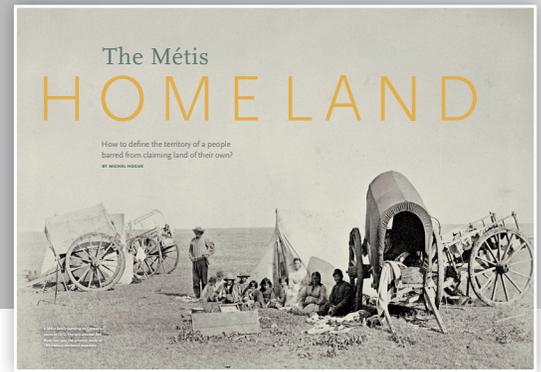


PRAIRIE TRANSPORT IN THE MÉTIS HOMELAND



Lesson Description/Outcomes

Throughout the vast Northwest Territories in the mid-1800s, moving people and materials involved a variety of transportation methods. New forms of transportation, such as trains, came to be used alongside more traditional modes of transportation, such as York boats, canoes, and Red River carts.

In this activity, your students will learn the values and limits of each of these modes of transportation as they plan trade and travel routes across the Lake Winnipeg watershed.

Activating (30 min)

Read "Toward a Métis Homeland" by Darren O'Toole, noting the Métis' use of Red River carts, York boats, and canoes.

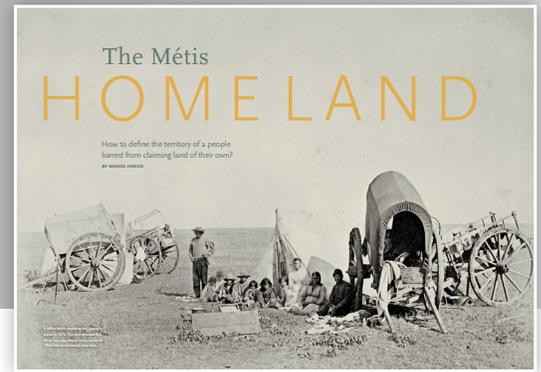
Acquiring (30 min)

Compare the different advantages and disadvantages of the railway, the York boat, the birchbark canoe and the Red River cart as modes of transportation. Use entries from [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#) for reference.

The class should come up with a table resembling the one below:

MODE	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
Railway	Can travel quickly across land and carry large loads.	Cannot travel over water and very expensive to install.
York Boats	Can carry large loads on rivers.	Cannot travel on land, seasonal, requires many people to operate.
Canoes	Can move swiftly along rivers with few people.	Cannot carry large loads, seasonal, cannot travel on land.
Red River Cart	Can travel on land, snow and water.	Slow, noisy and uncomfortable.

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Applying (60 min)

Divide students into four groups and give each group a copy of the [Lake Winnipeg Watershed Tiled Map](#). Have students plan the best possible trade route to connect major trading centres. They should consider how to take advantage of the strengths of the different modes of transportation (refer to the map in the article “The Métis Homeland” by Michel Hogue in the November/December 2017 issue of *Canadian Geographic*). Stops along the route must include:

- Fargo
- Winnipeg
- Regina
- Saskatoon
- Calgary
- Edmonton

Use coloured string or markers to trace out the routes. For example:

- RAILWAY – **Black**
- YORK BOAT – **Brown**
- CANOE – **Blue**
- RED RIVER CART – **Red**

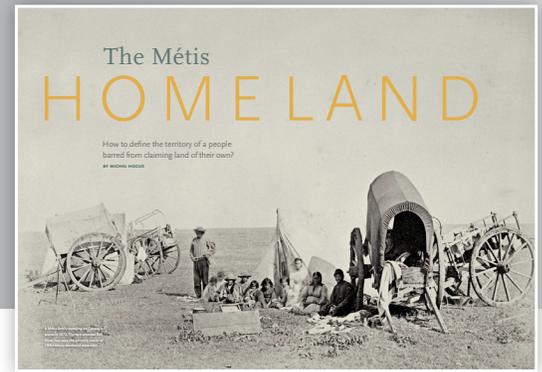
Assessment

As students are tracing the trade routes they should ask questions such as:

- Are there many people that will travel this route? (worth the cost?)
- Do we need year-round access here? (seasonal travel or essential?)
- What resources need to be brought where? (e.g.: fur trade routes?)
- How will this affect the landscape/wildlife? (e.g.: migration patterns?)

Have students present their mapped routes to the class, explaining their answers to the above questions and the reasoning behind the routes they’ve chosen.

PRAIRIE TRANSPORT IN THE MÉTIS HOMELAND



Resources

- Tiled Map - “Lake Winnipeg Watershed” *Canadian Geographic*. Available at canadiangeographic.com/educational_products/tiled_map_lake_winnipeg_watershed.asp
- Article - “The Métis Homeland” by Michel Hogue. *Canadian Geographic*, Nov/Dec 2017
- Website – “Locomotives and Rolling Stock” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Available at thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/locomotives-and-rolling-stock/
- Website – “York Boat” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Available at thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/york-boat/
- Website - “Birchbark Canoe” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Available at thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/birchbark-canoe/
- Website - “Red River Cart” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Available at thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/red-river-cart/
- Online Article - “Toward a Métis homeland” by Darren O’Toole. cangeo.ca/nd17/homeland