

presenting the Story of the Oil Boom

Researching Various Aspects of the Oil & Gas Industries to Understand Its Effect on Our Western Lifestyle

Introduction

Students need to understand the role the oil and gas industries played in creating the Alberta identity and appreciate how Alberta has grown and changed culturally, economically and socially since the 1920s. Our western heritage is still a very important part of our culture and has been affected by the oil industry. Why does Alberta's economic fortunes depend so heavily on oil revenues? What was it like to work in the early oil industry? How would life be different in Alberta without these resources? How can we use primary resources like photographs to learn more about what the oil boom was like?

Project Explanation

In this project, students will develop an appreciation of the stories and lifestyle of the oilmen and women who began the Alberta oil industry from the 1920's onward. Students will undertake research in order to get a good picture of what the industry was like back then. They will use the research to create a PowerPoint presentation focusing on an aspect of the oil and gas industry. Using the *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* and *ImagesCanada.ca* websites, they will search for and find primary photographs to assist and represent aspects of the presentation.

Alberta Social Studies Curriculum Unit Connections

Grade Four - Alberta: The Land, Histories and Stories

- 4.1 Alberta: A Sense of the Land
- 4.2 The Stories, Histories and People of Alberta
- 4.3 Alberta: Celebrations and Challenges

Grade Five - Canada: The Land, Histories and Stories

- 5.1 Physical Geography of Canada
- 5.2 Histories and Stories of Ways of Life in Canada
- 5.3 Canada: Shaping an Identity

Grade Six - Democracy: Action and Participation

- 6.1 Citizens Participating in Decision Making

Materials and Resources Needed

- *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* - Character Biographies and Online Artifacts
<http://www.glenbow.org/mavericks>
- Images Canada
<http://www.imagescanada.ca/>
- The Oil and Gas Frontier: 1913 to the Present
http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/calgary/oil.html
- Alberta's Natural Resources – History of Development
<http://www.abheritage.ca/abresources/history/index.html>
- Oil Information Research Links
<http://www.lethsd.ab.ca/mmh/grade4/altaresources/oil.htm>
- Natural Gas Information Research Links
<http://www.lethsd.ab.ca/mmh/grade4/altaresources/naturalgas.htm>
- The Story of Hydrocarbons

http://www.abheritage.ca/abresources/inventory/resources_hydrocarbons.html
- Alberta Oil & Gas History and Important Facts
<http://www.gov.ab.ca/home/index.cfm?Page=29>
- Alberta's Oil Industry
<http://www.energy.gov.ab.ca/736.asp>
- Alberta's Natural Gas Industry
<http://www.energy.gov.ab.ca/222.asp>
- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Facts
<http://www.evostc.state.ak.us/facts/qanda.html>
- Computers, PowerPoint

Procedures

Students will conduct research for and create a historical fiction story about a real or imaginary character that was involved with the oil and gas industry in Alberta. The project could be introduced by the teacher through orally telling a part of the story of the oil boom or of an "oil well shooter" like Charles Stalnaker. These stories may be found on the *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* site in those characters' biographies.

Each student (or small group) will begin to research about one area of the oil & gas industry. In the end, they will share their results with the others in the class, allowing each student to get a good picture of what the industry was like. Possible topics may include:

- What is oil and natural gas? How was it formed?
- How do people find oil?
- How do people drill for oil?
- How is oil refined (turned into usable products like gasoline)?
- How is oil transported?

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- What is the impact of the oil and gas industry on the land and its other natural resources (e.g. rivers, lakes, animals, birds, etc.)
- Are we running out of oil? What then?

Once a topic is chosen, students will use the Oil & Gas web resources above, the *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* and the *ImagesCanada.ca* websites. They will search for information, primary artifacts and photographs to assist and represent aspects of their topic. When one of the Mavericks is connected to the research topic, they should be incorporated into the presentation, showing how the topic is connected to real people.

Some tips on using the Images Canada web site:

- Just the name can be used in a single search. Searching "peter lougheed" yields 119 photos and "herron" yields 26 photos.
- Click on "more information" under each picture to find other subject terms to use in searching. For example, you can use "dwelling" or "houses" instead of "shelter".
- Photos may be copied into another program like Word and then enlarged or printed in a landscape format if needed.

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<http://www.imagescanada.ca/r1-230-e.html>

Once each student has written up their research findings in their own words, it may be copied and pasted into a PowerPoint presentation. Students should have all information written before adding graphics and photographs or playing with the layout. The presentation should be practiced before being presented to the large group.

Assessment and Evaluation

- Students and their teacher should develop their own rubric by identifying evaluation criteria for the project that will match their own learner outcomes. This allows students to understand the expectations for their work and to have input into the ongoing evaluation process.
- Individually or in small groups, students might evaluate the work of two or three other students in order to gain insight into how their peers approached the project.
- After completing the project, students may talk or journal about what they felt they did very positively, what they had difficulty with, and how they would change how they would approach a similar project in the future.
- The final student presentations may be videotaped in order to be shared, re-examined, and evaluated. These may also be shared or evaluated along with their parents or be presented at student-led conferences.

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Ideas to Enrich this Project

- Students could undertake the project in the Oil & Gas project #3 - *Saving the Environment One Maverick at a Time... Examining Oil's Impact on the Environment and Taking Action for Conservation & Preservation.*
- Students could compare how the early oil & gas industry worked and compare it to how the modern oil & gas industry.
- Students could take on the personality and clothing of one of the Maverick characters when they present or share their stories. (See also the "Becoming a Western Legend" student activity)
- Students could create a web site for the class projects. This may provide a "real" audience to share their stories and research with.
- Students could use the real photographs from *ImagesCanada.ca* to draw mechanical reproductions of their own. They could use charcoal or pencil to achieve the black and white style, or redraw the photo in colour.
- Students could print a photo in black and white and then use watercolour paints to add colour. They may "colourize" the whole photograph or only touch up small sections or parts for emphasis. An example is the little girl's pink coat in the black and white movie *Schindler's List*.

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