

Nationalism: Identity, Nation, and Belonging

30 minutes, 3 stages

Nationalism shapes how people understand who they are and where they belong. In this assignment, you will examine nationalism as both an identity and a feeling shared by groups, and consider how it connects to other loyalties that matter to people ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)). You will also begin to think about the tensions that arise when nationalism meets other values and commitments ([Outcome](#)).

Stage 1: Define and Distinguish (8 min)

Read the following statements. For each one, write one sentence explaining whether it describes nationalism or ultranationalism, and why.

1. A political movement argues that the nation's interests must always come first, even if it means limiting the rights of minority groups within the country.
2. Citizens gather to celebrate shared language, customs, and traditions that bind them together as a people.
3. A government claims that its nation is superior to all others and that expansion through military force is justified.
4. A region seeks self-government and recognition of its distinct culture and history within a larger state.

When you finish, underline the word or phrase in each statement that was most important to your decision.

Stage 2: Explore Multiple Loyalties (12 min)

Nationalism is one form of identity, but people often hold other loyalties at the same time: to religion, region, culture, class, or ideology ([Outcome](#)).

Choose one of these scenarios. Write a short paragraph (5 to 7 sentences) explaining the tension and how the person might try to balance both loyalties.

Scenario A: A person is deeply committed to their religious faith, which teaches universal compassion across all nations. At the same time, they feel strong pride in their nation's achievements and want to support its interests.

Scenario B: A person belongs to an Indigenous nation with its own governance, laws, and territory. They also hold Canadian citizenship. How might these two forms of national identity interact or conflict?

Scenario C: A person immigrated to Canada from another country where they were born. They maintain close ties to their heritage nation's culture and family. They also feel Canadian. What tensions might they experience between these identities?

Stage 3: Reflect on Evolution (10 min)

Nationalism is not fixed. Understandings of identity, nation, and nationalism change over time and across contexts ([Outcome](#)).

Answer both questions in 2 to 3 sentences each.

1. Think of a nation or national movement you have studied (in class or elsewhere). Describe one way that nationalism in that place or time was shaped by historical, geographic, political, economic, or social factors ([Outcome](#)).
2. How might nationalism in Canada today be different from Canadian nationalism in 1867, or in 1945,

or in 1995? Name one specific change.

Self-check

1. Can you explain the difference between nationalism and ultranationalism?
2. Can you give an example of a loyalty or commitment that might conflict with nationalism, and explain why the conflict exists?
3. Can you name one historical or contemporary factor that has shaped nationalism in a specific place?

If you answered yes to all three, you are ready for the next lesson.