



## The Early Chinese Canadians, 1858-1947

### *Educational Resources*

#### Lesson 1

#### **Causes and Consequence: Why do things happen in history?**

#### **Activity 1.1**

#### **Understanding Causes and Consequences**

1. Begin with a story to build on students' own experiences of causes and consequences.  
For example:
  - The teacher could ask students who or what had an influence on their report card grades. Consider all the factors or conditions, as well as all the people that might have helped or hurt their grades. Of course, the student is chiefly responsible for their grades, but probe them for a wider list: family, friends, teachers, the amount of time spent studying and reviewing, the degree of participation in class, the effort they expended in projects, etc.
  - Expand the questioning so that students must consider social forces or conditions. For example, if students were in a different country or a different historical period, their parents may have had to insist that they work instead of attend school. Thus, the economy and family wealth are factors. The Ministry of Education could change its policy and introduce new exams or, more radically, the federal government could declare war and recruit the boys into the army. Politics could then also be a factor. And so on.
  - Sometimes small actions or just plain luck can have significant consequences. For example, getting the time wrong and arriving late for a final exam could result in failing the course.
2. Group some of the causes discussed into three categories: individuals, groups and social conditions/forces.
3. Explain that when looking for the causes of historical events, historians consider the same kinds of factors. Human beings "make" history, just as the students "make" their report card grades. However, we act under certain conditions that influence us. This is the same in history. People influence

events, but they in turn are constantly influenced by social forces, by other groups, by geography, and by history.

4. Explain that the students will be studying some significant events in the history of Chinese Canadians and looking at their various causes and consequences, much as the class looked at the causes and consequences of their school marks.