

Fraser Trade Brigade

Background Information on the Fraser River:

The Fraser River was named after Simon Fraser (1776-1862) who explored the river in 1808 on behalf of the North West Company in search of a navigable route for fur trading. Simon Fraser believed that he was traveling on the Columbia River to its ocean outlet. It was another explorer, David Thompson, who later named the river after Simon Fraser.

First Nations people had lived along the Fraser River for thousands of years before Simon Fraser's arrival. Some of the archaeologists estimate up to 9000 years before. (A site under the Alex Fraser Bridge has been dated back that far). While we can't know an exact arrival date, it would have been after the last ice age, 10-14 thousand years ago. It is worth noting, though, that within the oral traditions of First Nations groups, there are no stories of them arriving in what we now call Canada. For them, they have always been here.

The Fraser River starts as a trickle at Mount Robson (Headwaters) and ends in the Strait of Georgia in the Pacific Ocean. There are many tributaries that add water to the Fraser, including the Thompson River (22% of the total water flow).

The Fraser River is estimated to be 1,375 kilometers long. If it was stretched out across Canada, it would span the distance between Vancouver and Regina, Saskatchewan. The Fraser River is longest river in BC, and the fifth largest river in Canada. It is less than 15,000 years old.

The characteristics and landscapes of the Fraser River change from the beginning of its journey to its end. As you exit the headwaters on Mount Robson and enter the Upper Basin region, the river's sediment load increases creating more turbulent waters with the water appearing grey or brown in colour. The river then passes through drier lands with low vegetation as a result of little rainfall and hot temperatures. In the Fraser Canyon, the river is squeezed between the Coast and the Cascade mountain ranges, increasing the speed and creating many impressive rapids.

The point at which the fresh water of the Fraser River meets the salty water of the Pacific Ocean is called the estuary, (also sometimes called "between land" by the First Nations people because as the tides ebb and flow, the estuary mudflats alternate between being exposed and submerged). Because estuaries have access to both riparian (river) and marine nutrients, they are home to an incredible diversity of life.

A habitat can be defined as a place where an organism can get food, water and shelter. The major habitat types along the Fraser River include: brackish and freshwater marshes, salt marshes, tidal flats, sloughs, and flood-plain forests among others.

The Fraser River watershed is also home to 60% of BC's population, approximately 2.7 million people. A watershed is an area of land that drains all the water into one main river. The Fraser River watershed is also called a drainage basin, since it collects so much water and drains such a large area (25% of BC's area).

Program Overview:

The Fraser River is one of the world's great rivers, not only in its contribution to the environmental, cultural, and historical wealth of British Columbia, but because of its current pivotal role in the economy of BC. In this program, students explore the role of BC in the global economy through interactive games and activities.

Program Objectives

- To understand our connection to the Fraser River, through recreation, culture, the economy and the environment.
- To understand how the Fraser River connects Canada to the rest of the world, through the import and export of goods.
- To understand the role of supply and demand in our economy.
- To explore the economic and environmental cost of various methods of transport.
- To learn about the way international relationships affects economic prices.

Helpful Vocabulary

Import: to bring a good or service from another area for trade

Export: to transport goods or services to another place for trade

Interdependence: people and countries rely on one another for goods, services, and ideas

Trade: buying, selling or exchanging of goods and services

Raw materials: the basic material that products are made from

Natural Resource: materials or substances such as minerals, forests, water, and fertile land that occur in nature and can be used for economic gain

Shipping: the transport of goods by sea or other vehicles

Industry: economic activity concerned with the processing of raw materials and manufacture of goods in factories

Supply and Demand: the amount of a commodity, product, or service available and the desire of buyers for it, considered as factors regulating its price

Global/Local: relating to the whole world; worldwide/belonging or relating to an area or neighborhood, typically exclusively so

In- class activities:

Here are some ideas to help prepare your class for the program, and to continue the learning back in the classroom.

Pre-visit:

1. In this program, we'll be talking about supply and demand, as well as exploring the global trade economy. Below are some short videos providing introductions to both topics.
 - a. Supply and demand
 - i. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB1Kd6TGJao>
 - ii. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqeRnxSuLFI>
 - b. Global economy. This short animation provides a great introduction to global trade, what it is, and some advantages and disadvantages. However, the text is not spoken aloud, but this is easily worked around by reading aloud the text for your students.
 - i. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aemiFHJXrHI>
2. In this program we'll also be talking about imports and exports. Canada, and particularly BC, export a lot of natural resources. With your students, research what natural resources BC exports. Depending on how much time you can spend on this, you may want to look at where each resource comes from within BC, where each resource goes, how much money each resource brings into BC, or other details.

Post visit:

1. A lot of our food is traded globally. You can use some or all of the material in "Our Food's Journey" lesson plan, put out by John Hopkins University, to explore the global food trade with your students.
 - a. http://www.foodspanlearning.org/_pdf/lesson-plan/unit2/lesson7-foods-journey-lessonplan.pdf
2. In this program we talked about how resources and products are traded around the world, and touched briefly on whether all products traded globally are strictly necessary. The Story of Stuff Project is a great resource for this topic. This is a San Francisco-based organization that fosters honest conversations about our consumption-based culture. They have made quite a few animated movies (see below), as well as run study programs and campaigns.
 - a. Here is the original video, made in 2007. As a US organization, it does reference US politics a couple times, but the content is very applicable to Canadians. This 20-minute video examines the "underside of our production and consumption patterns. [It] exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just world."
 - i. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroigqM>
 - b. They have many other award-winning "Story of" movies, all high-quality and fact-filled.
 - i. <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of/>
 - c. Their website is a treasure-trove of resources, tools and links.
 - i. <http://storyofstuff.org>