

8 Lessons

The Halifax Explosion

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Note of introduction:

What follows are 8 lesson plans that situate the events and implications of the Halifax Explosion in relation to the big six historical thinking concepts. In order to fully utilize this resource, please take note of the following:

1. Much of what will be used in class is taken from the book *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton. It is recommended that the teacher obtain a copy of this book. Not only will this provide many of the unit resources, but it also contains a disc that will provide you with the Blackline Masters. In addition, it will better acquaint you with the big six historical thinking concepts that this unit attempts to teach, and which Ontario History curriculum has started using in 2013.
2. Many of the primary sources have not been **directly** reproduced here due to copyright reasons. It is the responsibility of the teacher to access the resources via the links and publication information that is listed in the appendices. So if you do not see any primary resources **directly pasted into** a lesson, don't assume they are not there. They are here, but you will have to follow the citations used in the appendix to access them. As responsible history teachers, we need to treat the property of others, in this case primary sources, with a deep level of respect. For that reason, we cannot flippantly take what is not ours if we don't have permission. They are very accessible, however, and I encourage you to take full advantage of them, with the appropriate permissions. Thanks for understanding the great responsibility we have, both as historians and as role models to our students, to respect the property of others.

Lessons

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Halifax Explosion

a. Overview:

This lesson will introduce the historical facts of the Halifax explosion; it will contextualize the explosion, explain why and how the explosions happened and discuss the city of Halifax's role in the war, the who what, where, when and why will be explained.

b. Learning Goal:

Students should learn how one event fits into a wider historical context and how one event can have long term effects.

c. Curriculum Expectations:

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

d. Materials:

primary source documents (appendices)

Prompts for students (BLMs):

Ask students what they already know about the explosion. Have they heard of it? This will allow the teacher to gauge what the students know and what needs to be taught in the unit. Ask students what they want to learn and encourage them to ask questions during the lessons and to ask for clarification if they would be interested in learning more detail.

e. Plan of Instruction:

Step 1: Warm up (5 minutes)

Show the pictures of the devastation to provoke awe

Show the class a YouTube video clip from a film called *Shattered City: Halifax Explosion*

Step 2: Discussion (5 minutes)

Ask students what they already know about the explosion, ask them what they think it is about

Reflect on the film, discuss the initial attitudes before the actual explosion, for example the onlookers were curious initially, but then became horrified

Step 3: Modelling (10 minutes)

Introduce historical facts regarding World War One and Canada's role in the war. Explain Halifax's connection to the war as a navy headquarters. Explain in detail how the explosion happened and the immediate results, including the fire and the tidal wave and broken windows and torn apart buildings. The facts that the teacher presents will be found on Halifax Explosion.org website and on the CBC news websites.

Step 4: Guided Practice (10 minutes)

-in small groups the students will discuss the photographs

Step 5: Independent Activity (10 minutes)

- the students will jot notes on what they think can be gained by looking at historical photographs

Step 6: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (10 minutes)

-students can share their opinions on why photographs are important

f. Assessment

Teacher will be able to see that the learning goal has been completed because the students should be interested in the photographs and the students will have participated in the discussion

Lesson 2: Historical Significance

a. Overview:

This is the part of the unit that will deal with the historical significance of the Halifax explosion. The students will use primary sources to determine the significance of the explosion and to meet curriculum requirements. The students will learn why the explosion is an important event in Canadian history

b. Learning Goal:

Students will practice using both primary and secondary sources to decipher why the Halifax explosion is significant, they will use the primary sources in order to determine the ramifications of the explosion

c. Curriculum Expectations:

1. The requirements that this lesson will focus on is:

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

2. the historical thinking concept that will be engaged is historical significance

d. Materials:

i. primary source documents (appendices)

ii. Hand out copies of primary sources, have them watch video

iii. Lead a class discussion on how the two sources demonstrate the historical significance of the explosion

e. Plan of Instruction:

Step 1: Warm up (5 minutes)

Teacher will garner students interest by having them view the above video, in order to show them the ramifications of the explosion.

Step 2: Discussion (10 minutes)

Continuing on from previous lesson, the teacher will discuss the factual knowledge of the explosion and why they are studying about it. Teacher can find knowledge on the explosion on the websites:

http://www.cbc.ca/halifaxexplosion/he3_shock/he3_shock_devastation.html

<http://www.halifaxexplosion.org/relief.html>

Step 3: Modelling (5 minutes)

Teacher discusses the consequences of the explosion and teacher will reveal what historical issues it touches upon. The students will explore the significance of a smaller event.

Step 4: Guided Practice (10 minutes)

Students will read the personal narrative and determine how the event is significant to everyday people as well as the city as a whole.

Step 5: Independent Activity (10 minutes)

Students will think amongst themselves what were the ramifications of the explosion. They will do a close reading of the narrative. They should consider the following questions. How did it bring change to Jean's (the writer of the narrative) life? How did the explosion bring changes to the city, physically and otherwise? What can the narrative show us about the changes that occurred? How this one person's narrative relevant to the larger event of the explosion?

Step 6: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (15 minutes)

Students will share their ideas of how the Halifax explosion is significant to the history of Canada and how it connects to the Great War

f. Assessment

During the sharing period, the teacher will assess how well the students can articulate historical significance and if they are able to make relevant connections to the war. Teacher will assess their ability to utilize primary sources to determine historical significance.

Lesson 3: Evidence

a. Overview

This lesson will focus on the historical thinking concept of evidence. The lesson will discuss what evidence is and how it can be used. The lesson will focus on using primary sources as evidence, how primary sources become evidence and how to draw conclusions from evidence

b. Learning Goal:

Students will learn the meaning of terms such as: historical context, corroboration, inference, interpretation, and source and learn how to gather evidence and gather information

c. Curriculum Expectations:

1. 1. The requirements that this lesson will focus on is:

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

2. the historical thinking concept that will explicitly engage in the lesson is evidence

d. Materials:

i. primary source documents (appendices)

ii. Teacher should hand out a copy of the personal narrative and display the photograph

iii. Ask class what types of evidence those sources are, are they primary or secondary sources, explain the difference.

e. Plan of Instruction

Step 1: Warm up (10 minutes)

Read aloud the personal narrative, display the photograph

Explain how evidence is necessary in studying history

Step 2: Discussion (10 minutes)

Explain key terms and discuss interpreting evidence and making inferences. Write down key terms for students to note down

Step 3: Modelling (5 minutes)

The teacher will demonstrate how to use primary sources as evidence and teacher will give examples of how historical knowledge can be gathered. The teacher will demonstrate how a source is turned into evidence; the teacher will inform the students that primary sources should be combined with secondary sources.

Step 4: Guided Practice (5 minutes)

In small groups the students will discuss the primary sources and discuss what conclusions can be drawn

Step 5: Independent Activity (15 minutes)

Students will engage in a primary source analysis, in one paragraph they will answer questions about what the above sources can tell us about the time period, students will write down the strengths and limitations of the above sources they will write what can be learned from it and what facts can be gathered

Step 6: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (10 minutes)

The students will volunteer to answer the above analysis questions for a group discussion.

f. Assessment

The students will hand in their primary source analysis, the teacher will thus be able to determine whether or not the students have been able to grasp how evidence is necessary in studying history. Also, the students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills.

Lesson 4: Continuity and Change

a. Overview:

This lesson will focus on the concept of continuity and change. The students will use primary sources in order to understand the flow of history and how historical changes occur.

b. Learning Goal:

Students should be able to use primary sources in order to sequence historical events and determine where and when historical changes occur.

c. Curriculum Expectations:

1. The requirements that this lesson will focus on is:

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

2. the historical thinking concept that will be explicitly engaged in this lesson is continuity and change

d. Materials:

i. primary source documents (appendices)

ii. Hand out copies of these sources to the students

iii. Ask students to think about what these sources tell us about the changes brought about by the explosion

e. Plan of Instruction:

Step 1: Warm up (10 minutes)

Explain the ramifications of the explosion, encourage student participation by having a brainstorming session in which students share what they think some of the possible ramifications could be

Step 2: Discussion (10 minutes)

Connect the Halifax explosion to the violence of the Great War by explaining why the munitions ship was travelling to Halifax, the teacher will discuss how the explosion caused a physical and emotional devastation of the home front not unlike the devastation of trench warfare as the Halifax explosion added even more casualties to an already large number, people died in Europe and now the death had come to the home front. Explore the negative impact on morale and discuss the physical and emotional ramifications of the explosion.

Facts can be found at this website:

http://www.cbc.ca/halifaxexplosion/he3_shock/he3_shock_devastation.html

Step 3: Modelling (5 minutes)

Have the class think about how history is divided into periods and how the Halifax explosion is part of the World War I time period

Step 4: Guided Practice (timings)

Class brainstorming about how one event can be a turning point can cause a domino effect in history

Step 5: Independent Activity (15 minutes)

Students will make a mind map in which they will connect the explosion in Halifax to other events; they will also independently read the newspaper article

Step 6: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (15 minutes)

Class will discuss their mind maps

f. Assessment:

Students will demonstrate their success through the mind maps that the teacher will collect; the teacher will assess their historical thinking abilities

LESSON 5: Cause and Consequence

a. Overview:

This is the part of the unit that will deal with Cause and Consequence. In keeping with the inquiry-based learning structure of the entire unit, the students will be examining primary sources to determine causes and consequences of the Halifax Explosion, and to meet curriculum requirements.

NOTE: Because there is a lot of material to cover in this task, this will probably have to be done over two class periods: one will focus more on cause, and the other will focus more on consequences.

b. Learning Goal:

Students will practice examining primary sources to determine causes and consequences (in this case, of the Halifax Explosion)

c. Curriculum Expectations:

1. The requirements that this lesson will focus on is:

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

2. The historical thinking concept that will be engaged in this lesson is cause and consequence.

d. Materials:

i. See all appendices for Lesson 5

ii. Before class:

DAY 1

-distribute the primary sources around the classroom in the different primary sources stations

-make sure video clip and projector are set up and ready

-provide enough printouts of the inquiry questions for each group

-make sure the final primary source is ready to be displayed on the projector

DAY 2

-distribute the primary sources around the classroom in the different primary sources stations

-have printouts of BLM

-provide enough printouts of the inquiry questions for each group

iii. Prompts for students –there will be a printout of the inquiry questions for each of the groups, for both day 1 and day 2

e. Plan of Instruction:

Step 1: Warm up (10 minutes)

Show this video (5.1a).

Ask students what caused the car to move at the end of the video. There will be obvious answers such as someone setting the first cog in motion, and the rest of the sequence occurring as a result. Push the students' thinking by suggesting other causes and consequences. For example, another cause was the environment. A perfectly level floor allowed for the successful interaction of each of the car pieces.

Another cause was that somebody took the time to put those pieces in exactly the places they were in. Also, there was some kind of initial force that started the motion. Also ask them what the consequence was of the pieces all coming in contact with each other. An obvious answer to that question would be that it made the car move. Probe for other answers such as Honda being able to produce an interesting commercial. Perhaps there was moisture damage on the floor due to oil and water that may have spilled on it. Get them to come up with all kinds of possibilities.

Step 2: Discussion (20 minutes)

Students will individually do “Activity: How I Got Here,” (5.2). Teacher can help them with ideas as needed.

Step 3: Modelling (5 minutes)

Teacher should take one of the primary documents (5.3) and display it on the projector. Teacher will “think aloud” while answering the questions that are found in the group activity (5.7), and will come up with a cause from the document. So the teacher will model, but the class will also contribute.

Step 4a: Guided Practice (15 minutes)

Students will work in groups of 5 or 6. Each group will go around to a different primary document (5.4, 5.5, 5.6) station and examine the document. They will answer the questions (5.7) on the paper to help them analyze it. Based on their analysis, the group will decide on one of the causes of the explosion.

Step 5a: Independent Activity (5 minutes)

Students will return to their desks to examine one last document (5.8) on their own. Working silently, they will try to determine a cause of the explosion through analysis of the document

Step 6a: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (20 minutes)

As a class, we will put up all ideas for the causes of the explosion on the board. Once we have determined a list, we will vote to rank them in terms of importance. Some questions we will consider are:

1. Why is this the most important cause?
2. Why is this the least important cause?
3. Do you think this event would still have happened if any of these did not occur? Which ones?

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The following will probably occur on **Day 2**. This plan includes steps from Day 1, but not all of them, and employs other ones.

Step 1: Warm up (40 minutes)

Show this video(5.1b). In terms of consequences, it is very important to bring attention to the Mi'kmaq community and how they fared. As you can see from the appendix, there is only one surviving photo of the disaster to the Mi'kmaqs. As needed, refresh the students' thinking by revisiting the topics of cause and consequences. You might consider using the “ACTIVITY: Comparing the Promise and Reality of Striking it Rich” (5.9). You may choose to frame the activity by using the question the textbook poses: “Tell us about a time when you did something with a pretty clear idea of what was going to happen and then you were surprised that things turned out differently.” (5.9)

Step 4b: Guided Practice (30 minutes)

Students will work in groups of 5 or 6. Each group will go around to a different primary document (5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15) station and examine the document. They will answer the questions on the

paper (5.16) to help them analyze it. Based on their analysis, the group will ascertain some of the consequences of the explosion.

Step 5a: Independent Activity (5 minutes)

Students will return to their desk for some personal reflection on one of the causes of the explosion. To help guide their thinking, they will answer the following questions:

1. What was the consequence that is depicted in this primary source?
2. What do you think this may have meant in the long term?
3. How does this make you feel?

Step 6a: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (10 minutes)

Class discussion on the consequences of the Halifax Explosion, and sharing of the answers in the previous activity.

f. Assessment:

Teacher will examine the sheet that was completed independently and take note of what is said in the class discussion to find out if the student has successfully been able to determine a cause for the explosion, and if the students are able to think deeply about the consequences of the explosion.

LESSON 6: Historical Perspectives

a. Overview:

This is the part of the unit that will deal with Historical Perspectives. In keeping with the inquiry-based learning structure of the entire unit, the students will be examining primary sources to determine historical perspectives of Vincent Coleman, the train dispatcher associated with the Halifax Explosion, and to meet curriculum requirements.

b. Learning Goal:

Students will practice examining primary sources to determine historical perspectives (in this case, of the Halifax Explosion, and Vincent Coleman)

c. Curriculum Expectations:

1. The requirements that this lesson will focus on is:

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

2. The historical thinking concept that will be engaged in this lesson is cause and consequence.

d. Materials:

i. see all appendices for lesson 6

ii. Before class:

-make sure projector is set up and the video clip is ready

-make sure classroom has internet access and the Morse code game, the inflation calculator, and the bank note visual can be accessed easily

-make sure the primary sources are scattered around the room at the various stations

-make sure there is access to computers for students to find out things about Vincent Coleman

iii. Prompts for students:

-the teacher will provide prompts as he/she goes through the lesson

e. Plan of Instruction:

Step 1: Warm up (15 minutes)

To balance out the more research heavy class, we will do two warm up activities

a. Watch the following clip that seems to depict Coleman as a hero (6.1)

b. Play the Morse Code game (6.2)

Step 2: Discussion (10 minutes)

Pocket turning-out activity (I made this up; it was not found anywhere so doesn't need to be credited):

Have a few students volunteer to turn out their pockets or backpacks and show the class what they have found in them. What does each of the things tell you about the student who owns them? For example, the ticket stub from an action movie may suggest to the students that this student likes action movies.

Or, it could have been from a group trip to the movies and this person did not enjoy the movie. Or something else. Pick other items and encourage the students to use this approach in coming up with

ideas of why the person might have that. Encourage them to be very critical and to examine different angles and imagine different contexts.

Step 3: Modelling (10 minutes)

Money discussion (I made this up; it was not found anywhere so doesn't need to be credited):

Take out a five dollar bill from your pocket. Ask the students what it means for you to be carrying around five dollars. A variety of answers could ensue, such as you wanting to be careful with how much money you carry, with you actually being poor and that is all you have to live on that week, or that you just stole it from someone. At any rate, the answers should be quite insignificant for the most part. However, what do we think of someone carrying around \$5 in Halifax in 1917? Show them evidence to suggest that this could be very different, via this inflation calculator (6.3)

This is a lesson in avoiding presentism and anachronism. Teach the terms presentism and anachronism (6.4), and tell them that they must keep them in mind as they progress through today's examination of primary sources.

Use this picture just as a fun visual (6.5)

Step 4: Guided Practice (20 minutes)

Have the students go around to each of the primary documents (6.6, 6.7, 6.8) and analyze them in contrast with what is being presented in the Heritage Minute, which could be interpreted as presenting Coleman as a hero. Do these actually show Vincent Coleman to be a hero, at the time? When they get to the things in Coleman's pocket, they need to engage in a little bit of research and tell others what they think about them. After each group has analyzed the items, they should go online and formally find out something about Vincent Coleman. What else does this suggest about him?

Step 5: Independent Activity (5 minutes)

Write a paragraph taking the results of your research and observations about whether or not Coleman was probably perceived as a hero for his time. Include things like what might be left out here, and how we could get a bigger picture of him and his time in these contexts.

Step 6: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (15 minutes)

Have a group discussion on whether or not you think Coleman was a hero, in relation to his time. This is not a formal debate, but students must speak to each other respectfully.

f. Assessment:

Based on the paragraph that is handed in, teacher should be able to understand whether or not the student is employing historical perspectives, and also including the realization that there are many more pieces that could be included here.

LESSON 7: The Ethical Dimension

a. Overview:

This is the part of the unit that will deal with The Ethical Dimension. In keeping with the inquiry-based learning structure of the entire unit, the students will be examining primary sources to better understand the ethical considerations of the Halifax Explosion, and to meet curriculum requirements.

NOTE: Because there is a lot of material to cover in this task, this will probably have to be done over three class periods.

b. Learning Goal:

Students will practice examining primary sources to better understand the ethical dimension (in this case, of the Halifax Explosion)

c. Curriculum Expectations:

1. The requirements that this lesson will focus on is:

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

2. The historical thinking concept that will be engaged in this lesson is the ethical dimension.

d. Materials:

i. see all appendices for lesson 7

ii. Before class:

DAY 1

-make sure that clip and projector are ready for the warmup activity

-make all arrangements to visit the plaque

-make sure that each student has a printout of the BLM

DAY 2

-make sure the projector and the BLM are ready

-make sure that the primary documents are set up in stations around the classroom

-make sure that there is a printout of the question sheet (7.8) for each group

DAY 3

-make sure that you are ready to give instructions for the debate activity (7.9) and facilitate the debate

iii. Prompts for students –there will be a printout of the inquiry questions for each of the groups

e. Plan of Instruction:

DAY 1

Step 1: Warm up (5 minutes)

As a class, listen to this clip (7.1). Because this clip indicates that after the explosion an investigation occurred, we get to thinking about ethics, or what was right and wrong in the situation. This will lead

into a broader investigation of the rightness and wrongness of the overall actions of Canadians at the time.

Step 2: Discussion (70 minutes)

Using the BLM and the activity called “Assess a Memorial (7.2),” students will answer questions about a local memorial. Because the questions are so generic, this activity can be applied to any memorial that is available nearby.

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This part will occur on **DAY 2**

Step 3: Modelling (30 minutes)

Using the BLM and the activity called “What Is the Ethical Position (7.3),” the teacher will read out and go through the questions with the students. They will have a visual of the excerpts on the projector or a PowerPoint, and the answers to the questions.

Step 4: Guided Practice (30 minutes)

Students will work in groups of 5 or 6. Each group will go around to a different primary document (7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7) station and examine the document. They will answer the questions on the paper (7.8) to help them analyze it.

Step 5: Independent Activity (15 minutes)

After gathering data from the primary sources as a group, each student will have a chance to return to his or her desk and think more deeply about the implications of each document. For each document, the student must write down the answers to the following question:

What do these documents tell you about ethics and the way they were handled, in terms of both the explosion, and the war? Why do you say that?

.....

This part will occur on **DAY 3**

Step 6: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (75 minutes)

Use the activity that is found on page 190-191 of the textbook (7.9), without using the BLM that is referenced there. Instead of reading them out the section about the Acadians, remind them of the key events of the explosion. The question that they will debate is “Were the actions of Francis Mackey and fellow Canadians on December 6, 1917 appropriate, or were they inappropriate?”

Follow the rest of the instructions for the debate on pages 190 and 191.

f. Assessment:

When students leave the classroom, they will hand in the answer to the question they thought about at their desk. Students will have reached the learning goal if they can make a personal statement about the ethics of the situation, and provide rationale for it.

LESSON 8: Conclusion

a. Overview:

This class will conclude the unit on the Halifax Explosion. In keeping with the inquiry-based learning structure of the entire unit, the students will be examining primary sources to consolidate their understanding of the six historical thinking concepts in relation to the Halifax Explosion, and to meet curriculum requirements.

NOTE: the material that needs to be covered by this lesson will span quite a few days. Because it involves preparing a presentation and presenting, the teacher should expect this to take at least a week.

b. Learning Goal:

Students will consider all they have learned about the Halifax Explosion in relation to the six historical thinking concepts, and show what they have learned through a presentation.

c. Curriculum Expectations:

1. The requirements that this lesson will focus on is:

B. Canada, 1914-1929

B1. Social, Economic, and Political Context

B1.4 explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I

2. All six of the historical thinking concepts will be engaged with in this lesson.

d. Materials:

i. See all appendices for Lesson 8

ii. Before class:

-make sure projector and laptop are ready to show the clip (8.1)

-make sure the primary sources are ready to be shown on projector

-make sure you have samples of presentations from previous years, or have provided samples you made yourself

-ensure that there is adequate space and access to resources for the students to plan and present

iii. Prompts for students –teacher will provide instructions and resources for the presentation

e. Plan of Instruction:

Step 1: Warm up (15 minutes)

Show this clip to start the class (8.1). I think this is a great way to connect the event with the recent past. From here, our class can go on to demonstrate their understanding of the explosion and its implications.

Step 2: Discussion (15 minutes)

Lead a class discussion on the six historical thinking concepts. Ask the students to remember a

document from each of the lessons and talk about its significance. To help aid the discussion, show them some more primary sources (8.2, 8.3), and ask them to identify the six concepts within.

Step 3: Modelling (45 minutes)

Introduce the project to the class. They will be broken into groups and will have to make a 10 minute presentation on the Halifax explosion, making sure to engage with each of the six historical thinking concepts. They will have a choice of three formats:

1. A poster presentation - the students can make a poster, and it needs to include text and images. They need to be able to talk about the Halifax explosion in reference to each of the six historical thinking concepts.
2. A model - the students can make a model of Halifax and the harbour (using, say, clay or papier mache) and include elements that they can relate back to the six historical thinking concepts. (this idea was potentially given in class by Professor Theodore Christou, but I am not sure. I am mentioning this just in case)
3. A speech - the students must have a well-thought out speech in which each of them takes a turn speaking. They have to be able to speak about each of the six concepts, relating to the Halifax explosion.

Each presentation should last for about 10 minutes.

If possible, bring in examples of work done in previous years. If you don't have that, make your own speech, model, and poster to model the kind of work that they need to do.

Allow them the rest of class to get started.

Step 4: Guided Practice (3 or 4 days)

Form groups and let them get started on the task. They will probably need a few days for this.

Step 5: Independent Activity (ongoing throughout the preparation of their presentation)

Encourage each student to continually critique the angles that are being taken and continue to ask questions individually. They should contribute thoughts and findings to their group to help shape a thoughtful presentation.

Step 6: Sharing/Discussing/Teaching (approximately 3 days)

Each group will give their presentation to the rest of the class.

f. Assessment:

The assessment for this class will be the presentations. Each group should be able to demonstrate their understanding of the six historical thinking concepts in relation to the Halifax explosion.

Appendices

Appendix 1

1.1 *Campbell Road (later Barrington Street) Looking North from Rector Street after the explosion* photograph. Halifax 1917. *Nova Scotia Archives*. Accessed Oct 14 2013. Reference no: Gauvin& Gentzel NSARM Photo/negative: N- 201.

<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/narratives.asp?ID=2>



1.2 Halifax Railway Station, in which 60 persons were killed by falling roof. *Nova Scotia Archives*. Halifax. Underwood & Underwood N.Y. publisher. Accessed Nov 9 2013. Reference no. NSARM photo drawer- places- Halifax explosion, 1917

<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/narratives.asp?ID=4>

(copyrighted)

1.3 Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion," Youtube video, 6:36, Upload date June 25 2009.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3DU95ZLxw8>

1.4 "Halifax Explosion." *CBCnews*. CBC/Radio Canada, Web. 9 Nov. 2013
http://www.cbc.ca/halifaxexplosion/he3_shock/he3_shock_devastation.html

1.5 "The Relief Efforts." *Halifaxexplosion.org*. Web. 5 Nov. 2013.
<http://www.halifaxexplosion.org/relief.html>.

Appendix 2

2.1

HALIFAX EXPLOSION

A blinding light! CRASH! B A N G! Rumble! Rumble! "Ohhh! A thunderstorm? It's worse than that. That big cloud up there frothing at the edges must mean it's the end of the world." Such were the thoughts of a six-year-old when the Mont Blanc exploded. It was the end of the world for hundreds and hundreds of Haligonians

Classes in the lower grades did not commence until 9.30 a.m. in December, 1917. Doris was in Grade 3 and I was in Grade 1 at Chebucto School. Shortly after 9 o'clock Dad had accompanied us to the door as we set out for school. Doris noticed a substitute teacher on the other side of the street. We were just two houses from home when the explosion occurred. We were picked up and thrown onto the verandah of the nearest house. We picked ourselves up and went home but when Doris saw the condition of the house her fear increased and she wouldn't go in. She grabbed my hand and we started running toward the substitute teacher; Dad came running after us and took us home.

Our family consisted of Mother, Dad and 6 children - Doris, 8; Jean, 6; Grace and Margaret, twins, 4; Walter and Betty, twins, 2. Dad was in the Army stationed at McNab's Island. There was to be a military funeral on Thursday afternoon and Dad was in charge of the burial party. As he had a wife and family living in Halifax he was granted leave to sleep at home Wednesday night. So he was home when the explosion occurred. Years later I asked him if, with all the death and destruction around that day, the funeral was held. His answer was to the point, "We were under military orders to conduct that funeral and that's what we did." He remembered that as the procession marched along the streets, soldiers stopped what they were doing, and saluted - according to regulations. Orders were not changed until after the funeral when the soldiers assembled to get the duty boat to return to McNab's Island. New instructions were to assist with relief and rescue; and again Dad was granted leave to sleep at home.

Holder, Jean. "Halifax Explosion." Letter. 6 Dec. 1985. *Halifax Explosion Reminiscence of Jean Holder*. Reference no.: Halifax Explosion Collection NSARM MG 27 vol. 9 no. 4.i Nova Scotia

Archives. Web. 10 Nov. 2013.

<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/narratives.asp?ID=12&Page=>

2.2 Halifax Explosion: The Aftermath and Relief Efforts (1917) Youtube video, 13:11, upload August 17 2010 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PlmLMxTXc>

Appendix 3

3.1 Cobb, Andrew. ""Personal Narrative"" Letter to Archibald MacMechan, Director, Halifax Disaster Record Office. 20 June 1918. *'Personal Narrative' given by Andrew Cobb, 20 June 1918 to Archibald MacMechan, Director, Halifax Disaster Record Office*. Reference no.: Archibald MacMechan NSARM MG 1 vol. 2124 no. 131. *Nova Scotia Archives*. Web. 12 Nov. <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/narratives.asp?ID=1>

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Andrew S. Cobb. Architect.

communicated personally to Director in train going to
Bedford, June 20th.

was in train No. 10 proceeding to Halifax on Dec-
ember 6th, 1917. When the train stopped near Africville he
saw people carrying their injured in sheets. Volunteered to go
for medical assistance but was compelled to give up the idea.
was one of six men working at one house till one o'clock rescuing
a man and his wife, another woman and a small boy. ^{They} had no
appliances, worked with their bare hands. There were large
sections of roof and walls to be torn apart. The only effective
implement would have been a gigantic crane which ^{might} could have lifted
the heavy masses of woodwork off the people buried beneath.
They could hear the cries of the people underneath the ruins,
shrieking or sobbing or giving directions. The next house to
the one they were working on was on fire. He was told there
were four children in it burning alive. The parents "went on
like maniacs". The man when rescued was uninjured but his wife
was severely cut. One eye was gone, she kept her hand over it
so that her husband could not see her injury. At one o'clock
Cobb was exhausted and had to give up. He made his way into the
city along Campbell rd. over the debris and among the corpses.
The dead seemed to him to have been drowned. He did not know
how the railway tracks and North St. Station could ever be cleared

3.2 Wrecked Homes-- Campbell's [sic] Rd." 1917 or 1918. Photograph. Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax. Nova Scotia Archives. Web. 9 Nov. 2013. Reference no.: NSARM / negative: N-1268 <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/archives.asp?ID=12>



Appendix 4

4.1. "Injured Dying in Snowbound relief trains, Halifax horror is growing more awful as days pass"
Newspaper article from *The Calgary Daily Herald*, December 8, 1917. *Google News*. Web 20 Oct 2013
<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=vgpkAAAAIBAJ&sjid=v3oNAAAAIBAJ&pg=1667%2C4270484>

4.2 Halifax Relief Commission. *The Contract Record*. "The planning of the new Halifax: economic considerations given first place-six schemes; two for city, four for county-diagonal streets reduce grades, expedite traffic" Toronto: August 28, 1918 pp. 680-683. Reference no: Halifax Relief Commission NSARM accession no. 57 *Nova Scotia Archives* Web 14 Oct 2013
<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/archives.asp?ID=76>

Appendix 5

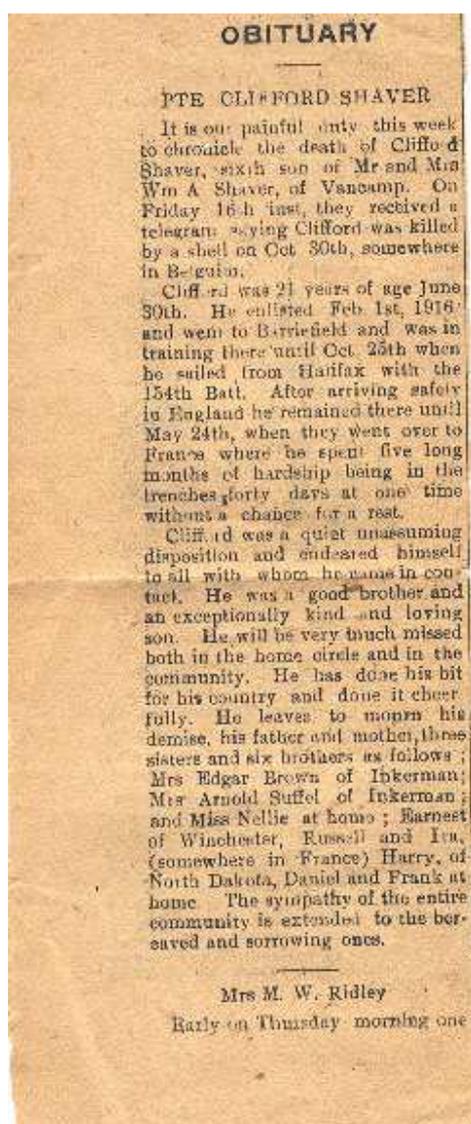
Day 1

5.1a *Cause and Effect*, Youtube video, 2:01, uploaded July 5 2008,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQWBnwu1oZs>.

5.1b Lynette MacLeod, *Halifax Explosion and Turtle Grove*, Youtube video, 2:26, uploaded December 9 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hw_oGyo_GbA.

5.2 Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd., 2013), 116.

5.3 "Shaver, Clifford," *The Canadian Letters and Images Project*, accessed November 14, 2013, <http://canadianletters.ca/template.php?collectionid=152&warid=3&mediaid=5819>.



5.4 "Johnson, Thomas William," *The Canadian Letters and Images Project*, accessed November 14, 2013, <http://canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=11763&warid=3&docid=1&collectionid=438>.

Digby, N. S.,
Nov. 5th 17.

My Dear Tom:

The letter has really arrived, bearing the post mark of 'Liverpool'. As soon as I saw it, just a short time ago, I became excited, before even opening it! But I am trying to keep wonderfully calm and collected, for, as you say, 'many is the slip'. But, just the same, I am hoping with all my heart that in a few weeks, at the most, you will be nearing Canada.

It will not seem quite so bad to know that you are on this side of the water, even if you cannot come here immediately.

But, I am planning so much on everything turning out just to correspond with our plans. Then again, you must not say two weeks, Tom dear, because that is altogether too short a time. A month even would go so quickly that you simply must stay that long even though you are termed a deserter! But just wait until we get you here, and see how easy (?) it will be for you to get away. I will be able to give every spare moment to my patient, Tom, because my ankle has completely recovered. So, when I am not teaching, I will see that you are getting real good care. They tell me that I make a very poor nurse, but you will probably find that out very soon.

You look so thin in your

pictures, Tom, that I'm afraid
I will be like an 'elephant'
to you. I have gained most
horribly this past summer,
mainly due to lack of
exercise, I think. Mrs. Abanson
and I have many good-nat-
ured disputes about it. She
says I look so much better,
with rosy cheeks, and I
say it is uncomfortable to
weigh — (I'd better not
tell you!) I am going to
lose it, though, just see
if I don't!

We are having our

² first snow storm of the season, and it looks very wintry. I dread to think of the stormy days, particularly for the poor boys in the trenches. They seem to be in better positions now, on higher ground but no doubt the mud will be getting deep. I have just finished knitting a sweater for Seily and have started one for Carran. So you see I am not lazy all the time.

I was sorry to hear of Corp. Barker's death. Mrs. Smallie has so often spoken

of him, and wondered how he was faring. He had Mrs. Smellie write to his lady friend out West just as the Batt. left here; and he also told her he had very slight hopes of returning to Canada. Poor fellow - his presentiments were all too true.

Some people think I am altogether heartless, going about with a snatch of song and a laugh with my friends, but I consider that I have a great deal to be happy about. We have really not had cause to worry about our boys at all - I mean outside of their danger from shell, etc. Perhaps I do see the funny side of life too much, but I have found that it pays, on the whole.

But I am wondering whether you got your leave to go home, and whether you are still in Liverpool, on the Atlantic, or just where! It is just two weeks ago last Friday since your letter was posted, so a great many

things might have happened since then. Soon I will know, I expect. Perhaps it might be impossible for you to send any word before leaving.

There is a German raider reported only 200 miles off Halifax, sighted by several or many vessels. The sailings and arrivals of English boats is kept very secret now, more so than ever before. We have always had reports of arrival of hospital ships, but none for several weeks now.

³ Then the lights in Halifax and vicinity are darkened completely, with a warning that they may be shut off completely at sunset.

It is now quite late in the evening, and Jessie is here staying all night with me.

The storm is raging, an awful night to be out. Much as I wish you were on your way back, I do hope you are not on the water tonight, dear Tom. But perhaps it is not so bad as on land.

Now, I must stop and say Goodnight. I wonder just

where you will be when this letter
reaches you. Cheer up— that 'happy
day' is coming soon.

With best love,

Yours,
Lulu

5.5 "Halifax, N.W.," *Nova Scotia Canada*, accessed November 14,2013, <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/archives.asp?ID=1>.

5.6 "The disaster in brief," *Nova Scotia Canada*, accessed November 14,2013, <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/archives.asp?ID=9>.

5.7 Questions to provide on a sheet of paper for each group on Day 1:

What kind of document is this?

When was it published?

Who produced it?

Who or what is it about?

Where do you think the producer obtained his or her information?

How is this related to the Halifax Explosion?

What information does it give us about the time, the people, the circumstance(s)?

What cause for the Halifax Explosion can you determine from this document?

5.8 "Plan showing devastated area of Halifax City, N.S.," *Nova Scotia Canada*, accessed November 14,2013, <http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/explosion/archives.asp?ID=21>.

Day 2

5.9 Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd., 2013), 124, 132-134.

5.10 Special to The Christian Science Monitor from its,Canadian Bureau. "HALIFAX EXPLOSION NEWS STILL SCANTY." The Christian Science Monitor (1908-Current File), Dec 07, 1917.

<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/hnpchristiansciencemonitor/docview/509905245/fulltextPDF/141B9AE4D7D58EBEAE9/3?accountid=6180>.

5.11 Jennifer Burke, "Turtle Grove: Dartmouth's Lost Mi'kmaq Community," in *Ground Zero*, eds. Alan Ruffman and Colin D. Howell (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Limited and the Gorsebrook Research Institute for Atlantic Canada Studies at Saint Mary's University, 1994), 51.

(this is apparently the only picture that survives from the disaster in the Mi'kmaq community)

5.12 "500 MADE BLIND BY HALIFAX EXPLOSION." *The Hartford Courant* (1887-1922), Dec 27, 1917.

<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/docview/556535321/fulltextPDF/141B9EBB45120277C9C/15?accountid=6180>.

5.13 "SCENES OF DEVASTION IN HALIFAX AFTER EXPLOSION OF MUNITION SHIP." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), Dec 13, 1917.

<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/docview/174343427/141B9EBB45120277C9C/19?accountid=6180>

5.14 Staff Correspondence of, The Globe. "Restoration of Halifax by Town-Planning Method." *The Globe* (1844-1936), Mar 15, 1919.

<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/docview/1350681095/fulltextPDF/141B9EBB45120277C9C/26?accountid=6180>

5.15 *Halifax Explosion: The Aftermath and Relief Efforts (1917)*, Youtube video, 13:11, uploaded August 17 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PImhLMxTXc>.

5.16 Questions to provide on a sheet of paper for each group on Day 2:

What kind of document is this?

When was it published?

Who produced it?

Who or what is it about?

Where do you think the producer obtained his or her information?

How is this related to the Halifax Explosion?

What information does it give us about the time, the people, the circumstance(s)?

What consequences of the Halifax Explosion can you determine from this document?

Appendix 6

6.1 "Halifax Explosion," *Historica Canada*, accessed on November 14 2013,
<https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/halifax-explosion>.

6.2 "Morse Code Translator," *The Halifax Explosion (CBC.ca)*, accessed on November 14, 2013,
http://www.cbc.ca/halifaxexplosion/he1_promise/interactives/morsecode.html.

6.3 "Inflation Calculator," *Bank of Canada*, accessed on November 14, 2013,
<http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>.

6.4 Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd., 2013), 139, 145.

6.5 "Price Guide - 1\$ Issue of 1917," *COINSANDCANADA.COM*, accessed on November 14, 2013,
[http://www.coinsandcanada.com/bank-notes-prices.php?notes=1\\$ Issue of 1917&id_cat=10](http://www.coinsandcanada.com/bank-notes-prices.php?notes=1$ Issue of 1917&id_cat=10).

6.6 "HALIFAX APPEALS FOR \$25,000,000 TO AID VICTIMS." *New York Times (1857-1922)*, Dec 10, 1917.
<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/hnpnewyorktimesindex/docview/99893913/141AD B224CA3360AFE4/1?accountid=6180>.

(Look for the part under "Operator Wired 'Goodbye'.")

6.7 Ivan Smith, "Vincent Coleman," *Nova Scotia's Electric Scrapbook*, last modified April 25, 2010,
<http://ns1763.ca/hfxrm/colemanpv.html>.

(consider prompting your students to notice how simple the inscription is)



6.8 Dan Conlin, "Vincent Coleman and the Halifax Explosion," *Maritime Museum of the Atlantic (The Nova Scotia Museum, Department of Tourism and Culture)*, December 6 2008, <http://maritimemuseum.novascotia.ca/what-see-do/halifax-explosion/vincent-coleman-and-halifax-explosion>.

(scroll down to the image that shows Coleman's wallet and other things)

Appendix 7

7.1 "Halifax Explosion: Establishing blame," *CBC Digital Archives*, accessed on November 14 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/war-conflict/first-world-war/the-halifax-explosion/establishing-blame.html>.

7.2 Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd., 2013), 200-201, 213.

7.3 Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd., 2013), 186, 204-205.

7.4 "CALLS NAVAL RESERVES." *New York Times (1857-1922)*, Aug 03, 1914. <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/hnpnewyorktimesindex/docview/97613853/14195F7037F40C204D0/1503?accountid=6180>.

7.5 "Mont-Blanc pilot Francis Mackey recalls Halifax 1917 explosion," *CBC Digital Archives*, accessed on November 14 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/war-conflict/first-world-war/the-halifax-explosion/mont-blanc-pilot-francis-mackey-recalls-the-explosion.html>.

7.6 Special to The New, York Times. "21,000 CANADIANS GOING TO THE WAR." *New York Times (1857-1922)*, Aug 05, 1914. <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/hnpnewyorktimesindex/docview/97582030/fulltextPDF/14195F7037F40C204D0/1512?accountid=6180>.

7.7 "THINKS JUSTICE HAS MISCARRIED." *The Globe (1844-1936)*, Jun 13, 1918. <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.queensu.ca/docview/1366382569/141BF9EAFE7E9C35F6/1?accountid=6180>.

7.8 Questions to provide on a sheet of paper for each group:

What kind of document is this?

When was it published?

Who produced it?

Who or what is it about?

Where do you think the producer obtained his or her information?

How is this related to the Halifax Explosion?

What information does it give us about the time, the people, the circumstance(s)?

What key words or images are used to make statements about ethics?

7.9 Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd., 2013), 190-191.

Appendix 8

8.1 Western News, *Last Halifax explosion survivor dies*, Youtube video, 2:02, published July 21 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JWYnsWCqvc>.

8.2 "Johnson, Thomas William," *The Canadian Letters and Images Project*, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://canadianletters.ca/letters.php?letterid=11708&warid=3&docid=1&collectionid=438>.
(for some reason am unable to access the original scans, but the text of the letter is there)

8.3 Alan Ruffman and Wendy Findley "The Explosion," *The Halifax Explosion*, accessed November 15 2013, <http://www.halifaxexplosion.org/explosion.html>.
(can use all of the pictures on this page)