



Constitute: Lessons for Grades 6–10

Addendum to *Constitute! Continuing the Journey: Teachers' Companion*

The documentary *Constitute!* tells the story of how Canadian women and women's groups fought for equality by successfully advocating for the rights of women and girls to be entrenched into the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Constitute! is available online for free. The *Constitute!* website also provides a teachers' companion—*Constitute! Continuing the Journey*—which includes detailed information regarding the context, historical background, and groups related to this film as well as activities designed for secondary students. To order free copies of the video and teachers' companion, send a request with your mailing address and number of copies to socialjustice@bctf.ca.

The following addendum provides activities that are suitable for elementary students in the intermediate grades. These activities are correlated to the following content and curricular competencies.

Social Studies Content

Grade	Content
Grade 6	Roles of individuals, governmental organizations, and NGOs, including groups representing Indigenous peoples.
	Global poverty and inequality issues, including class structure and gender.
Grade 7	Social, political, legal, governmental, and economic systems and structures.
Grade 9	The continuing effects of imperialism and colonialism on Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world.
	Discriminatory policies and attitudes and historical wrongs.
Grade 10	Government, First Peoples governance, political institutions, and ideologies.
	Discriminatory policies and injustices in Canada and the world, including residential schools, the Head Tax, the Komagata Maru incident, and internments.
	Advocacy for human rights, including the findings and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Social Studies Curricular Competencies

Grade	Competencies
Grade 6	Use social studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.
	Construct arguments defending the significance of individuals/groups, places, events, and developments (significance).
	Take stakeholders' perspectives on issues, developments, or events by making inferences about their beliefs, values, and motivations (perspective).
	Differentiate between short- and long-term causes and intended and unintended consequences of events, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence).
Grade 7	Use social studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
	Determine which causes most influenced decisions, actions, or events, and assess their short and long-term consequences (cause and consequence).
Grade 9–10	Use social studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.
	Make reasoned ethical judgments about actions in the past and present and determine appropriate ways to remember and respond.

Social Studies Big Ideas

Grade	Big Ideas
Grade 6	Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and freedoms.
Grade 7	Increasingly complex societies require new systems of laws and government.
Grade 9	Disparities in power alter the balance of relationships between individuals and between societies.
Grade 10	Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.

Teaching activities

I. Inquiry questions

Use one or more of the following inquiry questions to guide a teaching unit using the *Constitute!* resources.

- How did women contribute to the development of Sections 15 and 24 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*?
- What process took place to ensure women's rights were entrenched into the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*?
- What activities can children participate in to help advance equity for girls and women?

II. Pre-viewing activities

The following activities were designed to be used before viewing the film.

Activity 1: What is the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*?

Students explore the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by reading information books and online resources at the students' level. See the resources listed at the end of this document.

Activity 2: Research project: Why were women concerned about gender equality and women's rights before the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* became the law?

Individually or in small groups, students use printed and online resources to research the following information about women or women's groups, all of which are mentioned in the *Constitute! Teachers' Companion*.

Women and women's groups

- The Famous Five
- The Royal Commission on the Status of Women
- The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- The National Committee on the Status of Women.
- Doris Anderson.

Research questions

- What background information can you find about the woman, the group, and the individual women who were part of the group?
- What concerns, issues, or inequalities did the women experience and try to change?
- What actions did the women take to attempt to advance women's rights?
- What short- and long-term contributions did these women make to advance women's rights?
- What inequalities did women continue to face after they started their movement?

After the groups have collected and organized the information related to their topic, the class participates in a jigsaw activity. Divide the students into small groups made up of one member of each different research group. Each group member then shares their findings with their peers in the jigsaw group.

Activity 3: Gender equity

Read page 6 of *Constitute! Teachers' Companion*. Discuss how Sections 15 and 28 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* contribute to the advancement of gender equity. Use a T-chart to compare the rights and opportunities that women had or did not have before and after the Charter became the law.

III. Post-viewing activities

The following activities were designed for after viewing the film.

Activity 1: Discussion questions

Assign each student one or two of the questions below. Some of the questions require additional research. Ask students to share their answers with their peers during the relevant parts of the video or after viewing the video.

1. What is the Supreme Court of Canada?
2. How did the Supreme Court of Canada treat women before the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* became the law?
3. What is a senator? How did Senator Hayes' comments in the video help the public understand the importance of entrenching gender equality into the Charter?
4. Why was the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Conference canceled? What inspired the group of women to form an ad hoc committee and organize the conference that is shown in the video?
5. How many women attended the conference? What was significance of the number of attendees at the conference?
6. How were Aboriginal women treated before the Charter became law? Section 12(1)(b) was mentioned in the film. How did that law affect Aboriginal women?
7. What is a motion? Why was it important to women that the word "persons" be used in the charter when addressing gender equality?
8. Why did women believe that the process of constitutional reform did not represent the beliefs of all Canadians?
9. Why did Pauline Jewett believe that the Charter was important for the advancement of gender equality?
10. What was the new clause that was added to the Charter as a result of the conference? Why was this clause important for the advancement of women's rights?
11. At the end of the film, Linda Ryan Nye sang a song about patriarchy. What does patriarchy mean?
12. After the conference shown in this film took place, what did the ad hoc committee do to advocate for the changes in the Charter? What does the word "lobby" mean?
13. What did the women who were featured in the film show about working towards positive social change?
14. What year did the new *Constitution of Canada* with the entrenched *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* become the law?

Activity 2: Gender inequalities in Canada and the world today

Ask students to consider the following question: At the end of the film, the narrator mentions that women continue to struggle for equality. What inequalities do girls and women in Canada and around the world continue to struggle with today? What are some actions that children can take to contribute to positive changes regarding issues that affect girls and women?

1. Share the statistics on page 11 of the *Constitute! Teachers' Companion* or statistics related to women's issues that are prevalent in the world or in a location of your choice. Some examples of issues might be poverty, health care, pay equity, violence against women and girls, child marriage, environmental issues, and access to education.
2. Students work individually or in small groups to select one gender equity issue that interests them the most. More than one group or student can choose the same topic.
3. Students use online and printed resources to carry out brief research on the issue to answer the following questions:
 - What are the short- and long-term factors, decisions, policies, or events that contributed to or influenced the issue?
 - What are the short and long- term consequences of the issues? Describe.
 - How are individuals or organizations working to help improve these challenges?
4. Ask each group to share their findings in a written summary or oral presentation.
5. Students then vote on one or more issue to focus on, depending on the needs of the class and time constraints. Students carry out more extensive research on the selected topic(s). Review the BCTF Social Justice Lens and 3 Ss documents. Support students in developing action plans to address the identified issue(s) taking into consideration the notions addressed in these BCTF resources to ensure that their action plans have a lasting impact and result in systemic change.

The table below illustrates the use of the 3Ss document to develop a plan.

Social justice	Social service	Social responsibility
Start and maintain a gender-equity action group in the school that is open to all interested students.	Organize a fundraiser for an organization made up of members of an equity-seeking group that is committed to developing long-term changes to women's issues.	Create a presentation or a printed resource such as a pamphlet or a board game to educate other elementary students about the selected topic(s).
Write letters to people in the community who influence policies to voice opinions and concerns regarding women's rights, as well as suggestions on how to advance these issues.	Organize a clothing or toy drive for a women's shelter.	Invite a speaker to present to students.
Work with students in other classes and schools to organize an ongoing awareness or advocacy campaign.		

Resources

- [BCTF 3 Ss document](#)
- [BCTF Social Justice Lens](#)
- [Canadian Encyclopedia: *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*](#)
- [Constitute! Free online video](#)
- [Constitute! Continuing the journey: Teachers' companion](#)
- [Government of Canada Guide to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*](#)
- [Law Lessons Teachers and Students: *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*](#)
- [Ministry of Education Manitoba: *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*](#)
- [The Charter for Children Series, DC Canada Education Publishing](#)
- [TVO Video: *Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms: What is it and how does it protect the rights of all Canadians?*](#)
- [Youth Guide to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*](#)