

# **FORT LOUISBOURG: LIVING HISTORY**

Ken MacDonald, Nova Scotia

## **INTENDED GRADE/SUBJECT AREA**

Grade 6 Social Studies, Geography, Language Arts, Health, Music  
(Adaptable for grades 4 – 9)

## **CONCEPTS**

- Local history, significance of local historic sites, culture and everyday life in times past, research and inquiry methods, presentation skills, teamwork

## **INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES**

Students will:

- develop an appreciation for the significance of an historic site and demonstrate the historic relevance of events from that time period;
- research, organize, and present in a formal way what they have learned about the everyday lives of people of the past;
- discover the impact of people, places, and events from history on our lives today;
- develop cooperative and networking skills in planning varied methods of presenting their findings to the class and to their families and friends.

## **RECOMMENDED TIME FRAME**

Variable time frame depending upon how much the teacher wishes to cover on the topic. Class time runs about 40 minutes to an hour. Visiting a historic site like Louisbourg takes a minimum of a full school day, and about two follow-up classes are necessary to complete the written project. The computer presentation segment takes about two or three classes in total for each group of students to design and create individual slides, and at least two weeks of intermittent time, maybe more, depending upon technical glitches and other ongoing class activities, to mold it into a formal presentation. The Louisbourg game takes about two or three classes to develop in groups, and about two classes for other groups to try the games on a rotating basis.

## **BACKGROUND**

Fortress Louisbourg is a site of distinctive national historic significance, not only for its impact upon Canada's history, but also for the extent and quality of its massive reconstruction. Everyone, however, is not so fortunate to be teaching in an area of close proximity to such a site. However, with printed material available on most historic sites, as well as information and virtual tours of these via the Internet, information can be easily accessed. By class visits or other means, this information can serve as an invaluable source in the teaching of Canadian history. Although this lesson plan is based upon Fortress Louisbourg, I feel the activities are easily adaptable for use when studying any historic site that is accessible to your classroom by proximity or any other means.

There are three activities outlined. All or some could be used, depending upon classroom dynamics, abilities, interests and access to computer technology. I've gotten much information

from a book entitled *Louisbourg: An 18th Century Town*. This was written as a cooperative effort by the Fortress Louisbourg staff and local Cape Breton teachers. The text of the book is available on the Internet, and I've included the website under Materials/Resources.

## ACTIVITIES

### Activity #1 — Individual Projects

Plan a day trip to a local historic site, if possible, one that has examples of reconstructed or period buildings and staff dressed in period costume. Distribute the following assignment in class before departure, and ask class members to take notes as they visit various locations on site after their arrival. The completed assignment could be submitted to the teacher, as a class presentation, or both.

Visit one of the buildings on site.

- a) Describe the outside of the building. What material was used in its construction? Can you guess why this material was used? Include a drawing.
- b) Tell who lived there or owned it. What job did s/he have?
- c) Describe how people were dressed.
- d) Describe the inside of the building, what you saw, and compare it to a building used for similar purposes today.
- e) Write a short report on what you think a typical day would be in the life of a person living and working in the building. Include topics like family life and responsibilities, cleanliness, preparation of meals, leisure activities, daily work, etc. Compare it to today.
- f) Give your opinion as to whether you would like to live in those days. Why or why not?

### Activity #2 — Class Presentation

- If using presentation software, familiarity with programs such as HyperStudio or PowerPoint is very helpful. Assign approximately four students, who are comfortable with computer use, the responsibility of working with students to assist them in designing their slides for presentation in the program.
  - If not using software, assign a similar amount of students to compile and organize pages of a class book or album illustrating the visit to the site.
- a) Before leaving to visit the site, assign approximately two to four students the responsibility of being photographers. For a computer project, a digital camera would be very helpful. If one is not available, pictures would have to be scanned.
  - b) Have each student (individually or in small groups) photographed in an area of some significance on the site. Tell the students they are responsible to relate why this area is important.

c) Upon returning to the class, when pictures are available, have the student or groups write brief descriptions of the area in which they were photographed.

d) If using presentation software, have assigned students work with class members to integrate photos and text into slides for the purpose of creating a presentation. It is suggested that only about 10 – 20 slides be created in total. Edit as necessary. Invite family members to the school to view the final production.

If not using presentation software have students place their photo on a page and write an explanation of the photo adjacent to it. Maybe a word processing program could be used, if not, the student's own handwriting. Students' art could be used. Create a cover and if possible laminate. Make the book or album available for each family.

*NOTE: If the class is unable to visit an actual site, these projects can be also created by using photos and information requested from any historic site or other relevant sources. Students can either draw, photocopy or scan photos.*

### Activity 3 — Creation of a Board Game

a) Create a fact sheet based on the historic site you visited or studied. Depending upon class ability, ask the students to do so (with guidance). These facts could be used as standard background information available to all students when creating a board game. For example, with Louisbourg I compiled a few basic facts about the fortress and a list of advantages and disadvantages faced by both the **English and French in the two sieges.**

b) Divide the class into groups of three to five. Using examples such as Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, or other games, explain to the class that you want them to create a board game based on the historic site you visited or studied. Give examples of different designs the game board could take (wheel, square, circle). Cards could be created and used with the board. Distribute the fact sheets. The game could be about battles fought, the way people dressed at the time, foods they ate, occupations, challenges, or any facet of their lives.

c) When completed, have the students exchange their games with different groups so each student can get an opportunity to play the games created by other groups. (One person from each group explains to other groups how the game works.)

### EVALUATION

Evaluation can take a number of forms. Creativity, research and knowledge of material, sentence structure, neatness, and spelling are all evaluated. Point values are assigned, particularly in Activity #1. Cooperative skills and presentation skills are also considered.

### MATERIALS/RESOURCES

- Financial resources to make field trip possible.
- Camera(s) and film, film developing.
- If using presentation software, students must have access to computer or computers that can run Powerpoint, Hyperstudio or similar software. Also, students would need access to either a digital camera or a scanner.

- Bristol board or ticket board, scissors, glue, coloured pencils, etc., for the board game.
- If studying Louisbourg, a number of websites are helpful, including: [www.parkscanada.ca](http://www.parkscanada.ca) (click on National Historic Sites or Lieux historiques nationaux), [www.collections.ic.gc.ca/fortress/hermosa.htm](http://www.collections.ic.gc.ca/fortress/hermosa.htm) and Louisbourg: An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Town at [www.fortress.uccb.ns.ca/search/scol\\_e4.html](http://www.fortress.uccb.ns.ca/search/scol_e4.html).
- Very effective resource is the Fortress of Louisbourg CD-ROM. Sydney, NS: Fitzgerald Studios.

### About the Educator

Ken MacDonald's students live and breathe the history of 18<sup>th</sup> century Louisbourg. This local historic site is integrated into language arts, health, geography, music and social studies. Students explore class differences between the local French and Mi'kmaq, and compare daily life in Louisbourg with today. Students also created a computer-based presentation on Jost House, a historical building in downtown Sydney. Upon viewing the project at a Heritage Fair, the staff requested to use it in their permanent display.