

The Open Suitcase Series – Program Description

The History of Tourism on Prince Edward Island

This program explores the history of the tourism industry on Prince Edward Island, with emphasis on its benefits, disadvantages, challenges, and changes over time. Discover what techniques have been used to promote visitors to the Island. How did changes in transportation methods affect Island tourism? Why is the industry so important?

Listed are descriptions of the topics covered and the contents of the suitcase. Also included is a list of suggested activities and questions for critical thinking which accompany the program.

The written material covers the following topics:

Definition of Tourist and Tourism

Learn to define tourism and discover the components that make up this industry. What is needed to be a tourist? Have people always traveled?

Benefits of Tourism

Tourism affects people in a number of different industries and influences the lives of both visitors and residents. Explore some of the positive aspects that it brings to an area.

Disadvantages of Tourism

There are two sides to every story and along with all the benefits of tourism there are some downfalls. Have a look at some negative aspects of the industry.

Overview of Tourism on Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island may be small, but it has long been a desired travel destination for many. Why do visitors love this small province? Discover some of the Island's qualities which have attracted tourists here for years and continue to do so. Some of the sales pitches and festivals, which bring people in great number, are discussed.

Tourism Prior to 1900

When did Islanders begin to realize the economic benefits of the tourism industry? Who was visiting the Island in these early years? How was the Island being promoted?

Attracting Visitors in the Early Decades of the 1900s

The tourism industry began to grow in the early 1900s, expanding to reach middle class visitors along with wealthy upper class families. Lucy Maud Montgomery published *Anne of Green Gables*, tourist bureaus were opened, and motoring practices were changed to accommodate visitors. How did these changes affect the industry? Was the government involved in the promotion of the industry as it is today?

Tourism during the Depression Years of the 1930s

The face of tourism changed with the turn in the economy. How did the Great Depression affect Island tourism?

Island Tourism during the 1940s

How did World War II impact tourism on Prince Edward Island? Were finances available for travel? Discover the ways and means visitors came to the Island including the Wood Islands-Caribou Ferry Service, which began in 1941, as well as the history of the Charlottetown Airport.

Rapid Growth During the 1950s

Learn how the Island government began to get involved in the industry. How was the Island being promoted in this post-war period? From where were people visiting?

The 1960s Promotion of P.E.I. as the Cradle of Confederation

Prince Edward Island is known as the birthplace of Canada, a fact that was used as a promotional tool to attract visitors to the area during the 100th anniversary of the Charlottetown conference that took place in 1864. Which Island attractions celebrate this historic event? How were the majority of visitors coming to the Island?

Government Involvement during the 1970s

Seeing the economic impact of tourism in the province, the Island government began to be more involved in the industry. Money was invested to encourage visitors to take longer vacations, and much advertising was done to promote the Island's natural beauty through coastal drives of our three counties. Golf became another big part of the industry for both government and private owners. Did the government sometimes go too far in their attempt to bring visitors?

The Cultural Direction of the 1980s

The tourism industry is always looking for new ways to attract visitors. This decade focused on the promotion of the Island's culture including heritage, visual and performing arts. This led to the establishment and promotion of a number of community museums and government organizations. What sort of activities does cultural tourism entail? Why would this attract tourists? How did government get involved in cultural and heritage preservation? Government also began looking into hosting conventions and conferences, which can bring participants from all over the world.

Connection to the Mainland in the 1990s

How did the opening of the Confederation Bridge affect Island tourism? What is experiential tourism and how is it changing the face of tourism?

Current Considerations about the Industry

Providing around 12,000 jobs to Islanders, tourism is now the second most important economic industry on Prince Edward Island. How is the Island being promoted today? In which ways is the Island losing some of its uniqueness? How is tourism influencing the Island?

Questions for Critical Thought and Ideas for Further Exploration

Definition of Tourist and Tourism

- Many people who explore their own home areas call themselves tourists as well. If you were a tourist like this, what could you do in your own area?
- How do fuel companies, construction companies, and food suppliers benefit from tourism?
- Do you enjoy traveling? What do you find appealing about being a tourist?
- There are many types of tourism: beach, farm, winter, pilgrimage, educational, and cultural. Which do you think is most popular on the Island? In the world?

Benefits of Tourism

- Tourism benefits the preservation and conservation of architecture, arts, and heritage. Why do you think this is important?
- Tourism benefits towns and cities in one way by creating employment for local residents. What sort of jobs do you think the residents would do?

Disadvantages of Tourism

- One of the disadvantages of tourism is the unpredictability of the number of visitors. What are some factors that may make it more predictable?
- Why do you think the majority of those involved in the industry would get low wages?
- Overview of Tourism on Prince Edward Island
- Why do you think cultural and heritage tourism is becoming a bigger attraction than other sorts in the 21st century?

Tourism prior to 1900

- Why do you think hotels were thought to be a lesser quality than small boarding houses and inns?
- What do you think would have most helped promote the Island as a tourist destination: travel writers, steamship lines and railway promotion, or newspaper advertisements? Explain.

Attracting Visitors in the Early Decades of the 1900s

- Why was tourism considered to be a “hit and miss affair”?

- The availability of automobiles made traveling easier but it was a more costly method of transportation. How do you think this impacted the industry?
- Tourism organizers wanted to encourage visitors to experience the “Island way of life”. How would you describe the Island way of life? Why would this be attractive to tourists?
- Why do you think the tourism industry was so unorganized through the 1920s?

Tourism during the Depression Years of the 1930s

- Island tourism increased during the years of the great economic depression. Why do you think this was the case? Who could afford to travel during these tough times?
- How would this industry have helped Islanders get through the Depression years?
- Why do you think the Cavendish area was chosen for the Island’s first National Park? Do you think that was a good choice?

Island Tourism during the 1940s

- How did the war affect tourists to the Island? Would they have encountered the same experiences as pre-war days? What might have been different?
- Air transportation was introduced to the Island in the 1940s and there continues to be advancement in travel methods. What do you think is the most popular way to come to the Island: bridge, ferry or airplane?

Rapid Growth during the 1950s

- The promotion of Prince Edward Island as “Holiday Island” attempted to attract families with young children. Do you think this was a good way to advertise the Island? Is it an appealing slogan? What is the Island being promoted as today? Do you feel it is an effective promotion?
- Why would visitors be so interested in parks and beaches during the 1950s? How was this post-war period different from prior decades?

The 1960s promotion of PEI as the Cradle of Confederation

- Why do you think it took so long for the Island to promote itself as the birthplace of Canada? Why would this historical fact attract visitors?
- What do you think were some of the factors which lead to a tripling of visitors to the Island in the 1960s?

Government Involvement during the 1970s

- The Island competes in a large world tourism market. What are some other well-known tourist destinations?

- “Disney spin-offs,” though attempted with the aim of attracting visitors, often fail. Why might this be? Do you think they are a good idea?
- In the 1970s, many Islanders feared the province would become a big tourist resort. Were their fears without reason? If it became a reality, how would the Island be different?

The Cultural Direction of the 1980s

- Tourists come to experience the uniqueness of the province. What are some unique features of Prince Edward Island?
- Why did the tourism industry make a shift to greater promotion for cultural tourism?
- Why would the Island be a good location for conferences?

Connection to the Mainland in the 1990s

- Why is the building of the Confederation Bridge one of the most significant events in Island history?

Current Considerations about the Industry

- The tourism season has recently begun extending into the fall months to accommodate off-season travelers. What are some advantages / disadvantages to traveling in the off-season?
- Women and students tend to be employed in the majority of tourism positions. Why might this be the case?
- Name some of the factors that have always attracted visitors to the Island and continue to do so to this day?
- The Island has lost some of its unique factors such as driving on the left hand side, no Sunday shopping, and pop in bottles. How have these changes affected Islanders? How have the changes influenced visitors? Overall, are they positive or negative changes?
- In what sort of activities might visitors participate as a part of experiential tourism? What activities might be good to develop to attract visitors?

Suggestions for Activities

1. What would you recommend to a visitor to see and do on their holiday? Consider making a present day brochure outlining your choice of top Island attractions. In your brochure promote what you think is appealing and attractive about the Island, not necessarily what is being commercially promoted.

2. Compose an ad for a newspaper or magazine promoting vacationing on Prince Edward Island. Review the ads of days gone by that you can find in the resource binder. What are the important aspects of the Island to promote? Note how language has changed over time.

3. Consider becoming a tourist in your own province. Encourage your family to explore your home community.

4. Have a class debate about the merits of tourism. Is it an industry that is good for Prince Edward Island and its people?

5. If you were going to develop a new tourist attraction for Prince Edward Island what would it be? Would your attraction be specific to the Island, or would it be something that could be found anywhere in North America? An older group of students could look at putting in place an attraction totally out of character with the Island and be called upon to defend their idea while listing all the problems it might create. An example would be bringing dolphins to the province so that tourists could swim with them.

6. The best ambassador for any tourist destination is a local citizen who knows his or her surroundings. Play the Prince Edward Island board game and learn about your home province.

7. Debate government regulations. A good example of how much more involved the government has become in the tourism industry is the Tourism P.E.I. Act of 1988. You can find the legislation on the Internet and hold a classroom discussion on whether or not you feel the government is helping or harming the industry with its regulations.

8. Consider the spin-offs of the industry. A spin-off is defined a “something derived from another.” Make a list of the industries or types of businesses that are affected by tourism. An example would be increased sales for craftspeople.

9. Listen to the song on Allan Rankin’s CD about tourists coming to visit. Can you relate to the song? Try to find someone who can sing the jingle “Dial the Island” recorded by Stompin’ Tom in the 1970s. The toll-free # was 800-565-7421.

Items in the suitcase

Besides the written material contained in the binder a number of other materials have been gathered for the suitcase that will increase the student’s understanding of the tourism industry and how it has evolved over time.

Prince Edward Island On Board: Produced by Help on Board in support of Junior Achievement P.E.I., this board game gives students a chance to discover the Island and what it has to offer including some well known tourist attractions such as Founder’s Hall, The College of Piping, The Charlottetown Festival, and The Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival.

Tourism Guide Books: To visually see how tourism has changed over time, the suitcase includes five tourism guidebooks from different decades including 1910s, 1930s, 1950, 1970s, and 2000s. These books allow students to analyse how advertising techniques have changed, which attractions have come and gone, how values have altered, transportation methods have advanced, prices have increased, etc.

Brochures: An assortment of recent PEI brochures, pamphlets, and tourist information advertising a variety of attractions, concerts, parks, etc. is included. Brochures from years past can be found in the Supplementary Material Binder. Some of the early brochures in the binder include “Special Attractions,” “Prince Edward Island, Canada’s Garden Province”, and “Big 5 Tour.” This will give students the opportunity to make comparisons of how the industry has changed over time.

Articles and Ads: The Supplementary Material Binder includes a number of articles and advertisements relating to the tourism industry. Some excerpts include: a hotel ad from 1866, the Islanders’ Reunion Celebration Programme from 1904, a 1913 Guardian write up on the Island’s tourist attractions, and even a modern Guardian article on the 100th anniversary of Anne of Green Gables. These ads provide students with an opportunity to discover how the tourism industry has changed over time.

Photographs: The Supplementary Material binder contains photographs from the 1800s, 1900s, and 2000s. Topics covered include hotels and motels; transportation methods – automobiles, ferries, bridge, shuttle, train tracks; and a family vacation photo album from 1907. Also included are photos of postcards from the early 1900s. These images allow students to see what PEI was like many years ago, and visually make comparisons of how the tourism industry and peoples lifestyles in general have changed over the years.

Photo CD: All of the photographs are also provided on a CD for easy classroom viewing.

Allan Rankin CD: This CD has a song about tourists coming to visit. This gives students the opportunity to listen to travelers’ experiences.

Maps: Island maps are included in the suitcases to enable students to find key locations in the province. They can learn the geography of the province as they discover where prime tourist destinations once were, and where they are today.