

## **Caption Me**

**Concept(s)** Historical Perspectives

**Prepared for Grade(s)** 11

**Province** BC

**By** J M

**Time Period(s)** 1700-1800, 1900-present

**Time allotment** 2 x 80 minute classes

### **Brief Description of the Task**

Students will look at different visual texts of fur clothing from the 18th century fur trade era to present day and write captions for each image.

### **Required Knowledge & Skills**

1. Have an understanding of the fur trade and the role of fur in Canada in the 18th century.
2. Have practice in deconstructing visual texts.

### **Detailed Instructions**

#### LESSON #1

Key question: How has the role of fur changed from the 1700s to present day?

1. Distribute the handout "Fur Perspectives (Chart)" and a booklet of images from attachments "furpsec1.jpg", "furspec2.jpg", "furspec3.jpg". \*Other visual texts demonstrating the same idea may be used.

2. With the class establish their base knowledge of the historic role of the fur trade in the 1700s through the analysis of an image such as Frances Anne Hopkins' painting "Canoe Manned by Voyageurs Passing a Waterfall" (available from Wikipedia Commons at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Voyageur\\_canoe.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Voyageur_canoe.jpg) or on p.15 of Horizons, the Pearson Education textbook in British Columbia). Have them enter this in the first row of the Fur Perspectives Chart.

Refer to students to one of the images from the booklet to show that the perspective on fur has changed a lot over time. Explain the concept of historical perspective: the cognitive act of understanding the different social, cultural, intellectual, and even emotional contexts that shaped people's lives and actions in the past. In other words, seeing the world through the eyes of someone from a different time and place.

Introduce the essential question: How has the role of fur changed from the 1700s to present day?

3. Students should continue to fill in the chart by comparing various visual texts to their base opinion of the role of fur in the 1700s. Use the booklet of images "furspec" 1-3 jpg.

For a contemporary and controversial image of fur, view the video for the rapper Nas's *Hate Me Now* can be found on YouTube at this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKSjN3WWR3E>

Because of the questionable language and imagery, preview the video first. The most useful part of the video is the clip from 2:27-2:37 as the two rappers emerge from the car in fur coats and enter the nightclub. Consider freezing an image in this sequence.

4. Discuss the different historical perspectives of fur throughout the time periods and what could account for these differences. Outside information may need to be given by the teacher. Here are some possible reasons:

Irene Dunn reflects the Hollywood era and glamour; Peta ads reflect greater recognition of animal rights; the Nas video may be because men are becoming more conscious of their image and are comfortable wearing fur or it may show the materialism in hip hop culture and a desire of African-Americans to wear fur to show wealth and higher status after decades of slavery or prejudice; the Fur Council of Canada advertisements show fur as a "green product", a part of Canadian culture, and that the fur industry is a responsible industry to counter the Peta campaign.

## LESSON #2

1. Distribute worksheet "Working With Captions" and image booklet ("furcap1.jpg", "furcap2.jpg", "furcap3.jpg") Other images demonstrating the same idea may be used.

2. Go over what makes a good caption and practice writing captions from any visual text in the classroom or textbook. Discuss examples as a class.

3. Go over the caption task and the criteria.

4. The students will then write captions for the different visual texts. While the images will be different (for the most part) from the previous class, their Fur Perspectives chart will be helpful to write their captions. Go over again the idea of historical perspectives.

If required, below are some parallels to help students use their understanding from the first lesson:

Caption no. / Image / Time Period /Link to Fur Perspectives chart

1 / A or B / 1700s /base opinion on role of fur

2 / C / 1960s /similar to Irene Dunn reflecting Hollywood glamour

3 / D / contemporary /Peta ads

4 / E or F / contemporary /similar to Nas video

5 / G / 2007 /Fur Council of Canada

Samples of student work are attached (std work level 4, std work level 2/3, and student work level 1).

**Outcomes**

1. Looking at and comparing the different historical perspectives of fur from the 18th century to present day.
2. Deconstruct visual texts.
3. Learn how to write a good caption.