

# Happy Homecomings:

## What can travelers bring back?

Designed for:  
CTS Legal Studies: Law and the Traveler  
(Module 2050)

### Activity Overview

**Time required**  
60 minutes

### Materials/Resources needed

- Computers and internet access for every student.
- Attached handout of questions

### Lesson Format

Research and group/class discussion

### For the Teacher

As students approach an age where they may be travelling and venturing out into the world without their parents it is important to ensure that they are informed about the laws and regulations which may affect them while they travel. This mini research project helps students develop an understanding of what Canadians need to know when returning home after traveling anywhere in the world.

The project consists of research, written answers, and discussion and will take students about one hour to complete. Some ways in which this lesson could be organized are as follows.



- Divide the class into 5 groups, and assign each group a different scenario to research and answer the appropriate questions. Students can then share their answers with the whole group. The final two questions can be discussed as a class.
- (Jigsaw) Students can be divided into 5 groups. Each group member reads and answers the questions for one scenario. They then share their answers with their small group. The final two questions can be discussed as a class.

## Curricular Connection

This activity has been designed to complement CTS Legal Studies module 2050 (Law and the Traveler). By the end of this activity students will be able to:

- describe the restrictions on bringing goods back to Canada;
- analyze the role of Canada Customs as it relates to bringing goods from abroad;
- research the penalties and limitations that exist with regard to purchases made abroad; and
- describe the need for monitoring goods brought into Canada.

Students will find the answers to the attached questions on the Canadian Border Services Agency website in the document entitled: *I Declare: A Guide for Residents of Canada Returning to Canada*. An answer key for teachers is also included. The document can either be accessed through the following URL, or by going to the Canada Border Services Agency website and searching for document 'bsf5056':

<http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/pub/bsf5056-eng.html>

## Assessment

There are several opportunities throughout this activity for teachers to evaluate student performance and knowledge. Opportunities for assessment include the following.

- Students' written responses to research questions. These may be recorded by either one group member or each student, depending on the lesson structure you chose to use (a suggested rubric is attached).
- Oral presentations given to either the whole class or to their group.
- Participation in the discussion questions following the research.

## Additional Resources

- Copy of the Declaration Card travelers must fill out upon their return to Canada (Form E311):

<http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/forms-formulaires/e311-eng.pdf>

- Postal Program: Importing by Mail:

<http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/import/postal-postale/menu-eng.html>

- Safety and Security: Managing Access to Canada:

<http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/security-securite/safety-surete-eng.html#s2>

For the Student

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) assists travelers as they enter or re-enter Canada by enforcing domestic laws. To explore the laws that govern returning from international travel, answer the following research questions.

**ALL** the answers can be found in a CBSA document entitled: *I Declare: A Guide for Residents of Canada Returning to Canada*. You can access the document by going to the following URL, or by going to the CBSA website and entering ‘bsf5056’ into the search function. You might have to do some searching to find the answers you are looking for!

<http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/pub/bsf5056-eng.html>

Read the following scenarios and answer the appropriate questions.

1. You are one lucky high school graduate – your parents have given you money for a trip to Europe! You have big plans for what you want to see, do, and buy while you are overseas. You also plan on keeping an online travel blog to document all of your adventures. While you are busy packing, your dad gives you a pamphlet from Canada Border Services Agency and suggests you read it before you go.

What is the purpose of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)? You may know it by its former name, Canada Customs.

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What is one concern with bringing valuable items with you, such as your camera and laptop? What solution does the CBSA offer?

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2. Mary-Louise is returning home to Edmonton after a month-long backpacking trip through Europe, and is set to go through customs. While traveling she mailed more than one parcel home so that she would not have so much to carry.

Explain the Canada Border Services Agency’s policy on personal exemptions. What amount of personal exemption is Mary-Louise eligible for?

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Does Mary-Louise need to declare what she has already mailed home in addition to what she is carrying in her backpack?

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Research the kinds of penalties Mary-Louise might receive if she failed to declare some of the goods she brought home.

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3. John is planning to go to the next FIFA World Cup, wherever it may be, and he wants to be sure he is well prepared to go through Canada Border Services when he returns. Souvenirs will be a big part of what he wants to bring back for all his soccer-loving friends.

What are several things John needs to keep in mind as he chooses what gifts and items to bring back for his friends?

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Describe five products that have restrictions when bringing them back to Canada. Briefly describe why you think these items are restricted.

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4. Sophia has gone as a volunteer to Honduras with Dentists without Borders to work with the residents who need dental work done. While she was there, a stray kitten wandered into the building in which she was working. Sophia fell in love with the kitten and decided to bring it back to Edmonton.

What kinds of things does Sophia need to consider with her new kitten before bringing it through Canada Border Service Agency?

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List the three specific items that Canadians are prohibited from bringing into Canada.

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Assess, in your opinion, the reasons why the government has prohibited these items.

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5. While Luke was holidaying in France he decided to bring back wine as a gift for his parents when he shared his trip stories with them. Because he had just turned 18 and was returning to Calgary, he was able to bring liquor through the Alberta border crossing.

What is the limit that Luke can bring back without having to pay duty?

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Which provinces will allow Luke to bring back liquor from his travels?

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There are regulations when bringing goods back to Canada from abroad. List four specific items that you might bring back that have limitations on the amount or the kind.

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## Worksheet Rubric

Excellent	Good	Needs Work	Incomplete
All questions are answered and complete; thought and detail in answers goes above and beyond the required criteria.	All questions are answered and complete; thought and detail meets the required criteria.	Many answers are complete, but some questions are not answered; thought and detail in answers could be improved.	Most or all questions are not answered; insufficient effort was made to complete the assignment.

## Answer Key and Supplemental Information

1. You are one lucky high school graduate – your parents have given you money for a trip to Europe! You have big plans for what you want to see, do, and buy while you are overseas. You also plan on keeping an online travel blog to document all of your adventures. While you are busy packing, your dad gives you a pamphlet from Canada Border Services Agency and suggests you read it before you go.

What is the purpose of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)? You may know it by its former name, Canada Customs.

*The CBSA is responsible for administering and enforcing the laws that govern trade and travel, including international agreements and conventions.*

*It also works to ensure that those who pose a threat to Canadians, or who do not have the proper documentation, are detained and/or refused entry.*

What is one concern with bringing valuable items with you, such as your camera and laptop? What solution does the CBSA offer?

*A CBSA officer may ask for or require proof that you purchased these items in Canada and not during your travels. Otherwise, it may be assumed that you purchased the items outside of Canada and therefore must pay a duty in order to bring them back into the country, or be refused to bring them back at all.*

*To avoid this, the CBSA offers a free registration service for items with serial numbers or other unique markings. The items are recorded on a card (called Card Y38) before you leave the country and must simply be shown to a CBSA officer upon return to prove that the items were not bought during your travels. The card may also be used at other customs offices around the world as proof of ownership.*

2. Mary-Louise is returning home to Edmonton after a month long backpacking trip through Europe, and is set to go through customs. While traveling she mailed more than one parcel home so that she would not have so much to carry.

Explain the Canada Border Services Agency's policy on personal exemptions.

What amount of personal exemption is Mary-Louise eligible for?

*If you are a permanent or temporary resident of Canada who is returning to Canada after travel, or a former resident who is returning to Canada to live here again, you are eligible to bring a certain amount of goods back into Canada without having to pay duty taxes. The amount for which you are eligible varies depending on how long you have been away.*

*The goods you bring back should be for personal or household use only, including souvenirs or gifts you obtained during your travels. Things which are brought back into the country for other people or commercial use are subject to duty.*

*Mary-Louise has been away for more than 7 days, which means that she can bring back up to \$750 worth of goods without having to pay duty. Although, there may be restrictions or exceptions if she has brought back certain types of alcohol or tobacco products.*

Does Mary-Louise need to declare what she has already mailed home in addition to what she is carrying in her backpack?

*Aside from alcohol or tobacco products, Mary-Louise does not need to have any of these goods with her when she returns to Canada. However, she must still claim them upon entering Canada. She should ask the CBSA officer for a Form E24, Personal Exemption CBSA Declaration, which will allow her to include the items she has mailed home.*

Research the kinds of penalties Mary-Louise might receive if she failed to declare some of the goods she brought home.

*Mary-Louise may have to pay duty or taxes on her goods. CBSA also reserves the right to seize undeclared goods permanently, or until a penalty of 25-80% of the goods' value has been paid. The CBSA may also keep a record of Mary-Louise's false declaration which could mean that she has to go through a more thorough and time consuming search every time that she leaves and re-enters the country.*

3. John is planning to go to the next FIFA World Cup, wherever it may be, and he wants to be sure he is well prepared to go through Canada Border Services when he returns. Souvenirs will be a big part of what he wants to bring back for all his soccer-loving friends.

What are several things John needs to keep in mind as he chooses what gifts and items to bring back for his friends?

*Gifts for others do not count as part of John's personal exemption; therefore he must claim them and may have to pay duty on them. However, if he mails them to Canada while he is still travelling and denotes on the package that they are a gift, he does not have to claim*

*them on his return to Canada. However, the gifts cannot be worth more than \$60 Canadian, each. If John wants to bring back alcohol or tobacco products for his friends, he must also keep in mind that there are restrictions on these products, and that he must have these items with him upon his return to Canada.*

Describe five products that have restrictions when bringing them back to Canada. Briefly describe why you think these items are restricted.

*Responses will vary but may include the following.*

- **Firearms:** *these items are dangerous and their entry into Canada must be regulated.*
  - **Explosives, ammunition, and fireworks:** *see above.*
  - **Plants:** *some plants would cause damage to or interfere with Canadian eco-systems if they were to be introduced into the wild. Also, they can carry insects or diseases which may be damaging.*
  - **Animals:** *see above. Also, some animals are endangered or protected and therefore not allowed to be moved from their native country.*
  - **Cultural Property:** *certain historically significant items cannot leave their home country or be brought into Canada.*
4. Sophia has gone as a volunteer to Honduras with Dentists without Borders to work with the residents who need dental work done. While she was there, a stray kitten wandered into the building in which she was working. Sophia fell in love with the kitten and decided to bring it back to Edmonton.

What kinds of things does Sophia need to consider with her new kitten before bringing it through Canada Border Service Agency?

*She is allowed to bring the kitten back with her if it is younger than three months old without needing any documentation. If the kitten is older than that, she will need a certificate signed by a veterinarian that certifies the age, health, and information of the cat. If the kitten seems unhealthy, she may also be asked to have it checked by a CFIA-authorized vet.*

List the three specific items that Canadians are prohibited from bringing into Canada.

1. *Child pornography*
2. *Obscene material*
3. *Hate propaganda*

Assess, in your opinion, the reasons why the government has prohibited these items.

*Responses will vary.*

5. While Luke was holidaying in France he decided to bring back wine as a gift for his parents when he shared his trip stories with them. Because he had just turned 18 and was returning to Calgary, he was able to bring liquor through the Alberta border crossing.

What is the limit that Luke can bring back without having to pay duty?

*He can bring back up to 1.5 litres of wine.*

Which provinces will allow Luke to bring back liquor from his travels?

*Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec.*

There are regulations when bringing goods back to Canada from abroad. List four specific items that you might bring back that have limitations on the amount or the kind.

*Responses will vary but may include the following.*

1. *Cans or bottles of beer*
2. *Cigars*
3. *Meat*
4. *Dairy products*

### **Class discussion questions after scenario research has been completed and shared.**

1. Now that you have all the information regarding bringing goods to Canada, do you believe that these laws and restrictions are reasonable or not? Justify your opinion.

*Responses will vary.*

2. If you had an opportunity to change the legislation surrounding the Canadian Border Services Agency, what would you recommend be either added or deleted. Support your opinion.

*Responses will vary.*