

LESSON TWO



CANADA'S CAPITAL TREASURES

FOR GRADES:

From grades 6 to 9 or from grade 6 of elementary school to grade 3 of high school in Quebec.

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.

PEACE TOWER

MATERIALS

Peace Tower video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vTu1RkKvPw>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

- Learn more about the symbolic meaning of towers in general and The Peace Tower specifically;
- Create a piece of persuasive media;
- Find out more about the use of symbolic imagery in Canada's Peace Tower;
- Learn more about the symbolic meaning of the Canadian flag and how it was chosen;
- Understand that symbolic imagery can exist in a variety of forms and places;
- Analyze different uses of form within a video.

KEYWORDS

Peace Tower; campanile; Dominion Carillonneur; grotesques; gargoyles; Memorial Chamber; Robert Borden; Parliament of Canada.



FIRE OF 1916

Photo: Library and Archives Canada

After the fire of 1916, only the Library of Parliament was left standing. Observers report hearing the bell ringing before it came crashing to the ground. Work on the new buildings began almost immediately.

INTRODUCTION

For most of the past century, the Peace Tower has proudly announced that our country stands for harmony in times of both peace and conflict. Overseeing the workings of Parliament, the 92.2-metre tower was built to replace the old tower after a fire destroyed most of the Parliament Buildings in 1916. Conceived in the literal and figurative ashes of the First World War, the new tower very aptly earned its symbolic moniker, the “Peace Tower.”

Kings, queens, and heads of state enter Parliament through the entrance at the foot of the tower. Crowds gather on the enormous lawn below the tower to celebrate events, memorialize losses, and to

make their voices heard. During special evenings in the summer, a sound and light show is projected onto the Parliament Buildings. Enjoy some beautiful aerial footage of the Peace Tower in the video, “Peace Tower.”

A Canadian flag flies from the tower’s copper-covered apex and is changed daily, Monday to Friday. The flagpole is the “flagpole of the nation”; for example, a flag at half-mast triggers a day of national mourning.

The Peace Tower is visible from almost anywhere in the Capital Region, including across the provincial border in Gatineau, Quebec. Its four clock faces are almost five metres across and light up at night. The time is set by the

atomic clock at the National Research Council Canada in the Capital.

Officially, the neo-Gothic tower is a campanile, or a free-standing bell tower. The Dominion Carillonner rings the 53 bells during national events like Canada Day, state funerals, and during Remembrance Day ceremonies. Watch the video, “Peace Tower,” to hear a sampling of the bells being played on the organ like carillon. The old tower was also a campanile; its bell crashed down during the fire, and can still be seen on the grounds of Parliament Hill today.

The tower is constructed of Canadian stone, ranging from Ontarian and Nova Scotian sandstone to Quebec granite. Artists created many carvings, including grotesques, which symbolize a fight against evil, and gargoyles, which direct water away from the outside of the tower.

The Peace Tower was designed and built as the First World War raged in Europe. As a reminder of this horrific conflict, the Memorial Chamber was created just above the entrance archway. It is the only Parliament in the world to have such a room. Within the richly carved and highly symbolic room, the Books of Remembrance list all Canadian soldiers, airmen, and seamen who have died in service. The pages of the books are turned daily at 11 am, ensuring that names of the fallen appear at least once every year; family members can arrange to be present at this ceremony.

When dedicating the new tower’s building site in 1917, Prime Minister Robert Borden reminded the country of the need for peace in a world mired in war: “[the tower will be a] memorial to the debt of our forefathers and to the valour of those Canadians who, in the Great War,

fought for the liberties of Canada, of the Empire, and of humanity.”

The Peace Tower was commemorated as such in 1927 and to this day, celebrates our desire for a more peaceful world.

ACTIVITY ONE: DESIGN A GARGOYLE OR GROTESQUE

Gargoyles and grotesques are stone carvings that protect buildings. Some take human or animal shapes, while others are fantastical monsters. Many are humorous. Pick a location in your school building where a grotesque or gargoyle would fit. Draw a design for a carving. Should it be a humorous carving? A scary one? What is the symbolic meaning of your design?

ACTIVITY TWO: MAKE A CELEBRATION

The Peace Tower figures prominently in many major Canadian celebrations, such as Canada Day. Choose one event that has happened on Parliament Hill. Using the Internet, determine what the elements of this event were. Was there a musical component? A light show? Other performances? What was the role of the crowd, security, the military? Why did this event take place in Canada’s Capital? Using your example, propose a new event on Parliament Hill. What or whom are you celebrating? Why should this event take place in the Capital? Sometimes, events result in the creation of more permanent markers, such as plaques or buildings. Think of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games, for example. Is there any permanent legacy of your event? Outline a proposal for your class. Design a poster and an itinerary for your event.



THE PEACE TOWER, WITH CANADIAN FLAG

The Peace Tower observation deck is located right below the clock face.

ACTIVITY THREE: PROPOSE A SCHOOL TOWER

Towers are usually the tallest structures in a city or town. Towers can be used for communications, can have a military function (such as a watchtower) or can be important

for religious reasons. Think about your school building. In small groups, discuss the idea of creating a tower for your school. What would its function be? What would it look like? Be creative!

ACTIVITY FOUR: INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH AND CLASS DISCUSSION

Canada's Peace Tower is highly symbolic. Using library and Internet resources, select one element of the Peace Tower (e.g. the Memorial Chamber, the exterior, the clock, the carillon, the carvings, the actual name "Peace Tower") and reflect on its symbolic meaning. What is being commemorated and how? What are the pros and cons of making a permanent monument versus holding an event or having a less tangible commemoration? What does the Peace Tower mean to Canadians and how is this meaning given form in your chosen element?

ACTIVITY FIVE: CREATE A NEW FLAG (GRADE 1 OF HIGH SCHOOL IN QUEBEC OR GRADE 7 IN ONTARIO)

Today, a Canadian flag flies from the top of the Peace Tower; however, when the Peace Tower was built during the First World War, the Red Ensign that bore the British Union Jack and the royal arms of Canada flew instead. That's because Canada did not get its own flag until 1965. The Canadian flag was first raised on the Peace Tower on February 15, 1965.

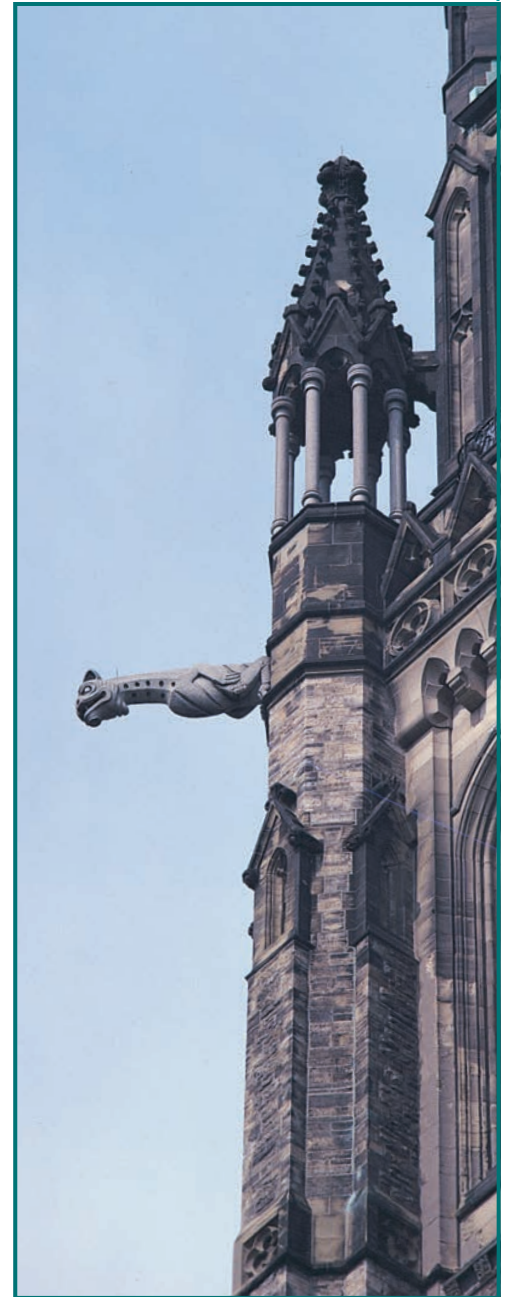
How is having its own flag important for a country? Do some research to find out what designs were suggested as possibilities for Canada's flag (Canadians submitted almost 6000 designs to Ottawa for consideration by Canadians), and why and how the eventual one was chosen. Then imagine that Canada must choose a new flag and create three possibilities. Beside each one, record your reasons for the design and symbols you have chosen. As a class, review the suggestions and vote for the most popular flag.

ACTIVITY SIX: MAKE A NOISE FOR CANADA (GRADE 2 OF HIGH SCHOOL IN QUEBEC OR GRADE 8 IN ONTARIO)

In the video "Peace Tower," the Dominion Carillonneur mentions that Prime Minister Mackenzie King called the Dominion Carillon "the Voice of the Nation." Why do you think he referred to it in this way? What other examples are there of Canadian symbols that are "audible" (as opposed to visual)? Hint: consider televised sporting events, school assemblies, or the Olympic games. With a partner, come up with your own "Voice of the Nation." Decide whether it needs lyrics. Record your rendition. Be prepared to play it for the class and to defend your choice.

ACTIVITY SEVEN: DISCOVERING CANADA'S ARCHITECTS (GRADE 3 OF HIGH SCHOOL IN QUEBEC OR GRADE 9 IN ONTARIO)

After the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings was destroyed by fire in 1916, hundreds of architects submitted their designs, hoping to win the reconstruction job. The Canadian government chose architects John Pearson and Jean Marchand. Why do you think it was important to the government that the pair represented an English- and French-Canadian collaboration? Pearson and Marchand both admired British and American architecture, but believed that it was possible to create a uniquely Canadian architectural form. How did they achieve this with the Peace Tower? Do some research to find out more about other Canadian architects, such as Douglas Cardinal, David Ewart, Étienne Gaboury, and Moshe Safdie, who have created other important symbolic buildings in Canada. What philosophies or viewpoints were they trying



PEACE TOWER, CLOSE-UP OF GARGOYLE, 2005

The Peace Tower prominently features four gargoyles, each more than eight metres long. These stone creatures have a very important function: they direct rainwater away from the building and help preserve the stone.



PARLIAMENT OF CANADA, 2008

Parliament Hill on Canada Day.

to convey in the buildings they designed, and how did they achieve their goals? Write several paragraphs to explain, and include a visual and informative caption of at least one of the buildings you mention.

MEDIA LITERACY ACTIVITY

View the video “Peace Tower” again. How does it successfully convey information about the Peace Tower and make its many features “come alive” to the audience? Why do you think the makers of the video chose

to include a brief segment profiling a person closely associated with the Peace Tower, the Dominion Carillonner? Did they achieve their purpose? Determine the length of the five videos linked to the Seven Capital Treasures project. Write a short paragraph giving your opinion of: a) why the makers of the video decided to make them all this length; b) whether or not you agree that the length is suitable and achieves the purpose of makers of the video.