

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Cowichan Connection'
Issue January/February 2018



Lesson Overview:

Students will explore *Canadian Geographic's* Great Trail special edition (January/February 2018). Detailed inquiry will be focused on B.C.'s historic Cowichan Valley. Extension activities will encourage students to investigate other sections of the Great Trail that are also described in the magazine.

Grade Levels:

6-12 (with minor modifications)

Objectives:

- Students will learn about the Great Trail in the Cowichan Valley by reading the article "Cowichan Connection" in *Canadian Geographic's* Great Trail special edition (January/February 2018).
- Students will complete a worksheet focusing their reading on the geography standards.
- Students will conduct research to gain deeper knowledge of the Cowichan Valley.
- Students will create a bicycle tour map of the Cowichan Valley Great Trail system.
- Extension activities: Students will compare the Cowichan Valley portion of the Great Trail with others in Canada (also featured in the January/February 2018 issue of *Canadian Geographic*).

Materials:

- 1 or more copies of *Canadian Geographic's* Great Trail special edition (January/February 2018).
- Pens/pencils
- Computers for research
- Map of the Great Trail system across Canada: thegreattrail.ca/explore-the-map/
- Map of British Columbia: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canada_British_Columbia_relief_location_map.jpg
- Map of Vancouver Island: en-ca.topographic-map.com/places/Cowichan-Valley-688435/
- Worksheet (provided)

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Links to Canadian Standards for Geography:

Geographic Skill 1: Asking Geographic Questions

1. Plan how to answer geographic questions

Geographic Skill 2: Acquiring Geographic Information

1. Use a variety of research skills to locate and collect geographic data.
2. Make and record observations about the physical and human characteristics of a place or region.

Geographic Skill 3: Organizing Geographic Information

1. Integrate various types of information to organize geographic information for display purposes.

Geographic Skill 4: Analyzing Geographic Information

1. Use texts, photographs, charts, tables, graphs, documents and maps.

Geographic Skill 5: Answering Geographic Questions

1. Develop and present combinations of geographic information to solve geographic problems and make reasoned decisions.

Lesson Development/Activities:

- Display a map of Canada, where you have highlighted locations of the Great Trail across Canada: thegreattrail.ca/explore-the-map/
- Display a map of British Columbia: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canada_British_Columbia_relief_location_map.jpg
- Display a map of Vancouver Island: en-ca.topographic-map.com/places/Cowichan-Valley-688435/
- Ask students to brainstorm what they know about the Great Trail, using the 5Ws (who, what, where, when, why, and how) as a guideline.
- Ask students about their personal experiences with/on the Great Trail. If there isn't a section of the Great Trail in your location, discuss local examples of trail systems for cyclists, walkers, runners, etc. Discuss how this trail provides a sense of place for members of the community.
- Use the Great Trail, British Columbia and Vancouver Island maps to provide students with geographical context. Ask students about patterns and trends that they notice regarding the location of the Great Trail. What physical and human interactions occurred **to create** the Great Trail? What physical and human interactions occur **because of** the Great Trail? What is the geographic importance of the Great Trail system?

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- Read the article (individually, in small groups or as a class) “Cowichan Connection” from the January/February 2018 issue of *Canadian Geographic*. (pages 62-68). Have students use the worksheet provided to make notes as they read the article.
- After reading the article, debrief using the worksheet with students. What did the students find most interesting/surprising? What patterns and trends did the students notice? Discuss some geographical reasons for the location of the Great Trail — e.g., elevation changes (gradient), past and present usage, etc. What are some geographical characteristics that make this portion of the Great Trail geographically unique?
- Create five groups (or more, if necessary) to research the following themes:
 1. Agriculture in the Cowichan Valley
 2. Natural ecosystems in the Cowichan Valley (flora and fauna)
 3. Cultural ecosystems in the Cowichan Valley (vineyards)
 4. Indigenous history/influences in the Cowichan Valley
 5. Economic geography: Duncan, Chemainus, Lake Cowichan, and Ladysmith

Students will use the article “Cowichan Connection” from the January/February 2018 issue of *Canadian Geographic* (pages 62-68) and other resources to create a detailed report for their classmates. This may be done in written or graphic format. The report can be structured around the 5Ws or it can be more free-flowing based on the students’ interests. The goal is to use this report to create a cycling tour in the next part of the activity. Students will share/present their findings to the class and post them on a display board in the classroom.

- **Assignment:** Students will create a cycling tour of the Cowichan Valley. Students already have most of the required information, which they gathered in the previous activity. Suggested structure and topics for the bike tour: Where to stop? Why there? What is the distance to this location? How long will the ride likely take an average person? When is the best time to visit the Cowichan Valley, based on weather and climate data? What types of flora and fauna and ecosystems will be found along this route? Provide specific locations/details, Indigenous history, and examples of local agriculture. Anything else interesting to see or do along your bike tour?
- Allow students to select their format for presentation: brochure/pamphlet, an annotated and foldable map, etc. Include photos/images to enhance the final product.
- Students must also prepare a minute-long “elevator pitch” on why their cycling tour of the Cowichan Valley is the best!

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Extending Your Geographic Thinking:

- Research invasive species in the Cowichan Valley. Compare them to invasive species in your local area. Explore the similarities and differences (patterns and trends): cvrd.bc.ca/2283/Invasive-Species
- Complete research in your area and compare it to the Cowichan Valley (i.e., agriculture, natural ecosystems, cultural ecosystems, economic systems, and Indigenous influences).
- All of the above activities can be adapted to use the information on other sections of the Great Trail in the January/February 2018 issue of *Canadian Geographic*. Choose from one of the following: page 34 – Following Fundy (New Brunswick); page 42 – 'Over the Land' (Baffin Island); page 48 – Along the Great Sea (Lake Superior area); page 54 – Ribbon of Green (Edmonton).
- Research other countries that have extensive trail systems. How do they differ from our trail systems? How are they similar? How does the conservation system around the trails differ?

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WORKSHEET:

“Cowichan Connection”, January/February 2018 issue of *Canadian Geographic* (pages 62-68).

GEOGRAPHIC STANDARD (TOPIC)	YOUR NOTES
<p>The World in Spatial Terms: Provide the longitude and latitude.</p>	
<p>Places and Regions: How have humans interacted with the region? How have different cultures affected the region? What are the natural/physical characteristics of the region? What are the human impacts on the region? How have the above changed over time?</p>	
<p>Physical Systems: Describe the ecosystem(s). What are the soil types? Display a climograph.</p>	

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GEOGRAPHIC STANDARD (TOPIC)	YOUR NOTES
<p>Human Systems: What types of economic activities were common along the Great Trail in the past and are common currently (continuity and change)?</p>	
<p>Environment and Society: Describe human uses for the railway track bed in the past and currently. What are the necessary soil and climate conditions required to support wineries, cideries, and local agriculture?</p>	
<p>Did you find anything interesting, surprising or is there anything you were left wondering about?</p>	