

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES
Teacher's Guide for
Theme 1: The Story Before Vancouver
Video “What attracted the Europeans to the Pacific Northwest Coast?”

Overview:

This video investigates what motivations and historical, political, and social developments brought European explorers to the Pacific Northwest Coast from the late 1500s to late 1700s. Students are introduced to the search for the Northwest Passage, the development of the maritime fur trade on the Pacific Northwest Coast, and conflict over land claims in Yuquot. The lesson sets the stage for Captain Vancouver's arrival by introducing how larger European politics came to a head at Yuquot for control of the Pacific Northwest.

This guide gives suggestions suitable for Grades 4-12 Social Studies students (see the BC Curriculum Connections Chart for further details). Teachers are invited to review and customize these suggestions based on curriculum guidelines, grade level, and student needs.

Resources:

- Video “[What attracted the Europeans to the Pacific Northwest Coast?](#)”
- Review questions worksheet for students

Thematic Question:

- What brought Europeans to the Northwest Coast?

Learning Objectives:

- Identify European explorers who came to the Pacific Northwest prior to Captain Vancouver.
- Describe what the idea of the Northwest Passage was and why it was sought after.
- Describe the role of trade in European exploration of Pacific Northwest.
- Connect regional conflicts on the Pacific Northwest Coast to global rivalries between colonial empires.

Key terms and Figures:

- **Northwest Passage:** A theoretical shorter sea route connecting Europe to Asia. However, it proved difficult to find and packed sea ice made it difficult to

navigate the Arctic. It wasn't until 1906 that the first successful crossing of the Northwest Passage was made. As sea ice declines, the waterways have become more passable.

- **Yuquot:** Located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, Yuquot has an ongoing tradition as a gathering place for the Mowachaht/Muchalaht and Nuuchahnulth First Nations. Yuquot was a site of early contact between the First Nations and European explorers. At the time of Cook and Vancouver's voyages, this location was known as "Nootka" to the British.
- **John Meares:** c. 1756 – 1809; British maritime fur trader. Meares traded for furs along the Northwest Coast to sell in China. He based his operations in Yuquot, claiming he had bought land from Chief Maquinna to build a British trading post. Chief Maquinna later denied these transactions. The Spanish argued these land claims were a lie and used force to try to take possession of the cove. This event is known as the Nootka Crisis. Meares returned to England to report the injustices he'd suffered and to ask for help from the British government.
- **Captain Esteban José Martínez:** c. 1742-1798; Spanish explorer and navigator. Captain Martínez is most strongly associated with Spanish exploration of the Pacific Northwest. In 1789, Martínez was ordered to occupy Yuquot and establish Spanish influence in the area.
- **Nootka Crisis:** A dispute between Spain and Britain over who should have control over Yuquot, known as Nootka at the time, nearly leading to a war. Worried about Britain's supposed land claims in Yuquot, two Spanish warships led by Captain Martínez arrived in 1789 to take possession of the cove. They accused British fur traders of trespassing on Spanish territory, seized British ships and arrested their crews. During the disputes, Chief Callicum was killed by the Spanish. Both Britain and Spain prepared for war.

Sample Lesson Plan

Part 1: Activate Prior Knowledge

Intended audience: Grades 4-12

Use any of the following questions for group discussion or as think-pair-share.

Students could draw a mind map to keep track of words and ideas.

- During this time, there were rumours of a “Northwest Passage”. What do you know about the Northwest Passage? Why do you think they were looking for it? Why was it hard to find?
- What do you think the English in the late 1700s knew about the Pacific Northwest?
- Ask students to compare and contrast what it might have been like to come from 1700s London to the Pacific Northwest Coast for the first time. For example:
 - Imagine living in late 1700s London. What would your daily surroundings look like? What were buildings made of? What elements of nature would be around you? What kinds of smells and sounds would you encounter in your daily life?
 - Now, imagine you sailed to the Pacific Northwest coast for the very first time. How would this landscape be different from back home? What sights are different? What smells and sounds? Is anything familiar? What's most unfamiliar?
- Some major events highlighted in this lesson's video took place at Yuquot, on the west side of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Using Google Maps or Google Earth, locate Yuquot and spend some time looking at the area around it. Based on the surrounding place names, what groups do you think have influenced the history of this area?

Part 2: Watch *Changing Perspectives* Video

Intended audience: Grades 4-12

Watch the “What attracted the Europeans to the Pacific Northwest Coast?”

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

Part 3: Review Questions

Intended audience: Grades 4-12

Resource: accompanying review questions 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 was Captain Cook looking for? Where did he think it was?
 - He was looking for the Northwest Passage, and thought it was up north in the Arctic (above 71° North)
2. Who was the first European to visit the Sandwich Islands? What are these islands known as today?
 - Captain Cook and his crew. The Sandwich Islands are now known as Hawaii.
3. What resource was worth a lot of money in China?
 - Sea otter pelts
4. What kinds of knowledge were brought back to Europe from these trips?
 - Knowledge about trade networks, about other people, charts of the coast, sea otter pelts worth a lot of money in China.
5. How did First Nations and European groups participate in the early west coast fur trade?
 - Hint: timestamp [04:35-04:45]
 - Europeans: a new market, iron [trade good], established trade networks
 - First Nations: established trade networks, routes, hunting knowledge, chiefs gained influence and wealth through trades
6. Once Europeans arrived in the Pacific Northwest Coast, did their motivations change? Why did they keep coming back?
 - They were economically motivated to keep returning to acquire more valuable pelts, and to compete for ownership of the region.
7. Compare and contrast the agendas of different groups on the west coast (British, Spanish, Indigenous communities). Identify some sources of conflict and cooperation based on these agendas.
 - Tip: Use a visual organizer or venn diagram.
 - Sources of conflict: control of territory and control of trade as seen in the Nootka Crisis.
 - Sources of cooperation: Trading, making the maps together, sharing information.
 - Indigenous communities might want to initially contribute to trade for access to goods, but also were wary of the well-being of their communities and surrounding environment with the arrival of these newcomers.
 - British and Spanish both want control of the region for economic gain. Also want to map the region to learn more about it.

Part 4: Analysis Prompts

Intended audience: Grades 8-12

These additional prompts expand on the review questions above, and ask students to further analyze what they've learned from the video, either as written responses or discussion. 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. Expansion ideas might include asking students to debate opposing views, think/pair/share, or write in-depth essays.

1. What can we learn from historical drawings made by the ship's artist on Cook's expedition (see timestamp 2:53 in the video for John Weber's drawings)? What can't we learn? Are these drawings biased?
2. Why were furs such a lucrative trade product in this time period? How did global forces impact the local supply and trade of sea otters?
3. Who benefited more from the late 1700s fur trade on the west coast: Europeans or Indigenous Peoples?
4. What examples of globalization do you see in this video? Is this process ongoing today? What evidence do you have to support your position?
5. Take a look at the image of the map in the artifact section of this part of the website . Compare Russia and Asia on the left with North America on the right. What can we learn about European understanding of the western side of North America from this map?

Part 5: Wrap Up Discussion

Intended audience: Grades 4-12

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.

- Do you think that these events are still relevant for Canadians today? Why or why not?
- Did you learn anything that surprised you?

Further Learning Activities (Beyond the Video)

Creative Activities

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

- What were fur trader attitudes towards natural resources? Do you think they would have kept exploring in Pacific Northwest Coast if it wasn't for these natural resources?
- Listen to Stan Roger's song, "Northwest Passage" with your class. What perspectives and bias are represented in this song? Are any important perspectives missing? Ask students to write an additional verse based on what they've learnt about the Northwest Passage, or to critique the song's lyrics.
- Divide students into small groups, and ask each group to present a delegation to the monarch of a hypothetical European country that they will be the ones to find the Northwest Passage. Students should consider the following: Why should your monarch choose to fund your delegation? What resources do you have that will make you successful? What will they gain by sponsoring your project?

Inquiry Projects

Expand on learning with an inquiry-based project, such as:

- How was the fur trade similar to other natural resource extraction initiatives? For example, you might think about the Gold Rush or the establishment of cod fisheries.
- Research a trade post that's near your location. What's involved in setting up a new trading post? What kind of goods were traded? How was the trading post integrated into previously established trade networks? Who was involved and where were they coming from? Who benefited from the post?
- Ask students to consider who owns the Northwest Passage today. Research some arguments, and break into groups to debate or create a project that supports their opinion.