

MÉTIS CULTURE • THE FUR TRADE 1600–1800 • CURRENCY

Learning goal: Students will be able to understand the importance of the Fur Trade's role in the formation of the Métis Nation and the development of Canada.

Suggested timeline: 2 x 75-minute periods

Subjects: Canadian History, Geography, Mathematics, Economics

Lesson opener

See it:

Ask: Why did the Europeans want the furs—what was the purpose of the furs?

Show the following clip: firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_groups_travel.html Discuss the different modes of transportation. Have students speculate on the size of canoe that was required on different waterways (eg. Great Lakes vs. inland lakes and rivers) and why. Compare the canoe with the York boat and Red River Carts.

Strategy/Lesson activity

Feel it:

Teacher provides the background of the Fur Trade—see resources—the Fur Trade was driven by the fashion of the Europeans (the beaver hat)

louisrielinstitute.com/metis-educational-resource-kit.php

metisnation.org/culture-heritage/métis-timeline

Know it:

Link Feel It strategy back to See It strategy.

How many years was the Fur Trade a primary economic activity in the land that is now Canada, before Canada became a country? How did the Fur trade create an opportunity for a new nation to form? What are some factors in the 1600s that influenced the formation of the Métis Nation in the 1700s?

Take a look at our currency. The symbols on the Canadian currency represent the Crown. Compare and contrast fur trade currency to contemporary Canadian currency. Ask students why they think that it was important to have a standard currency system—link to the fur trade.

Assessment

Do it:

Choose an important fort or community and use creative writing or story telling to show what life was like then. Be sure to include the role of the coureurs des bois and fur trade company employees.

Develop a job ad for a coureur de bois and/or a fur trade company employee during the 1700s. What would you say in the ad? How would you advertise? Where would you advertise?

Suggested Resources:

Métis Nation of Ontario Website—Culture and Heritage:
metisnation.org/culture-heritage/who-are-the-m%C3%A9tis

Métis—The Canadian Encyclopedia: thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis

Métis Nation of Ontario Website—Métis Historic Timeline with explanations of events:
metisnation.org/culture-heritage/métis-timeline

Métis Education Kit—Teacher's Guide: louisrielinstitute.com/metis-educational-resource-kit.php

Where Two Worlds Meet, The Great Lakes Fur Trade
by Carolyn Gilman

Writing, Ritual and Folklore: Imagining the Cultural Geography of Voyageurs
by Carolyn Podruchny

The Voyageurs, The Backbone of the Fur Trade
By Dorthea Calverly

Ontario Métis Historic Research
metisnation.org/registry/citizenship/historicresources

Many Tender Ties
by Sylvia Van Kirk

KAIROS Blanket Activity: kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise

Canada: A People's History: cbc.ca/history/EPISODESUM2LE.html

Our Legacy; Métis Culture: scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_metisculture

Fur Trade: Our People's Story (YouTube video): youtube.com/watch?v=2HHGmxQ2C4w

Beaver Pelt Trade: Curriculum Services Canada (YouTube video):
youtube.com/watch?v=JGoVlgcT6tM

Aboriginal Beliefs, Values and Inspirations (student textbook)—ISBN:978-0-13-510651-8 Co-published by Pearson Education Canada and GoodMinds.com

The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America, Edited by Peterson and Brown, University of Manitoba Press.

The Hinge of an Empire (video) by Fort William Historical Park, Ontario
fwhp.ca/hd-film