

Historica Canada Education Portal

Using the Minutes to Think Critically

Overview

The Heritage Minutes illustrate the possibilities of story-telling. This critical thinking exercise will help guide you through the deconstruction of four Heritage Minutes: [Peacemaker](#), [Vikings](#), [John Cabot](#), and [Jacques Cartier](#). The activities can be easily adapted to any of the [Heritage Minutes](#) you want to use in your classroom.

Aims

An invaluable skill for any student is the ability to critically examine available historical evidence and develop an awareness of its possibilities, as well as its limitations.

Background

History is made up of stories, and stories are created through the use of evidence and imagination. In the search for authentic history, we are limited not only by our imaginations, but by evidence being presented to us as Absolute. By developing critical skills, students will have a better understanding of the shifting perspectives involved in the telling of

history.

Activities

Begin by showing each Minute, and asking your students to tell you about the story presented.

You could create a web for each Minute on the chalkboard or ask groups of three or four students [with each group assigned one Minute] to draw a web on large pieces of newsprint for presentation to the class. You may need to show each Minute two or three times in order for students to get sufficient details.

Ask the students - either working individually or in small cooperative groups - to select the important fact from the story.

Discuss what a fact is and how to know what information is factual [as opposed to opinion, conjecture, or inference].

View the Minutes again and talk about the aspects of each of the four stories that are created by the imagination of the writer or videographer.

Ask the students to record the factual information on the worksheet provided.

Where does all this leave your students?

All evidence must be critically examined and challenged. All history must be examined in light of who is writing it, why they are writing it and what evidence they have used to create the story.

Resources

[Heritage Minute Playlist](#)

[Heritage Minutes: Peacemaker](#)

[Heritage Minutes: Vikings](#)

[Heritage Minutes: John Cabot](#)

[Heritage Minutes: Jacques Cartier](#)

[The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)