



TEACHING UNIT

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| General Topic: | The Economy: The Basics – and Key Issues |
| Unit Title: | Resources and Production |
| Grade Level: | Grade 6 |
| Recommended Curriculum Area: | Social Studies |
| Other Relevant Curriculum Area(s): | Language Arts |



The Building Futures Project is sponsored across Canada by Investors Group. CFEF extends our appreciation to Investors Group for their generous support.

Social Studies Curriculum Expectations

- describe characteristics of pre-Contact First Nation cultures across Canada, including their close relationships with the natural environment, the motivations and attitudes of the European explorers, and, the effects of contact on both the receiving and the incoming groups;
- use a variety of resources and tools to investigate different historical points of view about the positive and negative effects of early contact between First Nation peoples and European explorers;
- analyse examples of interaction between First Nation peoples and European explorers to identify and report on the effects of cooperation and the reasons for disagreements between the two groups.

Related Language Arts Curriculum Expectations

Listening

- 1.3 – identify a variety of listening comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after listening in order to understand and clarify the meaning of increasingly complex oral texts (e.g., use self-questioning to monitor understanding; visualize)

Speaking

- 1.2 – generate ideas about a potential topic and identify those most appropriate for the purpose
- 1.4 – demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in increasingly complex oral texts in a variety of ways
- 1.5 – interpret oral texts by using stated and implied ideas from the texts
- 2.2 – demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour in a variety of situations, including paired sharing, dialogue, and small- and large-group discussions
- 2.3 – communicate orally in a clear, coherent manner, using appropriate organizing strategies and formats to link and sequence ideas and information

Relevant Economic Expectations

The role of an economy is to use available resources to produce and distribute products and services needed and wanted by consumers –

- Features of Canada’s early economy
- Difference between needs and wants
- Specialization helps societies produce more and better things
- Businesses that produce well, and what consumers will buy, can make a profit and succeed
- Identify key resources used in Canada and their community
- Describe how resources in their community are used to produce products and services

Background Information

Students need a basic understanding of how an economy works. By learning about the features of Canada's early economy, students will see how resources were used to supply the basic needs of the First Peoples, European traders and settlers.

First Peoples could use the resources from their surroundings to provide food, shelter and clothing. As the French and English settled in the New World, the needs and wants of the First Peoples changed. They had access to resources, (beaver pelts) which could now be used to trade for other supplies that they wanted. The women wanted pots, silverware, blankets, shoes, etc. to make their lives easier. The men wanted guns, ammunition and tools so that they could hunt and work more efficiently. Students should appreciate the interactions of the French and English, and the difficulties that they had. Students need to understand the daily life and challenges faced by various groups involved in the fur trade (e.g., the Coureurs de Bois, (the French traders), and the trappers). The students will learn how supply and demand makes an economy work. This also leads to interdependence among people and communities.

The Coureurs de Bois started establishing trading posts. The demand, in Europe, for beaver pelts (to make the very fashionable beaver hats) created an opportunity for trade. There was no currency, so the beaver pelt became the first "money" to be used in Canada.

During the discussions the students may empathize with the First Peoples because of the struggles they endured to survive. They will appreciate how perseverance was needed in order to survive. Students will understand how cooperation contributes to successful business practices.

Overview of the Unit

Students will learn about the fur trade and the features of the early economy in Canada. They will be asked to put a "monetary" value on various products. In groups, they will have the opportunity to try bartering at a trading post. A game called "Escape from Barter Island" may be played as a follow-up activity.

The First Peoples had access to many beaver pelts, so they needed to exchange them for other products. They will define and discuss the meanings of PRODUCTS, SERVICES and RESOURCES. Students will research Canada's resources and describe resources in their community and how they are used to produce products and services. By trading resources and products, the students will be able to see that specialization leads to the need for exchange. Students will experience what makes a business successful by playing a game about running a business on the computer.

Estimated Time Frame: 6 periods – 40 minutes each

Suggested Implementation Strategy

Period 1 – 40 minutes INTRODUCING THE FUR TRADE

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Hand out a picture of the beaver hats to each group. (handout 1)
- Ask the question: Who would want to buy a hat like this?
- After a brief discussion about the hats, tell the students that they will be reading about how, where, and why these hats became popular.
- Hand out the text entitled "The Fur Trade" (handout 2)

- Use a guided reading approach to read and discuss the text. In small groups, assign the task of thinking about what products the First Peoples might want to trade for, and how much they think these items would cost in beaver pelts.
- On large paper the groups will complete the following T-chart:

| Items purchased | Number of beaver pelts |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| | |

The teacher should give an example:
e.g. one blanket 5 beaver pelts

Period 2 – 40 minutes THE TRADING POST

To introduce the idea of a trading post, if available, use a computer to show the short Canada Vignettes – Trading Post on YouTube. This is the link to the website. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5wiXTGY6Lc>

- Make a place in the room to look like a trading post; this could be done as a previous art lesson. The teacher may opt to dress like a Coureurs de Bois and play some French music in the background for ambience.
- The T-charts made in period one will be put up on the wall in the trading post as the price lists.
- The teacher will act as the owner of the trading post. The groups of students will pretend to be a First Nations People. First, they decide on how many pelts to trade and what they want to buy in exchange for their pelts. Then each group will come up to the trading post to trade their pelts for goods.
- The teacher will conduct trades, purposely asking for too many beaver pelts, enticing the students to barter with them.
- Sometimes the teacher will tell the buyer that she or he can't trade because they have run out of a particular item.
- After this activity, the students will be asked to discuss and reflect on some of the problems that arose during the trading session. If the responses desired do not arise, the teacher will guide them by asking questions like:
 - How did you feel when the owner asked for too many pelts?
 - How could the trading post owner avoid running out of items?
 - What do you think would happen to the cost of an item if the demand for it rose?
 - Do you think the trader has created a successful business?
 - Would you go there again? Why?

Period 3 – 40 minutes NEEDS VERSUS WANTS

- The teacher will ask each student to brainstorm items that they have purchased at a store recently. (e.g., milk, shampoo, shoes, a video game, a chocolate bar, etc.) and write these ideas on paper.
- From this list, the class will make a chart organizing these items into 2 categories – NEEDS and WANTS.

CANADA’S RESOURCES, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES — VOCABULARY STUDY

- The teacher will write on the board the words RESOURCES, PRODUCTS, and SERVICES.
- The class will, individually, use a dictionary or a computer to find and write a definition for each word. Or, if necessary, this will be assigned as homework.

Period 4 – 40 minutes

- Start the class by taking up the assignment from period 3, and making sure the class understands the meaning of RESOURCES, PRODUCTS, and SERVICES.
- In small groups, the students will use computers or the library to research and make a list of the resources in Canada.
- Three websites that can be used to access Canada’s Resources are:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Canada
<http://www.ask.com/web?q=Canadian+Natural+Resources&qsrc=6&o=15732&l=dir>
<http://www.neok12.com/Natural-Resources.htm>

Period 5 – 40 minutes

- In groups, the students will look at their research on Canada’s Resources and be creative, making a mind map showing how these resources might be used in their community. (e.g., oil is used to produce gasoline for cars, wood is used to produce lumber for building houses, wheat is used to make bread for hamburger buns.)
- Share the mind maps with each other.

Period 6 – 40 minutes

- Using a computer lab, the students play a game called “Be Your Own Boss.” Kids get a chance to choose a business to start, and see how well they can make it grow. It teaches them about making business decisions (e.g., getting supplies, funding, etc.). <http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/games/boss/>

Possible Evaluation Activities

- The T-charts, brainstorming and mind maps could be assessed.
- An anecdotal record could be kept during the group discussions.
- The researched lists of Canadian resources could be marked.
- Students could be given a group evaluation to complete.
- Students may be asked to write a reflective paragraph about what they learned.

Additional Follow-Up Activities

1. Play the game “Escape from Barter Islands” at: http://www.clevelandfed.org/learning_center/online_activities/barter_island/ sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.
2. Learn more about the Fur Trade/Champlain’s Order of Good Cheer at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/settlement/kids/021013-2051.1-e.html>
3. Students visit the following website that offers 13 games to use to teach kids about fair trade. <http://teach.ewb.ca/resources/fairtradegames>
4. Research a business or service in the community and write a paragraph about why you think it is successful.
5. Design a poster for a business in the community.
6. Write a dialogue that might occur between the trading post owner and a customer.
7. Make a journal entry entitled “A Day in the Life of a Fur Trader.”
8. Read a non-fiction book that relates to the Fur Trade. Possible books are:
 - *The Fur Trade in Canada; an Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, University of Toronto Press, 1930
 - *Making the Voyageur World; Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade*, University of Toronto Press, 2006
 - *Winner Take All; the Trans-Canada Canoe Trail*, McGraw Hill, 1977
9. The teacher may do a read-aloud of a novel or story, such as:
 - *Life in the Early West*, by Mike Moore
 - *The Rocky Mountain Album – A Fur Trade Sampler*, by Mike Moore

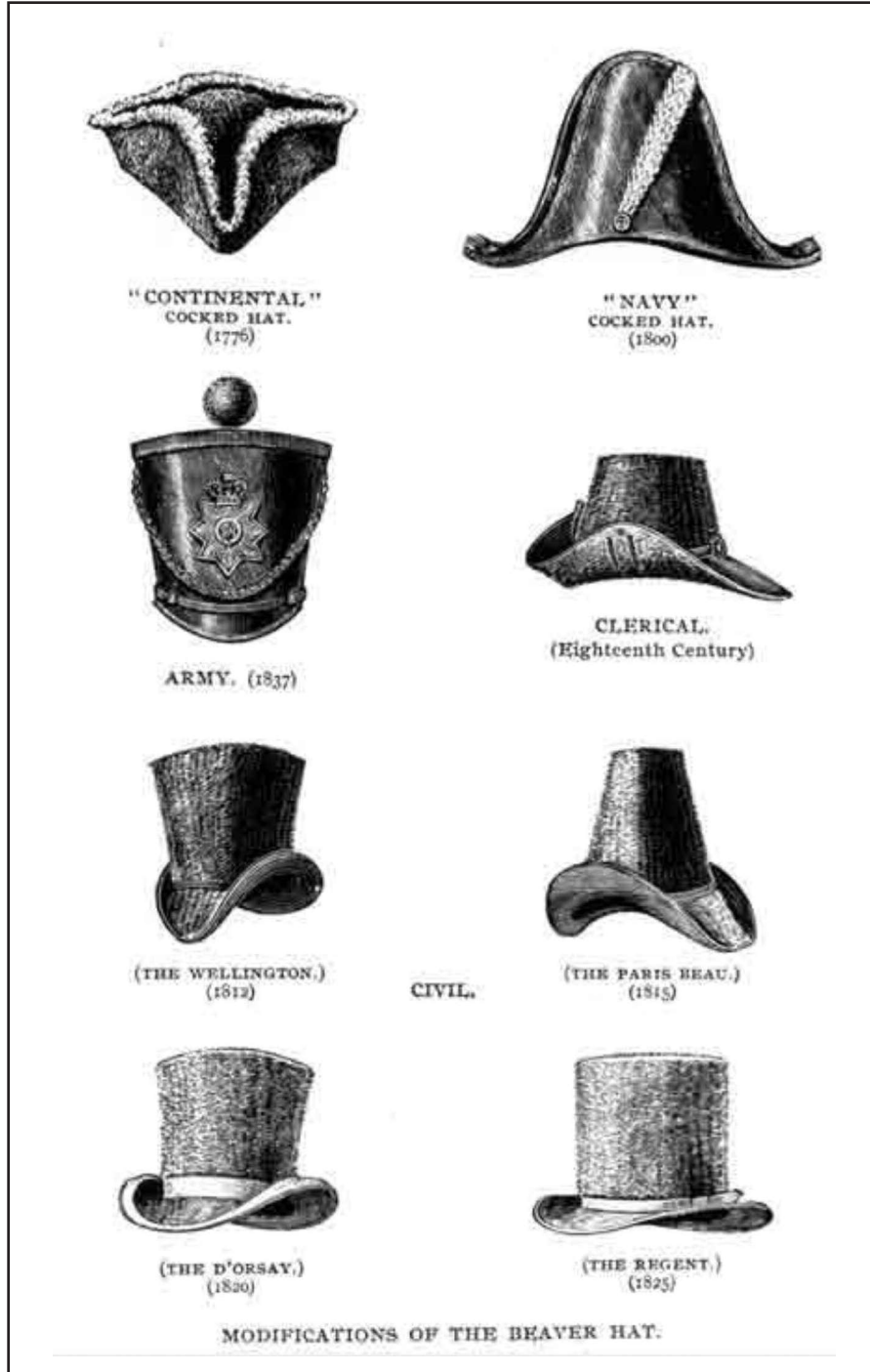
Modifications or Suggestions for Different Learners

1. Much of the unit involves group work and activities, so all students can participate in some way using their strengths.
2. The teacher can monitor the group activities to ensure that everyone has a role.
3. New Canadian students could research information on the computer in their own language.

Handouts

1. Pictures of Beaver Hats
2. Text and questions about the Fur Trade

Handout 1



The Fur Trade

Handout 2

The fur trade was one of the earliest and most important industries in North America. The fur trading industry played a major role in the development of the economy of Canada for more than 300 years.

The fur trade began in the 1500s as an exchange between First Peoples and Europeans. The First Peoples traded furs for such goods as tools and weapons. Beaver fur, which was used in Europe to make felt hats, became the most valuable of these furs. The fur trade prospered until the mid-1800s, when fur-bearing animals became scarce and silk hats became more popular than felt hats made with beaver. Today, almost all trappers sell their pelts. Inuit and First Nations trappers in Canada still trade their furs to fur companies for various goods.

The earliest fur traders in North America were French explorers and fishermen who arrived in Canada during the early 1500s. Trade started after the French offered the First Nations people kettles, knives, and other gifts as a means to establish friendly relations. They, in turn, gave pelts to the French. By the late 1500s, a great demand for fur had developed in Europe. This demand encouraged further exploration of North America. The demand for beaver increased rapidly in the early 1600s, when fashionable European men began to wear felt hats made from beaver fur. Such furs as fox, marten, mink, and otter also were traded.

In 1608, the French explorer Samuel de Champlain established a trading post on the site of the present-day city Quebec. The city became fur-trading center. The French expanded their trading activities into the prairies. They eventually controlled most of the early fur trade in what became Canada. The French traders were called “Coureurs de Bois”. These voyageurs were usually French Canadians, thus they were the first French-speaking people in Western Canada.

The fur trade contributed to the development of British and French empires in North America. During the 1600s, the prospect of wealth from the fur trade attracted many Europeans to the New World. Traders and trappers explored much of North America in search of fur. They built trading posts in the wilderness, and settlements grew up around many of these posts.

European business companies handled a large number of the furs shipped from North America during the 1600s and 1700s. The most famous of these firms, the Hudson’s Bay Company, was established in 1670. It was founded by a group of English merchants, with the help of two French fur traders. The English government gave the company sole trading rights in what is now the Hudson Bay region.

In 1783, British merchants in Montreal founded the North West Company to compete with the Hudson’s Bay Company. The traders of the new firm were called “Nor Westers.” They led many daring expeditions in search of fur in far western Canada. However, the company failed financially and, in 1821, merged with the Hudson’s Bay Company.

