

# COMMUNITY EVOLUTION: PUTTING THE PUZZLE TOGETHER

Pam Irving, Millarville, AB

## INTENDED AGE/SUBJECT AREA

Grades 2 & 3/Social Studies, Language Arts, Creative Writing, Drama and Technology

## CONCEPTS

- Community History: First Nations people, homesteaders, community services, schools, hamlet businesses, rural development

## DESCRIPTION

This lesson plan is a specific research segment of a year-long project. The work was not about a “product” but about a way of thinking about history—the learning of historical facts, details, and concepts—that becomes the stepping stone to a deeper understanding of historical patterns and community. Students made connections between “our community” and “the world.” Their discussions reflected an awareness of issues such as environmental changes, the First Nations experience, colonialism and consumerism. Students interpreted history in a participatory way and through their experience were able to develop new perspectives and understanding.

## INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES

Students work in small groups, which afford them the opportunity for in-depth inquiry into one aspect of community history. Each group is then responsible for presenting their findings to the class and from there they build the story of their community together.

Students will:

- investigate how and why a community changes as the residents on the landscape come and go and how the change determines the direction of the community.
- be able to utilize reading, writing, listening and speaking skills to locate, organize and respond to information and build new understanding.
- be able to demonstrate their learning through art and drama.
- utilizing technology, investigate the history of the community (in our case, Millarville websites) and report findings of the research to inform classmates

## RECOMMENDED TIMEFRAME

The students will need three 2-hour classes per week for seven weeks. Teacher preparation to make arrangements for field trips, speakers, parent volunteers, and primary research should be accomplished prior to the unit beginning.

## BACKGROUND

Students from grades 2 & 3 were involved in a way that helped them develop an overview of the history of their community. To meet individual differences students worked in both large and small groups, individually and with parents as co-learners, in and outside of the school, visiting museums and historical sites. They were however always allowed time to share their findings with

classmates thereby helping to establish a communal understanding of how understanding our history helps to guide our future directions.

## ACTIVITIES

### Part One –

#### Trip to the Glenbow Museum, Calgary

In order to learn about early life in Millarville and the surrounding areas, students went on a field trip to the Glenbow Museum where they were given a wonderful overview of settlement in the west. Students enjoyed the program “Settlers,” a program that provided background on Canadian settlement but focused on southern Alberta. They were organized in small groups, each with a parent leader as recorder, and then set out to examine the exhibits while searching for specific artifacts. For an example of what photos of the time and place would be like, go to [ImagesCanada.ca](http://ImagesCanada.ca) and type in the word “settlers.”

Students worked within their small groups to locate 3 different artifacts within the Settlers Gallery and the Stoney Gallery. They were provided with an artifact puzzle piece (a segment of a digital photo of an artifact) and were invited to search. Once found, the group discussed:

- What was the artifact?
- What was its use?
- Why was it important to the exhibit?

Sharing their findings with their classmates was an important part of the work. One way to do this is by posting discoveries to a website (see Glenbow Museum Field Trip under Resources).

Timeframe:	One Day
Resources:	Teachers prepared digital photos of specific artifacts in the galleries for the artifact puzzles and group recording sheets
Evaluation method:	As an opening activity, group results were shared and not evaluated as a percentage.

### Part Two –

#### Settlement & Development Research Groups

The next seven weeks were spent working on special small group projects where each group was responsible for investigating one aspect of the settlement and development of Millarville. The research groups were the vehicles to assist students in accessing information on a broad range of topics in a short but intense framework. The class as a whole was able to gain an appreciation for the greater history of the community when each group presented their information. In the information-gathering stage, most groups were able to utilize information from the units previous students had published in the history segment of our web page. The research groups were therefore an expedient method for gathering information. The students were not marked on their learning at this point in the unit. (See Glenbow Museum Field Trip under Resources)

We were fortunate to have six parents willing to join in this part of the heritage project to act as group members. They helped record group discussions and jot notes from the research that can be a stumbling block for young and emergent readers and writers.

Each group had guidelines for group work and resources, but plenty of opportunity to make choices about how their investigation would proceed and how they would present their findings.

## MATERIALS/RESOURCES

- Primary resources particular to the community under study; e.g, our Glenbow Museum field trip. You can read about it and our research groups at:  
[http://www.galileo.org/schools/millarville/heritage/glenbow\\_discov.html](http://www.galileo.org/schools/millarville/heritage/glenbow_discov.html)  
[http://www.galileo.org/schools/millarville/heritage/research\\_settlement\\_groups.html](http://www.galileo.org/schools/millarville/heritage/research_settlement_groups.html)
- Other available resources such as:
  - work done by previous students and found on our school website,
  - local history books,
  - stories from community members,
  - Glenbow Museum,
  - the “Our Roots” website ([www.OurRoots.ca](http://www.OurRoots.ca))
  - the Internet,
  - videos of previous speakers,
  - historical maps,
  - archive documents,
  - historical photos,
  - teacher-prepared digital photos of specific artifacts in the galleries (artifact puzzles), and
  - group recording sheets
- Technology: digital camera, video camera, word processing, Internet access, and scanner
- Additional materials needed to present their discoveries to be determined by each group individually

## About the Educator

Pam Irving endeavors to bring the grade 2/3 curriculum to life in the *History of Millarville*. Her project involves Galileo Educational Network mentorship, researching primary source information, visiting exhibits and archives at local museums, discussions with people of the First Nations and historians. Students examine Millarville’s past and present, investigating original homestead families, the First Nations experience, local historical sites and the community. Their understandings are shared through writing, art, drama and technology. Through her lessons, Pam’s students become aware that history determines the future.

## APPENDIX A: Marking Rubric

<b>Applies Process Skills</b>	Unable to list, record or recall information about the topic from presentations or their group research	With some prompting, was able to list, record or recall information from the presentations or their group research	Student was able to independently list, recall or record information from the presentations or their group research	Student made extensive notes of relevant information from the presentations and their group research
<b>Focuses and Cooperates in Group Tasks</b>	Student had difficulty focusing, working productively or cooperatively in research group	With minimal prompting, student was able to focus and work productively/cooperatively in research group	Student was readily able to focus and work productively/cooperatively in research group	Student was readily able to focus and work productively/cooperatively in research group and took a leadership role
<b>Contributes Meaningfully to Class Discussions</b>	Did not contribute to the review discussions	Added at least 1 pertinent fact or thought to the class review discussions	Added a couple of pertinent thoughts to the class review discussions	Able to make some key contributions to the review discussions (summative, controversial, etc.)
<b>Understands Information, Ideas, Issues</b>	Needed help to write any relevant thoughts that would pertain to any of the 3 key questions	Was able to write a thought or statement that relates to at least 1 of the 3 key questions	Was able to write a thought or statement that related to any 2 of the 3 key questions	Was able to write a thought or statement that related to all of the 3 key questions