

MY COMMUNITY



ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

POWER AND POLITICS

*My Community
Junior Division*

Background

In order for our classrooms to be culturally responsive and reflective, educators are urged to reach out to parents, elders, families and community members to build relationships of trust and belonging. This lesson is about representation and power, and will be strengthened by the inclusion of diverse community voices.

In this lesson, students will think critically about how decisions are made in the community, and who holds positions of economic power and political leadership. It is important to acknowledge that leadership in communities takes many forms, and we can all be empowered to become leaders.

The ongoing process of colonization has resulted in the under-representation of First Nations, Metis and Inuit, and racialized Peoples at all three levels of government. In order to re-imagine a more equitable distribution of power, students must recognize and disrupt the individual and institutional barriers that contribute to the economic and political systems of White power and privilege.



Learning Goals

- Students will identify different ways that decisions are made, and who holds power and leadership in the community. They will be supported to identify individual and institutional barriers that contribute to the under-representation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and racialized Peoples voices at all levels of the government and begin to imagine how we can create inclusive and equitable spaces for all voices to be heard.



Inquiry Goals

I wonder...

- How can I honour student voices and empower my students to make decisions and advocate for change in their own community?
- How can I support my students to understand the ways power and privilege impact the work that people do, and the decision-making process in the community?



Call for Action

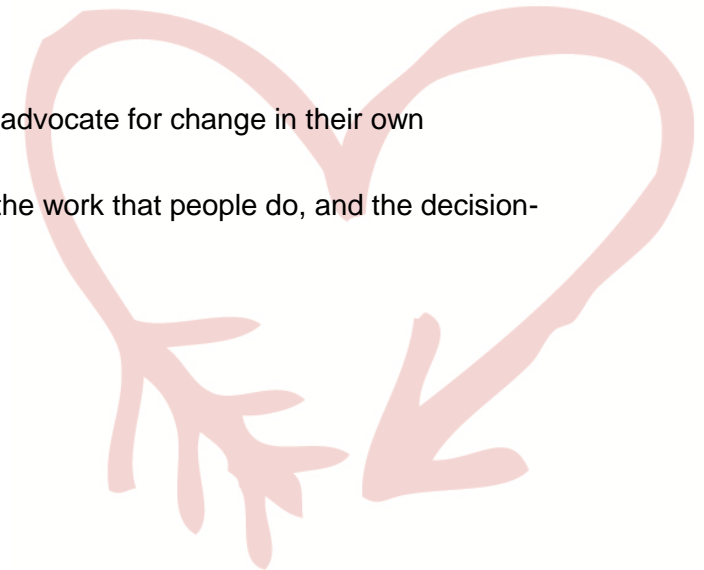
Students will participate in a mock community meeting and write a speech “in role” that:

- Demonstrates different points of view about an issue that affects the community.
- Identifies barriers that might impact how community members engage in politics.
- Explores the power of community activism and leadership.



Curriculum Expectations

- ✓ Grade 4 Social Studies, Language: Writing, Oral Communication, Media, Drama
- ✓ Grade 5 Social Studies, Language: Writing, Oral Communication, Media, Drama
- ✓ Grade 6 Social Studies, Language: Writing, Oral Communication, Media, Drama



Materials

Computer

Projector

Chart Paper

Markers

Poster paper

Suggested Prior Knowledge

- Ongoing discussions about the community must acknowledge the history and enduring presence of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. It is important to understand the treaty and land agreements of the community that the school is situated upon. The impact of colonization is ongoing, and the process has enforced structures of White power and privilege that continue to this day, including electoral systems of government. Students will need support to recognize the ways that structures and systems support and reinforce privilege and inequity in our communities.
- Familiarity with the following terms: **inclusive**, **community**, **power**, **privilege** and **employment equity** will enrich the experiences of this lesson.
- Educators should review the *My Community* section of the ETFO resource *Re-think, Re-Connect, Re-Imagine: Thinking about ourselves, our schools, our communities. Reflecting on White privilege* prior to this lesson.

Lesson Structure

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
<p>Before (Activation/ Review)</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Community Celebration</p> <p>Ask: <i>How is our classroom like a community?</i></p> <p>Use this provocation to activate prior knowledge about what it means to be a community, and to explore and/or review what all communities need.</p> <p>Announce to the class that at the end of this inquiry, they will have a community celebration. You have not decided yet what the special event will be, and you are looking for some ideas about how to make the final decision. There are three options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher decides. 2. Teacher selects two students to decide. 3. All students get to decide. <p>As a class, discuss the positive and negative outcomes of the different options. For each option, ask the students to consider who has the power in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Explore Option #3 together as a class. Ask: <i>What are some of the different ways we can ensure that every student has a voice in the decision-making process? Why is this important?</i></p> <p>Introduce the terms consensus and democratic decision-making, using examples from their own prior knowledge and experiences inside and outside of the classroom.</p>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what a community is and what all communities need. • Listen attentively and respectfully to others. • Work collaboratively to make a decision. <p>Questions to Consider for Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are students able to draw on their diverse experiences of community spaces (e.g., community spaces that address diverse identities and experiences such as faith, interests, cultural practices, social services, etc.)? • Are they asking questions to deepen their understanding of themselves and their community? • What do students understand about power?

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	<p>Use this discussion as an opportunity to honour different ways that communities make decisions. For example, before European settlers arrived, many First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities used a consensus decision-making process within clans, families and nations. Democratic elections were imposed on First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities as part of the ongoing process of colonization.</p> <p>Generate a list of ideas for a community celebration and write them on chart paper. Use consensus decision-making to choose the special event. Ask students to reflect on the collaborative process. <i>Was it fair? Were all voices included and considered? Did everyone agree?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do students know about different forms of governance and decision-making.
<p>During (Working on it)</p> <p>60-90 minutes</p>	<p>Work It Out</p> <p>Ask: <i>What do you know about who lives and works in our community?</i> As a class or in small groups, create a list of different people who work and live in the immediate neighbourhood.</p> <p>Support the students to unpack some of their assumptions and bias about how different work is valued in our community and who has access to job opportunities based on race, gender, class and ability. These questions can lead to discussion about how privilege and inequality is reinforced by the economic system of capitalism.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are there jobs that are more valuable than others? How do you know?</i> • <i>Which jobs in our community are the most important? Why do you think so?</i> • <i>How do we value work in our community?</i> 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and describe a variety of community members. • Examine their own bias and assumptions about the value of paid and unpaid work. • Share their ideas in writing and/or orally with a partner. <p>Questions to Consider for Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I make explicit connections between White privilege and economic inequality in our community?

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are there valuable jobs in our community that are unpaid work? What are they?</i> <p>In their journals, ask students to make a “Top Ten List” and organize the work of community members into most valuable (#1) and less valuable (#10). In pairs, ask students to share their lists and identify any similarities or differences in their opinions.</p> <p>Another strategy is to use “dot-mocracy” to share different points of view. Give each student two to three stickers to place on the list of work that they feel is most valuable. Discuss the results as a class.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What do you notice about who does these jobs in our community?</i> • <i>What are some of the barriers that community members might face when accessing jobs in the community?</i> • <i>How might these barriers be impacted by race, gender, sexual orientation, ability?</i> • <i>How can we ensure that all community members have equitable access to valuable work?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are students’ experiences of privilege and marginalization in the community? • Can students identify different types of barriers to employment and/or community engagement?
<p>After (Reflecting/ Constructing/ Consolidating)</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Make connections between leadership, representation and power. <i>Who are the leaders in our community? How do you know? Who makes decisions and who holds systemic power in the community? Do the elected representatives reflect the demographics of the community? Of Ontario? Of Canada? Why is this important?</i></p> <p>Use this discussion to acknowledge the role of elders and chiefs in First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, in addition to elected representatives of any/all three levels of government.</p>	<p>Questions to Consider for Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do students know about the elected representatives in their community? • How can I use data and graphic organizers to help students visualize this

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	<p><i>How do we include non-elected voices in the decision-making process? Are there alternative models of decision-making or self-governance that are more inclusive of different community needs?</i></p> <p><i>Explain how the electoral system contributes to the under-representation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and racialized Peoples in all levels of government. What are some of the systemic barriers for racialized community members to actively engage in elected politics? (Possible answers include: number of seats, boundaries, candidate selection, systems of voting, access to resources, etc.)</i></p>	<p>information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they understand power, access, decision-making? • Can students make connections between representation and White privilege and power?
<p>Individual Practice</p> <p>40 minutes</p>	<p>Community Member: Writing In-Role</p> <p>Each student will choose one member of the community from the earlier brainstorm list to represent in a mock community meeting. They will write a speech in-role that expresses their point of view about an issue of concern in the community to share at the meeting.</p> <p>Note: This learning can be differentiated by choosing different regions or territories to represent and/or explore different levels of government and political parties. Students can work in small groups to brainstorm ideas, share research and support different points of view before writing their own speech.</p> <p>Review and/or co-construct the success criteria with the class. Alternatively, you can assign different roles to ensure that diverse and multiple perspectives are explored.</p>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use success criteria to meet learning goals. <p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can write in-role as a community member, using “I statements.” • Students can clearly explain their point of view. • Students can identify an issue in the community that they want to change or improve. • Students can ask a thoughtful question for the community to consider.

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
<p>Call for Action</p> <p>60 minutes</p>	<p>Community Meeting: Drama</p> <p>The class will use drama to role-play a mock community meeting where local issues will be discussed by different community members. The educator can play the role of the facilitator and ensure that all voices are heard. Students can generate the topic for the meeting based on issues or needs in their own community, or another community they are learning about.</p> <p>This activity can be modified in many different ways depending on your students and your learning outcomes. It can be organized like a formal debate and include a democratic vote or election. It can be an opportunity to explore a larger inquiry question, such as: <i>How can we make our community more accessible to all community members?</i> or <i>Why is it important for community leaders to represent the diversity of its members?</i></p>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the creative process to speak in-role as a community member. • Communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings clearly and with expression. • Demonstrate understanding of barriers faced by community members and advocate for positive change.
<p>Next Steps (Teacher Reflection)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has voice and power in my classroom? How is my class acting as a microcosm of the society at large? • How do I honour and celebrate student voice in my classroom? • Is my classroom a place where democratic values are upheld? • Do I give all of my students equal opportunities for leadership? • How does my identity impact my relationships with parents, families, elders and community members? 	

Extensions

Job Fair

In small groups or individually, research one of the following topics:

- Hiring practices at a local business (chain store/restaurant is ideal).
- Precarious work (full-time vs part-time employment).
- Living wage campaign (Search: Fight for \$15 and Fairness).
- Union vs non-union working conditions/wages.
- Pay equity campaign (Search: Ontario Equal Pay Coalition).
- Employment equity programs (to encourage people of colour to apply for jobs).

Students will create an infographic poster ([Appendix B](#)) to display their understanding of their topic. Posters can be posted in a “job fair” with student guides discussing their topic. Invite students from other classes to attend the fair.

Community Leaders

Students can do research about community leaders to share with the class. The focus of this learning would be to highlight the achievements of First Nations, Metis and Inuit, and racialized leaders throughout history and the present. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the different forms of leadership beyond elected representation in our communities. These presentations can be shared with the whole school as part of an assembly or community event. The arts can be integrated in meaningful ways.

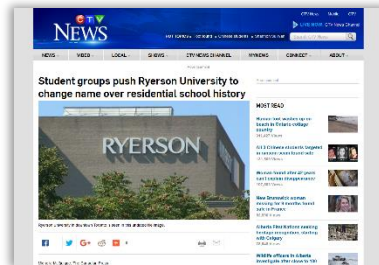
Additional Resources



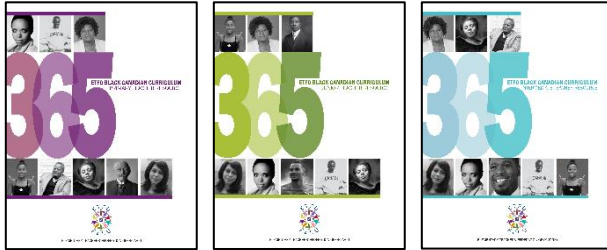
Egerton Ryerson: residential schools and the complicated nature of history (TheStar.com, 2017)



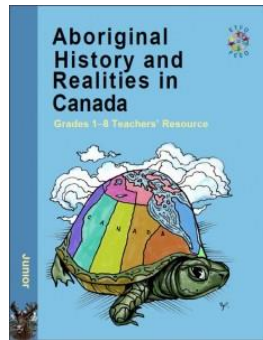
Resources on the [Jane's Walk](#) website



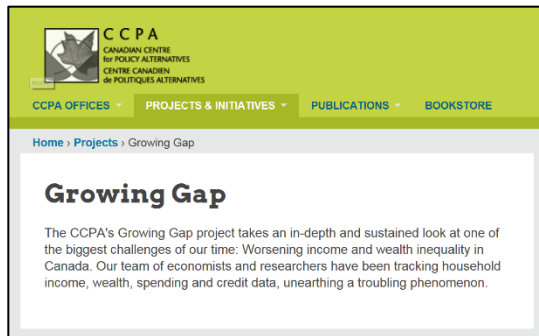
Student groups push Ryerson University to change name over residential school history (CTV, 2017)



365 Black Canadian Curriculum (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2017)



Aboriginal Realities and Histories Teacher Resource, Grades 4-6 (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario)



Growing Gap (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives)



A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan (Government of Ontario, 2017)

References



Jane's Walk Website



Who Are the People in Your Neighbourhood?

Appendix B: Info-Graphic Planner

Components	Make point form planning notes for each section in the space below.
<p>Main Idea What is the big idea of this infographic?</p>	
<p>Information What are the key supporting ideas on which you will focus to help get across your big idea?</p>	
<p>Data/Stats What are the numerical details you will use?</p>	<p>These can be measurements, dates, amounts, totals or anything with numbers.</p>
<p>Graphics What visuals will you use? What information will they get across?</p>	<p>These can be pictures, images, diagrams, etc.</p>

Components	Make point form planning notes for each section in the space below.
Plan your graphs/charts.	Rough sketch of layout.
Sources:	

GLOSSARY



ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Aboriginal peoples	Defined in section 35(2) of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> , s: "... 'Aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada." Other terms used to encompass these diverse groups include First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI), Indigenous, Native and First Peoples. For the purpose of this resource, Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples will be used to respectfully acknowledge these original inhabitants of North America.
Activism	The action or policy of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.
Advocacy	The act or process of supporting a cause.
Affirmative action	Affirmative action policies were developed to address long histories of discrimination faced by minorities and women. This term is primarily in use in the USA. In Canada, we have used the term "employment equity" since the 1980's.
Ally	Someone who works against the oppression of a specific social group(s), even though they do not belong to that group, such as a man who works to end sexism or a White person who stands up against racism. Becoming an ally involves acknowledging your own privilege and taking action towards social justice.
Allyship	Allyship is not an identity – it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people. Allyship is not self-defined – our work and our efforts must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with.
Assimilation	The process by which a person or persons acquire the social and psychological characteristics of a dominant or majority group: e.g., "Waves of immigrants have been <i>assimilated</i> into the American culture."

TERM	DEFINITION
Barrier	An obstacle to entry in societal activities, created by the culture of the community or the dominant group, i.e., people's behavior towards newcomers or persons seen as “the other” (e.g., marginalized groups).
Bias	An opinion, preference or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective or accurate judgements.
Class	Class is a relative social rank in terms of income, wealth, education, status/position and/or power.
Community	A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common; A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals.
Courageous conversations	<p>Educator Glenn E. Singleton outlines Four Agreements to guide educators, students and community stakeholders when discussing race:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay Engaged; • Expect to Experience Discomfort; • Speak your Truth; and • Expect and Accept a Lack of Closure.

TERM	DEFINITION
Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP)	<p>Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy seeks to empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically. Educators who ascribe to this pedagogy foster student voice by:</p> <p><u>Holding high expectations</u> Educators, students, families and community stakeholders work together to create a culture of high expectations in the classroom by engaging in high-yield teaching strategies, consistent assessment and caring relationships.</p> <p><u>Acquiring cultural competence</u> Educators use students' cultures and connections to communities as a vehicle for learning.</p> <p><u>Nurturing critical consciousness</u> Educators provide opportunities for students to critique the cultural norms, values and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities.</p>
Diversity	<p>The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.</p>
Employment equity	<p>Federal legislation, encouraging the establishment of working conditions that are free of barriers, correcting the conditions of disadvantage in employment and promoting implementation of special measures and the accommodation of differences for the four designated groups in Canada: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and racialized persons.</p>
Equality	<p>The state or quality of being equal; correspondence in quantity, degree, value, rank or ability.</p>
Equity	<p>A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.</p>
Eurocentric	<p>Focusing on European culture or history to the exclusion of a wider view of the world; implicitly regarding European culture as preeminent.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
Exclusion	The state of group disempowerment, degradation and disenfranchisement maintained by systemic barriers and supported by an implicit ideology of superiority.
Fairness	Having or exhibiting a disposition that is free of favouritism or bias; impartial.
First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI)	<p><i>First Nation.</i> A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which many found offensive. The term <i>First Nation</i> has been adopted to replace the word “band” in the names of communities.</p> <p><i>Inuit.</i> Aboriginal people in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. Ontario has a very small Inuit population. The Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act.</p> <p><i>Métis people.</i> People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry. The Métis history and culture draws on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibwe and Cree.</p>
Gender expression	The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2012) defines <i>gender expression</i> as: “Gender expression is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person’s gender through these attributes.”
Gender identity	The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2012) defines <i>gender identity</i> as: “Gender identity is each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person’s sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex.”
Identity	The concept a person develops about themselves that evolves over the course of their life. This may include aspects of life that they have no control over, such as where they grew up or the colour of their skin, as well as choices they make in life, such as how they spend their time and what they believe.
Inclusion	Creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to achieve to their full potential.

TERM	DEFINITION
Inclusive	To include all, to be comprehensive.
Infrastructure	Refers to structures, systems and facilities serving the economy of a business, industry, country, city, town or area, including the services and facilities necessary for its economy to function.
Liberation	The act of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, oppression.
Marginalized	This term is used to refer to the process of making a group or class of people less important or relegated to a secondary position.
Meritocracy	A social system, society or organization in which people have power because of their abilities, not because of their money or social position.
Mobilize	To make ready for action and movement.
Newcomer	A) A person who is new to Canada who has come here either as an immigrant or refugee. B) A person who is new to a school.

TERM	DEFINITION
The Ontario Human Rights Code 1962 (OHRC)	<p>The <i>Ontario Human Rights Code 1962</i> prohibits discrimination against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area.</p> <p>Protected grounds are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age; ● Ancestry, colour, race; ● Citizenship; ● Ethnic origin; ● Place of origin; ● Creed; ● Disability; ● Family status; ● Marital status (including single status); ● Gender identity, gender expression; ● Receipt of public assistance (in housing only); ● Record of offences (in employment only); and ● Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding). <p>Protected social areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accommodation (housing); ● Contracts; ● Employment; ● Goods, services and facilities; and ● Membership in unions, trade or professional associations.
Oppression	<p>How one group is dominated by another, more powerful, individual or group through physical, psychological, social or economic threats or force and frequently by an ideology of dominance.</p>
Power	<p>The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
Prejudice	A set of opinions about or attitudes towards a certain group or individuals within it that casts that groups and its members in an inferior light and for which there is no legitimate basis in fact. Usually a negative opinion formed before knowing all the facts.
Privilege	“Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they’ve done or failed to do. Access to privilege doesn’t determine one’s outcomes, but it is definitely an asset that makes it more likely that whatever talent, ability, and aspirations a person with privilege has will result in something positive for them.” – Peggy McIntosh
Racialized peoples	Recognizing that race is a social construct, the Ontario Human Rights Commission describes people as “racialized person” or “racialized group” instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms <i>racial minority</i> , <i>visible minority</i> , <i>person of colour</i> or <i>non-White</i> .
Racism	According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2012): “Racism is a belief that one group is superior to others. Racism can be openly displayed in racial jokes, slurs or hate crimes. It can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, people don’t even realize they have these beliefs. Instead, they are assumptions that have evolved over time and have become part of systems and institutions, and also associated with the dominant group’s power and privilege.”
Sexual orientation	A person’s attraction to someone of a different sex, the same sex or both sexes.
Socio-economic status	An economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation.
Stakeholder	A group/individual that has an interest in a particular issue or project and can affect or be affected by the outcomes.

TERM	DEFINITION
Systemic oppression	Systematic oppression is the mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person's membership in the social identity group.
Union or trade union	<p>A union is an organized group of workers who collectively use their strength to have a voice in their workplace. Through a union, workers have a right to impact wages, work hours, benefits, workplace health and safety, job training and other work-related issues. (Los Angeles County Federation of Labor)</p> <p>“trade union” means an organization of employees formed for purposes that include the regulation of relations between employees and employers (Ontario Labour Relations Act)</p>
Unfairness	Lack of equality or justice.
White Privilege	White Privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that Whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin colour in a racist society.