



---

**Re: Preparation for your visit**

Good day,

We are pleased to confirm your group's visit to the Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site of Canada.

Please note that the following entrance fees will be charged during your visit :

\$2.95 per person (including taxes). 2 accompanying adults per group enter free of charge.

Payment must be made when you arrive at the site, either in cash or by cheque payable to the **RECEIVER GENERAL FOR CANADA**. Please note that it is also possible for us to send an invoice to your educational centre. Simply state your preference upon arrival.

Our team of interpretive guides strives to offer services of the highest quality and has thus suggested certain activities that may be done with your group before your visit. These activities are adapted for second-language students and will help your students to familiarize themselves with the themes and specific vocabulary of the fur trade. The time they spend at our site will therefore be all the more educational and entertaining.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to our site!

The Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site of Canada Interpretation Team

1255, St-Joseph Boulevard

Lachine, Québec, H8S 2M2

Tel: 514-637-7433

Fax: 514-637-5325

E-mail: [lachine.cfl@pc.gc.ca](mailto:lachine.cfl@pc.gc.ca)

Web site: [www.pc.gc.ca/fourrure](http://www.pc.gc.ca/fourrure)



Parcs  
Canada

Parks  
Canada

Canada



# Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site of Canada

**Preparatory activities for second-language students**

*To the Edge of a New World* program

## **Presentation**

The following activities are designed expressly for second-language students. Their objective is to allow students to be well prepared for their discovery of the fur trade in Canada. As well, by establishing links between their life and that of the Voyageur, students will better understand this historical character and the content of their visit.

## **General objectives**

- 1- Allow students to familiarise themselves with one of the major players of the fur trade: the Voyageur.
- 2- Encourage students to compare their life with that of the Voyageur. This comparison will clearly show how immigration has always played a key role in Canadian history.
- 3- Give students an opportunity to practice reading comprehension and writing skills in English.



## Activity 1: Vocabulary used during the visit

52 words used during the visit are presented in the following activity. Instructions are found after the following article.

You will soon visit a **warehouse** that was built in 1803. **Bales** filled with **fur pelts** were stored in this warehouse. During this period, Canada's population was very low, and the **forest** covered a large part of the **country**. The forest was filled with many different types of **trees** as well as **animals** such as **otter, beaver, marten, fox, mink, raccoon, muskrat**, and many others.

The **Amerindians (First nations)** lived in this landscape 200 years ago. The Amerindians were the ones who **trapped** the different **fur-bearing** animals in order to clothe and feed themselves.

The Amerindians also **traded** with European **merchants**. These merchants brought various European-made **goods** to the Amerindians: **metal objects, textiles, firearms**, and many other items. In return, Amerindians supplied these merchants with the fur pelts of different animals.

Trade took place over 4500km from Montréal. No **roads** existed in the forest; however, there were many **lakes** and **rivers**. **Canoes** made with the **bark** of **birch** trees were therefore used to travel. A **portage** had to be done in order to overcome the many **rapids** that were met along the way. During a portage, the bales and the canoe were transported on one's back.

French-Canadian **Voyageurs** were the ones who **transported** these bales of goods to Lachine by birch-bark canoe. Once in Montréal, the fur pelts were boarded onto large **sailboats** and shipped to Europe.

**Europeans** used these pelts to line **clothing** and make **hats**. Wealthier men wore **felt** hats made with the **hairs** of the beaver fur.

The **bosses** of the fur trade **companies** were called the **Bourgeois**. The two most powerful companies at this time were the **Hudson's Bay Company** and the **North-West Company**. Their **offices** were located in London and in Montréal, respectively.

For a very long time, the fur trade was the most important economic activity in Canada. However, around 1820, **fashion** began to change and the beaver felt hat became less popular. In the Montréal **region**, the fur trade was replaced by the **wood** and **wheat** trade. The Bourgeois worked together to have the Lachine **Canal** built. The warehouse you will visit was sold and **transformed** many times before finally becoming the **museum** you will soon discover.



## Objective

To allow students to familiarise themselves with the vocabulary that will be used during the visit.

## Procedure

- 1- Each student will examine the list of fifty-two words that will be used during the visit.
- 2- Each student shall consult a dictionary to find the meaning of a word he has chosen to make sure he understands its significance.

## Explanation

- 1- Tell students that they will hear these words during the visit and that the guide might ask them to explain certain words out loud.

<b>Amerindian</b>	<b>European</b>	<b>Marten</b>	<b>Raccoon</b>
<b>Animal</b>		<b>Merchant</b>	<b>Rapid (noun)</b>
	<b>Fashion</b>	<b>Metal</b>	<b>Region</b>
<b>Bale</b>	<b>Felt</b>	<b>Mink</b>	<b>River</b>
<b>Bark</b>	<b>Firearm</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Road</b>
<b>Beaver</b>	<b>Forest</b>	<b>Muskrat</b>	
<b>Birch</b>	<b>Fox</b>		<b>Sailboat</b>
<b>Boss</b>	<b>Fur-bearing</b>	<b>North-West Company</b>	
<b>Bourgeois</b>	<b>Fur pelt</b>		<b>Textile</b>
		<b>Office</b>	<b>Trade</b>
<b>Canoe</b>	<b>Hair</b>	<b>Otter</b>	<b>Transform</b>
<b>Canal</b>	<b>Hat</b>		<b>Transport</b>
<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Hudson's Bay Company</b>	<b>Portage</b>	<b>Trap</b>
<b>Company</b>			<b>Tree</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>Lake</b>		
			<b>Voyageur</b>
			<b>Warehouse</b>
			<b>Wheat</b>
			<b>Wood</b>





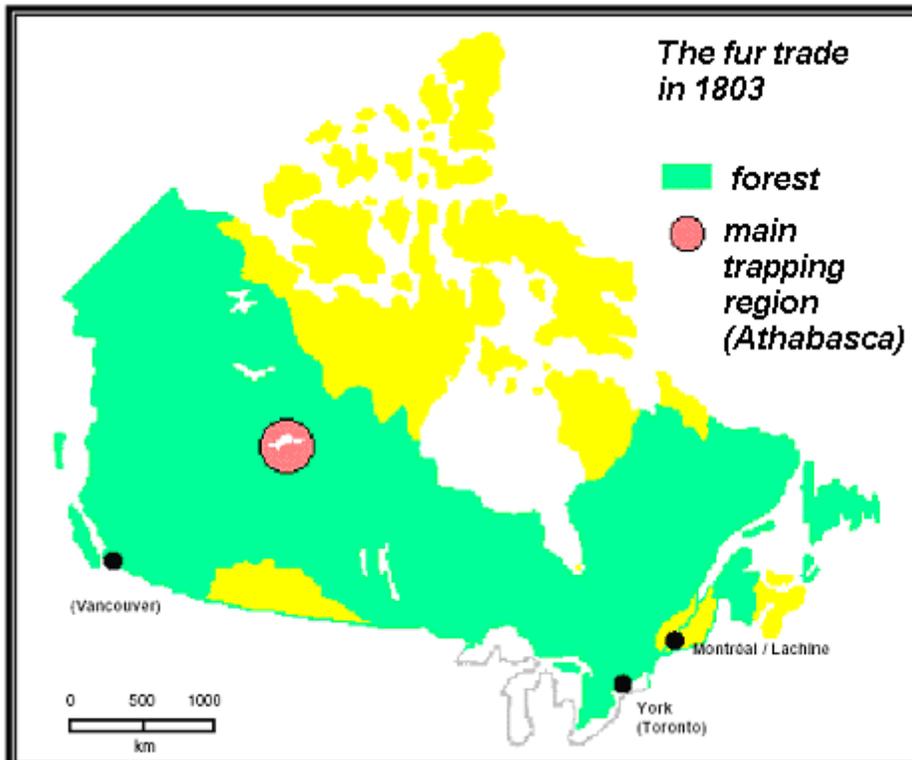
## Activity 2: Distance and transportation in Canada in 1803

### Objective

To visualise the distances Voyageurs had to cross in Canada and to understand the difficulties associated to this travel in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Procedure

1- Use a wall map of Canada, or distribute a photocopy of the map below to each student or group of students.



(continued on next page)





2- Indicate Lachine on the wall map; emphasise the area covered by forest; indicate the area where the best furs were found, the Athabasca region.

3- Explain to students that the distance separating Lachine from Athabasca is equivalent to the distance between:

Lisbonne (Portugal) and Moscow (Russia)

Lima (Peru) and Mexico City (Mexico)

Tunis (Tunisia) and Tehran (Iran)

Saigon (Vietnam) and New Delhi (India)

And/or any other comparison that is appropriate for the group.

4- The following chart can be filled in with your students. It shows the time needed to cover 4500 km using various means of transportation:

4500 km	
Plane	5 hours
Automobile	5 days
Bicycle	50 days
Means of transportation used during the fur trade :	
Birch-bark canoe	5 months





## Activity 2: Reading and writing a Voyageur's letter

During their visit, your students will discover the role that the fur trade played in Canadian history and the different people involved. They will also learn about one of the major impacts of this trade: the cultural exchanges that took place between Native peoples and the men newly arrived in fur-trading territory, the Voyageurs. Many of your students have immigrated to Canada and may be considered modern-day "Voyageurs"! In this activity, we would like your students to compose a letter in which they describe one of their travel adventures and that they afterwards send it to us.

### Objective:

To practice reading and writing skills in English and to learn about the life of the Voyageur. Students will also see that the Voyageur was like an immigrant travelling to a new country.

### Procedure:

- 1- Students shall first read the letter of the Voyageur and take note of the different details of the letter (descriptions, work, etc.).
- 2- Students shall write a letter in English in which they describe a trip they have taken, their move to Canada or any other adventure they have experienced through travel. The questions provided with the Voyageur's letter shall guide them in their composition.
- 3- Students shall bring this letter to The Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site of Canada during their visit and shall afterwards receive a response.





## *Jean-Baptist's Letter : A Trip to a New World*

*My dear wife,*

*A week already has gone by since the beginning of my contract as a voyageur. My colleagues and I must reach Fort William, at the north-west tip of Lake Superior, in order to meet other voyageurs coming from the North. They have spent the Winter trading with the Amerindians. They barter different European-made merchandise (metal objects, woollen blankets, tobacco, etc.) for the fur pelts the Amerindians provide. These voyageurs bring these fur pelts to Fort William, and we will bring them back to Lachine.*



Frances Ann Hopkins, Shooting the Rapids, Archives nationales du Canada

*Believe me, the Voyageur's life is not easy! Between ten and twelve of us paddle in a birch-bark canoe. It is the most practical way to travel, as no roads exist to bring us to our destination. The lakes and rivers are our roads. Every day, we paddle fifteen to sixteen hours and, when we come to rapids or to waterfalls, we have no choice but to portage. This is something that I hate to do! We must get out of the canoe and transport all the merchandise on our backs. The bales in which the merchandise is packed are very heavy. They weigh about 90 lbs each! As if this was not tiring enough, we must afterwards return to the canoe and carry it on our backs around the rapids or waterfall. If I have not written you earlier, it is because I am so fatigued...*

*The meals we eat are filling, but always the same. Every day we have a ration of peas and lard. I will write you again once we have arrived in Fort William, if the mosquitoes do not manage to eat me alive before! I will have time to write, as we will have a few weeks of rest before our return trip to Lachine. At Fort William, I will surely see my friend Pierre who has been working in the North for the past three years. I am anxious to see him, as I hear he has married a Native woman. And, I am certainly anxious to see you again my dear!*

*Your husband,*  
**Jean-Baptiste**



## Following your visit...

When you will visit **The Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site of Canada**, your guide will present to you the different people involved in the fur trade. One of these people was the Voyageur, who travelled very long distances by birch-bark canoe in order to transport bales of furs and trading goods from one place to another.

We would like you to tell us one of your travel adventures. Please write us a letter, in English, (approximately one page) in which you describe to us one of your trips. Bring the letter with you when you visit the museum; your guide will accept it and we will be pleased to send you a response. Be sure to include your mailing address! Here are a few questions that will help you begin writing your letter:

- Where did you go?
- Was it your first trip?
- Was it a trip for business or for pleasure?
- When did you leave?
- When did you return?
- How much time did it take to get to your destination? What was the total time you were gone?
- Which means of transportation did you use to get there?
- Did you listen to music during the trip?
- What did you do during your trip?
- Did you travel alone or with other people? Who did you travel with?
- Did you have a lot of luggage?
- What did you eat during your trip? Did it taste good?
- Was the weather good or bad?
- What kinds of clothes did you wear during your trip?
- What type of landscape did you see?
- How did you feel during your trip? Excited? Happy? Sad? Calm? Scared?
- Did you miss your friends and family?
- Did you bring back any souvenirs?
- When you returned, did you feel tired or rested?

A letter of a Voyageur, Jean-Baptiste, is included as an example. Thank you for sharing your adventures with us! It will be a pleasure for us to receive and read your letters!

**The Fur Trade at Lachine**  
**National Historic Site of Canada** interpretation team  
1255, Saint-Joseph Blvd.  
Lachine, QC H8S 2M2