

Teachers' Note: *Gender-based violence (GBV) is a complex and widespread social issue in Canada, linked to historical and contemporary political, economic, and social inequities that affect women, girls, Two Spirit, and gender diverse individuals. It's important for students to learn about the factors that contribute to GBV, and the ways in which Canadians are taking social and political action to end the epidemic of gender-based, intimate partner, and family violence. For more information on GBV, please see the Teacher Backgrounder for this learning experience.*

Before discussing gender-based, intimate partner, and family violence, it is important for teachers to inform students that if any information is disclosed that raises concerns about a student being harmed or posing a danger to themselves or others, the teacher has a legal duty to report it to ensure the students safety. Teachers can learn more about their [Duty to Report here](#).

Learning about the GBV in Canada can bring up strong emotions. For information on how to approach difficult histories in your classroom, please see [Teaching Difficult History A Guide for Teachers 7 to 12](#). This learning experience is an example and can be adapted to meet the needs of your students.

Outcome: Learners will reflect on the efforts of individuals and groups in Canada to address inequities in Canadian society.

Student Resource: *Fighting for Equity*

- Addressing Gender Inequity

Historical Thinking Concept:

- Historical Perspectives

Duration: 2 lessons, 75 minutes each

Lesson 1:

Objective:

- To introduce students to historical inequities experienced by women and girls in Canada, and progress made to reduce inequities.

Materials Needed:

- Printed or digital images and statistics for the "Carousel" (e.g., wage gaps, education access, suffrage movement, workplace inequities, GBV statistics, etc.)
- Sticky notes
- Timeline (print or digital) p. 7 Fighting for Equity
- Access to Internet for research

Key Vocabulary:

- Inequity
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV)
- Suffrage
- Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Background for Teachers:

For much of Canada's history, women faced significant inequities, including being denied the right to vote, own property, or hold many jobs. Early movements for women's rights, such as the suffrage movement in the early 20th century, laid the foundation for progress, culminating in legal advances like the 1982 inclusion of gender equality in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Despite these gains, systemic barriers persisted, especially for women from marginalized groups. Students can explore these historical inequities and their relevance to ongoing efforts for gender equity today.

Part 1: Introduction "Visual Carousel" (10-15 minutes)

- Display 5-6 infographics or statistics around the classroom that highlight gender inequities.
- Ask students to circulate, observe, and write their immediate thoughts or questions on sticky notes.
- As a class, students can discuss their observations in relation the following questions
 - What patterns or themes do you notice?
 - How do these inequities make you feel? Why do you think they exist?

Part 2: Mini Lesson: Historical Context (15-20 minutes)

- Explain to students that for many years, women in Canada did not have the same political or legal rights as men, or the same social or economic opportunities.
- Discuss examples of the milestones in the fight for women's equity in Canada. For example:
 - The suffrage movement
 - Women's contributions to WWI and WWII
 - The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1967)
 - Inclusion of gender equality in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Part 3: Research Scavenger Hunt (30 minutes)

- Project the timeline on p. 7 of *Fighting for Equity*.
- Ask students if any of the dates surprise them in terms of when women achieved certain milestones in Canada.
- Divide students into groups and explain that they are doing research to find other milestones in the fight for gender equality in Canada. You may wish to provide questions to guide their research such as:
 - When could women legally own property in Canada?
 - When could women open their own bank accounts or apply for credit cards in their own names?

- When were marriage bars lifted to allow married women to work in certain professions?
- When were women allowed to serve in combat roles in the Canadian Armed Forces?
- When was equal pay guaranteed for women under Canadian law?
- When were crimes against women such as sexual assault and domestic violence introduced under Canadian law?
- When were women accepted to professional programs like law, medicine, and engineering at Canadian universities?
- When did women get the right to vote in Canada? Indigenous women? Asian-Canadian women?

Part 4: How does changing policies and laws change our society? (15 minutes)

- In their groups, students can review their findings.
- Provide them with the following prompts and ask them to discuss their responses:
 - What barriers (social, cultural, political, legal, economic) might have prevented women from being able to achieve financial independence, legal protection from violence, or equal opportunities for jobs or education?
 - How might attitudes about gender roles affect how women were treated?
 - How do you think women’s experiences might have pushed them to advocate for change?

Assessment For Learning:

Before moving on to the next lesson, you can use an exit ticket to assess students’ understanding of the historical barriers women have faced and the milestones towards gender equality that have been achieved.

Exit Ticket:

1. Name one historical barrier women faced before gaining a specific right.
2. Explain one condition that may have contributed to this barrier.
3. Share one thing that surprised you or a question that arose from your research.

Single-Point Rubric

Criteria	Areas for Growth	Expectation	Strengths
Understanding Historical Barriers	Misunderstands or omits key barriers.	Clearly identifies a significant barrier women faced and connects it to historical conditions.	Provides detailed or nuanced connections.
Application of Research	Lacks clear links to research findings.	Effectively uses research to support reflections and questions.	Integrates research thoughtfully.
Critical Thinking & Reflection	Reflection is superficial or incomplete.	Demonstrates thoughtful reflection on the lived experiences of women and raises insightful questions.	Reflection is deep and thought-provoking.

Lesson 2: Introduction to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Canada

Objective:

- To define GBV, understand its forms, and explore its historical and contemporary causes in Canada.

Materials Needed:

- White board and markers
- Copies of [Gender-based Violence \(GBV\) in Canada: A Snapshot](#) (or project)
- Copies of [What is Clare's Law?](#) (or project)
- Student Handout: "Identifying and Addressing Forms of Gender-Based Violence"

Key Vocabulary:

- Gender-Based Violence (GBV)
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Intersectionality
- Colonialism
- Patriarchy

Background for Teachers:

In 2024, Nova Scotia passed Bill 482, the Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act. It became the first province in Canada to recognize intimate partner violence as an epidemic, following Recommendation V.14 of the Final Report of the Mass Casualty Commission. While it's essential to educate students about the realities of GBV, it's equally important to handle these discussions with care. Offering students opportunities to explore the ways Canadians have, and continue to, address systemic inequities and promote changes to laws and policies that relate to GBV helps them to see ways that people can affect real change in our province and country.

Lesson Plan Overview:

Part 1: Defining GBV (15 minutes)

- Ask students to jot down what comes to mind when they think of the word “violence”. Once they have had a chance to record their thoughts, ask a few students to share their responses.
- Define the term “gender-based violence” and explain that it encompasses many different kinds of actions and behaviours.
- Provide students with copies of Student Handout: “Identifying and Addressing Forms of Gender-Based Violence”

Part 2: Building Understanding: Examining GBV in Canada (20 minutes)

- In partners or small groups, ask students to review “Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Canada: A Snapshot (alternatively, you can project the PDF and review it as a class).
- Ask students to discuss the information provided and respond to the following prompts:
 - Did any of the information surprise you?
 - Why do you think some groups of women are at higher risk of GBV?
 - What questions do you have?
 - Why do you think the Canadian government collects data on incidents of GBV?
- Ask groups to share their responses with the class.

Part 3: Mini-lesson: Historical and Contemporary Contexts (20 minutes)

- Provide a mini lesson on the historical and contemporary factors that contribute to gender-based violence in Canada (see Teacher Backgrounder: “Causes of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Canada”).
- Highlight responses to GBV, such as the National Action Plan for Violence Against Women, Clare’s Law, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Part 4: How are Canadians advocating for change? (15 minutes)

- Provide students background information about Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol (Clare’s Law) Act. Explain that changing laws is one way that Canadians can protect people from GBV.
- In groups, ask students to review information on Clare’s Law in Canada: [What is Clare’s Law?](#)
- After reviewing the information, students can discuss:
 - How can Clare’s Law help to protect people against GBV?
 - Clare’s Law falls under provincial jurisdiction, meaning it is up to each province or territory to adopt and implement it. So far, only 4 provinces in Canada have adopted Clare’s Law. What challenges could provincial jurisdiction create in this case?
 - Look back at your handout and think about the different forms of gender-based violence. What are the limitations of Clare’s Law in preventing GBV? What other changes could be made to protect people from GBV?

Part 5: Reflecting on Advocating for Change (5 minutes)

- Ask students to record a brief reflection about their learning. They could:
 - Make connections between historical context and the contemporary inequities faced by women and girls.
 - Consider the ways changing laws and policies can protect people from GBV and the limitations of those changes.
 - Question why GBV continues to be a pervasive issue in Nova Scotia and Canada.
 - Consider the role men and boys play in ending GBV in Canada. (e.g., as advocates, services aimed at men and boys that could prevent future violence, etc.)

Assessment for Learning:

Before moving on to the next lesson, you can use observations and conversations as part of a Think-Pair-Share Check-In to assess student learning related to this lesson.

Think: Near the end of the lesson, ask students an open-ended question related to the objective (e.g., What is one factor you think influences effectively addressing GBV in Canada?)

Pair: Have students turn to a partner and share their answers for 2-3 minutes. Encourage them to explain their reasoning or build on each other's ideas.

Share: Ask each pair to write a one-sentence summary of their shared response on a piece of paper for you to review later.

Additional Resources

- [Domestic Violence in Nova Scotia](#), Government of Nova Scotia. Infographic, Dec., 2022
- [It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence](#). Government of Canada. Infographic, June, 2017
- [National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#). Government of Canada. Webpage, Nov., 2022
- [Turning-the-Tide-Together-List-of-Recommendations.pdf](#), Government of Nova Scotia. Final Report of the Mass Casualty Commission: Recommendations.

Launching the Inquiry: What are some of the ways that Canadians are addressing gender inequity and gender based violence?

Teachers can refer to the Teacher Resource (pp. 35-36) for ideas about how to introduce the case study, "Addressing Gender Inequity".