



## Lesson plan: Heraldry in Canada

### Introduction

The governor general is the head of the Canadian Heraldic Authority, the body that exercises, on his behalf, The Queen's authority as it relates to creating and regulating heraldic emblems.

In this lesson, students accompany Xavier the Herald as he explores the history of coats of arms. They will apply what they learn about our modern-day, Canadian heraldry to create their own coat of arms, as a meaningful expression of personal identity.

### Links with curricula across Canada

This lesson is designed for history classes.

### Grade level

Lesson activities are designed for students in grades 4 to 7 / Grade 4 to Secondary I. They can be adapted for younger and older students, as well as for newcomers to Canada of all ages.

### Learning outcomes

After completing the activities, students will

1. Understand how and why societies use symbols to illustrate heritage and express the identity of individuals, institutions and countries;
2. Understand the use and role of coats of arms in the Middle Ages, and recognize what has changed and what survives today in Canadian society;
3. Know that personal coats of arms and official emblems are created and governed by the Canadian Heraldic Authority;
4. Be more aware of personal identity (origins, history, etc.), and will have expressed and shared it with their classmates; and
5. Have enhanced their abilities in the use of form and colour; public speaking; group work; creativity; listening; observing; language; applying historical knowledge and conducting research.

### Teacher's preparation

Please read the "Teacher's Guide" from *Heraldry in Canada: An Educational Package for Ages 9 to 13*, which can be downloaded from [gg.ca/eduzone](http://gg.ca/eduzone). There, you will find background information on heraldry, including its history, terminology, use and much more.

### **Other helpful resources**

Canadian Heraldic Authority: [www.gg.ca/heraldry](http://www.gg.ca/heraldry)

Canadian Heraldic Authority on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HeraldryHeraldique](https://www.facebook.com/HeraldryHeraldique)

Canadian Heritage (national symbols): [www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/ccem-cced/symbbl/index-eng.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/ccem-cced/symbbl/index-eng.cfm)

Royal Heraldry Society of Canada: [www.heraldry.ca](http://www.heraldry.ca)

### **What you'll need**

- Printouts of the “Student’s Guide,” which can be downloaded from [gg.ca/eduzone](http://gg.ca/eduzone)
- Printouts of activity sheets 1 through 6, which can be downloaded from [gg.ca/eduzone](http://gg.ca/eduzone)
- Blank and scrap paper
- Rulers and possibly large curve and circle templates
- Markers or crayons in black, red, yellow, deep blue, green and purple;
- Images of Canadian or local coats of arms, or those of former governors general

### **Step 1: Today's visual identifiers**

With the students, begin a discussion of today’s visual identifiers. Brainstorm a list of logos, symbols, Aboriginal emblems, trademarks, etc. What are their design characteristics? Who uses them and in what context? How do visuals differ from words or sounds as communication tools? Consider how the choice of communication tools depends on a society’s level of technology, particularly in different parts of the world and throughout history.

### **Step 2: The origins of heraldry**

Introduce the developments in medieval armour that necessitated the creation of heraldic emblems, and how these emblems came to be used in battle and in tournaments. Discuss how heraldic emblems acquired decorative and legal (e.g. seals) purposes; how heraldry expanded throughout society (e.g., for use by towns, guilds and universities); and how the work of heralds began as a profession devoted to identifying and designing emblems.

### **Step 3: “Xavier the Herald of Heroes”**

Hand out the “Student’s Guide” to read. Recap the rules of heraldry and good heraldic practices. Perhaps prepare some bad examples that go against the rules and compare them with examples that follow the rules. Which are more effective and why?

### **Step 4: A few examples of coats of arms**

Show examples of both historic and modern coats of arms, perhaps those of a local society or municipality, or of former governors general. In order to show how heraldry has evolved in Canada, choose one or two coats of arms with typically Canadian details (e.g., local fauna or flora, maple leaves, snowshoes, motifs from Aboriginal art). Trace the origins of the symbolism, personal themes, mottos, choices of animals, objects and colours used.



### **Step 5: Creating your own arms**

Have the students make their own personal coat of arms. Use the blank shield from activity sheet 1 or from page 24 of the *Educational Package*. The students should reflect on their own personalities, heritage and values. What would best symbolize what they would want others to know about them?

### **Step 6 (optional): Creating arms for a community**

Have groups of students work together to design coats of arms for their school, town or club. Emphasize that there is indeed an official process to grant arms. Students can visit the Heraldry section of our website at [gg.ca](http://gg.ca) to learn what is involved in applying for armorial bearings.

### **Step 7: Review and play**

Review the material using the games and exercises found on [gg.ca/eduzone](http://gg.ca/eduzone). The complete set of activities is available in the *Educational Package* on pages 25 to 32, and separately as activity sheets 2 to 6. Answer keys for the exercises are found in the *Educational Package* on pages 33 and 34.

The activities are:

2. Hidden Words;
3. Scrambled Words;
4. The Arms of Canada;
5. What Doesn't Belong?
6. Coloring Pages.

### **Your feedback is important**

Let us know what you think of this lesson plan. Please send us your comments, questions and suggestions at [eduzone@gg.ca](mailto:eduzone@gg.ca).

