

Embedding South Asian Canadian culture, history, and heritage in the classroom

South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford

IN APRIL 2022, Saffron Threads launched as a free educational resource to support teachers with integrating South Asian Canadian culture, history, and heritage in classrooms. Saffron Threads currently features:

- nine activity plans, with resources for Kindergarten to Grade 12 across different curricular areas
- backgrounders, with information on history and culture to support activity plan implementation and learning
- a Time Shuffle timeline card game, featuring 35 important events and historically significant people from South Asian Canadian history in BC.

The activity plans were developed in collaboration with eight teachers from the South Asian Canadian community in BC, with support from the BC Teachers' Federation. Some of the activity plans included are:

- Brain Breaks: a physical and health education activity for Kindergarten to Grade 3 exploring mindfulness as a practice
- Discovering, Uncovering, and Celebrating Identity: an English language arts and arts education activity for Grades 4–6 exploring how identity and community intersect and are interconnected
- Design a South Asian Canadian Museum Exhibit: a social studies and ADST activity for Grades 7–9 exploring the culture, history, and heritage of their communities
- Exploring South Asian Canadian Culture through Food: an ADST (food studies) activity for Grades 10–12 exploring the origins of popular foods and recipes for South Asian meals.

Outreach box

In addition to Saffron Threads, the Royal BC Museum has developed an outreach box, available for loan at no cost to schools in BC through the Royal BC Museum's website. The kit has three units exploring who and what affected the beginning, rise, and decline of Paldi, now a ghost town on Vancouver Island. Students in Grades 4, 6, and 9 can explore images and objects to piece together this once vibrant South Asian Canadian community.

Legacy project

Saffron Threads, developed in partnership with Open School BC, is one piece of the larger South Asian Canadian Legacy Project (SACLP). SACLP aims to raise awareness and knowledge of the valuable contributions of South Asian Canadians to British Columbia's diverse culture, history, heritage, economy, and society. This two-year, grant-funded initiative includes:

- the South Asian Canadian Digital Archive
- a new social history book
- historic sites documentation and further engagement
- labour heritage research
- the Haq and History travelling exhibit
- Saffron Threads.

Saffron Threads will continue to grow in the coming years, and we hope you'll find an opportunity to bring South Asian culture, history, and heritage into your classroom.●

Resources

Links to the above resources can be found at linktr.ee/saffronthreads or by scanning the QR code.

