

Art & Agriculture

Designed for Grades 3-8

This theme-based approach to visual art curriculum is an opportunity for students to learn about New Brunswick's agricultural industry while being creative and strategizing with the elements and principles of art.



Your ag-based
art journey
starts here!

In Partnership with





Main Objective:

Through art analysis and the making of still life art, students will explore how food gets to their plate, what is the local food industry, and what are the benefits and nutritional value of healthy foods, particularly ones produced in the province of New Brunswick.

Curriculum:

(as outlined in [Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum](#))

Creating, Making, and Presenting

Students are able to express their ideas and communicate their feelings through creative art forms. Students will be encouraged to explore and experiment with different techniques and will develop new skills.

Understanding and Connecting Contexts of Time, Place, and Community

students will explore the value of the arts as a record of human experience and demonstrate critical awareness of the role of the arts in creating and reflecting culture in a local and global context.

Perceiving, Reflecting, and Responding

students will be expected to analyze and respond to the expressive and narrative qualities of their own and others' artwork through various means.

Overarching Questions:

1. Where does our food come from and how does it get to our plate?
2. What is the nutritional value of different types of food?
3. What is the history of our local agriculture?
4. What are some traditions and customs around food?

This unit plan is intended to span over several classes and has been chunked into 60 min learning activities but can be adjusted as necessary. There are opportunities to dive deeper into specific topics or to branch into cross-curricular learning activities to enhance the scope of the project.

Learning Activity #1 – What's On My Plate

Learning Activity #2 - Still Life and the History of Agriculture

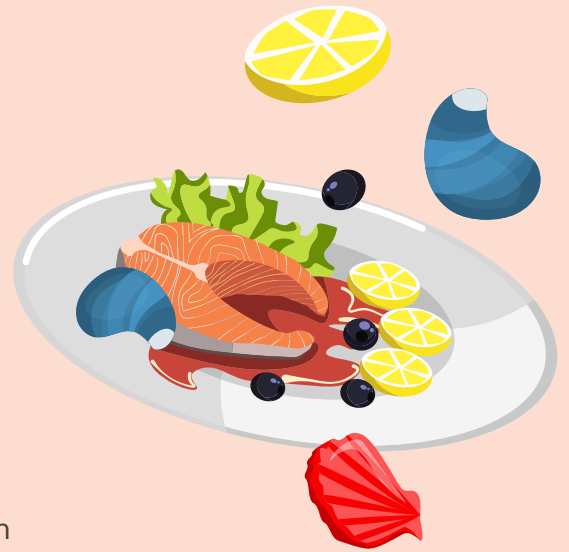
Culminating Activity – Collective Cookbook

* Important Consideration Prior to Beginning this Learning Activity

Food as a topic of education in the classroom must be approached with sensitivity. Some kids may experience food insecurity at home, therefore class discussions on food could be a very sensitive topic if food scarcity is part of their everyday life. Also, any students struggling with body image, eating disorders or social pressures related to food and weight may also find this topic stressful to discuss in the classroom. Please use discretion and your knowledge of students when following this unit plan and discuss any possible issues with your administration or guidance team prior to beginning.

Learning Activity #1

— What's on My Plate?



Objective:

To discuss the difference between local and imported foods and learn what is produced locally in New Brunswick. To conduct an art analysis as a class.

Materials:

Teacher -

whiteboard or chalkboard for taking notes during classroom discussion, screen and digital projector connected to a laptop for the art analysis of Mary Pratt, *Supper Table*, 1969.

Students -

sketchbook or paper, pencil/pencil crayons/crayons/markers, Elements of Art and Principle of Design reference guides

Steps:

Introduction (10 mins) -

Either in their sketchbook or on paper, ask students to do a one-page sketch of the last thing they ate. Depending on when the class is, this may be breakfast, lunch or a recess snack. Encourage the use of text and descriptive words as well to describe the food, the taste, where it was consumed, etc.

Class Discussion (20 mins) -

On the classroom board, make two columns: one labelled 'Local' (in this case you may choose Canada as a broader definition of what local means in relation to food) and one labelled 'Imported'. Review the meaning of each and then ask students to share with the class what food they drew and whether they believe it to be a local food (grown or

harvested in Canada) or an imported food (produced in a different country and transported to Canada). At this point don't make corrections, just allow ideas to flow and the two columns to be filled. Certain food items may appear in both columns.

Discuss some of the reasons why Canada may import certain foods (reasons such as climate, labour costs, natural resources, multiculturalism, immigration or market trends may come up).

Next, zoom in to an even more local context and discuss New Brunswick agriculture and what we produce here in our very own province. Ask students what they know of New Brunswick's food products. Some students and their families may be involved in the industry and could share their personal experiences with the class. As items are mentioned, circle them on the board or add them if they haven't been mentioned already. The goal is to end up with a list of NB agricultural products identified on the board. Ideally, there will be a list of NB agricultural products kept visible in the classroom throughout this unit plan.

Teacher Reference - Regarding Multiculturalism

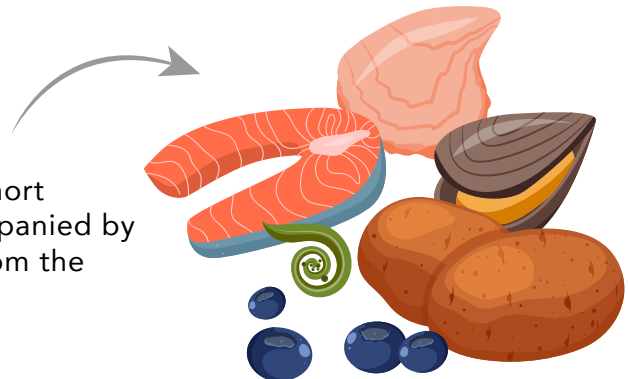
According to the Government of Canada website on Immigration and Citizenship, 2022, Canada's population of over 36 million people reflects a cultural, ethnic and linguistic mix that is unique in the world. Over the past 200 years, many newcomers have helped to build our country's way of life. About 20 percent of Canadians were born outside Canada. In Toronto, Canada's largest city, this number is over 45 per cent.

This diversity of people and Canada's multiculturalism has led to more demand for imported food products and grocery store items that are now made readily available. Many grocery stores have specific imported food sections to meet the growing demand for items that are not produced locally here in Canada.

Definitions:

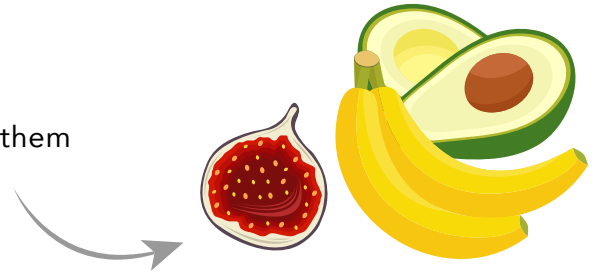
Local Food -

"local food is food that is produced within a short distance of where it is consumed, often accompanied by a social structure and supply chain different from the large-scale supermarket system" (Wikipedia)



Imported Food -

"To import products or raw materials means to buy them from another country for use in your own country"
(Collins Dictionary)



Teacher Reference - What is produced in Canada?




According to The Canadian Encyclopedia - Agriculture in Canada (published 2020 and last edited 2022) "Most of Canada's crop farming takes place in the Prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba). Alberta has the most beef cattle operations of any province. Saskatchewan produces the most durum wheat, canola and lentils. Manitoba has the most pig farms and is second in potato production. In British Columbia, farmers produce large amounts of fruit, vegetables, aquaculture products, eggs and poultry meat. That province also has the largest number of grape growers.

Ontario has the most poultry farms of any province, is second in pig and dairy farms and has the largest number of cannabis-growing operations. Ontario farmers also produce the most corn and apples in Canada. Quebec is the largest producer of blueberries in Canada and has the largest number of dairy farms and cows. In Atlantic Canada, farming is split equally between crops and livestock (including aquaculture). Potatoes are a popular crop in this region. There are also several large food product manufacturers in Atlantic Canada."

According to New Brunswick Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries: New Brunswick's agricultural crops include apples, bees, cranberries, controlled environment agriculture (for berry and vegetable production), field crops (including traditional crops such as barley, wheat, oats and forages in addition to new crops for the region such as grain corn, soybean, canola and biomass crops), organic production (including maple syrup), potatoes, small fruits (such as strawberries and raspberries), vegetables, and wild blueberries.

New Brunswick's livestock includes cattle, mink/silver fox, poultry and goats/sheep/swine.

New Brunswick's aquaculture includes salmon, oysters, and freshwater species (such as Atlantic salmon, brook trout, rainbow trout, shortnose sturgeon, and Arctic char).



Some students are uncomfortable or unable to share their work or their ideas in the format of a class discussion. As an alternative, invite these students to write their ideas in their sketchbook during the class discussion or on post-it notes that you can collect and add to the brainstorm.

Art Analysis (25 mins):

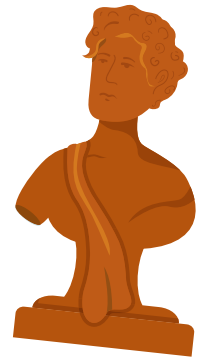
Teacher -

Project the image of Mary Pratt, *Supper Table*, 1969, so that everyone can see (turn off the classroom lights and close window blinds for a better viewing experience).



Mary Pratt (Canadian | Canadienne, 1935 – 2018), *Supper Table*, 1969, Oil on canvas | huile sur toile, 61 x 91.4 cm | 61 x 91,4 cm, Purchase | Achat
Collection of the Musée des beaux-arts Beaverbrook Art Gallery

Did you know? You can view this piece in person by visiting the Beaverbrook Art Gallery!



An Art Analysis in 4 Basic Steps -

*Please note – in my experience when doing this for the first time with students it may take them a few minutes to warm up and get involved. Don't be afraid of some silence while they look at and absorb what they're seeing while trying to find the words to describe it.

Describe – you can begin by introducing the title, artist, year, material and size of the artwork. Next, ask your students some of the following questions.

- What do you see in this painting? List the literal objects in the painting.
- What do you notice first when you look at the work? Why?
- What kinds of colours do you see? How would you describe them?
- What shapes can we see? What kind of edges do the shapes have?
- Are there lines in the artwork? If so, what kinds of lines?
- What sort of textures do you see? How would you describe them?
- What time of day or night is it? How can we tell?
- What is the overall visual effect or mood of the work?
- Name some other major events in history that occurred at the same time this artwork was created.

Analyze – This is where the elements (line, shape, space, colour, texture, value, form) and principles of design (unity, balance, movement, repetition, pattern, rhythm, contrast, variety, emphasis) can be discussed along with the formal qualities of the work. Focus on the most significant art principles and how the artist used them to organize the elements. Suggested questions to help with analysis:

- How has the artist used light in the artwork? Is there the illusion of a scene with lights and shadows, or does the artist use light and dark values in more abstracted way?
- How has the artist used colours in the artwork? What sort of effect do the colours have on the artwork?
- How has the artist used shapes within the work of art? Are shapes repeated in such a way that an alternating rhythm is achieved?
- How have lines been used in the artwork? Has the artist used them as an important or dominant part of the work, or do they play a different role?
- How did the artist create emphasis or a focal point?
- What role does texture play in the work? Is there the illusion of texture?
- How has the overall visual effect or mood of the work been achieved by the use of elements and principles of design? Have the shapes or content of the composition been balanced in a formal or informal way?
- How were the artists design tools used to achieve a particular look or focus?

Interpretation – An interpretation seeks to explain the meaning of the work based on what you have learned so far about the artwork, what do you think the artist was trying to say? ***Please note: remind students that their interpretation is valid based on their own experiences and thoughts, there is no one correct interpretation or answer

- What was the artist's statement in this work?
- What do you think it means?
- What does it mean to you?
- How does this relate to you and your life?
- What feelings do you have when looking at this artwork?
- Do you think there are things in the artwork that represent other things-symbols?
- Why do you think that the artist chose to work in this manner and made these kinds of artistic decisions?
- Why did the artist create this artwork?

Judgment – After careful observation, analysis, and interpretation of an artwork, you are ready to make your own judgment. This is your personal evaluation based on the understanding of the work. Here are questions you might consider:

- Why do you think that this work has intrinsic value or worth? What is the value that you find in the work? (For ex:, it is a beautiful work of art, conveys an important social message, affects the way that I see the world, makes insightful connections, reaffirms a religious belief, etc.)
- Do you think that the work has a benefit for others? Do you find that the work communicates an idea, feeling or principle that would have value for others?
- Does the work lack value or worth? Why do you think this is so? Could the reason you find the work lacking come from a poor use of the elements of art? Could the subject matter be unappealing, unimaginative, or repulsive?
- Rather than seeing the work as being very effective or without total value, does the work fall somewhere in-between? Do you think that the work is just okay? What do you base this opinion on? The use of elements of art? Lack of personal expression? The work lacks a majoy focus? Explore your criticism of the work as much as you would any positive perceptions. Realize that your own tastes and prejudices may enter into your criticism. Give your positive and negative perceptions.

Teacher Reference - Analysis Example

It's impossible to predict exactly what discussion will ensue from an art analysis, which is one of the exciting and engaging aspects of this activity. In case this activity is something new for you, here is my analysis of the painting that you can reference if necessary (but let new ideas fly in the classroom, the discussion does not have to be like mine):

Describe: I see a dinner table with the remnants of a meal. The table is seen from around head height looking down on it from one end. It appears to be inside a home. It's a shiny wooden table with 6 place settings. Each place setting has various dishes and food scraps that remain. The two settings at each head of the table have teacups while the other four settings, two on each side, have milk glasses. The dishware is white with blue circular stripes. There are condiments in the center of the table including ketchup, hot sauce, salt and pepper, and butter. A serving plate with a leftover hotdog faces the viewer. What I notice first about the painting is the quality of light that is cast on the table. It appears to be a warm, strong sunlight that is shining on the table from a window to the left that is outside of the picture frame. I also notice the hotdog that is close to the center of the painting and appears to be one of the only food items that is left untouched and intact. The artist has rendered the texture of all the objects to appear realistically. The glassware looks smooth, the bun looks soft, the placemats have the woven texture of cotton weave. Shapes and form feature prominently in this painting. The condiments in glass jars and the cups are all variations of cylindrical forms. The rectangular placemats are strategically placed around the table with the majority of the other items clustered in the center. The circular shape of the table itself takes up almost the entire frame of the painting. I would describe the

overall mood of the painting as content, comfortable, warm, inviting, and nostalgic.

Analyze: The colours used in the painting are true to life and realistic. They emphasize the warm nature of the light that is cast upon the table and create a sense of unity. Every reflective surface, including the glossy varnished table, reflects light and colour. The shadows have been rendered long and dark to the right of each subject to emphasize the low-lying sun assumed to be coming in through a window off frame, referencing the remains of a supper time meal. The circular shape of the table makes it a radial composition with a cluster of shapes and forms placed upon it with emphasis on the ruby red ketchup bottle that stands the tallest and the hot dog that remains untouched. This circular shape is reinforced by the circular blue lines that feature on the plates and salt and pepper shakers. The rectangular placemats stand out however their placement around the circle again emphasizes the circular composition.

Interpretation: The circular nature of the composition seems to reinforce the daily and ritualistic act of eating food and in particular of sharing a meal with family or friends. Making food, eating it, cleaning up and then doing it all over again within a matter of hours is a cyclical and necessary part of our daily lives that we don't always stop to consider. The full table with 6 place settings alludes to family and time spent together. It was the nature of the light rendered in the painting that first stood out to me and I associate a feeling of nostalgia with it, particularly as it highlights what I interpret as past family meals in a time before the present. I also pick up on a reference to the role of the mother in family dynamics, especially given the era in which it was painted. Setting the table, preparing the food and cleaning up was traditionally the woman's or mother's role in a family and I feel like the artwork is painted from this perspective. While the rest of the family has departed, it appears as if the mother remains to complete this ritualistic and repetitive task.

Judgment: While this painting is beautifully and impressively rendered, I personally do not find that it conveys an important social message. I do find that it successfully captures the magic and distinct colour of light, in particular that time of day known as the golden hour. I also enjoy the sense of nostalgia I get when I look at it and consider this to be a result of its reference to the fleetingness of time and the repetitive nature of everyday tasks. I believe others will also appreciate the ability of the artist to render materials so realistically and may appreciate the simple way that light shapes objects. While some artwork attempts to address large topics or global issues, I appreciate the simplicity of the subject matter and the reference to everyday experiences. As a single person with no family of my own, I can't relate to it on a personal level in the present day and find it falls short to address a global experience of food consumption and family. It represents one situation singularly and falls short in its ability to be relatable to a wide audience.

Teacher Reference - References

Mary Pratt: Life & Work by Ray Cronin provides additional information on the artwork titled Supper Table, Mary Pratt's biography, additional key works, and Pratt's style and technique.

According to the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 20 July 2022, they have recently acquired Mary Pratt's iconic 1969 painting Supper Table and it will be on permanent display in their new gallery space.

For more information on the Art Analysis procedure read Four Steps in Art Criticism by Janice Mason Art Museum.

The Art of Education has free downloadable reference guides, one for the Elements of Art and one for the Principles of Design. It is helpful to have a few copies of these in the classroom for students to reference or to hand one out to each student.

According to CTV News Montreal, 9 July 2021, Production of Heinz ketchup returns to Canada with new Montreal Factory.

Conclusion (5 mins):

In summary of the art analysis activity, bring the class's awareness to the ritual aspect of consuming food, the necessity of it, and its importance for providing us with vitamins, minerals, and all the things our body needs to survive and thrive.

Ask students to pay a little closer attention to what they eat over the next couple days and to ask questions such as; where did this food come from? How was it produced? How did it get to my plate? If students are willing, they can use their sketchbooks to keep a journal of what they eat, using images and words.

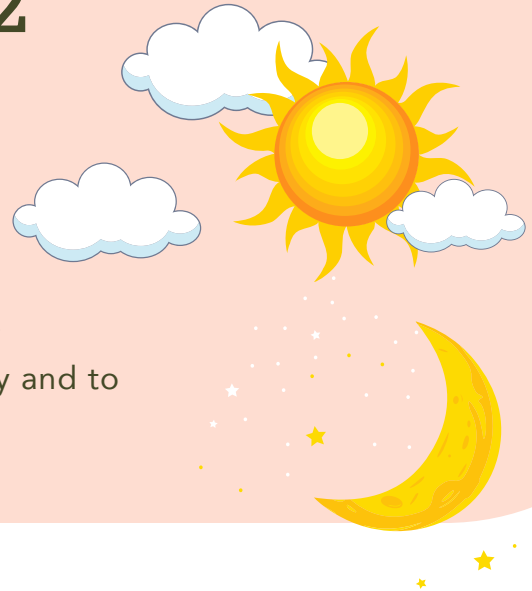
Something new to consider that will be discussed further is: what are whole foods and how do they compare to processed foods?

Learning Activity #2

— Day One: Art Viewing & Discussion

Objective:

To understand the contributions of the Wabanaki Societies to New Brunswick's agricultural industry and to contemplate the genre of art known as Still Life.



Materials:

Teacher -

Projector connected to a laptop to show Norval Morrisseau's *Androgyny*, 1983, Mary Pratt's *Classical Still Life with Pheasant*, 1995, Jacopo da Empoli's *Still Life*, circa 1625, and *Still Life Found in the Tomb of Menna*, circa 1422-1411 BCE.

Students -

sketchbook/paper and pencil.

***Please Note regarding the history of agriculture in New Brunswick**

When discussing New Brunswick agriculture we must acknowledge our Indigenous peoples, their relationship to the land, and their contributions to the development of agricultural practices prior to colonization. Wabanaki (People of the Dawn) is a confederacy of five related Indigenous nations including the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, Pesktomuhkati, Penobscot, and Abenaki nations. New Brunswick was established upon a large portion of the Mi'kmaw Nation, almost the entirety of the Wolastoqey Nation, and a portion of the Pesktomuhkati Nation.

The Wabanaki Wholistic Learning Framework 2022 was developed by the EECD First Nation Elders Council in consultation with First Nation communities and its purpose is to "guide learning specialists, curriculum writers and curriculum teams in the meaningful inclusion and centering of Wabanaki perspectives. All educators are welcome to use this Framework as a tool for embedding Wabanaki knowledge into their educational practice" (p.2). I have included some of the guidelines in the following learning activity.

Teacher Reference - References

Below are relevant guidelines chosen from the Wabanaki Wholistic Learning Framework:

Treaty Education – Guiding Focus – Our First Treaty is with Mother Earth

- Explore the beauty of the natural environment
- Demonstrate respect and responsibility for all living things
- Explore how all things are related and how interrelationships are celebrated in Wabanaki cultures

Wabanaki Societies - Guiding Focus - The connection of Wabanaki Peoples to the natural environment

- Discuss Wabanaki understandings of interconnectedness with the land: (e.g., the land is not owned, people “borrow” what the land has to offer and in return take care of the land)
- Investigate the impact colonization had and continues to have on the ways that Wabanaki people interact with the natural environment
- Consider how contact with Europeans has impacted Wabanaki connections to the natural world
- Identify the impacts that the seasonal cycles and natural seasonal events have on Wabanaki Peoples
- Learn about the diversity of life and medicines found in the natural world

Treaty Education – Guiding Focus – Being a Treaty Person

- Introduce the concept of Indigenous peoples and that any Canadians who are not First Nation, Métis, or Inuit are immigrants, the descendants of immigrants, or the descendants of people who were brought here in slavery

Steps:

Introduction and history of NB agriculture (20 mins) -

1. Project Norval Morrisseau’s *Androgyny*, 1983 on the screen in the classroom for everyone to see. Be sure to darken the room as much as possible for a better viewing experience.
2. Encourage your students to use their sketchbooks to take notes of things they find interesting, important or insightful while looking at the following artwork. Encourage them to make a quick sketch of the artwork or draw any details from it that they find intriguing.

Did you know? Norval
Morrisseau signs his
artwork in Cree:
ᑕᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ
which translates to
"Copper/Brass Thunder
Bird"



Norval Morrisseau, *Androgyny*, 1983, acrylic on canvas,
366 x 610 cm, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development of Canada, Aboriginal Art Collection,
Gatineau QC (Photo: Norval Morrisseau Life & Work by Carmen Robertson, Art Canada Institute)

According to Carmen Robertson in Art Institute Canada, "Norval Morrisseau (1931-2007) is considered by many to be the Mishomis, or grandfather, of contemporary Indigenous art in Canada. His life has been sensationalized in newspapers and documentaries while his unique artistic style has pushed the boundaries of visual storytelling. The creator of the Woodland School of art and a prominent member of the Indian Group of Seven, Morrisseau is best known for using bright colours and portraying traditional stories, spiritual themes, and political messages in his work."

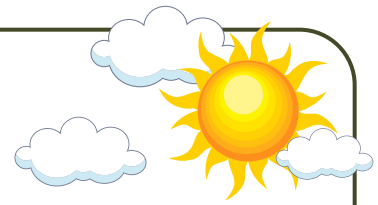
Norval Morrisseau was an Anishinaabe artist born in Ontario. While not a member of the Wabanaki Societies, this painting does express the beauty of the natural environment and it celebrates the diversity of life and tells the story of how all things are related.

3. Guiding questions to ask students while looking at the painting:

- What do you see in this painting?
- What is the relationship between the animals, the plants and the people?
- What colours did the artist choose to use? Why do you think he chose these colours?
- How is the landscape divided in this painting? What is happening in each section?
- What themes do you notice in this painting? What story is the artist telling?

4. Review the history of the Wabanaki Societies with your class as it pertains to agriculture and to reinforce their importance and role as New Brunswick's First Nations.

Teacher Reference - References



Here are some key points according to Abbe Museum's On-Line Timeline of Wabanaki History Curriculum, although please note it focuses on the current day State of Maine in the United States.

IN THE TIME OF THE DAWN / 500-12,000 years ago

As soon as glacial ice retreated, Native people occupied the land. At first, they lived in a landscape of mixed tundra and scrub forests. Eventually, as the climate warmed, mixed forests took hold and the great rivers of the state became established. Communities of hunters and gatherers collected shellfish on the coast, fished for salmon along the rivers and hunted moose in the interior forests. Trade networks connected people from Labrador south to the mid-Atlantic and west to the Great Lakes.

STRANGERS IN THE LAND: EUROPEAN CONTACT / 1500-1675

The Wabanaki were some of the earliest Native communities to encounter Europeans. Contact involved the exchange of ideas and knowledge, as well as material goods. Within decades, European diseases, warfare, alcohol and conversion to Christianity dramatically altered Wabanaki societies.

RESISTANCE: MAKING WAR & NEGOTIATING PEACE / 1675 – 1796

The Wabanaki were forced to go to war time and again during a century of conflict that saw the French and English jockey for control of North America. The Wabanaki made war in an effort to stop the invasion of their homelands. They also supported their French and American Revolutionary allies against the English. Many treaties were signed, but broken or never enforced.

HARD TIMES – THE SURVIVAL OF THE PEOPLE / 1800-1950

The Wabanaki communities lost much of their aboriginal territory in a series of land transfers, sales, and expropriations. The state of Maine took over management of tribal assets, doling out annuities to the tribes. In spite of the loss of self-determination and many traditional ways of making a living, the Wabanaki endured the hard times. Entrepreneurial Native performers, basketmakers, and guides took to the road to peddle their wares and an image of their culture to tourists. Many other Wabanaki left reservation poverty, seeking employment in Northeastern urban areas.

WABANAKI TIMELINE: A NEW DAWN / 1950 – PRESENT

The Wabanaki are contemporary communities with distinct cultures and traditions. The Tribes are concerned with developing greater cultural and economic self-sufficiency, while maintaining age-old traditions.



Teacher Reference - Literary Connection for Grades 3-5

A Day with Yahah, written by Nicola I. Campbell and illustrated by Julie Flett | Published November 2017 by Tradewind Books

World of Wisdom is a website that fosters Indigenous perspectives in learning. There is a Teaching Support site that offers a library of resources to support teaching practice, including Indigenous Books and Literacy Activities. According to World of Wisdom, "*In A Day with Yahah*, Nicola I. Campbell's words and Julie Flett's illustrations combine to take us along on an outing with Yahah and some of her family and friends as they gather plants, herbs, and mushrooms. As they spend the day together, Yahah passes on to the children her knowledge of not only plants and their uses, but also their language. This beautiful picture book celebrates time spent with family and friends, learning together about their traditions and language as well as the beauty and gifts of nature."

5. Discuss some of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit contributions to agriculture that may have gone unacknowledged. For example: pumpkins, fishhooks, chocolate, maple sugar, potatoes, beekeeping, beans, corn, squash, Thanksgiving.

Teacher Reference - References

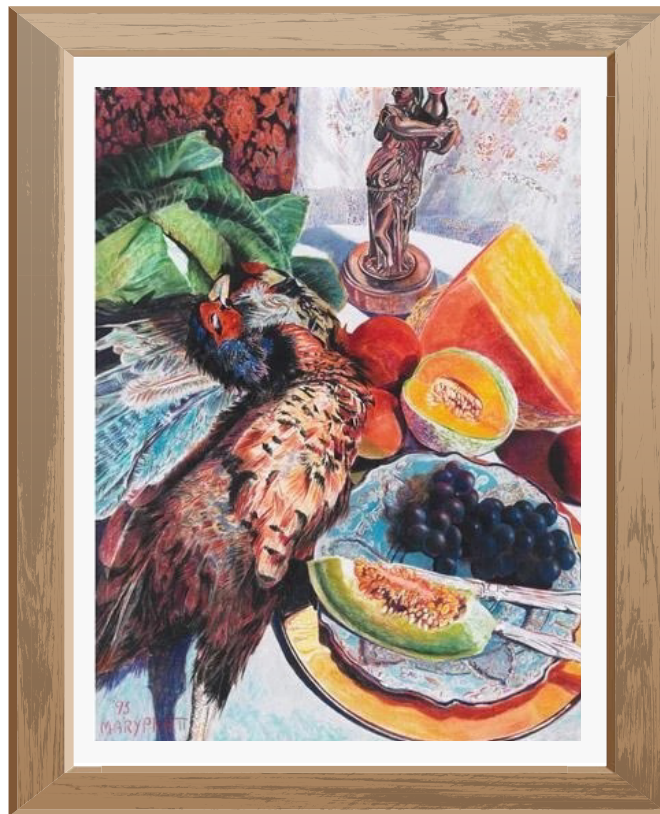
According to Dr. Pamela Rose Toulouse in *A Truthful Narrative – Bringing First Nations, Métis and Inuit contributions to the world into the K-12 curriculum 2014*, "Each of the 500 Nations on Turtle Island (North America and the Mesoamericas) have also given an abundance of innovations and inventions to the world. Many of these gifts have not been credited to the FNMI Nations from which they originate and have been appropriated through colonial laws. FNMI practices in architecture, engineering, dentistry, economics, aquaculture, medicine, metallurgy, pharmacology, transportation and many other areas need to be highlighted and shared. The self-esteem and success of FNMI students in our schools depends upon this curricular and pedagogical change..". This article links to Curriculum tables that highlight potential curriculum inclusions at each grade level for teachers to consider and include the contributions to agriculture listed above.

CBC News Article by Thandiwe Konguavi, 2021, Thanksgiving's roots in Canada can be found in Indigenous cultures and food, chef says. Excerpt: "Everything that's included in Thanksgiving, it's all Indigenous food," Iserhoff said. "You got the squash, you got the tubers, the potatoes, the mashed potatoes, the turkey, the corn ... they were here before settlers came, and that was a food source of ours." Giving thanks and celebrating the harvest and changing seasons are also part of Indigenous cultures, he said. But Indigenous contributions to Thanksgiving traditions are largely ignored today, Iserhoff said."

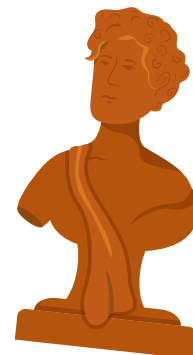
6. After discussing some of New Brunswick's agriculture that originates from our First Nations communities and reinforcing their contributions and place in our history, introduce the genre of art known as still-life.

Introduction of Still Life: a popular and age-old genre of art (25 mins) -

7. Project *Still-Life with Pheasant* by Mary Pratt on the screen so the class can observe it.



Did you know?
Artist Mary Pratt
was born in New
Brunswick but was
based in
Newfoundland for
most of her career.



Mary Pratt, *Classical Still Life with Pheasant*, 1995, mixed media on paper,
75 x 55 cm, Collection of Patrick and Lorin Kinsella
(Photo: Mary Pratt Life & Work - Biography by Ray Cronin, Art Canada Institute)

Some key points about the genre of Still Life according to Kelly Richman-Abdou, 2022 in *How Artists Have Kept Still Life Paintings Alive Over Thousands of Years*:

- Still Life (also known by its French title, nature morte) is a genre of art in which paintings and drawings feature inanimate objects as subject matter. The items will often include organic objects like fruit, vegetables or animals, and sometimes household items such as glassware or textiles.

Ask students to engage with Mary Pratt's *Still Life with Pheasant*, 1995 with some of the following questions:

- What do you see in this painting?
- What food items are local to New Brunswick (or Canada), and which are imported foods?
- What details has the artist rendered to make the food look realistic?
- How would you describe the colours the artist used?
- Can you tell where the light source is coming from based on the highlights and shadows in the painting?
- Could you make a meal using any of these food items as ingredients? Would it be a healthy meal? Why so?

8. Next, show the class Jacopo da Empoli's *Still Life*, circa 1625.

Did you know?
Artist Jacopo da Empoli was born in Florence, Italy in 1551.



Jacopo da Empoli, "Still Life," c. 1625, oil on canvas, 76 x 115 cm, (Photo: Wikimedia Commons, Public domain)

Some guiding questions to ask students while looking at Jacopo da Empoli's *Still Life*, circa 1625:

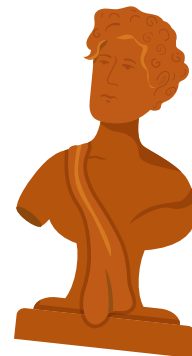
- Where is the light source coming from? How can you tell?
- How would you describe the colours in this painting?
- How are the objects placed in this painting? (Overlap is a key word to discuss)
- What item would you choose to eat and why?

9. Lastly, project the image *Still Life found in the Tomb of Menna*.



"Still-Life Found in the Tomb of Menna"
 (Photo: The Yorck Project via Wikimedia Commons, public domain)

Did you know? The very first still life paintings were created by the Egyptians as early as the 15th century BCE?



According to Kelly Richman-Abdou, 2022 in *How Artists Have Kept Still Life Paintings Alive Over Thousands of Years*:

- Still Life as a genre of art gained recognition in the 16th century but its roots date back to ancient times.
- "The earliest known still life paintings were created by the Egyptians in the 15th century BCE. Funerary paintings of food – including crops, fish, and meat – have been discovered in ancient burial sites. The most famous ancient Egyptian still-life was discovered in the Tomb of Menna, a site whose walls were adorned with exceptionally detailed scenes of everyday life."

Guiding questions to ask your students about the Still Life found in the Tomb of Menna:

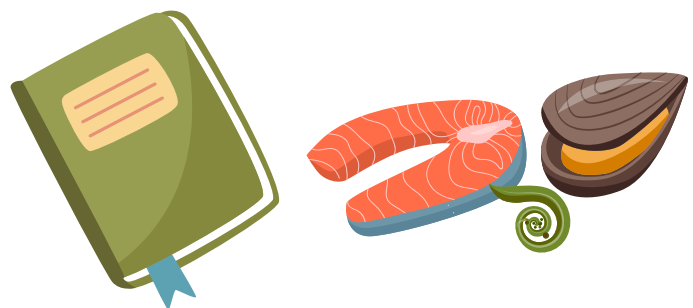
- What do you see in this painting?
- How does this painting compare to the other two still life paintings? (Some key concepts to look for here are the fact that this one is flat with no highlights or shadows. The items have been simplified to more basic shapes with minimal detail and texture).
- What do you think has been collected in the white bowls? And in the patterned bowl?

Now could be a great time to introduce or simply to discuss what whole foods are with your class. According to the article *What Are Whole Foods?* By Sara Seitz, 2022, "Whole foods are any type of food that is unprocessed or very minimally processed. Unprocessed foods include things like fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Minimally processed foods include grains that have been ground into flour, and food staples with short ingredient lists. Whole-food diets can be made up of organic food or conventional, so long as the food is consumed in its natural form or close to it."

It would be beneficial for your students to understand what a short ingredient list means and what to look for when choosing healthy snacks. You can choose a locally grown food item like an apple and compare that to some of the common snacks that have apple as an ingredient, such as; apple sauce, apple turnover, a granola bar with apple, a fruit roll up, etc. Have a look at the ingredient list to determine what has been added alongside apple. Some will have sugar and added preservatives, among other things. Be sure not to villainize any snack food. At this age kids are not buying their own groceries and are not the ones most often making these choices. The key thing here is to understand what whole foods are and to choose whole foods or foods with short ingredient lists as much as possible. It's all about moderation and understanding what it is that's on our plate.

Conclusion (15 mins) -

10. In their sketchbooks or on paper, ask students to think back about some of the foods they have eaten recently. Were they whole foods or processed foods? Were they local or imported? How would you create a still life incorporating those food items? Ask students to make a sketch of a still life that incorporates foods they have recently consumed.



Learning Activity #2

Day two/three/four: Still Life Art Making Activity



Objective:

To draw inspiration from the still life discussion and make an artwork of their own in the genre of still life with a theme of food that relates to NB agriculture.

Materials:

Teacher -

Keep the list of NB agriculture products up in the classroom. Have technology on hand for students to look up images and research information as needed (iPad, Chromebook). If no technology is available, try to have illustrated books or magazines that are relevant to the topic.

If possible, some actual food can be brought in to draw from observation. This would allow kids to look closely and observe the colour and texture of the food. Particularly if some are cut up into pieces.

Students -

Sketchbook or paper and pencil for preliminary planning and sketching. All these projects can be completed using acrylic or watercolour paint on paper or canvas or as a drawing with pencil or pencil crayons on paper depending on your classroom resources. The suggested project for grades 3-5 will require large sheets of paper, scissors, and tape or stick glue as well.

Steps:

Day One -

1. Choose one of the still life activities from below that best suits your class and the materials you have on hand

2. Introduce the challenge of the project and ask students to brainstorm their ideas. The creative process is just as important as the final product, and it is during this stage that they do much of their problem solving and decision making. Some may choose to start with a mind map and they may need to access the internet or books to look up images and facts.

3. Once they have a plan they can complete a sketch in their sketchbook to plan out the composition, colours, etc.

Day Two -

1. Work Period

Day Three/Four -

1. Depending on your class they may need one to three classes to work on their art. When everyone has completed their work, take time to do a reflection with them. Some kids may like to present their work to the rest of the class and the class can provide feedback or ask questions.

2. During the reflection all the prior material on NB agriculture and the contributions of our First Nation Communities can be reiterated during the presentation and discussion of their work.

Project Options:

***Please note:**

Depending on classroom resources and access to technology, all these projects can be expanded upon by having students research the specific nutritional value of the foods they incorporate in their still life artwork.

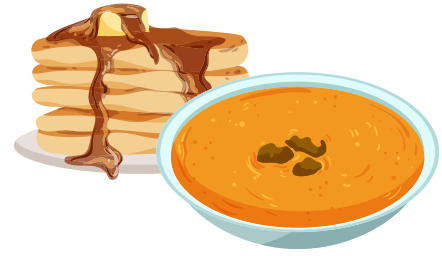
Realistic Still Life Featuring Local Foods -

Create a still life that features only locally produced food. Choose from the list of NB produced agriculture and aquaculture. Match colour and texture to the best of your ability. Decide whether food items will be drawn whole or in pieces. Choose the direction of your light source and use value to create highlights and shadows on your objects in order to create the illusion of space and form. Balance the composition of your still life by placing different-sized shapes grouped together on one side and one large, light shape on the other.



Symbolic Still Life -

how does your family celebrate special occasions? Is food involved? What meals are common at your family gatherings? Are there particular colours or patterns in the tablecloth, placemats or dishes used on holidays, birthdays, or special occasions? Create a still life drawing or painting that is inspired by your family's traditions and customs with food.



Use Emphasis in a Still Life to Highlight NB Agriculture –

Using emphasis (a principle of design), create a still life drawing or painting that highlights NB product(s). Draw the viewer's attention to the NB product through the use of contrast in value, colour, shape, size or with leading lines. For example:

- A still life in which all items are black and white except for the locally produced food product that is rendered in full colour
- A still life in which only the local food product has value (highlight, shadows, and mid-tones) to create form and texture to look realistic (all other objects are shapes of solid colour).

Political and/or Narrative Still Life –

Within the genre of still life make a political point or tell a story that relates to food. Food is not politically neutral and can be a launching point for critical views on society, our government, our history, etc. Here are a few links to topics that may be of interest to students to investigate further:

- According to Daniel Schwartz in a 2012 CBC News article titled The politics of food guides, "For 70 years, the issuing of government food guides in Canada has been about more than just nutrition and health."
- Maple Syrup Heist involving Quebec and New Brunswick farmers
 - o Canadian True Crime Episode 127 The Maple Syrup Heist of 2011
 - o Global – The Sweetest Heist 16x9
 - o The Canadian Encyclopedia, Great Canadian Maple Syrup Heist
 - o Dirty Money, Season 1 Episode 5, The Maple Syrup Heist, 2018
- Hunger in Canada – Food Banks Canada



Collaborative Project Suggested for Younger Grades 3-5:

A Collaborative Life-Sized Still Life -

Ask students to choose one food item or product that is produced in NB. Ask them to describe in detail the surface and texture of the item. For example; blueberries are smooth and purplish blue, potatoes are bumpy and light brown with dark brown specks. They may like to look up images or do some research on their food of choice. On a large sheet of paper, each student paints their entire paper with the colour and texture of the specific food item they chose.

For Example:

- For a salmon, paint the entire sheet with the colours of the fish and add the texture of scales all over it. Alternatively they could approach it as a cooked salmon filet and paint the colour and texture of cooked salmon
- For a blueberry, paint the entire sheet with the purplish bluish colour of blueberries
- For a potato, paint the entire sheet light to medium brown with dark brown specks and spots.

Ask students to cut out as many of their food items as they can from their painted sheet of paper based on a proportional frame of reference that you provide. For example, you could ask students to cut out the items at a life-size scale, therefore the potato should be significantly larger than the blueberry. Or you could provide a larger-than-life frame of reference such as a cutout fork that they can cut their food out to be proportionally accurate. This will require knowledge of the shape of their food and understanding of proportionality. If they all start with the same sized piece of paper, the student cutting out lobster may only get two while the student cutting out strawberries will get many.

The class can be divided into groups of 5-7 kids to make several collaborative still life 'paintings' in the classroom. On a large sheet of paper have a group of students (maybe those who work faster than others) work on drawing and designing a tabletop or surface upon which to place all the food items. They can choose a significant colour(s) or draw textiles with patterns, etc. They may choose to organize the food on a shelf like the Jacopo da Empoli or Egyptian still life they viewed. Once complete, students can, as a group, glue or tape all their food items in a balanced composition. Discuss how the food will overlap to create a sense of depth.

Teacher Reference - Elements of Art to focus on with the genre of still life:

Line – A mark made by a pointed tool. Lines can be long, short, straight, curved, thick, thin, etc. Lines can be organic or geometric.

Shape – An area enclosed by a line. Shapes can be geometric or organic, large or small, simple or complex.

Space – The illusion of space or depth in two-dimensional art can be created through over-lapping objects, size variation, value, placement and perspective. Still life art will often use the element of over-lapping to create a sense of three-dimensional objects grouped together on a table. Whatever object is closest to the viewer will have the most amount of detail and contrast, while objects that recede into the background have less detail and less contrast in the values rendered.

Color – Colours are the hues in an artwork. Colour can have value; light to dark, or intensity; bright to dull.

Texture – When painting and drawing on a two-dimensional surface such as paper or canvas, the challenge is to create an implied texture that creates the illusion of an object being rough, smooth, grainy, lumpy, etc.

Value – Light to dark and all the shades in between. Value creates the illusion of dimension on a flat surface. It can also give the illusion of space to paintings and drawings as objects in the background show less contrast and more muted values.

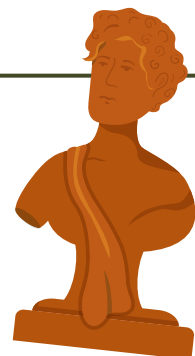
Form – Forms differ from shapes in that they appear to be three-dimensional. Like shapes and lines they can be organic or geometric.

Principles of Design to focus on with the genre of still life:

Emphasis - An area or object within the artwork that draws attention and becomes a focal point. Emphasis can be created through the use of contrast in value, colour, shape, or size and leading lines/movement.

Balance – Creating a harmonious compositional balance involves arranging elements so that no single part of a work overpowers or seems heavier than any other part. Some ways to create balance are by arranging the elements symmetrically, asymmetrically, or in a radial symmetry.

In terms of composition, balance refers to the visual equilibrium created by the placement of the major shapes within the 4 corners of the canvas. Shapes don't always equal objects – grouping objects can result in one shape. Balance is better achieved with different-sized shapes grouped together on one side and one large, light shape on the other.





Culminating Activity

— Collective Cookbook

Objective:

As a class, create a collective cookbook that features locally grown NB foods as the main ingredients. Reinforce the value of whole foods and encourage students to find recipes that have a short ingredient list and that are considered to be healthy. This culminating activity will bring together all knowledge learned about the NB Agriculture and working in the genre of Still Life.

Students will be responsible for:

- Choosing their New Brunswick food item of choice and researching how it is produced from start to finish (from seed to plate)
- Researching the nutritional value of the food and how it benefits humans
- Research a recipe that features that food as a main ingredient and is of nutritional value
- Create a one-pager that includes a title, the recipe, the steps and a drawn picture of the food or the final recipe

Format:

If possible, each students' work can be scanned and colour prints can be made of all the pages so that each student gets a copy of the collective cookbook. Binder rings (found at the Dollarama, Staples or Amazon) are an affordable way to create a book that can be added to and re-arranged as the individual chooses.

Resources:

- The New Brunswick: Deliciously Canadian is a website designed and managed by the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and is an excellent resource for this Collective Cookbook. It offers information and fact sheets including health benefits on individual products such as Maple Syrup, Atlantic Salmon, Cranberries, Apples, Wild Blueberries, and more. It also offers a list of recipes that feature A Taste of New Brunswick products.

Government of Canada – Food and nutrition. Includes a link to Canada's food guide, healthy eating recommendations, and Canada's Dietary Guidelines.

• According to the Government of Canada, the first ever Food Policy for Canada has been developed over the last few years in consultation with people and organizations with a diverse range of perspectives. The following four significant areas within food systems have been identified as key areas that require action in the short and medium term to support long-term outcomes. Some of these action topics could influence the overall theme of your collective cookbook.

- Help Canadian Communities Access Healthy Food (including the creation of a National School Food Program)
- Make Canadian Food the Top Choice at Home and Abroad
- Support Food Security in Northern and Indigenous communities
- Reduce Food Waste



Extra Activities and Ideas to Explore NB Agriculture with Your Class

Technology Connection:

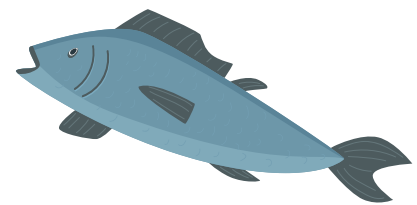
What are some of the current issues facing farmers? What technologies are used in the farming industry? What new technologies are currently being developed? What are some of the solutions being worked on right now? (Vertical Farming, Hydroponics, Urban Rooftop Greenhouses, Automation, Genetics Research).

CBC produced video: Farming is Canada - Farming is an integral part of Canada's past, present, and future. In this video, Evan Fraser, director of the Arell Food Institute, discusses how Canada's farmers can become more sustainable in their agricultural practices.



Mixed Media Fish Drawing:

Aquaculture is the cultivation of fish and other species that live in water. Choose a fish species that is local to New Brunswick. Study the hues and colours that make up the reflective and slippery skin. Draw an outline of your fish including fins and tail that is accurate to that species. Use watercolour and a wet-on-wet technique to apply the colour and hues to the fish. Allow to dry, then add a second layer of watercolour to add shading and detail as need be. Once that second layer is dry, using a fine tip marker or soft leaded pencil (4B, 6B, 8B) carefully draw the repeating pattern of scales overtop of the watercolour. Add details and lines to the fins and tail.



Board Games:

Have students or groups of students develop a board game that revolves around New Brunswick Agriculture. A game module explores board games and game design as media texts. The infinite variety of games, rules, and game styles reflect the infinite purposes, conventions, and audiences for games in the world's cultures. The link between storytelling and game playing is a close one and one that has existed for centuries.

Monopoly Style Board Game – players could move around the board purchasing farms or markets while facing challenges along the way. To research various challenges that farmers face, check out The Canadian Encyclopedia – Agriculture in Canada. These could include hazards to farming such as pests, flooding, extreme weather, etc.

Memory –Visual based memory game that are hand drawn and feature elements of New Brunswick, for example; seeds, crops, vegetables, animals, farming equipment, dinner plates, local farms, etc. Use cardstock for durability and laminate if possible. The class could collectively make one full game by each drawing a pair of cards.

Trivia – Create a deck of trivia cards based on facts about New Brunswick Agriculture.

Flipbooks:

An important concept to discuss with your class is how long fruits and vegetables take to grow from seed. A flip book is a great way to discuss time and to learn about each stage of development in the life of a fruit or vegetable. Cue cards, cardstock or post-it note pads can be used for this project. Flip books can be double sided in order to use one flipbook for two projects. Old notepads or found materials can be repurposed. Here are some great resources for your reference:

How to Make a Flipbook by Andymation –
Step by step guide to get started making flipbooks

More Flipbooks I Made as a Kid by Andymation –
Explains how you don't have to draw well to make a flip book

How to Make a Flipbook - WikiHow

