Grade 5- Teacher Zone
Focus: Canada
Topic B: Early Canada–Exploration and Settlement

Note: Worksheets are at the end of the document

Lesson Plan 1: Aboriginal People–The Early Years

Generalization
Contact between people in Canada’s early history prior to and during exploration and settlement brought changes to life on the Prairies. Contact frequently resulted in competition, conflict and cooperation.

Rationale
Students will study the history of the fur trade through the experiences of Aboriginal People. The contact era and the onset of the fur trade and settlement was a tumultuous time for all Aboriginal People. While some groups were not affected until the fur trade expanded, it must be recognized that the lives of Aboriginal People across Canada were vastly impacted by the introduction of European goods, the fur trade and ensuing settlement.

Objectives
Knowledge

- Make connections between exploration and settlement and the effects they had on Aboriginal lifestyles
- Define Eurocentric
- Acknowledge the different world views between French, English and Aboriginal People

Skills

- Learn to distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- Recognize that many historical documents were written from a Eurocentric perspective

Attitude

- Develop a more rounded perspective on Canadian history
- Work well with others in a group setting
- Share opinions and participate in group and class discussions as an active member of the learning process

Teacher Information
Prior to the fur trade era, Aboriginal Peoples were nomadic hunters whose diets consisted primarily of meat from buffalo, deer, caribou and other small animals, supplemented by berries and roots. They were also dependent on stone, bone, wood and leather for weapons, tools, housing and clothing.
When the fur trade began in Eastern Canada in the 17th century, traders slowly moved westward in search of more furs, primarily beaver pelts used to make hats for the Europeans. The first fur trading forts in what is now Alberta, were developed in the Athabasca region, due to the large number of lakes and rivers in the area. Initially, the three most important forts were Fort Chipewyan in the north, Rocky Mountain House and Fort Edmonton in the central region of the province. The early Hudson’s Bay Company fur trade voyageurs were driven and courageous, venturing into unexplored lands. They initially relied on the Aboriginal People to share their knowledge of hunting and trapping, making moccasins, canoes and snowshoes. Aboriginal People also shared medicines and knowledge about trading with these first traders. Eventually, fur traders began to take advantage of Aboriginal People and their hospitality. The introduction of liquor introduced many problems for Aboriginal People and the effects have been long lasting, effecting many generations. Many Aboriginal traders would often exchange all they had for small quantities of rum and brandy.

Once the North West Company was formed in 1785 trading became even more fierce. However, in 1821 the two major companies merged and the use of liquor in trade negotiations with Aboriginal People was forbidden.

**Introductory Activity**
Read a story depicting the life of an early fur trader. Choose a story that describes daily activities and discusses why they are involved in the trade. Read another story that describes what life was like for Aboriginal People before or shortly after the arrival of European traders. This story can be adapted from an Elder’s account. The purpose is to allow students to see the different beliefs, values and lifestyles of the two groups. A short video could also be shown.

**Main Lesson**
Have students adopt the role of a newspaper reporter researching a story on the history of the fur trade. Ensure that they include perspectives from both the fur traders and from an Aboriginal group. Students should narrow their research to a specific area involved in the fur trade and limit it to one of the trading forts mentioned above. Students will fill out the following Newspaper Article - worksheet, as an introduction to help them get started on their newspaper article

1. What is your topic?
2. Who or what are your sources for information and facts (use three or more different resources)?
3. How long is your article going to be?
4. What is your headline?
5. What is your hook? The first sentence of your article should grab readers attention.
6. What is your first paragraph about? Who is involved in your article? Make sure to include background information.
7. Your article will tell me, the reader, about what?
8. Are you going to include pictures, drawings, maps, traditional stories or songs, or actual interviews?
9. Wrap it up. How will you finish your article?
10. Your newspaper article should follow this sequence
Supplementary Lesson
As an alternative to the above lesson, students could compose a series of journal entries from both an Aboriginal person and a fur trader involved in trade activities. The students should try and make the journal entries authentic by doing research and using historical facts.

Supplementary Lesson
Students will want to fill out the following Fur Trading - worksheet to help them understand who was all involved in the fur trade and why.

Group:___________________________

Who are they?
What are their reasons for being in the West?
What is their relationship to other groups?
How does their presence affect other groups?
How does their presence effect the buffalo?

Supplementary Lesson
In order for students to understand the impact of the fur trade upon Aboriginal Peoples, the creation of a time line makes an excellent project. It allows students to conceptualize how events unfolded, and how little time it took for damage to be done to the traditional lifestyles of Aboriginal People. To help get students started, provide a time line sheet with a few events already added to act as a guideline. Students can then research corresponding dates and events via the Origin and Settlement Edukit Student Zone, as well as the Internet and textbook. Students should be permitted to include more than one event per time if they find it important.

Supplementary Lesson
Prior to the fur trade the following Aboriginal groups resided in Alberta

- Blackfoot
- Blood
- Peigan
- Gros Ventre
- Shoshoni
- Kootenay
- Crow
- Sarcee
- Beaver
Students should have the choice of researching one of these groups and determining how the fur trade era effected that particular group, and then pay attention to the following questions:

1. Did your group sign a treaty? If so, which one?
2. What area of the province did they typically reside in?
3. In what ways did your group adapt to the fur trade and the loss of buffalo as the main food source?
4. Describe some element of culture surrounding your group.
Introduction to Newspaper Article

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7. Your article will tell me, the reader, about what?

8. Are you going to include pictures, drawings, maps, traditional stories or songs, or actual interviews?

9. Wrap it up. How will you finish your article?

10. Your newspaper article should follow this sequence
    - Headline
    - Author
    - Topic
    - 1st paragraph
    - 2nd and 3rd paragraphs
    - Concluding paragraph
Fur Trading

Group: ____________________________

Who are they?

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How does their presence affect other groups?

How does their presence effect the buffalo?