

If These Walls Could Talk

History as a Lens to the Past

Time Frame:

Two weeks –lessons integrated across the curriculum (Social Studies/ Language Arts/ Art)

Overview:

During this unit of study, students will explore the individuals who made significant contributions to our history and the Canadian identity, by making their walls and using their “voice” to tell their story. This project could also be completed using provincial histories and identities.

Context:

The students will research aboriginal peoples and past explorers using multi-media (online resources and informational texts). They are expected to use this research to make a wall of a related structure, create a voice of the structure and present that to the class. The walls will become a part of the ongoing permanent class display.

Objectives:

1. The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the Aboriginal Peoples as well as early explorers and settlers.
2. The student will gain an appreciation for their heritage along with respect for diverse cultures.
3. The student will demonstrate growth during a cooperative learning module.
4. The student will demonstrate writing/research/oral skills during this cross-curricular project.

Activity:

Introduction/Trigger

- 1.) If your bedroom wall could talk what would it say about you? Your feelings? Events in your life? Your lifestyle? (Brainstorm as a class activity; guide the students to move beyond the physical description of their room. This could be further extended into the realm of the classroom and what stories the classroom wall could relate.)
- 2.) Brainstorm a list of walls. The aim is to elicit a variety of structures, not just houses. Pose the question – What is the earliest wall you can think of in our area?

Providing Historical Context

- 1.) Present the picture of [Demasduit](#) (Canadian Encyclopedia resource) on the computer and pose the following questions - Who do you think it is? What can you learn about the person’s life from the photo? How

could it be a picture of one of the last Beothuks? (Start the class by dipping a basket over the side of the desk. Ask the students what historical figure might have used this motion. Record their responses for future reference. Then show [John Cabot](#) (Heritage Minute) on the computer. Discuss who was closest with their prediction.)

Presenting the Scenario

You have been following a group of strangers who have been working out near _____ (any particular spot that may have been inhabited by First Nations peoples). When you ask, they explain to you they are archeologists from the university who are setting up an exploratory dig to determine whether or not _____ (insert relevant Aboriginal group here) once used the area. (Or they are determining whether or not a certain explorer really landed at the site.)

You lean back against a tree to watch. Suddenly there before you stands a small dwelling. As you peer in, the wall begins to talk.

Project Requirements:

See attached student's instruction sheet.

Materials: (Suggested)

1. Historica Minute of John Cabot
2. 500 Years Later, *Discovering Links*, Collections Series
3. Markers, tape, construction paper, scissors
4. Social Studies Textbook
5. *Red Ochre People*, Ingeborg Marshall
6. Canadian Encyclopedia – Demasduit

Evaluation:

Teachers may evaluate the written script, the oral presentation, as well as the wall utilizing a rubric. (copy of each below)

Students will display their walls around the classroom for comments from their classmates and visitors to the classroom. As a follow-up, the students will continue to add to the wall, throughout the year, as they study other individuals who made significant contributions to our history and unique identity.

Extension:

This activity could be further extended as a means to study and research local/provincial/national stories (structures). Here are some possible examples: Shulus Arbor (BC.), CN Tower (ON.), Black Creek Pioneer Village (ON.), Lower

Fort Garry (Man.), Barkerville Courthouse (BC.), Laurel Building (BC.), Cape Scott (BC.), Fortress of Louisburg (NS.), and The Matthew (NL.).

Rubric – Written Script

Idea Development	The topic is fully developed with relevant information. Details, examples, descriptions, or anecdotes support and clarify ideas.
Organization	The information is organized in a logical order. It has an introduction that engages the reader, and it has a satisfying ending.
Word Choice	The writing has lively and descriptive language specific to the topic researched. Precise verbs and specific nouns explain and clarify the information. Sentences vary in types and length.
Writing Conventions	There are few errors in punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing. Sentences are complete (few or no run-ons or fragments).

Scoring Levels

The key elements are evident:	
5 points	to an exceptionally high degree
4 points	to an moderately high degree
3 points	to a satisfactory degree
2 points	to a limited degree
1 point	No key elements are adequately developed.

Rubric – Oral Presentation of the Script

Voice	Does the presenter change his/her voice to suit the script? Does the presenter choose an appropriate pace to demonstrate knowledge of the script? Does the presenter project to the whole room?
Expression	Does the presenter use facial and hand gestures appropriate to the scenario?
Eye Contact	Does the presenter engage the audience with his/her character by using appropriate eye contact?

Scoring Levels

The key elements are evident:	
5 points	to an exceptionally high degree
4 points	to an moderately high degree
3 points	to a satisfactory degree
2 points	to a limited degree
1 point	No key elements are adequately developed.

Rubric – Visual Representation – The Wall

Creativity	Product is visually appealing through the use of original ideas and materials.
Materials Usage	Uses a wide variety of materials to replicate the structure.
Finished Product	Neatness in overall appearance (cutting, gluing, coloring, lettering, etc.).
Authentic Representation	Attention to details to replicate the structure from knowledge gained through research.

Scoring Levels

The key elements are evident:	
5 points	to an exceptionally high degree
4 points	to an moderately high degree
3 points	to a satisfactory degree
2 points	to a limited degree
1 point	No key elements are adequately developed.

Assignment: If These Walls Could Talk

With a partner, you will be researching one aspect of early Canadian culture and completing two follow up activities.

Part A:

Your first task is to find out about one aspect of Aboriginal culture. In order to do this you must use at least two of the available resources.

- Take neat jot-notes
- Record which resource material you use
- Possible topics include Hunting, Food Gathering, Clothing, Family Life, Beliefs and Practices, etc.

Materials:

- Textbook
- [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- Collection of other texts or approved online resources

Part B:

You will now use your notes to write a script from the point of view of the wall of an early aboriginal dwelling. Describe your topic as the wall would see it. What would be noticed? What would be happening? What might the wall overhear? Remember the wall would be able to see outside as well.

- Compose your rough draft. Does it include all your key points? Does it flow when you read it aloud? Can we hear your voice? Revise as needed.
- You will present this to the class. Decide who and how you will do this. How will you keep the information flowing? What will you need to present your script?
- Compose your final copy.

Part C:

Your last task is to create a wall that resembles that of the early dwelling. This will be your prop for your presentation. How can you make it as realistic as possible? How will you use the wall?

Deadline: You will have two weeks to complete this project.

Research – Friday – Week 1

Written script – Wednesday – Week 2

Walls – Thursday – Week 2

Presentations – Friday – Week 2

Evaluation:

Your project will be evaluated on your written script, your oral presentation, and the wall you create. Do your best!