

## **Bill of Rights Educational Activity**

*This activity is designed to familiarize students with the evolution of human rights in Canada. Students will look at and discuss various primary documents provided by the Diefenbaker Canada Center. These documents will look at the first stages of development of the Bill of Rights, what Diefenbaker's government accomplishes, and some of the negative reactions to the Bill. This activity is best done in conjunction with the human rights timeline activity, also provided by the Diefenbaker Canada Center upon request. Consult the online primary documents and website text as resources.*

### **Introduction**

- Give the students an introduction to the life of John Diefenbaker, focusing on his interest in developing the Bill of Rights.
- Explain his lifelong interest in human rights and minorities, which became evident during his second term as Prime Minister, when his government was able to focus on the creation of a Bill of Rights.

Refer to the following links:

1. Provincial Bill of Rights with Diefenbaker outlining the pros and cons of each.
2. A piece from the Financial post (03 May 1958).
3. "The Bill of Rights is Wrong," (28 September 1958).

### **Activity**

- Students will explore the evolution of human rights in Canada during this activity. Break students up into smaller groups and research the major events and defining moments that led to the creation of the Bill of Rights, then bring the class together to share their ideas.
- Students could make a timeline of important dates or they could use the human rights activity created by the centre.
- Introduce and discuss the first primary document and evaluate its content. What are the pros and cons of the Bill of Rights and what other points are relevant to the students.
- Divide the students into groups. The students can discuss the aforementioned two articles and discuss the validity of these opinions.
- Students will have thoroughly explored the Bill of Rights and the impact it had on Canadian citizens; they will also be aware of the controversies it generated.
- Have students look back at the timeline of human rights, do they think the Bill of Rights was effective?

### **Optional Activities**

- Students can look at the Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They can look at the similarities and differences between these documents, as well as look at the legal differences between them.

- There is a human rights timeline activity available from the Diefenbaker Canada Centre upon request which would enhance the lesson.