

## Documentary Lens Lesson Plan for *Land for Pioneers*

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### Curriculum Connections

#### Lesson Objectives

*Land for Pioneers* is a documentary about economic development in the Canadian North from a 1944 nationalist perspective. The film reviews Northern development from the era of early explorers such as Frobisher, Hudson and Davis through to the megaprojects of the 1940s.

In this lesson, students use the Heartland-Hinterland model of economic development to analyze the Canadian National Policy in the North. They brainstorm their own perspective on Canada's North and then create a development timeline as they view *Land for Pioneers*. After viewing, students a) discuss Canada's National Policy from the perspective of different characters in the film and b) write a position paper expressing their own viewpoint. A second metacognitive activity has students explore the overt and covert messages embedded in past and current documentaries on Canada's North.

#### Outcomes/Expectations

The following outcomes are part of the Canadian History 11 Course in Nova Scotia. While this lesson was written for this course, it is applicable in many other Canadian History and Social Studies high school courses.

##### General Curriculum Outcome

- How has the Canadian economy evolved to meet the needs of all Canadians?

##### Specific Curriculum Outcomes

Analyze the role played by the Staple Trade in the development of colonial Canada:

- evaluate and compare the role played by the cod and fur trades
- compare the role of the Staple Trade (primary industries) in today's economy with that of the colonial era

Analyze the relationship between the National Policy and the industrialization of Canada:

- outline the components and aims of the National Policy
- explain why Central Canada emerged as the Heartland of the new Canadian economy
- analyze the effects of the National Policy on the Hinterlands (the Maritimes, the North, and the West) and their peoples
- analyze the impact of industrialization on Canada's working class and assess society's response

Analyze the economic trends and policies that impact on Canada's current and future development:

- explore the implications of industrial and technological development for Canadian society and cultures
- explore the relationship between economic development and the state of the environment in Canada (e.g., age, sustainable development)

**Canadian Social Studies Themes in *Land for Pioneers***

Theme/Strand/ Key Concept	Connection to <i>Land for Pioneers</i> – Applications and Discussion Points
Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to be Canadian in this bold rugged land?</li> <li>• What connections are there between being a pioneer and citizen?</li> <li>• How does <i>Land for Pioneers</i> ask Canadians to practise conservation and support economic development?</li> </ul>
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact does working for a large multinational have on being a Canadian?</li> <li>• Would place of birth affect working in the North? If so, how?</li> <li>• How does <i>Land for Pioneers</i> portray being Canadian as a positive characteristic?</li> <li>• How does nationalism surface in the documentary during a massive world wide war (1944)?</li> </ul>
Change and Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does <i>Land for Pioneers</i> use a chronological approach to economic development in the North?</li> <li>• What differences and similarities are there between your perception of the North and the one in <i>Land for Pioneers</i>?</li> </ul>
Culture and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the documentary refer to the Aboriginal peoples of the North?</li> <li>• From whose perspective is the film created?</li> <li>• What perspective on development is portrayed in the film?</li> </ul>
The Land: People and Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did Aboriginal peoples use their land?</li> <li>• What impact did their land-use practices have on the land?</li> <li>• How does the documentary portray land-use practices changing?</li> <li>• How should society deal with private land-use practices in the face of the “public good”?</li> </ul>
Individuals, Societies, and Economic Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened to traditional land use as practised by Aboriginal peoples as southern development occurred?</li> <li>• Why and how should traditional land-use practices be preserved?</li> <li>• How powerful are economic motives as reasons to open up the North?</li> </ul>
Global Connection /Interdependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do people balance sustainable economic development with megaprojects?</li> <li>• How do the world’s indigenous peoples maintain their culture within the context of development?</li> </ul>
Power and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who creates policies that control land use?</li> <li>• Who should decide policies that govern how to use private land and Crown land?</li> <li>• How can competing interest groups reconcile land-use practices?</li> </ul>

## Materials and Resources

- Information on the National Policy from Library and Archives Canada  
<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/confederation/023001-2987-e.html>
- If teachers of Canadian History and/or Canadian Social Studies are not familiar with the Heartland-Hinterland Thesis, it was written by J.M.S. Careless. The thesis is explained in *Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History* at the following Web site  
<http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/papers/paperscareless.htm>
- Canada's Heartland/Hinterland (A PowerPoint Presentation from York University explaining the Heartland/Hinterland core/periphery concept and its effect on the development of Canada)  
<http://www.yorku.ca/anderson/Geog3540/3540%20Assignment%202%20Discussion/>

## Background

*Land for Pioneers* tries to generate a strong sense of Canadian nationalism through a shared frontier to conquer. Canada will be a strong nation built on the resources of this great and wondrous North. In this film, there is no question that the North is supposed to provide the resources to help develop Canada. The documentary provides a chronology of Northern development to support this belief.

For example, after the arrival of Europeans, northern development began with the Hudson's Bay Company. The first era of interaction was a staples trade: fish and furs were exported and manufactured products were imported.

From the exportation and trading outposts of the 18th century, through the gold strikes of the late 19th century, to megaprojects of the 20th century, economic development focused on the extraction of natural resources. All people in the documentary appear happy and content, suggesting this is the best way to develop the North.

The documentary also portrays the development of the North as a natural course of events.

## Lesson 1, National Policy and Economic Development

The purpose of the lesson is to analyze the relationship between Canadian National Policy and industrialization through the lens of the Hinterland-Heartland model of economic development.

Give students the following information before they view the film. *Land for Pioneers* is a documentary about economic development in the Canadian North from a 1944 nationalist perspective. The film reviews northern development from the era of early explorers such as Frobisher, Hudson, and Davis through to the megaprojects of the 1940s. Early economic activity consisted of the fur trade between the northern Inuit and southern business interests. A gold strike in the Yukon further opened the area. Twentieth-century development focused on gold mines, oil fields, timber reserves, heavy metals, fish stocks and farms.

During Canada's first 60 years, a National Policy grew to integrate the economic resources of different regions. The policy fostered varying economic roles for different regions. These roles have had a long-term impact on the peoples of the North. A meaningful lens to employ when studying the impact of industrialization and the national policy on the North is the Heartland-Hinterland Thesis.

## Previewing Activity

Have students brainstorm what perceptions they hold about the North. Before showing the documentary, ask the following questions:

- What comes to mind when you think about northern Canada?

- Where did you get these perceptions?

Compile a list of students' perceptions on an overhead sheet or chart paper for later use.

If you live in Canada's North, you could have students respond to the questions from the perspective of someone living in southern Canada:

- What points of view do you think people in southern Canada have about the North?
- Where might they have got these perceptions?

### Viewing Activity

**Step 1:** Provide a 20-minute lecture to explain the National Policy and the Hinterland-Heartland Thesis of Canadian development (see Materials and Resources section above). Then, as students view the film, have them compile a timeline of events concerning northern development. Discuss.

**Step 2:** Ask students to draw a diagram of the Heartland-Hinterland model of economic development. Suggest that they label the North as a hinterland and Central Canada as the heartland. Have students draw one arrow pointing from the Hinterland to the Heartland, and one arrow pointing the other way. Along the arrows have students identify items travelling from one region to the other. Ask:

- In which direction would gold, uranium and tungsten travel?
- In which direction would skilled labour, capital and manufactured goods travel?

**Step 3:** Divide the class into groups of three/four students. Assign each group one of the following roles:

- a skilled labourer from the Heartland working in the North
- a company executive stationed in the North
- a professional (doctor, teacher) from the Heartland working in the North
- an Aboriginal elder from the North
- a company executive from the North
- an Aboriginal youth from the North
- a resource worker from the North
- a citizen from the South living in the North
- the producer, director and NFB personnel who made *Land for Pioneers*

Have students watch the film again and take notes from their assigned perspective. Remind everyone that the film was made in 1944, with a very strong nationalistic perspective.

**Step 4:** Arrange the student groups in a circle to discuss—in role—the National Policy as a model of economic development (1867–1950) around the following headings:

- Impact (Benefits and Problems) for the North in the past
- Long-term impact (Benefits and Problems) for today
- Should the pattern for northern development have changed? Why or why not?
- What should the National Policy for northern development be today?

**Step 5:** Review with students the results of their earlier brainstorming session on their perceptions of the North (see the Previewing Activity). Have students write a 150-word position

paper agreeing or disagreeing with one small part of the National Policy advocated in the film. Let students know that they can use the quotes and excerpts from the film to support their position.

## **Lesson 2, Whose Interest Should a News Report or Documentary Serve? (A metacognition activity)**

**Step 1:** Documentaries reflect the times, places, perceptions and preoccupations of the world that created them. To help students explore the overt and covert messages embedded in mass media and to help them develop visual and media literacy, use the following questions to stimulate discussion:

- How does *Land for Pioneers* reflect the prescribed role for the North from a mid-20th century point of view?
- Why do you think the film was made?
- Does the film engender a sense of strength and pride in Canada?
- Do Canadians still perceive the North as it is portrayed in this film?
- What emotions does the music evoke?
- How does the film portray Aboriginal peoples?

**Step 2:** Talk about why news reports and documentaries are created today. Discuss current documentaries or news reports that present regional issues.

- How is provincial employment portrayed?
- How are megaprojects portrayed?
- What news stories do we receive from the North?
- How are Aboriginal people often portrayed?
- How are multinationals dealt with in the media?
- Have students ever detected a bias or attitude in news reports and documentaries?
- What questions/concerns do we experience today?
- How does creating a news story or a documentary make an event a common experience?