



TORONTO STAR  
**CLASSROOM CONNECTION**



# SCTV and Canada's creative contributions

## TEACHER GUIDE

Canadian Press reporter Cassandra Szklarski looks at how the comedy series “SCTV” laid the groundwork for many of Canada's biggest entertainment stars. The success of Martin Short, Eugene Levy, John Candy and Catherine O'Hara would help pave the way for international celebrities including Ryan Gosling, Drake, Shawn Mendes, Lilly Singh, and Samantha Bee.

It's been said that our proximity to the United States gives Canadians the unique ability to master U.S. pop culture while also critiquing it. That has allowed us to find success south of the border both behind and in front of the cameras, and blend seamlessly into the fabric of Hollywood.

But the Canadian point of view remains strong, and not all Canadian comedy, music and film translates abroad. There are key regional differences, too, with artists in the Maritimes, Prairies and West Coast each offering distinct perspectives of this vast land.

The question, “What is our Canadian identity?” is a perennial one, and is as much a part of who we are as any answer it elicits.

### **Additional discussion/research points:**

- How does Canadian film, television and comedy reflect our national identity?
- History plays a large role in shaping culture. How do big U.S. film, television and pop culture productions affect Canadian culture? How have our British roots shaped our cultural outlook?
- Hollywood's dominance in the entertainment world, along with Canadians' eager embrace of slick U.S. film and television productions, continually raise fears that our own culture is under threat. How do federal groups like Telefilm Canada, the Canadian Radiotelevision and Telecommunications Commission, and the Canadian Television Fund protect Canadian culture? What else can be done to raise the profile of homegrown artists?
- In the 1970s, television ruled home entertainment. Today, the internet, social media and digital streaming services dominate our pastime. How has that shift changed society? How is the way we consume media affected by gender, class, age, race and region?
- Write a review of a film we see in class. Analyze one or more themes and discuss the historical context of the ideas presented, and explore how these things have changed today.
- Some of Canada's biggest authors include Margaret Atwood, Farley Mowat, Mordecai Richler and Alice Munro. Pick a book by one of these authors and write a paper about its core themes.
- Many of these authors have had their works adapted for television or film. Examine how Lucy Maud Montgomery's “Anne of Green Gables” was streamlined and modernized for the first two episodes of CBC-TV's adaptation, “Anne.”
- Some of Canada's biggest names in music include Drake, the Weeknd, Justin Bieber and Celine Dion. Pick one artist and examine a breakout moment in their career. Explain how it captured a cultural trend in the broader pop culture world.



The Trailer Park Boys



Jim Carrey



John Candy



Colin Mochrie

