

Weddings Tell a Story

Learning Outcomes

Grade 10 Social Studies: Canada in the Modern World

Topic A - Challenges for Canada: The 20th Century and Today

- Theme III: Identity (d. Interaction among groups influences one's identity.)

Background Information

In Canada's multicultural society, people from different cultural groups interact. This interaction creates and influences one's cultural identity. Weddings are a good example of traditions and rituals that are unique to various parts of the world. In their original countries, weddings have changed over time. In Canada, inter-cultural interactions have influenced wedding practices. "Identity" includes consciousness about one's cultural heritage. This lesson uses the Ukrainian Weddings website content as a resource for students to answer the question: How is cultural identity influenced by inter-cultural interactions?

Objectives

Students will:

- Investigate how traditional customs can be linked to cultural identity.
- Investigate how cultural identity is influenced by inter-cultural interactions.
- Investigate and compare various wedding scenarios differing through time and culture.
- Plan, gather, organize and interpret information.
- Express ideas through writing, discussion, and presentation.

Time

2-3 class periods.

Materials

Internet access. Website: Ukrainian Weddings [http://www.museums.ualberta.ca/exhibits/ukrnwedding/r_intro.html]

Large chart paper, felt pen

Focus

Key Questions for Discussion

1. What is your ancestry?
2. How significant is your ancestry to your identity? What other identities do you have? [*Cultural, occupational, familial, etc.*]
3. What elements (such as traditions and rituals) of your culture are practiced in Canada today? [*Student ideas. Weddings, religious holidays, etc.*]
4. What has been lost? [*Student ideas. Aspects of some traditions might have been lost or altered.*]

5. What has been added? [*Student ideas. Aspects of some traditions that might have been adapted or added. New music styles, symbolic clothing, new holidays, new Canadian elements in ceremonies.*]
6. What are some potential outcomes of one's cultural background in a society made up of people from different cultural backgrounds? [*Student ideas. Assimilation - A minority group adopts customs and attitudes of prevailing Canadian culture. The original identity is lost. Integration – A minority group adjusts its customs and attitudes to be compatible (but not necessarily identical) to prevailing Canadian culture. A distinct identity and other parts of the original culture may be retained. Pluralism – More than one culture co-exists in a larger society over time. More than one identity and culture is accepted as normal.*]

Explore & Investigate

Task One: Develop a question for investigation

Working in pairs, students visit the Ukrainian Weddings website. They skim the website, not for details, but for how it is organized and what kind of content it contains. Each student writes a 2-3 paragraph synopsis of the website content. This will help students decide what kind of information needs to be gathered from the interview.

Task Two: Develop questions to guide research

An *interview* will be the tool used by students to investigate the question. Because the website provides much information about Ukrainian weddings over time and locations, the interviewees will be a couple that was married in the 1990s and is NOT of Ukrainian background. This will provide a basis of comparison with the website information. Through a class discussion, students develop a list of questions for the interview. The goal is to find out how the pre-wedding, wedding day, and post-wedding components progressed and how culture played a role in the events, so interview questions should be structured to facilitate this goal.

Task Three: Gather information

Students work in groups of 3-4 to interview a couple that was married in the 1990s and is NOT of Ukrainian background. The teacher may bring volunteers into the classroom (one couple per group), or have students conduct the interviews outside school hours.

Task Four: Synthesize information

Each interviewing group produces a one or two page description of the interviewees' wedding. The groups then bring together their various descriptions and, adding their own experiences, produce a one page description of the typical wedding of the interviewees' location and time.

Task Five: Organize information

As a class, information is gathered and organized using the three-phase approach. This is done by each group first presenting their findings.

Part A. Expert groups

Student groups take on the role of one of the following experts:

1. Persons from 19th century Ukraine.
2. Persons from Ukraine today
3. Persons from Canada today, of Ukrainian descent.

Each group produces a one-page description of a typical wedding of their time and location.

Part B. Mixed groups

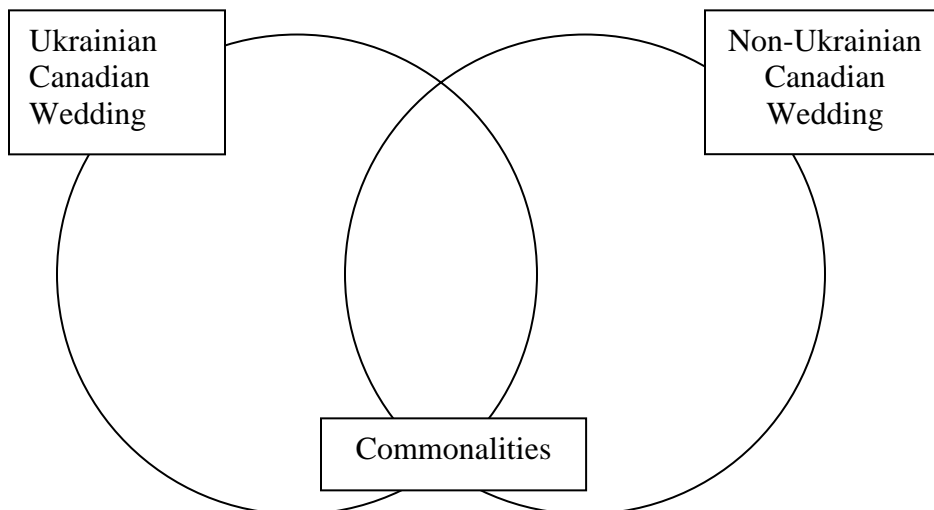
Groups are re-arranged to contain one expert from each category.

Each group creates a large chart to illustrate (point-form descriptions) various wedding scenarios.

	Persons from 19 th century Ukraine.	Persons from Ukraine today (1990s)	Persons from Canada, of Ukrainian descent in the 1990s	Persons from Canada, not of Ukrainian descent in the 1990s
Pre-Wedding				
Wedding				
Post-Wedding				

Part C: As a class or individually

As a class or individually, students create a Venn Diagram comparing the similarities and differences of columns 3 and 4.



Reflect & Interpret

Key Questions for Discussion

1. Which differences between the Canadian Ukrainian and Canadian non-Ukrainian weddings (columns 3 and 4) are due to Ukrainian culture traditions?
2. How do you account for those differences that are not due to Ukrainian culture traditions?
3. Consider the similarities. Which can be attributed to assimilation of Ukrainian culture into a more common Canadian culture?
4. Do you think assimilation will continue to influence and change ethnic cultural traditions?
5. Are there any other influences that may change these traditions?
6. Do you think there are ethnic cultural components that will cease to exist in the near future? Why do you think this?
7. Why, in your opinion, do young couples continue to keep traditions of their ancestral roots in Canada? Do you feel this is a positive or negative factor for Canadian culture? Explain.

Extensions

- Students create a bulletin board display showing the evolution of Ukrainian weddings over time. This may include creative aspects such as fictional diary entries, photographs, etc.
- Students participate in a classroom debate around the issue: Canadians with ancestral roots elsewhere continue to practice their traditions (not necessarily weddings, think of other examples). Is this a positive or negative factor for Canadian culture?