

The Kids Book of Canadian History

Teaching Activities



WRITING

Tell a Time Travel Tale

Imagine what it would be like to be a child living with an Inuit family in the days before the Europeans came. How would you keep warm? What would you eat? What games would you play? What would your family's life be like? If possible, students could look at the photographs taken by Inuit artist Peter Pitseolak. Then have them write a "time travel" adventure. Option: Time travel in reverse: An Inuit child from those long-ago days visits your present-day family.

Write a Profile

Have students explore the stories of some of Canada's outstanding Native leaders. Some of the possibilities include Dekanawideh, founder of the Five Nations; Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant, and singer Buffy Saint Marie. Ask students to write a profile (short biographical sketch) of their favourite person, then collect their profiles in a class magazine.

DESIGNING AND ILLUSTRATING



Make a Model

Ocean-loving students could find out how the Vikings built the boats that brought them to North America 1000 years ago. Have one group build an accurate replica using simple materials. Another group could create an appropriate setting for the vessel, perhaps an ocean scene with a huge iceberg nearby.

Other ideas: Fort Louisbourg, or a Native dwelling

Design a Poster

Advertising is nothing new — British agents used posters to entice people to become Canadian pioneers, and the railways did the same to attract tourists to the Canadian Rockies.

Ask your students to design a poster to recruit new people to work for the fur trade. Using text and pictures, they may aim to attract hunters, voyageurs, storekeepers, explorers, or merchants.

Another topic: Posters to attract pioneers



In Costume

Both then and now, costumes define a person's role in society. Students could pick a period — seventeenth century New France, nineteenth century Victoria, B.C., or the Swinging Sixties — and research people's clothing. New France, for example, could include the seigneur (the landowner plus his wife and children), habitants (farmers and their families), priests and nuns, and Native people. Students could make simple costumes and present a living tableau.

Create a Cartoon Story

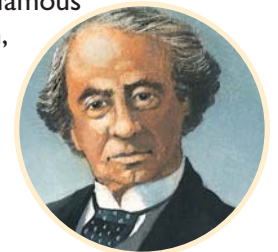
Gold! In the mid-nineteenth century, adventurers rushed to British Columbia and the Yukon to seek that "flash in the pan." Have students research the classic gold-rush route from Skagway, Alaska, over the Chilkoot Pass to Dawson City. Then suggest that they invent a few characters and a story line. Using pictures and dialogue boxes, students can turn their stories into an illustrated cartoon narrative.

Other topics: A voyageur's journey to a fur-trading fort, or the expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia

DRAMA

Role-Play an Escape Story

The Underground Railroad features dramatic tales of nighttime escapes, secret codes and coffin hideaways. A group of students could take on the roles of escaping slaves, their former masters, the slave-hunters, the "conductors" who guided the slaves, and the people who provided safe houses. (Among the famous "conductors" were Harriet Tubman, herself an escaped slave, and Alexander Ross, a white doctor from Belleville, Ontario.)



GAME

Confederation Cards

Have students make a set of playing cards to learn about Confederation. They could make cards for (1) each province and territory, (2) the year in which each one entered Confederation, (3) the premier or leader at the time, and (4) the main reason why each province or territory decided to join Canada. The goal of the game is to get sets of four matching cards — students make up the rules!

MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Tape a Radio Program

In 1929, Canadians were shocked when their newly-purchased radios gave them news of the crash that set off the Great Depression. Things were especially bad on the Prairies, where farmers were hit by years of drought. Have a group of students write a script for a news story that might have been broadcast one day during the Depression. Suggest that they tape-record their report, adding music and sound effects.

Other topics: The Winnipeg General Strike, or the October Crisis



Plan a Historical Movie

Ask students how they would film the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. They will need to research the uniforms and weapons of the period as well as the military strategy employed by Wolfe and Montcalm. A final outline could include a plot summary, names of actors the students would like to cast in the main roles, sketches of locations, and suggestions for creating excitement and suspense.

Other topics: A battle in the War of 1812, or the First World War

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Mock Trial

Older students might enjoy researching the reasons behind a rebellion, such as the Red River Rising or the Mackenzie Rebellion. Students can decide who will go on trial — for example, William Lyon Mackenzie, Louis Riel, or Louis-Joseph Papineau — and for what crime. Choose individuals to act as lawyers, judge, and jury. The whole class can discuss the final verdict.

Interview Your Elders

Some students can tell their own stories about immigration, but many others might need to interview a parent or grandparent to find out what it's like to leave your homeland and come to Canada. Ask students to prepare their interview questions in advance and either tape the answers or take notes. Help them to edit and illustrate the final interview.

Another Point of View

The hardest part of completing the Canadian Pacific Railway was laying track through the Rocky Mountains. Without the Chinese workers to explode the dynamite, it probably could not have been done. Encourage students to find out how Chinese men were recruited, what dangers they faced, and how they were treated by their supervisors. A group could prepare an oral presentation with illustrations for the rest of the class.

Other topics: Women's struggle for the right to vote, or the World War II internment of the Japanese-Canadians

HISTORY INTERNET SITES

Here is a small selection of Web sites offering games, information and videos of interest to kids.

❖ For information on how to get involved in "Heritage Fairs," see the Historica Foundation's Web site.

www.abbotsford.net/heritagefair

❖ For links to Canadian explorers and pirates, see "Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers Theme Page."

www.cln.org/themes/pirates.html

❖ For information and games, see "Confederation for Kids" in the National Library of Canada's Web site.

www.nlc-bnc.ca/2/2/h2-6040-e.html

❖ For Canadian history quizzes, information and biographies, see "Historica" on the Canadian Encyclopedia Web site.

www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm

❖ For information about the "reality television" series Pioneer Quest, Quest for the Bay and Quest for Gold (available on video), see History Television's Web site.

www.historytelevision.ca/Quest/features/

*Please note that the Web site addresses listed in this publication were visited and were accurate at the time of printing; however, we cannot guarantee that the sites will offer the exact information needed, or that the domain sites will not change. Please remind your students — Always surf the Internet with an adult, and never give out personal information.

