

HOW TOLERANT ARE CANADIANS?

Introduction



Download the mp3 of this Introduction at newsinreview.cbclearning.ca.

Focus

Canada is a multicultural country where people of many races and backgrounds live in harmony together. Most of us are proud of our diversity, and we like to think prejudice isn't a problem in our country. But how tolerant are we? In this *News in Review* story we'll look at how a racist incident shocked a community. And we'll ask pollsters and ordinary Canadians whether we should be doing more to fight intolerance.

Note to Teachers:

Teachers should be aware that the teaching of sensitive and controversial issues may provoke emotional responses from students. A high degree of care should be taken before lessons to ensure that the learning environment allows for conflicting sets of values to be processed analytically and with respect for differences in peoples and their cultures, identities, and world views. As with all activities that involve complex thinking, teachers should build in time for reflection and metacognitive activities.

The majority of Canadians embrace multiculturalism, human rights, and diversity as fundamental values of our country. This is a result of centuries of immigration, where people from many different cultures and ethnicities decided to make Canada their home. Canada has always needed people from other countries to contribute to our economic and social well-being.

Our diverse population is one of the distinct features of our country. This diversity is valued so highly that laws have been enacted to protect and encourage it. For example, all Canadians are guaranteed equality before the law and equality of opportunity regardless of their origins. This fact alone sets us apart from many other countries in the world that do not treat diverse people fairly or

justly. Canadians like to believe that they are extremely hospitable and fair-minded people.

But despite an overall perception of Canada as a tolerant country, with a good overall human rights record, there are ongoing incidents of intolerance and discrimination that paint a darker picture of our beliefs and behaviours—incidents that demand our attention and action. How can all Canadians meet the challenge of working together for common goals despite all of the unique individual and cultural identities that exist in the country?

While there are no easy solutions, it seems clear that diversity requires tolerance, openness, and acceptance on the part of all Canadians.

To Consider

Indicate whether you agree, disagree, or if you are not sure about each of the statements below. Return to your answers and reconsider them after you have learned more.

- a) Intolerance will always exist.
- b) Young people are less intolerant than older people.
- c) Racism exists between different races and within the same race.
- d) Diversity is a national strength.
- e) Diversity is a national challenge.

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Video Review

Did you know . . .

In 1914, in Nova Scotia, Viola Davis Desmond—a black woman—was arrested, put in jail, and fined after she sat in the “white only” seating area of a theatre. On April 14, 2010, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia granted Desmond a posthumous pardon, the first such pardon to be granted in Canada.

Note to Students:

You may have several emotional responses to the video. You may feel anger, sadness, interest, disinterest, guilt, or similar emotions. Learning about issues of identity is difficult because of the range and intensity of emotions that can arise. During your class discussions, be sure to maintain a respectful learning environment that encourages each person to discuss conflicting sets of ideas and values. Be sensitive in your discussions and remember that one person’s opinion or experience cannot and should not represent the viewpoints or experience of an entire culture, ethnicity, or other group.

Pre-viewing Activity

Before you watch the video, discuss the following questions with a partner or in a small group.

1. Think of one example of intolerance and discrimination in Canadian society.
2. Think of one example of Canadian tolerance and inclusiveness.
3. If a poll was taken about racism and tolerance in Canada today, predict what the results of the poll might be.

Viewing Questions

As you watch this *News in Review* story, respond to the following questions in the spaces provided.

1. What hate crime occurred in Hants County, Nova Scotia, on February 21, 2010?

2. How did the community respond to the crime?

3. What other evidence of anti-black racism exists in Nova Scotia?

4. What were some of the results of a spring 2010 CBC poll on racism? Record some of the comments you heard in the video.

5. How will the face of Canadian society continue to change for the next 20 years?

6. According to Kirk Moss—the teacher—how did racism affect his life as a young immigrant?

7. What are two ways that Canadians could make our society more equitable and inclusive?

8. What evidence is there that younger Canadians are becoming “colour-blind”?

Post-viewing Activity

After you have watched the video, discuss and respond to the following questions. Your teacher may choose to place you in a small group with other students.

1. Who did you relate to the most in this video? Why?

2. What information was the most interesting to you? Why?

3. What information was the most disturbing and/or surprising to you? Why?

4. On the whole, do you think that Canada is a tolerant country? What evidence would you use to support your opinion?

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A Sensitive Subject

When speaking about sensitive and controversial issues involving tolerance and intolerance toward other human beings, it is important to have some common language to better understand the complex issues we are addressing. If you cannot distinguish equity from equality, or tolerance from acceptance, or you don't really understand the meaning of racism, ageism, or ableism, you will be less successful in identifying problems and taking action to improve our school, community, and world. It is also important to keep in mind that language is constantly evolving, including language regarding human identities.

Talking about racism, prejudice, and intolerance makes many people uncomfortable. You may have

experienced intolerance and felt its painful effects. You may feel angry, sad, or disturbed by discussions that deal with your identity as a human being. You may feel implicated or guilty in hearing stories about racism and injustice—*I can't believe how badly Aboriginal people have been treated in Canada; You should hear how my mother talks about that group of people.* Or you may want to dismiss what you hear—*Why should I care? I've never done anything to anyone.* Regardless of your reaction—and you may have more than one—it is important to talk about these issues in an open and respectful fashion even if respect can be hard to give or to earn. These are “real-life” issues that affect all Canadians now and in the future.

Understanding the Language

Answer the questions below in your notebook or computer using the definitions provided.

1. What is the difference between acceptance and tolerance?
2. What does it mean to say Canada is a diverse society?
3. What is the same and different about race and ethnicity? Why are the two easily confused?
4. What is the difference between equality and equity? Why do you think diversity requires equity and not necessarily equality?
5. How is a hate crime different from other crimes?
6. Give an example that clearly shows that you understand the distinctions between prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping. Which of these human tendencies do you think is the most destructive? Why?

Definitions

The following definitions are useful in discussions on racism, prejudice, and intolerance.

Acceptance: to be met with approval

Antiracist: seeking the elimination of racism in all its forms

Discrimination: unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors. Discrimination, whether

Further Research

Learn more about “white privilege” by reading an excerpt of Peggy McIntosh’s paper “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” at www.cwru.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf.

intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

Diversity: the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include—but are not limited to—ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Ethnicity: the shared national, ethnocultural, racial, linguistic, and/or religious heritage of a group of people, whether or not those people live in their country of origin

Equality: the quality of being the same (in value, measurement, status)

Equity: a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Hate crimes: crimes motivated by hatred toward a specific group in society; can include graffiti, oral comments, vandalism, arson, assault, and murder

Prejudice: a set of opinions about or attitudes toward a certain group—or individuals within it—that casts that group and its members in an inferior light and for which there is no legitimate basis in fact

Race: a social construct that groups people on the basis of common ancestry and characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture, and/or facial features. The term is used to designate the social categories into which societies divide people according to such characteristics. Race is often confused

with ethnicity—a group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background; there may be several ethnic groups within a racial group.

Stereotype: a false or generalized—usually negative—conception of a group of people that results in the unconscious or conscious categorization of each member of that group, without regard for individual differences

Tolerance: willingness to recognize and respect the beliefs and practices of others; does not always imply agreement with the beliefs and practices

White privilege: a set of advantages that are believed to be enjoyed by white people beyond those commonly experienced by people of colour in the same social, political, or economic spaces

The “Isms” and “Phobias”

The group of words below is not inclusive of all types of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination based on human qualities and attributes, but it will help you begin to understand the ways in which we can negatively impact other human beings. These “isms” and “phobias” can be evident in institutions like education and religious systems as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individual people.

Ableism: prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people who have developmental, emotional, physical, sensory, or health-related disabilities

Ageism: prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people based on age

Anti-semitism: prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against individual Jews or the Jewish people on the basis of their culture and religion

Heterosexism: discrimination in favour of heterosexuals and against homosexual people

Homophobia: a hostile attitude, negative bias, or fear—which may exist at an individual or a systemic level—toward people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered

Islamophobia: prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, or fear directed against Muslims or Arabs on the basis of their culture and religion

Racism: a set of erroneous assumptions, opinions, and/or actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another

Sexism: prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination directed against people on the basis of their sex (biologically determined) or gender (socially constructed characteristics of women and men)

Follow-up

1. Match the following statements to the correct “ism” or “phobia.”
 - a) An elderly woman’s advice is dismissed by the town council as irrelevant and out-of-date.
 - b) A Muslim boy is taunted by other students as a “terrorist.”
 - c) None of the books in the library depict same-sex relationships.
 - d) Two girls who hold hands in the school hallway are called “gay” by other students.
 - e) The school has boys-only cricket, hockey, and baseball teams.
 - f) An autistic child is told he cannot participate in music lessons.
 - g) Nazi symbols are found painted on the walls of a synagogue.
 - h) A girl’s father will not allow her to date boys outside her race.
2. After completing the previous activity, write a brief reflection using these sentence stems:
 - a) The “ism” or “phobia” that I have to deal with personally is . . .
 - b) The “ism” or “phobia” that struck me as most pervasive in my home is . . .
 - c) The “ism” or “phobia” that struck me as most pervasive in my school community is . . .
 - d) The issue I wish we could discuss more about as a class is . . .

Sources for definitions: *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards*, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1993; *Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, 2009; worldnetweb.princeton.edu

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Perspectives on Racism

Before Reading

1. Think about how you'd answer the question: "Is racism a problem in Canada?"
2. Compare your answer with that of a classmate.
3. Compare your answers in a small group. What do you think accounts for different perspectives on racism in Canada?

Group Activity: Considering Perspectives on Racism

Create a "placemat" on a large sheet of chart paper to record responses during the following exercise. Write the title "Racism in Canada" in the centre of the placemat and leave enough space to record your group's final observations in a rectangle around the title. Divide the remaining space on the paper into four sections so that each member of a group of four students can individually record information in response to the questions in Task 1.

Task 1: Reflecting on Other's Words

Read the quotes below and then put the following information in your section of the placemat:

1. One quote with which you agree.
2. One quote with which you disagree.
3. One quote that you find particularly interesting or provocative.

"We believe—and research confirms—that students who feel welcome and accepted in their schools are more likely to succeed academically." — Kathleen Wynne, former Ontario Minister of Education (*Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, 2009)

"Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone." — George Dei, Canadian educator and antiracism and equity advocate (*Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*, 2009)

The following three quotes are from unidentified pedestrians in response to the question: "Is racism a problem in Canada?" (CBC News, "Aboriginal Peoples, Muslims face discrimination most: Environics poll," March 15, 2010)

"I think you're going to find racism all over the place. You're going to see it in the workplace, you're going to see it . . . in schools."

"I think we are a bit more tolerant than other countries, but I do still think that it's a problem."

"It's frustrating because you want to be seen as a person as opposed to some idea of what people see you as."

"There still exists systemic discrimination against Aboriginal peoples in the health-care, social-service, and justice systems, particularly in the Prairies." — Grand Chief Morris J. Swan Shannacappo of the Southern Chiefs' Organization (CBC News, "Aboriginal Peoples, Muslims face discrimination most: Environics poll," March 15, 2010)

“Discrimination in this country is essentially a race issue. If the Muslim is white, nobody has a problem. If the Muslim is black, people are petrified. So in the end it is a question about colour, not religion.” — Tarek Fatah, founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress (CBC News, “Aboriginal Peoples, Muslims face discrimination most: Environics poll,” March 15, 2010)

“I feel that I’m Canadian because I’ve lived here all my life and I don’t know anything else. Race has never been an issue for me.” — Alena Mondok, 13-year-old of Slovakian and Jamaican heritage (CBC News, “Aboriginal Peoples, Muslims face discrimination most: Environics poll,” March 15, 2010)

“We want to avoid the kind of ethnic enclaves or parallel communities that exist in some European communities. New Canadians have a duty to integrate . . . We don’t need the state to promote diversity.” — Jason Kenny, Canadian Minister of Immigration (“Enough of multiculturalism – bring on the melting pot,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 31, 2010)

“It is the effort to live in a country of peace and prosperity, with laws that are just, with people who are humane, and where citizens of all backgrounds encounter equal opportunities when they set out to realize their potential, contribute to their communities, participate in the Canadian economy, and engage the Canadian political system.” — Michael Adams (*Unlikely Utopia: The Surprising Triumph of Canadian Pluralism*)

“Multiculturalism has been completely distorted, turned on its head to essentially claim that anything anyone believes, no matter how ridiculous and outrageous, is okay and acceptable in the name of diversity.” — Ujjal Dosanjh, Liberal MP for Surrey, B.C. (“The new war over multiculturalism,” *Toronto Star*, April 25, 2010)

“In an immigrant nation, tensions are inevitable between the native-born and the foreign-born, older and newer immigrants, and the ancestral practices of immigrant parents and their Canadian-born or -bred kids. The push-pull of ‘old country’ values and new is the alchemy of a living, breathing culture. National identity is constantly evolving.” — Haroon Siddiqui (“The new war over multiculturalism,” *Toronto Star*, May 9, 2009)

“Canadian racism has always been subtle, unlike American racism, which slaps you in your face. Canadians who are racists truly believe that they are open and welcoming—until a person of colour or immigrant points out the racism. Then they cry reverse racism or point the finger right back at you because, in this great land, there is no racism . . . only overly sensitive immigrants.” — Shellene Drakes-Tull (*Toronto Star*, May 16, 2009)

“It’s very important that people come out and see other people’s cultures and what they bring to Canada. It’s only through learning about each other that we can really respect each other.” — Areeba Jawaid (*The Globe and Mail*, March 10, 2010)

Task 2: Sharing

Once everyone has completed their section of the placemat, the group should share and debrief their choices.

Task 3: Final Group Observations

As a group, discuss the following and write your group's responses in the centre of your placemat.

1. What is one question you would like to ask one of the people quoted?
2. What is one response you would like to make to one of the quotes?
3. What is your group's response to the question: "Is racism a problem in Canada?"
4. What is your group's response to the question: "What are three things that could be done to reduce and/or eliminate racism?"

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Evidence of Intolerance in Canada

Did you know . . .

Blacks are the third-largest visible minority in Canada, exceeded only by the Chinese and South Asian communities. Statistics Canada reports that black people account for 48 per cent of the victims of racially motivated hate crime in the country.

Focus for Reading

The following cases promote difficult conversations regarding intolerance and racism in Canada. For each case, consider the following.

1. What is the major issue/problem?
2. How was the issue/problem dealt with?
3. Do you think the issue/problem was resolved correctly? What else can be/should be done?

Sutton, Ontario

In 2007, 11 separate cases of racially motivated attacks and slurs aimed at Asian Canadians who were recreationally fishing were reported to police in Simcoe County, Ontario. Perpetrators who were caught were arrested and tried. Two years later, three incidents were reported. It appears that the work of human rights staff, leaders of the Asian community, police, and politicians is making progress in curbing these attacks.

Source: *Toronto Star*, April 9, 2009

Keswick High School, Ontario

A 15-year-old Korean student was suspended from school for 20 days and was charged with assault causing bodily harm after a fight in gym class with a white student on April 21, 2009. The white student used a racial slur and when confronted refused to apologize. The white student threw the first punch, hitting the 15-year-old in the mouth. The 15-year-old, a black belt in martial arts, threw a punch that broke the white student's nose.

The Asian student was the only one charged after the fight, which led to protests in the school community and beyond. Four hundred students walked out of class one morning to protest the suspension and criminal charges. After one week of suspension, the York Board of Education reversed its decision and allowed him back to school after the

two boys participated in a reconciliation session. The criminal charges still stand, and the boy is due to appear in court on May 13, 2010.

Source: *The Globe and Mail*, May 1, 2009

Hants County, Nova Scotia

Two Nova Scotia brothers await trial for hate crimes in Hants County, Nova Scotia. They face charges of public incitement of hatred, mischief, and uttering threats. They are accused of placing a two-metre high cross with a hanging noose in front of the home of Michelle Lyon and Shayne Howe and their five children. Howe is the only black person living in the town of Poplar Grove. The crime took place on February 21, 2010, at 1:30 in the morning.

Many in the community of Hants County rallied around the family. Lyon and Howe received many cards and letters of support. And more than 200 people took part in a march against racism and in support of the family. Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon are unsure if they will remain in the community where they have lived for six years.

Source: cbc.ca, March 1, 2010

Africville, Nova Scotia

Africville was a black community at the northern tip of the Halifax peninsula that existed for about 150 years. Its founding members were former American slaves

Did you know . . .

The government of France is seeking to ban the niqab and the burqa from streets, shops, and markets in addition to public buildings. In January 2010 the Muslim Canadian Congress declared a ban on the face-covering niqab or burqa. About 30 Muslim groups across Canada denounced the proposal, stating that the state has no business dictating what a woman should wear. In Turkey, a Muslim nation, face-covering garments are forbidden by law.

and other black settlers. The community did not receive running water or sewage facilities despite paying city taxes.

The tight-knit and vibrant community—which had become physically run down over the decades—was ordered destroyed. The land was expropriated and levelled in the 1960s to make way for “urban renewal” and a bridge over the Halifax harbour. Former residents and their descendants have been demanding compensation and redevelopment. Part of the old Africville site was declared a national historic site in 2002.

Mayor Peter Kelly of Halifax delivered a formal apology to residents of Africville in February 2010 and promised \$3-million to build a replica church and interpretive centre at the site. No money has been offered to former residents forced to move.

Source: cbc.ca, February 23, 2010

Hamilton, Ontario

“Would your ability to judge evidence in this case without bias or prejudice be affected by the fact the accused are black men or non-white men?” This question has been permitted in Ontario courts since 1994 since it was found

that anti-black racism is a fact that must be confronted in legal proceedings in Canada.

Potential jurors are asked this question by defence lawyers during jury selection. A person who responds “yes” would most likely not be chosen as a jury member. At least one court case in Hamilton, Ontario, ended in a mistrial due to the fact that too many potential jurors declared themselves intrinsically biased against black defendants.

Source: *Toronto Star*, June 27, 2009

Montreal, Quebec

In February 2010, a 29-year-old Egyptian-born woman wearing a niqab was expelled from a French-language class for immigrants in Montreal. The school reported making multiple “reasonable efforts” to accommodate her beliefs. As a result of this high-profile case and others, Quebec tabled legislation in March 2010 requiring Muslim women to show their faces in all government locations. This controversial legislation continues to be debated as an example of what is “reasonable accommodation” of minority groups in Canada.

Follow-up

1. Conduct further research on two of these cases. Go to <http://cbc.ca> to gather your information.
2. Take the Project Implicit Psychological at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html> test to see if you are unconsciously biased.

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Weighing the Evidence

Quote

"I always believe at some point, as years and generations go by, we will all be so mixed and diluted that racism will not be so prevalent and strong."
— Elisa Marcucci, a Canadian-born Italian married to a Jamaican French-Canadian, ("Mixed-race couples increase 33%," *Toronto Star*)

Quote

"It's a benefit for my kids to grow up with this diversity and open-mindedness to different cultures, views and opinions."
— Carina DelFrate, a Canadian-born Filipina married to an Italian-Canadian ("Mixed-race couples increase 33%," *Toronto Star*)

There is evidence that Canadians, especially younger ones, are becoming more accepting and tolerant. Read the information below and then respond to the questions that follow.

Visible Minorities Will Become the Visible Majority

According to Statistics Canada, about one-third of Canada's population—up to 14.4 million people—will be a visible minority by 2031. "Visible minorities" are defined by the study as persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-white in colour.

Countries of Origin for the 247 243 immigrants who became permanent residents of Canada in 2008 (Source: Immigration and Citizenship Canada)

Country	# of immigrants	% of total
China	29 336	11.9
India	24 549	9.9
Philippines	23 724	9.6
U.S.	11 216	4.5
UK	9 243	3.7
Pakistan	8 052	3.2
South Korea	7 245	2.9

The country's foreign-born population may rise as much as 28 per cent, which is four times faster than the rest of the population. White people in Toronto and Vancouver will become the minority over the next 30 years. The largest "visible minority" groups are Indians, Pakistanis, and Sri Lankans. The proportion of Chinese-Canadians is expected to decrease from 24 to 21 per cent due to low fertility rates. Urban centres remain the choice of most immigrants as places to settle.

Mixed-race Couples

A new Statistics Canada study released April 20, 2010, shows that mixed-race couples are doing better socio-economically than those who marry within their own race. On average, mixed-race couples earn \$5 000 more in annual income. Mixed race couples were also more highly educated. Among Canadian couples with a university degree, 6.4 per cent are in mixed unions.

Follow-up

1. What is the evidence of increasing acceptance and tolerance?
2. How does diversity make Canada stronger?
3. What Canadian statistical trends may influence future views on diversity?
4. Write a brief reflection using these sentence stems:
 - a) What I find hopeful in this information is . . .
 - b) I would/would not consider marrying outside of my own race because . . .
 - c) My response to Marcucci and DelFrate (quotes in the margins) is . . .

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Activity: The Canadian Museum for Human Rights

In 2012, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) will open in Winnipeg. This ambitious project aims to be the most comprehensive human-rights museum in the world. One of the museum's challenges will be selecting exhibits that document the full range of people and events that are significant in the history of human rights.

Choose one of the following tasks to complete.

1. Go to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights Web site at www.humanrightsmuseum.ca/share-your-story/guidelines-stories and share a story with them (they are accepting online submissions of photographs, PDF files, and videos). They are looking for stories about experiences of discrimination, overcoming and/or confronting discrimination, people or events that have inspired you to respect and honour human rights and images, symbols, objects, words, music, or art that symbolize human rights to you.

Be prepared to share your story with your classmates or with your teacher in a conference.

2. Write a proposal to be presented to Victoria Dickenson, the chief curator of CMHR, in which you argue for the inclusion of a Canadian person (e.g., Viola Desmond), group (e.g., Canadian Race Relations Foundation), artifact (e.g., Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms), or event (e.g., Statement of Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, June 11, 2008) in the new Canadian Museum of Human Rights. You must be prepared with adequate and accurate research along with an idea of how the research will be presented in an engaging museum exhibit. The following guidelines will help you complete this task:
 - a) Generate a list of criteria to be used to decide what "deserves" a place in this museum.
 - b) Decide on a person, group, artifact, or event to be represented based on your criteria.
 - c) Gather research on your topic.
 - d) Decide on a compelling format in which to showcase your topic that is mindful of the museum format.
 - e) Write out a script of all words presented and visuals presented/objects represented in the installation.
 - f) Comment on how people will be encouraged to reflect, talk, think, and meet people through interaction with your exhibit.

Be prepared to present your proposal to your classmates.