

## HBC Coat of Arms

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**Grade Level:** 7/8, 9/10, 11/12

**Subject Area:** Social Studies/ History

**Themes:**

- Arts, Sports & Culture
- Canadian Identity
- Business
- Exploration & Geography
- Industry, Invention & Technology
- Media & Communications

**Lesson Overview:** In this lesson, students explore different types of coats of arms, the basic elements of a coat of arms, while focusing on HBC. They research a business and create a coat of arms that best represents it.

**Time Required:** Two to three lessons

**Associated Resources:**

**HBC Sources:**

- [Coat of Arms](#)

**Other Online Sources:**

- [Coats of Arms – Countries of the World](#)
- [Coats of Arms – Governor Generals of Canada](#)
- [Coats of Arms – Provinces and Territories of Canada](#)

**Historical Thinking Concepts:**

- Establish *historical significance*
- Use *primary source evidence*
- Identify *continuity and change*

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will:

- Identify the types and elements of coats of arms.
- Explore the history and significance of the HBC coat of arms.
- Compare and contrast the changes brought to HBC's coat of arms over time.
- Create a coat of arms for a business based on research.



HBC Coat of Arms, 1952.  
HBC Corporate Collection.

### Background Information:

A coat of arms or an armorial ensign, was originally a design placed on the shield of a knight as a type of recognition during battle. It is thought to have been used as early as the 11th century and by the mid-12th century became more and more popular. At first, it was created for individuals, then for families, states, and organizations. It was ultimately a representation of character, membership and power.

A coat of arms is usually in the shape of a shield and can include a helmet, a motto, and various symbols, such as animals, wreaths, stripes, shapes or objects.

The first seal depicting Hudson's Bay Company's corporate coat of arms was made in 1671, the year following the granting of the Royal Charter. Although there appears to be no record of the registration with the College of Arms in London until 1921, this is most likely the result of a gap in the official records. It is quite clear that the coat of arms and motto are heraldically correct in design and composition. Moreover, the historical record indicates that the Company used the corporate seal with the coat of arms on it from the very beginning. The possession of a corporate seal was, and still is, an important part of any corporation's legal existence

### The Lesson Activity

#### **Activating: *How will students be prepared for learning?***

- Show the students images of several coats of arms. Ask: What are these? What do they mean, symbolize or represent?
- Explain that in heraldry there are three types of heraldic emblems: (1) arms, (2) flags and (3) badges.
- Explain that they will be exploring coats of arms. [For more information, see: <https://www.gg.ca/en/heraldry>].
- Further explain that coats of arms can be divided into three categories: PERSONAL COAT OF ARMS --- CORPORATE COAT OF ARMS --- INDIGENOUS EMBLEM
- Hand out Student Resource: Coats of Arms – Different Types. Lead a discussion.
- Draw the students' attention back to the coats of arms you shared. What type were they? Can you think of other coats of arms you have seen? What type were they?

#### **Acquiring: *What strategies facilitate learning for groups and individuals?***

- Hand out Student Resource: Parts of a Coat of Arms. Explain the common elements often found on coats of arms: crest, helmet and mantling, shield, supporters, and motto.
- Look for these elements in the coats of arms you shared. Lead a class discussion.
- Explore the components of HBC's coat of arms [See: <https://www.hbcheritage.ca/history/company-stories/coat-of-arms>]. Either print copies of the webpage or have the students engage digitally.

- Have students identify the crest, helmet and mantling, shield, supporters, and motto.
- Ask:
  - Is the HBC coat of arms a personal or corporate coat of arms?
  - How has the HBC coat of arms changed over time?
  - Why did HBC's coat of arms change over time?
  - Should the HBC coat of arms be revised today? Why?
  - What symbols should/could be added or changed?

**Applying: *How will students demonstrate their understanding?***

- Distribute Student Resource: Create a Coat of Arms, one per student.
- Read over and assign.
- Guide and assist as necessary.

**Materials/Resources:**

- Access to the internet with electronic devices for student use [optional]
- Print copy of Student Resource: Coats of Arms – Different Types
- Print copy of Student Resource: Parts of a Coat of Arms
- Print copy of Student Resource: Create a Coat of Arms - one per student.
- Art supplies (coloured pens/pencils, paint, etc.)

**Extension Activities:**

- Using Student Resource: Three Corporate Coats of Arms, have students compare and contrast the coat of arms of the East India Company, Northwest Company, and HBC. This may be an opportunity for students to look at the impacts of globalization and trade from different historical perspectives.

## Student Resource: Coats of Arms– Different Types

Summary of coat of arms content sourced from: <https://www.gg.ca/en/heraldry>



### PERSONAL COAT OF ARMS

A coat of arms tells a story – your story. It is a unique and personal emblem that can be passed down to future generations. Using colours and symbols significant to you, it celebrates your family, your values and your achievements. Think of it as a “selfie” in a traditional form, an image that captures who you are.



### CORPORATE COAT OF ARMS

A coat of arms can also serve as a branding tool or a mark of identity for your organization. A corporate coat of arms is thus similar in many ways to a logo. While logos often reflect current design trends, a coat of arms conveys a sense of history, permanence and authority.

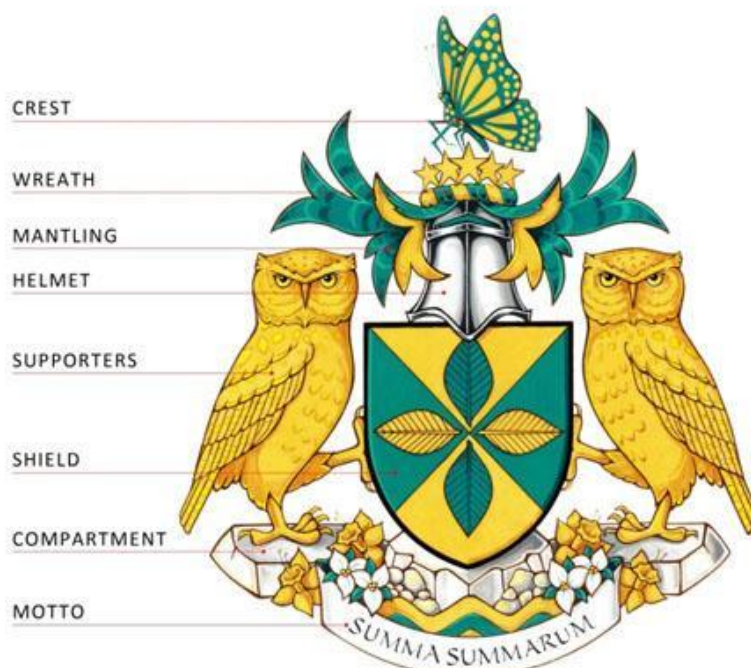


### INDIGENOUS EMBLEM

First Nations, Métis and Inuit emblems have existed in Canada for centuries and are powerful indications of pride, identity and sovereignty. Rich in meaning, their forms often differ from heraldic emblems such as coats of arms. Indigenous emblems are seen on objects such as clothing, masks, paintings, carvings and totem poles.

## Student Resource: Parts of a Coat of Arms

Adapted from: <https://www.gg.ca/en/heraldry/parts-coat-arms>



### Crest

At the top of the coat of arms is the crest. The crest is whatever appears above the helm. (Note that there is not always a crest for every coat of arms.)

### Helmet and mantling

The helmet placed above the shield recalls the origins of heraldry.

### Shield

The shield is the central shape on which the colours and symbols that make up the coat of arms are placed. Without a shield, there is no coat of arms.

### Supporters

The supporters, which can be animals or human figures, are placed on either side of the shield, appearing to hold it up.

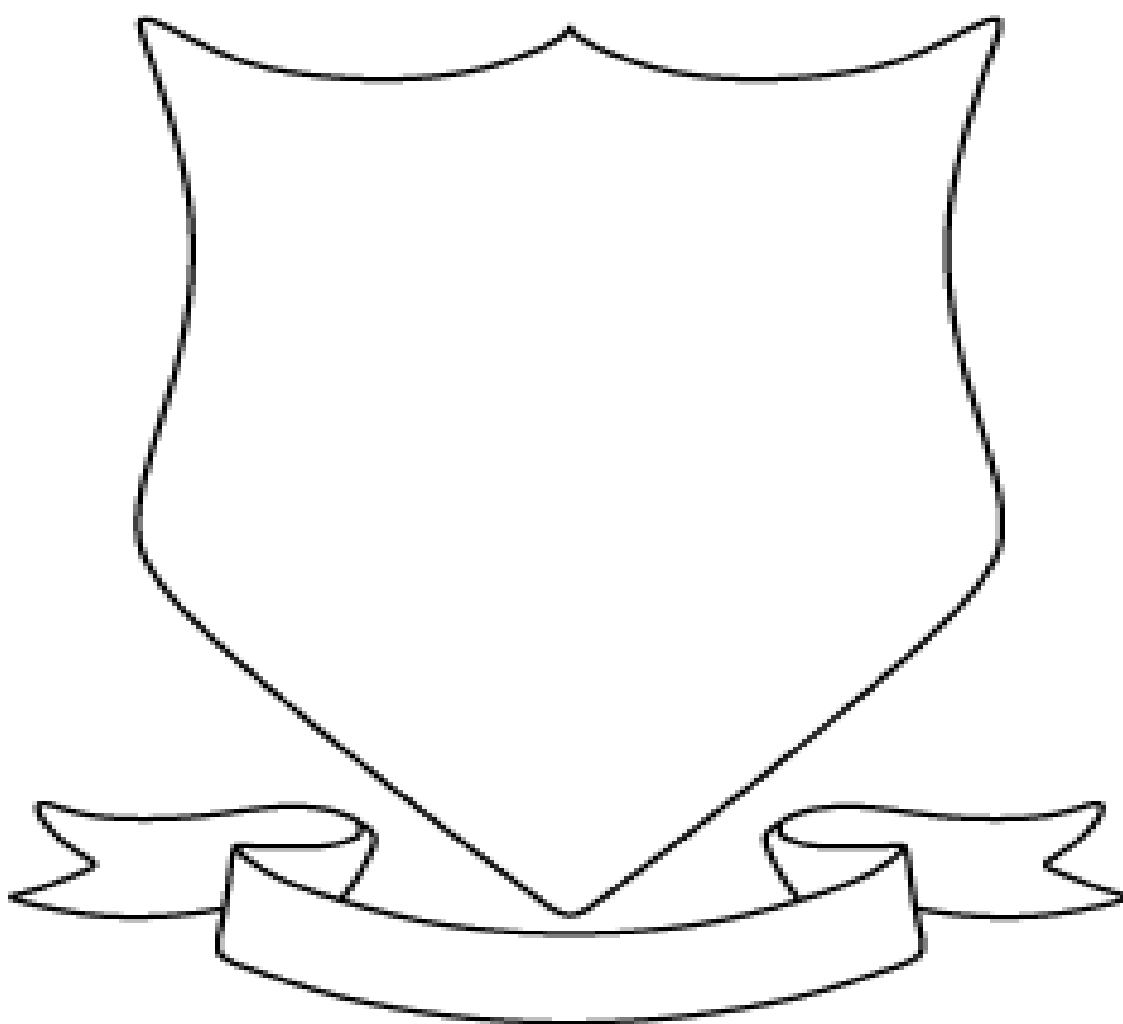
### Motto

The motto is a short inspirational phrase or series of words, like a proverb. A motto was usually placed at the bottom of a shield within a scroll but occasionally it could be seen above it.

**Student Resource:** Create a Coat of Arms

Drawing inspiration from HBC's coat of arms, look at other businesses you know and create a coat of arms that best reflects their company brand. Research their historical significance, symbols and overall contributions. Use the following template.

Share your creation in small groups or with the rest of the class. Explain the elements you included and why.





## Student Resource: Three Corporate Coats of Arms



HBC coat of arms, 1921. HBC Corporate Collection.

### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

**MOTTO:** *PRO PELLE CUTEM*  
 "Skin for Skin" or "Skin for Leather"

**FOUNDED:** 1670

**PRODUCTS:** Fur trade, General Store, Department Store, 86 Canadian locations.



North West Company coat of arms, ca. 1800–1820.  
 Unknown Artist, Library and Archives Canada,  
 C-008711.

### NORTH WEST COMPANY

**MOTTO:** *PERSEVERANCE*

**FOUNDED:** 1789

**DEFUNCT:** 1821

**PRODUCTS:** Fur Trade



East India Company coat of arms, Wikimedia Commons.

### EAST INDIA COMPANY

**MOTTO:** *Deus indicat. Deo Deucente nil Nocet* "God is our leader. When God leads, nothing can harm"

**FOUNDED:** 1600

**DEFUNCT:** 1874

**PRODUCTS:** cotton, silk, indigo dye, sugar, salt, spices, saltpeter, tea and opium; products from India