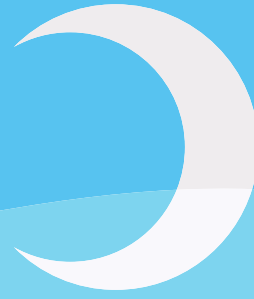




Green
UMMAH



WORLDVIEWS, JUSTICE & THE ENVIRONMENT

The Greening Our
Communities Toolkit
Teacher's Guide



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Green Ummah

presents

The Greening Our Communities Toolkit Teacher's Guide

PACKAGE TWO

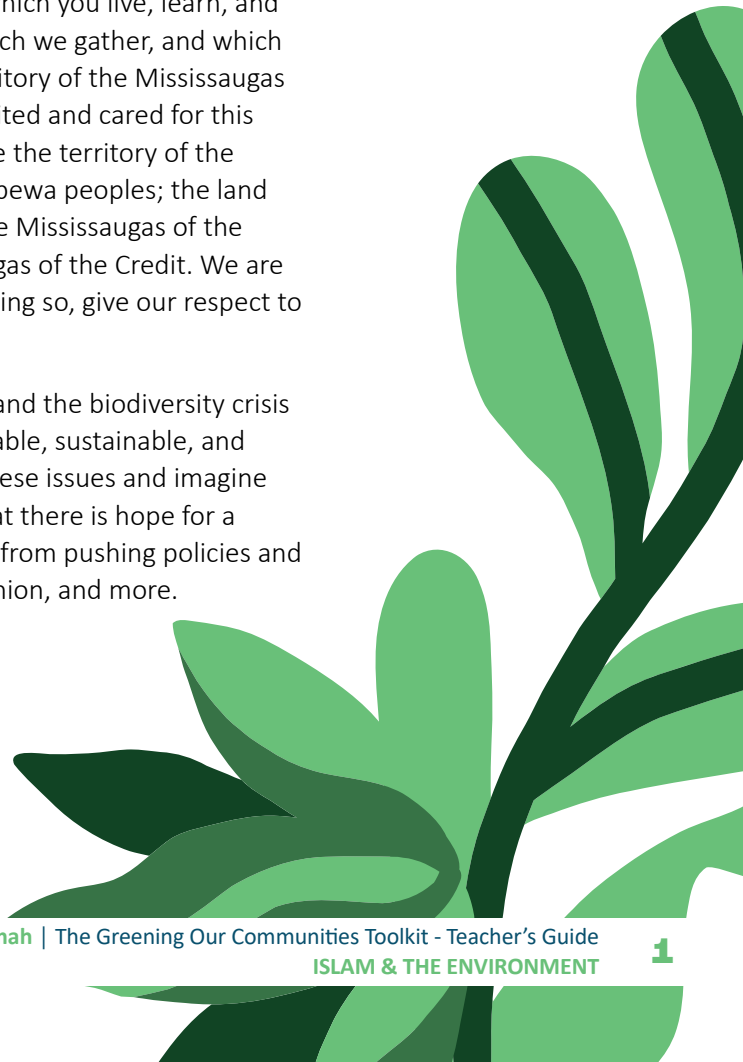
Worldviews, Justice & the Environment

AUDIENCE:

**Geography, Science, and Equity Studies teachers
for Grades 9-12**

This lesson has been brought to you by Green Ummah, a Canadian non-profit building towards a green future in Muslim communities. Wherever you are joining us from, we encourage you to take a moment to acknowledge the land on which you live, learn, and work. We would like to begin by acknowledging the land on which we gather, and which the Region of Peel operates, is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples inhabited and cared for this land, and continue to do so today. In particular, we acknowledge the territory of the Anishinabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Ojibwe/Chippewa peoples; the land that is home to the Metis; and most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who are direct descendants of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land, and by doing so, give our respect to its first inhabitants. Let's get started!

In reality, our world is infinitely complex. While climate change and the biodiversity crisis are both realities, so are the many efforts to build a more equitable, sustainable, and balanced world. While it is vital to understand the urgency of these issues and imagine the consequences if we do nothing, we also want you to see that there is hope for a better world. And there are so many ways that you can engage, from pushing policies and laws forward, inventing technical solutions, changing public opinion, and more.



Lesson 1: Why Do I Think About the Environment the Way I Do?



Time Required: 75 – 90 minutes

Description:

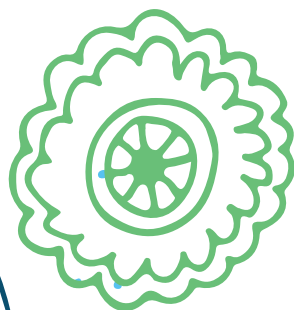
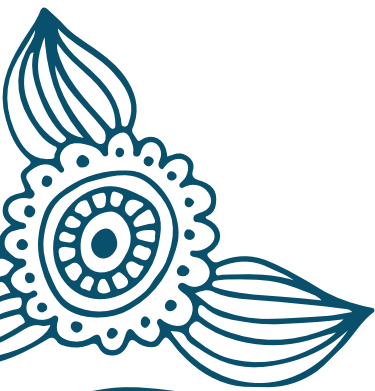
In this lesson, students will explore how worldviews influence the way people think about the environment, and how their views influence their treatment of the environment

Learning Goal:

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to explain, in your own words, how different worldviews influence the way people think about and engage with the environment.

Success Criteria:

- I can define colonialism.
- I can identify the dominant worldview in Canada and how this shapes how people think about and treat the environment.
- I understand Indigenous worldviews of the environment and can explain how it differs from a colonial worldview.
- I understand how other worldviews, such as faith-based worldviews, think about the environment. Ontario Curriculum Connections:



Ontario Curriculum Connections:

Geography, Grade 9

A1.5 Use the concepts of geographic thinking (i.e., spatial significance, patterns and trends, interrelationships, geographic perspective) when analyzing and evaluating data and information, formulating conclusions, as well as making judgements about geographic issues relating to Canada.

A1.6 Evaluate and synthesize their findings to formulate conclusions and/or make judgements or predictions about the issues they are investigating.

B1.1 Analyze the environmental, economic, social, and/or political implications of different ideas and beliefs about the value of Canada's natural environment. Explain how these ideas/beliefs affect the use and protection of Canada's natural assets.

Equity Studies, Grade 11

C1.2 Describe the complexities of the relationship between an individual's cultural heritage and Canadian values, beliefs, and practices.

C2.4 Describe a range of perspectives on specific contemporary equity or social justice issues in Canada.

In this lesson, you will learn about Islam's teachings on conserving the environment and living sustainably. Throughout this lesson, students can refer to the Key Terms to understand the concepts covered. This lesson can be completed in 75–90 minutes and includes a suggested outdoor activity component.

Materials Required:

- Paper and pencil
- Internet-enabled device
- [Activity Worksheet - Personal Worldview Questionnaire](#)
- [Activity Worksheet - Reflecting & Documenting](#)
- [Activity Worksheet - Element Mapping](#)
- [Worldviews, Justice & Environment Key Terms](#)
- [Topic Backgrounder Colonialism & Environment in Canada](#)



Step 1:

Introducing Worldviews



(25 minutes)

- A. To help students confront their own personal worldviews, have them complete the Personal Worldviews Questionnaire, featuring a series of statements that they will evaluate on a scale to reflect how much they agree or disagree with the attitudes expressed (4 minutes).**

After completing the worksheet, ask students to compare their responses with a small group or with a neighbouring peer (4–5 minutes).

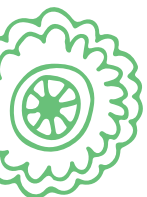
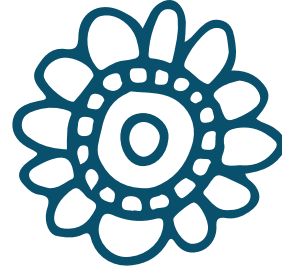
Finally, debrief together as a class and ask students to share any similarities or differences they found amongst peers. Discuss how different worldviews of two individuals could translate into different outcomes for the same scenario—for example, protecting the environment (6 minutes).

- B. To build an understanding of personal worldviews in regards to the relationship with the environment and community, engage students in some self-reflection (5-minute reflection, 5-10 minute discussion):**

Ask students to write down three values that are very important to them in how they interact with the environment and their communities (for example, spending time in nature, treating others with kindness or helping others, and so on). Once students have written down their three values, ask them to reflect on the cause of this value → what/who caused them to value this? By thinking deeply about what shapes their values, students will begin to understand their worldview. You can have students reflect privately or share with the class.

- C Then introduce Indigenous worldviews and how they differ from western worldviews, and particularly how the two worldviews shape human relationship with nature.**

- [Indigenous Worldview](#) (play from 2:12- 5:22 minutes)



Personal Worldview Questionnaire



ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Personal Worldview Questionnaire					
Read and think about each of the following statements. Circle the response to each statement that best reflects your personal worldview on the issues below					
1. People are naturally inclined to be good.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. People should just try to have fun by pursuing leisure activities and not worry about work and accomplishing great things.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. We should care for others first, and worry about ourselves second.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. All humans are equal, and no one should get special privileges	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Preserving nature is more important than using its resources to maintain human activity.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Individual freedom is more important than the rights and wellbeing of society.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. Humans have an ethical responsibility to leave the earth in a better condition than it is now.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Adapted from LearnAlberta, "Exploring Personal Worldviews."

Step 2:

Worldviews – Colonialism & Environment in Canada



(15 minutes)

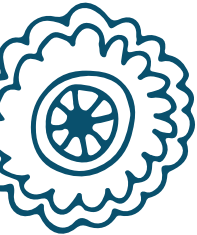
Continue defining colonialism, briefly discussing the history of colonialism in Canada and how these two worldviews, Indigenous and western, interact in colonial and post-colonial Canada.

Distribute the topic backgrounder [Colonialism & Environment in Canada](#) (10 minutes reading) to students to read individually.

After reading, put your students into groups for a think-pair-share activity (5-7 minutes).

Now that students have an understanding of the difference between Indigenous and western worldviews, have students reflect on the following questions and share their thoughts with their partner:

- Why is it the case that two people who live in the same neighbourhood may have completely different worldviews?
- How has colonialism shaped my worldview?
- How has colonialism shaped the way I think about the environment?
- What have I learned from Indigenous worldviews in relation to the environment?
- What aspects of my life, such as culture, religion, and upbringing, have shaped my worldviews about the environment?



Colonialism & Environment in Canada

TOPIC BACKGROUNDER

Colonialism

Colonialism is the practice of one country taking full or partial political control of another country. Colonialism occurs when individuals or groups from one country settle in another country to exploit their people and natural resources. Moreover, colonial powers attempt to impose their own languages and cultures on the people of the countries they have colonized.

Colonialism has a strong presence in Canada's history. In the 1600s, Europeans began to arrive on Indigenous territory. The Indigenous nations were fairly welcoming to the Europeans, and the Europeans were jealous of the lands as they had degraded most of their own natural resources. In the 1700s, more settlers began arriving and Indigenous people resisted the theft and destruction of their land. This is when treaties came along—at the beginning, treaties were meant to establish a peaceful relationship between the Crown and First Nations. However, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 declared that treaties going forward would be to settle land ownership. The Indian Act was another tool used to force assimilation of the Indigenous population. Indigenous people did not voluntarily assimilate, which led to the Canadian government taking more extreme measures. This included banning spiritual and cultural practices, and "Indian Agents" were sent to control band council meetings. Children were also taken away to attend residential schools. These mandatory schools punished children who spoke their native tongue or engaged in spiritual practices, which became forbidden. Children were abused and malnourished, and schools were riddled with disease.

When Europeans entered North America, they wanted to transform it into a country that worked for their needs. The animals and plants that Indigenous people relied on were reduced or eliminated completely. Other problems also occurred, such as issues with fishing. In the early part of the 20th century, the commercial salmon fishery in Georgia Strait plundered the sockeye and spring runs so aggressively that less spawning fish made it into the Interior along the Fraser and Thompson River systems.

Colonialism and Climate Change

Climate change is the current change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards. Climate change is attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels. Colonialism has many negative impacts on the environment. It has been a major cause of climate change and the biodiversity crisis at large. Colonialism allowed colonial countries to exploit natural resources to develop their economies. However, these countries relied heavily on fossil fuels. In other words, the level of development of a colonial country has a direct positive relation with carbon emissions. The more developed and higher GDP it has, the more carbon emissions it has caused. For example, colonialism allowed the United States, along with other developed nations, to accumulate wealth and influence by extracting fossil fuels, and consequently, leave the world with a massive debt of carbon emissions.



Who has contributed most to global CO₂ emissions?



Cumulative carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions over the period from 1751 to 2017. Figures are based on production-based emissions which measure CO₂ produced domestically from fossil fuel combustion and cement, and do not correct for emissions embedded in trade (i.e. consumption-based). Emissions from international travel are not included.

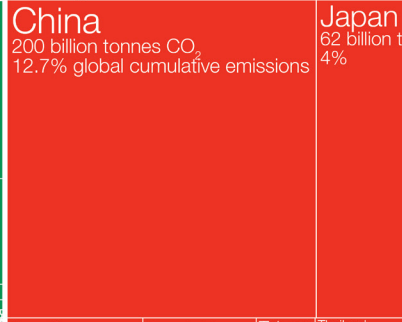
North America

457 billion tonnes CO₂
29% global cumulative emissions



Asia

457 billion tonnes CO₂
29% global cumulative emissions



EU-28
353 billion tonnes CO₂
22% global cumulative emissions



Russia
101 billion tonnes
6% global emissions

India
48 billion t
3%



Europe

514 billion tonnes CO₂
33% global cumulative emissions

Africa 43 billion tonnes CO₂
3% global emissions
South America 40 billion tonnes CO₂
3% global emissions

Oceania
20 billion tonnes CO₂
1.2% global emissions

Figures for the 28 countries in the European Union have been grouped as the 'EU-28' since international targets and negotiations are typically set as a collaborative target between EU countries. Values may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Data source: Calculated by Our World in Data based on data from the Global Carbon Project (GCP) and Carbon Dioxide Analysis Center (CDIAC). This is a visualization from OurWorldinData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing.

Licensed under CC-BY by the author Hannah Ritchie.

What is the Biodiversity Crisis?

Currently the world is facing a biodiversity crisis, which is a loss of diversity, both number and variety, of plant and animal species in specific parts of the world where those species are native. When studying the causes of this biodiversity loss, we learn that colonialism has had a severe negative impact.

A case study that can be analyzed involves one of the most active volcanoes in the world: the Piton de La Fournaise. On this volcano, there have been more than 600 years of lava flows. Before permanent human settlements, forests were dominated by large, fleshy-fruited plant species—usually big trees. However, when humans began to settle in these areas, fruit-eating animals (frugivores) such as giant tortoises and flying foxes went extinct on the island. Frugivores are important in tropical forests as they swallow large fruits and deposit the seeds far away from the parent trees. After a major disturbance such as a lava flow, seed dispersal is vital in order to obtain ecosystem recovery. With the lack of frugivores, tropical forests cannot fully recover.

What is Indigenous Traditional Knowledge?

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge is the collective knowledge of traditions used by Indigenous Peoples to sustain and adapt themselves to their environment over time. This information is passed on from one generation to the next. Such Traditional Knowledge is unique to Indigenous communities and is rooted in the rich culture of Indigenous Peoples. The knowledge may be passed down in many ways, including storytelling, ceremonies, dances, traditions, arts and crafts, ideologies, hunting and trapping, food gathering, food preparation and storage, spirituality, beliefs, teachings, innovations and medicines.

Unlike colonial approaches to the environment, Indigenous peoples are able to display harmonious and respectful relationships with the environment. Robin Wall Kimmerer is a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She embraces the idea that plants and animals are humans' oldest teachers and that we can engage in reciprocal relationships with the environment. She authored the book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, which explores Indigenous relationships with nature. Below is an excerpt from her book:

“Hold out your hands and let me lay upon them a sheaf of freshly picked sweetgrass, loose and flowing, like newly washed hair. Golden green and glossy above, the stems are banded with purple and white where they meet the ground. Hold the bundle up to your nose. Find the fragrance of honeyed vanilla over the scent of river water and black earth and you understand its scientific name: *Hierochloa odorata*, meaning the fragrant, holy grass. In our language it is called *wiingaashk*, the sweet-smelling hair of Mother Earth. Breathe it in and you start to remember things you didn't know you'd forgotten.”

Read more at this link below:

www.penguin.com.au/books/braiding-sweetgrass-9780141991955/extracts/2283-braiding-http-sweetgrass

•

Why Do I Think About the Environment the Way I Do?



ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Reflection

Think about what we have learned about nature. Think about everything that nature includes, from the air we breathe, the plants and weeds that grow, the animals we see, the water we use. Either look around your house or take a walk outside and spend at least ten minutes without your phone noticing nature where it comes up. Really focus on the experience of it using all your senses.

Documentation

Take another five to ten minutes to document what you have noticed. You are welcome to use whatever medium you feel comfortable with- for instance you can take a photo or video, or record a voice note to describe what you see, or write down a description, or a combination of any of these methods! For ease of your experience, we have included a text box on page 2 that you are welcomed to use as a notepad for combining all your observations.

As you observe the nature in your surroundings, we recommend you to focus on one element. For example, if you were focused on the rain, you could take a video or audio recording of how this rain sounds, a selfie to show how the rain has impacted you- for example you chose to experience rain. As a result of this experience, you became wet. Now continue with this observation by writing a description of the rain, i.e. is it cold or warm? Were the droplets big or small? How did the rain sound? How did it smell?

Write observations here...

Why Do I Think About the Environment the Way I Do?



ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Element Mapping

Now is the time to think about how the element you have chosen is connected with the world around you! Using the Element Mapping table on page 2, write your element in the middle in big letters. Then, draw a line outward and write down a description of this element with any of the first-hand material you have gathered.

Then draw lines to the following questions:

1. What journey did your element travel to get to you?
2. Where is your element going to go after it interacts with you?
3. Which people or things have interacted with your element?
4. How does the government control, regulate or impact your access to this element?
5. How will the climate change and biodiversity crisis impact this element?
6. What can you do to protect this element and/or engage with it in your everyday life?

Now continue to do some research to answer these questions, make sure to reference the sources you used. Then come back to your map on the next page and draw additional lines with your answers, pulled from your research. You can be as creative as you want and incorporate graphics, animation, drawing, pictures, etc. of your element! Make you sure you keep a list of your sources. After completing the map, send it to info@greenummah.org.



Element Mapping

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for mapping elements. It occupies the majority of the page's vertical space below the header.

Element Mapping

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for mapping elements. It occupies the majority of the page below the header.

What journey did your element travel to get to you?

Cattails



References

“Cattails.” Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/plant/cattail>

Worldviews, Justice & the Environment Keyterms

Biodiversity Crisis: The loss of the diversity—both number and variety—of plant and animal species in a specific region.

Climate Change: The current change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Climate Justice: The recognition that climate change impacts people differently based on identity, and the idea that future policies and laws have to take these inequities into account.

Colonialism: The practice of one country or group taking full or partial political control of another country. Colonialism occurs when individuals from one country settle in another country to exploit their people and natural resources. Moreover, colonial powers attempt to impose their own languages and cultures on the people of the countries they have colonized. (Definition from <https://www.thoughtco.com/colonialism-definition-and-examples-5112779>)

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge: The collective knowledge of traditions used by Indigenous people to sustain and adapt themselves to their environment over time. This information is passed on from one generation to the next. Such Traditional Knowledge is unique to Indigenous communities and is rooted in the rich culture of its peoples. The knowledge may be passed down in many ways, including: storytelling, ceremonies, dances, traditions, arts and crafts, ideologies, hunting and trapping, food gathering, food preparation and storage, spirituality, beliefs, teachings, innovations and medicines.

Racism: The belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another.

Systemic Racism: A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It is a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.

Worldview: An individual's worldview is the way they see and understand the world, especially regarding issues such as politics, philosophy, and religion. (Definition from www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/world-view)

Racialisation/racialised:

Marginalisation/marginalised:

Reconciliation:

Indigenization:

Decolonization:



Step 3:

Take Action Activity



(15 minutes)

Note: This activity can be done during class or as a take-home. It is encouraged to have students do this activity while outside, whether in the school park, a neighbourhood park, or on a Green Ummah trip to a Natural Wildlife Area.

We are in a relationship with the nature around us. No matter where we live, we can find it. In this activity, you will reflect upon and answer the following question:

“What shapes my relationship with nature?”

1. Reflection: Think about what we have learned about nature. Think about everything that nature includes: the air we breathe, the plants and weeds that grow, the animals we see, and the water we use. Either look around your house or take a walk outside and spend at least ten minutes without your phone noticing nature where it comes up. Really focus on the experience of it using all your senses.
2. Documenting: Focus on one element in nature that you have noticed. Now take another 5 to 10 minutes to document what you experienced. You are welcome to use whatever medium you feel comfortable with. You can take a photo or video, use a voice note and describe what you see, write down a description, or combine these methods. For example, if you were focused on the rain, you could take a video or audio recording of how this rain sounds, a selfie to show how the rain has impacted you (ex. you became wet), write a description of the rain (Is it cold or warm? Were the droplets big or small? How did they sound?).
3. Mapping (Assignment): Now is the time to think about your own worldview. Why did you experience the element the way you did? On a piece of paper, write your element in the middle in big letters. Next, draw a line outward and write down a description of this element with any of the first-hand material you have gathered. Then draw a line extending from the middle for each question below (see worksheet for sample). Brainstorm as many answers as possible to these questions:
 - What journey did your element travel to get to you?
 - Where is your element going to go after it interacts with you?
 - How do you interact with this element in your everyday life?
 - What worldview affects how you interact with this element?
 - How does the government control, regulate, or impact your access to this element?
 - What can you do to protect this element and/or engage with it in your everyday life?

Now continue to do some research to answer these questions, and make sure to reference the sources you used. Then come back to your map and draw additional lines with your answers pulled from your research. You can be creative as you want and incorporate graphics, animations, drawings, and pictures. of your element. Make sure you keep a list of your sources! Take a photo of your final map and send it to info@greenummah.org

Sample Rubric, Geography (Grade 9)

Expectation	1	2	3	4
Uses the concepts of geographic thinking (i.e., spatial significance, patterns: the trends, interrelationships, geographic perspective) when analyzing and evaluating data and information, formulating conclusions, and making judgements about geographic issues relating to Canada (Knowledge/Understanding, Application).				
Evaluates and synthesizes their findings to formulate conclusions and/or make judgements or predictions about the issues they are investigating (Thinking/Inquiry, Communication).				
Analyzes the environmental, economic, social, and/or political implications of different ideas and beliefs about the value of Canada's natural environment, and explain how these ideas/beliefs affect the use and protection of Canada's natural assets (Thinking, Communication).				
Teacher Comment:				

References and Teacher Resources:

- leveller.ca/2019/09/timeline-of-canadian-colonialism-and-indigenous-resistance/
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/colonialism-definition-and-examples-5112779>
- <https://opentextbc.ca/postconfederation/chapter/11-2-environment-and-colonialism/> <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/8/12/what-does-islam-say-about-climate-change-and-climate-action#:~:text=Muslims%20believe%20that%20humans%20should,environmental%20policy%20in%20Muslim%20countries>
- <https://theecologist.org/2020/mar/10/biodiversity-colonisation-and-tropical-islands>
- <https://climatesociety.ei.columbia.edu/news/why-we-need-confront-climate-changes-colonial-legacy>

Lesson 2:

What are the Barriers that Some People Face in Accessing the Environment?



Time Required: 2 – 3 hours

Activity Description:

In this lesson, students will learn how environmental racism impacts different communities in Canada—including their communities—and brainstorm ways to address environmental racism.

Learning Goals:

By the end of this lesson, you will:

- Gain an understanding of racism, systemic racism and environmental racism in Canada.
- Explore historical and contemporary examples of environmental racism in Canada.
- Recognize your role within existing power structures and reflect on your privileges and biases.
- Begin to take action to address environmental racism in Canada.

Success Criteria:

- I am able to define racism, systemic racism, and environmental racism in the Canadian context
- I am able to critically assess examples of environmental racism and how it impacts racialized/marginalized populations in Canada, such as Black and Indigenous people.

Ontario Curriculum Connections:

Geography, Grade 9

A1.1 Formulate different types of questions to guide investigations into issues in Canadian geography.

A1.2 Select and organize relevant data and information on geographic issues from a variety of primary and secondary sources (e.g. primary: raw data from fieldwork, both quantitative and qualitative; statistics; photographs; satellite images; secondary: newspaper columns, books, atlases, geographic magazines, websites, graphs, charts, digital and print maps), ensuring that their sources represent a diverse range of perspectives.

A1.5 Use geographic thinking concepts (i.e., spatial significance, patterns and trends, interrelationships, geographic perspective) when analyzing and evaluating data and information, formulating conclusions, and making judgements about geographic issues relating to Canada.

A1.6 Evaluate and synthesize their findings to formulate conclusions and/or make judgements or predictions about the issues they are investigating.

B1.1 Analyze the environmental, economic, social, and/or political implications of different ideas and beliefs about the value of Canada's natural environment. Explain how these ideas/beliefs affect the use and protection of Canada's natural assets.

Islamic Studies, Grade 9

1. Explain the rights of God and the rights of humans as well as our responsibilities to other creations and the environment.
2. Examine the value and respect for human rights as reflected in the Quran.
3. Promote the dignity, rights, and responsibilities of individuals guided by Islamic teachings.

Equity Studies, Grade 11

C1.1. Describe the ongoing challenges and struggles facing various racial, cultural, or national minority groups in Canada, including Aboriginal people and newcomers

C2.1 Describe a variety of historical and contemporary examples of inequity and social injustice in Canada.

C2.2 Demonstrate an understanding of Canada's historical and current relationship with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and of the ways in which Aboriginal people have worked to achieve recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Materials Required:

- Paper and pencil
- Internet-enabled device
- Sticky notes
- [Worldviews, Justice & Environment Key Terms](#)
- [Case Study 1: Africville](#)
- [Case Study 2: Chemical Valley](#)
- Case Study 3: Coastal Gas Pipeline

Additional Multimedia Resources:

- [Nibisiing](#) (5 minutes)
- [What is Environmental Racism](#) (2 minutes, 23 seconds)
- [Youth Perspectives on Environmental Justice and Racism, Cristal Cisneros](#) (12 minutes, 6 seconds)
- [Environmental Justice in Mi'kmaq & African Nova Scotian Communities](#) (19 minutes, 20 seconds)
- There's Something in the Water- available on Netflix
- [Environmental Justice, explained](#) (3 minutes, 33 seconds)

Teacher Script:

We cannot learn about the environment, and how to create a *Greener Ummah* ("community"), without discussing environmental racism. We will work together to define and discover examples of environmental racism in Canada. Moving forward, it is crucial to keep in mind that the environment is just one place where racialized or marginalized people are negatively impacted at disproportionate rates.





Activity

Throughout this activity, students can refer to the Key Terms document to understand the different definitions covered in this lesson.

Step 1:

Understanding Privilege & Oppression



(15 minutes)

Begin by sharing a definition of privilege and oppression with your class that are given below:

- Privilege is “a right or benefit that is given to some and not others” (Merriam-Webster)
- Oppression is the “the exercise of power or authority unjustly.”

After sharing the definitions, ask students to reflect where they may have experienced privilege or oppression in their lives. Students can think about class, gender, religion, race, nationality, physical ability, language, and more. Encourage them to write their responses.

Suggested activity: Provide each student with two sticky notes. Have students anonymously write an example of privilege on one sticky note, and an example of oppression on the other. These could be based on personal student experiences. On a whiteboard or wall, designate a column for “privilege” and a column for “oppression,” and have students stick their notes in the respective column.

Once all students are done, do a “gallery walk” and invite students to come up to the board and read through all of their peers’ examples. (7 minutes).

Once students have had the time to read and reflect, continue on to a class discussion on the following questions (8 minutes):

- What did you notice about the differences between the examples of privilege and oppression? What similarities did you observe in the responses?
- Is it possible to be simultaneously impacted by oppression as well as privilege and power in society?
- Why do you think people can hold privilege and power while experiencing oppression?
- What can we do to ensure that our privilege is used positively?

Step 2:

Exploring Environmental Racism in Canada



(75 minutes)

In this part of the activity, students will explore examples of environmental racism in Canada by looking at three different case studies that will inform students' understanding of barriers to accessing the environment for some people.

Put your class into three groups and assign one of the following three case studies exploring environmental racism in Canada to each group. In their groups, ask students to analyze the case study by answering the questions in the case study (30 minutes). After students have analyzed the case study, ask them to share their findings with the rest of the class in 5 minutes presentations.

[Case Study 1: Africville](#)

[Case Study 2: Chemical Valley](#)

Case Study 3: Coastal Gas Pipeline

After each group has presented their case studies, have a class discussion reflecting on the questions below (10 minutes):

1. What are some similarities and differences in the three examples we saw?
2. Think back to the warm-up activity on privilege and oppression. What is our role as Canadians [*or Canadian-Muslims if taught in a Muslim setting*] in addressing environmental racism?

Optional Extension Activity:

Take Action Capstone Project (Take Home Assignment or 60 Minutes):

If your curriculum allows, you can add in this extension activity to further enrich the understanding of environmental racism in Canada and take action to address it.



Environmental Racism in Canada

Africville Case Study

Case Study 1: Africville

In your assigned group, begin by watching the following video:

Video: Africville - Africville: The Black community bulldozed by the city of Halifax

As we go through the Africville case in more detail, think about the ways that Africville residents are interacting with nature. How does this compare to your experiences?

History & Quick Facts

- East Coast- Halifax, Nova Scotia
- First inhabited by Mi'kmaq since time immemorial.
- With colonialism came the British and French to Nova Scotia who brought enslaved Africans and were followed by African-American refugees that had escaped the United States as slaves.
- Halifax was founded in 1749, built by enslaved Africans.
- Africville as a settlement was north of Halifax, commonly referred to as the “place the road ends” and was inhabited by formerly enslaved people, Maroons and black refugees from the War of 1812. This land was given to them because it was deemed infertile and unlikely to produce any produce. Despite this, they built their own community including schools, had a store and a church.

What is the problem?

- The community in Africville paid taxes but received no municipal services, including roads, water, sewage, public transport, garbage collection, schools, street lamps, police services, etc. It was still a safe haven away from the anti-black racism of Halifax.
- Halifax began expropriating the land and adding undesirable services next to Africville including a train track right through the settlement which destroyed homes and a waste treatment plant, night-soil disposal pit (for human waste), prison, garbage dump, tar factory, stone cutting plant, slaughterhouses and infectious diseases hospital nearby. The garbage dump was an “open-pit dump” which is now illegal because it does not protect the environment, it leaves the garbage exposed- open to burning, scavengers, vectors and the elements.
- This turned the settlement into a ‘slum’ and allowed the City of Halifax to start tearing it down. They bulldozed homes, destroyed the church in the middle of the night, and expropriated all the land.



How is the problem systemic?

- Council recognized that the open-pit dump was a “health menace” and wanted to put it as far away from the city. They ended up putting it only 350m away from Africville. It polluted the air causing respiratory problems, polluted the groundwater and surface water, seeped into the soil and reduced the production of vegetation. It also attracts rodents and snakes that carry dangerous disease.
- The waste treatment plan further polluted the water.
- The train track cut through the settlement and brought dangers of speeding trains and also polluted the settlement.
- Moving undesirable industries nearby and not servicing the land allowed the City to give Africville the label of a slum and this allowed the residents of Halifax to believe it should be removed.
- Africville residents were exposed to toxic pollutants (soil contamination, water contamination, waste overflow, exposure to disease and radiation) and denied basic services despite being tax-paying citizens.

What is the current situation?

- Africville was destroyed over several decades, with the last home destroyed in 1969 and all the land belonged to the government.
- In 1996, the site was declared a National Heritage Site, in 2010 the Mayor of Halifax apologized and in 2012 the Church was rebuilt.
- The people who lived in Africville received little to no compensation for the loss of their land to this day and no compensation for the negative health effects they suffered as a consequence of the open-pit dump. In 2018, a Nova Scotia judge turned down the application for a lawsuit.

Activity:

In their assigned groups, ask students to answer the following questions and share their findings prepare a short presentation to share with rest of class answering the following questions:

1. Summarize the case study, tell everyone what happened? How is it a case of environmental racism? And what is the current situation?
2. Based on the group’s understanding of the case, come up with a working definition of “environmental racism” and share with the rest of class.



Environmental Racism in Canada

Chemical Valley

Case Study 2: Chemical Valley Case Study

In your assigned group, begin by watching the following video

Video: Chemical Valley Canada's Most Polluted City: Welcome To Chemical Valley

As we go through the Chemical Valley case in more detail, think about the ways that Chemical Valley residents are interacting with nature. How does this compare to your experiences?

Quick Facts & History:

- This land has traditionally been home to the Chippewa people for over 300 years. It was a hunting ground and land of the first nation peoples that the British government took from them in 1827. Over the years this land has been overtaken by many plants and refineries that have polluted the air. It is the most singularly poisonous location in North America.
- Located near Sarnia in southeast Ontario which has a population of 72,000 and other townships nearby within Chatham-Kent, including Wallaceburg and Walpole Island. Around this area, there is the Aamjiwnaang First Nations Reserve with about 850-900 Chippewa people living there.
- 40% of Canada's Chemical industry is housed here with an astonishing 60 chemical plants and oil refineries in just a 24 KM wide section!
- in 2005 they had a record high 46 days of smog during which time schools had to be cancelled due to the dangerously high concentration of pollutants in the air. The World Health Organization called this the "worst in Canada".

What is the problem?

- Due to the plants and refineries the air in the surrounding area has become dangerously polluted. Due to this poor air quality most of the residents have become ill with various negative effects on their health, including high rates of cancer.
- The issue has been in the press since 1985 when a Maclean's article exposed the issue. In 1985 there were only 13 petrol companies in a 10km stretch. In August 1985, an accident at Dow Chemical Ltd. led to the spillage of 2,500 gallons (almost 9,500 litres) and left a blob of chemicals at the bottom of the St. Clair River. This spill was the 11th dow spill of 1985 and one of 275 total reported spills in between 1975-85.
- Ecojustice declared this a violation of the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights and have worked tirelessly to try to create a safer environment for the residents. The Environmental Bill of Rights is a provincial law that should give residents the right to participate in environmental decision making.



How is the problem systemic?

- According to the National Observer, Environmental racism is the burden imposed on racialized communities by disproportionately locating hazardous and toxic industries in their neighbourhoods. Think about how many oil and chemical plants you've seen in your entire life?
- Usually zoning laws stop the development of such chemical and gas plants close to neighbourhoods. Think about your city and where these plants are located, if any. Do you see them and are they in your neighbourhood? However, in Sarnia, municipal zoning laws were lax and the province was open to permitting as many as possible. This is how the polluting plants ended up right next to the Aamjiwnaang First Nations Reserve.
- As polluting industries are undesirable, they are usually located near poor communities of color, this is due to the fact that these communities do not have the means to fight back. This is despite the Environmental Bill of Rights.
- These polluting industries deteriorate the air, soil and water quality of the nearby communities which then deteriorates the health and well-being of the members of that community.
- Pollution is a form of systemic violence. It may be out of our sight and away from our lives, but it is a part of everyday life for those communities it affects. The government allows these factories and plants to open in specific spaces and not others.
- The use of Indigenous land for the chemical industry has resulted in the forced relocation of Indigenous people to just small reserves to help clear the area for these factories. This is a structural poverty producing system and goes against reconciliation efforts.
- The UN stated that when looking at the toxic exposure in Canada discrimination is very evident as the conditions faced by these Indigenous groups would not be acceptable anywhere else in Canada.

What is the current situation?

- In 2014, an incident led to over 500kg of hydrocarbon gas to spill into the air. Nearby residents reported burning eyes, dizziness and nausea. Over 500 spills between 2014-2015 alone, many spills not even reported, and many of them not dealt with properly by the government.
- The problem still exists with more long-term health effects being discovered, such as higher rates of asthma, cancers like leukemia, and skewed birth rates (2:1 ratio of girls born to boys).
- What the government says:
 - They are making an effort to control pollution by controlling major contaminants and decreasing the sulphur dioxide releases.
 - They have asked the corporations to provide a plan on how they plan to minimize the pollutants.
 - The provincial government has decided to divide Ontario into air quality zones with a focus on zone 3s that include Sarnia and Hamilton.
 - Ontario is also working on improving its communication with the Aamjiwnaang community.
 - The Ontario government has started a Clean Air Sarnia and Area Community Advisory Panel where community members can join to share concerns and help address the local pollution problems.
 - Federal Liberal MP Lenore Zann has put forward Bill C-230, which calls for the development of a strategy to redress environmental racism
- What the Provincial Government actually did:
 - After Bill 132, it is easier and cheaper for companies to pollute our water as the fines have also reduced.
- The problems still continue and the community is posting air quality reports on Facebook to keep the community members informed.

Environmental Racism in Canada

Coastal Gas Pipeline

Case Study 3: Coastal Gas Pipeline Case Study

In your assigned group, begin by watching the following video:

Video: Coastal Gas Pipeline - What is the Wet'suwet'en Nation protesting?

As we go through the case in more detail, think about the ways that Wet'suwet'en peoples are interacting with nature. How does this compare to your experiences?

Quick Facts & History:

- Coastal Gas is attempting to build a pipeline through unceded Wet'suwet'en territory, located in Northern BC.
- The Wet'suwet'en are an Indigenous nation made up of five clans including the: Gilseyhu (Big Frog), Laksilyu (Small Frog), Gitdumden (Wolf/Bear), Laksamshu (Fireweed) and the Tsayu (Beaver Clan).
- This land is the hunting and living ground for the Wet'suwet'en people. It is also unceded, which means that the Wet'suwet'en people never legally gave away their rights to be on that land.
- A timeline:
 - Dec 31, 2019 – The pipeline project got the approval to proceed
 - Jan 5, 2020- The Wet'suwet'en chief issued an eviction notice to the coastal gaslink stating they are trespassing on wet'suwet'en land
 - Jan 7, 2020- The Wet'suwet'en chief sends list of demands to cancel all the permits
 - Jan 13, 2020 – The RCMP sets up checkpoints restricting access on the morice west forest service road
 - Jan 30, 2020- The RCMP stands down on their enforcement
 - Feb 6, 2020 – The RCMP begin enforcing the injunction (6 people are arrested)
 - Feb 8, 2020- People protested by barricading themselves inside using chains in efforts to prevent arrest
 - Feb 10, 2020- Police move into Unist'ot'en, where the Wet'suwet'en have, for more than a decade, been re-establishing a presence in what began as an effort to block proposed energy projects through the area.
 - May 14, 2020- An MOU (memorandum of understanding) was signed that stated that the Canadian and British Columbia government understand and recognize those rights and titles held under the Wet'suwet'en system of government.



What is the problem?

- A 670-kilometre (417-mile) pipeline will cut across traditional Wet'suwet'en lands that cover 22,000sq km across northern BC.
- The land is recognized as Indigenous land yet the pipeline is being built on that land without consent from the community. The chiefs never agreed to this pipeline.
- The pipeline will affect the land, water and the community.
- The Coastal GasLink pipeline is a key component of a \$40-billion LNG Canada export terminal at Kitimat, B.C., designed to ship natural gas to international markets, which has many other implications for climate change.

How is the problem systemic?

- Wet'suwet'en and other Indigenous people are increasingly becoming the targets of racism and backlash because of their Canada-wide anti pipeline demonstration.
- The building of the pipeline requires the members of the community to relocate from their ancestral land which results in a loss of culture and it further continues the cycle of poverty and cultural loss.
- We cannot yet see the impact of the pipeline on the environment but we know that it will have a negative impact on the Wet'suwet'en people. The Coastal Pipeline is being built after government approval and with consultation from government at the provincial and federal levels, yet Indigenous communities were left out of the conversation and will be the ones disproportionately impacted by the pipeline. The simple act of allowing the pipeline to pass through unceded territory is an act of environmental racism.

What is the current situation?

- An MOU was signed recognizing the rights of the Wet'suwet'en people to the land.
- Construction has continued, despite being slowed down by protests and then COVID. The project is over 1/3 complete as of February 2021.
-

Activity:

In their assigned groups, ask students to answer the following questions and share their findings prepare a short presentation to share with rest of class answering the following questions:

1. Summarize the case study, tell everyone what happened? How is it a case of environmental racism? And what is the current situation?
2. Based on the group's understanding of the case, come up with a working definition of "environmental racism" and share with rest of class.



Activity

Step 1: Find an Environmental Problem

Find an example of an environmental issue that impacts your community. Note that there are many levels of community. Your community can be your neighbourhood, school, city, or other group that shares common characteristics with you. Remember as you choose your issue that while climate change is global, it has specific impacts on your community.

Step 2: Defining the Problem

Write your environmental issue in one sentence.

Step 3: Gathering Information

Research the problem with whatever tools are available to you. We recommend browsing through the Government of Canada website, journal articles databases (if you have access), your school library, or the Internet. Gather some facts about the issue. Answering the following suggested questions can help organize your research:

- What is the issue?
- Why is this an issue?
- Who does the issue affect?
- How does the issue affect you?
- How does the issue affect marginalized or racialized individuals in your community, and does it impact them (or you) disproportionately?
- What is currently being done to address this issue in Canada, and by whom?

Step 4: Proposing Solutions

After collecting all the facts, students will either propose a solution to address the issue or alter a solution that they found compelling while researching. Students can present their findings, together with their proposed solutions, in a format of their choice (i.e. presentation, short video, social media campaign). It is imperative to include a piece about how your solution addresses the disproportionate impact on marginalized and racialized people in your community.





Activity

Throughout this activity, students can refer to the Key Terms document to understand the different definitions covered in this lesson.

Step 1:

Understanding Privilege & Oppression



(15 minutes)

Begin by sharing a definition of privilege and oppression with your class that are given below:

- Privilege is “a right or benefit that is given to some and not others” (Merriam-Webster)
- Oppression is the “the exercise of power or authority unjustly.”

After sharing the definitions, ask students to reflect where they may have experienced privilege or oppression in their lives. Students can think about class, gender, religion, race, nationality, physical ability, language, and more. Encourage them to write their responses.

Suggested activity: Provide each student with two sticky notes. Have students anonymously write an example of privilege on one sticky note, and an example of oppression on the other. These could be based on personal student experiences. On a whiteboard or wall, designate a column for “privilege” and a column for “oppression,” and have students stick their notes in the respective column.

Once all students are done, do a “gallery walk” and invite students to come up to the board and read through all of their peers’ examples. (7 minutes).

Once students have had the time to read and reflect, continue on to a class discussion on the following questions (8 minutes):

- What did you notice about the differences between the examples of privilege and oppression? What similarities did you observe in the responses?
- Is it possible to be simultaneously impacted by oppression as well as privilege and power in society?
- Why do you think people can hold privilege and power while experiencing oppression?
- What can we do to ensure that our privilege is used positively?

Sample Rubric, Geography (Grade 9)

Expectation	1	2	3	4
Formulates different types of questions to guide investigations into issues in Canadian geography (Thinking/Inquiry)				
Selects and organizes relevant data and information on geographic issues from a variety of primary and secondary sources (e.g., primary: raw data from fieldwork, both quantitative and qualitative; statistics; photographs, satellite images; secondary: newspaper columns, books, atlases, geographic magazines, websites, graphs, charts, digital and print maps), ensuring that their sources represent a diverse range of perspectives (Communication)				
Uses the concepts of geographic thinking (i.e., spatial significance, patterns and trends, interrelationships, geographic perspective) when analyzing and evaluating data and information, formulating conclusions, and Making judgements about geographic issues relating to Canada (Knowledge/Understanding, Application).				
Evaluates and synthesize their findings to formulate conclusions and/or make judgements or predictions about the issues they are investigating (Application, Communication, Thinking/Inquiry)				
Analyzes the environmental, economic, social, and/or political implications of different ideas and beliefs about the value of Canada’s natural environment, and explain how these ideas/beliefs affect the use and protection of Canada’s natural assets (Application, Communication)				
Teacher Comment:				



References and Resources:

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