

ADMISSION TICKET ASSIGNMENT

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COURSE:

CANADA SINCE 1867

(HIST 203)

SUMMARY

In preparation for class discussion, students write thought-provoking questions (max. 150 words) about assigned readings and submit them at the beginning of class as “admission tickets.” The instructor selects questions from exemplary admission tickets to include on the midterm and final exams.

“Students come to class having engaged with the readings in a significant way.”

- Laura Madokoro

GOALS

- Encourage students to engage in focused thinking about assigned readings before class
- Facilitate in-class participation, especially among less vocal students
- Foster students’ critical thinking skills
- Provide students with opportunities to prepare thesis statements for original research essays

STEPS

- 1 The instructor provides examples of both excellent and unacceptable “admission ticket” questions.
- 2 Students do assigned readings and write a thought-provoking question (max. 150 words). When there are multiple readings for a given class, the question should reference all of them, but may focus on a particular one.
- 3 Students submit the ticket in person (on paper – with name and ID number) at the beginning of class.
- 4 The instructor returns tickets with feedback so that students can further their critical thinking about the readings and improve future admission tickets.

READY TO TRY IT OUT?

HERE'S SOME ADVICE ...

- Determine your purpose. Have a clear sense of what you want students to gain from doing admission tickets.
- Keep in mind that students tend to do well on this task, and grades may be high. Weight the assignment accordingly within the overall assessment structure.
- Find ways to give students ample feedback. If possible, involve a TA in providing students with feedback. If TA support is not available, consider reducing the number of tickets you assess.
- Consider ways to capitalize on students' questions, such as incorporating them into your lectures, “workshopping” them in class, or using them as exam questions.

ASSESSMENT

This ongoing assignment is worth 15% of the final grade. Students submit 12 “admission tickets” throughout the term, and the instructor randomly chooses five of these (3% each) to assess based on the following rubric:

Clearly explained context for the question	Original, clear, engaging question	3.0
Good context	Mundane question	2.0 – 2.5
Minimal context	Original, clear, engaging question	1.0 – 1.5
Lack of context	Absence of engaging question	0.0 – 0.5

BENEFITS

- Students read regularly in preparation for class.
- Quality of in-class discussions and research papers improves because students have already engaged with the topics.
- Attendance is stronger because students must submit the tickets in person at the start of class.

CHALLENGES

- Students are often unfamiliar with this assessment strategy, so they may express anxiety or resistance. Providing them with sample questions and a rubric, as well as actionable feedback, helps address these concerns.
- Returning tickets to students during class can be time-consuming and disruptive. A solution is to return the tickets while students are clustered during group activities.

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