

Canadian Conflicts Heritage Minutes

Creating “Heritage Minutes” to Understand How War Changed and Shaped the Canadian Identity

Introduction

Students need to critically examine how major events, such as war and conflict, changed the way of life in Canada and appreciate the impact of these changes on citizenship and identity. What do the stories of these Mavericks tell us about the development of Western Canada? What was it like to live through wartime? Why was Alberta an important part of the home front during wartime? How did Albertans contribute to the Canadian war effort?

Project Explanation

In this project, students will develop an appreciation of how war helped to develop the identity and heritage of the province of Alberta. They will choose a topic for a short presentation modeled after the “Canadian Heritage Minute” commercials on television. They will research the Maverick and the conflict, plan and script their presentation, and practice the production. The students will then assemble it into a finished presentation by gathering props, finding costumes, using accents and speech mannerisms, and record the practiced scenes. The presentations can then be shared with the entire class.

Alberta Social Studies Curriculum Unit Connections

Grade Four - Alberta: The Land, Histories and Stories

4.2 The Stories, Histories and People of Alberta

Grade Five - Canada: The Land, Histories and Stories

5.2 Histories and Stories of Ways of Life in Canada

Materials and Resources Needed

- *Mavericks: An Incorrigeable History of Alberta* - Character Biographies and Online Artifacts
<http://www.glenbow.org/mavericks>
- Computers, digital video editing program such as iMovie or a slideshow program like PowerPoint, digital still or video cameras (if applicable)
- Canadian Heritage Minutes
<http://www.histori.ca/minutes/>

Procedures

Students will create a "Heritage Minute," modeled after the Canadian Heritage television commercials promoting Canadian history. Students will research one of the "War and the Home front" Mavericks from the *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* site, picking one small "vignette" from that person's life to explore and dramatize. The final product may be done as a live dramatic presentation, a digital video production, or even a photographic slideshow using a program like PowerPoint, depending on how the teacher wants to approach the project and the technology available.

Teachers may introduce the project by going to the Canadian Heritage Minutes website. All of the Heritage Minutes are collected there, with background information and an online video of the commercial itself. Viewing a number of the videos will give students an idea of what they are attempting to create. They will need to make a presentation to assist others to learn about a part of one of the Maverick's life, that is of high interest, and is historically accurate. How did that Maverick represent Canada? Why are they respected? Why were they chosen as a Maverick?

Students will begin by choosing the topic of the Heritage Minute and creating the background information section for their presentation. They will have to choose a Maverick to focus on, find a specific event to dramatize, and then research all pertinent information needed as background information by their audience. They will need information about the person, what their job was, their personal history, and the war(s) they participated in.

Once they have the information, they will have to write the actual background information document that will go with their Heritage Minute. They should include information on who the person was, what their accomplishments were, and how they benefited the war effort.

Once the research and background information is complete, they can begin scripting and storyboarding their Heritage Minute. One minute is not a lot of time, so they will have to remember to be concise in their use of language and content. They will also have to decide on any costumes or props needed and how or where they will create the backdrop for their scene.

The students will need time to practice their scenes, even if filming the Heritage Minute, as this will speed up the process once they are in front of the camera. They will then either be ready to present live in front of the class or to film and edit their Heritage Minutes. If creating a digital video or PowerPoint, they may add narration, sound, music, titles and subtitles to their presentations. Once the presentations are edited and finished, they may be presented in class to their peers.

Assessment and Evaluation

- After the teacher and students collaboratively create a rubric, students should use it as a guide for their learning as they are working through the process, regularly checking that all the needed elements are included in their work and revising as needed. The rubric can then be used as a formal evaluative tool when they have completed their project.
- Students may evaluate themselves and their peers using their project rubric, examining each other's project for historical accuracy, detail, and creativity.
- A project journal may be used for information gathering as well as for reflective writing as the process is taking place. Students can pose questions, vent frustrations, synthesize their work, examine their process, and even wonder about what they are missing or what is still needed for their project. This may be completed as a group or individually.
- Students should use their journal to reflect upon their group dynamics, how the problem solving process worked, their solutions to the problem, what could have been done differently or better, and any successes or frustrations they felt when working with their group.

Ideas to Enrich this Project

- Students may plan and organize a special "Red Carpet Movie Premiere" to show off their work for the parents.
- Students could create a web page for each Heritage Minute, including a scaled down version of the digital video or PowerPoint, as well as their Background Information section.