

VOYAGEUR LIFE

LESSON PLAN



WOLF RIDGESM
ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER



CLASS DESCRIPTION: A Human Culture & History Class

Students will be assigned roles and become characters in an imaginary North West Company brigade in the year 1793. They will portage and paddle along Wolf Lake and set up an encampment. There they will learn some of the skills of the colorful voyageur, such as making gallette (fry bread) and tea, flint and steel fires, shaving a tent stake and practicing voyageur games. Upon returning, they will learn their own futures, along with the role of the fur trade in the exploration and settlement of Minnesota.

Total time: 3 hours (2 1/2 hours outdoors)

Audience: 6-20 students, 4th grade through adult

Activity level: strenuous

Travel: 1 1/2 mile

Total uphill travel: 250 feet

GUIDING QUESTION

What would it be like as a voyageur, and what was their role in the local fur trade?

CONCEPTS

1. The environment influences human actions; and humans both adapt to, and change, the environment.
2. Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.
3. The Fur Trade spanned 200 years in this area (1660-1840's) and involved Native Americans, high-class gentlemen, middle-class businessmen, and lower-class voyageurs.
4. Different cultures hold varying beliefs on environmental issues.
5. The meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources changes over time.

OUTCOMES

Upon completion of Voyageur Life students will be able to:

1. Describe the role of voyageurs, gentlemen, and Native Americans during the fur trade era.
2. Demonstrate paddling and portaging, singing and joking, feasting and fighting.
3. Demonstrate the fire-starting technique using flint and steel.
4. Use a drawknife to fashion wood into a tent stake.
5. Evaluate and choose aspects of their preferred role in the fur trade era (voyageur, gentlemen, and Native American).



Our mission is to develop a citizenry that has the knowledge, skills, motivation and commitment to act together for a quality environment.

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Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and the USDA are equal opportunity providers and employers.



Equipment

Equipment that is carried back and forth from the classroom to the Voyageur site

(Inventory and refill items before and after each class.)

Food

- water (8 canteens)
- raspberry leaves (1 cup)
- can of Crisco
- jug of maple syrup
- flour (4-5 cups)
- soap and scrubbie
- fire glove
- matches

Fire Making Bag

- 4 flints and steels
- scissors & jute
- unburned charcloth & container
- burned charcloth & container
- birch bark tinder
- 4 safety goggles (Dr. McLaughlin's bag)

Misc. Items

- NW Co. flag
- Jacques's pouch (brigade list, quote)
- unsharpened tent stake (south stairway)
- costumes and name tags
- first aid kit

Equipment that remains in the classroom

- beaver trap
- beaver pelt
- trade goods: tin cups, blanket, beads, musket, axe head, tobacco, etc.
- wooden paddle
- voyageur song CD & player
- high wine kegs (3)
- 90 lb. fur bales (12)
- posters: NWC coat-of-arms, Canoe Cargo Sketch, & Voyageur paintings
- rifle and powderhorn display
- top hat display
- pipe display

Equipment that remains at the encampment

- Alexander Mackenzie's tent (10'x10')
- assorted kettles, tea pot, frying pan
- spatula, stirring spoons, tongs
- 22 cups
- shaving bench, drawknife
- fire tripod with hooks and chains, fire grate

Appendices

- Glossary
- Additional Information
- Optional Activities
- References
- Sources
- Class Sheets
- Spiral Learning Sheet
- Planning Outline

Set-up (15 min.)

- Classroom/class prep description
- Safety Management

I. What are key roles in the NWC Brigade? (30 min.)

- A. Assign Roles
- B. Brigade Overview
 1. Fur Trade Companies
 2. The Participants

II. How did Voyageurs travel? (30 min.)

III. What would it be like as a Voyageur? (75 min.)

- A. Flint and Steel Fire Starting
- B. Galette and Raspberry Tea
- C. Shaving Tent Stakes
- D. Games
- E. Snack and Clean up

IV. How were Voyageurs involved in the Fur Trade? (45 min.)

- A. Paddle, Portage, and Perspectives
- B. Historical Inquiry

Clean-up (15 min.)