

NEW HOME - Upper Canada pioneer simulation - Teacher Instructions

BACKGROUND

1. This role-play is most useful if it is preceded by one or more lessons on the immigrant and pioneer experience in Canada 1790s-1840s. For example, work connected with textbook *Horizons: Canada's Emerging Identity* p. 49-72, use of the *Canadian Scrapbook* "Pioneer Settlement," short clips from *Canada, A People's History*, class discussion about their ancestors' immigration or pioneer experiences, readings from primary sources, films about immigration such as "The Newcomers" (Irish immigration 1840s), and so on. After a few classes becoming familiar with this time period and the challenges faced by ordinary people, the role-play will make much more sense.
2. Relate a general story about the passage to Canada, e.g. a coffin ship from Ireland to Quebec City, and the journey by horse, wagon, boat, or foot from a port such as Quebec to a remote township in Upper Canada. It is relatively easy to find these kinds of stories online, e.g. Grosse Île memorial.
3. If you have student exemplars from past simulations, show them to the students and provide a rough introduction to the activity before they begin. Read from the exemplars or pass a few around.

PREPARATION

1. Print off and trim the role cards. If you plan on doing this simulation often, you may wish to have them laminated. Set aside the correct number for your class, creating a balance between wealthy and poor settlers. Wealthy settlers seem to accomplish more in this role-play, whereas the poor settlers are often motivated to catch up quickly. Too many poor and not enough development occurs; too many rich and the gameplay is too easy.
2. Print off the map file (3 x 11"x17" sheets). Trim and tape them together and place them on some poster paper. This will provide a central location to not changes in property holdings and developments that take place during the gameplay. Attach the map to the wall or chalkboard.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read at least the first part of the instructions on the New Home handout, perhaps before handing it out. Explain how big 40 hectares is compared to something they know (e.g. 500m x 800m is the equivalent of 80 soccer fields). 5 hectares is comparable to a large school property or 10 soccer fields. Speculate on what kinds of building materials, time, and effort are required to build a small house, build a fence, or clear a road right-of-way.
2. Remind them that clergy reserves and crown reserves were set aside to raise money for the government (crown reserves) and Anglican church (clergy reserves). These lands can be leased (usually a little later into the game), but not purchased.
2. Distribute role-cards randomly, balancing out wealth vs poor characters (1:2 ratio works fine). Give the students some time to chat about their characters and have a look through the handout.
3. Gather their attention and let them know that they can make any kind of deals that seem appropriate for the time, e.g. exchange labour for building materials. At some point soon after they start, they should record their land holdings and any big improvements to the township on the big map. Their handout is to be used to take notes -- their observations, deals they make, developments that take place, etc.

GAMEPLAY

1. Get them started. Don't be too worried about specific instructions, e.g. what to build or how much a hen is worth. You, or preferably the students, can invent the details as you go. If they do not jump to it, encourage them to mark their property on the big map as a way to get them moving. Nine times out of ten this activity gets going on its own without much intervention from the teacher.
2. Once they have started in on the basic requirements (clearing land, building a house), some of the students will come up with ideas for more elaborate developments such as school buildings, sawmills, general goods stores, and churches. It requires money, time, and materials to do these things, so negotiations need to take place and involve some of the wealthier settlers as patrons.
3. There is plenty of unclaimed land on the map. These can be given out by the teacher as incentives for taking on certain developments (e.g. a woodlot for a sawmill). Better yet, see if a student figures out that if they are some kind of magistrate or elected official (e.g. representative for the Legislative Assembly), they might be the one to dole out new land grants. Getting elected to office might require gathering names of supporters (or X for the illiterate ones).
4. Nudge rather than guide the progress of the township. The developments are more rewarding when they come from the students rather than the teacher -- this is the point of a role-play. This simulation takes at least an hour, and has been known to stretch out to three or more hours.

AFTERWARDS

1. Provide time for the students to talk about what happened in the role play, perhaps pair/square/share or a general class discussion. Remind them of what the follow-up assignment involves and perhaps show them some student exemplars.
2. Provide time for the students to write or create their response project. It should include a description of the journey to reach their land, a description of their land and the township, a three-month plan (how they got started), a 2-year plan (what was done to survive the first year or two), a 5-yr plan (how things turned out), and letter home to family or friends reflecting on the key outcomes of their adventure.
3. The format could be a series of letters or journal entries, or some other format (suggestions are on the handout). Two hours should be enough to get a good start on the follow-up project. Of course some will want more time to finish it. Leaving a couple of days from when they work on it until it is to be submitted is a good idea -- given them a chance to polish their project.
4. Finish with a gallery walk or class presentation, at least of some of the finished projects. Take pictures of the projects or keep some to use as exemplars. Use a self-assessment form for students to evaluate their participation in the role-play. Assess the finished follow-up project using a rubric or criteria check-list. The success of the project usually hinges on three things:
 - a) inclusion of relevant facts or observations, either taken from the gameplay or from other sources
 - b) creative writing or expression that shows that the student connected with the time period and challenges of being a pioneer
 - c) serious response to each of the steps in the simulation (arrival, description, 3 month, 2 year, 5 year, letter home)