



The History and Evolution of the Supreme Court of Canada

Student worksheet

This worksheet is designed to guide your thinking before, during, and after the video that you will watch. Answer the questions as you watch and reflect on how the Supreme Court of Canada has evolved over time.

Before you watch

- What do you already know about this topic? Before watching the video, decide whether each statement is true or false. You are not expected to know all the answers, so you can always mark down “not sure.”

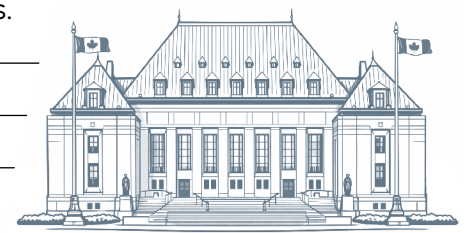
Statement	True	False	Not Sure
The Supreme Court of Canada has always been Canada's highest court.	☐	☐	☐
At one time, Supreme Court decisions could be appealed to courts in the United Kingdom.	☐	☐	☐
The Supreme Court of Canada struggled at first to define its role.	☐	☐	☐
The number of judges on the Supreme Court has changed over time.	☐	☐	☐
Changes to Canada's legal system affect the power of the Supreme Court.	☐	☐	☐
The Supreme Court plays a role in shaping Canadian society.	☐	☐	☐

- Why might a country choose to have a single, final court of appeal?

While you watch

- When was the Supreme Court of Canada officially created? _____
- Why was the Supreme Court not originally the highest court in Canada?

- Identify one challenge the early Supreme Court faced in its early years.



4. How did some legal experts describe the quality of professionalism of the early court?

5. Why did some people believe Canada did not need its own Supreme Court at first?

6. What change in 1949 made the Supreme Court the final court of appeal in Canada?

7. According to the video, how did the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms change the role of the court?

After you watch

1. In the video, former Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin describes the early Supreme Court as “a court in search of a role.” What do you think this means?

2. Identify one change in Canadian society mentioned or implied in the video and explain how it affected the role of the Supreme Court.
