

HBC Flags

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Grade Level: 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, 11/12

Subject Area: Social Studies/ History/
English

Themes:

- Arts, Sports & Culture
- Canadian Identity

Lesson Overview: In this lesson, students explore the history of HBC flags. They conduct research and consolidate their knowledge by creating a 12-word story about the flag's history.

Time Required: One to two lessons

Associated Resources:

HBC Sources:

- [The Flags of HBC](#)

Other Online Sources:

- [HBC Flag: Tales and Treasures from the rich legacy of the Hudson's Bay Company. Canada's History](#)

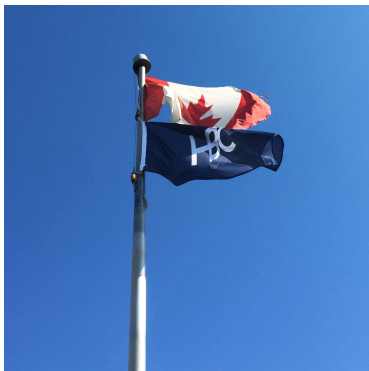
Historical Thinking Concepts:

- Establish *historical significance*
- Identify *continuity and change*

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Investigate the history and significance of HBC flags.
- Consolidate their research by creating a 12-word story.



The Corporate Flag, the Governors Standard Flag, and the Red Ensign Flag. HBC Corporate Collection.

Background Information:

The origin of the flag is like that of the coat of arms, an object, in this case a piece of material rather than a shield, that was used for identification or recognition during battle. As a sign of identification, flags are also used as a symbolic claim of possession, ownership, or achievement such as the planting of a flag. (Examples: Explorers reaching the South Pole or the United States astronauts planting a flag on the moon.)

Flags are presently ubiquitous and remain useful as emblems of leadership or nations, for communication, as decoration or in parades. They are also draped over coffins during funerals and lowered to “half-mast” when a person of note has died.

Companies past and present have also created flags as identification, and such is the case for Hudson’s Bay Company. The HBC flag has a long history that extends beyond branding as its roots are in British Imperialism. The first HBC flag is essentially a modified version of the Red Ensign of the British Royal Navy. Permission to use the modified ensign was granted in 1682 to the company by its first governor, Prince Rupert, who was also Vice Admiral of England. It was created for HBC ships sailing into Hudson’s Bay and flown at its forts. This flag was in use for several hundred years. The “Governor’s Standard”, which depicted the Company’s Coat of Arms on a field of white dates back to 1779 and was used to signal the Governor’s presence. As of 1970, it replaced the Red Ensign flag as the Company flag and would be flown next to the new flag of Canada. The historic flag can still be seen at HBC historic sites throughout Canada.

The Lesson Activity

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

- Distribute copies of Student Resource: HBC Flag – Think | Pair | Share, one per student.
- Instruct them to silently study the image.
- Under THINK have them write their first impressions of the image. What is it? Who does it belong to? Does it remind you of something else? Have you seen it before? Provide time for them to complete individually.
- Divide the class into pairs. Instruct them to revisit the same questions again with a partner and jot down notes on the sheet.
- After several minutes, bring the pairs together. Have them share with the whole class. Instruct them to take notes on their sheets.
- Encourage discussion.

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

- Instruct student pairs to read an overview of the flags of the HBC. Provide print copies or digital access to [The Flags of HBC](#).
- Give them several minutes.
- Have the pairs write TRUE or FALSE on separate sheets of paper.
- Explain that they are going to play a round of 'READING: True or False'. You will read a statement aloud about HBC flags and each team will have 5 seconds to hold up their 'TRUE' or 'FALSE' card in response. See: Teacher Resource: HBC Flag – Team True or False
- Debrief after game.

Applying: *How will students demonstrate their understanding?*

- Distribute copies of Student Resource: HBC Red Ensign Flag: 12-Word Story, one per student.
- Read over and check for understanding.
- Once they have completed the task, share their 12-word stories with the whole class.

Materials/Resources:

- Access to internet for student research
- Printed copies of webpage, [The Flags of HBC](#) or electronic devices for student access.
- Print copies of Student Resource: HBC Red Ensign Flag– Think | Pair | Share
- Print copies of Student Resource: HBC Flag: 12-Word Story, one per student

Student Resource: HBC Red Ensign Flag – Think | Pair | Share

HBC Red Ensign Flag. HBC Corporate Collection.

Think:

Pair:

Share:

Teacher Resource: HBC Flag – Team True or False

Read aloud each statement. Students respond either TRUE or FALSE.

1. The historical flag most associated with Hudson's Bay Company is the modified Red Ensign of the British Royal Navy. [ANSWER: True]
2. In 1682, Prince Rupert, first Governor of HBC granted the Company permission to use the flag at its forts and on its ships entering Hudson Strait. This was common practice at the time. [ANSWER: False. No other private enterprise was ever granted such a privilege.]
3. For many years, the HBC flag was used as a sort of logo on Company stationery and private branded products. [ANSWER: True]
4. Today the HBC Red Ensign flag is used as part of the visual identity of the Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation (HBCHF) and the flag continues to be flown at former HBC historic sites across Canada. [ANSWER: True]
5. The Governor's Standard Flag has a version of the Canadian coat of arms on it. [ANSWER: False. The Governor's Standard Flag is white and has a version of the HBC coat of arms on it. It was considered to be more distinctive than the red HBC ensign, which is often confused with various provincial flags.]
6. In the fall of 2012, HBC launched a re-design of its flag. It is a red background with 3 conjoined letters, H-B-C on it. [ANSWER: False. The background is navy.]
7. Over the centuries, there have been three HBC flags flown over the company's locations and on the company's products: red ensign design, the governor's standard, and the corporate flag logo. [ANSWER: True]

Student Resource: HBC Flag: 12-Word Story

Imagine that Hudson Bay Company is creating a lapel pin of the HBC flag to sell in their department stores. The design of the pin is complete, now your task is to create a short, textual overview of the flag's history that will be printed on the back of the small piece of cardboard – called the pin backing - that the pin is attached to.

Your short text must be **12 WORDS LONG** (no more – no less!). Write your overview below.

Like other forms of short stories or 'flash fiction', a **12-word story** allows a reader to consume an entire narrative in just a moment's time. Due to the limited word count, you have to work hard to tell an engaging story, develop connection with the characters and have a plot. These bite-sized narratives are fast and fun and can easily be shared on social media platforms.

Adapted from:

<https://www.zachary-phillips.com/fiction/12-word-stories-p1>

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-an-unforgettable-six-word-story>

Hudson's Bay Company

www.hbc.com
