

**EPISODE 1 GOING TO WAR:**  
British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP)**Activity Two:**  
**Using assessment criteria to challenge  
a common classroom****MISSION**

Through examination of a common classroom resource (textbook), to what extent do you feel assessment criteria were used in producing the resource?

**KEY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS****What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this activity?**

- **Learn** about the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP).
- **Examine** a common classroom resource to establish and challenge what is/should be considered historically significant.
- **Evaluate**, through assessment criteria, whether the BCATP should be considered historically significant to the development of Canada.
- **Assess** the impact of the BCATP on the development of Canada's aviation system and national economic infrastructure.
- **Analyze** and **prioritize** events in Canada's history throughout the 20th century.

**BACKGROUND**

Online lists of the most significant issues, people, places and events (items) that shaped Canada's history during the 20th century are plentiful. However, the items on these lists vary from author to author, making it clear that no list is more final or complete than another. In many ways, a history textbook is a list compiled by an author or authors. It includes what the author has decided is important for a student to know. But, if we assume that no one list is authoritative, it is important for students to be able to use multiple sources to create their own lists.

Classrooms often use a single resource to provide course content. For many history classes, a textbook is the most common resource, and the content in each chapter is what the author(s) have determined to be significant in Canada's history.

For any resource used in the classroom, students should question how the author(s) determined what would be included, and question what did not make it into print. For the purposes of this activity, students should explore authors' decision-making processes to determine the relative significance of events during the Second World War.

- How much space on each page is provided for each issue, person, place or event?
- Which items receive more attention and space on the page than others?
- What process do you think the authors used to determine what to include, and what to omit?

For the purposes of this activity, students will focus on the Second World War, and whether the chapter makes any mention of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

## REVIEW: HOW DO WE EVALUATE IF AN ISSUE/PERSON/EVENT IS HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT?

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A common practice used by historians to evaluate information during research is the use of assessment criteria. A person, place or event is determined to be significant when it meets the selected criteria. Historians will use criteria such as the following:

1. **Short-term impact:** Does this issue have short-term impact?
2. **Enduring implications:** Does its impact endure for years and/or decades?
3. **Number of people affected:** Does it affect a few people or a large number of people?
4. **Local and national implications:** What are the local implications? National implications?
5. **International implications:** Does this issue have international implications?

## ACTIVITY

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1. In small groups (3-4 students per group), students will establish what makes an event historically significant, and determine what makes one event more significant than another.
2. Without using the classroom resource (textbook), each group will research key issues, people, places and events that involved Canada during the Second World War, and will generate a master list.
3. Each group will examine their classroom resource, and record the Second World War items considered significant by the resource on a large sheet of chart paper. Students can look at chapter headings and themes used in the resource.
4. Working with the master list they have generated, each group will apply its assessment criteria to determine the historical significance of each item they have listed. What are the top eight items?
5. Working with the list of items in the classroom resource, each group will apply its own assessment criteria to determine the historical significance of each item listed in the resource. What are the top eight items?

6. Each group will establish a prioritized list of items that includes the BCATP, and will record on chart paper the prioritized list, ranked from most significant to least significant. Each list will be posted on the wall for display and presentation purposes. Remember that only the top eight items will make it onto the list.
7. Each group will post its results and will presents its list of issues, people, places and events, and will justify its rankings.
8. Groups may also ask themselves some leading questions, such as whether or not their items fit into one category more than another. For example: battles, home front, individuals, technology, etc.



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