




A Question of Sovereignty

Students will describe both federalist and sovereignist perspectives surrounding the Québec Referendum of 1995 and explore the advantages and disadvantages of Québec's sovereignty or independence from each perspective.

Instructional Support

A number of possible tasks are provided in this suggested activity. It is not intended that you work through all of the tasks, but rather select those tasks and resources that will best meet the learning needs of your students. The focus should be on ensuring that students have the background and support to be successful with the skills that are the focuses for assessment (describe federalist perspective, and describe sovereignist perspective).

Setting the Context for Learning

- Share with students an introduction to the Québec Referendum of 1995 by using the [CBC News Quebec Referendum 1995 video clip](#). Discuss with students the implications of the vote. What would it have meant for Canada if Québec voters had voted in favour of pursuing sovereignty or independence from Canada?
- Let students know that as they work through their inquiry over the next several classes, they will be working on the skills that they need in order to be successful with the [Summative Assessment Task: Nationalism and Self-determination](#) .
- Share the assessment task and the [assessment task rubric](#)  with students. Point out the different parts of the task, and let students know that they will be working on the various parts of the task as the classes proceed.
- The summative assessment task is structured to provide students with concrete examples of the idea of where a "nation within a nation" exists. In this case, the example is that of the Québécois movement for sovereignty. Depending on your classroom context and the interests of your students, the focus for the task could be changed to First Nations self-determination or other contemporary examples.
- The language of the summative assessment task rubric is clarified through the formative assessment opportunities provided for each suggested activity. The boldfaced descriptive words in the rubric are also clarified in the [Summative Assessment Task Rubric Glossary](#) .

Describe Federalist and Sovereignist Perspectives

- Provide students with context for the Québec Referendum of 1995. Ask students to consider what the implications of national self-determination of the Québécois would be for Canada as a nation, as well as for Québec.
- Discussion of the Québec Referendum needs to be facilitated to avoid polarizing students into two camps: sovereignists and federalists. Any debate surrounding sovereignty and self-determination is nuanced and complex, based on the variety of experiences and perspectives of the people involved.
- Encourage students to revisit the lists that they developed on the qualities of nationalism and ultranationalism. Have students apply these qualities to an example of the pursuit of a nation within a nation (e.g., First Nations, Métis or Inuit self-

government, or Western alienation/sovereignty movements) to determine whether the pursuit of self-determination is nationalism.

- Point out to students that although the summative assessment task rubric separates the focuses for assessment into "describe federalist perspective" and "describe sovereignist perspective," students are essentially using the same skill for both. The individual lines on the rubric acknowledge, however, that although a student may do an excellent job of describing the sovereignist perspective, his or her description of the federalist perspective may not be so strong (or vice versa). The use of two distinct focuses for assessment allows you and students to note areas of varied achievement.
- As students begin working on the first part of the summative assessment task, describe federalist perspective and describe sovereignist perspective, model the process of describing a perspective using the bulleted prompts from the task. For example, First Nations, Métis or Inuit self-government could be used to model understandings, depending upon community context.
- Ensure that students understand that they need not only to identify the perspectives but also to describe the reasoning behind the perspectives through the perceived advantages and disadvantages.
- Discuss with students the importance of recognizing the sources of their information. In this instance, the events of the referendum do not change, but people's interpretation of the events and rationale change according to perspective and bias.
- Remind students that there may not be advantages and disadvantages for both sides of the issue. In addition, caution students that the advantages and disadvantages are not necessarily the opposite of each other. For example, the sovereignist advantage of preserving Québécois culture is not a disadvantage to the federalist perspective.

Formative Assessment

Throughout this suggested activity, you will support students in achieving the following skills that are the focuses for assessment:

- [describe federalist perspective](#)
- [describe sovereignist perspective](#)

The following formative assessment opportunities are provided to help students unpack and develop the focus skills for assessment. Feedback prompts are also provided to help students enhance their demonstration of the focus skills for this activity. Formative assessment support is not intended to generate a grade or score.




Formative Assessment: Assessment for Learning Opportunities

Describe Federalist Perspective and Describe Sovereignist Perspective



Engage students in *self-reflections* to examine the pertinence of their descriptions of the two distinct perspectives. Use the feedback prompts below to provide structure in guiding students through these formative assessment opportunities.

Feedback Prompts:

- Did I ...
 - focus the description by providing details and information about the federalist perspective?
 - include a description of reasonable advantages of separation from the federalist perspective?
 - include a description of reasonable disadvantages of separation from the federalist perspective?
 - consider how this specific perspective will determine whether something is seen as an advantage or a disadvantage?
- Did I ...
 - focus the description by providing details and information about the sovereignist perspective?
 - include a description of reasonable advantages of separation from the sovereignist perspective?
 - include a description of reasonable disadvantages of separation from the sovereignist perspective?
 - consider how this specific perspective will determine whether something is seen as an advantage or a disadvantage?

These feedback prompts have been incorporated into the [Describe Federalist Perspective: Student Self-reflection Tool](#)  and the [Describe Sovereignist Perspective: Student Self-reflection Tool](#) , which can be copied or adapted for student use. Samples of tools created for similar skills within different formative assessment contexts may be found in the [Social Studies 20-4 Formative Assessment Summary](#) .

Linking to the Summative Assessment Task

- As students describe the federalist and sovereignist perspectives through the suggested activity A Question of Sovereignty, they will have completed the first and second parts of the [Summative Assessment Task: Nationalism and Self-determination](#) .
- Students should consult the assessment task and the [assessment task rubric](#)  to ensure that they have provided the information required.
- Encourage students to use the feedback received during the formative assessment opportunities to make enhancements to their work in progress.
- If necessary, continue to use the feedback prompts from the formative assessment opportunities to coach students toward completion of a quality product.

Suggested Supporting Resources

Textbook References

Student Basic Resource—McGraw-Hill Ryerson, *Understanding Nationalism*:

- Page 189 Québec and National Self-Determination
- Pages 343–344 Québec Sovereignty and National Unity
- Pages 185–190 What Are Some Effects on Canada of Pursuing National Self-Determination?

- Pages 333–351 Should Canadian Unity Be Promoted?
- Pages 114–115 National Interest and Arctic Sovereignty
- Page 128 Activity 2

Teaching Resource—McGraw-Hill Ryerson, *Understanding Nationalism*:

- Reproducible 2.5.6 Survey on Arctic Sovereignty
- Reproducible 2.5.7 In the National Interest
- Reproducible 2.5.9 Canada's National Interests
- Reproducible 2.8.4 Positive and Negative Consequences of the Pursuit of Self-Determination
- Reproducible 2.8.5 Pursuit of National Self-Determination in Canada
- Reproducible 2.8.6 Unintended Consequences of the Pursuit of Self-Determination
- Reproducible 4.15.4 How Some Aspects of the Federal System Affect National Unity
- Reproducible 4.15.5 Challenges to National Unity


Web Resources

Web Links for Online Sources:

1995 Québec Referendum

- CBC Digital Archives: [Separation Anxiety: The 1995 Quebec Referendum](#) (radio and television clips)
- Québec separatist movement:
 - CBC Digital Archives: [The October Crisis: Civil Liberties Suspended](#) (radio and television clips)
 - www.Vigile.net website—article: [Quebec Separatism Dims as Harper Spending Quells Urge to Leave](#) (2008, contemporary perspectives)

Other Examples of Sovereignty in Canada

- Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada website—resource: [Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy: Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada's Northern Strategy Abroad](#) 
- CBC News in Review: [Defending Our Sovereignty in the Arctic](#)
- North American Aerospace Defense Command website—section: [About NORAD](#)
- CBC Digital Archives: [War & Conflict: Defence](#) (radio and television clips)
 - [One for All: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#)
 - [NORAD: Watching the Skies](#)
 - [NATO Celebrates 50 Years](#)
- CBC Digital Archives: [Lest We Forget: Remembrance Day](#) (radio and television clips)

Videos:

- YouTube.com website:
 - [CBC News Quebec Referendum 1995](#)
 - [Quebec Referendum Night News](#)
- LearnAlberta.ca: [The Crowfoot Dynasty \(Series: Generations\)](#)

Distributed Learning/Tools4Teachers Resources:

- LearnAlberta.ca: [Social Studies 20-2 Module 3: Contemporary National Interests](#)

Critical Challenges:

- LearnAlberta.ca: [A Charter of National Duties](#)