

CANADIAN HISTORICAL FESTIVAL: BECOMING A NATIONAL FIGURE

Dean Stevens, Alberta

INTENDED GRADE/SUBJECT AREA

Grade 8 Social Studies

CONCEPTS

- This is a general lesson plan for a Canadian historical festival. Changes can be made to accommodate location, space, student population, community population, or any other variable.

INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES

In completing the Canadian Historical Festival, students will:

- develop an appreciation for the importance of past events;
- understand the connection between what has happened in the past and what our country is like today;
- learn specific and detailed information about a single historical figure;
- apply learned knowledge to determine the nature of the world in which their chosen figure lived;
- develop and use skills necessary to conduct historical research;
- develop and perfect proper note-taking skills, bibliography writing and footnoting skills;
- become immersed in the life and times of another person by living as this person for one morning;
- understand the geographic and political environment of an individual from Canada's past;
- develop and apply speaking and presenting skills;
- understand how to write a biography in the first person [an "autobiography" of someone other than themselves];
- develop skills for using computer technology, specifically the word processor, Internet, and paint-and-draw programs;
- develop critical thinking skills in assessing various sources of information;
- develop creativity in producing backgrounds and props for display during the festival;
- make connections between various periods of Canadian history;
- understand the manner in which people of the past dressed;
- learn and develop the skills necessary to successfully communicate information to students who are younger than themselves, as well as to adults;
- develop proper time management strategies;
- understand the importance of individual Canadians to the development of Canada;
- learn the role a person's environment or surroundings played in his/her life;
- connect the lives of Canadian historical figures to the events of their time.

ACTIVITY

The project involves researching a famous person from Canadian history. Extensive information will be gathered and learned. The project will be presented at the end of the term. To receive a passing grade, each of the following must be completed.

1. Research the person you have chosen and take extensive notes. The notes, as well as a bibliography of where you found the information, will be handed in for part of the grade. Included in this must be descriptions of important dates and places in the person's life, achievements of the person, the person's contributions to Canada's development, importance of the person to his/her time, as well as a detailed physical description of the person.
2. Using the notes you have taken, write an "autobiography" of yourself as if you are the person whom you have chosen to role-play. This must be written in the first person. Included in this biography must be all important information about the person's life. This will be an extensive piece of writing, and will be graded accordingly.
3. Create a costume that allows you to dress up as the person you have chosen.
4. Create a backdrop you can use that represents the person or the period of time s/he is from. You will stand in front of this during your presentation.
5. You will present your historical figure to other students in the school, as well as to parents and members of the community. All students will be set up in the gymnasium at the same time. You must be able to give a detailed biography of the person, in the first person (as if you are the person), and then capably answer any questions you are asked about the person or the time s/he is from. You will be in character for part of a day. You are not allowed to leave character for the entire time you are in the gym. **THIS MUST ALL BE DONE WITHOUT THE USE OF NOTES.**

About the Educator

Dean Stevens encourages his students to make connections between historical and current events. His class organized a Historical Festival that involved researching and role-playing famous Canadian or local figures. Using costumes, props and a modest set, they presented their characters to the school and community. Students also create historic parliamentary scrolls and a colonial newspaper that includes articles, political cartoons and interviews reflecting life in Upper or Lower Canada.

Choices of Figures for the Festival

Below is a list of people you may choose from. If the person you wish to choose is not on the list, you must receive permission from me before you begin. Some of the historical figures could be put into groups. If you wish to form a group, have each group member take one of the listed people. However, there must be a solid historical connection between the figures chosen for the group. Each group member will be graded individually.

Sir John A. Macdonald	Louis Riel	Thomas Scott
Gabriel Dumont	General Wolfe	Leif Eriksson
Samuel de Champlain	Jean Talon	Jacques Cartier
Marguerite Bourgeoys	General Montcalm	Marie Guyart
Laura Secord	Marie de la Peltrie	Sir Wilfrid Laurier
Jeanne Mance	John Cabot	Conte de Frontenac
Tecumseh	Captain James Cook	George Vancouver
François de Laval	Alexander Mackenzie	Louis-Joseph Papineau
Simon Fraser	Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley	David Thompson
Thomas Douglas (Lord Selkirk)	Philomen Wright	Thayendanegea
Viscount Monck	Sir James Douglas	Robert Gourlay
James Bruce (Lord Elgin)	George A. French	Marie-Marguerite d'Youville
Sir William Cornelius Van Horne	Joseph Howe	Lord Durham
William Lyon Mackenzie	James Murray	Henry Kelsey
Sir Francis Bond Head		Charles Tupper
Sir Charles Tupper		