

Montana Fur Trade: Four Square Primary Source Lesson Plan

Content & Organization

The unit is comprised of the following four main sections:

1. A Teacher Background Section that includes: A) the contextual historical information necessary to link specific primary source documents with a larger historical narrative; and, B) a well-defined correlation between the lesson and the National Standards for History Unit Objectives;
2. Primary Source based unit/lesson plan. The length of the lesson/unit will depend on the class and the amount of homework the teacher wishes to assign – usually four to five days.
3. Student resources consisting of primary source documents and links, lesson-related handouts (and worksheets (or links to them), other related-background materials and links, and a bibliography.

Context & Rationale

Teachers can use this unit in a variety of ways, but it is geared towards a Montana History class/section at the high school level. This unit serves as an introduction to the fur trade in Montana.

Chronologically, this unit follows the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and serves as an introduction to the Montana gold rush as well as the Treaty Era between the United States and the American Indian tribes in Montana and surrounding states.

The structure of the unit is very flexible. Teachers may use resources they see fit based on their intentions and needs. There are a number of optional resources that can be explored as well as opportunities for extension too.

Historical Background Information

The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806 brought the first group of white explorers into present day Montana. Not long after the Expedition, fur trappers and traders arrived in Montana. The fur trade was the beginning of a new economy based on using and exploiting the natural resources that Montana had to offer. The trappers came into the area looking for beaver and, eventually, bison, most of which was for the profit of people living far away. Furthermore, the fur trade era impacted the native people of the region in many ways, as well as, created a new series of conflicts between Indian tribes in this area. (Holmes, 2008)

By 1840's the fur trade was dwindling – the beaver supplies were declining and the popularity of the beaver hat was fading. The trapping moved to bison (mt.gov, 2011). In 1840 the American Fur Company shipped 67,000 bison robes to market in St. Louis. By the early 1870's the hunt reached about 1.5 million per year. Around 1878, the bison herds were wiped out. Trappers brought alcohol, disease, Christianity,

and a new economic system to the Indian people already living in the region; however, perhaps the most devastating result of the fur trade for Indian people was the eventual decimation of the bison, an animal they depended on for their survival. (Holmes, 2008)

United States History Standards

The lesson contained will emphasize the development of several key historical skills prioritized in the 5-12 *National History Standards: Era 4* (National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA , 1996)

- Standard 1: United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans
 - 1A: The student understands the international background and the consequences of the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the Monroe Doctrine.
 - 1B: The student understands federal and state Indian policy and the strategies for survival forged by Native Americans.
- Standard 2: How the industrial revolution, increasing immigration, the rapid expansion of slavery, and the westward movement changed the lives of Americans and led toward regional tensions.
 - 2E: The student understands the settlement of the West.
- Standard 4: The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period.
 - 4B: The student understands how American strived to reform society and create a distinct culture.

Investigative/Essential Questions

The primary purpose of this unit is to delve into the long range impacts of the fur trade on Montana, its resources, and people. The more specific investigative questions are:

1. How did beaver change the history of Montana? (Standard 1A)
2. In what ways were the Indian people involved in the fur trade? (Standard 1B)
3. What induced the shift in the marked from beaver to bison? (Standard 2E)
4. Who were the “Black Robes” and what influence did they have on Indian living in Montana during this time? (Standard 4B)

Lesson Scope/Focus

Students will be looking at a variety of journals, pictures, stories, and biographies that influenced the fur trade in Montana. They will choose four specific areas to explore in-depth. They will then create a 4 Square display (folded piece of construction paper) of the information they discovered.

Learning Outcomes

- Analyze, classify, and interpret information leading up to and resulting from the fur trade in Montana.
- Identify early explorers and describe their impact on the development of Montana(e.g. fur trade explorers)
- Assess some of the consequences, specifically, religious and political, of American Indian and European interactions during this time period.

Procedures:

DAYS 1 & 2:

Introduction/Warm-up – KWL about the fur trade. Picture, text & timeline examination on pages 80 and 81 in *Montana: Stories of the Land* textbook.

- Ask students to make at least two of the following observations from the Primary Source Toolbox (Riley, 2011):
 - What strikes you in examining this picture?
 - What sorts of things leap out at you?
 - What grabs your attention?

Activities – Jigsaw reading of Chapter 5 of *Montana: Stories of the Land*

- Divide students into 4 or 5 groups (depending on class size) so that there are approximately 5 students in each group – the following is an example of dividing the chapter among 4 groups:
 - Section Group 1: Read pgs. 82-84 (Stop at *Americans Join...*) and become an expert on your assigned section.
 - Section Group 2: Read pgs. 84 (*Americans join..*) through pg. 88 (stop at *The Trapping Way...*)
 - Section Group 3: Read pgs. 88 (*The Trapping Way...*) through pg. 91 (stop at bottom of page 91)
 - Section Group 4: Read pgs. 92 (*The Impact of the Fur Trade...*) through the end of pg. 96
- Each Section Group will need to write an 8 to 10 sentence summary of their section of reading – they will share this summary and other information with their Chapter Group. They need their summary of their section ready to share with their Chapter Group on Day 2.

(Day 2) Jigsaw Discussion/Teaching – Within each group assign each student a Letter (A-E). The letter will be their Chapter Group – they will be sharing their section information with their Chapter Group.

- A's, B's, C's, etc. will get together and share their information with the rest of the members within their groups so that, by the end, each students has all of the information for all of Ch. 5.

DAYS 3 & 4:

Introduction/Warm-up – Have students get into their Chapter Groups and share the information they each learned from their section of reading.

Activities – Now that students have the background information on the fur trade in Montana, students will choose 4 primary sources from the Fur Trade – two journals and two pictures. Show and explain example 4 Square activity. Go over the directions with students.

- Take large piece of construction paper – fold the paper in half. Students will put their primary source evaluations in the four squares (two on the front and two on the back).
- Square #1 & 2: Have students choose **two** diary/journal entry from the following website:
<http://www.mtmen.org/mtman/mmarch.html>
 - Choose two diary/journal entries – highlight each, copy and paste into a Word processing document and print each.
 - Staple them to the first two squares.
 - Under each stapled diary/journal, students will create **Dialectical Journals**:
 - Students will create a dialogue with the textual information. Select phrases they find important or interesting on the left side of the paper and create a reaction or opinion to the phrase. Must have at least 6 phrases & reactions. (synthesize)
- Square #3 & 4: Students will choose two pictures from the reading, websites, and/or classroom resources, print the pictures, paste them to squares 3 and 4.
 - They will fill out the **Stepping into a Picture** worksheet (attached) for each.
 - Staple the completed picture analysis to each related “square”.
- For further clarification of how the completed activity looks, please see student samples.

Discussion/Closure –**Each day**, close the class with the following question:

- What did you find out today that you didn’t know, or that challenges something you thought you knew?
 - Each day have them add what they have “learned” to their KWL from Day 1.
- Discuss the essential questions and their understanding of them.

DAY 4 (AND POSSIBLY 5):

Introduction/Warm-up – Peer Evaluations – explain the process for peer evaluation.

Activities – Students will rotate and evaluate three of their peer’s Four Square projects. They should do the following for **each** peer evaluation:

- Describe in detail the 4 sources your peer evaluated.
- Make at least two observations – what strikes you in reading the document? What sorts of things leap out at you? What grabs your attention?
- Ask two or more questions – what puzzles you? What don’t you get? What do we need to talk about & try to figure out?
- Note one or more connections - What connections do you see? Does this source remind you of a source or issue from another historical era? Does this source remind you of a source or issue from contemporary times?
- What do you find out here that you didn’t know, or that challenges something you thought you knew?

Discussion - Write an 8-10 sentence summary of the overall significance of the fur trade. Have them integrate their understanding of the essential questions into their summary. They should be able to: discuss how beaver changed the history of Montana, evaluate the contributions of the American Indians to the fur trade. Examine the shift in the fur trade market, as well as the influence that Christian missionaries had on the American Indians living here during and after the fur trade. After students have written their summary, have them share it with a partner. Then as a pair, they will share their learning with the class. Finally, have students complete their individual KWL and discuss the class KWL as a wrap up for the Fur Trade chapter/era.

Assessment Rubric

Use the following rubric to assess each of the four squares and student understanding and integration of essential questions into four square project. Each square/source is worth 10 points – add together for a total of 50 points on the assignment.

	Exemplary (9-10 pts)	Adequate (8 pts)	Minimal (7pts)	Attempted (6 pts)
Analysis of Document	Offers in-depth analysis and interpretation of the document; distinguishes between fact and opinion; explores reliability of author; compares and contrasts author's point of view with views of others.	Offers accurate analysis of the document.	Demonstrates only a minimal understanding of the document.	Reiterates one or two facts from the document but does not offer any analysis or interpretation of the document.
Understanding of the Essential Questions	Offers an in-depth understanding of essential questions – is able to integrate their answers into their 4 Square and orally discusses the overall impact of the fur trade on Montana people, wildlife, and environment.	Offers accurate understanding of essential questions.	Demonstrates only a minimal understanding of the essential questions.	Does not offer any understanding of the essential questions.
Knowledge of Historical Content	Shows evidence of thorough knowledge of time period associated with source; relates primary source to specific historical context of the era.	Uses previous general historical knowledge to examine issues included in the source.	Limited use of previous historical knowledge without complete accuracy.	Barely indicates any previous historical knowledge.
Identification of Key Issues/Main Points	Identifies the key issues and main points included in the primary source; shows understanding of the author's/photographer's goal(s).	Identifies most but not all of the key issues and main points in the primary source.	Describes in general terms one issue or concept included in the primary source.	Deals only briefly and vaguely with the key issues and main points in the document.
Understanding of Audience	Show strong understanding of the author's/photographer's audience.	Show some understanding of the author's/photographer's audience.	Shows little understanding of the author's/photographer's audience.	Show no understanding of the author's/photographer's audience.

Possible Extension Assignments

Teachers may use the following activities as extension assignments to provide a more in-depth understanding of the Fur Trade era (or other eras as well).

1. **Questions** – Create 6 questions about terms, ideas, or characters. The questions may be directed to the author or a character or about the material. Justify why you would like to ask that question. (analyze)
2. **Summarize** – Write a one page (typed) summary of the main ideas or key points. Retell **in your own words** your understanding of the topic. (recall)
3. **Flow Chart** – Make a chronological depiction of major events. You may make a storyboard explaining the sequence of events. Must include at least 7 events and 4 pictures. Do not copy the timeline at the beginning of the chapter or you will receive a ZERO. (application)
4. **Comparison Chart** – Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting two subjects of the time period. Your diagram should be full of information. (interpretation)
5. **Editorial Cartoon** – Create an editorial cartoon or political cartoon about the topic or a character in the reading. Under your cartoon write your message or explain your interpretation of the issue. (analyze)
6. **Cause and Effect Chart**: Design a cause and effect chart about some issue in the reading. You must list at least 5 causes and the effects of each. (analyze)
7. **Letter to the Editor**: Create a letter to the editor about a controversial issue in the reading. (synthesize)

Links to Resources:

Primary Sources:

1. Picture Resources (teachers may print pictures or direct students to websites to choose their own):
 - a. <http://popartmachine.com/artwork/LOC+1075337/0/The-Summer-Rendezvous.-Ashley-was-the-first-to-establish-the-summer...-painting-artwork-print.jpg>
 - b. Broadside Announcing the Auction of Buffalo Robes, 1877. Montana Historical Society Research Center. Archives.
http://montanahistoricalsociety.org/education/textbook/Chapter5/Ch05-1_BuffaloRobes.pdf
 - c. Mountain Men and the Fur Trade: <http://www.mtmen.org/>
2. Journal/Diary Resources
 - a. Library of Western Fur Trade Historical Source Documents: Diaries, Narratives, and Letters of the Mountain Men: <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/mmarch.html>
 - b. Mountain Men and the Fur Trade : <http://www.mtmen.org/>
 - c. Lewis and Clark Journals: <http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/>
3. Montana Historical Society Footlocker – teachers in Montana can sign up to have the footlocker of artifacts sent directly to their school:
<http://montanahistoricalsociety.org/education/footlocker/FurTrading.pdf>

Secondary Sources:

4. *Montana: Stories of the Land* Ch. 5
<http://montanahistoricalsociety.org/education/textbook/Chapter5/Chapter5.asp>

Teaching Resources:

1. Written Document Analysis Worksheet (National Archives Worksheets)
<http://montanahistoricalsociety.org/education/textbook/WrittenDocAnalysis.pdf>
2. Photograph Analysis Worksheet (National Archives Worksheets)
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf
3. Primary Source Toolbox (Riley, 2011)
http://biographiesofthenation.pbworks.com/f/Riley_Jun14_I_LP.pdf

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