

Grade 8

History

The Development of Western Canada

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

Lives of Métis and First Nation Peoples in Western Canada in the 1890s

Students research and compare how Métis and First Nation peoples lived in western Canada in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8, 2004*

Specific Expectations

Knowledge and Understanding

- describe the everyday life of various groups (e.g., First Nation peoples, Métis, Europeans) in western Canada in the late nineteenth century

Aboriginal Context

First Nation peoples living in western Canada in the late nineteenth century had developed ways of life that were in harmony with the natural and physical characteristics of the areas in which they lived. For instance, those who lived in areas in which hunting and trapping were the best ways to obtain food would live in teepees that could be set up and dismantled easily, while those who lived in areas that could be farmed would build homes that were more stable, such as wigwams.

During the same period, some Métis lived with First Nation peoples, but most were integrating themselves into the society of the new settlers, usually through marriage, and living in the houses the new settlers were building.

Teaching Strategies

- Have students research ways of life in Métis and First Nation communities in western Canada in the 1890s, focusing on shelter, food, clothing, transportation, and recreation.

- Have students develop a T-chart to compare the lifestyles of Métis and First Nation peoples.
- Have students share their findings in a class discussion.

Teacher prompts: How did Métis and First Nation peoples get and prepare their food in the 1890s? How did they house themselves? How did they get from one place to another? What is different about how they lived then and how they live today? What is the same?

Resources

The following recommended resources and web links were accurate at the time of publication. Teachers are encouraged to check that these reference listings remain current.

Aboriginal Canada Portal. Heritage and Traditions.

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en/ao26728.html>

Contains links to sites with information about the heritage and traditions of Métis and First Nation peoples in western Canada.

Alberta Online Encyclopedia. Métis Cultural Life.

http://www.abheritage.ca/albertans/people/metis_cultural.html

An article about Métis values and lifestyles.

Campbell, Maria. *Riel's People: How the Métis Lived*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992.

The text covers the history and origin of the Métis, their methods of hunting and trapping; their family life, shelter, clothing, household articles, food, and transportation; their role in the fur trade; and the Riel Rebellions of 1869 and 1885.

Canadian Museum of Civilization. Ethnology: Indigenous People of Canada.

http://www.civilizations.ca/cmhc/index_e.aspx?ArticleID=364

Provides links to sites containing information about the culture and history of Canada's First Nation peoples.

Racette, Calvin. *Flags of the Métis*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 1987.

Contains images and explanations of the meanings of the many flags used by the Métis.

The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture. <http://www.metismuseum.ca/main.php>

Contains information about Métis history and culture, as well as oral histories.

Making Community Connections

- Invite a representative from a Métis or First Nation community to talk to the class about what everyday life was like for his or her ancestors a hundred years ago.

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

This teaching strategy is one component of *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom. Based on the revised Ontario curriculum, the collection includes resources for educators at both the elementary and secondary levels. Other resources in this series can be found on the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

