

ACTIVITY
WORKBOOK

THE
Great-West Life
ASSURANCE  COMPANY

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Festival du Voyageur



THE GREAT - WEST LIFE
SCHOOL PROGRAMME
at Festival du Voyageur

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This document was revised in 2012.



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for having taken the time to download this Activity Workbook. *Festival du Voyageur* believes it is important to provide a well-rounded educational school programme. We truly hope this workbook is a useful tool for teachers, especially for those teaching grades 4 to 6. *Festival du Voyageur* believes this workbook will provide fun and educational ideas and activities designed to enrich your school program visit. Students will be exposed to the different subject areas – literature, social studies/history, environmental/natural studies, mathematics, physical education and arts, through games, reading, research projects, crafts, cooking (*mmm*, a bannock recipe), songs and much more. Reference books and Internet resources are listed at the end of this document. We invite and encourage teachers of other grade levels to adapt any activity to their classroom needs.

The information has been gathered for a variety of age groups, *though mainly for the use of elementary and middle school grades*. We welcome any feedback in regards to the content of this guide. These comments will allow us to improve the Activity Workbook for future years.

**Please enjoy your visit, the activities and being part
of the *Festival du Voyageur*!**



TERMINOLOGY OF THE FUR TRADE ERA

BOURGEOIS

Simultaneously, they were owners, managers and operators of a fort or a district. They hired and paid *les engagés*, or employees of the company. Often of Scottish descent, these men managed and held shares in the company and were therefore referred to as partners. There were generally two groups of *Bourgeois*: the Montréal partners and the wintering partners who passed their winters in the forts and trading posts far from Montréal, almost always in the North West.

VOYAGEUR

Contracted labourers, or *engagés*, *voyageurs* were mostly young French-Canadians from the Montréal area. From time to time, some *voyageurs* worked as independent fur traders, alone or in small groups. However, during the large majority of the fur trade era, most of *les voyageurs* signed contracts with the two fur trade giants: The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company (NWC).

PORK EATERS (*Mangeurs de lard*)

Seasonally employed in summer, they paddled between Montréal and Fort William. This term is also used to describe the men who traveled west of Fort William for the first time. They were at the bottom of the company's hierarchy. The term Pork Eater derives from the diet which consisted of hard bread, corn mash and salted pork.

WINTERERS (*Hommes du Nord, hivernants*)

They paddled from Fort William to Lake Winnipeg and farther north. They spent their winters west of the Great Lakes.



A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE FUR TRADE ERA (17TH TO 19TH CENTURY)



Fur trade boundaries
in the New World

THE FUR TRADE

In the 17th and 18th centuries, beaver fur was very popular with the men and the women of Europe. Beaver fur was very much in style and was used to make a multitude of things, particularly waterproof beaver felt hats. Shortly after they landed in the New World, Europeans quickly realized there was an abundance of beautiful beaver on these majestic lands across the Atlantic Ocean. Thus, the hunting and trading of beaver pelts became quite organized. The First Nations people who lived in Canada were already hunting the beaver to make clothes from its fur. Europeans decided to establish relations with the First Nations people in order to hunt on these strange lands and maximize their fur trade profits.



As the years went by, a few groups established fur trade companies and built forts and trading posts west of the Great Lakes to facilitate the fur trade network. Companies would hire First Nations guides, explorers, clerks, “free men” and especially contracted *engagés* who transported furs in canoes and worked in the forts. These men were known as *les voyageurs*.

Many First Nations people played a very important role during the fur trade era. They knew the territory very well, knew where to find beaver and knew how to hunt and trap them efficiently. They were the main suppliers of furs (of beaver or any other animal) for the fur companies. They would then make their way to the nearest fort or trading post to trade the furs they had trapped. They would trade the furs with a clerk for goods and provisions from Europe. Things like pearls, mirrors, casseroles, tobacco, axes and knives.



A few suggestions for visual teaching aids:
A map of the world, a map of Canada, images of beavers,
images of beaver felt hats, images of canoes, etc.



Engagés were hired by the fur trade companies to transport many different things in big wooden barges named “York Boats” (if they were hired by the Hudson’s Bay Company) or in birch bark canoes (if they were hired by the North West Company). They transported goods from Europe to forts and trading posts and brought furs back with them, which were then transported to Europe in very large ships.

Les engagés whom we know as “*les voyageurs*” were the men who worked for the North West Company. These men had to leave in canoes and paddle for weeks and months from Montréal into the interior of the continent. The NWC also had two types of *voyageurs*: the ‘Montreal Men’ (or pork-eaters), who returned home to Montréal in the winters and the ‘Men of the North’ (or winterers), who spent their winters in the forts of the North West.

Les voyageurs were brave and courageous men. They surmounted many dangers, both in water and on land, in order to reach their destinations. During their trips *les voyageurs* mostly ate pemmican, salted lard, dry biscuits, pea soup and dried peas. Pemmican is what they consumed the most, and is a mix of bison lard and sundried bison meat. Pemmican was usually prepared by First Nations and Métis women.

If you would like to do some research, here are a few suggestions of themes:
Fur trade, *voyageurs*, explorers, clerks, North West Company, Hudson’s Bay Company, felt hats, pemmican and fur trader.



[Click here](#) to see pictures of different styles of beaver felt hats



WHO ARE *LES VOYAGEURS*?

Between 1690 and 1850, *voyageurs* were generally hired by contract as paddlers, carriers and manual workers for the fur trade companies. This is the reason *voyageurs* were also known as *engagés*, French for “hired man”. These men worked under the supervision of a clerk. Men who chose to work independently, known as *hommes libres* (in French means “free men”), had similar roles and responsibilities as *les engagés* but were not bound to a company by a contract. One distinction between *les engagés* and *les hommes libres* is that the latter independently trapped and traded.

It is true that the majority of *voyageurs* were French-Canadians, however many others were English, Scottish, German, Iroquois, etc. Any ambitious man could be *un voyageur*, if he was ready to put in the hard work. *Les voyageurs* were the backbone of the North West Company and they transported furs and goods across more than 5000 km. Every spring men would leave from Lachine, near Montréal, after loading their canoes with goods and provisions. From there they would travel to Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, where they took part in a religious ceremony; this would be the last ceremony of its’ kind for several months. Their arduous journey officially began here and would then continue for weeks and months into the North West.



LES VOYAGEURS

Les voyageurs were employees recruited and contracted by one of the fur trade companies, on average for a three-year period. They were young, often single, generally short of stature (due to the limited amount of space available in the canoes) and very strong. We estimate that there were approximately 5000 *voyageurs* in the North West in 1800.

A typical *voyageur's* workday lasted about 14 hours, but the days could sometimes drag on to 18-20 hours. They had to paddle for a long period of time and at a furious pace (approximately 50 to 60 strokes per minute). They had to make many portages with a leather strap on their heads and provisions on their backs.

Les voyageurs would journey north and would transport merchandise that was traded for pelts which they would bring back to Montréal. They were an indispensable moving force crucial to the fur trade. *Les voyageurs* have also contributed to many discoveries. Many explorers accompanied *les voyageurs* in order to map out the North American continent.

As colonization moved farther west, many *voyageurs*, once their contracts expired, became laborers, trappers, farmers, etc. A good number of them also formed alliances with First Nations women and later on with Métis women. This is how the Métis nation came into being; a nation that played an enormous role during the foundation of the province of Manitoba.



Others even accompanied explorers during their expeditions and voyages in order to experience different adventures and help discover the far depths of this vast continent.



WHAT DID *LES VOYAGEURS* DO?

It was expected that each *voyageur* work at least 14 hours a day, paddle 50 strokes per minute and be able to carry two "*pièces*" (bails) weighing 55 kilograms each across each portage. Drowning, hernias, broken limbs, compressed spine and rheumatism, to name a few, were the hazards that *les voyageurs* faced. This is without mentioning the clouds of black flies and mosquitoes that drove the men near the brink of insanity and could only be properly repelled with a mix of bear grease and skunk urine.

Les voyageurs' daily routine was a back-breaking one. During their long voyages they were constantly moving down the rivers. A typical *voyageur* on a trip would wake up as early as 2:30 – 3:00 AM, and set off without eating breakfast. Before 8 o'clock, a breakfast stop was made on a beach or river shore. At approximately 2:00 PM, a midday lunch was served on the boat; though lunch was often only an opportunity to chew a piece of pemmican while paddling. A stop was made for a few minutes each hour so the men could smoke a pipe. This pause was called *une pipé* and was very important for *les voyageurs* who calculated their distances in "pipes" (for example, 3 *pipés* could equal 15 to 20 km).

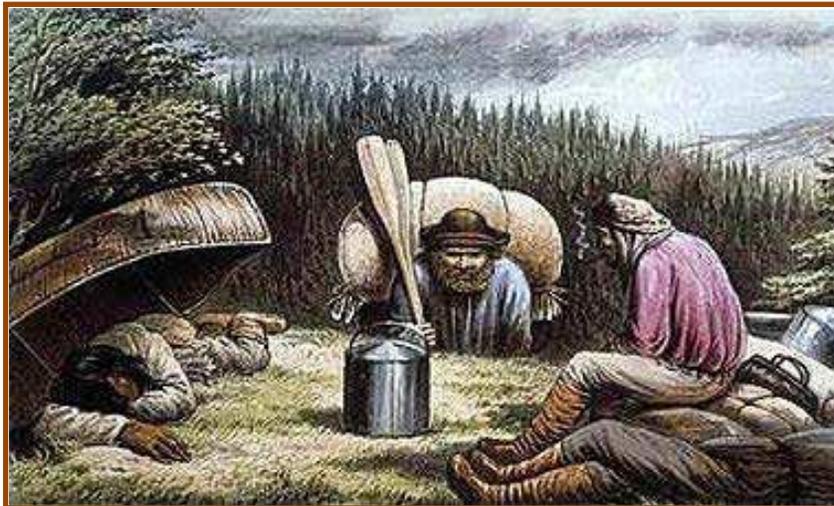
At nightfall, the canoes were unloaded and turned over to serve as shelters. Supper, which was pre-cooked the night before, was warmed and served. The men slept on turf, moss or the beach with their heads under the overturned canoes. A tarp provided protection from wind and rain. During the night, a kettle filled with peas and water was hung over the fire, added to it were strips of pork when available. This simmered until daylight, at which time the cook added four biscuits and let it continue to simmer. At dawn, the call "*lève, lève nos gens !*" (meaning: Up, up folks!) resounded throughout the camp. Canoes were loaded and launched; breakfast would be consumed on-board. It would be served from a kettle full to the brim consisting of cooked peas and biscuits so thick that a stick would stand upright in it. Since bowls and utensils would take up unnecessary space in the canoe, the men often ate their meal out of their hats.



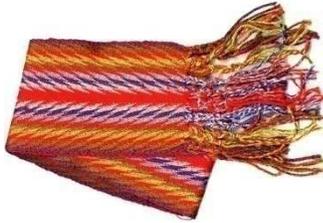
WHAT DID *UN VOYAGEUR* LOOK LIKE?

Many *voyageurs* had long hair, which protected them from mosquitoes and cool breezes. *Les voyageurs* wore: a shirt, a hat, pants made from cotton, linen or wool, possibly a pair of deer skin leggings (they went from the ankles to above the knees and were secured by a string tied to their sashes), a pair of leather moccasins, and occasionally, a loincloth. If the weather was more on the chilly side, they would wear a hooded coat – *un capot*, and, *une tuque*. For important meetings, such as the annual *rendez-vous* at Fort William, *les voyageurs* would wear their most beautiful finery, their cleanest shirts and they would adorn their hats with beautiful feathers. They, of course, also wore a hand woven sash – *une ceinture fléchée*.

The *ceinture fléchée* (literally translated as “arrowed sash”), a long hand woven sash made of wool and named because of its distinct motif, was very useful. Tied around the waist, the sash lowered the risk of a hernia. Placed on the forehead, it could also be used as a weight bearer to help carry bails during portages. It could also be transformed into a small rope to carry different objects, such as wood for the fires. Due to its’ tight weave it could also be used as a type of cup with which to drink water.



LA CEINTURE FLÉCHÉE (THE SASH)



The sash, entirely woven by hand, was an essential and very sought after accessory in Canada from the late 1700s to the beginning of the 20th century. In addition to being very stylish, it would keep *les voyageurs* warm and was very efficient in supporting *les voyageurs'* lower backs while they were carrying bails during portages. It also helped to support heavy objects in general. Usually, *la ceinture fléchée* was looped twice around the waist and tied on the side of the hip. Around the year 1890, thanks to advancements in technology, sashes were made by loom instead of hand woven. The loom is still used today to make *des ceintures fléchées* and they are available at *le Festival du Voyageur*.

[Click here](#) for more information on voyageur wear.

[Click here](#) for specific information on how sashes are made.



THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF VOYAGEURS

THE NORTH WEST COMPANY HAD TWO MAIN CATEGORIES OF VOYAGEURS:

- 1) The “Montreal Men”, also known as “pork eaters”, paddled from Montréal to Fort William with goods and provisions from Europe. After their annual *rendez-vous* at Fort William they would load their canoes with furs and make the return trip to Montréal. Their nickname – “pork eaters”, came from the fact that French-Canadians were used to adding pork meat to their soup. During his first days of travel, missing his daily diet, a new *voyageur* could be heard muttering the words – “Ah ! Si nous avions du lard” which meant – “I sure wish we had pork!”
- 2) The “Northern Men”, also known as “winterers”, were *les voyageurs* that spent winter in the interior. They transported furs from the North West to Fort William and after the annual *rendez-vous* they would load their canoes with provisions from Europe and return to their respective forts.

All *les voyageurs* within these two large categories were split up into three different positions while paddling the canoes:

- a) L'avant (or bowman): This man was located in the front (or bow) of the canoe and acted as a guide.
- b) Le gouvernail (or steerman): This man was positioned at the stern (rear) of the canoe and he steered the craft by order of *l'avant*.
- c) Milieux (or middle): The men with less experience had to paddle in the middle of the canoe. After learning the art of canoeing, they would sometimes have the chance to become a bowman or a steersman. This was quite an honour since they would be paid better than the middles.

The express canoe – The greatest honour to be bestowed upon *un voyageur* was to be asked to paddle the express canoe, a light canoe used to transport important people or urgent messages. This small canoe could travel twice as fast as northern canoes.



WHERE DID *LES VOYAGEURS* COME FROM?

Because the *voyageur* system was developed under the French regime, and as most of the men hired by the NWC were French-Canadians, the term "*voyageur*" remained. Most of the men were recruited in French-Canadian villages and towns, notably: Sorel, Trois-Rivières, Québec and Montréal. Other villages and towns included Laprairie, Châteauguay, Île-Perrot, Pointe-Claire, St-Philippe, Chambly, Boucherville, Île-Jésus, St-Laurent, Varrenes, Terrebonne, Lachenaie, Longueuil, St-Ours, Yamaska, Contrecoeur, Berthier, Vaudreuil, Mascouche, L'Assomption, Ste-Geneviève, Rivière du Loup, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Lavaltrie, St-Sulpice, Ange-Gardien, St-Jean-Port-Joli, Grand-Mère, Verchères, and St-Denis. (See page 20 for an activity your students can do to answer this question.)



THE CANOES OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY



1 – THE MASTER’S CANOE (*Le canot du maître*)

- The biggest of the canoes
- Used to travel between Montréal and Lake Superior
- Could carry up to 90 packages of 40 kg each, 8 to 12 men, their equipment and a few passengers
- Measured up to 12 meters in length by 2 meters in width
- Was too large for the smaller rivers of the interior

2 – THE NORTHERN CANOE (*Le canot du Nord*)

- Was used inside the continent, when leaving from Lake Superior
- Was manned by 4 to 6 voyageurs, and transported approximately 35 *pièces*. One of these canoes could carry upwards of 1,750 kg.
- Measured 7 meters in length, 1 meter in width and 20 to 30 cm in depth
- These lasted one or two seasons, meaning the NWC had to build or purchase up to 70 units per year

3 – THE EXPRESS CANOE (*L’express*)

- Was approximately 5 meters in length
- Was used to transport important people and urgent messages from Montréal to the North West or between different forts in the North West.
- Served as an express vehicle. There was also a winter express service, which used dog sleighs and snowshoes instead of a canoe.
- (photo not available)

[Click here](#) for more information about the canoes and boats of the fur trade era.



AN EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL *VOYAGEUR* DAY IN THE SUMMER

Les voyageurs are the employees of *les Bourgeois*. They work very hard for these men who hire and pay them. To ensure that the *Bourgeois* is happy, *le voyageur* must make sure all goods are delivered on time, which means as soon as possible!

This schedule was taken from a *voyageur's* diary. Robert Seaborne Miles wrote this in the fall of 1818 as he traveled from Lachine (west of Montréal) to Fort Wedderburn on Lake Athabasca.

DAY 1

2:30 a.m.	Woke up, loaded canoes, departed
7:30 a.m.	Stopped for breakfast ashore
1:40 p.m.	Stopped for lunch ashore
8:00 p.m.	Stopped canoeing for day

DAY 2

5:00 a.m.	Portaged, ate breakfast, left at 8 a.m.
1:15 p.m.	Portaged, ate lunch, left at 3 p.m.
8:40 p.m.	Stopped to camp for the night

DAY 3

4:30 a.m.	Left camp and poled up a number of strong rapids
7:30 a.m.	Ate breakfast ashore and left again at 9 a.m.
1:15 p.m.	Portaged and ate lunch
8:00 p.m.	Stopped to camp for the night



FORT GIBRALTAR

Originally built at the fork of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in 1810, Fort Gibraltar was a North West Company (NWC) fur trade post but was more specifically used to store pemmican. The fort as we know it today was reconstructed in 1978 by *Festival du Voyageur Inc.* in St-Boniface on the east shore of the Red River.

Historically, the fort was very important politically, geographically and economically. Fort Gibraltar played a major role in the conflict between the NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC); its' location (at the fork of two rivers) meant that the NWC knew exactly who passed through the area and when; and the control of the region meant the control of the pemmican since the Métis who lived in the area were the bison hunters and they made the pemmican, the main source of nutrition for the *les voyageurs* in the canoes.

Fort Gibraltar was twice taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company. Not long after the second takeover, in 1816, the fort was torn down and the house timbers and stockades were rafted down the river to be used towards the Fort Douglas settlement. Fort Gibraltar was then rebuilt not far from its original location (where we find the corner of Main Street and Broadway today) and served as a trading post for the NWC until its merger with the HBC on March 26th, 1821. It is at this time that Nicholas Garry left London for Red River. Garry was soon to be appointed Deputy Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and it was in his honour that George Simpson changed the name of Fort Gibraltar to Fort Garry in 1822.

In 1835, the HBC began building a new Fort Garry (later called Upper Fort Garry) and the former NWC site was used as outbuildings for the new company. This continued until the flood of 1852 which destroyed its aged buildings. Today Fort Gibraltar houses a blacksmith shop, workers quarters, two towers, a trading post, a pemmican depot, a riverside platform and *la Maison du Bourgeois*.

The main purpose of today's Fort Gibraltar is to reflect the life of *les voyageurs* and fur traders living in the Red River settlement of 1815-1821 and to promote the important historic contributions of the Métis, the Francophone population, the Scottish Settlers, the First Nations peoples, and the explorers of the NWC.

[Click here](#) for more information about Fort Gibraltar or to book a school tour.



SOCIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY – PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

PROJECT – RESEARCHING HISTORICAL FIGURE

Ask your students to complete a research project about a historical figure. Write the names listed next on individual pieces of paper and place them in a hat: *Adam Thom, Cuthbert Grant, David Thomson et Charlotte Small, Duncan Cameron, George Simpson, Isabelle Gunn, Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, the La Vérendryes, Chief Peguis, Letitia MacTavish (Hargrave), Lord Selkirk, Miles McDonnell, Peter Fidler, Pierre Falcon, Pierre Guillaume Sayer, Robert Semple, Margaret Taylor, Archbishop Provencher, Bellecourt, Dumoulin, Archbishop Ritchot, First Nations peoples, etc.* Have the students pick a name and research some of the following questions: Where did their historical figure come from? What was their lifespan? What did they discover or do? How did they contribute to the fur trade? Which company did they work for?

PROJECT – ILLNESSES DURING THE VOYAGEUR ERA

Ask your students to complete a research project on the common illnesses present during the *voyageur* era: scurvy, diphtheria, smallpox, rubella, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, etc. Why did they contract these illnesses? Which remedies, if any, did the First Nations people have for these diseases?

PROJECT – TRIP PLANIFICATION

Invite your students to enumerate the different steps that must be followed to prepare a trip. Have them identify possible challenges and conditions that may be encountered and how cooperation would be essential to their survival. Ex: students can prepare a fictitious voyage from Winnipeg to Lac du Bonnet. They could also create and improvise a short skit to demonstrate the various difficulties and successes encountered.

ACTIVITY – THE FIRST NATIONS AND THE INUIT

Invite your students to ask questions about the First Nations people and the Inuit before and after the arrival of the Europeans. They could also ask questions and comment about how history is responsible for repercussions felt today by these peoples.

ACTIVITY – TRANSPORTATION

Ask your students to name modes of transportation used during the fur trade era. Encourage the students to research and discuss the materials used in the construction of these various modes. Invite your students to explore how the seasonal changes affected the choice of vehicle and routes utilized.

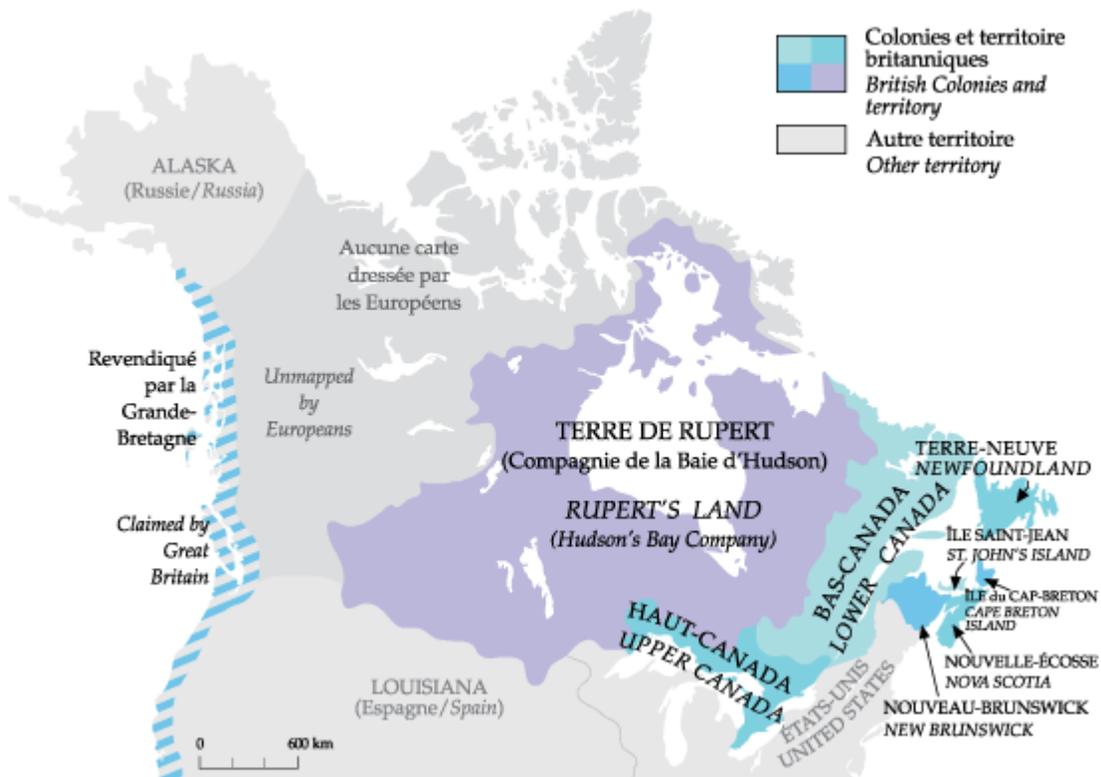


ACTIVITY – WHERE DID *LES VOYAGEURS* COME FROM?

Create your own map based on the eastern portion of the map provided. Indicate the towns and cities listed below. From what specific area were the majority of *voyageurs* recruited?

Due to the fact that the *voyageur* system was developed under the French regime and most of the men hired by the NWC were French-Canadians, the term "*voyageur*" was coined early during the fur trade.

Most of these men were recruited in French-Canadian villages and towns, notably: *Sorel, Trois-Rivières, Québec and Montréal*. Other villages and towns included *Laprairie, Châteauguay, Île-Perrot, Pointe-Claire, St-Philippe, Chambly, Boucherville, Île-Jésus, St-Laurent, Varrenes, Terrebonne, Lachenaie, Longueuil, St-Ours, Yamaska, Contrecoeur, Berthier, Vaudreuil, Mascouche, L'Assomption, Ste-Geneviève, Rivière du Loup, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Lavaltrie, St-Sulpice, Ange-Gardien, St-Jean-Port-Joli, Grand-Mère, Verchères, and St-Denis*.



LITERATURE – PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

WRITING PROJECT – LEGENDS (ALSO FALLS UNDER SOCIAL STUDIES)

Ask your students to create a legend based on the fur trade era. As an example of a legend you can use the legend on the next page, *La chasse-galerie*, a legend about a flying canoe. You can also explore a few First Nations and Inuit legends. Invite your students to a discussion about legends. Do other cultures have legends? What role do legends play in a culture? What is transmitted through these legends?

WRITING PROJECT – TRAVELLING 300 YEARS AGO

Ask the students to write a fictitious text in which they travel in a canoe and camp in the wild, 300 years ago! Encourage students to make correlations between the realities of travelling (modes of transportation, shelter, food, and challenges, etc.) then and now.

WRITING PROJECT – POEM

Students can write a poem relevant to any aspect of the fur trade era such as the beaver, *les voyageurs*, the rivers, sashes, etc. Suggestion: Use a minimum amount of words (or any amount you would like) from the vocabulary list.

WRITING/DRAWING PROJECT – CLASS MURAL

Encourage your students to create a class mural made up of drawings and texts based on their knowledge of beavers, the fur trade, *les voyageurs*, the North West Company, etc.

WRITING PROJECT – FESTIVAL DU VOYAGEUR

Ask the students to ask questions and research facts about *le Festival du Voyageur*. Where is it held? How long does it last? How has the festival evolved since its' onset?

OTHER THEMES TO EXPLORE

Maple syrup, First Nations people, Inuit people, Métis people, the first European settlers in Manitoba, the Red River settlement, etc.



THE LEGEND OF THE *CHASSE-GALERIE*

Well friends, it's time to talk about "*Chasse-galerie*". It is a legend that may not have used up much ink and paper throughout the years, but it sure did use up a lot of saliva in the mouths of the story tellers that spoke of it.

It may be that in the bright glow of a full moon we no longer see the silhouette of those infamous flying canoes. However, there was an era when, from time to time, some people witnessed a canoe flying in the night sky. This story, my friends, begins in a *voyageur* camp in the great North West. One crisp autumn night, like so many others, a group of *voyageurs* sat around a campfire, longing for their families and pining over their girlfriends. Autumn nights were cold, harsh and uneventful. Life was quite different then. There were no roads or highways that crossed the forest and plains between the East and the North West. *Les engagés* would make the trek from Lachine to Fort Gibraltar before the rivers and lakes froze over and would not return home until spring, when the ice had melted away.

One of these cold and uneventful nights, *un voyageur* named *Baptise Beaudry* said to the others:

"We'd be well tonight boys! We'd be dancin' and singin' at home. There's probably a celebration at Father Bourret's. Ah, if only I could be with my sweetheart...I would tell her some stories...Swing her around the dance floor."

One of the men sitting around the fire was the cook, Gabriel Lapine. He usually sat there listening attentively, never saying a word. You must understand that Gabriel didn't only make bannock and pea soup. He also paddled with the others on their long trips and was suspected of dabbling in black magic. All of a sudden Gabriel spoke up:

"It's real simple boys, we'll call upon the "Chasse-galerie."

"What!?!?" They replied. "Risk losing our souls to fly through the air in a canoe!?!?"



“Oui, oui,” he answered. “We’ll get there before midnight. We just have to follow three rules. During the trip, alcohol can’t touch our lips, we can’t curse and we have to get back to camp before sunrise, or else the devil will come take our souls.”

“Sounds good,” said Baptiste. “Making a deal with the devil is a small price to pay to see my sweetheart. I would do anything to see her, especially when I’m two months from home. Hurry up les boys! Everyone in the canoe, take off your scapulars. We’re an even number, that’s what we need!”

It was cold and the wind was picking up, but they listened to Baptiste. Gabriel, the cook, sat at the helm, at the rear of the canoe and asked them all to say the magic words:

“Acabri, Acabra, Acabram! Magic canoe; make us travel over lakes and mountains.”

And the canoe flew, flew like the wind, faster than a plane. It flew over the black forests and the glowing lakes. The oars looked like witches’ brooms brushing away the star dust. In the distance they could see small lights, getting closer and closer with each passing second. The party would be grand tonight. And then, just like that, they arrived at Father Bourret’s, just in time for the festivities. All night, Beaufouet was dancing with his beloved, the cook was playing the spoons and Baptiste was telling stories. They were partying like sin and as the night went on, they paid less and less attention to the time.

Finally, it dawned on Beaufouet that sunrise was imminent. They all rushed out of the house and stumbled in the canoe to hurry back to camp.

“Acabri, Acabra, Acabram! Magic canoe; make us travel over lakes and mountains.”

And the canoe once again flew like the wind. Some of *les voyageurs* had brought back some *Caribou* and had trouble getting back into the canoe. Baptiste was tied to the boat and his



mouth was covered to stop him from cursing. As fear slowly set in, the canoe started zigzagging and jerking about in the sky. Baptiste got his mouth free of his gag and let out a curse:

“Holy crooked devil’s horns drowned in holy water! We better make it back quick!”

At that moment, the canoe rammed into a white spruce and *les voyageurs* tumbled down the tree like a partridge into the powdered snow. The snow banks welcomed them like fluffy mattresses. Luckily, they were not far from camp and made the rest of the trip on foot. Many of them had cuts, sprains, scratches, but somehow there were no broken bones. Despite having broken all the rules, they had managed to evade the devil...this time. Once at camp they promised each other they would never again call on the *Chasse-galerie*.

They must have stayed true to their word because nowadays we never hear of people claiming they’ve spotted a flying canoe in the crisp autumn nights. Maybe one day, someone will once again tell a story of how they saw a canoe flying in the moonlight, above the great lakes, too bad for those of you who don’t believe my story, because this is where it ends.



VOCABULARY LIST

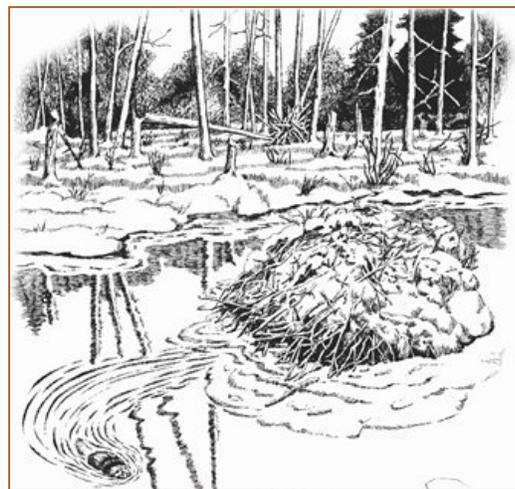
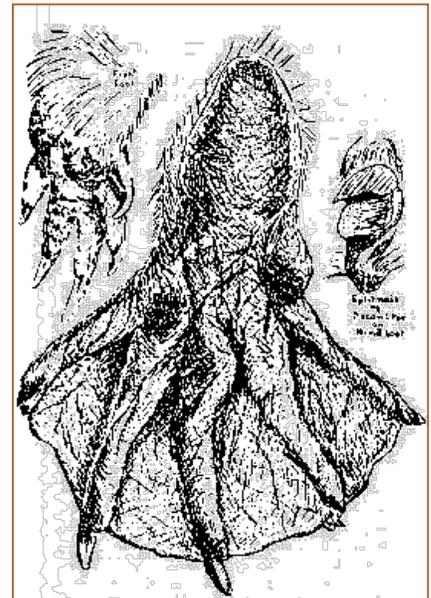
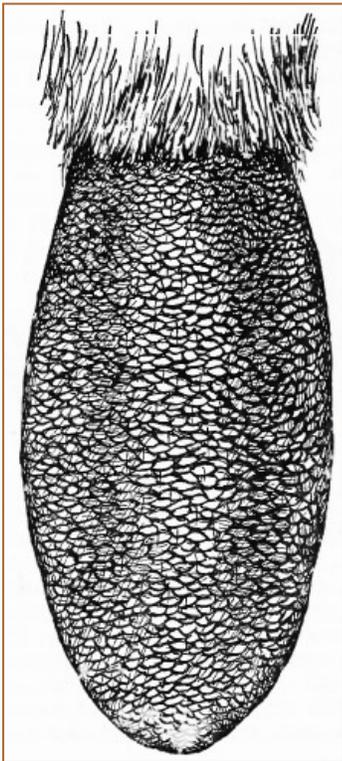
<i>An arrow</i>	<i>A gun</i>	<i>A ration</i>
<i>An axe</i>	<i>A hooded capot</i>	<i>A relay</i>
<i>A bale</i>	<i>The Hudson's Bay Company</i>	<i>A rope</i>
<i>Bannock</i>		<i>A sash</i>
<i>A beard</i>	<i>A jig</i>	<i>A shirt</i>
<i>A beaver</i>	<i>Lard</i>	<i>A sleigh</i>
<i>A birch tree</i>	<i>Leggings</i>	<i>Snow</i>
<i>A bison</i>	<i>A man of the north</i>	<i>Snowshoes</i>
<i>A bow</i>	<i>The Métis</i>	<i>A snowstorm</i>
<i>A Bowman</i>	<i>A mosquito</i>	<i>A spoon</i>
<i>A canoe</i>	<i>A moustache</i>	<i>A tail</i>
<i>A colony</i>	<i>A needle</i>	<i>A toque</i>
<i>A cooking pot</i>	<i>The North West Company</i>	<i>A voyageur</i>
<i>Dancing</i>		<i>Waterfalls</i>
<i>A dog</i>	<i>A pair of moccasins</i>	<i>A winterer</i>
<i>A felt capot</i>	<i>Pemmican</i>	<i>A wolf</i>
<i>A fiddle</i>	<i>Pelts</i>	<i>Un ballot</i>
<i>A fire</i>	<i>A pine tree</i>	<i>Une ceinture fléchée</i>
<i>A fort</i>	<i>A pipe</i>	<i>Un engagé</i>
<i>A fox</i>	<i>Pork eaters</i>	<i>Une fourrure</i>
<i>A fur</i>	<i>A portage</i>	<i>Un sac-à-feu</i>
<i>A fur bonnet</i>		



SCIENCES – PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH PROJECT – THE BEAVER

As a fun project, students could read and study books about the beaver and its importance during the fur trade era. You can then get the students to write a little text or draw a comic strip about the beaver and the fur trade. You can ask the students to explore different aspects of the beaver and its' lifestyle. Aspects to explore: What is the average weight of a male and female beaver? How, why and where did they built their dams? Who are their predators? How long can a beaver stay under water? What does the beaver eat? Since when has the beaver been on the Canadian nickel? As another fun activity you could ask the students to form small groups and try to recreate a mini beaver hut.



PROJECT – ANIMALS OF THE FUR TRADE

You can have the students translate these French words for specific animals to find out which animals were hunted for their furs during the fur trade era. Students can research on one or more of these animals, studying their habitat, their diet, their sleeping habits, their young, etc. Which ones were the most hunted for their furs? Why? Which came close to extinction? Are any extinct? You can also ask the students to complete a project about one of the animals.

Le castor/<i>beaver</i>	L'ours/<i>bear</i>	Le rat musqué/<i>muskrat</i>
La martre/<i>martin</i>	Le caribou/<i>caribou</i>	Le lynx/<i>lynx</i>
Le vison/<i>mink</i>	Le bison/<i>bison</i>	Le coyote/<i>coyote</i>
Le blaireau/<i>badger</i>	La loutre/<i>otter</i>	Le raton laveur/<i>racoon</i>
L'hermine/<i>hermine</i>	Le renard/<i>wolf</i>	La mouffette/<i>skunk</i>
Le loup gris/<i>Gray wolf</i>	Le pékan/<i>fisher</i>	L'orignal/<i>moose</i>
Le carcajou/<i>wolverine</i>	Le lièvre/<i>rabbit</i>	Le chevreuil/<i>deer</i>



How were these plants used by the First Nations people?



WHITE PINE – *Le pin blanc*

ECHINACEA – *L'échinacée*



[Click here](#) for information on these and other medicinal plants





EVENING PRIMROSE – *l'onagre*

GINSENG – *Le ginseng à cinq folioles*



[Click here](#) for information on these and other medicinal plants



PROJECT – MEDICINAL PLANTS

Invite students to research native medicinal plants used by the First Nations people to treat wounds, discomforts and physical ailments. On the two previous pages, you can find four medicinal plants native to Manitoba. What are their medicinal properties? What ailments can they treat? What are the sizes, habitats, flowers and fruits of these plants? What are the differences between their uses then and their uses now?

ACTIVITY – INDIGENOUS PLANTS OF MANITOBA

Identify some plants indigenous to Manitoba, and/or Canada. You can go on an excursion in the neighborhood or in a park to find some plants. You can then ask the students to answer some questions. Are they weeds? Are they useful to us or to other creatures? Are dandelions and wild plantain native to Canada? They can then write a few texts or draw some flowers/plants that they see, etc.

PROJECT – MAPLE SYRUP

Discuss where maple syrup comes from and encourage students to ask questions regarding the process used to make syrup in the 1800s, and the process used today. In which provinces and states do we find the best producing trees? Do maple trees in Manitoba produce maple water to make syrup? Which Franco-Manitoban community is known for making maple syrup? Are there any other trees from which sap can be drawn to make syrup?

**MURAL PROJECT**

Ask students to make a mural with pictures and texts that explore one or more aspects of the fur trade era, such as: the beaver, the fur trade, other animals and furs, *le Festival du Voyageur*, etc.



MATHEMATICS

EXERCICES – Easy

Pattern: Using wooden or plastic coloured beads (red, white, blue), create patterns and duplication of the patterns. Ask students to identify the different pattern. Ask them to reproduce your pattern and to create their own using 3 or more elements (add another coloured bead).

Example:

2 red beads

3 blue beads

1 white bead

and continue with...

2 red beads

3 blue beads

1 white bead...etc...

Pattern: Students can create patterns by using recycled plastic bottle caps (washed). Students can team up into pairs, each identifying the pattern that her/his partner has created.

Pattern: Create patterns using different coloured shapes and coloured items. Try to trick your partner by omitting a bead and see if she/he can spot the so called 'error' in the pattern. Will they find it?

EXERCICES – Moderate difficulty

Pieces of Pemmican for Lunch

Jean-Yvon has 6 pieces of pemmican. He has eaten 2 pieces before lunch. Théophile has 5 pieces and he has eaten 3 of his pieces before lunch. How many pieces are left for each of them? How many are left in total for lunch?

Find the weight of the fur bundle

If a fur bale is to weigh 60 kg, what must be added to the following equation?

$$(3 \times 10 \text{ kg}) + (2 \times 5 \text{ kg}) + (2 \times \underline{\quad} \text{ kg}) = 60 \text{ kg}$$

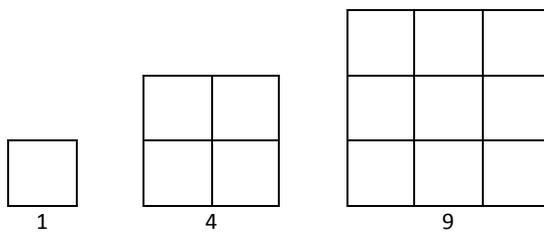
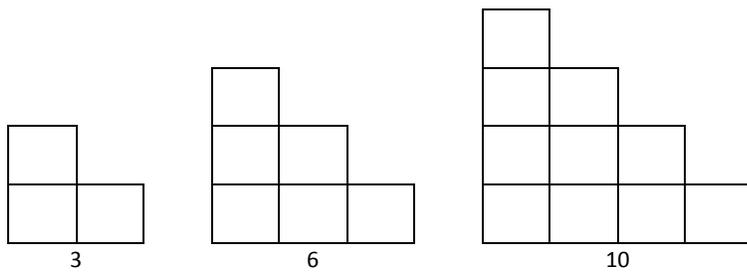
Other: Make up your own mathematical problems (easy to difficult) using beaver pelts.



HOW MANY FUR BALES ARE IN STORAGE?

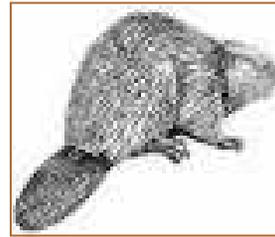
PROGRESSIONS

What will be the next progression in the following diagrams?



THE VALUE OF BEAVER PELTS IN 1784

During the fur trade era people used a different trading systems than we use today. Today, most things can be exchanged for money, which in turn can be used to buy almost anything. However, during the fur trade era a type of bartering system utilized the beaver pelt as the base unit. This meant the value of objects was calculated in beaver pelts. Therefore the beaver pelt was today's dollar.



EXAMPLES OF THE FUR TRADE ERA BARTER SYSTEM

YOU COULD TRADE ONE BEAVER PELT FOR THE FOLLOWING PELTS:

10 muskrat pelts	3 doe pelts	1 small bear pelt
5 raccoon pelts	2 deer pelts	1 lynx pelt
4 marten pelts	2 mink pelts	
3 red fox pelts	2 wild cat pelts	

YOU COULD TRADE 2 BEAVER PELTS FOR THE FOLLOWING PELTS:

1 black bear pelt	1 otter pelt
1 moose pelt	1 bison pelt



TRADE PELTS FOR GOODS

TRADE 1 BEAVER PELT FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

24 sewing needles
20 fish hooks
20 flints
12 dozen buttons

9 arrowheads
4 lead pieces
3 large knives
2 ceintures fléchées

2 pounds of sugar*
1 pound of tobacco
1 gallon of brandy**

TRADE 2 BEAVER PELTS FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

6 silver earrings
6 feet of calico tissue***
3 pounds of gun powder

1 bracelet
1 shirt

MORE EXPENSIVE GOODS:

3 beaver pelts = 1 large blanket or 15 small knives
4 beaver pelts = 3 lbs of coloured beads or 1 pistol
12 beaver pelts = 1 musket

*1 pound = 454 grams

**1 gallon = 4.5 litres

***1 foot = 30 centimeters



BEAVER PELT PROBLEMS – EASY

TO BE USED WITH THE VALUE OF BEAVER PELTS IN 1784.

1. What pelts would you need to bring to the Trading Post to get:

One frying pan?

Deux ceintures fléchées?

One large blanket?

One bracelet?

One shirt and 3 lbs of coloured beads?

One musket, four lead pieces, and 3 lbs of gunpowder?



BONUS: What pelts could you trade for a shirt, three feet of calico, six dozen buttons and one razor?

2. How many otter pelts would get you a plaid shirt?
3. Gaston is going to the Trading Post with six beaver pelts. How many feet of calico could he get?
4. John needs a pistol and 20 fish hooks. How many lynx must he catch in order to get them?
5. Charles grows 8 lbs of tobacco to trade. How many beaver pelts could he get for it?
6. If a trader has received beaver pelts for 12 sewing needles, a plaid shirt, a large blanket and one nice hat, how many beaver pelts did he get?



BEAVER PELT PROBLEMS – DIFFICULT

TO BE USED WITH THE VALUE OF BEAVER PELTS IN 1784.

1. You need six lbs of gunpowder and one large knife. What furs should you bring to the Trading Post?
2. Émile has caught a black bear, two otters, two deer, a lynx and five muskrats. What else must he catch before he can trade for a musket?
3. Dakota needs 3 lbs of beads to make jewelry to sell. How many muskrat pelts must he cure before he can get his beads?
4. Pierre needs a large blanket for his next hunting trip. He has two wildcat pelts, two marten pelts, a mink pelt and a small bear pelt. Does he have enough pelts for the blanket?
5. Benoit is going to the Trading Post with five raccoon pelts, one mink pelt, two marten pelts, two lynx pelts and a moose pelt. What could he get for them?
6. A trader has just bought 40 gallons of brandy from England. How many beaver pelts could he get for the whole shipment?

How many moose pelts?

How many muskrat pelts?

7. This morning a trader received some beaver pelts in exchange for two gallons of brandy, 12 lbs of beads, eight razors, and one large blanket. Later that day he traded some of the pelts from the morning for a new musket and fifteen small knives. How many beaver pelts does he have left?



BEAVER PELT PROBLEMS – ANSWERS

BEAVER PELT PROBLEMS – EASY

1. Answers are given in beaver pelts. However, equivalencies in other pelts are encouraged.

1 beaver pelt

1 beaver pelt

3 beaver pelts

2 beaver pelts

6 beaver pelts

15 beaver pelts

Bonus: 4 beaver pelts

2. 1 otter pelt

3. 18 ft (5.4 meters) of calico

4. 5 lynx

5. 8 beaver pelts

6. The trader received $9 \frac{1}{2}$ pelts.



BEAVER PELT PROBLEMS – DIFFICULT

1. Answers will vary, though they must equal $4 \frac{1}{3}$ beaver pelts (e.g. 4 beaver pelts and 1 doe pelt or 4 beaver pelts and 1 red fox pelt).

2. Answers will vary, but must equal $3 \frac{1}{2}$ beaver pelts. (e.g. 3 lynx pelts and 2 marten pelts).

3. Dakota must cure 40 muskrat pelts.

4. Yes.

5. Answers will vary, but must equal 6 beaver pelts. Examples include 1 nice hat and six earrings, or 18ft (5.5 meters) of calico.

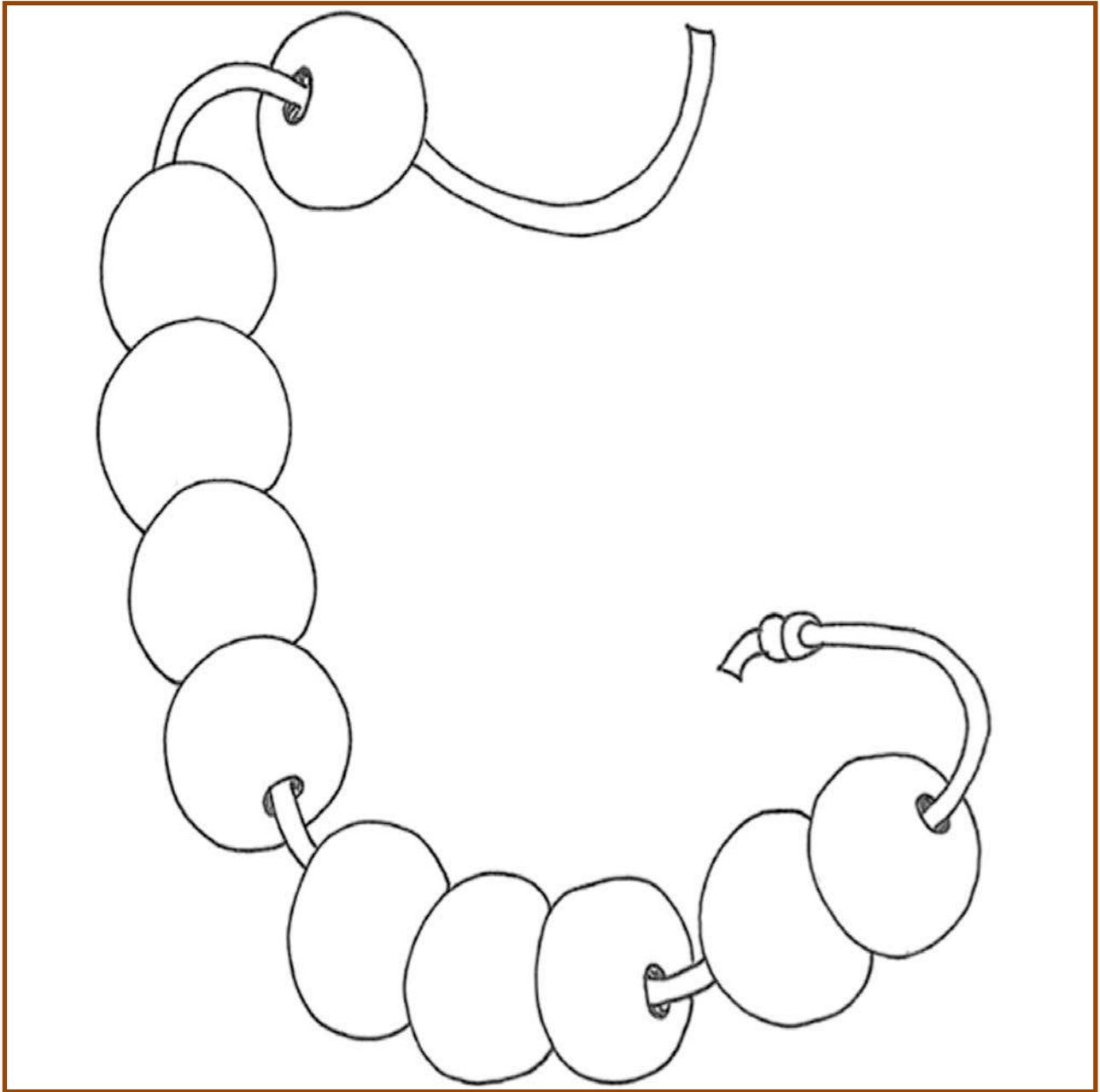
6. 40 beaver pelts, 20 moose pelts or 400 muskrat pelts.

7. The trader has 10 beaver pelts left.



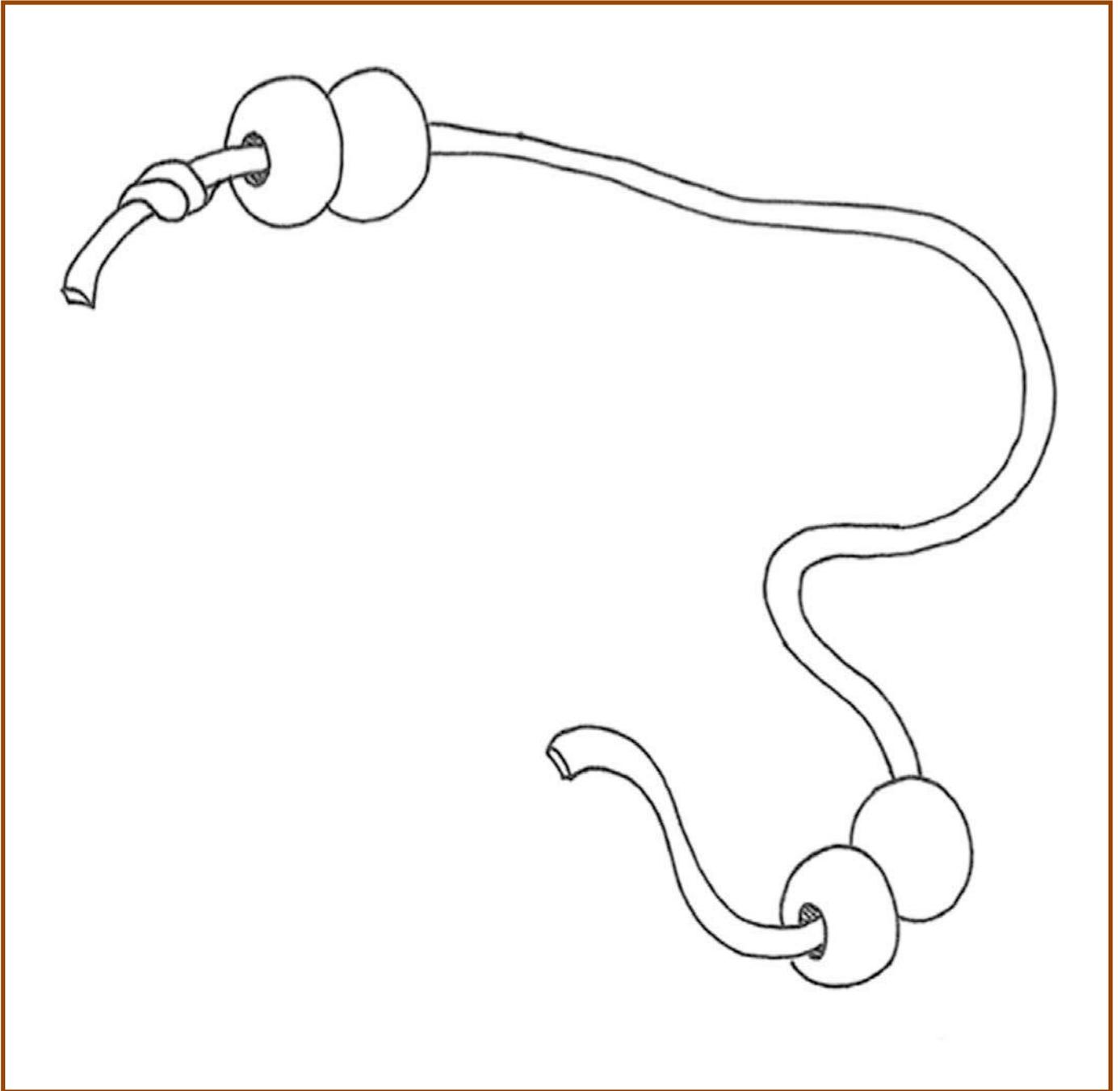
CREATING SEQUENCES

COLOUR THE BEADS TO CREATE SEQUENCES.



CREATING SEQUENCES

DRAW DIFFERENT SHAPED BEADS TO CREATE A SEQUENCE OF YOUR OWN.



LA CHANSON DU VOYAGEUR

SUNG ON THE MELODY OF THE TRADITIONAL FRENCH SONG 'CHEVALIER DE LA TABLE RONDE'

LYRICS/PAROLLES: GÉRALD LAVOIE (DANIEL LAVOIE)

HARMONY/HARMONIE: MARCIEN FERLAND

Voyageur! Va faire tes bagages
C'est à l'aube que nous partirons.
C'est à l'aube oui, oui, oui
C'est à l'aube non, non, non
C'est à l'aube que nous partirons.

Pour dormir, le nez aux étoiles
Au berceau des quatre saisons.
Au berceau oui, oui, oui
Au berceau non, non, non
Au berceau des quatre saisons.

Down the river you can hear a wind song
Bearing tales of the voyageurs.
Bearing tales oui, oui, oui
Bearing tales non, non, non
Bearing tales of the voyageurs.

Mighty men taming mighty country
For a man they will never see.
For a man oui, oui, oui
For a man non, non, non
For a man they will never see.

Nous navigu'rons toutes les rivières
Pour y voir les nouveaux pays.
Pour y voir oui, oui, oui
Pour y voir non, non, non
Pour y voir les nouveaux pays.

Du sapin, de l'odeur du cuir (sic)
Nous pourrons y fair' nos chansons.
Nous pourrons oui, oui, oui
Nous pourrons non, non, non
Nous pourrons y fair' nos chansons.

Tales of lakes and of rushing rivers
From a land we have never seen.
From a land oui, oui, oui
From a land non, non, non
From a land we have never seen.

Now they're gone to a new adventure
While the wind hums a joyous song.
While the wind oui, oui, oui
While the wind non, non, non
While the wind hums a joyous song



VIVE LA COMPAGNIE

(TRADITIONAL)

J'SUIS DESCENDU DANS MON JARDIN,
VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !
C'ÉTAIT POUR CUEILLIR DU RAISIN,
VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !

REFRAIN

Ô VIVE, Ô VIVE, Ô VIVE LA VIE,
Ô VIVE, Ô VIVE, Ô VIVE L'AMOUR,
VIVE LA VIE, VIVE L'AMOUR,
VIVE LA COMPAGNI'.

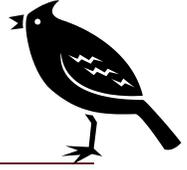
JE N'EN AVAIS PAS CUEILLI TROIS GRAINS, ... VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !
QU'UN ROSSIGNOL VINT SUR MA MAIN, ... VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !

IL ME DIT TROIS MOTS EN LATIN, ... VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !
ET CES TROIS MOTS, J'LES COMPRIS BIEN, ... VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !

QUE LES VIELLES FILLES NE VALENT RIEN, ... VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !
LES VIEUX GARÇONS ENCORE BIEN MOINS, ... VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !

LES GENS MARIÉS, ON N'EN PARLE POINT. VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !
ILS ONT TOUJOURS LE VERRE À LA MAIN ! VIVE LA COMPAGNI' !





ALOUETTE

(TRADITIONAL)

REFRAIN

**ALOUETTE, GENTILL' ALOUETTTE,
ALOUETTE, JE TE PLUMERAI.**

JE T'Y PLUMERAI LA TÊTE, (L'ENSEIGNANT OU UN PETIT GROUPE D'ÉLÈVES)
JE T'Y PLUMERAI LA TÊTE, (UN DEUXIÈME GROUPE D'ÉLÈVES QUI RÉPÈTE)
ET LA TÊTE,
ET LA TÊTE,
ALOUETTE !
ALOUETTE, AAAH !

AU REFRAIN

JE T'Y PLUMERAI LE BEC,
JE T'Y PLUMERAI LE BEC.
ET LE BEC,
ET LE BEC.
ET LA TÊTE,
ET LA TÊTE,
ALOUETTE !
ALOUETTE, AAAH !

AU REFRAIN

LA CHANSON CONTINUE AVEC :

*ET LE NEZ..., ET LE DOS..., ET LES JAMBES...,
ET LE COU... ET LES YEUX... ETC...*

[Click here](#) for other good song ideas.



BANNOCK RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

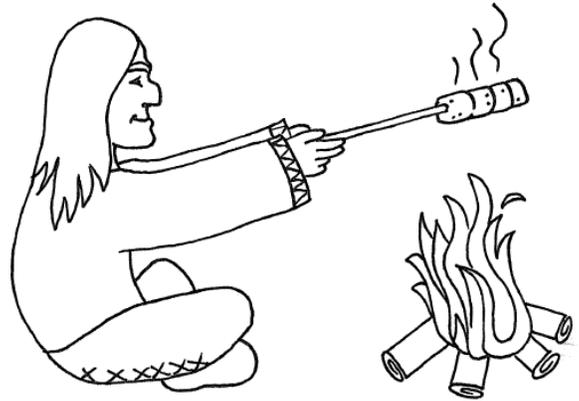
3 cups of flour

1 ½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

¼ cup of fat (shortening or butter)

1 ¼ cup warm water



STEPS

- Mix all dry ingredients together.
- Make a hole in the middle and add fat.
- Pour water on top of the fat.
- Blend mixture together with your hands (make sure to wash your hands first!)
- Divide the dough into two balls.
- Flatten each ball into 1 cm thickness.
- Punch holes in both with a fork.
- Cook in well-greased frying pan for 20 minutes.

[Click here](#) for other great recipe ideas.



WWW ACTIVITY SHEET

WHAT DO I KNOW?	WHAT DO I WANT TO KNOW?	WHAT DID I LEARN?



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NORTH AMERICAN HISTORY – [Champlain Society website](#)

SOCIAL STUDIES – [Canadian Museum of Civilization website](#)

HISTORICAL ARCHIVES – [Digital collection of 101 Champlain Society volumes](#)
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IMAGE – [A picture of an origami beaver](#)



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