

**THIS! IS CANADA | VOILA! LE CANADA**



**experiences CANADA**  **VIRTUAL EXCHANGES**  
**ÉCHANGES VIRTUELS**

**THIS! Is Canada**  
**A Virtual Exchange Program**

# Application Guide

Avec la participation d'Échanges Canada  
du ministère du Patrimoine canadien



With the participation of Exchanges Canada  
of the Department of Canadian Heritage



**WELCOME!**



Experiences Canada virtual exchange program THIS! Is Canada! connects young people and encourages them to virtually discover the diverse history, geography, languages, cultures and ways of life that shape our country.

It's a fun, engaging online activity designed for youth from Grade 7 - 12. It can support social studies, languages, and creative studies curricula. Each activity unit is designed with the flexibility to permit teachers/parents-guardians to assign it as an individual or small group work respecting social distancing protocols, with the majority of tasks completed online.

Experiences Canada virtual exchanges are intended to reach all Canadian youth, either school groups or youth affiliated with a recognized community organization or individual participant.

All the stages of a virtual exchange provide participants with an opportunity to become familiar in both communities, strengthen national identity, develop a greater understanding of Canadian history and heritage and make connections with youth from another part of Canada.

To apply for an Experiences Canada exchange, please [visit our website](#).



## **OBJECTIVES:**

Experiences Canada virtual exchange program THIS! Is Canada, connects youth virtually across Canada through a series of projects and activities that encourages them to discover the diverse history, geography, languages, cultures and ways of life that shape their communities and our country. It is a unique opportunity to participate in a national project and for youth to connect across Canada at a time when travels may not be possible. It offers a prelude experience for groups interested in participating in an in-person exchange the following year or in the future.

1. Each virtual exchange participant will contribute to the creation of an interactive map of Canada.
2. Contribute to increased knowledge and understanding of Canada among Canadian youth, by enabling them to learn about the history, heritage, geography, industry, institutions, cultures, communities, Indigenous perspectives, and languages;
3. Help young Canadians connect to one another and create linkages, across the country and between groups, thereby helping to strengthen the fabric of Canadian society;
4. Develop Canadian identity and a sense of belonging to Canada among youth by enhancing their appreciation of both the diversity and the shared aspects of the Canadian experience.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

- Youth participants are enrolled in a school group or a recognized community organization in Canada;
- Individual youth age 12 - 17 with parental approval
- Groups of 30 youth between the ages of 12 and 17 who reside in Canada,
- Participants can sign-up to the virtual exchange program more than once.
- Participation to the virtual exchange does not affect youth participation to the In-Person exchange program.



## EXCHANGE GUIDELINES

- Each group or individual participant have the opportunity to choose from up to nine different activity units. The topics are: Daily life, Economy, History, Indigenous Perspectives, Geography/environment, Arts and Culture, Entrepreneurship, Second Language and Climate change.
- Each activity unit is designed with the flexibility to permit teachers, parents/guardians to assign modules as individual or small group work respecting social distancing protocols, with the majority of tasks completed online.
- Each module can easily be integrated within existing curriculum, and includes assessments and larger questions to help guide teachers/educators-parents-guardians.
- Each activity unit challenges youth to create a specific media product (i.e. a video, a photo gallery, a website.) showcasing their communities;
- Participant(s), first share their creation with their twins through an online meeting scheduled in real time using the school or home approved platform (i.e. Zoom, Google hangout...etc.);
- The media products created by the youth will then populate a virtual interactive Map entitled; This! Is Canada, available from Experiences Canada's website, highlighting all participating communities, and offering other visitors a Virtual tour across Canada.
- The modules are to be completed at the participants' own pace although the youth media products must all be submitted by the organizer to Experiences Canada .
- The media products created by youth must be branded as an Experiences Canada project. Experiences Canada provides templates for each modules/topics.
- All participants will be invited to complete a survey.
- Students are encouraged to use their own original content. When they are using third party content, students must seek permission from authors. If permission is not granted by original creator, the project will not be eligible for submission due to copyright laws



## VIRTUAL EXCHANGE PROCESS

Once a group is twinned, the organizers will receive a Notification email with the twins' contact information, inviting the organizers to discuss the possibilities of a virtual exchange between their communities.

The exchange project will be confirmed, when both applicants accept the offer of twinning presented to them, and submit their Acknowledgement of Organizer, their participant fee(s) and Agreement.

Once the exchange is confirmed, organizers will have access to a secure portal on our website where youth participants can be registered. Here, they will have access to the Virtual Exchange Teachers-Parents Guide which includes an overview of the program; Participants Guidelines and Permissions and Module-by-Module Instructions including technical specifications for media products as well as the log on information to our Online Learning System Talentlms via which the modules will be delivered to the youth participants. Templates, examples and step-by-step guidelines are provided for each unit/topic.

Selections (twinings) are determined based on the following factors:

- Experiences Canada will identify compatible participant(s)/groups based on demographics (ages, gender balance, size of group, etc.);
- And similar goals or interests;
- Alternatively, groups or individual participants who have connections across the county can ask to be paired together.

## VIRTUAL EXCHANGE MODULES

### 1. Daily Life

This module will introduce the virtual exchange program and start the journey for youth to make connections between their own communities and their twins. Participants will begin with ice breaker activities, then focus on defining identity and community and preparing information about their community to present to their twin – Where's their favorite place to eat, to hang out, what music they like, etc.

Activity: Youth will create a Kahoot quiz or a short video showcasing their community.



## **2. History**

This unit will foster an understanding of the diverse individuals, groups and institutions within community. Youth will develop an understanding of significant people, events and places in the past that have helped shape their community and their twins' community. Youth will gain an appreciation for the reality that every community has many histories to explore. Within this module, students will learn about who has come before them and how times have changed.

Activity: Youth will create a short photo gallery with captions to share some of the historic people, events, and places within their community.

## **3. Geography**

In this module, youths will be encouraged to get outside and explore their natural environment. The unit will help them explore the unique natural characteristics of their community; consider Indigenous worldviews about the interconnectedness of all living things, and the impact of human activity on their local environment. Students will reflect on why it is important to connect to the environment and consider their responsibility with the natural environment.

Activity: Youth will create a map featuring natural characteristics in their community or graph human activity that has impacted their natural environment.

## **4. Economy**

This unit will help youth develop an understanding of economic concepts and how various industries and roles work together to shape our regional and national economies. The unit will also encourage youth to explore their own future opportunities by reaching out to local business and industry leaders to learn about their jobs and how they got started. Youth will be encouraged to determine an employment of interest and research the steps involved that will lead to their preferred profession.

Activity: Youth will create short documentaries featuring (Zoom) interviews with business and/or government leaders about economic challenges and opportunities in their community.



## **5. Indigenous Perspectives**

This activity will develop understanding of the important relationship between language, customs and culture and identity; strengthen pride and awareness about First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities, increase understanding of Indigenous worldviews, and help youth become more familiar with treaties and land claims across Canada. Youth will be asked, “What does it mean to be a treaty person?” By exploring this question, non-Indigenous and Indigenous youth will better understand the relationship between Indigenous people and Canada.

Activity: Youth will create a Slideshow highlighting the language, culture, and leadership of their own, or local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

## **6. Art and Culture**

This unit will support and encourage youth’s artistic expression and/or the exploration of their community through an artistic lens. Youth will be encouraged to create their own art projects that reflect on their community and their cultural identity and/or research historic and contemporary artists in dance, music, theatre and literature that have helped shape their community’s identity.

Activity: Youth will create a website featuring local art and artists (could be all or any one of visual, dance, music, written; or create a gallery of their own works).

## **7. Entrepreneurship**

In this module, youth will learn about entrepreneurs in their community and find out how innovation has impacted the various goods and services across Canada

Activity: Youth will create a Google slide or PowerPoint featuring a local or national entrepreneur, or conduct a video interview with a local entrepreneur.

## **8. Second Language**

In this module, youth will practice/share their second language in greater depth with their twin, and put that practice to the test with a fun activity.



Activity: Youth will write a magazine/newspaper travel article in their second language promoting their community as a desired travel destination, or if your twin does not speak your second language, create a booklet of common words or sayings – unique to your community or culture and share with your twin.

## 9. Climate Change

In this module, youth will learn about civic action and solutions for combatting climate change in their community.

Activity: Youth will create a poster that includes how to reduce emissions, or energy-saving techniques for their house or create an infographic about climate action that would engage the students in their school

\*\*\*\*

**APPLY [HERE](#)** to access the Virtual Exchange Teachers-Parents Guide, which includes Module-by-Module Instructions including technical specifications for media Products and templates; as well as the log on information to our Online Learning System.

## KEYS FOR A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

### 1. Define Your Objectives

Virtual exchanges are a unique way for youth to connect across Canada and learn about Canadian history and heritage, cultural diversity, industry, rural and urban life or improve their second language at a time when travels may not be possible. With clear objectives, the Experiences Canada staff will be able to twin you according to your main theme (for example practice a 2<sup>nd</sup> language or learn about indigenous perspectives).





## 2. Select Youth Participants

The organizer is responsible for the selection of participating youth.

## 3. Your Twin

Experiences Canada will find a group or individual participant that shares your interests and demographics. If you would like to be twinned with a specific group or participant, please identify this on the Application Form in the “pre-twin” section. Once we find a twin, the group organizers will be notified by email.

## 4. Planning your Exchange

Organizers should select the number of modules they would like to complete; and chose the topics that are of interest to them. Groups and individual participants select the number of modules to complete and chose the topics. Virtual participants will be given priority if applying, later on, to participate in the In-person program.

Educators, youth groups or individuals may alternatively choose to do any one or all six units; and they can choose between having their whole group work on one or more unit, or, dividing their class into smaller teams, with each group responsible for completing a specific unit.

Organizers set the pace to complete each modules; Participants can work at their own pace.

## 5. Continue to Communicate

Organizers should encourage continued interaction between the participants in order to promote lasting links between participants and their communities.

## COSTS

### The Group pays for:

- Participation fee of \$100 per group;
- Or \$ 10 per individual participant;



- Virtual or electronic costs to produce youth media products.

**Experiences Canada** generously supported through **The Government of Canada – Exchanges program** funds the costs related to the design, production and delivery of the program.

## **A PROGRAM FOR ALL CANADIAN YOUTH**

Experiences Canada encourages and supports the participation of all Canadian Youth to participate in an exchange, including youth from the following groups:

### **Youth with Special Needs or Disabilities**

A person with Special Needs or Disabilities is defined as a person with a long-term physical condition, mental condition, or health problem who is limited with respect to functions in the home, in school or other activities and/or requires special assistance to perform daily functions.

### **Youth from Low-Income Households**

A person who lives in a household earning less than the low income cut-off as defined by Statistics Canada is considered to be from a low-income household.

### **Visible Minority Youth**

A visible minority youth is defined as an individual, other than an Indigenous person, who is non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

### **Indigenous Youth**

Indigenous is considered as First Nations, Métis or Inuit peoples.



## Youth from Rural or Isolated Areas

A person who lives in a community with a population of less than 10,000 is considered to be from a rural or isolated community.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. Organizers

As the designated representative for the school/organization, or as a parent-guardian of an individual participant, you are responsible to:

#### Taking the lead in planning and organizing the exchange

- Submit an application and communicate with Experiences Canada representative;
- Select the youth participant(s);
- Return your participation fee(s), Acknowledgement of Organizer and Agreement by the established timeline;
- Confirm that a police vulnerable sector check will be obtained for every person aged eighteen (18) or older who will participate **directly** in the virtual Exchange, including the Group Organizer and the Parent/Guardian of youth participating individually;
- Take measures to ensure participants are aware of the appropriate use of technology and internet safety;
- Ensure youth involvement with the activities and creation of the media products;
- Send all youth media products to your Experiences Canada coordinator, preferably by June 1<sup>st</sup>;
- Ensure that the media products are branded as an Experiences Canada project;
- The organizer is responsible for disciplinary related matters (if applicable);
- Encourage youth participants to complete the Exchange surveys.



## Tips for Group Organizers

- Read the Organizers/Teachers Guide and FAQs found on our website. The organizer/teachers Guide includes an overview of the program; Participants guidelines and permissions and Module-by-Module Instructions including technical specifications for projects and log on information.
- Educators, youth groups or individuals may choose to do any one or all nine units; and they can choose between having their whole group work on one or more unit, or dividing their class into smaller teams, with each group responsible for completing a specific unit.
- Make sure all participants are aware of the appropriate use of technology and internet safety.
- Encourage continued interaction between the participants in order to promote lasting links among participants.

### 2. Youth and Parents

- Take an active role in the activities;
- Be aware of the appropriate technology and internet safety.
- Share the experience with other youth, schools and the community at large via social media;
- Complete the Exchange surveys;

### 3. Experiences Canada is responsible for:

- Supporting experiential learning opportunities through national virtual exchanges;
- Working with the group organizer to ensure that all aspects of the exchange are well planned and organized;
- Providing all the necessary tools to assist in the planning of the virtual exchange.
- Following all policies, procedures, and reporting requirements outlined by Exchanges Canada for the administration of the program.