



Global Voices Information Sheet

Canada and Congo's election



A man holds a ballot and riot police stand guard while voters head to Congo's polls (Source: cbsnews.com)

Background Info

- The Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo or DRC, formerly known as Zaire) is a very large country in central Africa that is bordered by nine nations, including Rwanda, a very small country to its east.
- In 1994, ethnic tensions grew in Rwanda between Tutsi and Hutu tribes to the point of mass genocide. Over 500,000 people were killed in just a few months. Many refugees fled Rwanda for Congo, including rogue militias who carried out cross border raids. The Rwandan government was concerned that the refugees in Congo were planning an invasion.
- The Rwandan army attacked with support from neighboring countries Uganda and Angola, targeting Rwandan militias, but also killing Congo civilians.
- By 1998, war broke out in Congo. The Great War of Africa, involving eight African nations, had four million casualties, with another one million people perishing later from war-related malnutrition or disease. Even more people were displaced from their homes.
- In 2003, a formal peace agreement was reached, but the fighting didn't stop and violent conflict in Congo continues to this day.
- The conflict continues, partly, due to the mineral trade, since rebel armies control some of Congo's mines. The international community (including Canada which holds over \$1 billion in private mining investments), buy minerals from Congo.
- The international community has an interest in establishing peace and good government in Congo partly because of its mineral resources. Another important reason to establish peace is the Congo's strategic position in central Africa, where internal conflict can cause instability for its border countries.

Key terms

- **Logistics**—the detailed coordination of a complex operation involving many people, facilities, or supplies
- **Think tank**—a body of experts providing advice and ideas on specific political or economic problems, usually advising governments
- **Moral imperative**—a principal that compels a person (or organization, or government) to act
- **Orange Revolution**—a series of protests that took place in the Ukraine after the presidential run-off vote in 2004, which was said to be ruined by voter intimidation, corruption and fraud
- **Paradoxical**—seemingly absurd or self-contradictory

Global Voices Secondary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: elections, voting, democracy, the Democratic Republic of Congo, political unrest, civil war, international aid and investment.
- Course Connections: Business Studies, Canadian and World Studies, English, Social Sciences and Humanities.

Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Computers and internet
- Newspapers
- Global Voices column

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Reading Comprehension

1. Reading Comprehension: Global Voices Column (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Pre reading steps:
 - i. Introduce the topic and encourage students to discuss what they already know about the topic, making predictions around what the column is about.
 - b. Reading steps:
 - i. Read: students must read the text independently, highlighting important points throughout the column.

- ii. Ask: students must ask themselves what the story is about, recording five questions they are unsure of after reading the column.
 - iii. Paraphrase: students must write point form notes in their own words around what the column is about.
- c. Post reading discussion:
- i. What are the main points of the column?
 - ii. What emotions did this column evoke in you?
 - iii. What problem is identified in the column?
 - iv. What questions do you have about the column?

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Discussing the Global Voices Column (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Ask students the following suggested questions about the column, encourage them to use evidence from the Global Voices column to support their answers:
 - i. What is the message in this column?
 - ii. What perspectives are presented in this column? Which ones are left out?
 - iii. What problem is presented in this column?
 - iv. What events are discussed in this column?
 - v. What is democracy?
 - vi. What are the stages of a federal election?
 - vii. Where is the Congo? What social and political issues has the Congo faced in the past and in the present?
 - viii. What were the results of the current election that took place in the Congo?
 - b. Before concluding this discussion, ensure students have a sound understanding of the Global Voices column and the issues at hand.

Thinking

1. The Democratic Republic of Congo (estimated time: 45 minutes)
 - a. As emphasized in the Global Voices column, the Congo has experienced a tumultuous past. Ask students to explain some of the troubles the Congo has faced and discuss this as a class.
 - b. Distribute newspapers around the classroom and/ or allow students to access the internet or visit the library.
 - c. Ask students to research the history of the Congo and focus on one event in history or an area of trouble the Congo has experienced. Students must provide context, explain the country's reaction to the issue as well as any attempts to salvage the situation.
 - d. When students have completed their research, bring the class back together and encourage students to share their discoveries, culminating in a class discussion.

Communication

2. Investing in the Congo (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. In the Global Voices column, it is stated that Canada has given the Congo millions of Canadian aid dollars to buy medical supplies and send children to school; however Canada is stifling this progress by not supporting the Congo's bid for democracy. Address this statement with the students.
 - b. Ask students to write an independent reflection, stating whether they agree or disagree with this statement.
 - c. When reflections are complete, bring the class back together to discuss their thoughts around this statement.

Application

1. Mock Election (estimated time: continuous project)
 - a. Explain to students that they will be creating and enacting the drama of a fictional election. In this campaign enactment they will be producers, directors, and actors.
 - b. Tell students that their elections will be taking place in the Congo and they will have to arrange the following elements: setting, characters, context, and concluding events.
 - c. Divide the class in half forming two political parties.
 - d. Explain to students that each party needs to create a platform and once this is created they must create a campaign plan that they will execute in their school. Candidates and their aides must give speeches, “air” commercials, post ads etc. around the school. On the final day, voters from other classes will be invited to the class to vote on their preferred political party.
 - e. Help students plan their storyline by asking students to perform the following inquiries.
 - i. Setting: Ask students to research the Congo determining the social and political state of the country, how the election will look, possible dangers at election time, the type of leadership the country needs and issues that are important to the people of the Congo.
 - ii. Characters: Ask students to build out their political party and supporters, determining the character of each individual. Each person in their group should have a role.
 - iii. Context: As a class, determine the events that will take place as they act out their fictional election.
 - iv. Concluding events: Leave the concluding events up to chance as other members of the school will be invited into the classroom to vote for a political party.
 - f. Provide parties with a week to begin preparing their campaign and executing their plans.
 - g. At the conclusion of the week invite students around the school who have witnessed the campaigning into the classroom to hear debates between the political parties and vote for their chosen party.
 - h. When the mock election is complete bring the class back together for an active discussion around democracy, their experience with the election process and the Congo.

Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

Free The Children – www.freethechildren.com

We Day Teach - <http://www.weday.com/teach>