

Significance of the War of 1812

by Ernest Wasson

Suggested grade level: Junior/Intermediate

Suggested time: 50 minutes

Brief Description of the Task

In this lesson students will attempt to place the War of 1812 into context by reviewing other events of **historical significance** in Canadian history. This lesson is intended as way of concluding the unit.

Historical Thinking Concepts

- Historical Significance

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

1. Explore the historical significance of the War of 1812.

Materials

Photocopies of the Appendices.

Prior Knowledge

As this lesson is intended to conclude the unit on the War of 1812, a working knowledge of the war is necessary.

Assessment

- Exit slip

Detailed Lesson Plan

Part 1

1. Have students list the five most important events that have happened in their lives. How did they decide? Would their parents or friends agree with the list? Would they agree five years from now?

2. Who decides what makes up our history? What is deemed important depends on many factors, including who is making the decision, and whether or not the event has just happened or some time has passed since the event. And judgments about significance can change over time. What we deem to be significant now, may not be seen in the same light at a different time period.

3. In this lesson students will be presented with 5 important historical events (the War of 1812 and 4 other historically significant events) and need to rank them in order of their historical significance. Emphasize that this is more than just personal opinion – it is a decision based on criteria – and that group members may have very different perspectives.

Criteria for historical significance include:

- How were people affected by this event?
- How many people's lives were affected?
- How long lasting were the changes?
- How does this event shed light on things that concern us today?

Part 2

1. Place students in groups of four. Distribute **Appendix 1: Significant Historical Events in Canadian History**. Have each group member place the five events in order individually. Group members should then compare their rankings and try to build a consensus of the order of significance. They should then create a list with a brief explanation for each ranking.

2. Have each student complete an exit slip where they explain how they chose the most significant event on their list (or how the group did so).

3. Conclude the lesson with a whole class discussion of where the War of 1812 showed up in the rankings.

Teacher Note:

Additional information about the concept of Historical Significance can be found on the Historical Thinking Project website at www.historicalthinking.ca