

# CANADA'S GENDER PAY GAP



*The Places We Meet: Embedding Intersectional Feminism in the Classroom, Kindergarten to Grade 8* was developed to help educators and learners critically examine issues of intersectional feminism. This resource will support conversations around equity issues, change-making, and shifting power to achieve social justice for all.

## The Places We Meet includes:

- Teacher/educator guides with helpful tips for using the resource to enhance classroom practice
- Dynamic lessons and reproducibles for the Primary, Junior, and Intermediate divisions, linked to up-to-date Ontario curriculum expectations
- English and French glossaries of equity terms
- Booklist of picture books featured in the lessons

**Division:** Intermediate

## Duration of the Lesson(s):

90 minutes (plus extra time for Consolidation activities)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION (FOR THE EDUCATOR)

Although Canada's *Pay Equity Act* came into effect on August 31, 2021, there still exists a gender pay gap across many industries and at a variety of professional levels. In 2021, female employees aged 25 to 54 earned \$3.79 (11.1%) less per hour, on average, than their male counterparts. In other words, women in this age group earned \$0.89 for every dollar earned by men (Pay gap, 1998 to 2021). Other studies and data have also shown that pay inequities disproportionately affect those who are 2SLGBTQ+, newcomer women, and women living with disabilities.

This lesson examines the gender pay gap in Canada by comparing the numerical data from the article *The Gender Pay Gap is Not a Myth. Here are 6 Common Claims Debunked* with an infographic based on the information in the article. Learners will then be encouraged to find their own data on a subject of their choosing and create an infographic based on their findings. Through analysis and conversation, this lesson encourages learners to consider the effectiveness and purpose behind infographics.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### Canadian Women's Foundation –

- *The gender pay gap: Pay gap in Canada: The Facts*
- *The gender pay gap is a myth*

**Global News** – *The gender pay gap costs Canadian women almost \$16,000 a year*

**Pay Equity Office, Ontario**

## KEY TERMS (FOR USE WITH THE LEARNERS)

**Annual Income/Earnings:** The total value of income earned during a fiscal year.

**Cumulative:** Increasing in quantity by successive addition.

**Glass ceiling:** A metaphorical invisible barrier that prevents certain individuals in a workplace from accessing promotions, opportunities, and higher pay. It most commonly refers to the barriers faced by women and those who experience marginalization in society.

**Non-binary:** One term used to describe genders that do not fit into the two categories of male or female. Other terms include genderqueer, agender, bigender, or pangender.

**Systemic barriers:** Institutional policies and/or practices that reinforce institutional structures and power dynamics resulting in the differential and unequal treatment of members of certain groups.

**Trans:** An umbrella term that describes people with diverse gender identities and gender expressions that do not conform to stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a girl/woman or a boy/man in society.

**Two-Spirit:** A term used by some Indigenous individuals to describe their sexual, gender, and/or spiritual identity.

## BIG IDEAS

Gender pay gap, power and privilege, intersectional identities

## LEARNING GOALS

- We are learning about the gender pay gap in Canada and why the *Pay Equity Act* came into effect.



## CURRICULUM

- We are learning about the effectiveness of infographics and how numerical data can be used to influence and inform the intended audience.
- We are learning that the pay gap in Canada is a result of the systemic barriers faced by those who do not identify as male.

### SUCCESS CRITERIA

The following are suggestions for what could be included in the success criteria. Effective practice includes co-constructing success criteria with learners:

- I can explain the factors that impact the pay gap between men and women in Canada.
- I can explain how infographics are a tool to share data and information in a visual way.
- I can explain why the discrepancy in pay goes beyond a person's salary and that additional barriers exist depending on a person's positionality.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASSESSMENT

#### Assessment AS Learning:

- Anecdotal notes from the observations and conversations had through discussion.

#### Assessment OF Learning:

- Assess learners' ability to apply an analysis of infographics through critical questions.

### CRITICAL QUESTIONS

- What factors impact the gender pay gap in Canada?
- Does the *Pay Equity Act* correct the pay gap? Why or why not?
- Why are infographics an effective tool to use when sharing numerical data? How can they influence and persuade an audience?
- Why does the gender pay gap persist after the passing of the *Pay Equity Act*?

## CURRICULUM LINKS

### MATH: DATA

#### Grade 7

**D1.4** Create an infographic about a data set, representing the data in appropriate ways, including in tables and circle graphs, and incorporating any other relevant information that helps to tell a story about the data.

### MATH: DATA

#### Grade 8

**D1.4** Create an infographic about a data set, representing the data in appropriate ways including in tables and scatter plots, and incorporating any other relevant information that helps to tell a story about the data.

### LANGUAGE: COMPREHENSION: UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO TEXTS

#### Grades 7 & 8

**C2. Comprehension strategies:** Apply comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading, listening to, and viewing a variety of texts, including digital and media texts, by creators with diverse identities, perspectives, and experience, in order to understand and clarify the meaning of texts.

**C3. Critical thinking in literacy:** Apply critical thinking skills to deepen understanding of texts, and analyze how various perspectives and topics are communicated and addressed in a variety of texts, including digital, media, and cultural texts.

### PROGRAM ADAPTATIONS

- Materials can be shared via virtual learning platforms or can be printed for use in the learning space.
- Have learners work in mixed-ability groupings to support multiple entry points.

### MATERIALS

- recording method for learner responses (e.g., chart paper and marker, shared electronic document, etc.)
- Fact vs. Myth Quiz
- article: *The Gender Pay Gap is Not a Myth*. Here are 6 Common Claims Debunked
- infographic: What is Pay Equity?.pdf

- Canva, Photoshop, or Google Slides/Draw to create the infographic (free slide templates can be downloaded from Slidesgo)

### MINDS ON

As a whole group, play the Fact vs. Myth Quiz. Learners should be encouraged to share their ideas and questions throughout. Record learners' thoughts as these will come in handy in the Consolidation portion of the lesson.

Facilitate a brief discussion on what might have been surprising, what was new information, or other facts that resonated with the learners. Invite learners to consider why they answered the quiz questions the way they did, and what this tells them about their assumptions and biases. It is critical to note that although it is now illegal in Canada to pay women less than men, the *Pay Equity Act* hasn't eliminated the gender pay gap because this is a systemic issue and various policies and practices continue to create barriers for those who do not identify as male.

**Note:** The facts and information presented consider only the identities of male and female. This is purposeful, as a question that will arise in the Consolidation portion asks whose voice is not heard (transgender, non-binary, gender diverse, and two-spirit people). Whenever learners make this observation, it is critical to stop during the lesson to discuss the impact of binary statistics. Invite learners to consider and discuss new alternatives for statistics that are more inclusive.

### ACTION

Display and read aloud the article titled *The Gender Pay Gap is Not a Myth*. Here are 6 Common Claims Debunked. Learners are encouraged to take note of which numbers stood out and how the numbers were used overall in this article.

**Optional:** Have learners read through the article prior to the lesson to allow them to apply reading strategies that help them (e.g., use Google Read & Write and have the text read aloud to them).

Invite each learner to add some of the most noteworthy numbers on large chart paper in a graffiti style.

Create small groups. Each group will be given access to a copy of the gender pay gap article and a copy of the What is Pay Equity? infographic. Together in their groups, learners will compare the information in the article and the infographic.

#### Prompts:

- Which numbers in the article do you think were most important? Why?
- Which text provided more information?
- Which text was easier to understand?
- Which text did you prefer, the article or the infographic? Why?

Invite learners to consider what information may be missing (e.g., women whose identities intersect with race, religion, age, sexuality, ethnicity, language, and ability).

Invite the learners to share their ideas in an open discussion.

#### Anticipated discussion points:

- the article provides more context
- the infographic is easier to understand (highlights critical values), however this could be misleading without the context of the article
- the preferred text will depend on the audience and the purpose of the text

Support learners through the discussion to summarize the various points of view and ideas presented.

### CONSOLIDATION

Share, “there is a lot of factual information available about the inequity in pay, but now that Canada has instituted the *Pay Equity Act*, is there still a need to discuss Canada’s pay gap? Is there still a pay gap?”

**Note:** Although the *Pay Equity Act* went into effect on August 31, 2021, there is still a gender discrepancy in pay. At this point, it is critical to help learners understand the barriers women face are systemic. Focus on the bottom portion of the infographic: not only is there a pay gap between men and

women, but the gap is greater for immigrant women, racialized women, and it is the greatest for Indigenous women.

#### Have learners consider:

- What additional barriers do immigrant, racialized, and Indigenous women face in many other aspects of their lives and how do these contribute to the gender pay gap?
- Whose experiences are not included in this data? Example: transgender women, non-binary, gender diverse, and two-spirit people.

Invite learners to consider how often and how effectively infographics are used in our daily lives (e.g., social media, commercials, informative videos, etc.). Co-create a list of critical questions we should consider as a viewer.

#### Anticipated/possible critical questions:

- Who created this?
- What sources were used?
- Can we verify the information presented?
- What is the intention?
- What is the message?

Learners will find an infographic to analyze using the above critical questions and apply their learning by sharing their results with the class. (This may be done on another day if learners need time to explore and find infographics that are relevant.)

Where applicable, encourage learners to make connections to the article they read during the Action phase.

Connect the importance of reading an infographic with thinking critically about the information being shared. Infographics continue to evolve, especially within social media apps. Regardless of the medium, the same critical questions and ideas apply because of the mass distribution and the click/quick activism intention behind each post.

### EXTENSIONS

Learners can work individually, in pairs, or in groups to identify another inequity that exists and create an infographic to display the data that supports that inequity. Example: NBA versus WNBA – air time, participation, salary of players, sponsorships, etc.

Invite learners to consider what pieces are missing from this analysis as the data is collected based on gender binaries (e.g., men and women) and does not consider gender identities that move beyond these social constructions.

Learners can search for their own articles around the gender pay gap and create an infographic that may summarize the information, or they may take an infographic and create an article based on the information presented or other sources of information.

### REFERENCES

- United Nations Human Rights Committee. (2015, August 13). *Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Canada* (CCPR/C/CAN/CO/6).
- Racco, M. (2018, April 13). *The gender pay gap is not a myth. Here are 6 common claims debunked*. Global News.
- Statistics Canada. (2022, May 31). *Quality of employment in Canada: Pay gap, 1998-2021* (catalogue no. 14280001).