

Lesson 2: My Vision for Toronto

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What do I like most and least about Toronto?
- What would my ideal city look like?
- How can listening to other people's ideas influence my own thinking?

OVERVIEW

Different people have different ideas about what their city and communities should be like.

In this lesson, students reflect on the aspects of Toronto and their community that they like and dislike, and the things they would change if they could. Afterwards, they design their ideal city or neighbourhood, both to help them identify what they think can be improved, and to compare their vision to those of their classmates. In the *Consolidation* activity, students will summarize their vision in a few key words, and consider some ways it could be implemented.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their city and/or neighbourhood;
- recognize how their vision of an ideal city may differ from those of their classmates;
- analyze ideas about how to make Toronto better.

STARTER

This *Starter* activity gets students thinking about what is important to them in their city.

1. In pairs or small groups, have students discuss the following questions:

- What are the things that you like most about living in the city of Toronto? What are the things you don't like?
- What are the things that you like the most about your neighbourhood? What are things that you don't like about your neighbourhood?

2. Once students have had a chance to share within their groups, have them share their opinions with the rest of the class and identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of Toronto.

ACTIVITY

What does your ideal city look like? In this activity, students will sketch out a map of their ideal city and/or neighbourhood, and then share their ideas with classmates and identify what they have in common and where there are differences.

1. Provide each student with a copy of Handout 2.1. On one side is an outline of the city of Toronto ("Design Your City"), and on the other is an empty box ("Design Your Neighbourhood").

Teacher note: Alternatively, you could have students work in groups and focus on either their city or neighbourhood, rather than both. They could also use chart paper or Bristol board, or create a diorama.

2. On the “Design Your City” side, tell students to draw some major features that they would like to see in their ideal Toronto. Some possible ideas include:

- Attractions
- Parks
- Transportation (roads, subways, etc.)
- Community Services
- Neighbourhoods
- Etc.

3. On the “Design Your Neighbourhood” side, tell students to focus either on the neighbourhood they live in, or to come up with a completely new one. Have them draw either a map or a streetscape of their ideal neighbourhood.

4. Put students in pairs, and have them compare their designs. Ask them to identify similarities and differences.

5. Have the pairs of students share their designs with the rest of the class. Consider organizing a ‘Gallery Walk’ in your classroom or the hallway and have students examine the designs.

Afterwards, discuss as a whole group:

- What are the most common features among all the designs?
- How do the designs compare to Toronto today? What are the biggest improvements that could be made to the city as a whole?
- How do the neighbourhood designs compare to one another? What are some ways that our neighbourhood could be improved?

6. Have students reflect on what they saw and heard from their classmates. Ask them to share an idea they really liked from someone else and explain why. Is there anything they would change in their own design(s) after hearing someone else’s ideas?

CONSOLIDATION

Have students respond to the following prompts as a written exercise, or through classroom discussion.

- If I were to summarize my ideal Toronto in three words or phrases, it would look like this:
My ideal Toronto is _____, _____, and _____.

Example: “My ideal Toronto is clean, fun, and easy to get around in.”

- What are three things that I can do to help make my vision for Toronto a reality?