

Historica Canada Education Portal

Flashes in Time: Explorer Tableaux

Overview

Students will, after researching background information on early exploration of Canada (Cabot, Cartier, Champlain, Frobisher and Hudson), role play/create tableaux based on situations in which contact was made between the explorers and Indigenous people.

Aims

Main objectives of the project: Through role playing of historical situations (and creation of representative tableaux), students will demonstrate an understanding of how contact between people in Canada's early history resulted in both conflict and cooperation (advantages and disadvantages for each group involved).

Background

Students should be familiar with explorers to early Canada prior to completing this activity.

Activities

Time Allowance: 6-7 periods

Procedures:

1. Warm-up Activities: Students will be given 10 seconds to role play each of the characters listed below, in the given situations:

- a) 7 year old child climbing a tree;
- b) soldier being inspected;
- c) elderly woman knitting;
- d) hockey player scoring a goal;
- e) Cree hunter stalking a caribou;
- f) voyageur portaging with canoe.

2. Role Playing Exercise:

- Together, read background information on Cabot's voyage on "The Matthew," and create a list of the difficulties and obstacles encountered by this explorer and his crew.

- Split into pairs, taking the role of captain and a crew member, or 2 crew members, and act out the various hardships encountered on this voyage.
(2 minutes given)

- Technique for presenting - When the teacher places her hand above the students' heads, and says, "The spotlight's on you," students will have between 10 and 20 seconds to perform their scenario for others in the class.

- Feedback will be provided by teacher, and peers, regarding effectiveness of the performances given. Then, a second hardship will be assigned for students to role play, following which the students will perform in a similar manner.

3. Introduction to Tableaux:

- A Heritage Minute, based on Cabot's initial sighting of Newfoundland, will be shown, discussed, and summarized orally.
- The concept of tableaux will be discussed with the class (with a focus on character reaction to this event, blocking, procedure for presentation).
- Presentation format: use 2 chairs to create the boundaries for the "stage";
- Total time for presentation – 20 seconds: (5 seconds for neutral entrance; 5 seconds to create scene; 5 seconds of freeze frame; 5 seconds for neutral exit of characters)
- Students will be divided into groups of 5, and assigned the task of creating a single tableau, based on the Cabot video, allowing students to choose the segment of the video to be presented. Students will be given 5 minutes to practice.
- Presentation – as above, with students lined up, and presenting in rotation; presentations to be videotaped.
- After viewing videotaped performances, feedback will be given regarding clarity of information relayed to class, facial expression and ability of performers to remain in character, blocking, etc.
- If video equipment is unavailable, the tableaux can simply be performed in front of the class.

4. Creating Explorer Tableaux

- In the same groups of 5, students will be assigned the task of creating a sequence of 3-4 tableaux based on a given explorer (Cartier, Frobisher, Hudson, or Champlain).
- Students will use the text, "Early Canada," internet sites and supplementary print material to research a given explorer in their groups

of 5 students.

- Students will, working cooperatively in groups, summarize the information on chart paper.
- The teacher will conference with individual groups to determine which “scenes” would be most suitable for creating tableaux.
- Students will create 3-4 sequential tableaux highlighting scenes such as the voyage, initial contact with Indigenous people, discoveries/accomplishments, etc. demonstrating cooperation, conflict and/or competition, and which best represent the given explorer.
- Students may create/bring from home, simple costumes or props, as required.
- Tableaux will be presented, using the presentation format established during the Cabot “practice tableaux,” and presentations will be videotaped, viewed by the class, and evaluated.

Evaluation:

Evaluation tools:

- Rubrics and marking scheme to be established cooperatively by the teacher and students.
- Suggested criteria to include: accuracy of information presented, appropriate choice of costumes and props utilized, dramatic performance – facial expression, blocking of scene/positioning of characters, ability to remain in-character throughout presentation, and follow given format for presentation.
- Students will view videotaped presentations, employing established guidelines for marking their assignments.

Formal Testing:

- Students to discuss examples of conflict, cooperation and competition, in writing, identifying the explorer, country represented, Indigenous

people they came in contact with, and ensuing results.

Application:

- Development of guidelines for interaction between dissimilar groups.
- Make connections between initial contact with natives, and historical consequences of this contact.

Resources

[The Canadian Encyclopedia:](#)

[Exploration](#)

[Exploration Timeline](#)

[John Cabot](#)

[Jacques Cartier](#)

[Samuel de Champlain](#)

[Sir Martin Frobisher](#)

[Henry Hudson](#)

[John Cabot Heritage Minute](#)

Materials:

Chart paper and felts; video camera and television; computers; Human Resources Librarian; teacher

Budget: Minimal – costumes and props optional