

A New Home -- Teacher Notes

Role-play/Simulation, group size: 14-31

Summary: student act out characters that have immigrated from Europe and the United States to Upper Canada in the early 1800s. After the simulation, they write about their experiences to family back home.



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. Here are some suggestions about which cards to use:
 - Top 20 (include these): 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 37
 - If more, add in this order: 6, 34, 36, 4, 24, 33, 38, 23, 29, 21
 - If less, subtract in this order: 2, 30, 1, 8, 20, 5, 27
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:

- inclusion of relevant facts or observations, either taken from the gameplay or from other sources
- creative writing or expression that shows that the student connected with the time period and challenges of being a pioneer
- serious response to each of the steps in the simulation (arrival, description, 3 month, 2 year, 5 year, letter home)

STUDENT SAMPLES



and Courtney. Isabella is 23, Maggie is 18 and Courtney is 17. We are all from Scotland. I am a doctor and my wife stays at home and makes little trinkets or blankets to help pay the bills. Isabella was married in Scotland and her husband has also come on the journey with us to Upper Canada. Maggie and Courtney will be married in Upper Canada.

The ship ride over from Scotland was very long and rough. The journey was about two months long. When we were on the boat many people got a very bad sickness. If you got the sickness you got on a different boat before we entered the St. Lawrence River and went to Gross Isle. My family and I were very thankful we did not get any sickness and survived the journey. We were stuck under the ship deck most of the time. Only once or twice we were allowed on the ship decks. Going on the ship deck was a rush for everyone to get some fresh air. Under the ship deck always smelled very bad and was not sanitary.

from mine for after the winter passes so we will have food on our land. Ryan has been talking to some men about something I dare not write on paper. He says it will give us a better future with lots of wealth, but Ryan's life will be at risk. I don't know what I'd do if Ryan were to pass. At this point he's our last hope.

October 21st, 1847

Ryan left today with some men, he says he'll be back in 2 weeks' time, but that's if he comes back. He left us with enough food to last till then. It's starting to get a lot colder and I worry that we will not have money to make warmer clothes, and without that how will we survive?

October 30th, 1847

Betrayal! That's all Ryan has ever known! I was gone little over a month and he takes my wife for his own and then leaves her to go kill an innocent man. I am just thankful that Lillian's heart still lies with me, her one true love. On my journey it was amazing the information I gathered. While I built chimneys for Lanny Langston he helped me to perfect my writing skills so I can now write in my own journal. I met a man named, Iain Gillen, who gave me his young daughter and an egg laying hen for a chimney on each of his houses. The young girl however would be too hard for us to feed with the winter just around the corner, so I wed her to a textile manufacturer, Jamie Campbell, for free clothing until my daughter turns of age to marry. So I began my journey home with the hen and our new clothing for the winter when I found a young woman who was lost. She said her husband, Ryan Shaughnessy, was killed by a bear. She looked like he hadn't eaten in days. So I rode back to town for help while she waited in a tree nearby so she could not be harmed by animals. Myself and a couple of other men rode her back to her lot which looked to have been lived on for many years. She thanked me and handed half of his food supply and some seeds. "The food was for my husband and I to make it through the winter, but seeing as how I will only need food for one you can take it his food, and the seeds are for after the winter, so you can grow some crops and hopefully make it out here," she said as she turned to enter her house which I followed.