THE WAR OF 1812
AN INQUIRY GUIDE
INTRODUCTION

Understanding the War of 1812 and its place in Canada’s history is an important part of a history student’s education. Being able to recognize the different perspectives, experiences, and outcomes that resulted from the War of 1812 is also important. The skills taught in this learning tool are meant to be useful to students throughout their study of history.

The War of 1812 was many things to many people living in the geographic area that was Upper and Lower Canada including the British soldiers sent to defend a distant land that was a part of the British Empire, and their American counterparts.

Formerly known as The Historica-Dominion Institute, Historica Canada is the largest independent organization dedicated to Canadian history, identity, and citizenship. Historica Canada is committed to bringing forward the stories and experiences of Canada. This guide is made possible with the generous support of the Government of Canada.

The tools provided here are supplemented with additional activities and resources at www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812. We hope that this guide will assist you in teaching and learning about this important period of Canadian history in your social studies, geography, or history classroom.

The province of Canada, 1843
Courtesy Library and Archives Canada.

The Battle of Queenston 13 October 1813
by I. W. Laird, 1836.
Courtesy Library and Archives Canada.

Announcement of the expulsion of United States citizens from Quebec City, 1812
Courtesy McCord Museum.

It Happened in Canada
Courtesy Estate of Gordon Johnston.
ANALYZING IMAGES
AND OTHER SOURCES

The ability to analyze and weigh the importance of an image or document is an essential skill for a history student to have. Historians regularly use two groups of source documents for their research. Documents created during the time period being studied are known as primary sources and can include journal and diary entries or letters. Primary sources can also be public documents such as official correspondence, newspaper photographs, or political cartoons. Documents created after the time period being studied that analyse, interpret, or offer an opinion about the historical period are called secondary sources. Examples of secondary sources include biographies, textbooks, articles, or even movies about historical events.

Determining the meaning of political cartoons can be a fun activity because they often contain humour. You can find political cartoons in your local newspaper, both print and online editions.

Activity

Take a look at the cartoons below and analyze them by using the criteria in the chart to the right. You may find this easier to do with a partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Where did the cartoon come from? Who drew it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date/Occasion</td>
<td>When did it appear? Was it made for a particular occasion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>What issue does the cartoon address?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td>Who or what is in the cartoon? Are there any symbols in the cartoon? For example, animals are often used—such as a beaver—to represent Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captions or Words</td>
<td>What is the caption or what do the characters in the cartoon say? Think about what that tells us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>After considering all of the above, what is the cartoon attempting to say? A political cartoon usually makes a comment on the issue it is about.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONSIDERING PERSPECTIVE

What perspectives are portrayed in the first cartoon? Which one is given the most importance? What would someone from the time of the War of 1812 think about these cartoons? Would they understand them?

FURTHER ACTIVITY

Review the political cartoons found in a newspaper in your area or look them up on the newspaper’s website. Watch for a week and bring to class one that you like along with a written explanation of what the cartoon means. Use the criteria chart to help you analyze it.
The body of American Brigadier-General, Zebulon Pike, who died in the 1813 Battle of York, was packed in a cask of rum before it was shipped back to Sackets Harbor, NY. Oddly enough, most of the rum was found to be gone when the cask was opened. Where did it go?

To avoid being enlisted in the militia, in 1812 and 1813, about 20 men hid in a cave near Lake Simcoe. They were eventually caught and sent to jail.

In June of 1814, there were 4,500 British regular soldiers and 3,000 Aboriginal warriors fighting in the Niagara region of Upper Canada. To feed them for one month required 149 tons of flour and 960 head of cattle!

The cost of transporting a barrel of flour 100 miles in a boat on Lake Ontario was 75 cents. To send the same barrel by land was $5.00. This is one reason why control of the lakes was so important.

In the CBC television show The Greatest Canadian, Tecumseh was 37th on the list while General Isaac Brock was 28th.

1. Who is in the painting?
2. How are the subjects portrayed?
3. What specific details stand out?
4. What was the purpose of the painting?

Consider the painting above with a partner. What message is conveyed about Brock and Tecumseh? Use the guiding questions above to help you.

Paintings and other images rarely have captions or words, so history students have to look closely at the details in the image to draw conclusions. Some questions you might ask are:

DID YOU KNOW?

History is filled with amazing facts and stories. Events like the War of 1812 continue to be a great source of interest to historians and students today. Take some time to consider these fascinating incidents:

- The body of American Brigadier-General, Zebulon Pike, who died in the 1813 Battle of York, was packed in a cask of rum before it was shipped back to Sackets Harbor, NY. Oddly enough, most of the rum was found to be gone when the cask was opened. Where did it go?
- To avoid being enlisted in the militia, in 1812 and 1813, about 20 men hid in a cave near Lake Simcoe. They were eventually caught and sent to jail.
- In June of 1814, there were 4,500 British regular soldiers and 3,000 Aboriginal warriors fighting in the Niagara region of Upper Canada. To feed them for one month required 149 tons of flour and 960 head of cattle!
- The cost of transporting a barrel of flour 100 miles in a boat on Lake Ontario was 75 cents. To send the same barrel by land was $5.00. This is one reason why control of the lakes was so important.
- In the CBC television show The Greatest Canadian, Tecumseh was 37th on the list while General Isaac Brock was 28th.

Conduct a little research of your own to find an interesting fact from the War of 1812. Sometimes interesting facts come from our own time (see the example of The Greatest Canadian) while others will be from the period of the War of 1812.

Present your findings on an index card. One side could state the fact and, if you like, the other side could have an illustration.

SUGGESTIONS

Begin by researching specific people such as Isaac Brock, Joseph Brant, or Laura Secord—among the many figures from the war. Additionally, look through the index of any book about the War of 1812 and keep your eye out for interesting sub-topics. Look through www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812 and visit The Canadian Encyclopedia to begin your research. For an extra challenge, try to learn something about a lesser-known figure from the War of 1812.
INQUIRY INVESTIGATION PROJECT OF THE WAR OF 1812

The War of 1812 is an important and interesting episode in Canadian history. The personalities, battles, and concerns raised by the war continue to be topics of discussion more than 200 years later.

One way of learning more about a subject is to conduct your own research and investigation about a specific area of interest. This is often called an “inquiry project.” An “inquiry project” includes asking a question, and using your research to answer it, and presenting your findings in a “product” format. Visit www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812 for a downloadable checklist that will provide you with further guidance as you do your research.

QUESTIONS

In an “inquiry project” it is important that you develop good questions that are of interest to you. Here are some sample inquiry questions:

- Why is Laura Secord a hero? Is her story true?
- If the United States had more troops in North America than the British, why did they not win the war?
- Did the War of 1812 have an effect on my region?
- What was it like to live in British North America during the War of 1812?

Some questions may be easier than others to find answers. If you have difficulty, you can always choose another question. Above all, think of a question that is particularly interesting to you. Check out Historica Canada’s 1812 website for facts, stories, and pictures: www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812

GETTING STARTED

It might be a good idea to get into a group of four and develop a list of questions about the War of 1812. From there, you can decide what you want to investigate on your own.

DON’T FORGET!

Remember that your topic sentence should be an opinion, not a statement of fact. Ask yourself if anyone could disagree with your topic sentence. If the answer is yes, you know you have something that is an opinion.

When using evidence, be as specific as possible. Use statistics or quotations from your research to support your opinion. Consider including two good examples or evidence in your paragraph. A great source of evidence is primary sources. You can find links to a number of sources here: www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812

STEPS

1. Think about what interests you about the subject, in this case the War of 1812. Develop questions you would like answered. What is it exactly that you wonder about?

2. Make a list of sources you could use to help you answer your questions. This could include certain books and articles, websites, visits to historic sites, or people you know. Visit www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com or www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812 to get started.

3. Conduct your investigation. Make your research notes. Come up with an answer to your question.

4. Work with your teacher to decide on a “product”—the way you will present what you have learned. Will it be a poster board, map, timeline, a short written piece, a storyboard, song, cartoon, or speech? The number of products is unlimited, but you and your teacher should choose one that is right for you and your subject.

5. Share your findings and rough draft of your “product” to get feedback from classmates or the teacher.

6. Improve your “product” based on the feedback you receive.

7. Present the final version of what you learned.

WHILE INVESTIGATING

Keep a short journal of your experiences as you investigate your topic. Each day that you work on your project, note down successes, challenges, and any further questions that come up as you do your research.

AFTERWARD

When your research is complete, reflect on your learning experience. What was your greatest success? What challenges did you face and how did you deal with them? What conclusions did you draw about your subject? Write your observations in your journal.

CRITICAL THINKING: WRITING A POSITION PARAGRAPH

It is important to be able to express your opinion in writing. In this activity, you will have the chance to take a stand on an issue related to the War of 1812. First, let’s look at how a position paragraph can be set up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTS OF THE PARAGRAPH</th>
<th>INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic Sentence</td>
<td>The first sentence of your paragraph should say what your opinion is on the topic you have selected.</td>
<td>I believe the War of 1812 was a significant moment in Canadian history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence and Examples</td>
<td>In this part of your paragraph, you need to give one or two facts that help to support your opinion.</td>
<td>One of the reasons I believe this is because the outcome of the war meant British North America would remain British rather than becoming American.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Give some analysis or explanation of the meaning of your evidence.</td>
<td>Had the war been lost, the United States could have controlled what is now Ontario and Quebec and possibly more territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding Sentence</td>
<td>Tie it all together with a sentence concluding your paragraph.</td>
<td>The outcome makes it clear that the War of 1812 was a crucial moment in Canada’s past.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOPICS (INQUIRY PROJECT CONTINUED)

Sometimes it can be a challenge to decide what to write about. Below are a few topics to get you started, but you can write about anything as long as you are taking a position on the topic.

- Evaluate the contribution of a historical figure. Was the contribution of that person significant? For what reason?

- What was the most important event in the War of 1812?

- Has a topic or person been overlooked? Explain why.

- Is it important to remember the War of 1812?

RESEARCH TIPS

Once you have your topic, it will be time for research. Here are a few research tips, along with suggestions on where to begin.

- Search topics or any of the figures from the War of 1812 online at The Canadian Encyclopedia. At the end of the main article on the War of 1812 is a list of links to further resources.

- Refer back to other Education Guides in the War of 1812 series from Historica Canada, available at www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812. Check out the Heritage Minutes on the War of 1812 online.

- Get a book from your school or local library. Use the index at the back or the table of contents to direct you to specific information.

- When taking notes, put them in point form and use your own words as much as possible. Any notes that you copy word for word should be in quotations marks and include the page number that you copied them from.

- Use the timeline on Historica Canada’s War of 1812 website for an overview of events from before, during, and after the War at www.HistoricaCanada.ca/1812.

POSITION PARAGRAPH CHECKLIST

Use this organizer to help you track your progress in your position paragraph.

Here are the topics I am thinking about:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

Sources I have consulted or plan to consult are:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

My outline to present the results of my study is as follows:
1. Topic sentence:
2. Evidence:
3. Conclusion:

My rough draft was read by:
1. __________________________

Ways to improve my project before handing in the final version:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________

INQUIRY INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

Use this organizer to help you track your progress in your inquiry investigation project.

Here are the questions I am thinking about:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

Sources I have consulted or plan to consult are:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

My rough ideas to present my topic include:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

My teacher and I decided on this product:
1. __________________________

The rough draft of my product was presented to:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

Ways to improve my product before handing in the final version:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________