Once Mind Map or Significance Sketch is complete, students should select a few points on the Mind Map to annotate for significance, which is the aspect of the Mind Map used for assessment. Using the proficiency progression below – have students explain significance of mind map points of their choice. This could be done on a post-it, attached piece of paper or colour coded directly on the Mind Map. Encourage students to look at the progression, to see the detail needed to show their depth of understanding.

Significance: Can assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places

Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Can identify the important events, people, places and/or ideas in provided sources.	Can identify and explain why events, people, places, and/or ideas are significant.	Can explain the significance of people, places, events and/or ideas by discussing its place in the narrative, what it reveals, and/or its impacts.	Can analyze the significance of people, places, events and/or ideas and make predictions, comparisons and/or connections.



<div>Name: _____</div> <div>Support: Agreed, Wanted, Encouraged, Helped, Acted Condemn: Disagreed, Attacked, Criticized, Stood Against Excuse: Justified</div>		
<div>Supported</div> <div>Who supported the anti-Asian attitudes at the time?</div>	<div>Condemned</div> <div>Who condemned the anti-Asian attitudes at the time?</div>	<div>Excused</div> <div>Who excused the anti-Asian attitudes at the time?</div>

Name: _____

Summary of the injustice:		
Immediate and long-term consequences:		
Official response(s) to the injustice:		
Criteria for an apology	Reasons why it may be adequate.	Reasons why it may be inadequate.
Sincere and full admission <i>Acknowledges the mistakes and, where warranted, exposes any intentional wrongdoing.</i>		
Adequate support <i>Offers appropriate assistance and/or compensation for the negative experiences and consequences for the victims and their families and ancestors.</i>		
Prevention potential <i>Response helps to build public awareness and avoid future injustice.</i>		
Fair consideration <i>Response fairly respects the legitimate interests of all affected parties- does not create new victims or ignore old ones.</i>		
Overall assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Much more than was required <input type="checkbox"/> A little more than was required <input type="checkbox"/> Exactly what was required <input type="checkbox"/> A little less than was required <input type="checkbox"/> Much less than was required	Reasons for assessment 1. 2. 3.	

Name: _____

Continuity and Change

- Identify the similarities and differences between the experiences of a single group over two time periods.
- Identify, assess and justify the most important similarity and difference between time periods.

Time Period:	Time Period:
Policy/Event/Law:	Policy/Event/Law:

Describe three similarities:	Evidence of important continuity: What is known about its effect, its key role in people's lives, and how widespread it was.
Explanation and justification for the most important similarity:	

Describe three differences:	Evidence of important change: What is known about the depth of its effect, its permanence, and how widespread its impact was.
Explanation and justification for the most important difference:	

Strategy | [Righting Canada's Wrongs Resource Guide, Gibson, Danjoux, Case](#)

Name: _____

Historical Perspective

What are the event(s) and time period you are investigating?		
	Group 1	Group 2
Motivations (what were they thinking)		
Actions (what did they do)		
Responses (how did they and others respond to these actions)		

Name: _____

Literacy Organizer

Summarizing Statement:

Identify a key idea from each of the source and briefly explain how it supports your statement on Sikh worldview.

Key idea and brief explanation:

Key idea and brief explanation:

Key idea and brief explanation:

Conclude your thinking: