

STORY CARDS -- prompts for historical and geographical thinking -- K-7

Includes: 2 Story Cards with Instructions part one and two, and 10 cards for each category; 42 cards total

Artwork: public domain Illustrations by Arthur Rackham from the Wikimedia Commons ¹



These cards can be used to prompt thinking about heritage and culture, about time and place, and about a person's place within their family and community. They can be an icebreaker, a class activity (one card at a time), prompts for story circles, or they could be the basis of further inquiry. Some cards contain special terms that a teacher might need to define for students. For the little ones, the cards can be read aloud.

The questions are examples of what can come out of a Q Matrix with the guiding theme of "heritage inquiry." Here is one possible way to set up a Q Matrix.

Q MATRIX	Event <i>what</i>	Situation <i>where/when</i>	Alternatives <i>which</i>	People <i>who</i>	Reasons <i>why</i>	Means <i>how</i>
Present <i>is</i>						
Past <i>did/was</i>						
Possibility <i>can</i>						
Probability <i>would</i>						
Prediction <i>will</i>						
Imagination <i>might</i>						
Decision/Choice <i>should</i>						

¹ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Arthur_Rackham

The questions are also heritage-themed ways to explore the six critical thinking concepts that form the basis of the Competencies in BC Social Studies curriculum.

Historical and Geographic Thinking Concepts
Significance: Make decisions about the importance of a person or event from the past, while understanding different perspectives on what is important. Make decisions about what aspects of geographic locations and phenomena (things that happen) make them important or noteworthy. Why does it matter?
Evidence: Evaluate different sources and information, especially primary sources, and make decisions based on sound evidence. Develop interpretations based on different kinds of social, geographic, and scientific data.
Continuity and Change: Understand that some things change while some things remain the same over time. Identify how patterns and trends related to specific places vary and stay the same over time and compared to similar locations.
Cause and Consequence: Examine what creates change and evaluate the impacts of change. Understand how humans and the environment interact or influence each other. Consider obvious causes but also look for hidden causes.
Perspective: Understand that we do not all view the world in the same way, and that our experiences of the same events can differ. Understand that each of us has our own sense of place that results from our experience of the human and physical characteristics of our environment. How people from the time or place express what has happened?
Ethical Judgment: Make informed judgments about the fairness of a decision or whether people made the best choices in the past. Make informed judgments about the responsibility of practices and results of a particular action related to human or physical environments.

Card Contents

STORY CARDS Instructions

- Can be done with a partner or in a group.
- You can draw one card for everybody or each person can draw their own card.
- Ask a teacher or adult to explain any words that you find difficult to understand.
- You are allowed to change the question a bit if it helps you find an answer.
- The idea here is to explain a bit, to say “why,” and not just answer the question.
- “Family” can mean anything you want -- the people you live with, but also relatives or other special people that are a part of your life.
- Each question is meant to pull out a little story from your memory -- the stories can be short, like a quick reply, but they can also be longer if you have more to tell.
- Maybe the question won’t work for everyone, but give everyone a chance to respond. Come around again to anyone who needed more time to think.
- questions about someone else’s response if the person has finished talking. Asking “why?” is a good way to pull a bit more from each person’s response.
- Another way to play is to take the question home and come back with a story the next day.

Artifacts

- What do you think is the oldest object in your house? Perhaps it is something that has been passed down in your family -- an "heirloom."
- If you had to pick two or three objects from your home that showed who you are or where your family came from, what would they be?
- What is something in your home that's not really worth a lot of money, but is still quite special to you or your family? Something of "sentimental value" -- but not a pet!
- Is there an old photo in your home that has a story behind it? If not, is there any photo that helps capture what your family is like?
- What is something interesting in your home from the past that you or your family has displayed or put up somewhere?
- What are two objects in your room that could be used to explain what it is like to be a Canadian to someone from another country?
- Sometimes tools or object that were once commonly used everyday items but were replaced by more modern objects that do the job differently. What is something in your home that used to be used but is hardly used at all nowadays? A "relic."
- Imagine that one day you will be a grandparent. What is an object or "heirloom" that you would pass on to your grandchild?
- If you could have a painting or photograph of anything at all to place in your home for family and guests to see, what would be in it?
- What is an imaginary object that you wish was real and that you could have?

Culture

- You probably think of yourself as a Canadian. Is there another nationality or culture that you are connected with? How do you know about this?
- What is your favourite activity that your family does on a regular basis?
- Is there a tradition in your family that probably goes back a long time, maybe since before your mother or father was born?
- "Heritage" means something that is passed down to others. This could be a language, tradition, property, dance, recipe, and so on. What is something that has been passed down to you?
- "Culture" is a word for all of the things that make a group of people unique from other groups, like art, traditions, beliefs, and ways of making a living. Culture takes many forms, like ethnic groups (Irish, Cree, or Mexican), or groups that have things in common, such as teens, farmers, schools, or hip-hop dancers). Do you belong to a culture? Do you belong to more than one culture?
- Do you think your family has a connection to something important that happened in history? This could be anything that made an impact on the past.
- Think about experiences you have had with other people's families or with your friends? What is a tradition they have that you really enjoyed?
- Some people build tree diagrams to show parents, step-parents, cousins, grandparents, great-grandparents or other relatives. How far back can you go? Do you know the name of a great-grandparent?
- Of all the food that gets made at your home, which one goes back the furthest? In other words, is there a recipe or way of making something that has been passed down for a long time?
- Using your imagination, what would be an amazing tradition to start?

Qualities

- ▶ What you ask if you could interview an ancestor of yours that has passed away?
- ▶ What is something sad or funny that happened in your family's past that you can share?
- ▶ Families sometimes have beliefs or attitudes that make them unique -- sometimes these are called "values." What are one or two values that you come to mind when you think about your family?
- ▶ If you found yourself in a situation where other people asked you to tell them an interesting story about your family, what would you say?
- ▶ Is there something your family does that you think might be unique -- something that would not be common in other families you know? This could be an activity, tradition, meal, holiday, belief, and so on.
- ▶ What's something that it is important for you to do on a regular basis? Nothing gross, please! Where do you think this activity came from -- what are its "origins?" Maybe it's something your whole family does.
- ▶ Do you have a lot of elderly people in your life? What is a good memory you have about an elderly person?
- ▶ What is the longest conversation you have had with an elderly person? How did the conversation come to be, and what did you talk about?
- ▶ What is the best quality a person can have? Who do you know that has this quality?
- ▶ If you could only pass on one value, quality, or belief to others, what would it be? Think of a time you showed this value, quality or belief.

Places

- ▶ Of all the places in the country or the world, your family lives here. How did your family end up living where they do? How about other relatives?
- ▶ What is a built place, something made by people, that is important to you? Perhaps this is a place that has special memories for you. Think about what makes it special.
- ▶ What is a natural place, something outdoors, that is important to you? Perhaps this is a place that has special memories for you. Think about what makes it special.
- ▶ What your earliest memory of nature? Think about what you remember about this experience. Maybe it's not the earliest, but one of the earliest.
- ▶ What is a place that you have visited that really stands out in your memory? Is this place important to other people as well?
- ▶ If you could change one thing about the place you live (home, neighbourhood, town or city), what would it be?
- ▶ What place in your home town or city is probably the most important? Think about who it is important for, and what makes it important. You could limit this question to just your neighbourhood if you want.
- ▶ How do you think your life would be different if you were born in another country?
- ▶ What comes to mind when you think about a place that is safe? How about a place that is dangerous?
- ▶ What is an imaginary place that you wish you could visit?