
**NATIONAL
CANADIAN
FILM DAY**



**LA JOURNÉE
DU CINÉMA
CANADIEN**

CANADIAN FILM ACTIVITY BUNDLE

OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

We've put together a package of activities designed for kids and families to do at home, or with friends, to help celebrate CanFilmDay along with the rest of the country. Since they are based on in-school lesson plans by REEL CANADA, they are both educational and fun!

This package is not intended to fulfill format curriculum expectations. Rather, it contains a variety of ideas for activities and discussion questions that can be used on their own, or to accompany your choice of film(s). We hope that it will provide an opportunity for parents to engage with their children and start conversations around Canadian film and the industry's role in telling diverse Canadian stories.

There's something in here for all ages, and many of the activities can be done as a family, or online with friends. We hope the ideas here will provide lots of ways to keep kids

For more information on National Canadian Film Day's
Family Friendly Programming, please visit:

canfilmday.ca/fun-stuff/family-programming/

2026 Edition

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Face Mask Theatre

Players: Any number, any age

Premise: Show off your performing skills by acting out a scene of your choice from a Canadian film, using our series of fun celebrity face masks. There are many ways you might do this, depending on participants' ages and familiarity with Canadian film talent.

Some suggestions are provided here, or you can think of your own!

Materials & Set Up:

- Download our **Celebrity Faces Masks** from the CanFilmDay digital party kit at canfilmday.ca/fun-stuff/party-kit
- Print (on thick paper) and cut out as many of the masks as you want.
- Glue the masks to popsicle sticks (or use string to affix to your face).



(Activities 1 and 2 marked with a 🍁 icon are best for participants who are familiar with the work of the specific face mask celebrities. If you are new to the *who's who?* of Canadian film, try one of the simpler activities 3 through 7.)

Activities:

1. Choose a scene from the movie you are watching for CanFilmDay and reenact it using the masks. You can use the mask of the actor in the scene (if available) or use another mask to reimagine the scene with a different actor. 🍁
2. The same as above, but you can find a scene on YouTube to reenact. 🍁
3. Write and act your own scene using the masks available. You could think of a movie concept and choose the actors you like best to portray in the scene.
4. Conduct an interview (or informal conversation) as one celebrity interviewing another. You may need to research your celebrity to accurately portray them in the interview.
5. Roleplay a short autobiography of the celebrity. Research facts about your celebrity to give an accurate portrayal.
6. If you're unfamiliar with the celebrities on the masks, create your own characters based only on the physical appearance of the masks. Tell any story using your new characters.
7. Pose with a mask to recreate one of that star's movie posters.

Tips!

- Try having one person don multiple masks to play different characters!
- You can also use the masks to create a "tableau" of a scene, where characters freeze in position to create a still image.
- If you think your scene is particularly funny or creative, or if you just want others to see it, share a video of your scene on social media and tag us — @canfilmday and #CanFilmDay. We might even reshare it!
- Have fun!



Discussion Questions:

- Who is your favourite Canadian actor, and which of their performances is your favourite? Explain.
- How might different types of films require specific acting styles, techniques or actions?
- How is acting for film and television different from acting on stage?

Whose Line Is It Anywh-EH? : Canadian Film Improv Games

Players: Any number, any age (may vary by game)

Premise: Show off your performing skills and creativity by playing some quick-thinking improv games using our Canadian Film masks and props!

Materials & Set Up:

- Download the following items from our **Canadian Film Day digital party kit:**
canfilmday.ca/fun-stuff/party-kit
 - Celebrity Faces on Sticks masks
 - DIY Photobooth props
- Print (on thick paper) and cut out as many of the masks/props as you want.
- Glue the masks/props to popsicle sticks (if available).
- Some games will require several slips of paper (for you to write suggestions on).

Improv Activities:

There are endless options for fun improv games you can play with Canadian Film themes and topics. We included a few suggestions **on the following page**, but you can also play any other improv games you want. We'd love to see what you can come up with!

Note

If you think your improv is particularly funny or creative, or if you just want others to see it, share a video of it on social media and tag us — @canfilmday and #CanFilmDay. We might even reshare it!



Discussion Questions:

- What function do props and costumes have in films? How would films be different without props and costumes?
- What improv game was your favourite? Describe your experience (emotions, challenges, etc.) performing improv. How is the experience of improv different from acting based on a script?
- How and why is improv sometimes used in films?

Canadian Film Improv Games

Story Circle

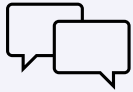


Put all props and masks in a box with a sheet to hide them. Players sit in a circle.

One player begins by drawing an item at random and beginning to tell a story that incorporates that item. After a short time, the next player takes over, drawing a new item to incorporate into the story and continuing from where the last player left off.

Repeat, going around the circle. The player to draw the last item ends the story!

Interview



One player takes a face mask to play that celebrity being interviewed. Another player will be the interviewer. Both players will draw an item each time they ask or answer a question and must incorporate the item into their question or answer.

Example: Player 2 draws the antler and asks about "that time you got attacked by a moose." Player 1 (the celebrity) then draws the bottle and tells a story about fending off the moose attack with a bottle.

Scenes from a Hat



Spread the props and masks out so everyone can see. Write on slips of paper several scenarios related to Canada or Canadian film (*e.g., "The cat came back the very next day" or "Going to Tim Hortons"*).

On their turn, each player draws a random suggestion slip from a hat or bowl and acts out that scenario using the props. (*You can read the slip to younger children.*)

For a variation on this activity:

Conceal the masks and props in a box. As in the original activity, players act out the scenario they draw from the hat. But this time you will draw and give them a new prop or mask from the box every 20 seconds that they must incorporate into their improv.

To add interactivity, players may work together. Give the group one scenario and then hand out props to one player at a time.

Telephone (Best for larger groups.)



Put all props and masks in a box with a sheet to hide them. Players sit in a circle. One player draws two items at random from the box (don't let anyone see!) and must think of a sentence to combine them (*e.g., "Colm Feore has beaver teeth."*).

They whisper their sentence to the next person in line, who whispers what they hear to the next person, etc. The last person in line repeats what they heard out loud, and then the original speaker compares their line to see how much it has changed through the "telephone" process.

Out of the Box



Put all the props (not the masks) in a box and cover it with a sheet. Players draw one prop from the box and act out a scene using their prop in a creative and humorous way for a purpose other than intended. (*Example: using a tuque as a bowl to eat from, a necktie as a hockey stick, etc.*)

Canadian Film Movie Poster Matching Memory Game

Players: 2 or more players, any age

Premise: Test your memory by matching pairs of Canadian movie posters!

Materials & Set Up:

- Print **two** copies of the movie poster chart (PAGE 20) — make sure you print on thick enough paper so the images don't show through the other side. (Glue a piece of construction paper on the back, if necessary.) Cut out the movie poster tiles along the dotted lines.
- Arrange the 36 poster tiles face down in a 6 x 6 grid (or another shape of your choosing).

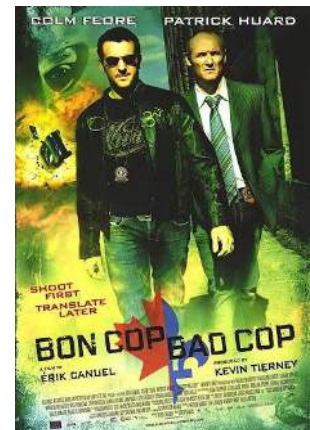
Instructions:

Players take turns turning over two tiles.

If the player turns over two tiles with different images, their turn ends. If the tiles show the same image, the player keeps the set and plays again until they don't make a match.

Players should try to remember the locations of specific images to make matches on future turns.

The game ends when all tiles have been matched. The player with the most tiles at the end wins!



Discussion Questions:

- What function do movie posters serve?
- What is your favourite movie poster, and what do you like about it?
- How are movie posters an example of both art and commerce?

Modifications: This game isn't the only way to use the film poster tiles. Here's another:

Use only the posters for movies you *haven't* seen. Draw a tile at random. Try to predict what the movie is about based only on the poster. Then watch the trailer and see how close you were in your prediction. You can even do this several times (with different posters) to decide what movie you want to watch (based on trailers).

Oh Canada! – Animated Cross-Country Tour

Players: Any number, any ages

Premise: This activity is great for kids to learn more about the geography and culture of different regions in Canada.

Materials & Set Up:

- Print the chart of Canadian regions and images (PAGES 21 - 22) — You can print one for each participant or have them work together.
- Cut out the tiles along the dotted lines and scramble them all together face up.

Instructions:

Watch the Mercury Filmworks animated short film *Oh Canada!*, available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rviyli8UA70>

Players try to match up the outline of each province/territory with the associated historical, cultural or geographical image.



Discussion Questions:

- Where have you travelled in Canada? What is your favourite place in Canada, and why? Where would you like to travel in Canada that you haven't been to, and why are you interested in going there?
- Canada is a land of diversity, both in terms of its people, culture(s) and languages, but also in terms of its geography. What are the different geographic regions in Canada, how do they differ from one another, and how might these diverse geographic areas contribute to the diversity of Canada's people? (For example, prairie farming economy vs. coastal seafood economy)

Modifications:

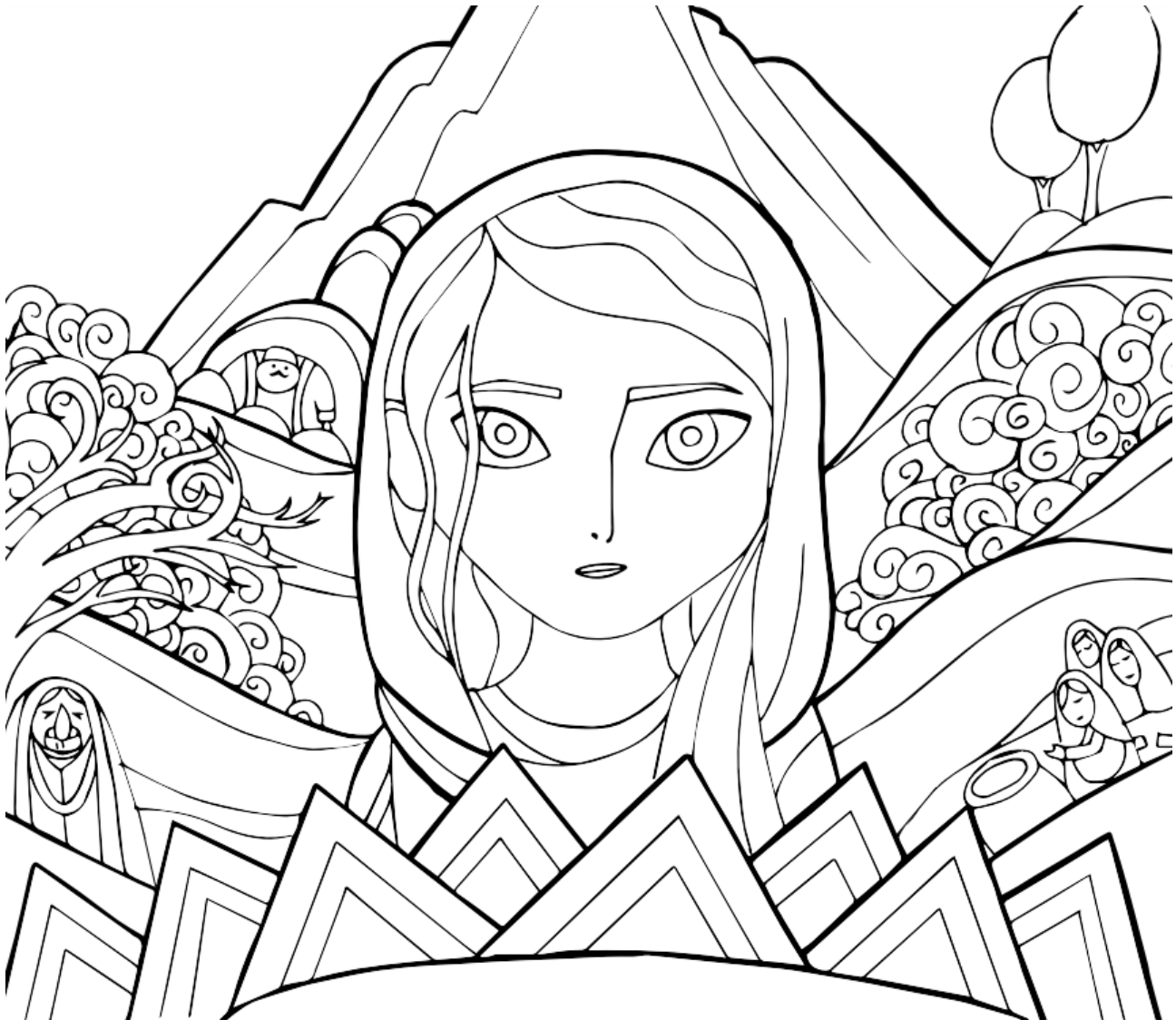
- Map tiles are designed so the names can be cut off the top to make the game more challenging. For older players, separate these so players also have to match up the map outline with the correct name.
- You can watch the animated short film before or after the game, depending on how easy you want to make the activity.
- After the game, learn more about the regions/images you were most interested in!

Colourful Canadian Film

Players: Any number, any ages

Premise: Colouring is fun & relaxing for kids and kids at heart, especially when you get to colour in scenes from Canadian films! We've included a page from our National Canadian Film Day colouring book here, or choose your favourite from the link below.

- Download the whole Canadian Film Day colouring book from the **digital party kit:** canfilmday.ca/fun-stuff/party-kit and print your desired colouring pages.
 - Use crayons, pencil crayons, markers, or whatever you prefer. Get creative!
 - **Share your masterpiece with us on social media!** — @canfilmday #CanFilmDay
-



NATIONAL
CANADIAN
FILM DAY

The Breadwinner/ Parvana: Une Enfance en Afghanistan (2017)
Directed by / Réalisation : Nora Twomey

Digital Screening Party Kit

Hungry for more activities? Check out our Digital Screening Party Kit at the link below for a bunch of great goodies and games you can access at home.



The kit includes:

Photo Props

- Canadian Film Celebrity Face Masks
- DIY Photobooth Props & Speech Bubbles

Fun Stuff

- Spotlight Films Watchlist
- Origami Moose Instructions
- *Reel Gourm-eh!* Recipe Book
- Bookmark
- Colouring Book

Event Hosting Help

- Printable Admission Tickets — *to make your screening feel official!*
- Printable DIY Popcorn Box
- My First CanFilmDay Certificate
- Make Your Own Pins Templates

Games

- CanFilmDay Bingo Challenge
- *Cards Avec Humanit'eh* (Card Game)
- *CANLIBS* word game
- CanFilmDay Mazes
- Fortune Teller
- *T'aboot* (card game)
- CanFilmDay Word Search



Party Kit Link: <https://canfilmday.ca/fun-stuff/party-kit/>

Reel It In! (Go Fish: Canadian Film Edition)

Players: 2 or more players; Recommended for ages 10+

Premise: A CanFilm twist on the classic card game Go Fish! Collect matching pairs of cards to earn points and learn about different aspects of the Canadian film industry. The team with the most matches (when all the cards are gone or after a fixed time) wins.



Materials & Set Up:

- Print 2 copies of the cards at tinyurl.com/reelitincards. Cut into 58 cards. Shuffle cards together.
- Deal 7 *Reel It In* cards to each player (or team).
- Place remaining cards face down in a scattered pile — this is the “fish pond.”
- Decide which player/team will go first — perhaps whoever correctly answers a Canadian film trivia question first.

Play:

On their turn, a player or team:

1. chooses one of their cards and reads out the word on it.
2. chooses a player (from another team, if playing in teams) and asks if they have the matching card.

If the player being asked:

- **does not** have the matching card, they reply, “Reel it in!” and the first team takes a card from the pile in the middle and ends their turn. Play continues clockwise.
- **does** have the card, a match is made! That team reads out the definition of the term out loud and forfeits the card to the asking team.

Whenever the asking team makes a match, they may continue to play, asking teams for another new match until they are told to “Reel it in!”

Discussion Questions:

- Share something interesting about the Canadian film industry that you learned today for the first time? Explain why it interests you.
- What film industry job do you think you would be best at, and why?

Additional activities using these cards: *Print only one set of cards for these. The player with the most cards at the end wins. Adjust as needed to play in teams.*

- **Trivia:** A player reads out the definition on the card (to increase difficulty, read only the first part). The first to guess the term correctly wins the card. *Information in ‘Did you know?’ boxes on the cards may be used for additional trivia questions.*
- **Pictionary:** A player takes a card and draws the term on the card (without using letters/words). If someone correctly guesses the word in less than 2 minutes, that player wins the card. Otherwise, the drawer loses one point.
- **Charades:** The same as Pictionary, but instead of drawing, the player acts out the term (without speaking) for others to guess.

Get Animated! : Canadian Animation

Players: Any number, Recommended for ages 8+

Premise: Did you know Canada has a long history of animation? Since the National Film Board was founded in 1939, Canadian animators like Norman McLaren and Cordell Barker have been creating memorable and innovative animated films. Below are some ideas for how to begin learning about animation in Canada.

Discussion Questions:

- What are your favourite animated films? What do you like about animation?
- What are some differences between animated & live action films? What can you do with animation that you can't do as live action? How can the two types be combined?
- What are some different types of animation? What do you know about how each of these types is created? How have advances in technology changed animation?
- [After watching an animated film.] Do you think the film you watched could have been made in live action? Why or why not? What changes would need to be made to the film if it was made in live action?
- What different kinds of stories can be told through animation? Animation is often created for children; why might a filmmaker use animation to tell a story for adults?
- Do you consider animation to be more of a genre, or a technique/medium? Why?



Activities:

1. Visit the National Film Board website and look at their animation section: nfb.ca/animation/. Each person chooses one short film to watch. Then, discuss the different animation styles and techniques between the films, the Canadian elements of the story, and the different types of subject matter animation is used for. You can also have them find & share 3 interesting facts about the filmmaker.
Younger students can be limited to children's sections of the website: nfb.ca/channels/based-childrens-books/ or nfb.ca/channels/cartoons_for_kids/
2. Have each person think of a short story that is could *only* be told through animation. Share the stories and explain *why* animation is the best medium to tell them. If you have a group of people, vote on who thought up the most outlandish or unrealistic story that would be the most difficult to tell in live action.
3. Watch the following YouTube video about 5 different types of animation: [youtube.com/watch?v=NZbrdCAsYqU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZbrdCAsYqU)
Race to find an example of each of these types (see PAGE 23 for a worksheet you can use) on the NFB website (nfb.ca/) and watch them!
NOTE: *It's not always easy to tell one type of animation from another, and some films use a combination of animation types. If your kids find this difficult; discuss that!*
4. Create and share your own animation using one of the methods on the following page.

Resources for creating animations

Professional animators use a range of costly & complicated software. Here are a few basic options & programmes with free versions you can use to make bare-bones animations. There are many options available beyond those listed here.

You may wish to have children work together, or with you. We recommend familiarizing yourself with whichever programme you select, before having children access it. That way you'll be better equipped to help them navigate any difficulties.

More complex programmes marked with a ✨ are recommended for older users. Adolescents can create an animation based on a story of their choice — maybe a sequel to the film they watched.

Easy traditional animation for all ages:

- **Flip Book:** create at least 20 small drawings — the easiest way to create basic hand-drawn animations.
 - An example of a traditional flip book on paper: scholastic.com/parents/school-success/learning-toolkit-blog/create-diy-flip-book-your-little-artist.html
 - **Flip Anim:** flipanim.com/ (A free, easy-to-use site to create a flip book online)
- **Stop Motion Studio:** cateater.com/try.html (Mobile & desktop app for creating Stop Motion animations. Free trial version available to download.)

The following online programmes let you create basic Motion Graphics. Free versions with limited options are available.

- **Animoto:** animoto.com

The following online programmes let you create short videos using premade templates and animations. Free versions with limited features are available. Due to their complexity, these programmes are not recommended for children under 10.

- **Renderforest:** renderforest.com/
- **Animaker:** app.animaker.com/
- **Powtoon:** powtoon.com/ (Online programme & mobile app to create animated videos such as explainer videos and presentations.)

Looking for a taste of how real animators do it? **Blender** is an open-source animation suite for creating 3D and 2D animation. Download the full version for FREE: blender.org/ ✨

Resources for further reading on Canadian animation:

- Piers Handling, Marcel Jean & Wyndham Wise (2006). "Canadian Film Animation." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. — thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canadian-film-animation
- Robyn Ludwig (2014). "Before McLaren: Canadian Animation in the Silent Film Era." *Cartoon Research*. — cartoonresearch.com/index.php/before-mclaren-canadian-animation-in-the-silent-film-era/
- Ryan Walsh (2015). "Canadian Animation: The Struggles of Earning Recognition from its Audience." *The Artifice*. — the-artifice.com/canadian-animation-recognition-audience/

BONUS!

Watch Mercury Filmworks' *Oh Canada!*, a short, animated tribute to our national anthem.

Then check out this behind-the-scenes look at its creation:

tinyurl.com/OhCanada-animation

The Art of the Storyboard

Players: Any number, Recommended for ages 6+

Premise: The film we see onscreen is the final result of countless hours of planning. A director, cinematographer, and production designer all have to imagine the visual aspects of the film, understanding and capturing how things like lighting, camera movement, costumes, sets, etc. will look to the audience and how best to convey desired emotions. Part of this planning process is called “storyboarding,” where the filmmaker creates a visual outline of how certain shots will look, which helps guide the filmmaking process. Explore the storyboarding process below!

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think filmmakers sometimes use storyboards to plan out how they want a scene to look before shooting? What problems might occur without this planning?
- What information would you include in a storyboard, and how?
- Are storyboards more important for some kinds of films or scenes than others? Explain.
- Can you think of artistic projects other than films that might benefit from using storyboards during the planning process?
- Finished films and storyboards are both ways of telling stories using visuals. What are some other visual storytelling methods you can think of? How are they similar to or different from storyboards?
- What is “composition” and how do storyboards help a filmmaker with composition when shooting?



Parent Hints!

- Comic books and graphic novels are very similar to storyboards!
- Storyboards help artists visualize how actors and objects will be positioned and move in relation to each other and the camera.
- Storyboards are a way to envision shot composition, or the way elements of a scene are arranged “within the frame” (the space captured by the camera) to convey an intended message. Other visual mediums like painting and photography also use principles of composition.

Preparation (optional, for learning):

1. Learn & discuss what a storyboard is. More information is at the following links:

- acmi.net.au/education/online-learning/film-it/storyboards/
- moviemaker.com/luck-draw-storyboarding/
- tinyurl.com/48zewrpe

2. Look at some examples of storyboards online.

For example: dga.org/craft/dgaq/categories/columns/drawing-board

You can find tonnes of helpful side-by-side comparison videos by searching “storyboard to film shot comparison” on YouTube. Here’s a great video about the 2008 film *The Dark Knight*, showing the transition from script to storyboard to screen:

youtube.com/watch?v=VmLhsACnKtU

3. Learn more about composition here: tinyurl.com/elements-composition-framing

Activities:

There are many practical and creative ways you can become more familiar with the storyboarding process. Below are some suggestions.

- Create a storyboard series based on a scene from a Canadian film of your choice.
 - For adolescents, you may have them find a screenplay online from a Canadian film and use the script as a guide to create the storyboard.
 - **Historica Canada's** "Heritage Minutes" are great short films because they are all only 60 seconds long. Perfect for having kids "reverse engineer" a storyboard based on the finished film. See them here: [youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1848FF9428CA9A4A](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1848FF9428CA9A4A)
- Find a series of storyboards for a single scene or sequence online. Cut these out and have kids work (together or in competition) to place them in chronological order of how they think the scene should play out.
 - For example: This scene storyboard from the Canadian zombie film *Les affamés* by Quebec-based storyboard artist Jean-Philippe Marcotte: tinyurl.com/lesaffames-storyboard (**NOTE: This sequence contains depictions of zombie violence and is not recommended for small children**)
 - Ask questions about why they placed certain storyboards where they did, and discuss the narrative logic of their order. How does the artist express movement/action and story through these images? How is colour used?

Resources for creating storyboards

For creating storyboards, you can hand draw them or use one of the online storyboard creators (links below), depending on your preference.

On paper:

- You can use regular paper divided into rectangular sections.
- A 3-panel template is included on PAGE 24; print it twice if you want a 6-panel storyboard!

Apps for creating storyboards:

- **Storyboard That:** storyboardthat.com/ (Excellent, simple browser-based storyboard template. Offers a free version with a maximum 6-panel storyboard and lots of features.)
- **Storyboarder:** wonderunit.com/storyboarder/ (Free desktop app for Windows and Mac. Full-featured drawing programme with Photoshop, Premiere and Final Cut integration, shot generator, etc. Drawings can be done in the app or on paper first and scanned into the app. This programme is more advanced than Storyboard That.)
 - **Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)** has a full lesson on storyboarding that ends with a creative project using Storyboarder. Available at: acmi.net.au/education/online-learning/film-it/storyboards/

Telling Canadian Stories 1: Common Canadian Experiences

Players: Any age, from kids 8+ to adults. Works best with at least 3 people; the more the better. Can do with friends online!

Premise: One of the important aspects of Canadian film, literature, and other art forms is their ability to tell stories specific to Canadian experiences. But what is a “Canadian experience” really? This trio of activities, which are best done together, explore the idea of telling Canadian stories and what it means to tell authentic stories without relying on stereotypes.

Materials & Set Up:

- Give everyone a copy of the “Common Canadian Experiences” worksheet on PAGE 25.
-

Activity Instructions:

1. Each participant fills out the sheet with a list of five events or experiences that they believe will be shared by others. These should be events or experiences that are common to many people in Canada. Encourage students to come up with unique examples.
2. Each person takes a turn reading one of the items from their list. If anyone else can relate to that story (i.e., if it is an experience they have had), they should raise their hand (or any other signal of your choice) and write that experience on the middle section of their sheet. **Keep track** of each experience suggested and the number of students who respond to each story.
3. At the end of the exercise, announce the top three “most common Canadian” stories. Keep these in mind for subsequent activities.



Discussion Questions:

- What do you think of when you hear the phrase “Canadian experience” or “Canadian story?”
- Did you disagree with anyone else’s suggestion of a Canadian experience? What about it did you disagree with?
- Were you surprised by any of the top “most common” Canadian experiences? What about this surprised you? Are there exceptions to this experience being common — in other words, are there people in Canada for whom this experience is not common?
- Not all Canadian experiences are common. Can you think of Canadian events or experiences that are unique, experienced by only a few, and are still Canadian?

Modifications & Notes:

Dress up responses for presentation by compiling them into a visual format:

- Haiku Deck - haikudeck.com/ (simple text can be paired with striking images in a slide format)
- Canva - canva.com/ (graphic design creation)
- Infogram - infogr.am/ (data visualizations)
- Poster My Wall - postermymwall.com/ (make a simple and visually pleasing poster that summarizes the results of the activity)

Telling Canadian Stories 2: What Makes a Canadian?

Players: Same as previous activity

Brainstorm & Discussion

1. On the same handout, each person fills in the bottom section individually with ideas about what they think it means to be Canadian.
2. Gather in a group — this can be done online! — and share responses. Circle any responses that were suggested by multiple people and map all responses using a **word web** (also called a **mind map**).*
3. Discuss what their responses suggest about how we view Canadians. For example, are there a lot of “stereotypical” responses (e.g., polite, like hockey, etc.)?



Discussion Questions:

- Did anyone correctly identify that what makes someone *technically* Canadian is a Canadian citizenship? Why do we sometimes call people “Canadian” based on stereotypes that may or may not apply (not all Canadians drink coffee from Tim Hortons, for example). Do you think there is one Canadian identity or many? Are we accepting of people as “real” Canadians if they have citizenship but might not fit the stereotype of what a Canadian looks or acts like?
- Do you think these common Canadian cultural traits/stereotypes are good or bad? How might they be both helpful (e.g., by uniting us around shared interests) and dangerous (e.g., by excluding those to whom these traits do not apply)?
- Have all Canadians always been treated equally? What are examples of times when being “Canadian” was not something to be proud of for some people (e.g., forced assimilation of Indigenous people, internment camps, labour exploitation, unequal rights, racism, etc.)? How can Canadian people and the Canadian government help to ensure equality for all people in Canada?
- Canada is a land of diversity both in terms of its people, culture(s) and languages, but also in terms of its geography. What are the different geographic regions in Canada, how do they differ from one another, and how might these diverse geographic areas contribute to the diversity of Canada’s people? (*For example, prairie farming economy vs. coastal seafood economy*).

* Note:

A **word web** or **mind map** is where you group responses according to theme (activities, stereotypes, values, legal definition, etc.). Search Google for “word web examples” or “mind map examples” to see what these look like, if you are not familiar.

Telling Canadian Stories 2.5:

From Hollywood to Halifax – American Vs. Canadian Films

Players: This is an optional bonus discussion appropriate for **high school age** teens and **adults** who want to learn and discuss more about the uniqueness of Canadian film in relation to the “Hollywood Machine.”

Premise: Reflect on your perceptions of Canadian and American film and consider the different contexts underlying each industry.

Preparation: Locate some clips from popular American movies filmed in Canada. (See this link for some ideas: postcardsandplaces.com/stories/movies-filmed-in-canada*)

*Note that some films in this list — *The F Word*, *One Week*, *Room*, *Barney’s Version* and *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* — are Canadian films.

Introduction: Many films are shot in Canada (particularly in Vancouver and Toronto), so much so that Canada has been referred to as “Hollywood North.” However, despite being filmed in Canada, many of these films are actually American movies, with American casts and crews, and Canadian settings doubling for American cities.

Activity:

1. Show your selected clips and ask the kids to guess where they were filmed. Don’t reveal until the end that all these movies were filmed in Canada.
2. Ask each person to think about the last movie they saw (*prior to the one they watched for Canadian Film Day*). What country produced this movie? Where was it filmed? Where was it set? (This information is easily found online).
3. Tally the countries of production. You may find the occasional person with a film from a country outside the US, but most will likely have mentioned a Hollywood film.
4. Discuss some or all the following questions as a class.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do we see so many more American films when we live in Canada?
- Why are American movies so much more famous than Canadian movies?
- What are the differences between Canadian and American movies? (In terms of budgets, funding, population of audience, etc.)
- Why do US studios film movies in Canada? What effects does this have on Canada?
- Does a bigger budget necessarily make for a better movie?
- How does funding affect the types of movies that are made in Hollywood and Canada?
- Do Canadian films need to compete with American films? What can/should Canadian filmmakers do to “stand out” from Hollywood films? How can they create truly Canadian films telling Canadian stories?

Telling Canadian Stories 3: In Our Own Words

Players: Same as previous activity

Using a large piece of paper (or collaborative drawing app), discuss and brainstorm answers to one or more of the questions below. Take turns writing or doodling your suggestions on the paper — You may wish to assign a different question to each person and then rotate, so each person writes on other people's paper:

Discussion Topics:

For children 12 and under

- Where are great places to shoot films in Canada? What kind of movie would you shoot in each place?
- Who are Canadian heroes that we should know about? If you were making a movie about this person, what would be a good movie title?
- What Canadian issues might you find in the news that would make great films? What would the films be titled?
- What are the benefits of watching Canadian films?

For teens and adults

- Why should we tell Canadian stories? What would happen if we didn't? Do you think it is important to support the Canadian film industry? Why or why not? What can individuals and governments do to support the continued production of Canadian films?
- What Canadian stories are not being told and why? How can the Canadian film industry make sure these stories get told?
- Many films are shot in Canada that are not considered Canadian films. To qualify as Canadian, a film must have a certain percentage of Canadian crew (for example, the director, writer, cast, etc.) and a Canadian production company. Why do you think these criteria exist?

Finish with a brief discussion about students' thoughts from the entire exercise. (Were there any major disagreements or strong feelings?)



TIP!

If you have not watched a Canadian film yet, now would be a good time to show a film that explores a unique or common Canadian experience and relate it back to the discussions in this set of activities.

Pitch Meeting

Players: Minimum 2 – 3 players, any age. The bigger the group the better!

Premise: Test your creative reflexes with this fast-paced game of improvising 2-word movie pitches.

Play: Everyone sits in a circle. Choose a random person to start. The starting player stands and announces something that they would like to see a film about, containing two words (or one compound word). The next player in the line then says something they would like to see, using the last word of the previous student's suggestion as their first word. For an extra challenge, have players throw a ball to the next person (their choice) rather than going in order around the circle.

Example:

Player 1: "I'd like to see a film about snowboarding."

Player 2: "I'd rather see a film about a boarding school."

Player 3: "I'd rather see a film about schoolwork."

Player 4: "I'd rather see a film about working out.", etc.

How to Win:

When a student is stumped or they say an answer that doesn't make sense, they are eliminated. The winner is the last player in the game.

Discussion Points:

- Do you think these brief answers are enough of an idea to base a movie on? What other information might you need if you wanted to "pitch" a movie for real?
- What influences the decisions on what films get made for theatres? For film festivals? How can we help make sure many different kinds of films get made?
- Do film festivals offer different films and choices than movies shown in the theaters? Why do we have film festivals?

Story Swap

Players: Minimum 2 – 3 players, ages 8+

Premise: Players will collaborative on writing by contributing to each other's stories. (Note that this exercise does **not** reflect how professional writers collaborate.)

Play: Players write the beginning of a story that introduces **someone with a problem**.

Example: *"Gary wasn't a usual hound dog. His ability to speak set him apart from the other hounds. However, this made Gary a very lonely hound dog."*

After a short time, players pass their stories to the right, and then continue the story they just received from the person on their left. Continue passing and writing until you decide to announce the last round. Players will write the ending (don't forget to resolve the problem!) to whichever story they have in hand. Then read all the collaborative stories out loud!

Discussion: How did it feel having someone else contribute to your story? Did your story end up how you originally imagined? Was it difficult not to have 'control' over your story? How do you think writers manage to collaborate on writing without letting one person take over? What are the advantages & disadvantages about collaborative writing?

Canadian Movie Hangman

Players: Minimum 2 – 3 players, ages 6+.

Premise: This classic game can easily be adapted to use words and phrases related to Canadian film. It's also great for improving spelling!

Instructions:

1. Write the word "HANGMAN" (or "CANFILM") on a paper.
2. One player — the "Executioner" — secretly chooses a word or phrase related to Canadian film (e.g., filmmaking terms, names of actors/directors, film title, etc.)
3. Write down the number of blank spaces matching the number of letters in the clue. Use a slash (/) to separate words.
(E.g., The movie *The Grizzlies* would be written as: ___ / _____ .)
4. Other players take turns guessing a letter. If the letter they guess doesn't appear in the title and fill in a blank, then circle a letter of the word "HANGMAN." If it does appear in the title, write it in the corresponding blank.
5. If the clue is not guessed correctly before 7 wrong letter guesses (i.e., when all of the letters in "HANGMAN" are circled), the executioner gets to host another round. Otherwise, the person who correctly guessed the clue takes over as executioner.

Modifications:

- You can also play "Pictionary" using the same basic premise. Instead of writing a phrase for others to guess, the player will draw it. This is great for playing on teams.
- If you need ideas for clues, you can visit the REEL CANADA film collection website at: reelcanada.ca/canadian-film-collection/

Dr. Know-It-All

Players: Minimum 2 – 3 players, any age. Works better for larger groups.

Premise: Players must work together to answer a question, with the barrier that each person is only allowed to speak one word at a time.

Play:

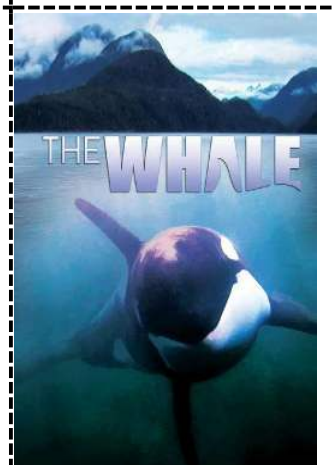
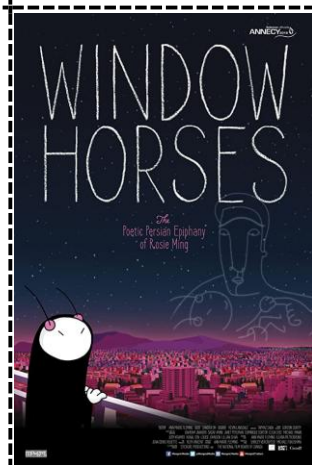
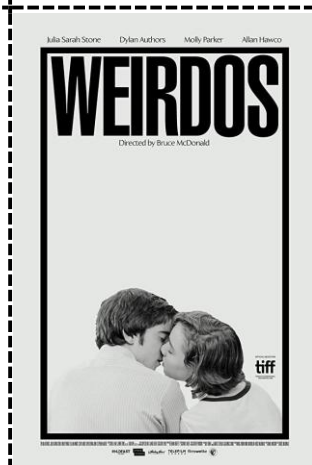
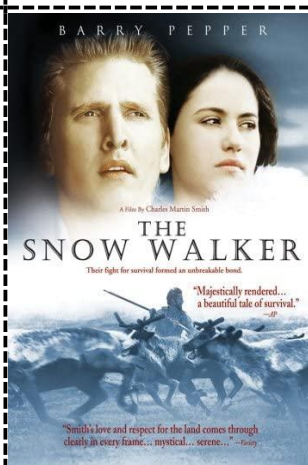
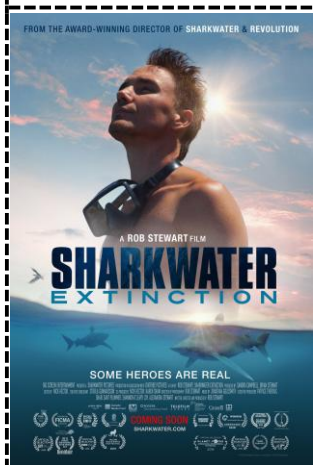
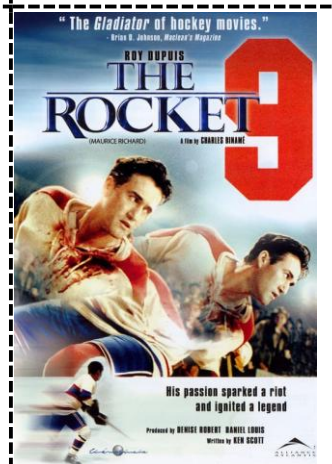
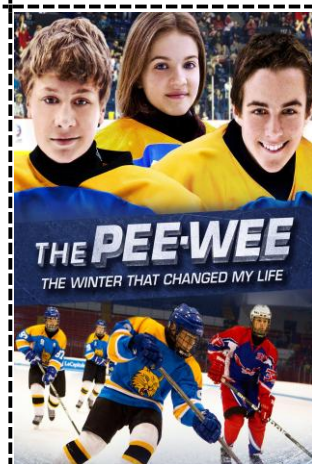
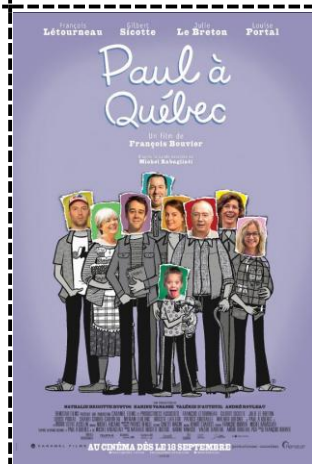
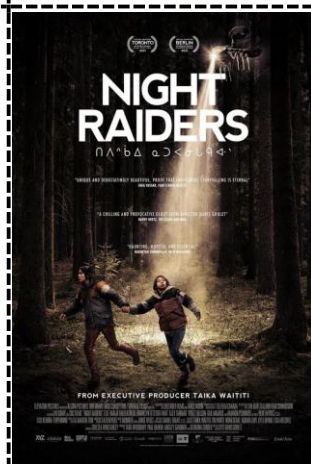
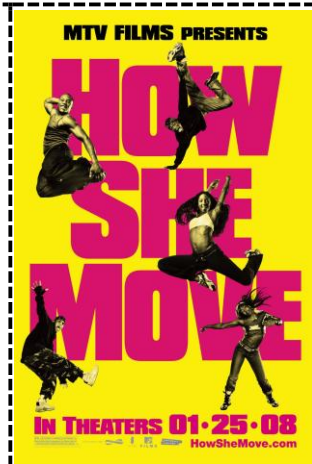
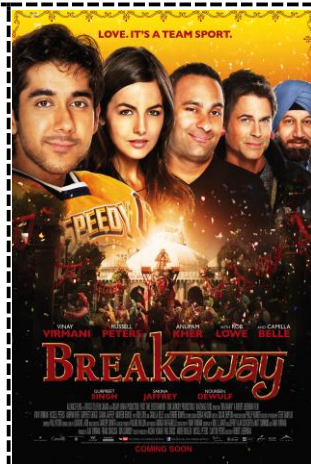
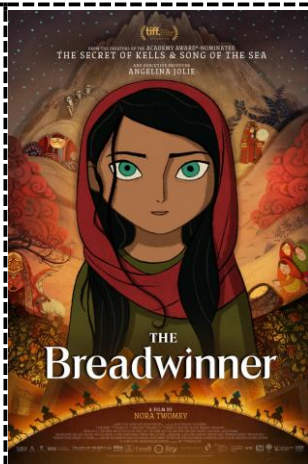
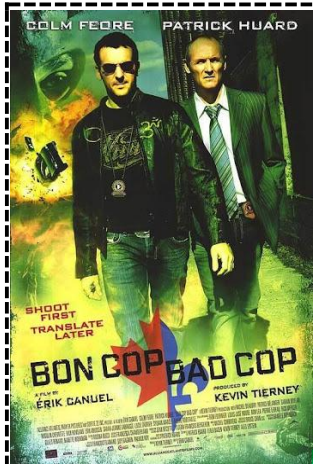
1. 2 – 5 players sit in a line facing the others. These players represent the "special guest film professor, Dr. Know-It-All" — a world renowned expert on films. Explain that the Doctor is so smart he has shares five brains (or, as many brains as players in the line).
2. Players not in the line can take turns asking the 'professor' questions about film, Canadian film, or National Canadian Film Day.
3. The 'professor' will attempt to answer the questions, but the catch is that each 'brain' can only speak one word of the answer at a time. If a player is unable to quickly think of a word to continue the answer, that player must switch places with the questioner.

NOTE: Answers must make sense; players cannot just say a random word.

Additional Activity Resources

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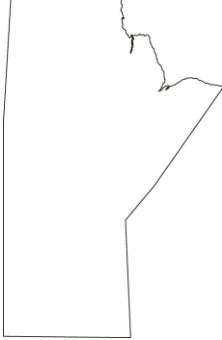








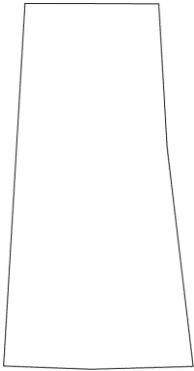





ANSWERS

(From left to right, top to bottom)

1. St. John's/Newfoundland dog (NL)
2. Bluenose (NS)
3. Anne of Green Gables/potato farming (PEI)
4. Hopewell Rocks (NB)
5. Montreal (QC)
6. Sudbury giant nickel (ON)
7. Museum of Human Rights/Esplanade Riel bridge, Winnipeg (MB)
8. Wheat field/grain elevator (SK)
9. Calgary (AB)
10. Coast Salish totem pole (BC)
11. Gold prospecting (YT)
12. Dog sledding across the tundra (NT)
13. Inuk building an Inukshuk (NU)

<p>Alberta</p> 	<p>British Columbia</p> 	<p>Manitoba</p> 	<p>New Brunswick</p> 	<p>Newfoundland & Labrador</p> 
<p>Northwest Territories</p> 	<p>Nova Scotia</p> 	<p>Nunavut</p> 	<p>Ontario</p> 	<p>Prince Edward Island</p> 
<p>Quebec</p> 	<p>Saskatchewan</p> 	<p>Yukon</p> 		

FIVE TYPES OF ANIMATION: SCAVENGER HUNT

Go online to the **National Film Board** and browse the website to find an example of each of the five types of animation. Fill in the chart below with the information about each example film. Some films use more than one type of animation, but you should not put the same film as an example twice.

<p>Traditional (also called cell or hand-drawn) <i>Flip Books, Classic Disney films</i></p>	<p>The animator hand-draws each 'frame.' When all the drawings are played one after the other, it looks like the images are moving!</p> <p>Today, even most hand-drawn animation is done using a computer and drawing tablet.</p>	<p>Title of Film: _____</p> <p>How can you tell this film uses traditional animation?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>2D (also called vector-based) <i>Flash</i></p>	<p>In this cheap and easy method, the animator uses a computer program to help animate movement for them, so they don't have to hand draw everything — or sometimes anything! It can look similar to hand-drawn, but 2D animations may not feel as "lively" as hand-drawn if done quickly or with less effort.</p>	<p>Title of Film: _____</p> <p>How can you tell this film uses 2D (vector-based) animation?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Computer Animation (also called 3D or computer-generated imagery (CGI)) <i>Pixar films</i></p>	<p>The animator uses a computer programme to create and control objects in a 3D digital environment.</p> <p>This is the most common animation type today.</p>	<p>Title of Film: _____</p> <p>How can you tell this film uses computer animation?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Motion Graphics <i>Animated logos, Explainer videos, Television promos, Film opening titles</i></p>	<p>The art of creatively moving graphic elements or text, usually to promote a product or service.</p> <p>Motion graphics are different from other animation types because they are not focused on a character or story.</p>	<p>Find an example of motion graphics in any of the films (<i>Hint: Look at the beginning of a film</i>), and explain how you can tell these are motion graphics:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Stop Motion Animation <i>Claymation, Puppet animation, Paper cut outs, Silhouette, Pixilation</i></p>	<p>The animator combines live action filmmaking techniques with traditional animation. The animator takes still photos of real objects (clay sculptures, puppets, action figures, etc.) to create each frame, rather than drawing.</p>	<p>Title of Film: _____</p> <p>How can you tell this film uses stop motion animation?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

STORYBOARDS	NOTES

COMMON CANADIAN EXPERIENCES

List three events or experiences that you think are truly Canadian:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Memorable Stories Shared by Others

WHAT MAKES A CANADIAN?

Think about the things that make someone **Canadian**. Brainstorm some responses in the space below. Write the first thing that comes to your mind — you may write point form or sentences.

