# Change and Continuity as Historical Forces

## Suggested Subject Levels: 9 and 10

## Subject: History

## Suggested Ontario Curriculum Expectations:

* **Change and Continuity**
  + Identify the major groups of immigrants that have come to Canada since 1914 and describe the circumstances that led to their decision to emigrate (e.g., impact of war, political unrest, famine);
  + Analyze the similarities and differences between current and historical patterns of immigration to Canada, making reference to changing immigration policies and pull factors (e.g., incentives for immigrants) that were in effect during different periods

## Topic: Benchmarks of Historical Thinking

## Content: Change and Continuity as Historical Forces

## Working Definition:

“One of the keys to continuity and change is looking for change where common sense suggests that there has been none and looking for continuities where we assumed that there was change. Judgments of continuity and change can be made on the basis of comparisons between some point in the past and the present, or between two points in the past, such as before and after Confederation in Canada. We evaluate change over time using the ideas of progress and decline.”[[1]](#footnote-0)

## Goals (Aims and Outcomes):

Students should be expected to understand and apply the concepts of continuity and change to significant historical events.

## Objectives (Performance and Behavioural Indicators):

Students should be able to consider historical events or ideas both in terms of their persistence/continuity and their change/evolution.

## Materials (Aids/AV/Technology):

Computers with Internet Access

## Introductory Activity (Focusing Event):

Discussion Questions, whether approached as a whole class or divided amongst smaller groups, can help students focus their thinking on questions related to the consideration of the moral dimensions of historical thinking.

Focusing, leading questions for discussion might include:

a. Identify any points in your life that, looking back, appear as turning points or tipping points. What were the moments you can remember that dramatically changed the course of events in your life?

b. What are the distinct periods in your life that you can separate and relate as distinct?

c. Throughout those periods, despite other changes, what forces, events, or ideas were continuous and persistent for you?

## Development Activity (Modeling/Explanation/Demonstration):

Brainstorm with the class, using mind mapping, the meanings of terms such as change, continuity, periods, and turning points, within the context of historical thinking.

Individually, students can create individual life maps, demarcating their lives into periods on a timeline. They should identify on these maps, using pictures and words, significant events or people who were involved in these periods.

Short presentations of these life maps, in small groups, as a whole class, or in conference with the teacher, should follow.

Key questions to be answered in the presentation or conference can include:

1. How did you divide your life? What separates one period from another?

2. What were the events or people that remain in the life map throughout?

3. How did the changes in course happen?

4. How are the events of your personal life map related to those of others in your family, social circle?

5. How do the periods in your life relate to those of your community, or of others in society?

Some events, clearly have more of an individual impact, while others affect or persist through the lives of many people.

### Follow-up Activity:

Teachers can collect a variety of history textbooks and bring them into the classroom. Students can be asked to consider how the textbook authors divided the context of study with regards to chapters or particular periods.

Key questions to be discussed or responded to in a journal entry or essay could include:

1. What criteria and judgments do historians use to establish divisions?

2. Why are certain divisions particular to a historian’s account, while others are commonly agreed upon as significant?

3. What distinguishes an “era” or an “age”?

4. Are there events in our present world or context that we see as potentially emerging as tipping points for the future course of events?

5. What factors in our present society will continue to be influential in years to come?

## Practice (Guided/Monitored Activity):

Students can examine the Canadian context and try to identify factors that have changed, continued, and evolved over the country’s history. The aim of such activities would be to consider the evolution of the country itself, and how a multiplicity of events, individuals, and ideas are implicated in this history.

A useful activity would involve having students list, with a partner or in small peer groups, fifty to one hundred physical items that affected Canadian history.[[2]](#footnote-1) Some of these items would be new inventions or creations, while others could have preceded human settlement of the land.

As a consolidating activity for this practice lesson, students can be asked to share their lists and discuss how each item is significant, either in terms of turning points, changes, continuities, or evolution of ideas. A master list for the class can be created.

A sample list is included in the folder, under the title “Then and Now Activity Example.”

## Independent Practice (Relation to STONES social history research):

Students can be asked to read the text on the Francophone Community in Kingston.[[3]](#footnote-2) Take the tour online or, if possible, in person. A class trip to the sites might be possible.

Students should be asked to jot down, as they emerge, thoughts or feelings provoked by the tour text or sites. They should be asking themselves what the events, individuals, concepts, artifacts and places depicted in the text/tour meant in relation to the past activities on continuity and change in history.

Students can use the worksheet, included in the folder under the title “Continuity and Change Worksheet” to reflect on the forces of change and continuity within the context of Kingston’s / Canada’s history.

Using this worksheet, students will identify a person, place, artifact, or idea deemed significant by the individual. They will explain, briefly, its significance in the past context as well as its present significance. Lastly, they will assess and describe the degree to which continuity and change were important.

## Accommodations (Differentiated Instruction)

Extra time can be afforded to students.

## Checking for Ongoing Understanding (Formative Assessment/Feedback Opportunities)

Students can journal, following each activity within the units of study, a reflective entry considering their ongoing understanding of the benchmark for historical thinking, as well as its implications for active, participatory citizenship in contemporary contexts.

Teachers can take the opportunity to read these journals and adjust the lessons / course of study to the pace, concerns, and questions raised in the entries.

Student and teacher journals can be shared in online space using a blogging tool such as blogger.com

## Closure (Wrapping up Activities):

Students can be asked to write a table of contents for a history textbook that they would write on, for example, the history of Canada, their city, their school, or the world. Following this activity, they can, in written form or in conference with the teacher, explain why they decided to assign the periods or sections that they did.

Alternatively, in partners, students can role-play being a historian and trying to explain to a young child or novice historian the importance of taking into consideration the forces of continuity and change when thinking historically.

1. http://www.histori.ca/benchmarks/concepts/identify.php [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Robert Chapman: http://www.histori.ca/benchmarks/tasks/view.php?taskId=41. A rubric for the activity is included on the site. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Downloaded, or viewed online, at http://stoneskingston.ca/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)