



# CRSP

Canadian Restructured School Plan  
Le Projet D'une École Canadienne Restructurée

**Fact or Fiction?**  
*A Jaundiced Look at the History Book*

*CRSP is a project of the*



Canadian Vocational Association  
Association canadienne de la formation professionnelle

© CVA/ACFP 1998

## **Why study the topic?**

Many of the attitudes and values that influence your life and your society are anchored in beliefs about the past. The history we know today is based on interpretations of events. That is, history textbooks are based to a large extent on their authors' interpretations of written records of the period in question. And these written accounts often reflect the culture and value systems of the people who wrote them at the time. But what if the records are contradictory? Perhaps some of the current geopolitical conflicts are based on very different perspectives of previous events. What if you were wrong all along and your profound convictions are based on pure fiction? In this learner guide, you will begin to appreciate the subjective nature of much history writing. This may help you to be more critical in your judgements of day-to-day events.

## **What do I need to know before I begin?**

You should have an interest in current events.

You should know how to find current and past issues of newspapers from around the world through various formats (such as microfiche or microfilm in a public library or through the Internet).

## **What will I know and be able to do when I have completed the guide?**

You will be able to read descriptions of events with a more critical attitude towards subjective interpretations.

You will be able to trace some stories to original records.

## What resources are available to help me?

Public and university libraries for back copies of newspapers.

Web sites of major newspapers for current issues.

## How may I meet the expectations of the guide?

By using this guide, you are putting expectations on yourself. You will know after working through the activities whether your attitude towards written reports has changed.

## When should my work be done?

The time you devote to this is up to you. You should expect to have to spend several hours researching particular stories.

## How will I demonstrate I have met the expectations?

By completing at least two “history text” paragraphs as described in the Activities Section of this guide and discussing them with a knowledgeable individual.

## What activities do I need to do?

<b>Activity 1: This Day in History . . .</b>
--

This activity may be a bit of a humility lesson. Chances are your birth did not make newspaper headlines around the world . . .

At your local library or a university library in your area, look through the collection of past issues of newspapers (perhaps on microfilm or microfiche) and find the issue of four different newspapers on the day of your birth. Answer the following questions.

- What events are reported on the front page?
- Are they the same or is there a different priority given to events?
- Can you explain why?

Write down your observations.

## **Activity 2: You Be the Historian**

In this activity, you will have the opportunity to play the role of historian. You may find it more interesting to do this activity with an interested partner.

Choose at least two recent significant events to research. Here are some possibilities:

- The Oka Crisis
- The Turbot “War”
- The October 1996 Canadian Unity Rally in Montreal
- The 1996 Quebec referendum
- The 1997 Canadian federal election
- The 1997 British parliamentary election
- Britain’s hand-over of Hong Kong to China on July 1, 1997
- The 1997 Canada-U.S. negotiations on the salmon fishing treaty

Each of these events is now part of world history.

Once you have chosen two recent and significant events, do the following:

Find coverage of the events in at least two newspapers or magazines from different provinces or countries. For example, you could look at how the unity rally was reported in *The Globe and Mail* and *Le Devoir* or in *The Gazette* and *La Presse* or in *The Gazette* and *The Globe and Mail* or in *La Presse* and *Le Devoir*. You could read about the Hong Kong hand-over as reported in *The Times* of London and the *South China News*.

Create a chart in which you compare the coverage in terms of:

- prominence  
(*the page the article appeared on, the length of the article, the wording of the headline, etc.*)
- the data reported, if any  
(*number of people/fish involved, cost/benefit, duration, size of the territory involved, number of deaths, etc.*)
- the tone of the coverage  
(*favourable to one side, neutral, condemnatory, laudatory*)
- the causes given by the author of the article
- pictures, graphs, if any
- the direct quotes provided  
(*from both sides of an issue, from one party more than another, etc.*)
- the conclusions drawn or predictions made of outcomes
- any other aspects in which there is a striking difference in the coverage provided by the two sources

Now pretend that you are a historian living in the year 2047. You are writing a history textbook for secondary schools ( . . . if there are still books and schools by then . . . ). For each of the two events you selected, write the paragraph in the book that describes the event based strictly on the written records you have examined. If you are working with a partner, write your paragraphs independently and then compare them and discuss the reasons for the differences or discrepancies.

If possible, present your findings to your teacher or someone else who knows a good deal about history. This might be a university professor or a political affairs reporter who writes for your local newspaper.

## Where do I go from here?

Continue your interest in current events (history in the making) and try to influence others to be more analytical and critical.

## LEARNER GUIDE WRITING TEAMS

### NEW BRUNSWICK SITE

Site Leaders: Dr. Neil Wortman (1996); Chris Fleming (1997).

### Participating Schools:

Campobello Island Consolidated School  
Carleton North Senior High School  
Fundy High School  
Grand Manan High School  
John Caldwell School  
Nackawic High School  
Southern Victoria High School  
St. Stephen High School  
Sir James Dunn Academy  
Tobique Valley High School  
Woodstock High School

### Learner Guide Writing Teams by Subject

#### 1. Art

Caroline Matheson, Leader	St. Stephen High School
Susan Galbraith	Carleton North Senior High School
Wendy Johnston	Woodstock High School
Alison Milne	Nackawic Senior High School

#### 2. Career and Life Management (CALM)

MacFarlane, Donna, Leader	Fundy High School
Pearl Bourque	Fundy High School
Barbara Colwell	Carleton North Senior High School
Paul Ingram	Fundy High School
Carol McMillan	Fundy High School
Derek O'Brien	Fundy High School
Lynn Reid	Tobique Valley High School

#### 3. English

Robert Griffin, Leader	Grand Manan High School
Sharon Dewitt	Tolbique Valley High School
Robert Lee	Fundy High School

#### 4. French

Don Albert, Leader	Nackawic Senior High School
Paula Baker-Johnston	Tolbique Valley High School
Tom Bridgeo	Woodstock High School
Fiona Cogswell	School District Office
Nancy Heppel	Woodstock High School
Sylvie Sirois	John Caldwell School

5. Mathematics

Clifford Kilcup, Leader  
Alan Gilmor  
Glenna Monteith  
Donna Seymour  
Ivan Shaw  
Pat Sorenson

Southern Victoria High School  
St. Stephen High School  
Southern Victoria High School  
Nackawic Senior High School  
Carleton North Senior High School  
John Caldwell School

6. Music

Diana Bainbridge, Leader  
Stephanie Archer  
Alison Milne

Fundy High School  
Sir James Dunne Academy  
Nackawic Senior High School

7. Physical Education

Jon Brain, Leader  
Mike Fletcher  
Al McGarvie  
Hal Mersereau  
Eric Rolbichaud

Southern Victoria High School  
Woodstock High School  
Nackawic Senior High School  
Fundy High School  
Tobique Valley High School

8. Science

Anne Sénéchal, Leader  
Charlene Carroll  
Linda Drisdelle  
Kathy McGuire  
Maura Tait

John Caldwell School  
John Caldwell School  
Tobique Valley High School  
Nackawic Senior High School  
Fundy High School

9. Social Studies

Paul Nugent, Leader  
Kenin Inch  
Scott Jones  
Larry Parker  
Trevor Perry  
Keith Pierce  
Rick Savage

Campobello Island Consolidated High School  
Nackawic Senior High School  
Woodstock High School  
St. Stephen High School  
Carleton North Senior High School  
Campobello Island Consolidated High School  
Tobique Valley High School

10. Technology

Marven Goodine, Leader  
Maurère Desjardins  
Chris Fleming  
Brent Shaw  
Chris Sherwood

Wookstock High School  
John Caldwell School  
School District Office  
Carleton North Senior High School  
St. Stephen High School

HUNTING HILLS HIGH SCHOOL SITE, Red Deer, Alberta

Site Leader: Duncan Anderson

Learner Guide Writers:

Bob Alspach  
Duncan Anderson  
Bruce Buruma  
Carl Dyke  
Michèle Ferreira  
Pat Mosychuk  
Rick Ramsfield

GRANDE YELLOWHEAD SITE, Alberta

Site Leader: Nancy Love-Crawford

Participating Schools:

Grande Cache Community High School, Grande Cache, AB  
Jasper Junior and Senior High School, Jasper  
Niton Central School, Niton Junction

Learner Guide Writers:

Andy Albas  
Ian Kirillo  
Angie Lemire  
Nancy Love-Crawford  
Vaughn Olorenshaw  
Judy Smolnicky

GLENLAWN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE SITE, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Site Leader: Arpena Babaian

Learner Guide Writers:

Arpena Babaian  
Linda Howell  
Jim Kullman  
Theresa Oswald  
Ken Thoroski