

## Respond to the Issue for Part 1

# Conduct an Inquiry: Relationships among Nationalism, Nation, and Identity

As you investigated the relationships among nationalism, nation, identity, and loyalty in Part 1, you considered how belonging to a nation and the resulting nationalism can shape a person's or a group's identity. You explored various issues related to the Main Issue for Part 1: *To what extent should nation be the foundation of identity?* Use the following research task as a basis for your ideas; you will discuss them at the end of this activity.

### Issue for Inquiry

In Part 1 you explored various understandings of nation, and factors that shape collective identity. This exploration has helped you develop tentative perspectives on the role of nations in shaping identity. You saw that people in Canada may identify with nations based on language, ethnicity, culture, and citizenship. Have you considered whether you are loyal to or identify strongly with a particular nation? The inquiry below will allow you to develop a response to the issue: *To what extent is nation the foundation for the identity of a group of people in Canada?*

Work in a group to conduct this inquiry. Choose one of the groups listed on the right as a focus of your investigation. Review the Skill Paths in Part 1 to make sure that your inquiry is effective.

### Preparing for Your Inquiry

In your group, brainstorm research questions that will help you investigate the relationship between identity and nation. As the Key and Main Issues ask “to what extent . . .,” you will investigate *how much* nation, along with other factors, influences identity.

### Examples of Groups in Canada that May Have Strong Nation-Based Ties

- Franco-Albertans
- Québécois
- Dene of Northwest Territories
- Métis
- Vancouver's Chinese community
- Vancouver's South Asian community
- Alberta's Ukrainian community
- Alberta's German community
- Anglo-Albertans
- Acadians
- Inuit of Nunavut
- Mennonites
- Hutterites

Ensure that your research question allows you to explore all factors that shape the group's identity, not just nationhood. For some groups, you may find references to key historical events or core documents that shaped their sense of nationalism.

As a group, clarify the meanings of all key words. Ensure that you understand the group you are investigating. You may need to do research for background knowledge before developing your research questions. Before you begin your investigation, consult your teacher to determine the timeline for your inquiry and what resources you can use. How will this information shape your investigation?

### Conduct Your Inquiry—Gather and Organize Information

One of the first things you need to do is determine what creates a sense of “we-ness” among the people of the group you are investigating. The unifying element could be language, religion, culture,

ethnicity, shared experiences, or shared civic ideas. Once you have identified this adhesive element, explore how it is promoted. Is it passed on through history, geography, or institutions? Canada, as a multicultural and pluralistic society, has legislation supporting institutions that promote minority cultures. You may choose to investigate what institutions are central to your group. Also consider any non-nation institutions that affect these people and their sense of collective identity.

It is important to keep an open mind during your research. Look for alternative perspectives, but remember that these may not represent all points of view. This process requires you to assess the reliability of the sources.

Consider how you will sort your research findings. A graphic organizer may help you look at the information from a variety of perspectives. In your group, share your findings and ideas and develop a way to effectively organize your information.

### Assess the Information

After gathering information, you may notice gaps in your research. Your group may decide to conduct more research.

Before developing a position on the issue, you must establish a set of criteria for judgment. Having a set of criteria allows you to make a reasoned judgment. A reasoned judgment is based on predetermined criteria instead of simply on emotional or superficial justifications. Review the Skill Path in Chapter 3 to establish criteria for assessing information.

To assess the information, look at how a nation-based identity offers both opportunities and challenges. Also consider if nation-based identity is a unifying or a divisive factor in an individual's effort to identify with and be loyal to a group or a nation-state.

One way to think about how to answer a “to what extent . . .” question is to consider the range of responses on a continuum. For this inquiry, your continuum might look like this:



Where on the continuum would you place your opinion? Do all the members of your group agree?

### Share Your Position with the Class

Keep in mind that you have researched only *one* group of people. Your opinion is based on a narrow investigation of the extent to which nation is central to identity. Now consider *whether it should be* central to identity, by examining the advantages and disadvantages of this relationship. As a class, hold a horseshoe debate on the issue: ***To what extent should nation be the foundation of identity?*** Canada, as a pluralistic country, includes a wide range of people who may identify with a variety of nations. It is important that you keep an open mind during the debate and change positions in the horseshoe only when reasoned information is presented that causes you to reassess your judgment.

### Revisit Your Conclusions

After the debate, return to your group and discuss if and why your position on the issue has changed. Re-examine your research questions and criteria. Your position may have changed because you heard alternative perspectives or a broader range of research. Why is it important that you were open-minded during the debate? It is important that you *remain* open-minded on the Main and Key Issues for the remainder of this text. As you read, you will gain a broad range of ideas, information, and perspectives that may cause you to change your position again.