



Teachers' Guide
to
**Death on a Painted Lake: The Tom Thomson
Tragedy**

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in Canadian History Project**
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Teachers' Support and The *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History* Websites

As the Teachers' Corner of *The Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History* websites outlines [<http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/indexen.html>], these sites provide five kinds of support for teachers:

- a summary of the Foundational Ideas of history teaching that informs the Mysteries Project;
- a detailed Teachers' Guide for each of the sites;
- short MysteryQuest lesson plans;
- a series of scaffolding activities and briefing sheets to introduce students to Key Concepts in Historical Thinking;
- access to the password protected “Interpretations” portion of the website.

1. **Foundational Ideas** gives you a thumbnail sketch of the teaching philosophy behind the Mystery websites, as well as a more detailed examination of the four different levels at which these sites ‘work’ as ways to teach and learn about history.

See: <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/foundationalideas/indexen.html>

2. **Teachers' Guides** contain detailed, graduated, multi-lesson and age-appropriate unit plans as well as free-standing lessons for elementary and secondary students.

See: <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/login/indexen.php>

3. Short, focused, age-specific, single-lesson **MysteryQuests** include detailed lesson plans and teacher support relating to one or more of the Mystery sites. Each of the MysteryQuest lessons employs the popular and student-friendly Webquest format to present a lesson that uses The Critical Thinking Consortium’s “Critical Challenge” approach and a small selection of primary documents from the sites to create short but powerful lessons involving students in thinking critically about history.

See: <http://www.mysteryquests.ca/indexen.html>

4. **Concepts in Historical Thinking** provides activities and briefing sheets to introduce students to key concepts in historical thinking that they will be using as they work with these Mysteries. This part of the site is in active development at this time and currently includes three exercises: “What are Primary Documents?”, “History vs. the Past”, and “Testimony vs. Evidence”.

See: <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/keyconcepts/indexen.html>

5. Teachers are also eligible to request access to the **password-protected “Interpretations”** part of each of the Mysteries Website allowing you to read historians’ interpretations of the documents on the site. This section is password protected in order to encourage students to develop their own interpretations of primary documents, rather than relying on other people’s interpretations.

See: <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/login/indexen.php>

Historical Contexts: “The Tom Thomson Tragedy” in Canadian History

The website “Death on a Painted Lake: The Tom Thomson Tragedy” is a virtual web archive that looks at one of Canada’s most popular mysteries of the 20th century: the story of the death of the famous Canadian painter Tom Thomson. The task for students is to use the primary and secondary sources on the website to decide just how Tom Thomson died. Was it murder, suicide or a mere accident? While this mystery involves finding out the cause of Thomson’s death, the mystery will also provide insight into Thomson’s life, his historical significance, and why Canadians continue to be fascinated with the mysterious circumstances that surround his demise. This Teachers’ Guide provides a full teaching unit (described on page 9 of this guide) that provides high school students with a more focused and structured examination of the evidence and in the process, gives them an introduction to historical research and historical thinking.

Tom Thomson was an up and coming young painter in the early 1900s. He lived and worked among a number of influential and, some would say, revolutionary artists of the time. He and his contemporaries seemed to be carving out a new identity and purpose for Canadian art. They pushed the boundaries of the art world’s largely European traditions as they sought to truly represent the landscapes of the young country of Canada.

Although primarily based in Toronto, Thomson was one of a number of artists that would set out to travel and paint in Canada’s wilderness. Thomson had a particular affinity for Algonquin Park in Ontario and it was here that the mystery begins.

Site Organization

First of all, rest assured that no one is expected to read the entire site, not even you. No one is expected to peruse every item in an archive before s/he starts to write a research paper and the same principle applies here. What you as a teacher, needs is an understanding of the construction of the site in order to guide your students.

For a detailed overview of the site organization and tips on how to use the site, see the “How to Use This Site” section found on the Home page of “Death on a Painted Lake: The Tom Thomson Tragedy”.

See: <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/thomson/home/howtousesite/indexen.html>

Learning Outcomes of the “Thomson” website

This website can be used as the foundation for a whole course or for a single class. This Teachers’ Guide provides a number of lessons that comprise a single unit built around the question:

Was Tom Thomson's death the result of murder, suicide, or accident? Lessons in this unit are directed at a senior secondary level class in history, social studies, or law. They are designed to be cumulative, providing students with the scaffolding of skills and background knowledge that allows for their increased understanding, both of historical thinking and historic knowledge as the unit progresses. Nevertheless, if time is too tight to allow an entire Unit on this site, many of the lessons in the unit can be adapted for stand-alone, single lessons. We have generally found that a single class does not allow the students or the instructor to fully answer some of the basic questions and would suggest devoting more time.

While this unit is directed at a senior secondary class, the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History websites have been used for elementary to university graduate students, and the Thomson mystery is no exception. The level of your students will determine how "deep" you ask them to go.

A list of the specific courses across Canada for which this unit would be particularly appropriate has been included at the beginning of the unit. In general terms, this site will promote the following kinds of knowledge and skills. It will allow students to:

- identify and clarify a problem, an issue, or an inquiry
- develop a vocabulary that will allow them to analyze historical documents
- plan and conduct research using primary and secondary electronic sources
- generate and critique different interpretations of primary and secondary sources
- assess and defend a variety of positions on controversial issues
- construct a narrative from pieces of evidence that are non-sequential
- plan, revise, and deliver formal presentations that integrate a variety of media
- demonstrate leadership by planning, implementing, and assessing a variety of strategies to address the problem, issue, or inquiry initially identified
- develop their abilities to work independently or in groups
- refine abilities to construct and defend an argument

Please see the Unit Plan that follows to find more specific ways to introduce your students to the site, and for examples of instructional strategies that take full advantage of the pedagogical strengths of this site.

UNIT

DEATH ON A PAINTED LAKE: MURDER, SUICIDE OR ACCIDENT?

~ A unit of study designed to foster critical thinking
in the senior secondary level Canadian history curriculum ~

Fitting This Unit into Your Provincial Curriculum

Our *Teachers' Guide* team has done some research into provincial curricula across Canada. Thomson could be used effectively in the following courses, by province:

British Columbia

- ✓ Social Studies 11
- ✓ Law 12

Alberta

- ✓ Social Studies 7
- ✓ Social Studies 11 – Nationalism

Saskatchewan

- ✓ History 30 – Canadian Studies
- ✓ Law 30
- ✓ Social Studies 30

Manitoba

- ✓ Senior Social Studies 3 – Canada: A Social and Political History

Ontario

- ✓ Grade 11 – Understanding Canadian Law, University/College prep
- ✓ Grade 12 – Canada: History, Identity and Culture
- ✓ Grade 12 – Canadian and International Law, University Prep

Quebec

- ✓ Secondary 4 – History of Quebec and Canada

New Brunswick

- ✓ Grade 11 – Canadian History 121

Nova Scotia

- ✓ Canadian History 11
- ✓ Law 12

Prince Edward Island

- ✓ Grade 12 – Canadian History 621

- ✓ Grade 11 – Canadian Law 521
- ✓ Grade 11 – Canadian Law 531

Newfoundland

- ✓ Canadian History 1201
- ✓ Canadian Law 2104

Nunavut & NWT (see Alberta)

Yukon (see British Columbia).

Overview

Unit Overview

The mystery of the death of Tom Thomson, a young Canadian artist attempting to capture in his paintings what he saw as the essence of the Canadian wilderness, is a story that has captivated generations of Canadians since his untimely death in 1917. This unit invites students to use the primary and secondary sources on this website to decide just how Thomson really died. In the process, students not only learn about Thomson's life, his work as an artist, and the key players in his life and death, they also have the opportunity to actively engage in some key aspects of historical thinking: what can we learn from different types of evidence? What can evidence tell us about both events of the time period and its author? What is the significance of Thomson's life and death to those interested in the history of Canada? Students, in other words, will learn about 'doing' history, and will emerge with a better understanding of Canada's past as a result. The rich selection of documents that students will encounter provides a nuanced picture of the development of a variety of explanations surrounding Thomson's death.

The overriding question is one of historical interpretation. Was Tom Thomson's death the result of murder, suicide or accident? And, in essence, this comprises the "hook" for students. They are being asked to play detective: to evaluate the diverse puzzle pieces offered, to seek out additional information, and to assemble their own historical narrative and assign responsibility for these events as they see fit. This unit is intended to focus on the examination and analysis of evidence to culminate in the formation of a historically grounded hypothesis as to how Thomson died. Students are not only permitted, but *are required* to question, and then create, historical truth.

This unit has been designed to be flexible in its application. Students will be invited to explore evidence from the perspectives of the creators and also from the perspective of those attempting to understand history in a variety of time periods. Students will simultaneously broaden their knowledge of the Canadian past, be introduced to the use of historical primary documents, and learn to exercise skills of critical analysis, evaluation, and thinking. Students at the senior secondary stages of their education cannot be expected to have the time and academic resources to re-examine every proffered piece of evidence from interdisciplinary perspectives. This unit proposes to introduce them to these skills and resources. Nevertheless, each exercise and lesson suggested here draws students further into the case itself, encourages a personal engagement with history, and generates an opportunity to examine history and the social sciences in a more critical and informed manner.

Unit Rationale

First, this unit uses the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History website **“Death on a Painted Lake: The Tom Thomson Tragedy”** to introduce students to some of the issues surrounding the life and death of Tom Thomson. Secondly, it is designed to introduce students to primary documents in history and social studies. In particular, it aims to facilitate students' critical awareness of the social context of historical documents, to teach them to evaluate opposing

evidence, to understand the utility of documents from a variety of perspectives, and to encourage students to adopt a broader and more critical perspective when reading historical evidence and narratives.

Unit Themes

To facilitate teachers in developing additional lessons and/or an expanded unit, some of the central themes of this web site are listed:

Canadian Identity
Forces of Nationalism
Canadian Social History
Geography
Justice; Principles of Law
Canadian Heritage

Unit Objectives, Skills, and Attitudes

The central goals of this unit are:

- to encourage students to think about the significance of everyday life in history
- to refine students' historical thinking through the use of primary documents, understanding the nature and uses of evidence, and the role of both of these in building historical narratives
- to raise students' awareness of the constructed and contested nature of historical narratives
- to encourage students to develop tools appropriate to the evaluation of opposing evidence
- to facilitate students' critical awareness of author's perspective in historical documents
- to encourage students to adopt a broad perspective when reading historical evidence and narratives in order to become aware of less-obvious and alternate agendas
- to build a coherent narrative based on non-sequential evidence
- to develop skills in defending an argument

Instructional Strategies

Need for Computer Lab Time

While this entire unit is fully integrated with the Thomson website, most tasks can be completed if the requisite documents are printed off ahead of time and handed out to students. In this way, classes with limited access to computer lab time can still complete the unit.

Assessment & Evaluation

Because assessment and evaluation standards vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, only generalized guidelines have been included here. Instructors may wish to assign process marks for completion of the various tasks, or not, if their students are sufficiently mature enough to recognize that the successful completion of the various tasks is crucial to successful completion of the culminating activity.

The following skills and habits of mind are ones that should be carefully assessed in the process of evaluating the critical thinking needed in working with this site:

- Issues are analyzed seriously and thoughtfully
- Presentations and talks are given carefully, with materials well-prepared and organized, and points well thought out
- Results are expressed cautiously and are supported with reference to appropriate evidence
- Opinions are reasoned. Reports and narratives are written discerningly, reflecting the above and with care, attention and evident pride in quality work¹

¹ Taken from Roland Case and Ian Wright, "Taking Seriously the Teaching of Critical Thinking," in *The Canadian Anthology of Social Studies: Issues and Strategies for Teachers*, Roland Case and Penney Clark, editors (Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press).
The Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History *Teacher's Guide* for "Death on a Painted Lake: The Tom Thomson Tragedy".
<http://www.canadianmysteries.ca> 26-Jan-08

Synopsis

Key Question: Death on a Painted Lake: Murder, Suicide or Accident?

Create a short documentary that presents a particular point of view regarding the death of Tom Thomson: murder, suicide, or accident. Make the case that the point of view presented is the most plausible explanation by selecting relevant and compelling evidence for inclusion in the documentary and planning how the documentary will unfold in order to make a compelling case.

Lesson Title	Time Needed	Lesson Overview
Lesson 1: The challenge - Developing criteria	2 classes	Students are introduced to the task they will be focused on during this unit. Their challenge is to create a short documentary that presents a particular point of view regarding the death of Tom Thomson: murder, suicide, or accident. They will make the case that the point of view presented is the most plausible explanation by selecting relevant and compelling evidence for inclusion in the documentary and planning how the documentary will unfold in order to make a compelling case. During this lesson, students are invited to examine clips from examples of historical documentaries in order to build criteria for the products they will produce. They will also develop criteria for a plausible explanation.
Lesson 2: Who was Tom Thomson? Getting acquainted with the man and the legend	2 classes	Students are invited to examine a variety of primary and secondary sources to create a biography of Tom Thomson. Their challenge will be to write the biography which includes the historical aspects of his work, his life in the park and his death from a particular perspective which has been assigned to them (e.g. from the perspective of an author who is portraying Thomson as a Canadian hero; from the perspective of an author who thinks the controversy around his death has elevated him to an undeserved mythical status, etc.).
Lesson 3: The Plot: Determining the facts of the case	2 classes	Students read an overview of the controversy surrounding the case. After speculating about the reasons that might cause accounts of the same event to differ, students are invited to examine several accounts of the circumstances surrounding the death of Tom Thomson. Their challenge during this lesson is to create a timeline of events surrounding his death that highlights the points of contention among differing versions. They will then use the timeline to craft a series of powerful questions – both about the particular circumstances of the event and about the general contexts in which the event occurred – to guide their investigations. Students will be invited to revisit the timeline as they progress through the lessons and uncover new evidence and interpretations that appeared in the decades that followed Thomson’s death.

Lesson 4: The Cast of characters: Listening for testimony	2 classes	<p>In this lesson, students are first invited to participate in activities which help them uncover the difference between testimony and evidence that they might encounter in the various primary documents they will read. They start by examining an example of a modern document that they can relate to and deconstructing the various issues surrounding the reliability of the document, including questions regarding the author. Students develop the skills that help them read on the line (for evidence), between the lines (infer) and beyond the lines (listening for testimony).</p> <p>Students examine primary documents created by different key players in the search, discovery, and investigation of Thomson’s death. Their challenge in this lesson is to develop a profile of one of the key players based both on the testimony that can be gleaned from the relevant primary documents they authored and the secondary sources they use for background research.</p>
Lesson 5: Examining contemporary historical documents: What can they tell us?	3 classes	<p>Students read through a number of primary documents to gather evidence that will ultimately help them construct a case for murder, suicide, or accident as the cause of death. As they read, students are invited to consider what we can learn from each type of document. Students use a chart to assign different categories to information gleaned from sources (e.g. information about the context or the author; information about how Thomson died, information about how he was perceived/remembered, etc.)</p>
Lesson 6: Emerging evidence: Examining later documents: What can they tell us?	3 classes	<p>During this lesson, students are invited to examine the difference between traces and accounts and to consider the roles of both in historical investigation. The primary focus for this lesson will be to examine evidence generated years after Tom Thomson’s death and sort this evidence into traces and accounts. They gather evidence from these later documents and revisit their timeline and add, in a different colour, the evidence that emerged at a later date. They are invited to consider specifically what changed to make the person change their mind. An interesting aspect to this case is that some people changed their interpretation over the years. Students develop criteria for legitimate reasons to change one’s mind about the past.</p> <p>Students will write a news report with a concise, engaging, and informative headline that reflects their conclusions about the importance of the role of traces and accounts unveiled years after Thomson’s death in solving the mystery. OR Students will write the transcript of an interview in which an investigative reporter questions a forensic pathologist about the changing nature of the evidence in this case. The focus of the interview is the question of whether the passing of time has made solving the riddle of Thomson’s death more or less likely in light of what new information has emerged and what has been lost over time</p>

<p>Lesson 7: The Park: A crime scene or an accident waiting to happen?</p>	<p>2 classes</p>	<p>Students are invited to examine the importance of the physical setting of Thomson’s death and the role it might have played in his untimely demise. Students use both secondary and primary sources to research various activities that were occurring in Algonquin Park and Canoe Lake including logging, poaching, transportation of troops for the war effort, etc. Students will rank the relative dangers inherent in the setting and consider the role that each might have played in Thomson’s death.</p>
<p>Lesson 8: Thomson’s legacy: Has the mystery endured because of his link to Canadian identity?</p>	<p>2 classes</p>	<p>In this lesson, students grapple with the question of why the controversy surrounding Thomson’s death has endured and captured the imaginations of successive generations of Canadians. Students first generate and/or examine criteria to determine historical significance. Then students are invited to consider the reasons for the on-going interest in Thomson’s death and the significance of his life and death to Canadians.</p> <p>Students will create a “pitch” for the development of a documentary on the death of Tom Thomson. The “pitch” will include a broad justification for the documentary that encapsulates their judgment regarding Thomson’s significance in Canadian history and the reasons for the ongoing interest in his death.</p>
<p>Lesson 9: Drawing conclusions – Murder, death or suicide?</p>	<p>3 classes</p>	<p>In the final days, students re-examine the evidence they have gathered and reflect on the initial criteria they developed to make a judgment about the most plausible explanation for Tom Thomson’s death. They carefully select primary traces and accounts that they have studied throughout the unit which will support their case. Then, they plan their documentary in such a way that the evidence they present will make a compelling case.</p>

Preparatory Exercises

If students have not worked critically with primary source documents before, it is STRONGLY recommended that students do at least one of the preparatory lessons included in the Teachers' Corner section of the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Website: <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/indexen.html>.

The Lessons

LESSON 1: THE CHALLENGE - DEVELOPING CRITERIA

(2 classes)

(DAYS 1 and 2 of unit)

Overview

Students are introduced to the task they will be focused on during this unit. Their challenge is to create a short documentary that presents a particular point of view regarding the death of Tom Thomson: murder, suicide, or accident. They will make the case that the point of view presented is the most plausible explanation by selecting relevant and compelling evidence for inclusion in the documentary and planning how the documentary will unfold in order to make a compelling case.

During this lesson, students are invited to examine clips from examples of historical documentaries in order to build criteria for the products they will produce. They will also develop criteria for a plausible explanation.

LESSON 1, CLASS 1 (DAY 1 OF UNIT)

Activities:

Step 1: *Connecting to the Concrete:* Invite students to examine a concrete example of evidence at a crime scene. You might provide them with a description of a real or fictional crime scene; or you might wish to actually re-create a crime scene in the middle of the classroom using common objects, caution tape, etc.

You can find several examples of real unsolved mysteries in Canadian history at <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/indexen.html>. “Who Killed William Robinson” and “Heaven and Hell on Earth: The Massacre of the ‘Black Donnelly’s’ provide excellent examples of reconstructed crime scenes. Ask students to quietly and individually write down the pertinent details found at the crime scene. After about 2 minutes of independent work, ask them to share their observations with a partner. Invite partners to come up with a plausible explanation of what has happened.

Step 2: *Building criteria for a “plausible explanation”:* Consider having students post their explanations on chart paper around the classroom. Explain that students will be examining their peers’ explanations. Remind them of the importance of being open-minded (i.e. open to views other than one’s own, especially to contrary positions). Invite students to circulate around the room (perhaps divide them up so they all begin at different explanations).

As they circulate, ask them to rate each explanation as “highly plausible”, “somewhat plausible” or “unlikely”. To do this, they might use a common symbol decided on by the class (e.g. checkmark vs. question mark vs. “x”) or they might use coloured stickers to indicate their rating. Encourage them to remain open-minded as they read explanations that are contrary to their own.

Gather the 3 explanations that received the greatest number of “highly plausible” ratings on the board at the front of the class and read them aloud. Ask students to think to themselves about the reasons these are highly plausible; invite them to share their answers with a partner; randomly call on

a few students to share the reasons they discussed with their partner. As students share, record their reasons on the board.

Share with students that during this unit, they will be examining a real unsolved mystery and will be challenged to come up with a plausible explanation based on an examination of the evidence. Therefore, before they embark on the task, the class needs to decide upon criteria for a plausible explanation. Use the reasons on the board as the basis for a discussion in order to develop agreed-upon criteria.

Alternatively, you may wish to present students with 4-5 criteria, agree as a class on the 3 most important, and then allow students to individually choose 1 additional that they believe is important.

Post the agreed-upon criteria for a plausible explanation on the wall for reference throughout the unit.

Step 3: *Sharing objectives with students:* Introduce the story of the death of Tom Thomson. Provide a brief overview of the story, perhaps reading a brief account of the story from the Mysteries website, and emphasizing his continued importance in Canadian culture today.

Explain that over the course of this unit, thanks to a special project called the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History, they will learn not only about Tom Thomson in the context of his own time and place, but through the analysis of digitized primary source materials on the site, they will determine whether it is most likely that Tom Thomson died as a result of murder, suicide, or accident. Explain that they will share and defend their theory through the creation of a documentary film at the end of the unit.

LESSON 1, CLASS 2 (DAY 2 OF UNIT)

Activities:

Step 1: *Building basic background knowledge:* Ask students to think to themselves for 30 seconds to see what they can remember of the Thomson case based on yesterday's overview provided by the teacher and/or any other background knowledge that they have of Thomson and his death. Invite students to read "Welcome" on the website. As they read, ask students to use **Support Material No. 1: An Overview of the Case** to gather and organize information on the various possible explanations that exist regarding his death.

Welcome

Step 2: *Sharing objectives with students:* Remind students that they will commit to one explanation as the most plausible explanation by the end of the unit. Explain that they will share and defend their theory through the creation of a documentary film at the end of the unit. Handout the task sheet and explain how they will be assessed. Consider leaving a section of the task sheet with space for students to fill in agreed-upon criteria for a plausible explanation and criteria for an effective documentary.

Step 3: Building criteria for an effective documentary: Explain to students that their next task is to build criteria for an effective documentary. Show them clips of various documentaries or, alternatively, fast-forward through a significant portion of one documentary. Ask students to make a note of the various elements that they see (e.g. interviews, re-enactments, expert opinions, captions, etc.). Ask students to share their observations. Record their observations on the board under the title “What might be included in a documentary?” Ask them to add to the list based on other documentaries they may have seen in the past.

Next, show students one particular segment of the chosen documentary at regular speed. Alternatively, ask students to think back to a documentary you have showed them in class earlier in the course. Ask students to consider how effective the documentary was on a scale from -2 to +2 (-2 = very ineffective; +2 = very effective). Ask them to first individually rate the documentary and jot down the reasons for their rating. Invite them to share their answers with a partner and then to share again with another set of partners. As a group of 4, challenge them to organize their reasons behind the effectiveness of a documentary in order from most important to least important.

Consider randomly calling on a member of each group to share their group’s answers with the class. List the reasons on the board and indicate by means of an ongoing tally when other groups cite the same reason. Based on the tally, decide on the top 3 or 4 things which are crucial for a documentary to be effective (e.g. includes ample specific and detailed evidence to support its claims; addresses a variety of interpretations of the issue; uses relevant and compelling testimony of relevant key players in the case; uses visuals and music to both engage the viewer and create a compelling case, etc). Post the agreed-upon criteria for an effective documentary on the wall of the classroom for reference throughout the unit.

LESSON 2: WHO WAS TOM THOMSON? GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE MAN AND THE LEGEND

WRITING A BIOGRAPHY FROM A PARTICULAR PERSPECTIVE

(2 classes, assuming 75 minute periods)

(DAYS 3 and 4 of Unit)

Overview

Students are invited to examine a variety of primary and secondary sources to create a biography of Tom Thomson. Their challenge will be to write the biography which includes the historical aspects of his work, his life in the park, and his death from a particular perspective which has been assigned to them (e.g. from the perspective of an author who is portraying Thomson as a Canadian hero; from the perspective of an author who thinks the controversy around his death has elevated him to an undeserved mythical status, etc.).

LESSON 2, CLASS 1 AND 2 (DAY 3 AND 4 OF UNIT)

Activities:

Step 1: *Sharing objectives with students:* Explain that during this lesson, students will uncover who Tom Thomson was by examining both primary and secondary documents. In particular, they will consider how people with different perspectives might have viewed Thomson's life – and death. They will share their findings with their classmates by writing the “back cover” of a new biography of Tom Thomson written from a particular, assigned perspective. Explain that this information will build some of the background knowledge that they will need to create their documentary.

Step 2: *Connecting to the Concrete:* Ask students to work in groups of 4. Ask each group to choose a real or fictional figure from pop culture that all group members are fairly familiar with (e.g. Britney Spears, Homer Simpson, etc). Number off students in each group from 1 to 4. Assign a different role to each number (e.g. 1=mother of the character; 2=fan of the character; 3=security guard; 4=rival). Invite students to imagine that they are the authors of a new biography of the chosen character. The publisher has asked the author to write a blurb for the back cover of the book.

As a model, consider reading students the back cover of a biography (e.g. Peter C. Newman's biography of Brian Mulroney).

Provide students with a limited amount of time to write their blurb. Ask students to share their blurbs with their group members by reading them in turn. Ask each group to choose the 2 blurbs within their group that differed the most. Randomly call on groups to share those 2 blurbs. Discuss with the class the clues to the author's perspective (e.g. tone, adjectives used, judgments about the person, etc).

Step 3: *Building background knowledge:* Challenge students to write a similar “back cover” for a biography of Tom Thomson. Explain that they will first need to gather some information and consider it in the light of a particular perspective. With students working in the same groups of 4, assign each group one of the following perspectives:

- An author who is portraying Thomson as a Canadian hero
- An author who thinks the controversy around his death has elevated him to an undeserved mythical status
- A family member who thinks Thomson's life and death has been exploited by the media
- A witness to Thomson's death who is coming forward for the first time

Ask each group member to read one of the following secondary source documents:

[Tom Thomson](#)

[Reminiscences of Grip, members of the Group of Seven and Tom Thomson](#)

[Pictures by Sydenham Boy Worth Seeing](#)

[Portraits section](#)

Examine the introductions written by the Tom Thomson Mystery historian in each of these subsections:

[Thomson](#)

[The Thomson Family](#)

[Investigators](#)

[Park Residents](#)

[Artists and Patrons](#)

and any of the primary documents you see fit.

As they read, ask students to gather information on the organizer (**Support Material No. 2: Who was Tom Thomson?**). Once they have gathered information, each group member should use the last column of the organizer to consider the “spin” the person with their perspective would place on the material gathered. Invite group members to share information with each other on the same organizer.

Step 4: *Demonstrating understanding:* Invite students to use the information gathered in their organizer to write the back cover of their biography on Tom Thomson. Consider having students share information with other groups using a jigsaw activity: first, number group members within each group from 1 to 4; next ask all the number 1s from various groups to reconfigure to create a new group. All the number 2s also create a new group of their own, and so on. Once all students have moved to their new groups, ask them to take turns reading their back covers. As a class debrief the activity by discussing how the various perspectives at work might affect the evidence being presented in primary documents. Does this invalidate the evidence? Does the perspective itself tell us something about what might have happened? How should we use our understanding of perspective when examining evidence?

LESSON 3: THE PLOT: DETERMINING THE FACTS OF THE CASE CREATING A TIMELINE AND ASKING POWERFUL QUESTIONS

(2 classes)

(DAY 5 and 6 of unit)

Overview

Students read an overview of the controversy surrounding the case. After speculating about the reasons that might cause accounts of the same event to differ, students are invited to examine several accounts of the circumstances surrounding the death of Tom Thomson. Their challenge during this lesson is to create a timeline of events surrounding his death that highlights the points of contention among differing versions. They will then use the timeline to craft a series of powerful questions – both about the particular circumstances of the event and about the general contexts in which the event occurred – to guide their investigations.

Students will be invited to revisit the timeline as they progress through the lessons and uncover new evidence and interpretations that appeared in the decades that followed Thomson’s death.

LESSON 3, CLASS 1 AND 2 (DAY 5 AND 6 OF UNIT)

Activities:

Step 1: *Sharing objectives with students:* Explain that through this lesson, students will examine various accounts of the events surrounding Thomson's death and craft a series of powerful questions that will guide their investigation and which may be used to frame their documentary.

Step 2: *Examining Primary Documents:* If students have not worked with primary documents before, consider having them work through activities on the website (see activities at: <http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/keyconcepts/3513en.html>)

Step 3: *Nurturing an "inquiring mind":* Ask students to consider the difference between facts and claims. Consider providing students with a number of examples of both and asking them to sort them into their corresponding categories (see **Support Material No. 3: Concept Formation Exercise**). Based on the examples in each list, ask students in pairs or groups of three to develop a definition of each term. Debrief as a class and draw out the definitions listed below.

Explain that in the material they are about to read, they will uncover a number of facts and various claims or inferences made regarding the circumstances immediately surrounding the death of Tom Thomson. However, many facts are disputed and many interpretations are contradictory. This is the crux of the mystery. Where does the truth lie? Explain that by the end of this lesson, students will have constructed a timeline of the events and circumstances surrounding Thomson's death and will sift through a variety of accounts to determine whether each fact or claim they come across is disputed or not.

Ask students to think to themselves and then share with a partner, what might cause accounts of the same event to differ? Consider randomly calling on several students to share the discussion they had with their partner.

Definitions:

Evidence: The data used to make a judgment or draw a conclusion.

Fact: What actually happened or what is true and verifiable. Factual claims need to be assessed for their accuracy and relevance to an issue and not blindly accepted.

Step 4: *Building background knowledge:* Invite students to read a number of accounts of the events surrounding the death of Thomson in the "Tragedy" section of the website. Consider whether to differentiate instruction by assigning different readings to different students within a group or whether to simply ask all students to read all documents listed.

Search

[Tom Thomson Likely Drowned](#)

[Tom Thomson's Canoe Found On Canoe Lake](#)

[Daily Journal, July 16-18, 1917](#)

As students read, ask them to complete the organizer **Support Material No. 4: What happened according to whom**, by making a note of the account they are reading and the various facts and claims recounted by the author. Consider modeling the use of the organizer by reading through 2 of

the documents as a class and completing part of the organizer together. Once the organizer is complete and all sources have been read, invite students to compare accounts and to decide whether each individual fact or claim is disputed or corroborated by other accounts.

Discuss with the class which facts seem to be most disputed? Which have little or no corroborating evidence?

Step 5: *Synthesizing evidence:* As a class, create a timeline of events surrounding the death of Thomson. Consider creating the timeline on mural paper or on a bulletin board in the classroom. Students will be returning to the timeline at various points during the unit to add evidence as it emerges throughout their investigations. On the timeline, distinguish between undisputed, disputed, and uncorroborated events by writing them in different colours.

Discuss as a class: What are some conditions that might make uncorroborated evidence convincing or that might lead you to question evidence even though it has been corroborated by several sources?

You may wish to follow up this activity with activities and information found on the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History website regarding “Kinds of Evidence Offered in Court” (<http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/keyconcepts/4247en.html>)

Step 6: *Developing powerful questions:* In groups of 4, invite students to participate in a “placemat” activity that will assist them in developing a series of powerful questions. Provide each group with a piece of chart paper and 4 markers. See **Support Material No. 5: “Placemat” Exercise** for an explanation of how to draw a placemat on chart paper. Based on the timeline created, ask students to individually brainstorm the questions they would like answered in order to make judgments on the facts of the case. After giving students 1-2 minutes to brainstorm individually, invite them to consolidate their list in the middle of the placemat. Provide them with some criteria for powerful questions and ask them to assess and then tweak their questions to make them powerful questions.

Consider randomly calling on one member from each group to share their questions and to develop a class list of questions that will be posted around the timeline.

Explain that these will be some of the questions that will guide their further investigations into Thomson’s death and that might frame their documentaries.

LESSON 4: THE CAST OF CHARACTERS: LISTENING FOR TESTIMONY

(2 classes)

(DAY 7 and 8 of unit)

Overview

In this lesson, students are first invited to participate in activities which help them to uncover the difference between testimony and evidence that they might encounter in the various primary documents they will read. They start by examining an example of a modern document that they can relate to and by deconstructing the various issues surrounding the reliability of the document

including questions regarding the author. Students develop skills that help them read on the line (for evidence), between the lines (infer) and beyond the lines (listening for testimony).

Students examine primary documents created by different key players in the search, discovery, and investigation of Thomson's death. Their challenge in this lesson is to develop a profile of one of the key players based both on the testimony that can be gleaned from the relevant primary documents they authored and the secondary sources they use for background research.

LESSON 4, CLASS 1 AND 2 (DAY 7 AND 8 OF UNIT)

Activities:

Step 1: *Connecting with the concrete:* Consider starting this lesson with a concrete example of a document that provides both evidence and “testimony” (e.g. diary from a soldier in Afghanistan – see http://www.cbc.ca/news/viewpoint/vp_sanders/20060901.html). Provide students with a copy of the document and read the document aloud. As you read, invite students to “talk to the text” – to record their feelings, impressions, questions for the author, inferences about the author – in the margins of their copy of the document. Invite several students to share examples of what they recorded.

Step 2: *Exploring critical thinking vocabulary:* Debrief with the class by explaining that primary documents can tell us both about events of the past and about the author. What they tell us about the author is referred to as “testimony” rather than evidence. You may wish to extend this exploration of the concept of testimony by engaging students in activities on the Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History website under the section: Testimony vs. Evidence (<http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/teachers/keyconcepts/3512en.html>)

Step 3: *Sharing objectives with students:* Explain that during this lesson they will examine primary documents specifically to gain an understanding of the authors who were key players in the Thomson case. They will also gather information from secondary sources and use all the information gathered to develop a profile of one of the key players. The profile will be created on a “trading card” that will be available for their classmates to use as a reference as they plan come to conclusions and plan their documentaries. Consider showing the class examples of sports trading cards and drawing out the elements of an effective trading card (see <http://www.customsportscards.com/adultsportscards.htm> - for samples). Explain that their trading card must incorporate bio-data on their assigned key player from secondary sources, his or her perspective on Thomson and 1-2 of his or her most revealing quotes from primary document(s) studied. The information presented must be concise enough to fit on a trading card but must provide the most crucial information to understanding this key player's role.

Step 4: *Building background knowledge:* Assign each student a different character from the “Portraits” section of the website. Invite them to read at least 3 primary documents in each of the sections below that are by or about their assigned person in addition to the relevant webtext introduction. As they read, ask students to gather notes under 3 sub-headings: Information about the character; His or her perspective on Thomson; Revealing quotes.

In the “Portraits” section of the website, examine the introductions to each of the following subsections written by the website historian, and then take a look at the primary documents in each of these subsections:

[Thomson](#)

[The Thomson Family](#)

[Investigators](#)

[Park Residents](#)

Step 5: *Applying knowledge:* Ask students to sift through the information they have gathered and choose the information that will go on their trading card in order to fulfill the criteria above for an effective trading card. Once students have completed a rough draft of their trading cards, consider providing an opportunity for their peers to read and provide feedback on them before they complete a final draft that will be used by their peers throughout the rest of the unit.

LESSON 5: EXAMINING CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS: WHAT CAN THEY TELL US?

(3 classes)

(DAYS 9, 10 and 11 of unit)

Overview

Students read through a number of primary documents to gather evidence that will ultimately help them construct a case for murder, suicide, or accident as the cause of death. As they read, students are invited to consider what we can learn from each type of document. Students use a chart to assign different categories to information gleaned from sources (e.g. information about the context or the author; information about how Thomson died, information about how he was perceived /remembered, etc.)

LESSON 5, CLASS 1, 2 AND 3 (DAY 9, 10 AND 11 OF UNIT)

Activities:

Step 1: *Connecting to previous knowledge:* Ask students to reflect on what they know and/or think so far about the case. Ask them to move to the sign on the wall that reflects their current hypothesis about Thomson’s death (Murder, Suicide, Accident). Once there, ask them to pair up with another student and explain their reasons for choosing to stand here at this point in their investigations. What evidence have they seen thus far that seems most compelling? Why do the other two possible explanations seem less compelling at this point? Consider randomly calling on a few students from each group to share what they discussed with their partner.

Step 2: *Sharing objectives with students:* Explain that it is important to be aware of our own leanings during an investigation but also to avoid premature clarity. Having identified their current leanings, ask students to approach today’s lesson with an open-mind and a tolerance for ambiguity. Explain that it is expected that many students will change their mind as more evidence is uncovered, just as various people involved in the case changed their mind as time progressed (as we will examine in a

later lesson). Explain that during this lesson, students will examine a number of primary documents and will start choosing documents that best illuminate how Thomson died.

Step 3: *Building background knowledge:* If students are looking at hard copies of documents rather than electronic versions, consider setting up learning stations around the classroom. At each learning station, place several different types of documents printed from the website: visual evidence, diary entries, forensic evidence, letters, etc. Consider differentiating instruction by deciding in advance which students will examine which documents within a small group of 3 at the learning station and report back to the group – perhaps group students by reading ability so that struggling readers might focus on shorter, more straightforward documents, etc.

Investigations

Introduce students to the organizer they will use to gather evidence as they examine each document (**Support Material No. 6: Research Record**). Consider modeling the use of the organizer by looking at one document as a class. Fill in the organizer for that document on an overhead transparency; then have all students look at another document; debrief as a class; then split them up to independently look at documents and fill out the chart while circulating to answer questions and ensure they are on task.

Step 4: *Critically examining evidence:* For each piece of evidence gathered on the chart, invite students to make a judgment regarding whether it points to murder, suicide, or accident as the cause of Thomson’s death. They might do this by highlighting evidence in one of three different colours. Then, ask students to rate each piece of evidence based on how convincing it is on a scale of 0-3. Ask them to provide at least one reason for their rating. In deciding on their reasons, remind them to draw on the skills they have been building throughout the unit (e.g. it is corroborated by other evidence; the testimony provided by the document points to potential ulterior motives of its author, etc).

Ask students to share their findings with a partner. In partners, discuss which conclusion the evidence seems to be pointing to. Consider revisiting the activity done at the beginning of the lesson. Ask students to, once again, move to the sign posted on the wall that best reflects their hypothesis now. Once they have all moved to a sign, ask them to share their thoughts with a partner and randomly call on several students to share what they discussed with their partner and whether or not their minds have changed since the beginning of the lesson.

LESSON 6: EMERGING EVIDENCE: EXAMINING LATER DOCUMENTS: WHAT CAN THEY TELL US?

(3 CLASSES)

DAYS 12, 13 and 14 of unit

Overview

During this lesson, students are invited to examine the difference between traces and accounts and to consider the roles of both in historical investigation. The primary focus of this lesson will be to examine evidence generated years after Tom Thomson’s death and to sort this evidence into traces

and accounts. They gather evidence from these later documents and revisit their timeline and add, in a different colour, the evidence that emerged at a later date. They are invited to consider specifically what changed to make the person change his/her mind. An interesting aspect to this case is that some people changed their interpretation over the years. Students develop criteria for legitimate reasons to change one's mind about the past.

Students will write a news report with a concise, engaging, and informative headline that reflects their conclusions about the importance of the role of traces and accounts unveiled years after Thomson's death in solving the mystery. OR Students will write the transcript of an interview in which an investigative reporter questions a forensic pathologist about the changing nature of the evidence in this case. The focus of the interview is the question of whether the passing of time has made solving the riddle of Thomson's death more or less likely in light of what new information has emerged and what has been lost over time.

LESSON 6, CLASS 1, 2 AND 3 (DAY 12, 13 AND 14 OF UNIT)

Activities:

Step 1: *Sharing objectives with students:* Ask students to think back to the lesson in which they analyzed exemplars of documentaries and generated a list of key elements of documentaries (e.g. interviews with experts; clips from relevant news reports, etc.) Explain that by the end of this lesson, students will prepare either the transcript of an interview or of a TV news report that explores evidence that was generated years after Thomson's death and discusses what changed that caused new/different evidence to emerge. The transcript will be used in their documentary.

Step 2: *Thinking about reasons that interpretations of evidence might change over time:* Consider starting with an overview of the inquiry into the findings of Dr. Charles Smith, former pathologist at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. Briefly discuss with the class different reasons that a judge might change some of the verdicts in those cases – e.g. new evidence revealed about a key player (i.e. lack of expert knowledge that was assumed before); new scientific understanding (i.e. in the case of symptoms that were thought to only point to shaken baby syndrome, there is now evidence that the same symptoms may point to other possible reasons [genetics, a simple fall, etc.]).

Some helpful links:

<http://www.goudgeinquiry.ca/>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/crime/smith-charles.html>

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2005/06/07/autopsies-050607.html>

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20071211.wlshaken11/BNStory/specialScienceandHealth/home>

Given this concrete example, ask students to brainstorm other legitimate reasons for changing your mind – as a witness, as a judge, as a detective, etc. Record student answers on the board.

Step 3: *Examining changing interpretations:* Split the class into small groups. Ask each group to examine one or more of the documents listed below which were created years after Thomson's death. Consider providing roles in the group. For example, Person A might read the document aloud.

Persons B and C might record evidence as it is being read; Person D might be skimming through previous evidence as it is being read, looking for similarities and differences.

[Re: Human bones received from unmarked grave in Algonquin Park](#)

[Re: Request for report on remains found at Canoe Lake](#)

[Questions and answers by Dr. Noble Sharpe](#)

[Application for the exhumation of the body of one Thos. Thomson drowned in Canoe Lake in 1917 \(1931\)](#)

[A Sketching expedition and its bizarre development \(1970\)](#)

[The Legend \(1977\)](#)

[Copy of Dr. G. W. Howland's affidavit](#)

[Interview with Elva Henry](#)

[Interviews with Mrs. Margaret \[Thomson\] Tweedale](#)

[Interview with Daphne Crombie](#)

[Letter to J. S. Fraser](#)

[Letter to Blodwen Davies](#)

Invite each group to create a Venn diagram (see **Support Material No. 8: Types of Venn Diagrams**) on chart paper which compares the interpretations of the evidence in the more recent document with interpretations recorded at the time of Thomson's death that they have in their notes from previous lessons.

Each group prepares to present their Venn diagram. In addition, the group should also prepare to share with the class their perspective on whether or not the newer evidence should be wholly or partially accepted or rejected and the reasons for that perspective.

As each group presents, add the new interpretations to the class timeline in a new colour to indicate evidence generated or conclusions drawn at a later date.

Step 4: *Applying knowledge:* Finally, ask students to work individually or in pairs to write a transcript of either an interview with an expert in the case or a news report that is examining new evidence in the case. In either case, the transcript should frame the issue for viewers, introduce the new evidence or new interpretations and examine the reasons why people have changed their minds about original evidence.

LESSON 7: THE PARK: A CRIME SCENE OR AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN? RANKING RELATIVE DANGERS OF THE SETTING

(2 classes)

DAYS 15 and 16 of the Unit

Overview:

Students are invited to examine the importance of the physical setting of Thomson's death and the role it might have played in his untimely demise. Students use both secondary and primary sources to research various activities that were occurring in Algonquin Park and Canoe Lake including logging, poaching, transportation of troops for the war effort, etc. Students will rank the relative

dangers inherent in the setting and consider the role that each might have played in Thomson's death.

LESSON 7, DAY 1 AND 2

Activities:

Step 1: *Sharing objectives with students:* Explain to students that in the drama that is Thomson's death, they have examined the plot (events surrounding his death), the characters (the key players – witnesses, family, investigators, etc) and during this lesson they will examine the setting – Algonquin Park. What dangers were lurking in the park and what role might they have played in his death? These are the questions they will answer during this lesson.

Step 2: *Connecting to previous knowledge:* Start by examining students' perceptions of a national or provincial park; ask how many have been to one. Then, ask them to think to themselves briefly to gather their memories of their experiences; share with a partner; then, randomly call on several students to share their impressions. Alternatively, consider showing the class slides of Algonquin today in presentation software or via live streaming of the park's website (<http://www.algonquinpark.on.ca/>). Generate a list of terms and phrases to describe the park.

Ask students to read a brief overview of Algonquin at the turn of the century. As they read, ask students to choose an appropriate Venn diagram to illustrate how the park then compares to the park today (**Support Material No. 8: Types of Venn diagrams**).

Look at some of the webtext and historical documents in the "Landscapes" section, particularly the "Creation" subsection introduction and the documents it contains, to find out more about the history of Algonquin Park.

Step 3: *Ranking potential dangers:* Introduce students to the organizer (**Support Material No. 9: Potential dangers posed by the setting**) they will be using to gather evidence. As they note down each potential danger they come across in the primary documents they examine, ask them to consider the potential role it may have played in Thomson's death. Does it point to the possibility of murder, suicide, or accident? Once they have examined all the evidence, invite them to rank each potential danger, with #1 indicating that which was potentially most hazardous to Thomson given what we know of his activity in the park.

Finally, ask them to make a decision regarding whether, at this point in their investigations, they think the setting of Algonquin played a significant role in the death of Thomson. What place will it play in their documentary – a central role? A peripheral role?

LESSON 8: THOMSON'S LEGACY: HAS THE MYSTERY ENDURED BECAUSE OF HIS LINK TO CANADIAN IDENTITY?

(2 classes)
DAYS 17 and 18 of the Unit

Overview:

In this lesson, students grapple with the question of why the controversy surrounding Thomson's death has endured and captured the imaginations of successive generations of Canadians. Students first generate and/or examine criteria to determine historical significance. Then students are invited to consider the reasons for the on-going interest in Thomson's death and the significance of his life and death to Canadians.

Students will create a "pitch" for the development of a documentary on the death of Tom Thomson. The "pitch" will include a broad justification for the documentary that encapsulates their judgment regarding Thomson's significance in Canadian history and the reasons for the ongoing interest in his death.

LESSON 8, DAY 1 AND 2

Activities:

Step 1: *Sharing objectives with students:* Explain that the objective of the next couple of classes is to frame the purpose of their documentary. Why make it? Why show it? Why do Canadians still care after almost 100 years have passed? Students will be creating a "pitch" to convince producers to make their documentary. Explain that we know there is ongoing interest given the number of books published on Tom Thomson and his death, ongoing interest in the case, etc. Challenge students to provide, through their pitch to the producers, the most compelling reasons why there is continuing interest. Why does the story deserve to be told?

Step 2: *Examining and applying criteria for historical significance:* Explain that historian Peter Seixas identifies 2 criteria for determining the level of historical significance:

- a) Resulting in change (The event/person/development had *deep* consequences, for *many* people, over a long period of time.)
- b) Revealing (The event/person/development sheds light on enduring or emerging issues in history and contemporary life or was important at some stage in history within the collective memory of a group or groups.)

From: (Seixas, Peter. *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: A Framework for Assessment in Canada*, 2006).

Alternatively, the following can be used to judge historical significance:

- *Prominence at the time:* Was the event, idea, or person noticed at the time as having importance? How long did this recognition last?
- *Consequences:* Significance can be assessed by examining the impacts of events, ideas, persons. Specific criteria for judging consequences include:
 - Magnitude of impact: How deeply felt or profound was the impact?
 - Scope of the impact: How widespread was the impact?
 - Lasting nature of impact: How long-lived were the effects?
- *Subsequent profile:* The importance the event, idea, or person has played in popular history. Specific criteria for judging historical profile include:
 - Remembered: Has the event, idea, or person been memorialized?

○ Revealing: Does it inform our understanding of history?
(Denos and Case, *Teaching About Historical Thinking*, p. 13)

Ask students to consider the life and death of Tom Thomson in light of these criteria. Invite students to use the organizer provided (**Support Material No. 10: Assessing Historical Significance of the Thomson Mystery**) to gather evidence from the readings listed below.

Examples of documents that focus on historical significance:

[Studio Talk](#)

[The Ten Greatest Canadians](#)

[Thomson: Myth dispelled, man emerges](#)

Step 3: *Applying knowledge:* Invite students to use their organizer to create a “pitch” – i.e. a proposal – no longer than 1 page (250 words) that outlines the significance of Thomson’s death and justifies the creation of a new documentary on the cause of his death.

LESSON 9: DRAWING CONCLUSIONS – MURDER, DEATH OR SUICIDE?

(3 classes)

DAYS 19, 20 and 21 of the Unit

Overview

In the final days, students re-examine the evidence they have gathered and reflect on the initial criteria they developed to make a judgment about the most plausible explanation for Tom Thomson’s death. They carefully select primary traces and accounts that they have studied throughout the unit which will support their case. Then, they plan their documentary in such a way that the evidence they present will make a compelling case.

LESSON 9, DAY 1, 2 AND 3

Activities:

Step 1: *Drawing Conclusions:* Ask students to make a decision individually regarding the most plausible explanation for Tom Thomson’s death. The creation of this thesis should be preceded by a careful examination of all of the evidence gathered and the student’s critical examination of that evidence through the various organizers they have used throughout the unit.

At this stage, the teacher might decide to create groups according to thesis. Alternatively, if groups were created ahead of time, group members will need to form a consensus regarding the most plausible explanation at this stage.

Step 2: *Organizing arguments and evidence:* Invite students to individually and then in their groups write out their most compelling arguments and the supporting evidence for each of those arguments.

Step 3: *Planning the documentary:* Invite students to:

a) As a group, decide on components and their order – e.g. intro, recreation of crime scene, interview with..., shots of photographs/news headlines/etc, recent news report, conclusion, etc.

b) Assign tasks to each group member based on components. Each group member will be responsible for writing the narration, storyboarding, writing the script, organizing costumes and creating the sets for their respective parts. Alternatively, groups might be divided by role, i.e. one member writes narration for all parts, one person organizes authentic costumes/settings, etc.

c) Keep an ongoing log of group meetings and decisions, an ongoing to do list and an ongoing list of accounts and traces to be used within the documentary.

Remind students that the documentary must constantly return to their thesis.

SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 1: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CASE

An overview of the case (record basic facts):	
<p align="center">Possible Explanations</p> <p>✓ In each of the boxes below, list one of the explanations you encounter while reading an overview of the case</p>	<p align="center">Making predictions</p> <p>✓ In each of the boxes below, list some of the evidence that might emerge that would support the corresponding explanation</p>

SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 2: WHO WAS TOM THOMSON?

Information about Source ✓ author? ✓ date created? ✓ type of source? ✓ perspective?	Information about Thomson	How would this aspect of his life be perceived and portrayed by your assigned character?

SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 3: CONCEPT FORMATION EXERCISE

Which of the following are examples of “facts” and which are examples of “claims”?

When the body was found there was a bruise on the forehead.	The bruise on the forehead was caused by being struck by a blunt object.
His legs were tangled in fishing wire.	His legs had been bound with fishing wire.
The corpse was bloated.	The corpse had been in the water for 3 days before being discovered.
	He had argued with the last person to see him alive.
The bag he habitually carried was never found.	His personal effects had been stolen from the shore.

SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 4: WHAT HAPPENED ACCORDING TO WHOM?

Fact or Claim	Document #1	Document #2	Document #3	Document #4	Document #5	Document #6
	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?
	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?
	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?
	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?
	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?
	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?	X ☐ ?

X = disputed ☐ = corroborated ? = not corroborated

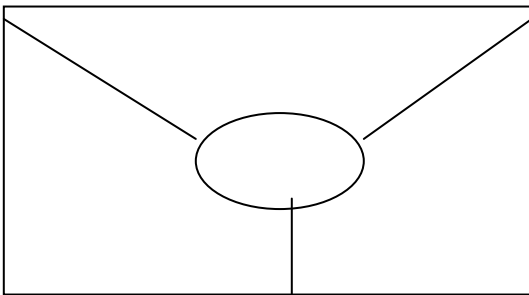
SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 5: “PLACEMAT” EXERCISE

Instructions:

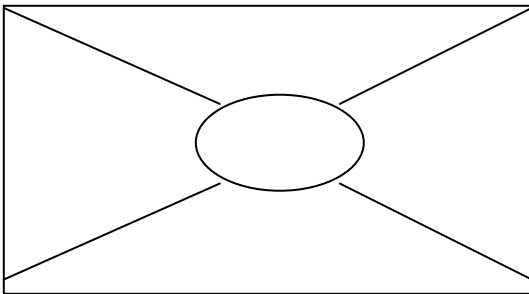
1. Divide up a piece of chart paper using one of the designs below. There should be a common section in the middle and individual sections for as many people as there are in your group.
2. Individually record your answers to the questions asked in your section of the placemat. Do not discuss answers with your group members yet.
3. Use the common area of the placemat to follow up based on your teacher’s instructions. This might include: recording common ideas, ranking or organizing ideas, brainstorming solutions, coming to a consensus on an issue, etc.

Some options for drawing a placemat

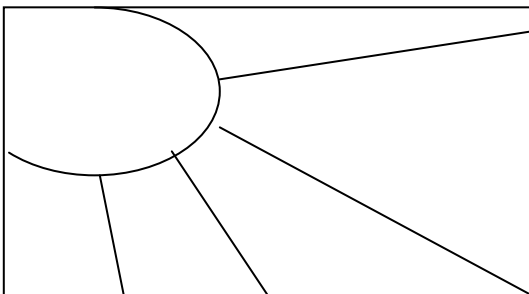
a) If there are 3 people in your group:



b) If there are 4 people in your group:



c) If there are 5 people in your group



SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 6: RESEARCH RECORD

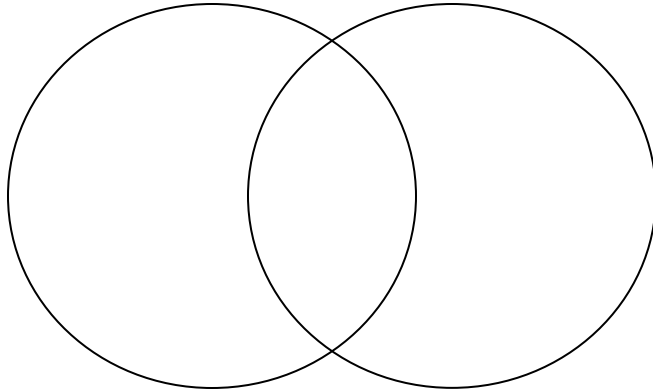
Name of Document	Type	Primary or Secondary	Evidence

SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 7: ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE

THEORY	Evidence which supports this theory	Points (either relating to background or testimony) that enhance the credibility of this evidence	Points (either relating to background or testimony) that diminish the credibility of this evidence	Assessing the overall credibility of the evidence							
Murder				Little credibility		Very credible	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Suicide				Little credibility		Very credible	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Accident				Little credibility		Very credible	-2	-1	0	+1	+2

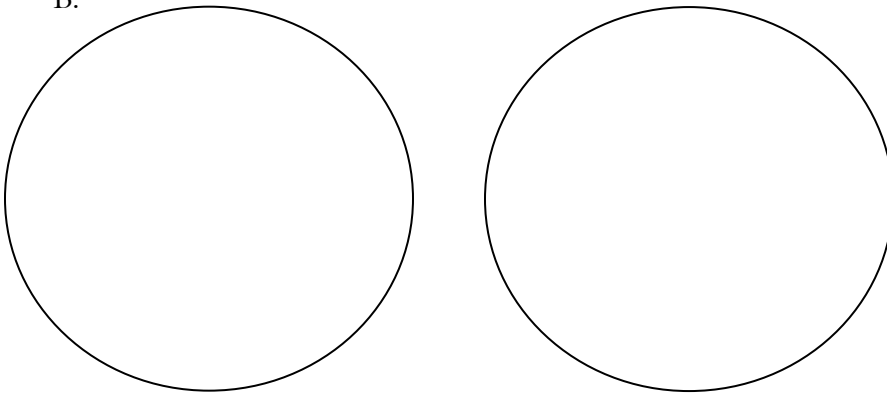
SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 8: TYPES OF VENN DIAGRAMS

A.



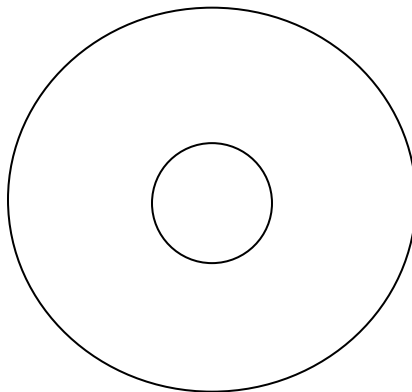
- shows that there are some similarities and some differences

B.



- shows that there are no similarities; the two things are completely different

C.



- shows that one is a “subset” of the other; it has all the characteristics of the other

SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 9: POTENTIAL DANGERS POSED BY THE SETTING (ALGONQUIN PARK)

Potential Danger	Evidence from Source: _____	Evidence from Source: _____	Evidence from Source: _____	Evidence from Source: _____	RANK ORDER of potential dangers	Role this hazard may have played in Thomson's death

SUPPORT MATERIAL NO. 10: ASSESSING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THOMSON MYSTERY

Criteria for Historical Significance	Evidence from Source: _____	Evidence from Source: _____	Evidence from Source: _____	Evidence from Source: _____

