

## Przykładowe tematy esejów z II etapu

2014

1. In 1968, a national fascination with the young Liberal Justice Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, his strong and innovative ideas about the principles of the government and politics and his youthful manners, unique for the times, led to his successful election to the office of the Prime Minister of Canada. Discuss Pierre Trudeau's personal style and his major political accomplishments that produced a nationwide reaction called 'Trudeaumania.' Do you think that history can repeat itself in the person of his son Justin Trudeau, the current leader of the Liberal Party of Canada? Does Canada need charismatic leaders with a social conscience?

2. Discuss the myth of the heroic, benevolent and upright Mounties as it was constructed in popular Canadian literature and film. Concentrate on the genre of the Northern or the Northwestern featuring Mounties (as contrasted with cowboys and sheriffs of American westerns). Comment on the importance of the mythologizing project in the process of building Canadian nationhood. What features of Canadianness do the RCMP officers reveal in the dominant culture representations of the police force? How is Sam Steele represented in Heritage Minutes? It is claimed that "the scarlet-coated riders had made the wilderness a safe abode and a place of opportunity for the law-abiding and industrious" (MacBeth, Policing the Plains 40). Their duty was to calm and "civilize" the frontier and they always succeeded in their missions. Has this idealized version of Canadian history ever been challenged by unacceptable actions of the RCMP officers? You may consult the essay by Christopher Gittings, "Imaging Canada. The Singing Mountie and Other Commodifications of Nation".

3. Visual imagery has a significant role in the formation of cultural and national identity. Images become internalized as cultural memories and they act as instruments of cohesive identity. In Canada, landscape painting has been used historically to construct a distinctive vision of Canadian national identity and it was the Group of Seven painters who have been hailed as the national group of artists. Discuss their role in the formation of specific mythologies of Canadianness. Identify the features of Canadianness promoted by the group. Do you find these conceptualizations problematic? Are you familiar with any parodies of the Group of Seven paintings? For the analysis of this topic you may consult essays by John O'Brian, „Kanadyjskość = Północność + Odludność. Malarstwo pejzażowe a tożsamość narodowa” and Edith-Anne Pageot, „Pejzaże, wyobcowanie. Konstruowanie mitów tożsamości narodowych w sztuce Kanady”.

4. The opening ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics were organized by the Canadian government as a "showcase of the very best Canada has to offer in terms of ingenuity, friendliness, culture and diversity;" it was also a "rare opportunity for viewers to experience the diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures in Canada. In this visually stunning masterpiece [...] Aboriginal youth in traditional clothing and regalia entered the stadium dancing their own traditional style of dance, representative of their unique Aboriginal heritage." This ideal unified vision of Canada was broadcast to the world but was it a genuine representation of the current situation of Indigenous people in the country? What do you think of the National Chief Shawn Atleo's bold words about "repealing the Indian Act and abolishing the Department of Aboriginal Affairs"? What is the Indian Act? What does the Idle No More Movement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada tell us about the present state of dialogue between both cultures?

5. Canada is one of the best places in the world to live, according to the Better Life Index (2013) which finds the country among the leaders in most of the 24 indicators of 11 topics which reflect what the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has identified as essential to well-being in terms of material living conditions (housing, income, jobs) and quality of life (community, education, environment, governance, health, life satisfaction, safety and work-life balance). Canada

came in third overall, behind Sweden and Australia. Which of the indicators make the country most attractive to immigrants? Which of them would be most important to you? Compare how Canada and Poland perform according to the importance you give to each of 11 topics that make for a better life. Does Poland feature better than Canada in any of the indicators of a better life?

6. Popular cultural representations of Indigenous people of Canada and Native Americans in general are full of stereotypes based on colonial ideologies; they are, as Daniel Frances points out, “[w]hite man’s fantasy”. Indeed, “through non-Aboriginal writing, theatre, film, television, comic books, and advertising, Indians have existed as the invention of the European.” Discuss the problem of misrepresenting Indigenous people by the dominant culture and compare the stereotypical images with the information you find about Indigenous people of Canada, living both on the reserve and in urban centres, on reliable websites and in online newspapers and magazines. What kind of vision of Aboriginal Canada are you getting from the various sources, including the Aboriginal media? How do the Indigenous people represent themselves to the world?

7. Contemporary Aboriginal artists of Canada challenge the dominant national landscape art of the country. They also question their earlier misrepresentation in the art of such dominant culture artists as Paul Kane. Their art projects inscribe different distinct visions of Indigenous realities, worldviews and knowledge systems. First, comment on Paul Kane’s representation of Aboriginal people and then select examples of art from two different cultures and argue for their distinctiveness resulting from culture specific conceptualizations of the universe. Do you think the current interest in Aboriginal art results from a genuine desire to get to know another culture or just functions as another problematic colonial fascination with otherness?

8. Heritage Minutes is another project of nation-building which aims at presenting a specific vision of Canadianness. Identify it and point out the major general characteristics of this national project. Analyze the construction of this vision on the basis of five examples of Heritage Minutes which focus on the representation of minority cultures. What kind of myth of Canadianness does the project promote? You are also expected to critique the series and take into consideration, for instance, the parodies of the Heritage Minutes in such Canadian television programs as “This Hour Has 22 Minutes” or “Royal Canadian Air Farce.” To discuss the topic you may consult two essays by Katarzyna Rukszto: “Up for Sale. The Commodification of Canadian Culture” and “The Other Heritage Minutes: Satirical Reactions to Canadian Nationalism”.

9. Residential schools in Canada were perceived by the Canadian government as a tool of civilizing the Aboriginal population. However, the government, hand in hand with the Christian churches, began an unrelenting and continuing assault upon the Aboriginal family and culture. Forced to attend church-run residential schools and subject to horrendous mental, emotional and frequently sexual abuse, children were to be stripped of their Aboriginal identity by means of beating out their spirituality and language, and by a simultaneous imposition of a foreign value system. Referring to various written government documents, personal recollections of Aboriginal people (available online), and photographs, discuss the residential school education as a black chapter in Canadian history and show its long-term effects. Compare the residential schooling with the Aboriginal concept of education. Comment on the current actions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and express your opinion about it.

10. The multicultural policy (Multiculturalism Act of 1988–Bill 93, the Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada) –the new approach to nation-building formed by the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, gave explicit recognition to Canadians whose origin was non-French, non-British-, and non-Aboriginal (separate Indian Act laws regulate the status of indigenous peoples). Yet, historically, Canadian immigration history was marked by racism and discrimination. Racist laws and practices restricted not only the immigration of certain groups to the country but they also had an impact on the treatment of various minority cultures already residing in Canada. Write an essay on the exploitation and racist treatment of Asian Canadians. Focus either on the

history of the Chinese in Canada, starting with the treatment of the Chinese working on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Rocky Mountains, or on the racist attitudes towards Japanese Canadians both prior and in the wake of the outbreak of WWII, their removal from the coast of British Columbia and imprisonment in internment camps. To examine the topic, refer to various written government documents, personal testimonials, and photographs. Reflect on the delayed apologies of the Canadian government to Asian Canadians and give examples of current important contributions of Asian Canadians to Canadian culture.

11. Canadian writers have also been involved in the process of mythologizing Canada. One of the mythologies of Canadianness, constructed by the dominant culture of the early 20th century, was related to the concept of small towns which were idealized as representing a way of life that was “finer, simpler, purer, more kindly and more honourable” than in big industrial urban centres. Small town inhabitants, however, were rarely tolerant of otherness. To describe the mentality of closely knit, law-abiding societies whose moral and social values are unquestionable and for whom otherness is regarded as problematic, Northrop Frye proposes a concept of “garrison mentality”. Do you think that Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and other novels by the writer, should you wish to discuss them, represent Prince Edward Island small towns as “garrison mentality” communities? Discuss the representation of the island society, its values, religious beliefs, views on the role of women and men, and other convictions as well as prejudices. Does Montgomery contrast it with bigger cities? Some critics claim that small Canadian towns represented the Canadian nation in miniature. Do you agree with such a statement with reference to Montgomery’s writing? Does the writer represent a broad spectrum of immigrants to Canada? What are the ethnic, religious and cultural groups she examines in her writing? Is multiculturalism of Canadian society an important part of her texts?

12. What is the spirit of Canada? There have been many attempts at defining the concept in literary, cultural, political and geographical discourses, just to mention some of them. Most probably every Canadian citizen or immigrant to this country asked this question at least once in his / her life but foreigners have also been pondering the allure of this country. For some, the spirit of Canada is inscribed in the accomplishments of its citizens and in the values and principles guiding cultural, social, economic, and political institutions. For others, it is the country’s unique geography, landscape, wildlife but also lifestyle (note Kim Bellefontain’s admiration for Canadian landmarks in *ABC of Canada* (Jasper National Park and Peggy’s Cove) and Canadian pastimes (the Calgary Stampede, playing hockey and watching the Northern Lights)). The spirit of Canada can also be defined through legends, fiction, poetry, music and visual art of the nation (see Barbara Hehner’s *The Spirit of Canada: Canada’s Story in Legends, Fiction, Poems and Songs*). How would you illustrate the concept? Write an essay about the spirit of Canada, specify your understanding of the term and choose three signifiers of Canadianness you consider most important for this discussion. Using a variety of sources, you must argue for your choice by showing a distinct character of the three selected aspects of Canadianness responsible for the uniqueness of the country’s spirit.

## 2015

1. It has been stressed by critics that visual imagery has a significant role in the formation of cultural and national identity. Images become internalized as cultural memories and they act as instruments of cohesive identity. Discuss the vision of Canadianness as created by Emily Carr in her paintings. What images of Canadianness does she promote? What do her paintings say about her relation to First Nations’ cultures? What is specific about her representation of Canadian identity? What was the reaction of the Group of Seven painters to the art of Carr? What are the similarities and/or differences between the vision of Canadianness represented in the paintings by Carr and the Group of Seven?

2. The category of Canadian nationhood has been changing throughout history. Initially, Canada was constructed as a bicultural nation, with the English and French recognized as the distinct dominant cultures, with no room left for the cultural diversity represented by immigrants to this country from all over the world, saying nothing about the diversity represented by the Indigenous people of this land. Provide several examples of the discriminatory treatment of the Indigenous population and non-British and non-French immigrants to Canada. The Canadian Multicultural Act, passed in 1988, ensured equal treatment and respect for all citizens regardless of their cultural or ethnic background. Nevertheless, this multicultural policy has been both praised and criticized. Why? Have there been any changes introduced to this official Canadian government policy in recent decades?

3. The title of a novel *Two Solitudes* (1945) by Hugh MacLennan has become emblematic of the relations between Anglophones and Francophones in Canada. The increasing tension between these two nations has resulted in the willingness of the majority of Francophone Quebecers to separate from Canada. Discuss the reasons for Quebec to separate from the rest of the country. What events in Canadian history intensified this conflict? Comment on possible promises and threats resulting from the separation of the province from Canada. What are the differences in the vision of Canadianness proposed by English Canadian and French Canadian politicians? How is the distinctiveness of Quebec represented by the artists/writers (give three-four names) of this province?

4. Comment on the present-day situation of Canadian Aboriginals. How have their societies changed since the arrival of white Europeans who brought with them their values, social codes and beliefs? What has been the impact of the Indian Act on Indigenous people in Canada? What challenges do they face on a daily basis? What actions do they take in order to fight for their rights? What is the meaning and importance of the Idle No More movement? What do you think is the future of Indigenous nations in Canada? For the analysis of some aspects of this topic you may consult, apart from various websites, such films as *Poundmaker's Lodge: A Healing Place*, *No Address*, *The Invisible Nation* and *You Are on Indian Land* (available online at <https://www.nfb.ca/> – see bibliography).

5. Examine the distinctiveness of Inuit filmmaking on the basis of Zacharias Kunuk's work. Select two films available online to discuss the topic. Explore the websites on Inuit culture taught by films which will help you to focus on the topic. Concentrate both on the content and form of the film projects with reference to the representation of this distinct culture: <http://www.isuma.tv/inuit-culture-education/teaching-films>; <http://www.isuma.tv/inuit-culture-education/inuit-filmmaking-style>

6. Discuss the phenomenon of Leonard Cohen, the Canadian singer-songwriter-poet-novelist. The critics say: "No comparison can be drawn between Leonard Cohen and any other phenomenon. Many will undoubtedly attempt such a comparison, but the result will be, at best, fragmentary. For Cohen is a rarity, if not a scarcity. And though he will always be rare in the true sense of the word, he will be listened to, sung, and read by an ever increasing entourage, those of the new awareness, those seeking artists of sensitivity." Do you agree with this statement? What kind of philosophy of life do Cohen's texts convey? Do you think his sung poetry can be still attractive to young people of today? Express your opinion.

7. The UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage established the World Heritage List as "a means of recognizing that some places, either natural or cultural, are of sufficient importance to be the responsibility of the international community as a whole". Canada has 17 World Heritage sites and another seven sites are on Canada's Tentative List of World Heritage sites. Choose three of these sites and examine their distinctiveness and their importance to Canadian culture, history and identity, as well as the "universal values" that they convey. Consider the criteria for inclusion on the world heritage list and criteria for determining the "Outstanding Universal Value", as explained in the online material provided.

8. Discuss the distinctive character of Canadian Northwest Indigenous art. Comment on its major characteristics and choose two examples to explore the worldviews of the Indigenous people of this geographical region of Canada.

9. Polish Heritage Day at the Royal Ontario Museum April 5, 2014 highlighted the work of artists and writers of Polish diaspora in Canada with a special focus on the impact of the Catholic religion on Polishness. Teresa Berezowski, the current president of the Canadian-Polish Congress stated: “We’ve played a part in the development of Canada and our multicultural fabric. It’s very, very faith based. It’s an important part of our community.” This traditional vision of Polishness has been expanded upon by such writers as Ewa Stachniak who contributes to the richness of Canadian society by constructing more complex visions of Polish society and the Polish experience in Canada. Concentrate on the writing of Ewa Stachniak to discuss the way she confronts the Polish historical heritage. Choose her novel *Necessary Lies* (2000), translated as *Konieczne Kłamstwa* (2004) to show the distinct immigrant view on the history of Polish society and its multicultural character.

## 2016

1. Canada as a “country without ghosts” or a “country without mythology” has been “invented” by writers, critics, artists and politicians. Landscape has been regarded as a chief symbol of Canadian cultural identity. It has been changing historically but the images of Canada as an uninhabited northern wilderness remain constant in the nationalist mythology proposed by the Group of Seven Painters. Margaret Atwood refers to this vision in her short story „Death by Landscape” (1990) and develops it in this narrative by focusing on the dangers that such a wilderness can create. Write an essay based on this story in which you analyze the representation of nature, as well as canoeing and camping in the wilderness as quintessential Canadian experiences. How are they represented in the text? What kind of dangers relate to them? What emotions does nature evoke in the characters of the story? Is nature a monster or a benign mother? In *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) Atwood proposed the concept of survival in savage and dangerous nature as important signifiers of Canadian identity. Does this short story convey similar ideas? What do you know of Indigenous attitudes to nature? Does Atwood’s story show any awareness of them? Are there any traces of the aboriginal presence in this narrative? Are there any examples of appropriation and misrepresentation of Indigenous cultures in this story? Does it reveal any other non-white Canadian attitudes to nature? How would you interpret the title „Death by landscape”, considering that landscape is the view of nature constructed by culture, and in this story specifically, by the European settler culture?

2. *Heritage Minutes*, the one-minute dramatizations of important events and figures in Canadian history, have been produced in order „to foster national identification among Canadian citizens by raising awareness and interest in Canadian heritage and history.” They are divided into several categories including Arts, Building Democracy, Canadian Symbols, Exploration, Heroes, Aboriginal Peoples, Innovators, Military, Settling Canada and Sports. Write an essay in which you analyze the construction of the vision of Canada produced in this project. Choose four categories to examine the topic. You are also expected to critique the series and take into consideration, for instance, the parodies of the *Heritage Minutes* in *Minute Parodies*. To discuss the topic, you may consult two essays by Katarzyna Rukszto: “Up for Sale. The Commodification of Canadian Culture” and “The Other Heritage Minutes: Satirical Reactions to Canadian Nationalism.”

3. Pierre Elliot Trudeau is regarded as one of the greatest politicians in Canadian history. During his years in office as Prime Minister (1968-74, 1974-79, 1980-84), he played a key role in passing crucial bills and acts that made Canada develop more as a nation, balanced the equality between the English and French Canadians as well as promoted the policy of multiculturalism. Trudeau achieved an

unprecedented popularity among Canadians. ‘Trudeaumania’ was a word used by the media to describe the nationwide admiration and enthusiasm for Trudeau. Examine the concept of ‘Trudeaumania’ in your essay. Ponder on the following questions: What was the political and economic situation of Canada at the time of Trudeau’s entry into politics? What was his vision of Canada? What are his most lasting accomplishments and contributions to Canadian politics and society? Name five of them. What personality traits helped him achieve the extreme wave of popularity? What was his relationship with the press and media? Do you notice another example of ‘Trudeaumania’ sweeping the country after Justin Trudeau, the eldest son of Pierre Trudeau, assumed office as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Prime Minister of Canada on November 4, 2015?

4. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, small groups of gold-seekers travelled along the Yukon River making small gold strikes. Eventually, on August 16, 1896 there was a major gold strike in Rabbit Creek near Dawson City and gold could be found all over the area. Less than a year after the initial discovery of gold, the steamer *Portland* arrived in Seattle with hordes of successful gold miners carrying bags and sacks filled with gold. Before long, the newspapers spread word of the discovery and shipment and the Klondike Gold Rush, sometimes referred to as the Yukon Gold Rush, was on, bringing large numbers of entrepreneurial adventurers to the Klondike River. In order to get to the Yukon goldfields, most miners went on a difficult overland journey in the sub-Arctic climate, which turned out to be a great physical challenge. While some people were able to find the hoped-for riches, the majority of them went there in vain. Write an essay in which you examine the significance of the Klondike Gold Rush for the Pacific Northwest in the late 19th century. How was the Klondike excitement related to the economic situation and social context of Western Canada at that time? How did the gold excitement change as the gold rush progressed? What role did the natural environment play in shaping the event? How was money really made and who were the Klondike Kings? Who was unsuccessful in getting rich and why? What was the impact of the Klondike on the economy and society of Canada at the time? Why do critics claim that “the most lasting legacy of the Klondike gold rush is the impression it left in the public mind”?

5. Louis Riel is one of the most controversial figures in Canadian history. He was a leader who sacrificed his life to fight for the rights and culture of the Métis people as their homelands – the vast territory called Rupert’s Land – had gradually started coming under Canadian influence. In an effort to prevent the loss of control of their land as well as to fight racism and discrimination against the Métis considered to be “half-breed”, Riel undertook the responsibility of leading two resistance movements against the Canadian government. As his actions resulted in the creation of the province of Manitoba in 1870, he was a hero for the French-speaking Métis whereas the Canadian government considered him a traitor and hanged him for high treason in 1885. Write an essay in which you examine the long-standing controversy surrounding Louis Riel, his impact on Canadian history and politics and the changing views on his legacy – his status as a rebel replaced by the recognition of him as a visionary praised for his political ideas. What were the two resistance movements? Why is Riel regarded by many as a Canadian hero while others question his sanity? Describe the lasting effect of Riel's execution on Canadian history.

6. Before WWII, there were about 23,000 Japanese living on the West Coast of British Columbia. The majority of them were Canadians by birth or naturalized citizens. Although they paid taxes and served in the Canadian army, they were denied the right to vote and suffered persecution and racism at the hands of mainstream Canadian society. To make things worse, in the wake of the bombing of Pearl Harbour by the Imperial Japanese navy, the Canadian government issued the War Measures Act, the terms of which stated that all people of Japanese origin were to be deprived of their fishing licenses, removed from their homes in British Columbia, and relocated to internment camps in the interior of British Columbia and Alberta. Discuss in your essay the problem of the internment of Japanese Canadians during WWII and the Redress Movement of the 1980s. Why were Japanese-Canadians

imprisoned in internment camps? What happened to their homes and possessions? What were the Acts and Orders-in-Council relating to the internment camps? Who spearheaded the Redress Movement and what were its claims? What is the goal and mission of Sedai, the Japanese Canadian Legacy Project?

7. Researchers have often missed or chosen to ignore the long tradition of Native humour. Even Franz Boas, a pioneer of modern anthropology, misread Indigenous cultures and reinforced the stereotype of the "stone-faced Indian." Humour, however, is essential to the Native way of life. Aboriginal people have "used humour in the same way as Jews used vaudeville and black American's stand-up." Watch the documentary *Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew* (2000), directed by Drew Hayden Taylor, about the power of Aboriginal humour. On the basis of this material write an essay in which you explore the concept of humour in Indigenous cultures. Focus on types of humour, and its functions in relation to identity, politics and racism.

8. Indigenous art projects inscribe distinct visions of Indigenous realities, worldviews, and knowledge systems. Watch the documentary directed by Loretta Todd, *Hands of History* (1994) and examine the concept of Indigenous art on the basis of interviews of four female First Nations artists—Doreen Jensen, Rena Point Bolton, Jane Ash Poitras and Joanne Cardinal-Schubert. Write an essay in which you reflect on the importance of art for Indigenous cultures although there is no word for art in most of them. Discuss the predominant subject matter, aesthetic philosophies, as well as techniques and personal styles of two selected artists.

## 2017

1. The 150th Anniversary of Confederation in 2017 is a good time for reflection on the contributions of Polish immigrants and Canadian citizens of Polish ancestry to the building of this country, considered by many as one of the most desirable places to live in the 21st century. Select three areas of Polish Canadian culture, be it literature, history, politics, business, film, visual arts, music, sports or three historical and/or contemporary figures, which you consider most important for the building of Canada's value system. Write an essay in which you specify first what the Canadian values are, and then discuss how the selected areas of Polish Canadian culture or historical and/or contemporary figures of Polish diaspora in Canada have been shaping them, contributing to them or enhancing them.

2. Write an essay in which you examine the history of Canada's road to total independence from Great Britain. When did Canada formally become independent? Which historical events have led to this specific event and what other series of events followed on the road towards its total independence? Discuss the topic with reference to key dates and events and explain how they have been crucial in leading Canada to independence from its mother country.

3. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, known as "the Great Conciliator," is regarded as one of Canada's most eloquent and illustrious Prime Ministers. Leading Canada through fifteen of its most formative years, Laurier strongly believed that the development of Canada's West was pivotal for the stimulation of the country's economy. By means of his tolerance and systematic compromise resolving numerous contentious issues which set Canadians against each other, Laurier was able to solidify the country into a Confederation with the addition of two provinces and, as a result, he brought the country to the status of nationhood. During his years in office, Laurier's leanings towards a political middle ground resulted in the improvement of Canada's position relative to the United States and Great Britain. The time of Canada's renewed growth and prosperity was the result of Laurier's actions and that period was called the 'Laurier Era'. Discuss the so-called 'Laurier Era'. What was the "Sunny Way?" How did Laurier reconcile the interests of English and French Canada with his policies? What was the Laurier-Greenway agreement? How did he encourage the development of and immigration to Canada's western territories? What events triggered the worldwide interest in the Canadian West? What were Laurier's nation-building

accomplishments? Why was Laurier defeated in the Canadian federal election of 1911? What is the proudest achievement of Canadian liberalism?

4. With the arrival of the first Europeans in Canada, Canadian territories and landscape underwent a tsunami of tumultuous changes. The circumstances and effects of exploration, industrialization, urbanization, and trade manifest themselves differently across diverse regions. The European newcomers, seeking new forms of wealth in the distant land, began to exploit and restructure the Canadian landscape by settlement, agriculture, mining, logging, and other enterprises. Massive projects, such as the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, were undertaken in order to increase settlement in western Canada, open up new markets, and enhance the development of the nation. Many of the causes include fragmentation of forest ecosystems from large-scale industrial logging and clearing for industrial and urban development, pollution from mining and smelting, draining of lakes for agriculture and several others. Write an essay in which you discuss the immense transformation and industrialization of the Canadian landscape since the arrival of European newcomers. Examine big projects which had an immense impact onto the landscape transformation. Who were the principal promoters of Canada's industrial development? What was the role of the Chinese immigrants in restructuring Canadian territories? What happened to traditional Indigenous peoples' lands? What were the economic and industrial impacts onto emerging urban centres? What challenges did the workers encounter in the construction of railways? What was the purpose of the 49th Parallel?

5. Write an essay in which you discuss the significance of oral stories and storytelling in the life of the First Nations in Canada by drawing examples from at least two stories and explaining what they signify or teach. What kind of knowledge do they convey? What has been their role throughout the history of the First Nations? In what ways are oral stories and the tradition of storytelling important today? What is their cultural value? How is storytelling understood as an act of resistance? How are oral histories used in a legal context?

6. Canada has developed as a non-violent peaceful nation whose values include freedom (as freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of peaceful assembly), equality (respect for the rights of all people), respect for cultural differences (recognition and appreciation of cultures and traditions of all Canadians), civic participation, community involvement and cultural sovereignty, just to name a few them. The respect for the law encapsulated in the motto „peace, order, and good government” and grounded in democratic values, led to the development of a unique federal style of government based on compromise, co-existence and commitment to social justice. In the past, however, there were several black chapters in Canada's history which reveal that policies and attitudes of earlier Canadian governments led to a severe mistreatment of the country's Indigenous people and several groups of Canadian citizens and immigrants. Select one of these groups and write an essay in which you examine how the policies of specific governments defied the values the country has been proud of. Focus on specific values and use them as a context for the discussion of the mistreatment of the group you have chosen to examine in this essay.

7. The paintings of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun can be read as a general commentary on the status and situation of Indigenous people in the Northwest coast of Canada. Select three of his paintings and write an essay in which you discuss specific issues addressed in them. Compare Yuxweluptun's art with the visual art project of the Group of Seven painters. Enumerate several features of the Group's landscape painting to show the vision of Canadianness they promote and contrast this vision with Yuxweluptun's views on Canada. Moreover, reflect on the choice of Yuxweluptun's artistic techniques to convey his ideas.



1. Why are the Aboriginal people reluctant to recognise the 150th anniversary of Confederation in the same manner as the mainstream Canadian society? Write an essay that answers this question by referring to at least three views of Indigenous scholars, artists or activists. Mention examples of policies, laws, regulations or government's actions that are criticised and the ones that are praised by the Indigenous People. What are the Indigenous people's expectations from the Canadian government and suggestions towards improving the situation of the Aboriginal People of Canada.

2. The Fraser River, which is the most important natural artery of British Columbia, was a source of food and transportation route for Indigenous peoples long before the arrival of first European newcomers. Its valleys were characterized by a wide diversity of vegetation and spawning beds for various salmon species. Yet, with the exploration associated with the fur trade, the Fraser watershed was used as a fur trade route only to become eventually subject to non-native settlement, fast-growing industry, large-scale agriculture, logging, mining, and demand for natural resources. In effect, these historical pressures had a devastating impact upon the biodiversity of the watershed, causing environmental stress, such as loss of wetland and stream habitat as well as disappearing runs of salmon. Write an essay discussing the transformation and industrialization of the Fraser River basin. Examine essential expeditions that led to the settlement of the Fraser watershed. How did the river influence the industrial development and settlement of the area? Simon Fraser's exploration of the river was one of the most difficult in North America. Why? How did the fur trade contribute to the settlement of the region? What were the pressures that transformed the Fraser watershed? Name and investigate the impacts created both by First Nations and early settlers onto the aquatic and forest environments of the Fraser River and the impacts of the present-day society on the watershed. What groups of Indigenous peoples were affected and how? What happened to Indigenous peoples' traditional lands? What was the role of the river during the Fraser River Gold Rush? What industries followed the gold rush of 1858?

3. Examine the website of the Canadian Arctic performing artists and their Qaggiq Project (<https://www.qaggiavuut.ca/>) which aims at the decolonization of the Inuit culture and language through the performing arts. Write an essay in which you give a brief overview of the complexity of the Inuit artistic expression, including the variety of genres used by the performing artists. To support your examination of the topic, select three examples of Inuit performing arts which you consider unique in the representation of the Arctic world.

4. William Notman (1826–1891) was a prominent 19th Canadian photographer whose photographs are regarded not only as “vivid works of art” but also as a visual archive of Canada's early history. Consult the art book online exhibition entitled *William Notman. Life and Work* by Sarah Parsons and the material on Notman entitled: “The Photographic Studio of William Notman: The Man and the Studio” in the Virtual Museum of Canada. Write an essay in which you explore the representation of Canada's 19th century social and cultural history on the basis of Notman's photographic art. Does Notman represent the diversity of Canadian society and richness of Canadian culture? What aspects of Canadian culture and society are the focus of his art? Provide a general overview of the topic and use six (6) Notman's photographs to support your analysis.

5. In the 1930s, Canada was severely affected by the Great Depression after the crash of the US stock market in October 1929. The industry suffered as the values of stock decreased at a rapid rate and demand for goods and services dropped. As a result, the prosperity of the 1920s came to a halt and numerous companies went bankrupt. The Western Provinces were affected by a major ecological disaster called the Dust Bowl. Due to heavy unemployment, Canadians suffered unprecedented levels of poverty and relied on government relief and charity for daily survival. Since Canada accepted an unnecessary flood of immigrants just before the 1930s, the unemployment crisis manifested itself as resentment towards immigrants and minorities, which resulted in an increasing xenophobia spreading throughout the country. Identify and discuss key social and economic changes in Canada during this period and explain their main causes. Write an essay that analyses how changing economic and social conditions and patterns affected Canadians and immigrants. What events triggered the economic

recession in Canada? What was the Dust Bowl? What were the government reactions to the worst economic crisis in Canada's history? Why were the unemployment relief camps established? Where did discontent grow rapidly among young men in Canada in the 1930s? What was the Regina Riot in 1935? Who benefited from the Dirty Thirties? Which minorities became a target of discrimination? Why did Canada take recourse to a strong use of exclusionary immigration policies? How did Canada recover from the Great Depression?

6. Canada is well known today as a multicultural society with a government that highly values its minority cultures. Has it been so throughout the history and what can be predicted for its future? Write an essay that discusses the impact of minority cultures in shaping Canadian culture by providing three examples of different artists, writers, politicians or other representatives of three minority cultures who have become influential figures in Canada. Draw examples from the Canadian multiculturalism policies and immigration law that have supported the growth of diversity in Canada, as well as from the unsupportive and discriminatory policies or laws directed towards the minority cultures in this country. Finally, discuss how you envision the future Canada in view of the current government's approach to the issues of diversity, immigration and minority cultures.

7. Pauline Johnson, the daughter of a hereditary Mohawk chief and an English mother, the author of *The White Wampum* (1895), *Canadian Born* (1903), *Flint and Feather* (1912) and *Legends of Vancouver* (1911), was the first Native Canadian woman poet, entertainer, performer and journalist. Her Mohawk name "Tekahionwake" (double wampum" or „double life" in the Mohawk language) conveys her mixed race background. Both her life and her texts represent the complex nature of her heritage, "a story of duality". She criticized harshly the colonial ideas about Indigenous population, land ownership and religion ("The Cattle Thief"), as well as the stereotypical representations of Native peoples in the mainstream "white" texts ("A Strong Race Opinion. On The Indian Girl in Modern Fiction"). At the same time, however, she was expressing her strong loyalty to the British Empire ("Canadian born"), and sometimes did not refrain from using colonial vocabulary to describe Native people. Write an essay which examines the duality of her literary and artistic work. Take into consideration the three texts mentioned in this question. You are also encouraged to explore other materials related to this topic.

## 2019

1. The 2018 Polaris Prize-winner Jeremy Dutcher pointed out that the Canadian arts scene is in the midst of an "Indigenous Renaissance." Many Indigenous artists in such fields as visual arts, literature, music, dance and film have been critically acclaimed worldwide. Their artistic practices are diverse, both traditional and contemporary. The distinctiveness and the role of art in Indigenous cultures has been documented by various Indigenous filmmakers, including Loretta Todd in her film "Hands of History" (1994). Watch the documentary and write an essay in which you discuss the views on Indigenous art as represented by Doreen Jensen, Rena Point Bolton, Jane Ash Poitras and Joane Cardinal-Schubert, the artists featured in this project. Focus on major themes and ideas of their artistic practices. What are their reflections on the differences between the Indigenous and Western art? How was Indigenous art defined by western scholars in the past? How is art defined by Indigenous people and artists? What is the role of art and artists in Indigenous communities?

2. Alice Munro, winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature, has been acclaimed by critics as the "master of the contemporary short story." She is praised for being "a meticulous documentalist: a recorder of sounds and smells, a landscape painter, an analyst of individual and social minds." Readers are enticed by the complexity of her psychological fiction and its artistry. Munro deals with topics such as dichotomy of reality, identity and relationships, self-discovery and self-alienation, relationship between identity and physical and social environment, just to mention some of them. The keywords used by critics to discuss the artistry of her short stories are: "open-endedness, complexity, irony, paradox,

double vision, irony, subtext, multiple telling, polyphony, hybridity”; her use of language is compared to the “denseness and precision characteristic of poetry” and the narrative strategies are examined as based “on textile crafts, patchwork piecing, quilting, stitching, intertextuality” and “destabilizing the notions of unity, coherence, and balance.” Select one Alice Munro’s short story from the list below and write an essay in which you reflect on the writer’s mastery and artistry of the short story genre. What did you find most striking/insightful/ captivating about the short story you chose for your analysis? What themes/ideas have been explored in the text? How are the characters represented? In your analysis, focus also on the use of language and narrative techniques. Did you find anything missing or disappointing in the short story of your choice?

3. A considerable number of Indigenous people from every region of Canada served in the Canadian armed forces in the World Wars, even though they were exempt from military service. Willingly accepting the most perilous tasks, they participated in every major battle of the wars and many Indigenous military servicemen were awarded medals for bravery and heroism, leaving a remarkable record of wartime accomplishment. Although the scale and diversity of Indigenous involvement in the war effort was great, they had to overcome cultural challenges and barriers. Having returned to Canada after years away at war, Indigenous soldiers, hoping that their sacrifice would result in greater recognition and improved living conditions at home, faced unequal access to benefits and found it very difficult to successfully re-establish themselves in civilian life. Write an essay discussing the participation of Indigenous people in Canadian military service during both World Wars. Examine various reasons why Indigenous men enlisted, focus on their contribution to the wars, and cultural challenges they were subject to before and after the military conflicts. What was the impact of the recruitment of Indigenous men on their home communities and traditional means of livelihood? What was the Soldier Settlement Act and how did it affect the lives of returning Indigenous military servicemen? What were the main problems the Indigenous veterans faced having returned to Canada after many years at war?

4. One of the most visible and recognized parts of the Canadian Constitution is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms enacted by the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1982. Considered to be one of the country’s greatest accomplishments revolutionizing specific aspects of Canadian life, its main objective is to strengthen national unity and to protect a number of basic rights and fundamental freedoms, affirming that Canada is a democratic and multicultural country. Yet, it also provides Canada’s Parliament, provincial and territorial legislatures with the power to limit and override certain Charter rights. Since its language is very general, it elevates the role of the courts as judges are enabled to make legal and social changes through their interpretation of the Charter’s meaning, which generates controversy. Write an essay discussing how the Charter has shaped Canada’s political landscape and social fabric since its enactment. Examine positive and negative influences of the Charter on the Canadian political system and Canadian society. Does the Charter divide or unite Canadians? Does it strengthen or weaken democracy? Has it provided minorities with a new avenue to change public policy? Has the role of the Parliament been gradually eroded? What are the main concerns relating to the Charter? What is the notwithstanding clause, also known as Section 33? How many times has the clause been used and by whom?

5. The Indigenous peoples of the territory that is known today as Canada have been living for generations, nurturing an intimate relation with their land and natural world in line with their holistic beliefs. Their life in close contact with the land has resulted in an in-depth knowledge of natural environment, its resources, their sustainable use and the harmonious relationship between humans and the land. Having faced colonialism, exploitation and losses, the encroachment of European settlers into their traditional lands, the Indigenous peoples in Canada are now confronting the immediate impact of the ruthless and thoughtless industrial activities of modern civilization. According to the United Nations, climate change is a potential “threat” to the lives of the Indigenous communities in Canada. Long before western scientists started alarming the world of the danger, the Indigenous people worldwide had voiced

their opinions about the necessity for an urgent shift in the approach to the natural environment. Many countries have not been listening to them. In Canada, in 2008, the government officially apologised for historical injustices committed against the Indigenous peoples living in this country, and declared its readiness to cooperate with them. Write an essay that discusses how the climate change impacts the lives of Indigenous communities in Canada. In what ways is it bringing irreversible changes to their cultures, societies, traditional lifestyles and knowledges? Provide examples of THREE such changes. Focus on the tensions between Indigenous forms of knowledge and Western science with reference to climate change. What are the Indigenous views and proposals on the preservation of the environment and biodiversity of the planet? In what activities raising the awareness on climate change are the Indigenous peoples of Canada involved? Provide TWO examples of their direct actions towards protecting environment. Point out how the government is cooperating with the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

6. The population of visible minorities in Canada has been rapidly growing. According to the Statistics Canada, by 2036 almost one of every two Canadian residents is expected to be a first or second generation immigrant. The top visible minority cultures in Canada include the South Asians and the Chinese. These minority cultures have contributed to Canada in various ways. Canada is recognized worldwide for its progressive multicultural policies; historically, however, the relationship between the Government of Canada and visible minorities has lacked consistency. Choose ONE minority culture (South Asian or Chinese) and write an essay about its changing relationship with the Government of Canada. Give THREE examples of the selected minority's contribution to the process of shaping Canadian identity and culture. Provide also TWO examples of discriminatory policies or any other forms of mistreatment the minority culture experienced in Canada. Discuss what the Canadian government has done for the reconciliation and redress for past injustices to this culture.

## 2020

1. Leonard Cohen, the Canadian singer-songwriter-poet-novelist, was described as a “ladies’ man and Buddhist monk [who] built a tower of song – even though darkness was never far off” (Gilmore). In Leonard Cohen: Everybody Knows Harvey Kubernik states: “No comparison can be drawn between Leonard Cohen and any other phenomenon. Many will undoubtedly attempt such a comparison, but the result will be, at best, fragmentary. For Cohen is a rarity, if not a scarcity. And though he will always be rare in the true sense of the word, he will be listened to, sung, and read by an ever increasing entourage, those of the new awareness, those seeking artists of sensitivity.” Write an essay in which you reflect on the distinctiveness of Cohen’s art. Do you agree with the above statement by Kubernik? What kind of philosophy of life do Cohen’s texts convey? Do you think his sung poetry can be still attractive to young people of today? Express your opinion. To explore the topic you may consult the suggested websites but you are also encouraged to use other materials available online.

2. Indigenous art projects inscribe distinct visions of Indigenous realities, worldviews and knowledge systems. Watch the documentary directed by Loretta Todd, *Hands of History* (1994) and examine the concept of Indigenous art on the basis of interviews of four female First Nations artists—Doreen Jensen, Rena Point Bolton, Jane Ash Poitras and Joane Cardinal-Schubert. You are also encouraged to consult other materials we propose for the exploration of the topic. Write an essay in which you reflect on the importance of art for Indigenous cultures, although there is no word for art in most of them. Discuss the predominant subject matter, aesthetic philosophies, as well as techniques and personal styles of two female artists selected from the documentary or other materials.

3. Canadian women writers of Polish descent have been conspicuously absent from Canadian literary canons or university reading lists, with a notable exception of Ewa Stachniak. Her literary career, similar to Joseph Conrad or Stefan Themerson, proves that writing in a second language does not belong to the sphere of unattainable fantasy. Stachniak is a winner of the Books in Canada First Novel Award

(2000) for her book *Necessary Lies*, which places her in the category of such eminent writers as Michael Ondaatje, Joy Kogawa, Nino Ricci or Rohinton Mistry. Being an author of five novels and many short stories, Stachniak has earned both Canadian and international acclaim. Write an essay in which you reflect on the contribution of Stachniak to Canadian literature. Focus on the type of novels and topics she chooses for her writing. Discuss why she foregrounds female experience in her texts. Select one novel as an example of Stachniak's writing between two cultures. To explore the topic you may consult the suggested websites but you are also encouraged to use other materials available online. Stachniak's novels translated into Polish are easily available in Poland.

4. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was established on 2 May 1670 as a joint-stock merchandising company aimed at a fur-trading commerce with the Royal Charter granting the Company a fur trade monopoly for the entire northern coast of the continent, which was named Rupert's Land. During its first century of operation, the Company, possessing enormous wealth and political power, established trading posts and forts along the routes of Hudson and James Bay. With the increased competition in the late 18th century, it was forced to expand further into the continent with trading posts spanning the continent all the way to the Northwest Coast. For the purpose of trade, the Company, largely dependent on Indigenous trappers, traded European goods for furs that were hunted, trapped and transported to trading posts by Indigenous peoples. When the fur trade faced a steady decline at the hands of Western settlement and the Gold Rush, the Company was forced to shift to retail and transform trading posts into stores with a variety of goods. Simultaneously, the Company's fur-trading empire drove colonization through vast tracts of Canadian land. Write an essay discussing the role the Hudson Bay Company played in the development of what became Canada. Examine the trading relationships between the Hudson Bay Company and Indigenous peoples in the fur trade. What were the impacts of the fur trade upon Indigenous peoples, their traditional lifestyles and economy? Did the Hudson Bay Company bring peace and stability to Indigenous peoples? How did the European expansion to the West and discovery of gold change the future of the Hudson Bay Company? What were the point blankets and why are they fraught with colonial history? Why were Metis women integral to the fur trade?

5. L.B. Pearson's Peace Plan, securing the cessation of hostilities in the 1956 Suez Canal crisis in Egypt, established Canada's reputation as a peace-keeping nation. Ever since, Canadian soldiers have participated in related missions all over the world. As part of Canada's commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Canada has played a key role in the international adoption of peacekeeping with 125,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces serving in peace enforcement operations. Yet, between 2006 and 2015, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper decided turn away from Canada's peacekeeping legacy for the sake of managing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, despite Canada's levels of participation in peacekeeping being at the lowest point, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is trying to fulfill his promise to return Canada to peacekeeping and renew its leadership position. Write an essay discussing Canada's role in international peace operations and conflict resolution. Examine whether Canada's actions were always guided by the desire for world peace. Why is peacekeeping important to Canada? Why was the image of Canadian peacekeeping harmed during the mission to Somalia? Why has Canada's participation in peacekeeping missions declined since 1992? What happened to the international myth of Canada as a peacekeeping nation? Should Canada, once the largest contributor to UN peace support operations, renew its role as a peacekeeper? How has the nature of peacekeeping changed? Can Trudeau fulfill his peacekeeping promises?

6. In June 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its Final Report titled *Reclaiming Power and Place*. It has been a highly anticipated document but its outcomes have been severely criticized. This project is just one example of a long history of Canada's ambivalent relationship with Indigenous women. Read the highlights of the report on the missing and murdered women and girls and study the discriminatory aspects of the Indian Act. Write an essay discussing how the Canadian Government's approach to Indigenous women has been shifting and how the Indigenous peoples of Canada have been struggling for equal rights, care and respect for Indigenous

women. By referring to the outcomes of the final report and commentaries by Indigenous people, examine the importance and impact of this inquiry undertaken by the Canadian government. To explore the topic choose ONE example of mistreatment through legislation, and ONE instance of misrepresentation in literature or popular culture. Moreover, provide TWO examples of positive changes in legislation and refer to TWO artistic events that raise awareness on this issue.

7. Canada is well known for its peacekeeping, compassion and positive solutions to refugee crises as exemplified, for instance, in the recent case of acceptance of over 50 000 Syrian refugees fleeing war since 2015. Historically, however, the Canadian government has not always represented such an admirable political stance. Write an essay that overviews the complexity of refugee resettlement in Canada and its political, economic and cultural impact in the past and today. Discuss how Canada's official policies have supported or discriminated against refugees – provide TWO examples of such policies. Moreover, read and watch the recent and earlier stories of struggle and success shared by refugees. Select TWO stories to demonstrate the newcomers' contribution to the Canadian society. Take into consideration the fears and hopes of refugees and the challenges they face in the new land. In what ways is the awareness of refugee crises raised and the process of resettlement supported in Canada? Provide ONE example from across artistic endeavors, literature, museum exhibitions or activist movements. Furthermore, reflect on the general public opinion about the intake of refugees by the Canadian government. Is there any opposition to the refugee intake in Canada and what are the major fears related to the problem? If yes, provide ONE example showing such attitudes and concerns.