

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada Digital Teaching Resources

By Scott Harrison and Erin Williams

Looking for new instructor resources? Check out the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada
<http://www.asiapacific.ca/>

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF Canada) is an independent not-for-profit organization that serves as Canada's catalyst for engagement with Asia and Asia's bridge to Canada. Much of its work focuses on policy-oriented research and action to facilitate stronger trans-Pacific ties on economics, politics, innovation, sustainability, and people-to-people connections. Over the last few years, it began doing work in the area of education about Asia to support teachers and students.

The most relevant APF Canada resources that would be of use to instructors of secondary school and lower-level university survey courses looking to introduce more Asia-related content into their classrooms are listed below. All materials are open access and available through the Internet.

Asia Pacific Curriculum
<http://www.asiapacificcurriculum.ca>

APF Canada's Asia Pacific Curriculum project provides Asia-focused resources for high school social studies teachers and students on a publicly accessible website. Resources include an ongoing "Asia Profile" series that features interesting data and stories from various Asian countries and territories, and topical lesson sets that include a background reading; classroom activity and assessment options; a guide for teachers; and a wide variety of supplemental materials such as videos, short radio programs, media coverage, timelines, quizzes, and key names and phrases in Asian languages. New country profiles and modules will be added to the website on an ongoing basis. Here is a short description of two recent additions:

China's One-Child Policy
<http://asiapacificcurriculum.ca/learning-module/chinas-one-child-policy>

This set of resources introduces students to the rationale, history, and impact of one of China's most far-reaching social policies. The resources include a background reading, graphs, photo images, an interactive quiz, and links to various media (including video and audio) that give students exposure to Chinese perspectives on how the One-Child Policy has shaped the world in which they live, and how it will continue to shape China even after the policy's official end. The resources also include an editable PowerPoint presentation and five classroom activity and assessment options. The topic is suitable for upper-level high school classes on human geography and twentieth-century world history.

The Rise and Fall of the Khmer Rouge Regime
<http://asiapacificcurriculum.ca/learning-module/rise-and-fall-khmer-rouge-regime>

This resource packet presents students with the background to and unfolding of the genocide in Cambodia (1975–1979), as well as different approaches to dealing with this chapter of the country's past. It includes a two-part background reading, maps, photo images, and media (including video). The resources also include an editable PowerPoint presentation and five classroom activity and assessment options. The topic would be suitable for upper-level high school (or even first-year university/college) courses on twentieth-century world history, the Việt Nam War, and social justice.



Screen capture of “The Rise and Fall of The Khmer Rouge Regime.”

Canada-Asia Agenda

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/canada-asia-agenda>

Canada-Asia Agenda is an online publication series focused on explaining contemporary issues and events in Asia. Because these are written for nonspecialists and are relatively short (2,000–2,500 words), they can be useful tools for teachers and students from upper-level high school onward. They can be used as background reading for teachers or supplementary material to existing lessons. Topics and themes covered include Asia Pacific politics, diplomacy, security, economics, business, social change, innovation, geography, education, culture, and media. Below are abstracts of a few examples.

“15 Years After Independence, Whatever Happened to East Timor?”

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/canada-asia-agenda/15-years-after-independence-whatever-happened-east-timor>

On May 20, 2017, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (the country’s official name, using the Portuguese words for East Timor) celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the restoration of its independence. Once the focus of human rights protests, Timor-Leste has fallen out of the headlines since the violent end of Indonesian rule and the country’s emergence as the twenty-first century’s first new independent state. Today, declining oil revenues leave some observers muttering about a “failed state” in the making, while others celebrate the elections and orderly transitions of power that mark a maturing democracy.

“Asia’s Clean Tech Transition: Balancing Green Development and New Market Growth”

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/canada-asia-agenda/asias-clean-tech-transition-balancing-green-development-and>

A profound shift toward a clean energy future has been underway in East Asia over the past decade. The industrial giants China, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea (and, importantly, the South Asian giant India) are the main players in these economy-wide transitions. Governments of these countries have all made various commitments toward low-carbon-emitting, green-growth strategies. They have invested in the building of new green energy technology manufacturing industries such as those related to solar and wind, smart grids, green vehicles, and green buildings. As a means to create and sustain momentum for greening efforts at home and globally, East Asian states have pioneered the establishment of new institutions at the national, regional, and international levels.

“The Hague’s South China Sea Ruling: Implications for East Asian Security”

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/canada-asia-agenda/hagues-south-china-sea-ruling-implications-east-asian>

The South China Sea is one of the most important waterways in the world. Every year, US \$5 trillion in goods pass through it, including almost all the oil imported by China, Japan, and South Korea. Tens of millions of people depend on its fisheries for either food or livelihood. It is the strategic gateway between the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. It is also the scene of multiple overlapping maritime and territorial claims that have erupted into violence in the past and threaten to do so again.

“China Looks North: Carving Out a Role in the Arctic”

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/canada-asia-agenda/china-looks-north-carving-out-role-arctic>

Approximately 1,500 kilometers south of the Arctic Circle lies China’s northernmost settlement, a snowy village simply referred to as “Arctic village,” or *beiji cun*. Although it has no Arctic territory and no history of audacious polar treks, China has steadily increased its voice and engagement in the region, and Chinese officials have referred to the concept of becoming a “polar region power.” The contours of China becoming a polar region power are starting to become visible through debates and discussions within China, as well as through its bilateral and multilateral engagement, especially with Russia and Nordic countries.

National Opinion Polls

<https://www.asiapacific.ca/surveys/national-opinion-polls>

APF Canada’s annual national opinion polls provide glimpses into Canadians’ views on Asia and the increasing importance of Asia for Canada’s prosperity. Every even year, the poll focuses on Canadian attitudes toward Asia and perceptions on Canada–Asia relations. Every odd year is reserved for two smaller thematic polls. Teachers may use these to gain insight into Canadian perceptions of Asia and as a base to compare and debate their own attitudes toward and understanding of Asia. All national opinion poll reports contain a number of graphs that could be used to support student data literacy. The most recent thematic polls are as follows:

2017 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Engagement with China

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/surveys/national-opinion-polls/2017-national-opinion-poll-canadian-views-engagement-china>



Screen capture of “2017 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Engagement with China.”

The uncertainty in Canada–US relations under the Donald Trump presidency, mixed with significant changes in Europe with Brexit, has been playing into public debate about Canada’s relationship with Asia. Most of the recent focus on Canada–Asia relations has been with China, given the country’s dramatic economic and political rise. According to the poll, because of global political uncertainties, Canadians are recognizing the importance of closer economic relations with China and in increasing business opportunities, including a potential free trade agreement. At the same time, however, Canadians continue to maintain concerns that increased engagement will come at a cost of increased economic and political pressure from China. The most important area for collaboration between the two countries, according to poll results, is in the area of pollution mitigation and environmental protection.

2016 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia

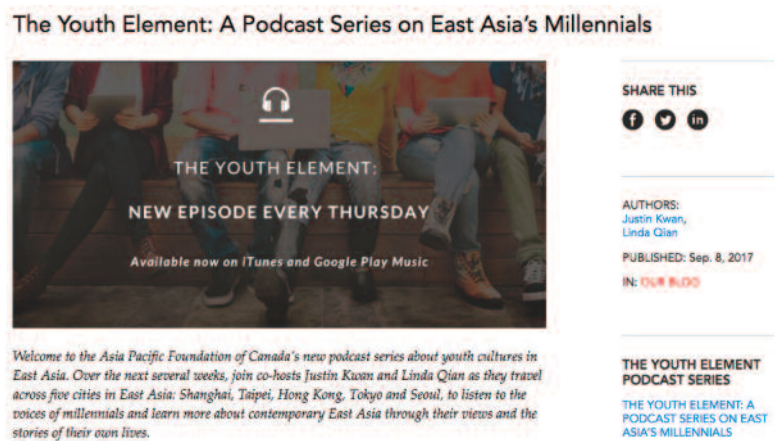
<http://www.asiapacific.ca/surveys/national-opinion-polls/2016-national-opinion-poll-canadian-views-asia>

This poll found that Canadians feel more connected and positive toward Asia and are more optimistic about future relations with the region than they were two years prior. It also found that a growing number of people are seeing China as more of an opportunity than a threat. Canada is increasingly positive about trade and collaboration with partners in Asia and sees the region as important for their province's prosperity. For example, 61 percent agree that the provinces should open more trade offices in Asia, up from 45 percent in 2014. Nonetheless, Canadians maintain distrust of foreign state-owned enterprises investing in Canada and hold strong views on the importance of human rights issues in Asia within trade, signaling that they are prioritizing political as opposed to economic or social rights.

The Youth Element: A Podcast Series on East Asia's Millennials

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/blog/youth-element-podcast-series-east-asias-millennials>

Teachers can use *The Youth Element*, a podcast produced by youth representing youth, to explore contemporary East Asia with their students. Why focus on East Asian youth? There is plenty of information available on the subject of East Asian youth and youth cultures, but it tends to focus on analyzing and generalizing youth behaviors, values, and consumer preferences. Instead of trying to understand “East Asian youth” as a singular category of analysis, this eight-episode podcast highlights the voices of millennials in five East Asian cities to make sense of the bigger questions around society, culture, politics, economics, national defense, and geopolitics through narrated stories of youth.



Screen capture of “The Youth Element” podcast page.

Asia Pacific News Service

<http://www.asiapacific.ca/news/asia-glance>

Are you a teacher or student who would like to stay informed about daily events throughout the Asia Pacific but lack time? APF Canada's daily news service is the answer; it provides titles and links to the top news stories from Asia Pacific-based English-language newspapers and delivers them to your inbox (or for access online). Every Thursday, the news service is supplemented with the “Asia at a Glance” section that provides a succinct summary of the top three news items from the previous week.

What's next?

While APF Canada has been around for over thirty years, it is reemerging as a contributor of materials and resources for education about Asia and would welcome thoughtful feedback and comments on existing materials and potential future education module topics, as well as opportunities to collaborate.

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