Seven classroom-ready lesson plans and five introductory videos highlight and explore the significance and importance of Canada's Capital Treasures. These treasures represent knowledge, sacrifice, commitment and ingenuity. This series of lesson plans is available for download at canadascapital.gc.ca/education.

NEVER GIVE UP! – MAURICE RICHARD MONUMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

- Make compelling and persuasive arguments regarding community achievements;
- Conduct individual and group research;
- Understand the role of memorializing as an important function of maintaining identity;
- Examine Canadian personalities of the mid-20th century.

KEYWORDS

Maurice Richard; Stanley Cup; The Hockey Sweater; Never Give Up.
INTRODUCTION

Walking in Jacques-Cartier Park in Gatineau, Quebec, most Canadians aren’t surprised to see a bronze statue of a giant hockey player. After all, hockey is Canada’s game, a unifying force across the country, and Maurice “The Rocket” Richard was one of the game’s greatest players.

Richard dominated the NHL in the 1940s and ‘50s, playing for his hometown Montréal Canadiens, and increased international recognition of a young Canada on the world stage. His records and achievements are legendary: scoring 50 goals in 50 games, winning eight Stanley Cups, and being fast-tracked to the Hockey Hall of Fame. His image appeared on everything from magazine covers to cereal boxes. His famous number 9 jersey was retired within a month of his leaving the league in 1960.

His life has been chronicled in books, television and film. The Hockey Sweater, the children’s book written by Roch Carrier, is about a child trying to obtain a number 9 “Habs” jersey. Richard’s legacy reverberates more than 50 years after his retirement.

It’s no wonder that Maurice Richard remains a national icon. A quick peek at Canadian popular culture reveals hockey as a defining aspect of our lives in fields as diverse as music, literature and advertising. Canadians follow their organized teams, from the NHL to minor leagues to the local peewee teams. Olympic hockey, both men’s and women’s competitions, can bring entire cities to a complete standstill.

But more than that, Canadians regularly lace up and take to the ice for community shinny games. Even when the snow and ice are gone, street hockey — with the familiar cry of “car!” — takes over summer evenings.

MAURICE “THE ROCKET RICHARD” STATUE “NEVER GIVE UP!”

Known for his speed on the ice and his powerful shots, Richard spent 18 years with the Montréal Canadiens. Prime Minister Chrétien remarked of this most dedicated hockey player that he “…defined and transcended the game of hockey.”
Lesson Five

When the Montréal Forum closed in 1996, Richard’s appearance at the closing ceremonies resulted in a 16-minute standing ovation, the longest ever recorded in that city. During the ovation, while fans chanted his nickname, “Rocket” over and over, he closed his eyes and mouthed the words “thank you.”

Four years later, at his funeral, more than 115,000 people visited, as his body lay in state at the Molson Centre in Montréal, including the Governor General and the Prime Minister of Canada. The following year, the larger-than-life bronze statue of Richard was erected in Gatineau, created by Au Coeur du Bronze.

Richard, without a helmet as was typical of his era, races toward the viewer, ready to shoot the puck, his penetrating gaze part of his terrifying reputation as one of the most determined goal scorers of all time. The words “Never Give Up!” are etched in the statue’s base, reminding us of Richard’s place in Canadian history, and the role of hockey in our national psyche.

ACTIVITY ONE: MAKE A HOCKEY CARD

Choose a present-day hockey player. Create a hockey card outlining their contributions to the game, including if they have been featured in other commemorative ways (e.g. on a stamp or a sculpture), or in popular culture (as a spokesperson for a charity or company, for example).

ACTIVITY TWO: CELEBRATING HOCKEY

Canadians are passionate about hockey. It’s more than just a game. As a class, brainstorm the various ways hockey is celebrated in Canada (e.g. Hockey Hall of Fame, Hockey Day in Canada). What other ways could hockey be celebrated? Individually or as part of a small group, choose one of these celebrations. It could be a monument, an event, a publication, or any other idea. Discuss whether your celebration needs to be permanent, or if it should have a definite beginning and end. As a group, present your idea to the rest of the class.

ACTIVITY THREE: PROPOSE A NEW MONUMENT

Someone in your community, perhaps even in your school, is contributing, or has contributed to your community in a positive way. Research the different ways to commemorate a person (for example, with stamps, statues, scholarships, building and street names, etc.). Select someone who you think deserves to be commemorated in your community. Determine which commemorative method (e.g. a monument, a special day) would be the most appropriate for your honouree. Present your commemoration to your class.

Activity Extension: There is also a Maurice Richard statue in Montréal. Why does Richard have a statue in two cities? Consider the individual you have decided to commemorate. Would it be fitting to have a second commemoration of them in the country’s capital? Where would be the best location for such a monument or commemoration?

ACTIVITY FOUR: INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH AND CLASS DISCUSSION

Maurice Richard came to prominence during the middle part of the
twentieth century. During this time, Canada was still growing as a country and many laws and social norms were changing.

Discuss as a class what other Canadian events happened during Richard’s playing career (1942–1960). Were there other personalities of the era that helped define Canadian identity? Choose one and present your Canadian personality to the class.

**ACTIVITY FIVE: WRITING A SHORT PAPER AND CREATING EPITAPHS (GRADE 1 OF HIGH SCHOOL IN QUEBEC OR GRADE 7 IN ONTARIO)**

The words “Never Give Up!” are etched in the base of the Maurice Richard statue. With a partner, research Maurice Richard’s life and then write a short paper explaining why these words are an appropriate epitaph for him. With your partner, think of two or three other Canadian icons or heroes and come up with appropriate epitaphs for them. Be prepared to engage in a discussion about these epitaphs with your classmates and explain your reasoning.

**ACTIVITY SIX: CREATING A BIOGRAPHICAL GRAPHIC NOVEL (GRADE 2 OF HIGH SCHOOL IN QUEBEC OR GRADE 8 IN ONTARIO)**

The life of Maurice Richard has been chronicled in books, television and film. Create a biographical graphic novel (2 or 3 pages, or longer, if you wish) that depicts an event (or several events) in the life of the great hockey player. If necessary, do some research to learn more information about the life and times of Richard. Make sure your facts are accurate. Before you begin drawing, spend some time reading graphic novels to learn about the various ways of telling a story in panels. Remember to include space for characters’ dialogue or for narration. Graphic novels are a great way to combine words and images in narrative. Try to take advantage of the genre by building in some action scenes. Do a quick rough mock-up of your pages before moving to a final version.

**ACTIVITY SEVEN: MAPPING SPORTS ICONS (GRADE 3 OF HIGH SCHOOL IN QUEBEC OR GRADE 9 IN ONTARIO)**

All around the world, people play sports and celebrate their national sports stars. Edison “Edson” Arantes do Nascimento, known by his nickname Pelé, was named the “Athlete of the Century” in 1999 by the International Olympic Committee. This incredible soccer player is a national hero in Brazil. With a partner, label the countries on a world map. Research to find a national sports hero or icon for as many countries as possible. What is it about each hero that makes him or her so popular? Find a creative way to represent each icon on the map and to describe why he or she is so popular throughout their nation.