

## **Social Studies 11 IRP Critique from a Critical Media Literacy Perspective British Columbia Curriculum**

### **Skills and Processes**

This organizer includes the skills and processes that students develop as they explore the issues presented in Social Studies 11. As students undertake thoughtful inquiry from a base of knowledge and values drawn from multiple perspectives, they construct new knowledge, learn how to develop and communicate reasoned arguments and convictions, and come to understand the practice of informed, deliberative, active citizenship.

The prescribed learning outcomes in this organizer include

- Critical thinking skills
- Research skills
- Communication skills
- Skills and attitudes of active citizenship.

### ***Information and Communications***

#### ***Technology***

The study of information and communications technology is increasingly important in our society. Students need to be able to acquire and analyse information, to reason and communicate, to make informed decisions, and to understand and use information and communications technology for a variety of purposes. Development of these skills is important for students in their education, their future careers, and their everyday lives. Literacy in the area of information and communications technology can be defined as the ability to obtain and share knowledge through investigation, study, instruction, or transmission of information by means of media technology. Becoming literate in this area involves finding, gathering, assessing, and communicating information using electronic means, as well as developing the knowledge and skills to use and solve problems effectively with the technology. Literacy also involves a critical examination and understanding of the ethical and social issues related to the use of information and communications technology. Social Studies 11 provides opportunities for students to develop literacy in relation to information and communications technology sources, and to reflect critically on the role of these technologies in society.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES 11: PRESCRIBED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

<b>SKILLS AND PROCESSES OF SOCIAL STUDIES</b>
<p>It is expected that students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• apply critical thinking—including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, and defending a position—to make reasoned judgments about a range of issues, situations, and topics</li><li>• demonstrate effective research skills, including<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- accessing information</li><li>- assessing information</li><li>- collecting data</li><li>- evaluating data</li><li>- organizing information</li><li>- presenting information</li></ul></li></ul>

- citing sources
- demonstrate effective written, oral, and graphic communication skills
- demonstrate skills and attitudes of active citizenship, including ethical behaviour, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and collaboration

### **POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate understanding of the political spectrum
- explain how Canadians can effect change at the federal and provincial levels
- explain how federal and provincial governments are formed in Canada
- describe major provisions of the Canadian constitution, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and assess its impact on Canadian society

### **AUTONOMY AND INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

It is expected that students will:

- describe Canada's evolution as a politically autonomous nation
- assess Canada's role in World War I and the war's impact on Canada
- assess Canada's role in World War II and the war's impact on Canada
- assess Canada's participation in world affairs with reference to
  - human rights
  - United Nations
  - Cold War
  - modern conflicts

### **HUMAN GEOGRAPHY**

It is expected that students will:

- explain the significance of changes in world population with reference to
  - population pyramids
  - distribution
  - density
  - demographic transition models
- compare Canada's standard of living with those of developing countries, with reference to poverty and key indicators of human development
- assess environmental challenges facing Canadians, including
  - global warming
  - ozone layer depletion
  - fresh water quality and supply

### **SOCIETY AND IDENTITY**

It is expected that students will:

- assess the development and impact of Canadian social policies and programs related to immigration, the welfare state, and minority rights
- explain economic cycles with reference to the Great Depression and the labour movement in Canada
- describe the role of women in terms of social, political, and economic change in Canada
- assess the impact of the conscription crises, Quebec nationalism, bilingualism, and regionalism on Canadian unity
- demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by Aboriginal people in Canada during the 20th century and their responses, with reference to

- residential schools
- reserves
- self-government
- treaty negotiations
- represent what it means to be Canadian with reference to
- distinctive Canadian programs and policies
- important Canadian cultural and scientific achievements

### **Suggested outcome indicators for skills needed in Social Studies 11**

- Demonstrate effective research skills, including
  - Accessing information
  - Assessing information
  - Collecting data
  - Evaluating data
  - Organizing information
  - Presenting information
  - Citing sources
- Access a range of information sources on selected topics, including sources
  - From a range of media types (e.g., print news, broadcast news, online)
  - Representing a range of perspectives that qualify as primary (e.g., original documents, political cartoons, interviews, surveys) and secondary (e.g., textbooks, articles, reports, summaries, historical monographs)
  - That deal specifically with Canadian social, cultural, political, legal, economic, and environmental issues (e.g., web sites for governments, NGOs, and interest groups; archives; libraries)
- Explain the importance of accessing and considering a range of information sources
- Assess the accuracy, reliability, and relevance of collected information by
- Determining examples of bias and points of view in information
- Identifying the data collection methods (e.g., poll, census, interview, survey)
- Determining currency of information
- Determining consistency with information obtained from other sources on the same topic (corroboration)
- Collect and organize primary data (e.g., design and conduct surveys and interviews; extract data from web sites and archives)
- Interpret and construct maps
- Synthesize and evaluate collected data
- Organize information effectively (e.g., outlines, summaries, notes, timelines, visual organizers)
- Present and interpret data in a variety of forms appropriate for the purpose (e.g., written, oral, graphic)
- Cite sources consistently and appropriately

## Media Analysis

Much of the information that the public receives about issues and events is received through media messages—in newspapers and magazines, on television and radio, and on the Internet. Analysis of media messages is a valuable component of Social Studies 11, and allows students to think critically and independently about issues that affect them.

The following concepts of media education are examples of the ways in which teachers and students can examine a range of media messages relevant to Social Studies 11.

- **Purpose:** People make media messages to inform, entertain, and/or persuade for political, commercial, educational, artistic, moral, and/or other purposes. and implicit values.
- **Representation:** Media messages are constructed; they are only representations of real or imaginary worlds.
- **Codes, Conventions, and Characteristics:** Each medium has its own set of codes, conventions, and characteristics that affect the way messages are transmitted and understood.
- **Production:** People who understand the media are better able to make purposeful media messages.
- **Interpretation:** Audience members bring their knowledge, experience, and values to their interpretation of and emotional response to media messages.
- **Influence of Media on Audience:** Media messages can influence people's attitudes, behaviours, and values.
- **Influence of Audience on Media:** People can influence media institutions and the messages they produce and transmit.
- **Control:** People who control a society's dominant institutions have disproportionate influence on the construction and distribution of media messages and the values they contain.
- **Scope:** Media technologies influence and are influenced by the political, economic, social, and intellectual dimensions of societies

## Suggested Assessment in the Government Unit

### Election Project

Ask students to choose a topic for an elections project, such as one of the following:

**Media analysis:** Students assess media coverage from several sources over two days of the campaign. Students should compare coverage of events over those two days in terms of the following: size and placement of the story, story angle or spin, visual portrayal of individuals and events, tone of analysis. Students should discuss the potential impact of media coverage on an election campaign.

**Issue analysis:** Students choose two issues of interest (e.g., the environment and national defence) and examine how these issues fit into the campaign. Students should examine party campaign materials, ads, and media coverage to determine how important the issues seemed in the campaign compared to other issues, and how party positions developed over the campaign on these issues.

**Leadership analysis:** Students collect advertisements and media clippings of the major party leaders. (This can be limited to one leader or a comparison of two or more leaders.) Ask students to write an accompanying paper, discussing how each party sought to portray its leader, how parties characterized other leaders, and how they work characterized in the media. The paper

could also address concepts such as what makes a good leader, and how she or he is portrayed by the media.

**Local campaign analysis:** Students volunteer a minimum of ten hours for a local campaign for a political party of choice. An accompanying paper should discuss the work done, how this work fits into the running of a local campaign, and the student's personal reflections on the experience

### **Critique**

There are many opportunities in the Social Studies 11 curriculum to focus on critical media literacy. Because much of the curriculum deals with things that are still very much relevant in today's society, it is a great place to focus on how many issues are portrayed in the media. Government, society, and even human geography can have huge components in the curriculum which can focus on media literacy. The IRP offers some good examples on how to incorporate critical media literacy into the curriculum. There are many mentions of the importance of teaching students at this level how to read the media and understand the various strategies in which the media can portray events, people and places. There are so many primary and secondary sources that can be used within this curriculum to teach critical media literacy. Issues of society in Canada have been portrayed in so many ways which can be transformed into a lesson of media literacy. There are really endless opportunities to touch on critical media literacy within this IRP, especially because its scope is much broader than just history. The problem remains that in most cases, critical media literacy is not embedded into the curriculum and remains the facilitators' decision whether to teach media literacy or not. The teacher must make an effort to take on the challenge of incorporating critical media literacy into the curriculum. There are no explicit instructions on how this can be done and therefore there must be a certain level of initiative to actually achieve these goals. Teachers can benefit from having more examples within the curriculum on how to touch on critical media literacy within each unit in the IRP.