

Learning Activity 6: Historical Perspective

Historical individuals cause historical events.

Course Link: Newfoundland and Labrador studies 2205

Outcome addressed:

SCO 1.0 - The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of how the arts may be used to express ideas related to culture, heritage and identity

SCO 2.0 - The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of economic, political and social issues related to Newfoundland and Labrador, both past and present.

Learning Goal and Description

Goal: To understand individual's of the past and the importance of their role.

Students will explore how historical events (the times) influence individuals and how individuals influence history.

Brief Description: Students will be asked to explore the role of individuals who lived during two significant periods in the history of Fort Point and Trinity. As they explore the role of individuals within these historical periods, they will be expected to base judgments on evidence and on an understanding of the times. What was considered to be right or wrong in 1812 or in 1762 may not be the same as today.

Planning and Preparation

Sources vary by student option and are included within the **Connection**, **Consolidation**, and **Extension** sections.

Preparations: This Learning Activity focuses specifically on the role of individuals (characters) in history and on having students use the arts to express their understandings. To stimulate students' creative thinking, teachers may

- highlight examples of traditional music that address character attributes and themes (e.g., "Great Big Sea, Buying Time" as an illustration of a song that might address what Benjamin Lester was doing during the French invasion of Trinity)
- use models of speeches, poems, recitations, and monologues as examples of creative expression (see sample suggestions under **Consolidation**.)

Strategies for Completion

Activation: (approximately 10 minutes.)

Teachers may begin by asking the question: *How do we come to know an individual in history?* (Discussion should remind students that we learn about a character in history from what that character said, from what others said about him or her, and from what the character did – his or her actions. It is often a character's action during time of significant conflict that reveal the strength of that individual and the contributions the individual made to "the greater good".) Teachers may use this

discussion to introduce students to the goal of this Activity – to examine the role of individuals in the developments of Trinity, Fort Point, or the War of 1812, taking particular note of how historical events (the times) influence individuals and how individuals influence history.

Connection: (40 to 50 minutes of class time for students to start their research and for teachers to respond to questions and provide initial support.)

Students may undertake a character study of one of the following:

- William Kelson, Gallery Image 89, biographical sketch at the Trinity Historical Society's Website: http://www.trinitymerchants.com/biographical_sketch.htm
Memorial University's Digital Archives:
http://collections.mun.ca/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=%2Fths_slade
- Benjamin Lester: Gallery: #21– Benjamin Lester; #22 – Lester's premises; #23 – Lester's fleet; #32-#57 – Lester's Diary
Memorial University's Digital Archives:
http://collections.mun.ca/cdm4/description.php?phpReturn=browse.php&cisoroot=m_lester (Consider: What alternatives did Benjamin Lester have from the actions he took? For example, what might have happened if he had challenged the French commander on the first day of the invasion?)
- An individual of their own choosing (with teacher approval)

Students may use **Organizer #14** to compile their information.

Consolidation: (Outside of regular class time.)

Teachers may ask students to take the information from their research and their completed **Organizer #14** and produce a representation of their chosen character such as the following: (Before students make their individual decisions, teachers may provide samples of each mode as frames to guide them.)

- A song that covers a key aspect of the character or key role played
- A persuasive speech titled, "I Have a Dream for Trinity"
- The script for a re-enactment of a role the character played (Canadian Geographic contains video of Rick Mercer examining re-enactments in Ontario of battles during the War of 1812. See http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/war_of_1812/videos/)
- A dramatic monologue (Students may read "Ulysses" as a model: http://www.portablepoetry.com/poems/alfredlord_tennyson/ulysses.html)
- A recitation (Students may read "The Smokeroom on the Kyle" as a model: <http://www.pigeoninlet.com/kyle.htm>)
- A reflective poem that begins with a title such as the following:
 - *A Moment in Time*
 - *If Only...*
 - *The Road Taken*
 - *An Extraordinary Day*

Students will also write a short explanation as to why they felt their mode of representation was appropriate for the character they studied.

Extension:

To commemorate the bi-centennial of the War of 1812, the Government of Canada initiated a special website that included a section on heroes: See

<http://www.1812.gc.ca/eng/1317828221939/1317828660198>

Students may choose one of the “heroes” listed, or another of their own choosing, and explore the role of this individual, beyond the information contained in this website. Students may write a character sketch demonstrating the significant influence the individual had on the course of events during the war. Students’ sketches may be placed in their portfolio.

OR

Reflecting back over the evidence of events surrounding the development of Fort Point from 1700 to 1815, students may respond to the following words contained in a poem titled “History” by Yusuf Adamu, a Nigerian poet:

History is a reminder that nothing lasts forever

History is always in the making.

Assessment and Evaluation

For this learning activity, teachers may

- examine the levels of detail and effort students demonstrate in the completion of **Organizer #14**;
- assess each student’s engagement in and adherence to the structures of the mode of response they use for their representation of character.

Organizer #14: Character Study

Aspects of Character	Notes
Event(s) What was happening around the character?	
Influence on Event(s) What role did the character play in the event(s)? What did he or she say and/or do?	
Influence (according to others) What, if anything, did others say about the character?	
Additional Evidence of Influence	