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The Robert McLaughlin Gallery



Canadian Identity : A New Perspective

Lesson Plan for Grade 4-6



A.Y. Jackson, *Untitled (Algoma)*; unknown date, oil on panel. Gift of Alexandra Luke, 1967.

What Is A Country's Identity?

A national identity refers to a consistent set of attitudes that establish one's identity as a citizen of their country.

- **Symbols**
- **Traditions**
- **Memories of National Experiences**
- **Achievements**
- **Cultural Traditions**
- **Morals/Values**
- **Beliefs**



5min

Break into small groups and select one of the categories below for each group to create a list based on the question below. Write the ideas down on a paper to share with the other groups.

What Defines Canadian _____?

CLIMATE

ANIMALS

CULTURE 

CLOTHING

FOOD

RECREATION

LAND USE

HOMES

TRANSPORTATION

10min

Discuss the answers as a class.

Is Identity Fixed Or Fluid?

5min

Take a look at your group's responses and determine which elements are static and which are subject to change over time. Identify and circle the aspects that you believe remain constant.

CLIMATE

ANIMALS

CULTURE

CLOTHING

FOOD

RECREATION

LAND USE

HOMES

TRANSPORTATION

10min

Let's talk about it as a group. What did we find out? Were most of the concepts fixed or fluid?

Consider These Questions.....

Do you feel Canadian?

**Do the stereotypes of Canadian National
Identity represent you?**

**Do you think National Identity is helpful or
not?**

**When you think of
Canadian Art, what do
you think of?**

Discuss.

Landscape Art

Consider the following questions:

- What clues do you see that could help identify the province?
- What observations lead you to believe it's in a certain province?
- How can you go about confirming the location?



Hortense Gordon, Belfountain, 1930, oil and charcoal on canvas. Gift of the heirs of the Hortense Gordon estate, 1970.

Kazuo Nakamura

Nakamura's abstract paintings are characterized by simple structures and colours, reflecting his fascination with nature, science, and mathematics. His works often feature patterns which he believed connected the worlds of science and art.



Kazuo Nakamura, Blue and Green, 1953, oil on masonite. Gift of Alexandra Luke, 1967.

What part of Canada's environment are you reminded of when looking at this painting?

Kazuo Nakamura

When you examine this artwork, which aspects of Canada's environment come to mind?

What details in the painting lead you to that conclusion?



Kazuo Nakamura, Lake, B. C., 1964, oil on canvas, Gift of Ron and Mary Tasker, 1991

Tim Jocelyn

Tim Jocelyn, a Canadian artist from the 1970s Toronto art scene, created wearable art, installations, banners, and collages.

He playfully combined Canadian animals with modern technology to explore national identity, as exemplified in this piece.

In what ways do colours impact the playfulness of an image?

What do you think is happening in this image?



Tim Jocelyn, Moose And Satellite Beaming, 1992 , coloured paper, Gift of Norman Garnet, 1999

What is this an image of?

Why did the artist choose this image?

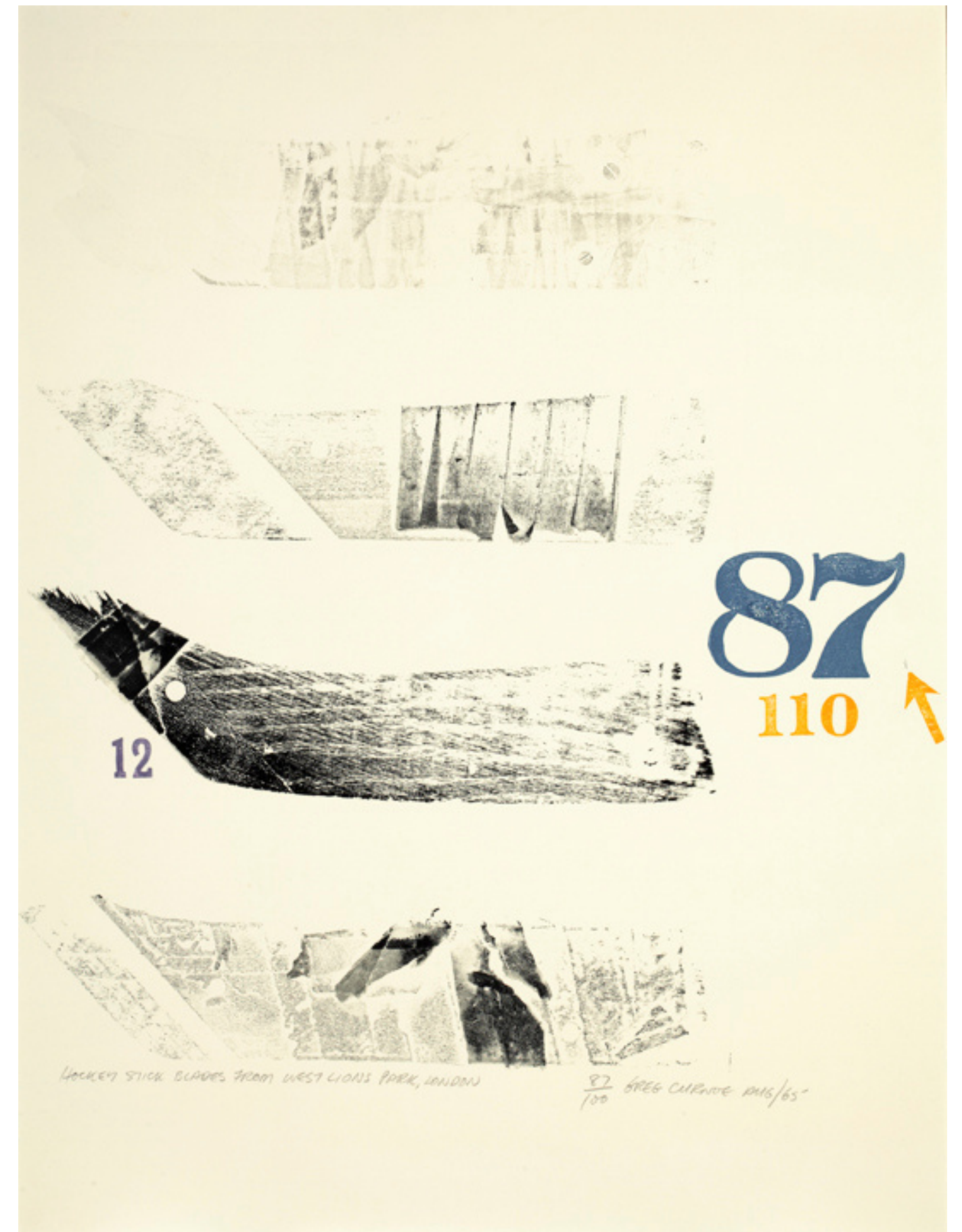
Do you support this image as a part of Canadian Identity?

Why or why not?

Engage your Class: Analyzing Canadian Identity with a Group Debate.

Get your students thinking and sharing their ideas on Canadian identity by splitting the class in half. Assign one group to discuss why the subject of the artwork represents Canadian identity, while the other group debates why it does not. Encourage everyone to share their observations and insights.

5min



Greg Curnoe, Hockey Stick Blades from West Lions Park, London, 1965, relief print, rubber stamp, Purchase, 1970

Giving The Canadian Identity a New Perspective

We plan to create a Canadian Identity collage that will include both fixed and fluid images from personal perspectives.

- Pencils
- White printer paper or drawing paper
- Markers of Coloured Pencils
- Laptop (for looking up images to draw or trace)
- Coloured Paper 8.5x11 for the background
- Gluesticks or PVA Glue
- Scissors

Planning Your Ideas

1

Think about stereotypical images of Canadian Identity (maple leaf, moose, maple syrup, hockey etc...). Make sure to choose images that are not culturally insensitive.

Pick 3 images

2

Think about some new images you that you feel could be added to Canadian identity that reflect your own experience. These could be based on foods, animals, clothing, recreation etc...

Pick 3-5 images.

Drawing Your Images

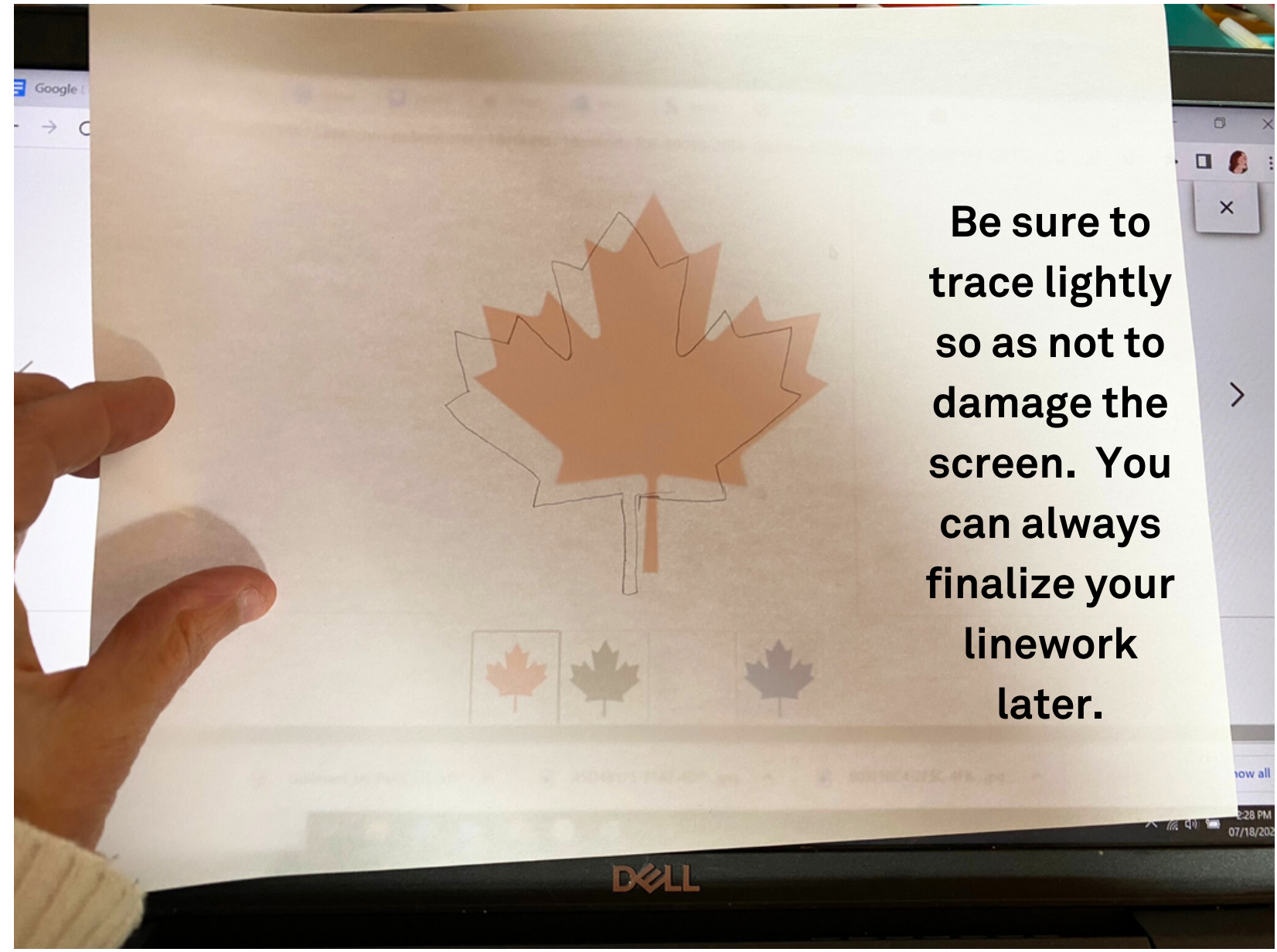
When searching for images try to add "icon", "drawing" or "graphic" to your image search to help find traceable images.
i.e. Search "Beaver icon" or "Beaver Graphic" or "Beaver drawing"

3

Start by looking up photos/drawings/icons of your chosen images online. Place your white paper on top of your laptop screen and use a pencil to lightly trace the image.

You can also draw freehand.

Don't make the images too complicated. Keep it simple.



Overlapping Images

4

To create a cohesive design, ensure that the images you trace overlap slightly with previously traced images.

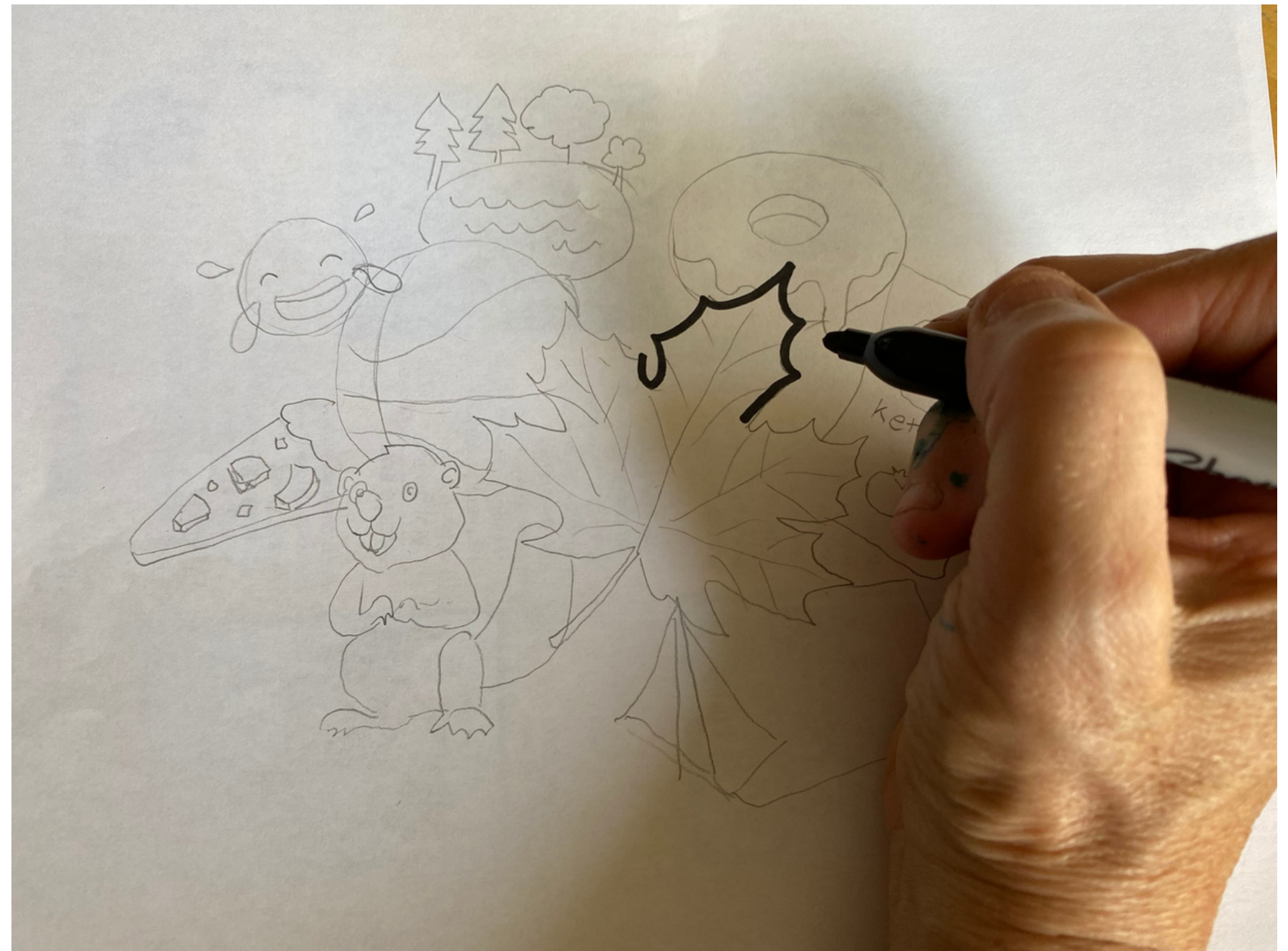


5

Outlining Images

Using a dark marker such as a sharpie, trace over all your drawings giving all images a nice clear outline.

Use an eraser to remove any extra pencil lines.



Colouring Your Images

6

Using coloured pencils/markers or paint, colour in your images.

Remember this is art, so you can be creative with your colour choices.



Cutting Out Your Collage

6

Using a pair of scissors cut around the entire drawing leaving a small white outline.

You can cut as tightly or as loosely around your images as you wish.



Leave a white border around your collage

Gluing Your Collage

7

Choose a paper colour you think best helps make your drawing stand out.

Using a gluestick or PVA glue, paste your collage down on a piece of coloured cardstock to construction paper.



Which background colour looks best?



FINISHED

You're Done!

8

Your artwork is now complete!

You have created a piece of artwork that shows your perspective on the Canadian identity.



Classroom Post-Activity Discussion

For those students who would like to share their artwork have them hang up their piece for others to see. Have them explain why they picked the images they did.



Land of lakes and trees.

We have a lot of funny comedians.

Hawaiian Pizza was invented in Canada inspired by pineapple imported from Hawaii.

More people can play basketball than hockey and basketball was also invented by a Canadian.

Donuts and Tims Hortons can be found everywhere!

Canadians have all kinds of weird potato chip flavours.

Lots of places to camp in Canada.

Additional Resources To Explore...



“National identity is made up”

From The New York Times

2018

Bibliography

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00131857.2018.1434076#:~:text=Therefore%2C%20national%20identity%20refers%20to,national%20sovereignty%2C%20and%20so%20on.>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_identity#:~:text=The%20collective%20elements%20of%20national,rooted%20in%20the%20nation's%20history.