

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Classroom Culminations Curriculum Package
A Living Document: Growing and Changing as Our Knowledge Does



OUTDOOR & ECOLOGICAL LEARNING DEPARTMENT

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Table of Contents: Voyageur Life Classroom Culminations

INTRODUCTION	2
HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE	2
VOYAGEUR LIFE GRADE 4 CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS: BIG IDEAS	2
FACTS ABOUT THE FUR TRADE.....	3
LES VOYAGEURS: WHO WERE THEY?	4
LES VOYAGEURS: WHAT DID THEY DO?	5
FIRST NATIONS	5
WHY FUR?	7
WHAT WAS THE BEST FUR?	7
TRAPPING ANIMALS	8
FUR-BEARING ANIMALS	8
THE VALUE OF BEAVER PELTS IN 1784	9
GET PADDLING: BEAVER PELT MATH PROBLEMS	10
BEAVER PELT MATH PROBLEMS - ANSWERS	11
SOCIAL STUDIES & HISTORY –PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES (GENERAL IDEAS)	12
LITERATURE –PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES (GENERAL IDEAS)	13
SCIENCE –PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES (GENERAL IDEAS)	13
MEDICINAL PLANTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA	14
DEVIL’S CLUB	14
KINNIKINNICK/ BEAR BERRY/ UVA URSI	14
MEDICINAL PLANTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA	15
PIPSISSIWA	15
USNEA/OLD MAN’S BEARD	15
INTERVIEWING A VOYAGEUR: KEY PEOPLE BEHIND THE FUR TRADE	16
HISTORIC PEOPLE	17
HISTORIC PEOPLE	18
HISTORIC PEOPLE	19
HISTORIC PEOPLE	20
HISTORIC PEOPLE	21
HISTORIC PEOPLE	22
HISTORIC PEOPLE	23
HISTORIC PEOPLE	24
HISTORIC PEOPLE	25
HISTORIC PEOPLE	26
REPORTER QUESTIONS	27

MAP OF CANADA

MAP OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Voyageur Life Grade 4 Curriculum

Classroom Culminations Curriculum Package

Introduction

The canoe is central to the story of Canada. We hope the Voyageur Life Grade 4 Curriculum Package provides a fun, educational experience for Grade 4 students across the Powell River School District. The Voyageur Life Field Experience will be offered at the Powell Lake Outdoor Learning Center (OLC) and is designed to be a high point in the school year for students in Grade 4. The Field Experience is ideally bookended by the Classroom Beginnings and Classroom Culminations curriculum packages. Through project-based learning and place-based, direct experience, students will develop a broad understanding of the role of the Voyageurs in the development of Canada. Students will be exposed to an inter-curricular learning platform including literature, social studies, language arts, natural science, mathematics, physical education, music, and the arts.

How to Use this Resource

The Voyageur Life Grade 4 Curriculum Package has 3 Components:

Part 1. Classroom Beginnings: Recommended for use in the classroom prior to the Voyageur Life Field Experience.

Part 2. The Voyageur Life Field Experience Curriculum: A facilitated curricular experience for use at the OLC.

Part 3. Classroom Culminations: Recommended for use in the classroom following the Life Field Experience.

Voyageur Life Grade 4 Curricular Connections: BIG Ideas

Science	All living things and their environment are interconnected.
Social Studies	The pursuit of valuable natural resources has played a key role in changing the land, people, and communities of Canada. Interactions between First Peoples and Europeans lead to conflict and cooperation, which continues to shape Canada's identity.
Language Arts	Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy. Using language in creative and playful ways helps us understand how language works.
Mathematics	Number represents and describes quantity: Parts of wholes can be represented by fractions and decimals.
Arts Education	Creative expression is a means to explore and share one's identity within a community. Music is a unique language for creating and communicating.
Physical Education	Daily participation in physical activity at moderate to vigorous intensity levels benefits all aspects of our well-being. Personal choices and environmental factors influence our health and well-being.

Career Education

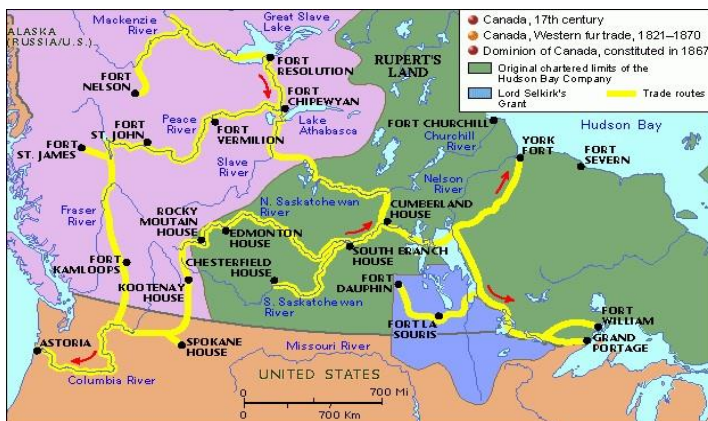
Leadership requires listening to and respecting the ideas of others.

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Facts about the Fur Trade

In the 17th and 18th centuries, beaver fur was very popular with the men and women of Europe. At the time, beaver fur was stylish and was used to make many things. In particular, waterproof beaver pelt hats were especially fashionable. Not long after Europeans arrived in the New World, they soon realized there was an abundance of beaver. As a result, the hunting and trading of beaver pelts was quickly organized into a trade system that by the 19th century included practically all of North America.

Long before Europeans arrived in the New World, First Nations were already hunting the beaver to make clothes from its fur. As trade relations grew, both First Nations and Europeans developed an appreciation for the goods the other had to offer. For both groups, trade between the two parties resulted in wealth. However, for First Nations trading with Europeans was an opportunity to learn about other cultures and to trade for practical things like metal pots and knives, as well as novelty goods like glass beads. For Europeans, trade with First Nations for beaver pelts was not only about making money, it was also about collecting the knowledge they needed to survive in a foreign land.



Student Name _____

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Les Voyageurs: Who Were They?

Between 1690 and 1850, voyageurs were hired as paddlers, carriers, and workers for the fur trade companies. Les voyageurs were employees of one of the two fur trade companies: The Northwest Company (French) and The Hudson's Bay Company (English). They were employed for a three-year period. They were young, often single, generally short in height (due to the limited amount of space in the canoes) and were very strong. There were approximately 5000 voyageurs in Canada in the 1800s. Those who worked for a company were called *les engages*. Those who worked on their own were called *les hommes libres* or "free men." All voyageurs trapped and traded.

Most voyageurs were French, but many were also English, Scottish, German, Cree, Ojibwe, Iroquois, etc. Every spring, the voyageurs would leave from Lachine, near Montreal, and travel more than 5000 km northwest, carrying fur and trade goods.

 **Get Paddling: Complete the sentences below with the information above.**

1. Voyageurs were hired to ...

2. Voyageurs worked for two companies. The companies were called...

3. Voyageurs were young and...

Student Name _____

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Get Paddling: List some of the cultures / countries the voyageurs were from.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Les Voyageurs: What did they do?

A typical voyageur workday lasted about 14 hours, but the days could sometimes drag on to 18-20 hours. They had to paddle for a long period of time and at a fast pace (approximately 50-60 strokes per minute). They had to make many portages with a leather strap on their heads and supplies on their backs. The voyageur life was a hard one, with many voyageurs drowning or breaking their limbs or backs. Furthermore, the mosquitoes and black flies nearly drove the men to crazy and were repelled with a mix of bear grease and skunk urine.

The voyageurs would travel north and transport goods that were traded for pelts which they would bring back to Montreal. They were the backbone of the fur trade. The voyageurs also made many discoveries during their voyages. Many explorers travelled with the voyageurs so they could map out the continent of North America.

As the voyageurs moved further west, once their contracts expired, many settled across Canada as labourers, trappers, and farmers. Relationships between First Nations and voyageurs developed beyond trade, into marriage.


Get Paddling: Make a list of 4 things the voyageurs did.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Student Name _____

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Get Paddling: Answer the following question in a sentence below.

 **Would you like to be a voyageur? Why or why not?**

VOYAGEUR LIFE GRADE 4

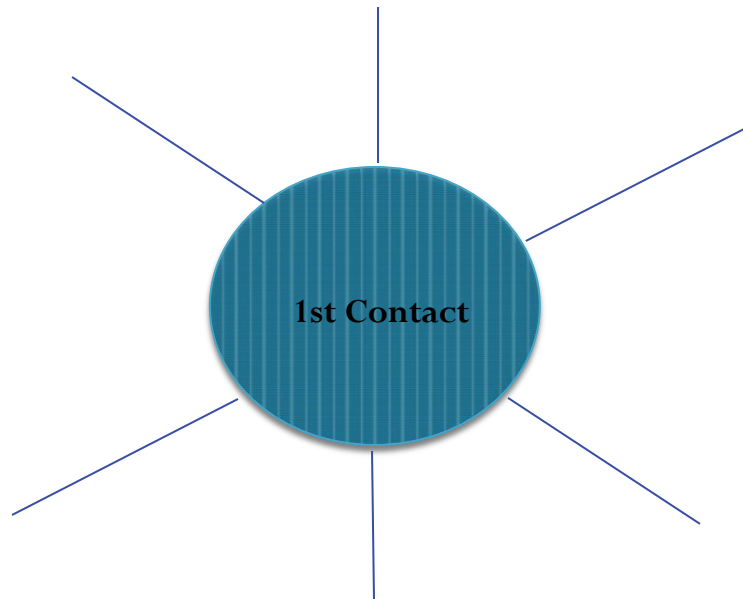
First Nations

First Nations people played a central role in the fur trade era. They knew the territory well, they knew where to find beaver, and they knew how to hunt and trap them. They were the main suppliers of furs for the fur companies. They would trade their furs at trading posts for European goods like axes, glass beads, knives, and metal pots and pans.



Get Paddling: Write a Story

Write a short story about what it would have been like the first time a First Nations culture made contact with a Voyageur. Mind Map your ideas below and complete your story on a separate piece of paper.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Why Fur?

The demand for furs in Europe sparked the fur trade in Canada. This demand was driven by fashion. People in Europe thought certain furs were more “cool” than others. When a type of fur was considered “cool” it was more expensive. Today, this would be like choosing between a Nike or DC sweater and a plain sweater, which would you choose? Most often the Nike or DC sweater. Why? Because Nike or DC are considered to be “cool” brands, therefore more expensive, therefore more wanted.

What was the Best Fur?

Most Mammals have fur and are referred to as “fur-bearing”. Furbearers possess two layers of fur. The first layer is a dense, soft, under fur that provides insulation and water-repellent qualities. The second layer is the outer layer which has longer, glossy guard hairs that grow through the under fur. The outer layer also protects the inner layer from matting and abrasion. Fur is the best when the guard hairs are at their longest length and the under fur is at its maximum thickness. Fur generally becomes prime in midwinter when the coat is fresh and fully grown to protect the animal from cold environments.



Get Paddling: Fill in the Blanks

Insulation	Protects	Longest	Fur Bearing	Midwinter
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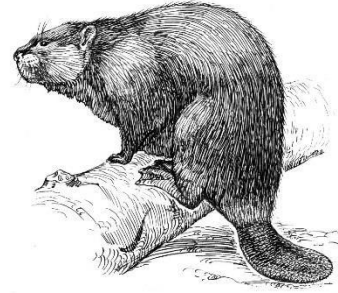
1. Animals that have fur are called _____.
2. The first layer of fur provides _____.
3. The outer layer of fur _____ the inner layer.
4. Fur is the best when hairs are at their _____ length.
5. The _____ is the best season for fur.

Student Name _____

VOYAGEUR LIFE GRADE 4

Trapping Animals

Before the introduction of guns, it was hard to get close to an animal to kill it without scaring it away. Many people would run animals into a fenced area they had created or off a steep bank. This rush of scared animals into one area was called a stampede. Deadfall was used for killing smaller animals such as beaver. Deadfall is when an animal is lured by bait into a device where that would trigger a device, which would drop on the animal. much like a mousetrap. Spears were also used for killing larger animals such as buffalo, however, rifles were later used for killing larger animals, however, rifles were not the greatest tool to use and had its drawbacks because there was risk of damaging the fur by the bullet, causing holes in the pelt. Poisoned bait was also used to capture mammals.



 **Get Paddling: Write the definition of each term on the line below.**

Stampede: _____

Deadfall: _____

Fur-bearing Animals

1. Beaver: The beaver's fur was ideal for making felt and was always in great demand. Pelts were used chiefly in making top hats, the rest for coats and trimmings.
2. Buffalo: The buffalo provided many needs for people. They may have been used for food, clothing, utensils, and food. Traders considered the buffalo to be a valuable fur to have. Furs were usually used for robes and rugs.
3. Fox: The long silky coat of the red fox was sought after by the fur traders. The darker pelts found in the north were the most valuable. Furs were used for hats and robes.

 **Get Paddling: Connect the product to the animal it came from.**

Rugs

Beaver

Robes

Buffalo

Top Hats

Fox

Voyageur Life Grade 4

The Value of Beaver Pelts in 1784

During the fur trade era people used different trading systems than we use today. Today most things are exchanged for money, which in turn can be used to buy almost anything. However, during the fur trade era a type of bartering system used the beaver pelt as the base unit. This meant the value of objects was calculated in beaver pelts. Therefore, the beaver pelt was today's dollar.



Examples of the Fur Trade Era Barter System

For 1 beaver belt, you could trade for the following pelts:

10 muskrat pelts	3 doe pelts	1 small bear pelt	2 wild cat pelts
5 racoon pelts	2 deer pelts	1 lynx pelt	3 red fox pelts
4 marten pelts	2 mink pelts		

For 2 beaver pelts, you could trade for the following pelts:

1 black bear pelt	1 moose pelt	1 otter pelt	1 bison pelt
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Trade 1 beaver pelt for any of the following:

24 sewing needles	12 dozen buttons	900 grams sugar	454 grams tobacco
20 fish hooks	9 arrowheads	2 sashes	4.5 liters brandy
20 flints	4 lead pieces	3 large knives	

Trade 2 beaver pelts for any of the following:

6 silver earrings	1 bracelet	1 shirt	1.5 kg gun powder
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More Expensive Goods:

3 beaver pelts = 1 large blanket or 15 small knives
4 beaver pelts = 1 pistol 12 beaver pelts = 1 musket

Student Name _____

VOYAGEUR LIFE GRADE 4

Get Paddling: Beaver Pelt Math Problems

To be used with *“The Value of Beaver Pelts” Information Sheet*

1. How many pelts would you need to bring to the Trading Post to get:
 - a. 9 arrowheads = _____ beaver pelts
 - b. 1 large blanket = _____ beaver pelts
 - c. 1 bracelet = _____ beaver pelts
 - d. 1 musket and 2 Shirts = _____ beaver pelts

2. How many otter pelts would get you a plaid shirt?

3. John needs a pistol and 20 fish hooks. How many lynx must he catch in order to get them?

4. Charles has 24 buttons. How many beaver pelts could he get for them?



BONUS

Benoit is going to the Trading Post with five raccoon pelts, one mink pelt, two marten pelts, two lynx pelts, and a moose pelt. What could he get for them?

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Beaver Pelt Math Problems - ANSWERS

1. How many pelts would you need to bring to the Trading Post to get:

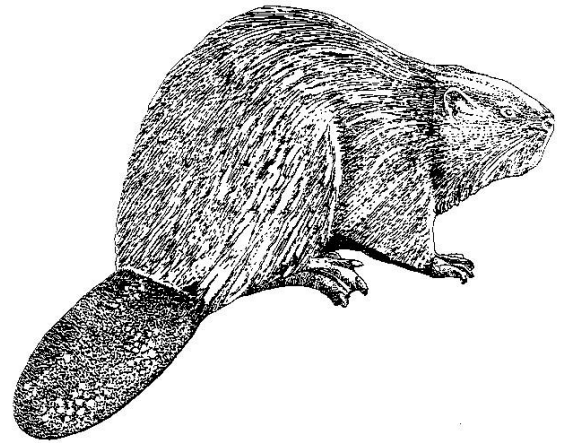
- a. 1 beaver pelt
- b. 3 beaver pelts
- c. 2 beaver pelts
- d. 16 beaver pelts

2. How many otter pelts would get you a plaid shirt?

1 otter pelt = 1 plaid shirt

3. John needs a pistol and 20 fish hooks. How many lynx must he catch in order to get them?

5 lynx = 1 pistol and 20 fish hooks



4. Charles has 24 buttons. How many beaver pelts could he get for them?

2 beaver pelts = 24 buttons

BONUS

Benoit is going to the Trading Post with five raccoon pelts, two mink pelt, pelts, two lynx pelts, and a moose pelt. What could he get for them?

The goods above = 6 beaver pelts. Answers will vary.

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Social Studies & History – Projects and Activities (General Ideas)

Project: Research a Historical Figure

Ask your students to complete a research project about a historical figure. Write the names listed on individual pieces of paper and place them in a hat:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Louis Riel• Adam Thom• Cuthburt Grant• David Thomson• Duncan Cameron• George Simpson• Isabelle Gunn• Jean-Baptiste Lagimodiere• La Verendryes• Chief Peguis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peter Fidler• Pierre Falcon• Gabrielle Dumont• Robert Semple• Margaret Taylor• Archbishop Provencher• Bellecourt• Dumoulin• Lititia MacTavish (Hargrave)
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Have the students pick a name and research some of the following: Where did their historical figure come from? What was their lifespan? What did they discover or do? How did they contribute to the fur trade? Which company did they work for?

Project: Illnesses During the Voyageur Era

Ask students to complete a research project on the common illnesses present during the voyageur era: scurvy, diphtheria, smallpox, rubella, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, etc. Why did they contract these illnesses? Which remedies, if any, did the First Nations people have for these diseases?

Project: Planning a Voyageur Trip

Invite students to outline the different steps that must be followed to prepare a trip. Have them identify possible challenges and conditions that may be encountered and how cooperation would be essential to their survival. Students could improvise a small skit to demonstrate the various difficulties and successes encountered.

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Literature – Projects and Activities (General Ideas)

Writing Project: Travelling 300 Years Ago

Ask students to write a fictitious text in which they travel in a canoe and camp in the wild, 300 years ago.

Writing/Drawing Project: Class Mural

Encourage your students to create a class mural made up of drawings and texts based on their knowledge of beavers, the fur trade, les voyageurs, the North West Company, etc.



Science – Projects and Activities (General Ideas)

Research Project: The Beaver

As a fun project, students could read and study books about the beaver and its importance during the fur trade era. You can then get students to write a little text or draw a comic strip about the beaver and the fur trade. You can ask students to explore the different aspects of the beaver and its' lifestyle. Aspects to explore: What is the average weight of a male or female beaver? How, why, and where did they build their dams? Who are their predators? How long can a beaver stay under water? What does the beaver eat? Since when has the beaver been on the Canadian nickel? *As another fun activity, you could ask students to form small groups and try to recreate a mini beaver hut.*

Project: Medicinal Plants

Invite students to research native medicinal plants used by the many First Nations of British Columbia. On the two following pages you can find four medicinal plants native of British Columbia. What are their medicinal properties? What ailments can they treat? What are the sizes, habitats, flowers and fruits of these plants? What are the differences between their uses then and their uses now?

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Medicinal Plants of British Columbia

How were these plants used by the First Nations of British Columbia?



← Devil's Club



← Kinnikinnick/ Bear Berry/Uva Ursi

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Medicinal Plants of British Columbia

How were these plants used by the First Nations of British Columbia?



← Pipsissiwa



← Usnea/
Old Man's Beard

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Interviewing a Voyageur: Key People behind the Fur Trade

LESSON PLAN FOR TEACHERS

Purpose: Students will develop an understanding of some of the key historical figures in the fur trade. Through role-play, students will explore the relationship between the fur trade and the eventual settlement of Canada.

Procedure:

Step 1: Divide the class in groups of 2. Have one student take on the “Reporter Role” and the other student to have the “Historic Person Role”.

Step 2: Tell students that the reporter will ask the historic person questions regarding important events using the “Reporter Questions” handout. The historic person will answer the reporter’s questions using information off of the “Historic Person” handout.

Step 3: As a team both students will present to the class their findings.

Step 4: As an addition groups can map out routes the Historic person may have explored on maps provided of British Columbia and Canada.

Step 5: Additional information may be gathered through the internet and books.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: Jacques Cartier

Date of Birth: 1491

Place of birth: France

On Jacques Cartier's first voyage, he went to pre-Confederate Canada in 1534 with 2 ships and 61 men to look for a passage to get to Asia. In this exploration he discovered a coast, which he called Newfoundland. Cartier went back to pre-Confederate Canada in 1535 with 3 ships and 110 men for his second voyage. The third voyage was because the King of England wanted Cartier to start a new colony and he left in 1541 with 5 ships and 1500 men. The winter was very cold and many of Cartier's men died due to illness. Cartier returned to France with the survivors and never returned to Canada. He became a businessman in France and died in 1557.

Cartier was the first European to arrive at the St. Lawrence River and the first European to make a map of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He also gave Canada its name. He thought the native word "kanata" which means village, was the name of the whole land. This name began appearing on European Maps as Canada.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: Samuel de Champlain

Date of Birth: 1570

Birth Place: France

Champlain's first voyage was in 1603 where he took part in a fur trading voyage to the St. Lawrence and mapped a great amount of the shoreline. In the following year he joined his second voyage to Acadia where he stayed until 1607. His greatest achievement was the founding of Quebec in 1608. His work was very important, as his maps of the Atlantic coast were the first accurate maps of the area, which would help many other explorers. By 1635 Champlain's health had gotten very bad and he died on December 25, 1635.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: James Cook

Date of Birth: October 27, 1728

Birth Place: England

James Cook was one of 7 children and at the age of 17 he became an apprentice for a ship owning family. He sailed along the coast of New France and mapped the river around Quebec City. Cook's first voyage to North America in 1768 was to travel to the South Pacific Ocean to enable scientists to see the Planet Venus move across the sun. This allowed for the measurement of distance from earth to the sun.

While exploring the south he was the first to discover Fiji and many other Islands. On his second voyage in 1772, Cook wanted to see if there was land at the South Pole. His ships did not reach the destination due to the packed ice, therefore he returned to England.

The third voyage in 1776 was due to the interest of finding the Northwest Passage. After reaching the Pacific he sailed north and was the first European to land on Vancouver Island. After Cook could go no further due to ice he returned to Hawaii where he was killed in a fight with Hawaiians in 1779.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: Samuel Hearne

Born: 1745

Born in: London

After three years on Hudson's Bay Company ships, he was put in charge of inland exploration. He made several attempts to explore the Coppermine River and finally in 1771 he became the first man to reach the Arctic Ocean over land on his first voyage. In 1774 he built Cumberland House, the first inland post of the Hudson's Bay Company.

He was appointed governor of Fort Prince of Wales in 1775, but was forced to surrender it to the French in 1782. A year later he established a new post named Fort Churchill at the site. In 1787 he retired to England where he spent his last years writing an account of his journeys which is remarkable for its skilled observation and realism. Hearne lived to be 47 with his death in 1792.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

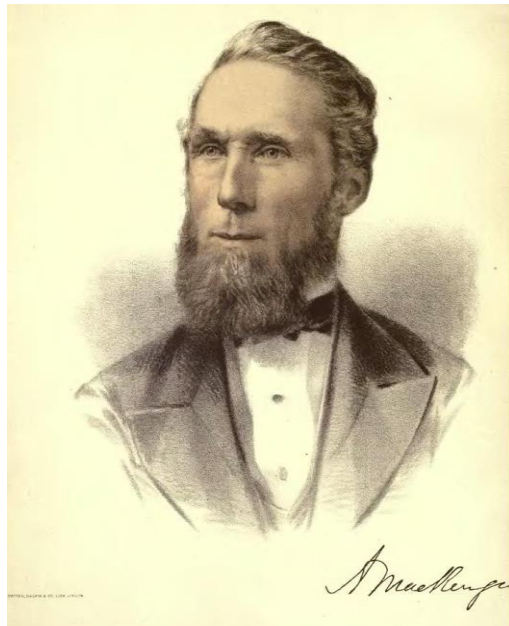
Name: Alexander Mackenzie

Date of Birth: 1764

Birth Place: Scotland

Mackenzie moved from Scotland to New York with his father and then to Montreal in 1776.

Alexander Mackenzie was the first explorer to cross North America. At age of 15, Mackenzie became a clerk in the North West company. His first voyage was in 1789 in search of a route to the Pacific Ocean. He and his crew traveled the Mackenzie river north and it soon became apparent that they would not reach the ocean. His second voyage was in 1792 reaching the Fraser River and eventually the Pacific Ocean. Mackenzie could not convince the company that the west was a good place to start trading and therefore he returned to England to publish a book about his travels. He died unexpectedly of illness in 1820 Alexander Mackenzie, fur trader and explorer was the first European to cross the north part of North America by land. He was a smart businessman who wanted to expand the fur trade across North America.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: David Thompson

Date of Birth: 1770

Born in: London

David Thompson attended a school for poor children, where he did so well in math and mapping that, at the age of 14, he was hired by the Hudson's Bay Company. At the end of the summer of 1790, Thompson offered his services to the Company's secretary to conduct observations along the coast of Hudson's Bay. In the spring of 1795, he learned that he had been appointed as surveyor since May 1794, with a considerable salary, but had been assigned jobs other than surveying. Frustrated at not being able to use his trade, Thompson left the Hudson's Bay Company for the North West Company on May 23, 1797.

In 1814, he drew an enormous map showing the northwest from Lake Superior to the Pacific. Thompson continued his surveying career in Lower and Upper Canada and determined the southern border of Canada. Thompson was the first white man to travel the full length of the Columbia River. Thompson died in 1857.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: Simon Fraser

Born: May 20, 1776

Place of Birth: New York

Simon Fraser moved to Canada in 1784 and in 1792 he worked in the North West Company, where he soon became partner in 1802. The North West Company wanted to find an easy route to the Pacific Coast that was easier than the one Alexander Mackenzie had found in 1793. This sparked Fraser's first voyage in 1805. Fraser's group did not make it all the way until 1808 due to lack of supplies and a bad fishing season. Although Fraser had traveled the full length of the river he was disappointed because the route proved to be too difficult for trading routes.

He died in Ontario in 1862. Few exploits surpass Fraser's passage down the turbulent river that bears his name. He was also responsible for the first British settlements west of the Rockies. Fraser died a poor man on August 27, 1862. His wife died the next day.

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: Isobel Gunn

Born: 1780

Place of Birth: Orkney Island, Scotland

In the summer of 1806, Isobel Gunn pretended she was a man and went by the name of John Fubbister. She entered into a 3 year work contract with the Hudson's Bay Company.

Although no one know exactly why she did it, it is said that she did it to follow a man she loved. It is also said that her brother George worked for the Hudson's Bay Company and that Isobel was interested in joining him after hearing about his many adventures.

Gunn worked unsuspected, alongside the men. She travelled on 1 voyage as a voyageur. Her journey went from the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters to the company outpost on the Red River a distance of more than 2,900 kilometres. On December 9, 1807 Gunn gave birth to a baby boy at the home of Alexander Henry, then chief of the Northwest Company's Pembina post.

After being found out, Gunn became known as Mary Fubbister. Against her wishes, Gunn and her child were returned to Scotland on the *Prince of Wales* on September 20, 1809.

There, she lived in poverty, working as a stocking and mitten maker until her death on November 7, 1861.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: Gabriel Dumont

Born: 1837

Place of Birth: Red River Area

Gabriel Dumont is best known as the man who led the small Métis military forces during the Northwest Resistance of 1885. He was born in the Red River area in 1837, the son of Isidore Dumont, a Métis hunter, and Louise Laframboise.



Although unable to read or write, Dumont could speak six languages and was highly adept at the essential skills of the plains: horseback riding and marksmanship. These abilities made Dumont a natural leader in the large annual Buffalo hunts that were an important part of Métis culture.

By the 1860s, Dumont was the leader of a group of hunters living in the Fort Carlton area. In 1872, he took advantage of the growing traffic on the Carlton trail and opened a ferry across the South Saskatchewan River and a small store upstream from Batoche. In 1873, his position as a leader was formalized when he was elected as president of the short-lived local government created by the Métis living on the south branch of the Saskatchewan.

His leadership role in the South Branch community continued. In 1877 and 1878, Dumont chaired meetings which drew up petitions to the federal government asking for representation on the Territorial Council, farming assistance, schools, land grants, and title to already occupied lands. Dumont was also a member of the delegation which convinced Louis Riel to return to Canada and plead the Métis case to the federal government.

When a provisional government was declared in 1885, Dumont was named "adjutant general of the Métis people." He proved himself an able commander and his tiny army experienced some success against government forces at Duck Lake and Fish Creek. The Canadian militia, however, proved too large and too well equipped for Dumont's army, which collapsed on 12 May 1885 after a four day battle near Batoche. Dumont avoided capture by escaping to the United States where, in 1886, he accepted an offer to demonstrate his marksmanship by performing in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show. After visits to Quebec (where he dictated his memoirs in 1889) Dumont returned to his old homestead near Batoche. He lived there quietly until his death in 1906.

Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historic People

Name: Sophie Marigeau

Born: 1836

Place of Birth: Near Jasper House British Columbia

Sophie Marigeau was a female fur trader of mixed First Nations and White heritage. She was born into the fur trade through her mixed blood mother and her mixed blood father. She lived among the Kootenai First Nations where she traded in mining camps and ran pack trains across the North Rocky Mountains. Sophie's pack trains provided supplies to miners in the Wild Horse Creek Gold Rush. For part of her career, she maintained a trading post on the Tobacco Plains on the border between Canada and the United States. She was an independent business woman who supported herself.

Although the latter part of her business-life suffered some significant financial set-backs (i.e. a cold winter killed off nearly all of her livestock, and she was robbed on more than one occasion by her business partners), Sophie was a sophisticated and organized business woman. She spent her final days in a comfortable home with hired caretakers. She died at the age of 80.



Voyageur Life Grade 4

Historical People

Name: Louis Riel

Born: 1844

Place of Birth: St Boniface

Louis Riel was a leader of the Métis, a people of mixed Indian and European descent. He tried to protect their rights when the land that was their home became part of Canada.

Riel was born on October 23, 1844, in Saint Boniface, Assiniboia. Assiniboia was a district that was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was also called the Red River Settlement. Riel went to Montreal to study and later held several jobs in the United States. He returned to the Red River area in the late 1860s.



In 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company arranged to transfer the Assiniboia lands to the new country of Canada. The Métis were afraid that this would bring outsiders who would harm their way of life. They formed a group to protest the changes, and Riel became their leader.

The Métis established a new government with Riel as president. He sent a group to Ottawa to push for Métis rights. They came to an agreement with the Canadian government, and Assiniboia became the province of Manitoba in 1870.

Riel won recognition and praise from some Canadians. The government, however, did not trust him. In 1873 he was elected to the Parliament, but he did not take his seat. The following year he was expelled from the legislature. In 1879 he moved to Montana where he married and started a family.

Back in Canada the Métis continued to struggle against the new government. In 1884 the Métis of the Northwest Territories asked for Riel's help. Riel returned to Canada and asked the government to address the problems of the Métis. But the government did not respond. In 1885 some of the Métis therefore began an armed rebellion. Government troops quickly crushed the rebellion, and Riel surrendered. He was put on trial and found guilty of treason. Riel was sentenced to death and was hanged on November 16, 1885.

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Reporter Questions

What is your Name?

Where were you Born?

What year where you born in?

How many voyages did you do?

Where did you go on your voyage?

What years did you do your voyages in?

What other important things did you do?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about you?

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Map of BC

