5th Grade New France Inquiry

Did the French Lose Out in North America?


Supporting Questions

1. Where in North America did the French explore and settle?
2. What relationships developed between Native Americans and the French over the fur trade?
3. How did the French and Indian War affect the French influence in North America?
4. Where is French culture represented in North America today?
### Did the French Lose Out in North America?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea &amp; Practices</th>
<th>5.3 EUROPEAN EXPLORATION AND ITS EFFECTS: Various European powers explored and eventually colonized the Western Hemisphere. This had a profound impact on Native Americans and led to the transatlantic slave trade.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staging the Question</td>
<td>Examine two maps—one of New France in 1750 and the other of French-speaking North America in 2006—and speculate about why the maps are so different.</td>
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#### Supporting Question 1
Where in North America did the French explore and settle?

**Formative Performance Task**
Create a chart of French explorers within the area and dates of exploration.

**Featured Sources**
- **Source A:** Maps of French exploration and settlement in North America
- **Source B:** Source bank: Excerpts from accounts of Cartier and Champlain’s expeditions to North America
- **Source C:** Source bank: Excerpts from accounts of French Catholic missions in 17th-century Canada

#### Supporting Question 2
What relationships developed between Native Americans and the French over the fur trade?

**Formative Performance Task**
List the benefits and costs of the North American fur trade.

**Featured Sources**
- **Source A:** Engraving showing the beaver fur trade
- **Source B:** Engraving showing styles of beaver hats in Europe
- **Source C:** Table showing the price of beaver pelts in Britain, 1713–1763
- **Source D:** Excerpts from “Your People Live Only Upon Cod”

#### Supporting Question 3
How did the French and Indian War affect the French influence in North America?

**Formative Performance Task**
Make a claim about the consequences of the French and Indian War.

**Featured Sources**
- **Source A:** Map of the French and Indian War
- **Source B:** Deportation Grand-Pré
- **Source C:** Excerpts from an address by Minavavana

#### Supporting Question 4
Where is French culture represented in North America today?

**Task**
- **Understand:** Identify examples of French influence and heritage (e.g., province of Quebec and city of New Orleans).
- **Assess:** Evaluate French influence in North America as it applies to today.
- **Act:** Hold a community forum focused on the French influence in North America.

#### Summative Performance Task
**ARGUMENT** Did the French lose out in North America? Construct an argument (e.g., speech, movie, poster, essay) that explains how France lost influence in North America, using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing perspectives.

**EXTENSION** Create a time-lapse map that illustrates the changes in French influence in North America.
Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry focuses on the emergence, growth, and collapse of the New France colony in North America. French explorers, missionaries, traders, and settlers established an important presence in North America, beginning with Jacques Cartier’s explorations in 1534 and continuing through the 19th century. The development of the fur-trading industry, along with a relatively stable relationship with Native peoples in North America, peaked around 1710. At that time the French controlled territory stretching west from Newfoundland to the Rocky Mountains and south from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. Over the next five decades, much of the New France colony collapsed, culminating in a French loss in the French and Indian War (known as the Seven Years’ War in Europe).

In addition to the Key Idea expressed earlier, this inquiry covers the following Conceptual Understandings:

- (5.3a) Europeans traveled to the Americas in search of new trade routes, including a northwest passage, and resources. They hoped to gain wealth, power, and glory.
- (5.3b) Europeans encountered and interacted with Native Americans in a variety of ways.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take four to six 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “Did the French lose out in North America?” students work through a series of supporting questions, performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence while acknowledging competing perspectives.

Staging the Compelling Question

To open the inquiry, students examine an image bank of two maps, one of New France in 1750 and one of French-speaking North America in 2006. Students then speculate about why the maps differ. After examining this initial information about the decline in French influence in North America, students should be better prepared to examine the reasons for these changes.
Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—Where in North America did the French explore and settle?—focuses on the earliest period of French exploration led by Jacques Cartier in the 1530s and continues with the explorations of Champlain, Marquette and Joliet, and La Salle in the 1600s. Students also consider the establishment of French Catholic missions across North America. The formative performance task calls on students to create a chart of French explorers with the areas and dates of exploration. Students examine a range of featured sources, including maps of the lands the French explored and settled and firsthand accounts of French activities in Canada from Cartier, Champlain, and two Jesuit priests.

Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“What relationships developed between Native Americans and the French over the fur trade?”—continues students’ work with the French experience in North America by shifting to the fur trade. By focusing on Native peoples, students begin to understand that the lands in which the French settled were already occupied. Thus, interaction, cooperation, and conflict were inevitable dimensions of the French experience in North America. The formative performance task calls on students to generate a list of the benefits and costs of the North American fur trade. To support them in this work, students engage with featured sources that highlight the fur trade, the demand for fur products in Europe, and the perspective of Native Americans on French activities.

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“How did the French and Indian War affect the French influence in North America?”—invites students to consider how war affected Native and non-Native cultures. As a larger conflict among powers in Europe spilled into North America, the French struggled to maintain their hold on the expansive New France colony. Native Americans played an important role in the North American conflict, mostly siding with the French in opposition to the British. Ultimately, the French lost considerable influence in North America through their defeat in the French and Indian War. The formative performance task asks students to make a claim about the consequences of the French and Indian War and offer evidence to support it. To help them in this task, students can draw on the featured sources, which include a map of the French and Indian War, a painting depicting the forced emigration of French Canadians, and a speech by a Native American leader warning the English not to overstep based on their victory in the French and Indian War.
Supporting Question 4 (with embedded Taking Informed Action)

The fourth supporting question—“Where is French culture represented in North America today?”—prompts students to Take Informed Action. Students demonstrate that they understand by identifying examples of French influence on the heritage of such places as the province of Quebec and the city of New Orleans. They demonstrate their capacity to assess by evaluating early French influences in North America in light of modern-day influences. And they demonstrate their ability to act by conducting a community forum focused on the French influence in North America.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry students have examined several historical sources to learn about the rise and fall of the French colony in North America as well as French influence in North America today. Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and the ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students are asked to construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “Did the French lose out in North America?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments likely will vary, but could include any of the following:

- The French were very successful in North America but were unable to maintain a strong presence compared with the British.
- The French may have lost geographic control of North America, but their influence is still strong today.
- The French lost North America because of their overreliance on the fur trade, inability to fully cooperate with all Native American tribes in the area, and loss in the French and Indian War.

Students could extend their arguments through a time-lapse map that demonstrates the changes in French influence in North America. Students begin with a map of North America in the 15th century that shows only the presence of Native Americans and then add a series of additional maps keyed to important dates in the history of New France (e.g., 1534, 1615, 1682, 1710, and 1754) that illustrate key events and occurrences in the North American colonial experience of the French.
Staging the Compelling Question

**Featured Source**

**Source A:** Image bank: Maps of New France in 1750 and French-speaking North America in 2006

Image 1: Map of New France around 1750.
Created by Pinpin. Permission to reprint granted under terms of the Gnu Free Documentation License. 
Image 2: Map of French-speaking populations, 2011.

### Supporting Question 1

|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The “Virtual Museum of New France” ([http://www.historymuseum.ca/virtual-museum-of-new-france/the-explorers/](http://www.historymuseum.ca/virtual-museum-of-new-france/the-explorers/)), from the Canadian Museum of History, contains information that teachers and students may wish to use to complete this inquiry. Animated French explorer maps showing routes of exploration, as well as additional information, can be found under “The Explorers” tab on the left-hand side of the web page. Teachers may want to use maps available on the pages about Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain, Jacques Marquette, and Louis Joliet.
### Supporting Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Featured Source</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source B:</strong> Source bank: Excerpts from accounts of French expeditions to North America by Jacques Cartier in 1535 and Samuel de Champlain in 1604</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**NOTE:** Jacques Cartier was one of the first French explorers in North America. In his first voyage in 1534, Cartier claimed the land he called Canada for France. Cartier made two later voyages. On his second voyage in 1535, Cartier wrote the following description of the lands that would become part of the French colony called New France.

[T]hrough the present expedition undertaken at your royal command for the discovery of the lands in the west formerly unknown to you and to us, lying in the same climates and parallels as your territories and kingdom, you will learn and hear of their fertility and richness, of the immense number of peoples living there, of their kindness and peacefulness, and likewise of the richness of the great river [St. Lawrence River], which flows through and waters the midst of these lands of yours, which is without comparison the largest river that is known to have ever been seen. These things fill those who have seen them with the sure hope of the future increase of our most holy faith and of your possessions and most Christian name, as you may be pleased to see in this present booklet wherein is fully set forth everything worthy of note that we saw or that happened to us both in the course of the above voyage and also during our stay in those lands and territories of yours, as well as the routes, dangers, and situation of those lands.

Public domain. Henry Percival Biggar, *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier: Published from the Originals with Translations, Notes and Appendices*. Ottawa, Canada: F. A. Acland, 1924.

**NOTE:** Although Jacques Cartier established France's claim in the St. Lawrence Valley in 1534, it would not be until the early 17th century that France founded its first permanent settlements. Here, the explorer Samuel de Champlain describes how he encouraged the Native peoples to participate in the fur trade.

I went on shore with my companions and two of our savages who served as interpreters. I directed the men in our barque to approach near the savages, and hold their arms in readiness to do their duty in case they notice any movement of these people against us. Bessabez [the chief], seeing us on land, bade us sit down, and began to smoke with his companions...They presented us with venison and game.

I directed our interpreter to say to our savages that...Sieur de Monts [Champlain's patron] had sent me to see them, and...that he desired to inhabit their country and show them how to cultivate it, in order that they might not continue to lead so miserable a life as they were doing...They expressed their great satisfaction, saying that no greater good could come to them than to have our friendship, and that they desired to live in peace with their enemies, and that we should dwell in their land, in order that they might in the future more than ever before engage in hunting beavers, and give us a part of them in return for our providing them with things which they wanted....

NOTE: Father Paul Le Jeune served as the superior of the Jesuit mission in Canada from 1632 to 1639. As part of his efforts to promote Catholicism in the region along the St. Lawrence River, he encouraged fellow missionaries to learn various Native American languages and to promote religious literacy at the expense of oral histories.

Jesuit Paul Le Jeune, 1632

...We have seen a great many fishing also for cod. I saw here -a number of seals, and our people killed some of them. In this great river, which is called the St. Lawrence, white porpoises are found, and nowhere else. The English call them white whales, because they are very large compared with the other porpoises; they go up as far as Québec.

On the day of Holy Trinity, we were compelled to stop at Gaspay a large body of water Extending into this country. It was here that we trod land for the first time since our departure. Never did man, after a long voyage, return to his country with more joy than we entered ours; it is thus we call these wretched lands....But it is my opinion that I come here like the pioneers, who go ahead to dig the trenches; after them come brave soldiers, who besiege and take the place.

After Mass we went into the woods; the snow was still very deep, and so strong that it bore our weight. In the morning there was a hard frost; and, when I went to wash my hands in the torrent of water which flowed down from the mountains, I found the edges of it completely frozen....

Public domain. The Jesuit Relations: and Allied Documents Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries, 1632. Source: http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations_05.html

NOTE: Father Gabriel Lalemant worked as a missionary among the Nipissings, an Algonquin-speaking nation, until his death in 1649. In 1642 he wrote a report describing the Nipissing Feast of the Dead of which an excerpt is provided.

A French Jesuit missionary, 1642

To make a Christian out of a Barbarian is not the work of a day....A great step is gained when one has learned to know those with whom he has to deal; has penetrated their thoughts; has adapted himself to their language, their customs, and their manner of living; and when necessary, has been a Barbarian with them, in order to win them over to Jesus Christ.

Public domain. Source: http://www.smithsoniansource.org/display/primarysource/viewdetails.aspx?PrimarySourceld=1181
Supporting Question 2


NOTE: This 1777 engraving from William Faden depicts French fur traders in Canada trading a beaver with local Native Americans. The engraving was part of a map published in London, England, titled *A Map of the Inhabited Part of Canada from the French Surveys With the Frontiers of New York and New England from the Large Survey by Claude Joseph Sauthier.*

Fur traders in Canada, trading with Native Americans in 1777.
### Supporting Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Featured Source</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source B:</strong> Horace T. Martin, illustration of modifications of the beaver hat, <em>Castorologia, Or, The History and Traditions of the Canadian Beaver</em> (detail), 1892</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**NOTE:** Trading between Native Americans and European settlers exploded after beaver hats became fashionable in Europe. Wool felt hats made from beaver fur were less likely to tear, bend, or get damaged by water. Unlike today, men and women commonly wore hats as part of formal wear. Higher-quality hats were made entirely from beaver wool. Some lower-quality hats included materials from other animals. Freshly caught beaver pelts that were immediately dried were called "parchment." Another kind of pelt was called "coat beaver." These were skins that Native Americans had worn for a year or more. Hatters and felt-makers began to make hats that used both parchment and coat beaver because the result was stronger, smoother, and more waterproof.

![Eight different styles of beaver hats.](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chapeaux_en_peau_de_castor.jpg)

Eight different styles of beaver hats.

### Supporting Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price per Beaver Pelt or Coat (Shillings per Skin)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>6.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1725</td>
<td>6.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1736</td>
<td>7.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>6.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td>6.08</td>
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<td>1750</td>
<td>8.42</td>
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<td>1755</td>
<td>12.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>13.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>17.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** The prices included on the chart are based on beaver trade exchanges at Fort Albany, New York. It is important to remember that as beaver become more popular, the price usually went up. Also, when the supply of beaver went down, the price usually went up. As beaver hats and coats became more popular and more beavers were trapped, the prices of beaver hats went up.

NOTE: Native Americans and the French maintained a delicate balance in the fur trade. Some Native Americans thought the French were taking advantage of them. French priest Chrestian LeClerq traveled among the Native American people living in Canada. He recorded this Micmac leader’s complaint about the French in 1680.

I am greatly astonished that the French have so little cleverness, as they seem to exhibit in the matter of which thou hast just told me on their behalf, in the effort to persuade us to convert our poles, our barks, and our wigwams into those houses of stone and of wood which are tall and lofty, according to their account, as these trees. Very well...

This is not all, my brother, hast thou as much ingenuity and cleverness as the Indians...Thou art not as bold nor as stout as we, because when thou goest on a voyage thou canst not carry upon thy shoulders thy buildings and thy edifices....

Thou sayest of us also that we are the most miserable and most unhappy of all men, living without religion, without manners, without honour, without social order, and, in a word, without any rules, like the beasts in our woods and our forests, lacking bread, wine, and a thousand other comforts which thou hast in superfluity in Europe....We consider ourselves nevertheless much happier than thou in this, that we are very content with the little that we have; and believe....that thy country is better than ours. For if France....is a little terrestrial paradise, art thou sensible to leave it?...

And if we have not any longer among us any of those old men of a hundred and thirty to forty years, it is only because we are gradually adopting your manner of living, for experience is making it very plain that those of us live longest who, despising your bread, your wine, and your brandy, are content with their natural food of beaver, of moose, of waterfowl, and fish, in accord with the custom of our ancestors and of all the Gaspesian nation. Learn now, my brother, once for all, because I must open to thee my heart: there is no Indian who does not consider himself infinitely more happy and more powerful than the French.

NOTE: This map of battles in the French and Indian War shows the territories that were in dispute during the conflict.

### Supporting Question 3

| Featured Source | Source B: George Craig, painting of the removal of French Canadians from Nova Scotia by British forces in 1755, *Deportation Grand-Pré*, 1893 |

**NOTE:** In the 17th and 18th centuries entire communities fell victim to larger European imperial struggles. During the French and Indian War, British authorities expelled thousands of French Acadians from their homes in Nova Scotia. By choice or by force, Acadians migrated to Britain’s North American colonies, Canada, Europe, the Caribbean, and Louisiana. In Louisiana’s Bayou Country, their descendants contributed to a distinctive French culture that came to be known as “Cajun”—a phonetic variation of the word Acadian.

NOTE: In this 1761 speech to an English trader named Alexander Henry, Minavavana, a Chippewa or Ojibwa chief, warns the English that France's defeats during the French and Indian War do not mean that England can assert sovereignty over Indian lands.

Englishman!—You know that the French King is our father. He promised to be such; and we, in return, promised to be his children. This promise we have kept.

Englishman!—It is you that have made war with this our father. You are his enemy; and how then could you have the boldness to venture among us, his children? You know that his enemies are ours....

Englishman!—Although you have conquered the French, you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods and mountains, were left to us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance, and we will part with them to none....

Englishman!—Our father, the king of France, employed our young men to make war upon your nation. In this warfare, many of them have been killed; and it is our custom to retaliate, until such time as the spirits of the slain are satisfied. Now the spirits of the slain are to be satisfied in either of two ways. The first is by the spilling of the blood of the nation by which they fell; the other, by covering the bodies of the dead, and thus allaying the resentment of their relations. This is done by making presents.

Englishman!—Your king has never sent us any presents, nor entered into any treaty with us. Wherefore he and we are still at war; and, until he does these things, we must consider that we have no other father, nor friend, among the white men, then the king of France. But, for you, we have taken into consideration, that you have ventured your life among us, in the expectation that we should not molest you. You do not come armed, with an intention to make war. You come in peace, to trade with us, and supply us with necessities, of which we are much in want. We shall regard you, therefore, as a brother; and you may sleep tranquilly, without fear of the Chippewa. As a token of our friendship, we present you with this pipe to smoke.