

TP-9 Wax Snapshots of Canadian History

**Cast: 50 characters
plus additional group member parts, as needed**

Teacher
Francis
Tour Guide
Jessie
Sam
Morgan
Cal
Bobby
Dillon
Chris
Kennedy
Sal
Kelly
Jordon
Dale
Sandy
Sam
Native Chief
Hunters # 1, 2, and 3
Native Child # 1 and 2
Native People
Champlain
Fille # 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
Couriers de Bois
Loyalist Child
Revolutionist # 1, 2, 3, and 4
Wife
Loyalist who has been tarred and feathered
Americans and Canadians in the war of 1812
William Van Horne
Donald Smith
Spectators
Train Engineer
Prospector # 1 and 2
Other Prospectors
Canadian Soldier # 1, 2, 3, and 4
German Soldier # 1, 2, 3, and 4

(On stage there are people arranged for the Native scene. They stand still, as if they are made of wax. The Natives sit in a semi-circle around a campfire with the chief in the middle of the semi-circle. Three hunters stand behind the circle, carrying spears and a buffalo. The tour guide enters and looks like he/she is preparing to meet someone. He/She is dusting off his/her jacket and fixing his/her hair. The teacher enters with his/her students, and the tour guide turns happily to greet them)

Teacher: No interrupting. No running. No chewing gum, eating food, or drinking beverages, as the museum staff do not want precious exhibits damaged by crumbs and gum wads. No riding the display animals. No disruptive expressions of enthusiasm – we wouldn't want anyone to get too excited.

Francis: Is there anything we *are* allowed to do?

Teacher: You can learn. That is all. Look! Here's our tour guide.

(The teacher shakes the tour guide's hand.)

Tour Guide: *(addressing the students)* Welcome, Middleton Middle School, to the Museum of Fine History. Here we have all things fine and all things historic.

Jessie: *(jumping and clapping)* Will we see knights, princesses, and kings?

Sam: Or will we discover the truth behind King Tut and whether the legend of his cursed tomb has any validity?

Tour Guide: Actually, no. Although this museum covers many great events in world history, today we are focusing on Canadian history.

Morgan: You mean, like Pamela Anderson, Jim Carey, and Shania Twain?

Cal: Or how Mike Myers does all those voices?

Bobby: So that means we are going to learn about hockey, right?

Dillon: Yeah, I love hockey. GO LEAFS GO!

Francis: Whatever. The Leafs suck.

Chris: SENS ALL THE WAY!

(Half of the students cheer and half of them boo. They argue about which hockey team is better, the Leafs or the Senators.)

Teacher: Now, now, children, settle down. This is no place to get rowdy. You are not respecting the museum rules.

Francis: I hate museums.

Kennedy: Yeah, they're boring.

Chris: They're almost as bad as libraries.

Sal: Why couldn't we have gone to Canada's Wonderland instead?

Teacher: That's not very educational.

Jordon: But it would've been awesome.

Kelly: Yeah! We could've gone on Drop Zone.

Dale: I totally barfed chunks the last time I went on that ride.

Sandy: Well, you're not supposed to eat three hotdogs and a pizza before you go on any of the rides.

Teacher: Shhh. Let's listen to what the nice tour guide has to say.

Tour Guide: The Canadian history we will be covering today is directly related to the curriculum you are studying in school.

(Everyone groans.)

Dale: Shoot me now.

Teacher: Dale, that's not very polite. I don't want to have to report you to Principal Yautweister.

Dale: *(under his/her breath)* You mean, Mr. Snotmeister.

(Students snicker.)

Teacher: What was that?

Dale: Nothing, Mrs. Kerbockle.

Tour Guide: I think that you all have the wrong impression of history. History is thrilling and packed full of suspenseful tales, especially Canadian history.

Sam: I was under the impression that history was based on facts.

Dale: Facts are boring.

Tour Guide: History is not boring, and it's not all about facts. We only know some of the "facts." Over time, information gets lost. Often we don't know the whole story, and we have to use our imagination to try and fill in the pieces.

Francis: History -- thrilling? Somebody should have informed my fifth grade teacher.

Cal: Yeah. I never realized how boring pioneers were until I had history class with Mr. Brumsey.

(All the students agree.)

Jessie: *(jumping excitedly)* Why don't we give it a chance? You never know. History might be exciting.

Teacher: That's the spirit, Jessie.

Sandy: *(talking to the tour guide)* Okay, you say that history is so cool. Prove it.

Sal: Yeah, you've got our attention. We're listening.

(Kelly snores.)

Chris: Well, most of us are.

Tour Guide: Good! Let's get started. If you look to your right you will see the premier display on our tour. *(The tour guide gestures toward the Native scene.)* It is an example of the people who originally inhabited Canada. It is

believed that they came across the Bering Strait, a piece of land that once joined Asia to North America. See, these are statues made of wax. Our museum artist works in close connection with historians to try and re-create historical images accurately.

Jordan: You mean people actually dressed like that?

Tour Guide: Yes. They didn't have shopping malls or trendy designers back then. They made all of their clothes from the animals they killed, like buffalos and rabbits.

Dale: I don't see many buffalos today.

Tour Guide: No, they are practically extinct.

Kelly: Probably because those Natives killed them all.

Tour Guide: It had nothing to do with the Natives. It coincided with the arrival of Europeans, or White Men as the Natives called them. We'll see this in our next exhibit.

Jessie: How'd the Natives kill the buffalo?

Tour Guide: Well, they used various methods. Sometimes they would hunt animals with bows and arrows. Sometimes they would drive them off cliffs.

Bobby: Like in their volkswagens?

Tour Guide: No, like on horses. Here, I'll be a Blackfoot warrior. And this (*grabs a broomstick*) is my horse. I will name my horse George. And all of you ... are the buffalo! Giddy up, George! (*The students do not move.*) Why aren't you running? If you really were buffalo, you'd have been extinct centuries ago. (*The students run away screaming.*)

Teacher: Order! ORDER! (*The students run back and get calmed down.*) Too much enthusiasm! I see what methods you're trying to use, but these are not the methods we use at Middleton Middle School – and besides, Jessie is a little over-excitabile. (*Jessie jumps up and down.*)

Tour Guide: Then she's in the right place! Nothing but excitement here! And just wait until you see our next exhibit that depicts the couriers de bois. But in order to get there, we are going to have to use our paddles. That's how the couriers de bois explored Canada. Come on class, pretend you're in a Canot du Nord, and you're headed in search of beaver skins. *(The students pretend they are rowing in a canoe.)* Row, row, row. That's right. You are naturals. Come on, you too, Mrs. Kerbockle. Everyone has to do their part, carry their own weight, earn their keep...

(The tour guide and class exit. The Native exhibit comes alive.)

Chief: I see you have returned. I am glad that you are unharmed.

Native Child # 1: We were so worried for you, father, for all of you.

Hunter # 1: We have brought gifts from the buffalo for our tribe to share. Mother Earth was generous to let us have one of her creatures.

Chief: Come, let's show our appreciation. Thank you, brother buffalo, for giving your life for the sustenance of our people. Your sacrifice has brought clothing, food, and tools to our tribe. Let us never forget that we are entwined and connected with all of nature. We release brother buffalo's spirit.

Hunter #2: We will now share this buffalo equally amongst all the people of our tribe, just as we share the bounty the harvesters bring forth. We all work equally hard to keep our people strong. We all have a role to play, and all, even the smallest child, has a voice to be heard.

Chief: Go prepare the buffalo for the feast.

(Hunter #2 exits with the buffalo.)

Native Child #2: Tell us about the hunt.

Native Child #1: Yes, and don't leave anything out.

Hunter #3: As you know, the buffalo are very intelligent creatures. They are strong and united, just as we are. As long as

they remained cohesive, we could not break one away from the herd. We followed the herd and pondered how we could outsmart the brave buffalo. On the fifth day, our brother, Rising Eagle, watched a rabbit hide from a predator by blending in to its surroundings. We took this as a sign and knew that the only way we could infiltrate the buffalo was to become like one of them.

(Hunter # 2 enters.)

Hunter #2: The buffalo is ready. Let the feast begin.

Native Child #2: You dressed up like a buffalo?

Hunter #3: Yes. As we eat, I will tell you all I have learned about the way of the buffalo. I have seen life through their eyes, and my respect for them is deeper than it has ever been.

(The Native scene exits and the next scene is arranged to depict New France when the filles de roi arrived. The ladies are being welcomed by Samuel de Champlain and other fur traders. The students, the teacher, and the tour guide enter paddling.)

Tour Guide: Well, what did you think about the fur trader exhibit?

Morgan: I love those beaver skin hats that they wore.

Tour Guide: You weren't the only one that loved them. I love them, too! I can only find imitations at used clothing stores now, but back then they were all the rage. Everyone had to have one. It was the exploration age's equivalent of the little black dress. Jacques Cartier came here looking for gold, and instead he found a commodity worth much more than that. He and his men set up fur-trading posts and collected beaver pelts from the Natives. The pelts sold in Europe for premium prices. They were rolling in the dough. There was money EVERYWHERE! *(The tour guide throws fake money. The teacher picks it up, organizes it neatly into a money clip, and gives it back to the tour guide.)* Unfortunately, Canadian culture paid a high price as well. The Native's way of life was drastically altered because of Europe's intervention. The colonizers brought disease, racism, and land ownership dreams that