Natural Resources of Canada and their Sustainability

Lesson Overview
Canada’s natural resources are very important to its economy; yet resource industries face many challenges to remain sustainable.

Grade Level
Grades 6-8 (middle school)

Time Required
100 minutes in class, plus some homework time to write a short essay

Curriculum Connection (Province and course)
Ontario Geography, Grade 7, Natural Resources

Link to Canadian National Geography Standards
Essential Elements #4 (Grade 6-8) – Human Systems
Essential Elements #5 (Grade 6-8) – Environment and Society
Geographic Skills #1 (Grade 6-8) – Asking Geographic Questions
Geographic Skills #2 (Grade 6-8) – Acquiring Geographic Information

Principal Resource
The Canadian Atlas Online website at www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas

Additional Resources, Materials and Equipment Required
- Attached worksheet
- Optional: other texts, atlases and websites as needed for more in-depth study

Main Objective
To have students understand the importance of natural resources to Canada’s economy and the necessity of using them wisely in order to sustain their benefits into the future.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:
- locate Canada’s natural resources
- describe Canada’s present use of resources
- appreciate the importance of these resources to Canada’s economy
- discuss the challenges facing Canadians for the future use of their natural resources
- use The Canadian Atlas Online
# The Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Teacher Activity</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Begin with a general discussion of natural resources based around such questions as:</td>
<td>• Take part in the discussion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is a natural resource? Name some examples.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What resources were important to the early history of Canada?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What resources is Canada famous for now?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What natural resources are especially important to the people of this community? Why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Development</th>
<th>Teacher Activity</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tell students that they are going to use an atlas website to learn more about Canada’s resources and the challenges faced by resource industries.</td>
<td>• Read the worksheet carefully to be certain that you understand the assignment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hand out the accompanying worksheet. Have students read it and then answer any questions they might have about the assignment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assign each student one resource area to research – mining (mines), forestry (forests) agriculture (farms) or fishing (Fisheries).</td>
<td>• Follow instructions carefully so that all necessary information is collected. Ask questions if you don’t understand anything. Record all appropriate detail.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Send students to the computer lab to begin. Be available as they are working to help students that are having difficulty finding their way through the site.</td>
<td>• Write a short essay.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once students are finished, have them write a short essay based on their findings. They should include the location and use of the resource, its importance to Canada and challenges that it faces in order to remain sustainable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Teacher Activity</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Have students get together in groups so that every group has at least one person who researched each of the resource topics.</td>
<td>• Present his/her findings to the group. Listen carefully while other presentations are made. Ask appropriate questions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the group discussion, have students share what they learned.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson Extension

Have students do further research on one of the challenges that they have found. This time they should be thinking of an issue that has two or more points of view. Pairs of students should research different points of view and debate the issues for the class. Possible topics: environmentalists vs. loggers, fish farmers vs. offshore fishermen, proponents of fishing moratoriums vs. fish plant workers, farmers vs. water quality experts.

Assessment of Student Learning

i. Essay

ii. Group work skills in discussion groups

iii. Question on unit test – Outline 3 factors that affect the future availability of natural resources.
   – Discuss factors that need to be considered before a decision is made to open a new mine.
Student Worksheet – Resources of Canada

Assigned Topic: ____________________________________________________________

Step 1
• Visit the Canadian Atlas Online website at www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas
• Once you are on the website, go to Explore By Themes and click on The Issues and choose Canada 2050 and answer the first question below.

1. What is meant by sustainability? ____________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

Step 2
• On the blue bar at the top of the screen, click on Canada Now and choose Industry. Scroll down to your assigned topic and begin to read. Use the links given to find out more about these resources by region.

2a. Describe the location of specific resources in Canada: ______________________
    ________________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________

2b. Discuss recent developments in your industry: _____________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________

3. How important is your resource to Canada’s economy? ______________________
    ________________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________

4. What challenges are faced by this resource industry in order to remain sustainable?
    ________________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________