

EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT BY EUROPEANS



INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the reasons Europeans explored and settled in what has become known as Canada. Students will come to understand the difficulties many indigenous peoples faced as a result of the arrival of the Europeans. Students will also have opportunities to learn about the Europeans themselves. The section includes these topics:

- early European explorers
- lives of early European settlers
- the effect of early European settlement on indigenous peoples
- major European settlements

Note to the teacher

Although “Canada” did not exist as a country until later in history, for the purposes of clarification this manual uses this term throughout.

Note to the teacher

Students can create their own timeline of early Canadian history. Students were introduced to timelines in the lower elementary years and are familiar with the concept by Year 4. As upper elementary students, they have the opportunity to research and choose the information that appears on a timeline and explore different methods of constructing one. The timeline activity in this section suggests making a timeline using index cards and a long roll of white paper. However, students might wish to try other materials, such as a length of black felt or several smaller pieces of paper taped or glued together. Students will also need to decide on the timeline’s dimensions. A suggested width for a timeline is 36 inches (90 cm), but length will depend in part on the amount of information being presented. The teacher may find this a valuable activity for practicing math skills such as estimation.



EARLY EUROPEAN EXPLORERS

Background Information

According to some historians, the first European arrival in North or South America happened around 600 BCE. In 1872, an inscription found in Brazil told of a Phoenician ship separated from its fleet during a storm and landing there. Historians have also found stories written by Irish monks traveling west during the 5th century, to what is now known as Newfoundland, Canada.

About 499 CE, a Buddhist monk from China, Hwei-shin, is thought to have reached the southwest coast of North America by way of the Pacific Ocean. Hwei-shin called the area he landed in “Fusang,” and he described in writing the great civilization he encountered there. According to Hwei-shin, other monks had visited Fusang before his time. After studying Hwei-shin’s writings and the many Chinese-

influenced artifacts found in the area he named Fusang, many historians today believe that Fusang was in Mexico.

Over time, other European explorers followed. This section will discuss a few of the most well known who landed in Canada before 1650 and how they influenced, as well as were influenced by, the indigenous peoples they encountered:

- the Vikings
- John Cabot
- Jacques Cartier
- Samuel de Champlain

Teachers and students will find plentiful information about other early European explorers active in Canada during that time. A chart at the end of this section summarizes these explorers according to four categories: name, where from, where explored, and some of the indigenous peoples with whom they likely came in contact. This chart of basic information can be used by students as a reference when carrying out research projects and can be added to as students carry out their own research on other early European explorers to Canada.

The Vikings

About the 9th century, the Vikings had established a large settlement in Iceland, and by the end of the century, they had also established a settlement in Greenland under the leadership of Eric Thorvaldson (c. 950–c. 1000), known as Eric the Red because of his red hair. Archeological investigation points to the arrival of Vikings in North America around the 10th century. It

is widely believed that Leif Ericsson (c. 980–c.1025), Eric the Red's son, led Viking explorers from Greenland to the coastline of Canada, and that he possibly went as far south as present-day Cape Cod in the US. It is not known for sure what brought these Vikings to North America, but some historians believe the Vikings wanted to explore areas west of Greenland in order to expand their territories and seek new supplies of game and wood. These Vikings eventually traveled to areas they named Helluland (Stone Land) and Markland (Forest Land) — part of Canada today known as Baffin Island and Labrador.

In addition to finding Viking dwelling sites, archeologists have found Viking artifacts in winter houses believed inhabited by indigenous peoples such as the Inuit. Some archeologists believe that the first European child born in North America may have been a Viking boy named Snorri. Snorri's father was Thorfinn Karlsefni, and his mother was named Gudrid. **Viking sagas**, stories passed down orally, recounted the history of Viking families and their voyages. These sagas were eventually recorded, and according to some, Snorri was three years old when the Vikings abandoned their efforts to **colonize**, establish permanent settlement in another land, and returned to Greenland.

Other Viking sagas tell of expeditions made by more of Eric the Red's family members to a place called Vinland the Good. Historians and archeologists are still debating the exact location of Vinland. Some historians have placed Vinland in Newfoundland, some in present-day New Jersey, and some in the Bahamas and Brazil. In 1960, archeologist Anne Stine and



Monument of Leif Ericsson

her husband Helge Ingstad found evidence of a Viking settlement in L'Anse aux Meadows on the northern tip of Newfoundland. These archeologists found buildings, tools, and other artifacts indicating that Vikings had lived there for approximately 15 years.

Because the climate and geography of the area do not match the descriptions in the Viking sagas, many historians believe that L'Anse aux Meadows is not Vinland, but a northern entry to the Vinland region, with Vinland itself likely located between the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and Maine. In 1978, L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland was made a national park and a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site. Wherever Vinland was located, what is true is that Vikings explored parts of Canada long before other Europeans arrived. After the Vikings, Canada would not see another European for several hundred years.

Did you know?

The name L'Anse aux Meadows began as a French term, "l'anse aux méduses," or "jellyfish cove." Over time, "méduses" was misspelled and translated incorrectly into English, becoming "meadows."

John Cabot

In Europe, merchants and rulers wanted to find a shorter route to the riches of Asia, and many explorers set out to find this route. One such explorer was John Cabot (c. 1450–1499) from Italy, who sailed under the flag of England. King Henry VII (1457–1509) and several English business owners had commissioned Cabot to find a quick way to the Far East. Cabot was granted a **charter**, a written, legal contract between an explorer or company and a country's ruler. A charter gave the explorer or company the right to explore and settle land in the ruler's name and granted privileges such as making profits and creating laws in the new land. In 1497, when Cabot arrived at what was most likely Newfoundland, he thought he had arrived in China. With excitement, Cabot planted a flag to claim the land in the name of England. He called the land "new found isle," but the British documented it as "new found launde." In this way, Canada's recorded history began with the arrival of John Cabot on June 24, 1497.

Cabot reported back to England that the sea of the newly claimed land was teeming with cod. One story told in England was that the ocean off the coast of Canada was

ACTIVITY 1

Creating a Timeline of Early European Explorers in Canada

Purpose

To create a visual representation of some major events and people of Canadian history from 950–1650 CE.

Material

Timeline of People.

Globe or map.

Chart, Examples of early European explorers in Canada.

Reference materials.

Small blank index cards.

Ruler, scissors.

Black felt marker.

Coloring pencils or markers.

Long roll of white paper.

Reusable, removable adhesive.

Canadian History journals and pencils.

Presentation

- Most Montessori teachers introduce this concept in Year 4 and present it in more detail in Years 5 and 6. This activity can be done in parts.
- Announce that the students will have an opportunity to make a timeline showing what Canada and its people were like in the time of the early European explorers.



INTRODUCTION

- Explain that in the thousand or so years up to 1650, and especially during the 1500s, a number of early European explorers reached Canada.
- Demonstrate the Timeline of People. Invite the students to show this time period on the timeline.
- Demonstrate the globe. Invite the students to identify Canada on the globe, then discuss what Canada's geography and climate was like in the thousand years up to 1650.
- Demonstrate the chart, Examples of early European explorers. Read aloud the four pieces of information given about the Vikings on the chart, adding some interesting details about the information in each column.
- Ask the students to trace the route the Vikings might have taken from Greenland

to Newfoundland, and discuss what challenges these explorers might have faced during their voyages.

- Repeat this process with the other explorers shown on the chart, emphasizing that these are just some examples of early European explorers who reached Canada.

CREATING A TIMELINE

- Demonstrate the length of paper, ruler, and marker. Ask the students to use the ruler and marker to draw a line down the length of the paper, then mark years along the line in intervals of 100 years, starting with 650 BCE and ending with 1650 CE.
- Ask the students to make a label for the timeline (e.g., Timeline of the Early European Explorers in Canada).
- Demonstrate the reference materials. Encourage the students to refer to the materials as they undertake research on the early European explorers.
- Ask the students to form groups, then select one explorer from the chart to research in more detail.
- Encourage the students to use the chart information as a base, then find five or more new facts about their chosen explorer, such as year of birth, year of death, how the person died, major accomplishments, places named after the person, and so on.
- Ask the students to copy their facts onto the index cards. (Decide ahead of time

whether this information should be presented in point form or in sentences. Ask the students to be consistent, whichever form is chosen.)

- Invite the students to make a picture card to accompany each information card. A picture card can illustrate one of the facts shown on the card (e.g., for John Cabot, a map showing the location of Cabot Strait). Pictures may be hand-drawn or copied from reference material.
- Invite the students to use the reusable, removable adhesive to attach the information cards and pictures to the long strip of paper in chronological order. Students may refer to the chart for self-correction.

Extensions

- Research two or more early European explorers not on the chart, then add their information to the chart and to the timeline.
- Create a collage illustrating events and individuals from one point on the timeline.
- Using the Six W's, write a research report on a European who explored parts of Canada in the 1500s. Include information about the indigenous peoples the explorer contacted and how they influenced and affected each other.
- Write and act out a play about a major event in the life of one of the early European explorers in Canada.