

WHAT IS A HERO?



GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Remember the 5WHs: Who, What, When, Where, How and Why.

Fill out the chart below and indicate the following in your answers:

- What characteristics make this person a hero? For example, what ideals were they committed to and why?
- Did they have a vision for a better world? What was this vision?

Who is involved?	What happened?	When did it take place?
Title of Article(s):		
Why did it happen?	How did it happen?	Where did it take place?

CHOOSE YOUR VOICE

Sample Template

You may want to print copies of this for student use.

1	Describe a situation in which there was/is an injustice	
2	The voice of the hero	
3	Consequences	
4	The bystander's explanation	
5	Consequences	

REAL-WORLD HERO: VIOLA DESMOND

1914-1965

“With this pardon, we are acknowledging the wrongdoing of the past.”

Percy Paris, Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs and Economic and Rural Development

Nine years before Rosa Parks sat at the front of the bus, sparking the American civil rights movement, Canadian Viola Desmond took a seat of her own in defiance of racial discrimination. In 1946, while waiting for her car to be repaired Desmond decided to see a movie at a theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. She wished to sit where she could see the screen better, even though the section was for whites-only. Violently taken away and incarcerated for her inability to abide by the theatre's racist rules, Desmond's case is one of the most publicized racial discrimination cases in Canadian History.

Viola Desmond was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia to bi-racial parents – her father was Black and her mother was White (not common at that time). From an early age, Desmond was the kind of person who wouldn't back down in the face of adversity. Noticing the absence of professional hair and skin products for Black women, she chose to address that need. Being of African descent, Desmond was not allowed to become a beautician in Halifax. With determination, she traveled to Montreal, Atlantic City and New York to receive her beautician training. Once her training was complete, Desmond returned to Halifax to open her own beauty salon.

Acknowledging equal rights, Desmond set up the *Desmond School of Beauty Culture* so that local Black women would not have to travel so far to receive proper training. The school created beauticians, and offered a model for business women to follow. Year after year, women restricted from whites-only training schools could attend Desmond's school. They returned to their communities to open their own businesses and employ Black women to work with them. Desmond's entrepreneurial spirit had her starting her own line of beauty products for Black women – *Vi's Beauty Products*, which she marketed and sold herself.

Viola joined her husband, Jack Desmond, in a combined barbershop and hairdressing salon. On the fateful day in 1946 when Desmond attempted to sit in the whites-only section of the New Glasgow theatre, she didn't know that she would become a Canadian hero. When buying a ticket for a better seat on the

main floor, she was informed that it was against policy to give that kind of ticket to a Black person. When Desmond 'sat' in defiance, she was forcibly removed from the theatre and arrested, incurring physical injuries. She was kept in jail overnight and never told about her right to legal advice, a lawyer, or bail. Desmond sat upright all night on the hard jail bench, bruised and angry, a fierce sight in elbow-length white gloves.



As if the racial injustice and physical assault weren't enough, Viola Desmond was also charged with tax evasion for failing to pay the one-cent difference in tax between the cheaper balcony and the slightly more expensive main floor seat. Desmond felt the injustice building when fined \$20 (\$273 in 2016) over a single penny due. Civil rights forces with the newly formed Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People supported Desmond's actions and fought alongside her for her rights. When she lost, they paid her fine.

Desmond filed a damage suit against the theatre's management but lost the appeal. Viola Desmond valiantly fought for what she believed in. Her actions eventually did affect change when Nova Scotia dismantled its segregation laws in 1954. All the same, Viola Desmond died in 1965 without being publicly acknowledged for the stand she took against hurtful racism and a discriminatory judicial system.

Discrimination against Blacks in Canada continued in the 1950s, despite legislation prohibiting it. For example, Blacks were still being refused service in some restaurants. The signing of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 didn't put a stop to the unfair treatment of Blacks and other minorities. Newspapers reporting incidents of discrimination helped expose racism while supporting equality for all Canadians.

In 2010, Viola Desmond was the first person to be granted a posthumous pardon in Canada. The government of Nova Scotia apologized for prosecuting Desmond for tax evasion and said she had rightfully resisted racial discrimination. At the event, Mayann Francis, the first African Nova Scotian Lieutenant Governor, signed Desmond's free pardon into law. Francis stated, "Here I am, 64 years later - a Black woman giving freedom to another Black woman." She called Desmond's case a miscarriage of justice and said she should never have been charged. "I believe she has to know that she is now free." A Heritage Minute was then created in Viola Desmond's honour.

The Bank of Canada announced in 2016 that Desmond would be the first Canadian woman to be featured on the front of the \$10 banknote issued in 2018. At the ceremony in Gatineau, Quebec on December 8th, 2016, Viola Desmond's sister, Wanda Robson, expressed how extremely proud and honoured her family was.

Viola Desmond did not intend to be an activist or to join any movement. But, when faced with discrimination, she knew that she simply *had* to stand up and fight for what she knew was right.

REAL-WORLD HERO: OSKAR SCHINDLER

1908–1974

“I am the conscience of all those who knew something – but did nothing.”

Oskar Schindler was an unlikely hero. In the years before World War II he was an agent of German military intelligence. He became a member of the Nazi party who profited from slave labour and stolen property.

Schindler went to Poland after the German invasion in 1939 and soon became involved in many illegal activities, making friends with the Nazi military and secret police. These connections enabled him to buy a factory. He used the cheapest labour available – local Jews. As the war progressed, Schindler prospered, but something else was growing inside him – a strong awareness of the escalating brutality of the Holocaust. Schindler’s mission became to protect his 1,300 Jewish workers.

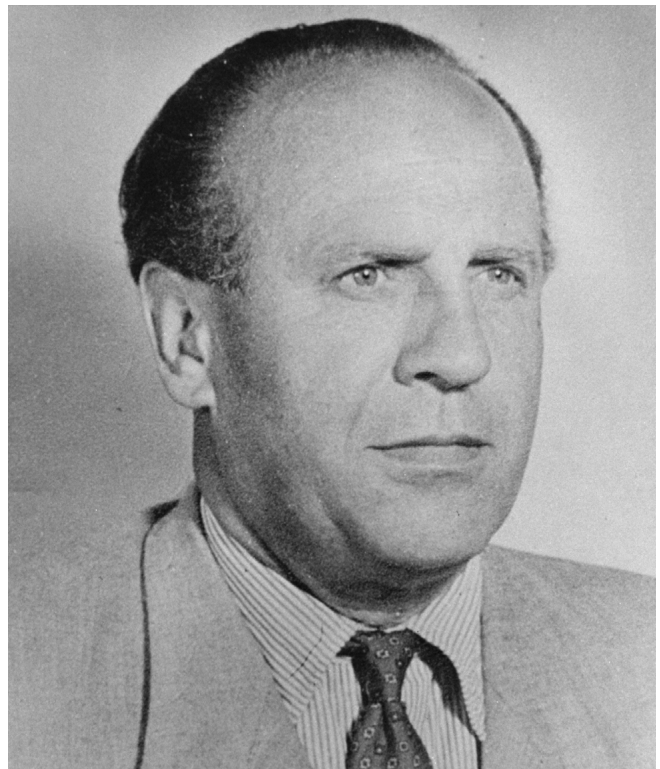
Schindler continued to hire more Jewish workers, designating their skills as “essential”. Without this designation, a Jew could be deported to a concentration camp or a death camp. At that time, a job in a factory was often all that separated a Jew from death. Schindler bribed the Nazis to persuade them to ignore what he was doing, fed his Jewish workers and treated them fairly. His factory became a place of safety from the Nazi hatred, brutality and murder.

By the fall of 1944, the Russian army approached and Germany’s grip on Poland weakened. The Nazis scrambled to finish murdering the Jews. After the ghetto in Krakow, Poland was destroyed, many Jews were sent to nearby Plaszow. Schindler came up with a new plan to protect the Jewish workers he called his children.

He used his influence to establish a branch of the Plaszow concentration camp in his factory compound, and used a list of 900 Jewish workers to set up the operation. The factory functioned for a year, deliberately making defective bullets for German guns. Schindler’s greatest accomplishment may be that he protected and fed his Jewish workers in the center of Nazi territory.

Today, there are more than 7,000 descendants of “Schindlerjuden” (Schindler Jews) living in the United States, Europe and Israel.

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Jerusalem, has honoured more than 20,000 men and women of conscience, including Schindler, who risked their personal safety to help Jews during the Nazi period. In some cases they helped friends. In other cases they helped complete strangers. In all cases, they chose to act when it would have been safer to do nothing.



REAL-WORLD HERO: MADELEINE PARENT

1918–2012

“I simply could not accept that.”

As a young girl at boarding school, Madeleine Parent first noticed the large gap between the working class in Canada and the wealthy or elite. She found herself unable to accept the worlds that separated the school's servants and the young female students like her. This difference between the working class and the elite would become the focal point of her life. A dedicated union activist, Parent addressed the plight of women and the working class in Quebec, battling against many forms of social injustice and inequality.

One of her most celebrated efforts was also the one in which she discovered that the unions themselves had little interest in helping women workers. It was 1942, and Parent headed the unionization movement for the Dominion Textiles plants in Montreal and Valleyfield, Quebec. Throughout the movement, Parent faced great personal strife and adversity but she stuck to her beliefs. Even when she caught the attention of the powerful premier of Quebec, Maurice Duplessis, and was convicted of conspiracy, Parent heroically fought on.

The union landscape began to shift in the 1950s. Madeleine Parent became one of the founding members of the Canadian Council of Unions (CCU), an organization dedicated to strengthening local union movements and ending the practice of Canadian workers paying their dues to American unions. The goal of the CCU was to help Canadian workers improve their own conditions and benefits. Through Parent's tireless efforts, the percentage of union workers in Canada contributing to American unions decreased.

Although she retired from union activism in 1983, Madeleine Parent maintained her steadfast commitment to the cause of social justice, serving on the *National Action Committee on the Status of Women* for eight years, committees for the defence of the rights of Aboriginal women and the *Women's March Against Poverty (Federation des femmes du Quebec)*.

Madeleine Parent sought to make a real difference in Canadian society and to better balance the distribution of wealth and resources. She will be remembered for her courage, resolve and ability to change the lives of people who had no voice, by teaching them to stand up for social equality and justice. It's also important, when considering the life of Madeleine Parent, to remember that the first step on the path she chose was putting her foot down as a young schoolgirl and saying, “I simply could not accept that.”



REAL-WORLD HERO: ANTONINE MAILLET

b.1929

“Acadia needs to say what it is, that it belongs to the world Francophonie and, accordingly, it has a place in the world, and this place is unique, like that of every people in the world.”

Writers know what it means to *choose your voice*. It's what they do every time they tell a story in the pages of a book. But Antonine Maillet created something remarkable through her storytelling; she took the spark and spirit of her French Canadian community and lit it up for all the world to see. In doing so, she brought the people outside in, and gave the people of Acadia a proud and recognizable face in the rest of Canada.

Maillet's volume of writing draws from her Acadian roots, inspired by the history, traditions, language and culture of the region. Passionately preoccupied with the land of her birth, Maillet became the voice of Acadia and, in that voice, audiences worldwide heard wisdom and humour, anger and energy, clarity and strength. In sharing her own stories for all of us to enjoy, Antonine Maillet made Acadia a place that all Canadians could imagine and honor. And her literary recognition as a gifted novelist led a growing cultural revival in Acadia.

To her initial surprise, when she began putting her ideas down on paper, readers and theatregoers were ready to listen. This appreciation translated into an array of awards for Maillet: the *Prix Champlain* for *Pointe-aux-Coques* in 1958; the *Governor General's Award* in 1972 for *Don L'Original*; the *Prix Quebec-Paris* and the *Prix des Volcans* (France) for

Mariaagelas (1975). In 1979, Maillet was awarded the *Prix Goncourt* for *Pelagie-la-Charrette*, making her the very first writer living outside France to receive this prestigious honour.

In addition to her internationally acclaimed writing success, Maillet has also been a teacher of literature, a scriptwriter and a broadcaster for Radio-Canada in Moncton (CBC). Spending as much time as possible in her beloved homeland, until late in life Antonine Maillet remained an advocate for Acadia, committed to its ongoing growth and development. As a writer, she reminds us that heroes are everyday people who help us imagine possibilities, empathize with others, explore alternatives, and share unique discoveries by telling stories.



REAL-WORLD HERO: NAOMI SEGAL-BRONSTEIN

1946–2010

“Every child has a right to live their life.”

She’s been called another Mother Theresa, a crusader for children who devoted her life to improving conditions for kids from Cambodia to Vietnam to Guatemala. Montreal-born activist Naomi Segal-Bronstein has been credited with saving the lives of more than 30,000 children worldwide and establishing medical clinics, charities and orphanages to give children in need the kinds of basic opportunities in life that we take for granted in Canada.

Segal-Bronstein’s passion for helping children took hold in the late 1960s, during the final days of the Vietnam War. She was deeply affected by news stories about Amerasian children who were abandoned by the US soldiers who fathered and rejected them in their native South Vietnam because of their mixed race heritage. Her first attempt to have these orphaned babies flown out of the country ended in tragedy, when a plane carrying dozens of them crashed over the South China Sea.

While the incident devastated Segal-Bronstein, it also left her more determined than ever. She immediately arranged for a second flight the following day, which she boarded alongside the children. In her own words, she realized that, “If you’re not strong to do this, then because of your weakness at that time, the kids would never get out.” With this act of courage and selflessness, Naomi Segal-Bronstein became a champion for children’s rights all over the world.

As Vietnam smoldered and Cambodia exploded in the 1970s, Segal-Bronstein continued to rescue orphaned and abandoned children through her organization, Families for Children. At considerable risk to her personal safety, she arranged for hundreds of children to be airlifted to the safety of adoptive homes in Canada and the United States.

In 1976, Segal-Bronstein and her family moved to Guatemala, where she established *Casa Canada*, a medical clinic and orphanage. Three years later, she founded *Healing the Children*, a program designed to bring seriously ill children to North America for medical treatment. Although she returned to Canada in 1989, *Healing the Children* had continued to grow, expanding into over 33 countries from around the world.

Back in Canada, Segal-Bronstein showed no signs of slowing down. She went on to establish *Canada House* in Cambodia as well as *Canada Cares Children’s International Foundation*, a charity that aids victims of hurricanes, land mines and other kinds of disasters. Before she passed away in 2010, Segal-Bronstein developed a campaign to convert old North American school buses into mobile medical clinics for Guatemala.

Through it all, this hero’s motivation has been fuelled by the one simple belief that “Every child has a right to live their life.” Thanks to her tireless efforts, thousands of children did.



REAL-WORLD HERO: LINCOLN ALEXANDER

1922–2012

“Eliminating discrimination is among the most important tasks facing society.”

Lincoln Alexander had a distinguished career as a lawyer, Member of Parliament and public servant in Ontario. He was the 24th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and the first member of a visible minority to serve in this post. Throughout his career, Alexander demonstrated outstanding leadership in eliminating racial discrimination and championing multiculturalism.

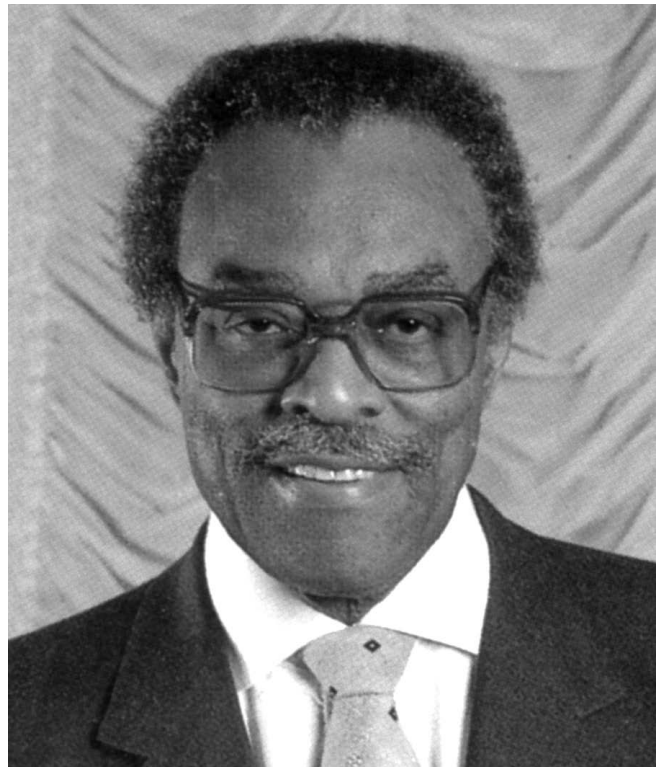
Born in Toronto in 1922 to West Indian immigrants, Lincoln Alexander served in the Royal Canadian Air Force at a time when the RCAF still had a formal policy of discrimination that prevented non-whites from joining that service. He attended Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto and, in 1965, he was appointed Queen’s Counsel. Three years later, he became the first black Member of Parliament in the House of Commons.

In 1979, Alexander became the Minister of Labour in Prime Minister Joe Clark’s Conservative government. He was the first black Member of Parliament to be appointed to the Federal Cabinet. He left elected office in 1980 to chair the Ontario Workers’ Compensation Board. When he became Lieutenant Governor of Ontario – and official representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II – in 1985, Lincoln Alexander made education and youth-related issues his top priorities.

After his term as Lieutenant Governor, Alexander became Chancellor of the University of Guelph. In 1992, he became a Companion of the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario. In 1996, he was named Chair of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Alexander received a number of awards throughout his career. They include the St. Ursula Award in 1969 and the Ethnic Press Council of Canada Man of the Year Award in 1982. In 1989, he won the Outstanding Citizen Award and Mel Osborne Fellow award from the Kiwanis Foundation as well as being the first recipient of the Canadian Unity Award. In 1992, he was granted the Canada 125 Medal.

Lincoln Alexander always fought to eliminate racial discrimination, and tried to encourage young people to find their own ways to do the same. An award has been established in his name to recognize young people aged 16 to 25 who have demonstrated leadership in this area.



REAL-WORLD HERO: NELLIE McCLUNG

1873–1951

“For generations, women have been thinking, and thought without expression is dynamic and gathers volume by repression; evolution when blocked and suppressed becomes revolution.”

Born near Owen Sound, Ontario, Nellie Mooney journeyed west with her family when she was a child and grew up in Brandon, Manitoba. She studied to be a teacher and taught in local rural schools before marrying Robert Wesley McClung, her lifelong friend and supporter. A devout Christian, Nellie McClung’s strong faith gave root to her deep belief in social justice. She was a lifetime member of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, which was especially concerned with the social and health problems caused by alcohol and fought many other social problems facing women and children.

A writer of novels and essays, McClung was one of the leaders of the women’s rights movement in the Canadian west. After moving to Winnipeg in 1911, she joined the Winnipeg Political Equality League, a group committed to helping the city’s female wage earners. She led Manitoba Premier Rodmond Roblin through the city’s sweatshops to demonstrate the appalling working conditions many women faced.

“Women are going to form a chain, a greater sisterhood than the world has ever known.”

McClung led the fight to allow Manitoba women to vote. When Roblin suggested “nice” women didn’t want the vote, McClung replied, “By nice women ...you probably mean selfish women who have no more thought for the underprivileged, overworked women than a pussycat in a sunny window for the starving kitten in the street. Now in that sense, I am not a nice woman for I do care.” McClung and other women seeking the vote worked to defeat Roblin’s government, and in 1916, the new Liberal government granted the vote to the women of Manitoba.

In 1927, McClung joined four other Edmonton women and became involved in “The Person’s Case.” The British North America Act, passed by the British Parliament in 1867 to create the Canadian Confederation, stated that one must be a “person” to serve in the Senate. In 1928, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the original BNA Act definition of “person” did not include women. McClung and her associates, “The Famous Five,” appealed the decision. In 1929 the courts ruled that Canadian women were indeed persons under the law and could be appointed to the Senate.

Nellie McClung’s actions significantly advanced the position of women in Canadian politics. Today, women serve in the House of Commons and the Senate, as well as in provincial and municipal governments across the country.



REAL-WORLD HERO: BROMLEY ARMSTRONG

1926–2018

“This is our Canada with people of every complexion... enjoying each other’s company.”

Bromley Armstrong arrived in Canada from Jamaica in 1947. He planned to remain only long enough to complete his studies. Instead, he chose to stay in Canada, making Toronto his home. Armstrong has spent his life fighting intolerance and discrimination and speaking up for disadvantaged people in their search for equal rights and justice in Canada.

Armstrong played an important role in changing Canadian immigration laws. Today, Canada has a reputation for being open and welcoming to immigration from every corner of the globe, but this was not always the case. When Armstrong arrived in 1947, discrimination was practiced in many different ways. At the factory where he worked, less than one half of one percent of the workforce was black.

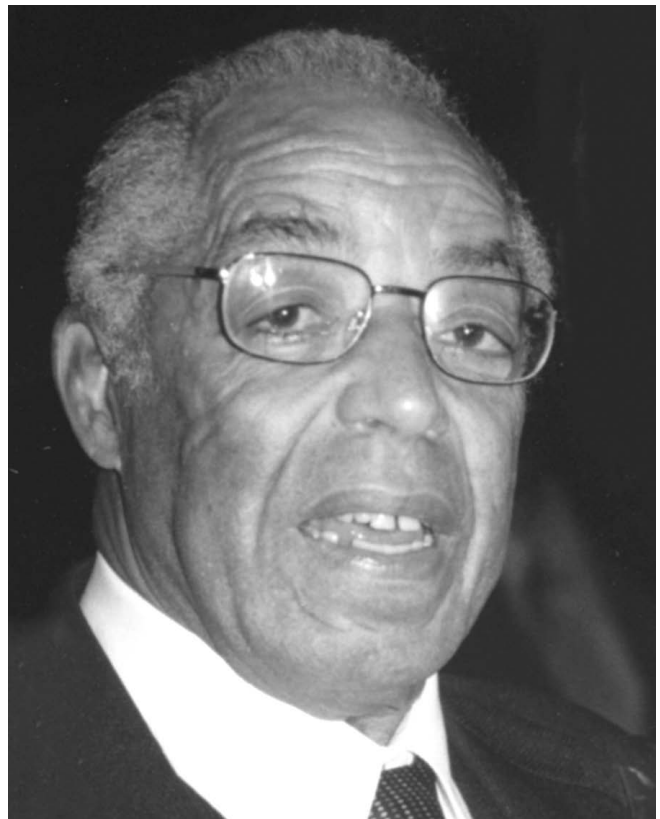
Armstrong soon became involved in the Union movement at his factory – the first step in his involvement in human rights issues. In 1954, he and more than two dozen others led a “March on Ottawa,” demanding that Canada’s racist immigration laws be revised. He was also known as a champion for the rights of “displaced persons” – immigrants from Eastern Europe who were not welcome in their countries of origin following World War II, and who experienced severe discrimination in Canada.

Armstrong was an outspoken champion of fairness. Through his efforts, the laws of Ontario, which had permitted restaurants and other places of business to refuse to serve customers because of the colour of their skin, were challenged in court and eventually thrown out.

In honour of his work, the Government of Jamaica recognized Bromley Armstrong in 1988 with the Order of Distinction, Officer. The Government of Ontario gave him the Order of Ontario in 1992 for his work in human rights.

Armstrong received the Order of Canada in 1994 for his contribution to human rights and labour. In 1998, he received the annual Baha’i National Race Unity Award for his pioneering fight against racism.

Until late in life, Bromley Armstrong remained active as a human rights champion, and an example to all Canadians that commitment and perseverance can lead to positive change.



REAL-WORLD HERO: JEAN LUMB

1919–2002

“Through education, through the strength of family unity, through respect for one another, we, the Chinese Canadians, have inherited a broad and firm foundation as good responsible citizens. I am proud, I am very happy, to be a Canadian.”

An activist and leader in Canada’s Chinese community, Jean Lumb was a pioneer in the struggle for equal rights for the Chinese in Canada.

Jean was born in Nanaimo, British Columbia in 1919 during a time when the Chinese community in Canada endured much discrimination. Chinese people were not allowed to vote, they were paid lower wages and they were barred access to professions in law, medicine and education. Chinese children could not attend the same schools as white children. Like the Japanese and Native communities, they had to attend segregated schools.

Family values and relationships were central to Jean’s life from a very early age. When she was just 12 years old, Jean had to leave school to help her parents support her 11 siblings. This sacrifice enabled her older brother Robert to eventually go to university and become an aeronautical engineer.

At the age of 16, Jean moved to Toronto to work in her older sister’s fruit store. In those days it was hard for Chinese to find work, so they opened restaurants, laundries and grocery stores. Though she had very little formal education, Jean was very hard-working and by the time she was 17, she opened up her own business – a fruit store in Chinatown.

In 1939 at the age of 20, Jean married Doyle Lumb. At her insistence, they were the very first Chinese couple in Toronto to be married at a church. Sadly, when the couple got married Jean lost her citizenship because Doyle was not yet a Canadian citizen.

In those days, Chinese women who married Chinese nationals had their citizenship revoked. This was due to Canada’s immigration laws. From 1923 until 1947, the Exclusion Act prevented Chinese from coming to Canada. Following World War II, other discriminatory laws resulted in keeping families in China and Canada apart.

The laws didn’t change until 1957, when Jean joined a delegation of other Chinese Canadians and met with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. The only woman in the group,

Jean played an important role in ensuring the meeting was successful and the laws were changed. Finally, Chinese families who had endured separation for so long could be reunited with their loved ones in Canada.

After the laws were changed, Jean regained her citizenship and continued her fight to end discrimination in Canada. Jean was the first Chinese Canadian woman and the first restauranteur to receive the Order of Canada for her tireless community work. And, in an amazing turn of life events, Jean served as a citizenship court judge from 1994-2000.

Most notably, Jean is recognized for her pivotal role in changing Canada’s immigration laws and for her outstanding contribution in saving Chinatowns in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. Today, thanks in part to her lifelong commitment to human rights, Canada has a thriving Chinese community that has made many significant contributions to Canadian society.



REAL-WORLD HERO: SEMPO SUGIHARA

1900–1986

“I cannot allow these people to die, people who had come to me for help with death staring them in the eyes. Whatever punishment may be imposed upon me, I know I should follow my conscience.”

Just before the beginning of World War II, in March 1939, Japanese diplomat Sempo Sugihara was sent to Kaunas, Lithuania to open an office to represent the Japanese government there. The temporary capital of Lithuania, Kaunas was strategically set between Germany and the Soviet Union, in Northeastern Europe. By September of that year, Germany’s National Socialist (Nazi) government led by Adolf Hitler had invaded Poland, and Britain and France had declared war on Germany. Fearing for their lives under the Nazis, who had enacted a series of laws to terrorize the Jews of Germany, a wave of Jewish refugees fled to Lithuania in search of safety.

Escape from the Nazi-controlled areas of Europe was almost impossible for Jews, and the Soviet Union would not permit them to enter unless they could demonstrate that their intention was not to stay, but only to pass through the country on their way to a final destination. Two countries remained options for the Jews of Kaunas: Curacao and Dutch Guiana. Jews were allowed to enter, but they needed transit visas – the vital documents that would allow them to travel through the Soviet Union. Suddenly, the hopes of survival for thousands of Jews rested on the shoulders of Sempo Sugihara.

When the Japanese government denied Sugihara’s request on behalf of the refugees three times, he literally took matters into his own hands. With the unflagging help of his wife Yukiko, Sugihara wrote and signed thousands of visas by hand. In fact, when he was finally forced to close the diplomatic office and leave Lithuania, he continued to issue visas from his window seat on the train until the very last possible moment. As he departed, he gave the official visa stamp to one of the refugees, so he could carry on the Jewish rescue effort.

Although it ultimately cost him his diplomatic service career, Sugihara’s selfless actions saved the lives of more than 6,000 Jews – the second largest number of Jews rescued from the Nazis by a single person.



REAL-WORLD HERO: MAURICE “THE ROCKET” RICHARD

1921–2000

“He’s the wind on skates... he’s all of Quebec on its feet... he’s life in action.”

Felix Leclerc

“The Rocket” is a famous name across Quebec. Symbolizing courage, strength and greatness in hockey, Maurice “The Rocket” Richard has been a true hero for Quebecers since the 1940s. There is no doubt that Richard was a role model for francophone Quebecers at a time when the face of Montreal was English and francophones were mostly shut out of the business world. The Rocket exemplified excellence on and off the ice, as well as the determination to succeed. In short, he was Quebec’s hero.

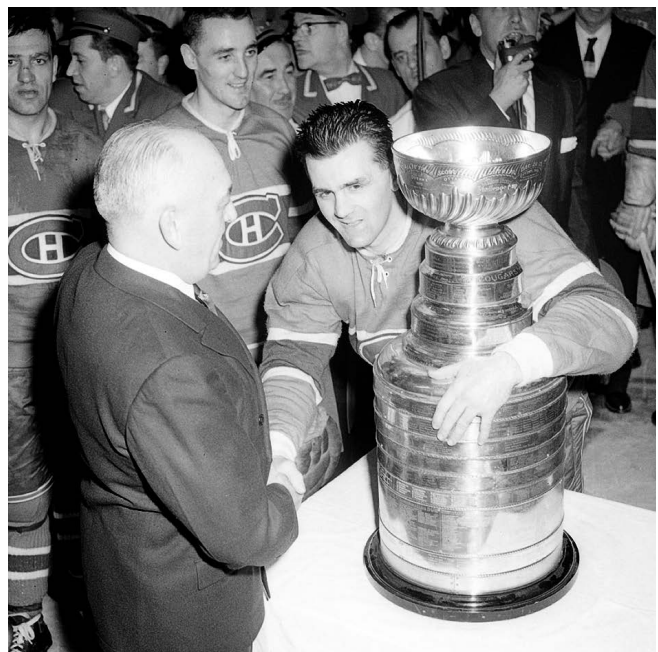
When he started playing hockey as a little boy, his dream was clear; Maurice Richard wanted to play for the Montreal Canadiens. Often plagued by serious injuries, Maurice Richard had to fight hard to make his dream come true. Nothing – not even pain from numerous injuries – could stop him from realizing his dream.

Drafted by the Montreal Canadiens in 1942, Maurice Richard was to become a hockey legend. Just look at these statistics: 8 Stanley Cups; first player to score 50 goals in 50 games; named to the All Stars 14 times; scored 626 goals and 465 assists in 1,111 games. Maurice Richard remains among the top ten scorers in the National Hockey League (NHL).

At the Montreal Forum on March 17, 1955, Clarence Campbell, president of the NHL, suspended the Rocket for the remainder of the season and the playoffs. It was a move that cost Richard the scoring title and the Canadiens the Stanley Cup. To a frustrated French-Canadian community, the suspension was a move that reeked of injustice and would spark a seven-hour riot that stretched for five kilometers along St-Catherine Street in downtown Montreal. Richard appealed for calm the next day on Montreal airwaves, and his fans listened. However, the event will forever be remembered as the Rocket Richard Riot.

Evidence of Richard’s hero status has been proven numerous times since his retirement. He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame (1961), made an Officer of the Ordre National de Québec (1985) and an Officer of the Order of Canada (1967). The City of Montreal held a state funeral when Richard died in 2000, when then Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien said, “He has been a star for generations, he was a model, he established standards that can never be met.”

Maurice “The Rocket” Richard is much more than a hockey legend. He also touched people’s lives because, no matter how long the struggle or how hard the path, Maurice Richard followed his dream. When we hold tight to our dreams, we become heroes in our own lives. Legends like Maurice Richard are important, since they remind us to have the courage to dream.



REAL-WORLD HERO: RYAN WHITE

1971–1990

“Don’t give up, be proud of who you are, and never feel sorry for yourself.”

Ryan White

With the odds stacked against him, Ryan White fought to make positive changes in the world. He is remembered as a true hero by everyone who witnessed his strength and courage.

Ryan White was born on December 6th, 1971 in Kokomo, Indiana. When he was 3 days old, doctors informed his parents that he suffered from a disease called hemophilia. This meant that his blood was unable to form clots, causing major hemorrhages which were very painful and dangerous to his health. Doctors treated Ryan with a blood clotting agent, which was injected twice a week to help his body form blood clots.

Due to complications of his disease, Ryan had to undergo surgery to remove 2 inches of his left lung when Ryan was 13 years old. During this operation he contracted AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Disorder, which changed his life forever. AIDS was not very well understood in 1984, but he was assured that he was not contagious. Doctors gave Ryan six months to live.

Spending the next 30 days recovering in hospital, Ryan did a lot of soul searching. He chose to fight back and was determined to go to school and enjoy everyday activities with his friends. This proved to be more challenging than he had hoped.

Ryan’s school had no guidelines for a person living with AIDS. The ignorance surrounding this disease caused people to panic. Many were not convinced that casual contact with Ryan was safe. Therefore, a nine month court battle began, while Ryan was forced to attend school by telephone.

After winning the right to attend school in court, he would realize that the prejudice was still overwhelmingly present. Even after Ryan agreed to use separate restrooms, drinking fountains and eating utensils, the harsh discrimination was not letting up. His locker was vandalized by students, parents pulled their children out of school and restaurants threw his dishes out after he left. He became the target of jokes and rumors and was not welcome anywhere in his community.

This injustice sparked worldwide media, and Ryan made many public appearances in which he helped raise awareness of the myths surrounding AIDS. Thousands of letters of support piled in from around the world, and Ryan became known as the face of the disease. He was able to meet some of the greatest celebrities, all offering their support for Ryan’s fight.

In 1987, Ryan’s family moved to Cicero, Indiana where they were welcomed with open arms. He was finally treated with the respect and support from the entire community because they were educated on the facts of AIDS. Ryan was allowed to be a teenager again. A movie about Ryan’s life, *The Ryan White Story*, aired on television where he starred in a role as his friend Chad.

Ryan was aware of his purpose in life and helped fight prejudice by educating others. He helped to set new guidelines in schools to ensure no other person would have to endure the discrimination he did. On April 8, 1990, Ryan lost his battle with AIDS, but his courageous spirit lives on in the lives he has forever changed.



RUBRIC

Student Instructions: Create a poster to be displayed in the school that will inspire other students to become involved in making the world a better place. Your poster should illustrate an opportunity – in your community, at school, with friends or in your family – to choose to be a real-life hero.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

CRITERIA	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Creates visual materials to inspire and persuade audiences	Demonstrates limited ability to inspire and persuade audiences through art	Demonstrates some ability to inspire and persuade audiences through art	Demonstrates the ability to inspire and persuade audiences through art	Demonstrates a strong ability to inspire and persuade audiences through art
Uses design elements and other features of posters to convey a message and mood	Demonstrates limited ability to use design elements and other features of posters to convey a message and mood	Demonstrates some ability to use design elements and other features of posters to convey a message and mood	Consistently uses design elements and other features of posters to convey a message and mood	Uses, in a highly effective way, design elements and other features of posters to convey a message and mood
Demonstrates, through art, an understanding of social responsibility	Demonstrates limited ability to communicate a message of social responsibility through art	Demonstrates some ability to communicate a message of social responsibility through art	Demonstrates the ability to communicate a message of social responsibility through art	Demonstrates strong ability to communicate a message of social responsibility through art

Comments: