

# **Monthly Current Affairs Voice Thread**

**Grade 5**

An Opportunity to Share  
Information and Opinions  
About Current Affairs that Relate to  
Canadian Geography and Natural Environment

Created by Dave Bennett and Shannon Nickols  
Calgary Girl's School  
2007

This voice thread serves as a medium for students to compile research on current affairs that support curriculum. The overall purpose is to develop skills of critical thinking and creativity, while building appreciation for Canada's physical geography and natural environment. This project should be ongoing as other areas of the curriculum are being studied. (5.S.1 and 5.1.1 – for a complete list of outcomes refer to the last page.)

## ***What is a Voice Thread?***

Voice thread is a free software program, accessible through the internet that is used to capture voices, share information, photos, links, and opinions on a particular topic.

It is a way to integrate ICT and meets many outcomes for use of technology and social studies. It is very simple to use and has privacy settings for safety concerns.

## ***Using Voice Thread: An Introduction to the Technology***

The Voice Thread website provides a helpful introduction and takes you through the three-step process for creating your own voice thread. It takes very little time to master this software see: <http://voicethread.com/> For specific information to using voice thread in the classroom, see <http://voicethread.com/classroom.php>

## ***Process:***

There are two sections of the process for this project. Each part has a rubric for assessment.

- Part A assesses skills and processes.

- Part B assesses content understanding.

## Process Part A: Skills and Processes

### Teacher Role:

Each month, the teacher will post a current affair on a voice thread based on concerns regarding physical geography and natural resources. The post will include an image and link to an article that overview the main ideas of the topic. The teacher will be responsible for choosing topics that speak to all regions of Canada. For example, the pine beetle in British Columbia and Alberta, which is depleting the forest. A second example could be the dwindling fish stocks in the Atlantic Region.

### Student Role:

Students will log into voice thread and read the posted material. They will be responsible for doing further research and summarizing a few pertinent points to add to the voice thread. This should be done in the first two weeks of the month.

Students will then listen or read a selection the other information posted by their classmates. In the final days of the month, students will be expected to respond a second time, stating their opinion on the current affair. Personal opinions can be specific to one of the questions below. (Teachers may choose for the whole class, or students can choose. These questions also provide for differentiation.)

Questions to encourage dialogue on voice thread:

- Explain how this issue creates concern for a **variety** of stakeholders?*
- Who are the stakeholders?*
- How does this issue speak to our dependence on natural resources?*
- Who do you believe was most impacted by these events?*
- What do you believe the government could do to help within this issue?*
- How does the scarcity of natural resources impact the cost of living?*
- How does this issue compare with the last current affair studied? What are the similarities the differences?*
- How does this issue impact our environment? What might be some environmental concerns in the present or the future?*
- How will you be impacted by this issue?*

### Critical Thinking Skills Rubric

<b>Use of Evidence</b> Student has ample and appropriate evidence to support opinion	<b>Use of Evidence</b> Student has one piece of appropriate evidence to support opinion	<b>Use of Evidence</b> Student does not use evident to support opinion
<b>Multiple Perspectives</b> Student acknowledges a variety of other perspectives demonstrating profound awareness of the complexity of the issue.	<b>Multiple Perspectives</b> Student acknowledges one other perspective, demonstrating some awareness of the complexity of the issue.	<b>Multiple Perspectives</b> Student does not acknowledge other perspectives demonstrating no or little awareness of the complexity of the issue.
<b>Future Considerations</b> Student presents any unanswered questions or research that could be done to help support the opinion.	<b>Future Considerations</b> Student suggests some areas for future research or questioning but does not link it to the opinion presented.	<b>Future Considerations</b> Student does not present unanswered questions or research that could be done to help support the opinion.

#### Process B: Content Understanding

**Teacher Role:**

Teacher will create a voice thread for a culminating response using all studied current events.

**Student Role:**

Student responds to questions below, using examples of the current affairs studied.

*Questions:*

*-Explain the diversity of natural resources within Canada.*

*-Demonstrate your understanding of how natural resources and geography might impact the way people live using examples of the current affairs studied.*

*-Demonstrate how the environment is impacted by our decisions and use examples from the current affairs studied.*

*-Through your studies, what environmental concerns do you have and why?*

## Canada's Physical Geography and Natural Environment Voice Thread Rubric

<p><b>Natural Resources</b> The oral report demonstrates an excellent understanding of the important natural resources for each geographic region</p>	<p><b>Natural Resources</b> The report demonstrates a good understanding of several natural resources studied</p>	<p><b>Natural Resources</b> The report demonstrates a good understanding of one or two natural resources studied</p>
<p><b>Geographic Influences</b> Student understands how natural resources influence how we live and can call on many examples to support their idea</p>	<p><b>Geographic Influences</b> Student understands how natural resources influence how we live and can call on several examples to support their idea</p>	<p><b>Geographic Influences</b> Student understands how natural resources influence how we live and has used one example to support their idea</p>
<p><b>Environment</b> Student has called on a variety of examples that demonstrate how our actions and use of natural resources impact our environment</p> <p>Student chose environmental issues and used several pieces of evidence to support their opinion.</p>	<p><b>Environment</b> Student has used several examples that demonstrate how our actions and use of natural resources impact our environment</p> <p>Student chose environmental issues and used a piece of evidence to support their opinion.</p>	<p><b>Environment</b> Student has used an example that demonstrates how our actions and use of natural resources impact our environment</p> <p>Student chose environmental issues and did not support it with evidence.</p>

## ***Curriculum Outcomes***

### **5.1.1 value Canada's physical geography and natural environment:**

- appreciate the diversity of geographic phenomena in Canada (LPP)
- appreciate how the land sustains communities and the diverse ways that people have of living with the land (GC, LPP)
- appreciate the geographic vastness of Canada (LPP)

### **5.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:**

- analyze significant local and current affairs from a variety of sources, distinguishing between fact and opinion
- critically evaluate ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives

## ICT Outcomes

**C.2** - Students will seek alternative viewpoints, using information technologies.

**Specific Outcomes** 2.1 seek responses to inquiries from various authorities through electronic media relevance for the purpose used.

**C.3** - Students will critically assess information accessed through the use of a variety of technologies. **Specific Outcomes** 2.1 identify and distinguish points of view expressed in electronic sources on a particular topic 2.2 recognize that information serves different purposes and that data from electronic sources may need to be verified to determine accuracy or relevance for the purpose used

**C.7** - Students will use electronic research techniques to construct personal knowledge and meaning. **Specific Outcomes** 2.1 use a variety of technologies to organize and synthesize researched information 2.2 use selected presentation tools to demonstrate connections among various pieces of information.

**P.6** - Students will use communication technology to interact with others.