



THE GREAT MARCH WEST

Length

1 hour 30 minutes

Introduction	15 minutes
Survivor Activity	15 minutes
Factors Activity	10 minutes
Pack a Red River Cart	20 minutes
Uniform Try On	20 minutes
Conclusion	10 minutes

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies

Grade Five	5.1.1 / 5.1.2 / 5.2.7 / 5.3.2 / 5.S.1 / 5.S.2 / 5.S.5
Grade Six	6.S.1 / 6.S.2 / 6.S.3 / 6.S.7 / 6.S.8

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to recognize and recall the historical context that led to the creation of the NWMP.
2. Students will be able to discover and determine the different people and animals that were a part of the march west as well as understand the impact that geography and climate had on their march.
3. Students will identify positive and negative aspects that the NWMP faced on their march and then be able to work on decision making skills and determine what they would pack on a long trek.
4. Students will build on teamwork skills through team exploration and collaboration in order to understand the geography of Canada, and understand the natural resources and climate in different geographic regions.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Students will engage in a discussion with the facilitator about major events and motivations behind the creation of the North West Mounted Police. They will then partake in a “Survivor-type” activity where the students will learn the makeup of the group that marched west. This activity will allow students to discover what contributed to the success of the March and what contributed to their hardships and learn how each geographic region posed different challenges as climate and natural resources changed along the way. Following this activity, students will get to use the knowledge they acquired in the survivor activity to discuss the factors that impacted the NWMP on their march.

After this, the class will be split in half and both groups will partake in the following activities. One activity is a packing activity. In this activity the students will discuss the distance, time, and realities of the Great March would have involved, and the facilitator will ask the students to think about what the Mounties would need to do to make camp each night. They will then be shown artifacts and will be asked to choose one artifact that they think would help them survive a journey similar to the Great March West. The group will need to come to a consensus about all the items chosen, and then they will get to pack a red river cart.

The other activity the students will engage in is a uniform try on activity. In this activity the students will discuss the merits of the uniform chosen and discuss the history of the NWMP uniforms. They will then take the remainder of the time to try on the Mountie Uniforms!

PREPARING YOUR CLASS

1. Review vocabulary words to prepare students for their visit.
2. Discuss the concept of settling and how the settlers had to make a difficult journey to come to the prairies. Discover where the settlers would have come from originally (France, Britain, Ukraine, etc.) and why they would come all the way to Calgary.
3. Discuss who the NWMP were and what their role on the prairies was. Discuss why they came to the North West Territories and that it was the NWMP that built and help to establish this area for the settlers.
4. Review the geographic and climatic regions of Canada from Ontario to Alberta. Discuss geographic features such as rivers and prairies, and brainstorm what challenges and benefits might come from these features. Discuss the different climatic regions from Ontario to Alberta, and brainstorm what challenges and benefits might come from them, such as the dry prairies create conditions that allows for large prairie fires.

VOCABULARY

Artifact – any object manufactured, modified or deliberately shaped by humans. Includes tools, weapons, ceremonial items, art objects, garbage, clothing and all food remains

Blackfoot Confederacy – a First Nations alliance that includes the Kainai (Blood), the Siksika (Blackfoot), and the Piikani (Peigan) tribes

Bow and Elbow Rivers – the two rivers that flow from the mountains and through Calgary. The Elbow River flows into the Bow River and their confluence is at the site of Fort Calgary

Buffalo/Bison – the North American species, better known as buffalo, has short, black, curved horns; a beard, shoulder hump, short tail; and long, shaggy, and woolly hair on the shoulders

Canadian Pacific Railway – founded in 1881 to link Canada's populated centres with the vast potential of its relatively unpopulated West. This incredible engineering feat was completed on Nov.7, 1885

Confederation – Canada became a nation, the Dominion of Canada, on July 1st, 1867. Before that, British North America was made up of a few provinces, the vast area of Rupert's Land (privately owned by the Hudson's Bay Company), and the North-Western Territory

First Nations – refers to the various governments of the First Nations peoples of Canada. There are over 630 First Nations across Canada with 46 in Alberta

Fort Calgary – the birthplace of the city of Calgary, and the original location of the North West Mounted Police fort built at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers in 1875

Immigration – movement of people intending to establish a home and gain citizenship in a country which is not their native country

Indigenous Peoples – the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs

North-West Mounted Police – a police force established in 1873 to maintain colonial law and order in the newly acquired North-West Territories

Portage – the carrying of a boat or its cargo between two navigable waters

Prairie – a large, mostly flat area of land that has few trees and is covered in grasses

Red River Cart – the Métis people were the inventors of the red river cart and it was crucial means of transportation on the prairies. It is made out of only wood so they were easy to repair on trips unlike if they had metal parts. The sound of the carts could be heard from miles because of the high pitch sound it made. Grease was not used on the axels because dirt would have stuck on the parts thus creating a mud that would wear down the axels quickly

VOCABULARY (CONT.)

Settlers – a person who has moved to an area and established a permanent residence there

Stagnant Water – not flowing or moving, and often foul-smelling or stale. Stagnant water can be dangerous for drinking because it provides a better incubator than running water for many kinds of bacteria and parasites

Whiskey Trade – many American traders made whisky the focus of trade between them and the First Nations. Their poisonous drink had a strong alcohol base that was amplified with pepper, gunpowder and even strychnine. Alcohol consumption was accompanied by increased violence and, before long, Canada's North-West Territories became a violent and lawless place