
LESSON PLAN FOR

NAVIGATION VIDEO: “WHAT WERE THE VESSELS LIKE THAT CAPTAIN VANCOUVER SAILED IN?”

Lesson Overview

Learn more about the vessels that Captain Vancouver and his crew used to sail to the Pacific Northwest Coast. This lesson introduces students to the design challenges and evolution of shipbuilding.

Resources:

- Video “What were the vessels like that Captain Vancouver sailed in?”
- Review questions worksheet for students

Lesson Learnings

Inquiry Question:

- What were the vessels like that Captain Vancouver sailed in?

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the various roles of crew members on Captain Vancouver’s ships.
- Explain late 1700s European ship design, and detail how improvements allowed Captain Vancouver to cross the ocean.
- Compare Captain Vancouver’s vessels to other ships.

Key Terms and Figures:

- *HMS Discovery*
- *HMS Chatham*

Activate Prior Knowledge

Begin this activity by asking students to form small groups. Ask each group to make a list of different types of seagoing vessels — something that could transport people across water. Challenge students to think of examples from various cultures and periods of time (for e.g., cruise ship, ferry, canoe, kayak, junks, coracles, raft, cargo ship, or oil tanker).

Then, ask students to analyze their lists using one or several of the following prompts:

- How could you categorize the vessels in your list? Is there a second way they could be categorized? (for e.g., by size, material, purpose, time period).
- Which vessel from your list do you think Captain Vancouver and his crew would have sailed on and why? Are there any disadvantages to this type of vessel?
- If you were to cross the ocean today, which vessel would you use and why?

Watch *Changing Perspectives* Video

Resource: accompanying review questions worksheet

Watch the video “What were the vessels like that Captain Vancouver sailed in?” as a class:

<https://changing-perspectives.grmdgs.com/en/contexte-context/>

Video Worksheet

Ask students to answer the following questions, as written answers using the worksheet or as think-pair-share. These questions build from direct recall to active critical thinking.

Possible answers in red.

1. What makes these ships move? **Wind**
2. List two materials described in the video, and why a shipbuilder would choose them.

Material	Purpose
White Oak	For strength; resistance to rot
Sitka Spruce	Masts could bend without breaking in heavy winds
Copper Sheathing	Prevent against pest teredo worm. Helps ship sail faster.

Tar Covered Hemp Rope	Waterproofing
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3. How did ship design change over time?
 - More masts and sails over time, bigger vessels, enclosed decks.
4. a) Name and describe both vessels on Captain Vancouver's voyage.
 - *HMS Discovery* and *HMS Chatham*. *HMS Discovery* was a larger fully-rigged ship. *HMS Chatham* was a smaller brig. Both were 'sloops of war'

b) Why do you think they sailed with two ships?

 - In case one sank, back-up vessel, to bring more crew, smaller *HMS Chatham* could go on smaller waterways
5. Why did these ships have large crews?
 - Needed carpenters for repairs, seamen had to climb up the masts to change the sails, sailmakers to repair sails.
6. Why do you think Vancouver brought ships with large guns and crew to operate them?
 - Possible answers: anticipating conflict; scare others; display of power
7. Why are square sails uncommon today?
 - Not as fast as triangular sails, and require more crew.
 - Additional reasons: Options of generators and engines to power ships instead of sails that require even less crew and are faster.

Analysis Prompts

These additional prompts challenge students to further analyze what they've learned from the video. These questions ask students to reflect on the practice of history and incorporate evidence to justify their claims. In some cases, students may benefit from further resources to explore these questions.

1. These ships cost a lot of money to build and operate. Why do you think the Europeans were willing to pay for these expensive ships?
2. Captain Vancouver's ships were both outfitted with guns. Argue for or against bringing these guns on their expedition.
3. What kinds of vessels are used in exploration today? How are these vessels similar or different to Captain Vancouver's vessels?
 - Examples of 21st century exploration: space exploration; deep-sea exploration; Arctic and Antarctic explorations; mountains; deserts; etc.

4. a) For Captain Vancouver's expedition, what do you think are the three most important qualities of the ships' design? What strategies could a ship builder use to build these into the design?
b) Name a type of modern vessel. What do you think are the three most important qualities of this vessel's design? Compare these answers to your response for Captain Vancouver's ships.

Wrap Up Discussion

Wrap up your lesson with a reflective discussion. Ask students to give answers to the following questions, either as a class, in small groups, or as an independent writing exercise.

- Draw a picture that shows 3 things you learned in this lesson.
- How are the brigs in this video different than today's ships?

Creative & Inquiry Project Ideas

Explore the following creative activities with your students, either as written answers, group discussion, or projects:

- These ships were incredibly large and stood out on the horizon. Draw and write a description about what you think it would have been like in the late 1700s to see one of these for the first time.
- Research another ocean-crossing vessel that is in use today. Compare and contrast the vessel with the *HMS Discovery*. Look into the namesake of your vessel.
 - If you are local to BC, you could look at the BC Ferries fleet:
<https://www.bcferry.com/on-the-ferry/our-fleet>