

YUKON ARCHIVES
The Alaska Highway: A Yukon Perspective
Lesson # 2

LESSON TOPIC:

Chapter 2: Construction and Maintenance of the Alaska Highway

SUMMARY:

This lesson begins with a class activity where students try to match a question (regarding the highway construction) with an answer. Once the Answer/Question cards are correctly matched, students review the material from this chapter, and then prepare a mock radio interview. The interviews are then presented to the class. A final group discussion on what they've learned and what they would like to learn more about concludes the lesson.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

B.L.M 2.1 "Question & Answer Matching Activity"

DURATION:

1 ½ to 2 hours.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:

Question & Answer Matching Activity

1. Cut the question and answer sections on BLM 2.1 into individual pieces. Randomly distribute one (either a question or an answer) to each student.
2. Ask the students to try and find the person in the class who has the matching answer to their question (or the question to the answer they have). Within a few minutes all students should be grouped into pairs.

3. One by one ask each pair to read their question, then the corresponding answer. Then ask the rest of the class if they agree or disagree with the “match”. Make a note of any disagreements but hold off providing the correct answer.
4. After all students have read their question and answer ask them to take a few minutes to make any changes.
5. Finally, share with the class which pairs are correctly matched and which ones are not. Make the changes so that all are correctly matched (these will be the pairs for the next activity)

NOTE: Teachers should note that B.L.M 2.1 has each answer directly following the question

ACTIVITY:

Mock Interviews

1. Introduce this chapter by explaining to the class that this section highlights the immense challenges involved in building the highway. Ask students to review the text and photos, making summary notes under the following subtitles:
 - Why the project began in the first place
 - Who exactly was involved in the construction
 - What were all the aspects of the highway project (including the Canol road, pipeline and refinery, upgrading airports, building additional airstrips and new telephone lines)
 - What the steps were in building the highway
 - What role the black regiments played
 - What role women played
 - What role the church played
 - How the highway has changed
2. In pairs, students are to choose one of the subtitles from their summary notes and design a mock radio interview. One person will assume the role of the interviewer and the other the interviewee (ie. a U.S. Army Engineer, a civilian working on the construction, General Hoge, a member of a Black regiment, a female administrative worker, a radio operator, a church worker, etc.) They are to prepare a minimum of 8 questions (open-ended as opposed to Yes/No type questions) for the interviewee that will demonstrate key aspects of the construction and maintenance phase of the highway.

3. Each pair will “perform” their mock radio interview for the class. Students in the “audience” should be encouraged to ask the interviewee additional questions after the initial 8 questions have been asked.

WRAP-UP:

Class Discussion

1. Now that students have explored in some detail the challenges faced building the highway and the multitude of personnel involved, lead a class discussion on what they’ve learned. Some lead-in questions for the discussion might be:
 - What new things did you learn about the Alaska Highway?
 - How might it change the way you think about the highway the next time you are driving on it?
 - Who do you think the highway impacted the most?
 - Who benefited?
 - If you were to list the pros and cons of having the highway, what would be on your list?
 - What do you think you would have done differently if you had been one of the engineers in charge of building the highway?
2. Finish the class discussion by making a list of questions that students might still have regarding the Alaska Highway (hopefully these questions might get answered in the subsequent chapters, and or with some further research).

EXTENSIONS:

1. Invite a guest into the class that was actually involved in the construction of the Alaska Highway. Have students prepare questions ahead of time to ask the guest.

OR

2. Invite a local highway engineer (or someone of similar status) to the class in order to discuss what is the same and what is different about building and maintaining highways. Again, have students prepare questions ahead of time that could be asked of the guest.

ASSESSMENT IDEAS:

1. Brainstorm with the class a list of qualities that make up a good radio interview. Encourage the class to agree on 4 or 5 top qualities of a good interview. These will be the parameters to be used in assessing students' interviews (you may for example give a score of 1, 2 or 3 for each of the 5 qualities (for a total mark of 15)
Examples: Informative, Provocative, Engaging, Stimulating, Educational, Useful, Accessible