

The French and Indian War: The War That Shaped America’s Destiny

“The volley fired by this young Virginian in the forests of America has set the world in flames.”

~British author Horace Walpole

Overview

Students will learn about the causes and effects of the French and Indian War through a perspective activity, Power Point presentation, class discussion, and reading. In an optional culminating activity, students can represent what they have learned regarding the French and Indian War through the creation of a short dramatic movie advertisement.

Grades

5-8

Materials

- Projector, laptop connected to the internet, and speakers so that one of the movie previews found at <http://www.thewarthatmadeamerica.org/> can be played for the class.
- “The French & Indian War Power Point,” available in the Database of K-12 Resources (in PDF format) at <https://k12database.unc.edu/files/2012/04/FrenchIndianWarPPT.pdf>
 - To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click “View” in the top menu bar of the file, and select “Full Screen Mode”
 - To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to CarolinaK12@unc.edu
- Perspective roles (Frenchman, Englishman, Native American), attached
- “Who Fought the French and Indian War?,” reading attached

Essential Questions

- What caused the French and Indian War?
- What impact did the war have on the English colonies, on Native Americans, and on the French?
- In what ways did the French and Indian War set the stage for the American Revolution?

Duration

- 60 minutes for lesson
- Additional time may be necessary for student presentations if assigning the “Create a Movie Trailer” culminating activity

Procedure

Warm Up: “The War That Made America”

1. As a warm-up and to peak student curiosity, play one or more of the movie trailers below, which were created for the PBS documentary “The War That Made America.” (Note: Access to the movie is not needed for this lesson; the trailers simply serve as a visual way to peak student interest.)
<http://www.thewarthatmadeamerica.org/promos.php>

After they view the trailer, ask students to brainstorm what they think the movie is about, based on the short advertisement. Further, ask them what peaked their interest regarding what they saw or heard.

2. Next, as students are likely to have pointed out that the movie is about a war, project slide 2 of the accompanying Power Point and ask the class to think about and discuss what they believe causes wars. (Answers can range from emotions such as anger, hatred, jealousy, greed, etc. to more tangible causes such as money, resources, land, etc.) Note student responses on a piece of chart paper. (This brainstormed list will be addressed once more during step 9 of this lesson.)
3. Let students know that in this lesson, they will be learning about the French and Indian War, also referred to as the Seven Years War, which took place in America (before it had become “America”) from 1754-1763. Refer back to the movie preview and the brainstormed list and ask students if anyone already knows anything about the French and Indian War, as well as what they think might have caused it, based on what they saw.

Introduction to the French and Indian War

4. Project slide 3, which contains a map of North America in 1700, and ask students to discuss.
 - What do you see? What information is this map giving us?
 - Who owned the majority of North American land in 1700?
 - Which areas of land do you think was most valuable and why?
 - (Point out the Ohio River Valley to students.) Why might this area be a very valuable part of North America?
5. Next, project slide 4, which offers a later map of North America in 1763 for comparison. Now that students know the French and Indian War took place between 1754-1763 in North America, ask them what evidence they can decipher about the war based on the information provided in the map. Discuss:
 - What information does the 1763 map give us?
 - What similarities and differences do you notice between the two maps?
 - Based on the evidence provided in these maps, who do you predict the French and Indian War was between and why?
 - Considering the time period and what you already know about it, do you have any ideas regarding what the war may have been over?
 - Who do you think won the French and Indian War and why?

French and Indian War Perspective Activity

6. Next, divide students into groups of three and explain that each person in their group will explore one of three perspectives involved in the war – that of a Frenchman, an Englishman, and an indigenous person. Tell students each of them will receive one of these characters and that they should spend the next 4 minutes individually reading their assigned character (each group member will have a different character) and answering the questions provided. Tell students that they should begin to imagine that they are themselves this character living in 1753. They should consider how they may think, act, speak, etc., as well as what they care about and want from their day-to-day life. Explain to them that when you give the signal, they will take turns spending 1-2 minutes introducing themselves (in character) and summarizing their answers to the questions for their group mates.
7. As a second part of the perspective activity, project slide 5 and explain the new roles for each character:
 - The Frenchman will be the note-taker and take detailed notes regarding the group’s response to each question
 - The Native American will be the summarizer and will report the details of the group’s conversation to the rest of the class at the end of the activity
 - The Englishman will be the responder to any questions posed by the teacher or class after the summary

Let students know they will have approximately 5-6 minutes to discuss the questions provided on slide 5:

- What issues or problems do you (as your character) have with the other characters in your group?
- What do you want from the other characters in the group?
- How can you get what you want?
- What questions do you have of the other characters?
- Based on what you have heard from one another, make a list of what you predict were causes of the French and Indian War.

8. After students have discussed, have each group summarizer share their group's conversation. As students highlight what they have gleaned to be the causes of the war, write these on a piece of chart paper title "Causes" and keep a running list throughout the remainder of the lesson. (Optional time saver: After the first few groups have presented, to save time, teachers can ask that only groups who have something new to add continue to present.)
9. Next, pass out the attached reading and questions, "Who Fought the French and Indian War" and have students read and answer the corresponding questions individually or in partners. Once students have completed the reading, discuss their answers to the questions and add any additional causes of the war to the class list that was started in step 7. Teachers may also want to discuss additional underlying causes of the war, such as differences in culture and ideology between the French and English, that was not explicitly addressed in the reading or perspective activity. Discuss with students how as in many wars, culture and religion likely played a part here as well. The French settlers in America were predominantly Catholics and they felt threatened by the anti-Catholic majority of the British. The British, who had come to America partly for religious freedom, feared being controlled by the French and the papacy.

Additional interesting information about the war to share with students can be found on slide 6.

Additionally, teachers of North Carolina history can share information about the state's specific role in the war using information such as: <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/fort-dobbs-and-french-and>

10. Once all of the actual causes of the French and Indian War have been identified, ask students to return to their first brainstorm completed in step 2 of the lesson, where the class considered the causes of war in general. Compare these two lists side by side and discuss which general causes were at play specifically in the French and Indian War.

Aftermath of the French and Indian War

11. Next, project slide 7 and tell students that you want them to consider the war and respond to the political cartoon projected. Discuss:
 - What do you see?
 - What symbols can you identify?
 - What message do you think the cartoonist is trying to convey and in what way might this connect to the French and Indian War?

Go over slide 8 and discuss the meaning of the cartoon in terms of the French and Indian War, as well as the American Revolutionary War.

12. Discuss slides 9-11 with students, pointedly noting how the French and Indian War set the stage for the American Revolution. After discussing the slides, post another piece of chart paper beside the "Causes of the French and Indian War" brainstorm and label it "Effects." In review, collect student responses to all of the effects of the war they can name, pointing out any areas left out once student thoughts have waned.
13. Explain to students that the French and Indian War is often referred to as the "war that shaped America's destiny," or "the war that made America." Discuss:

- Why might the French and Indian War be described in this way? In what way did it “shape America’s destiny” or “make America?”
- How do you think this war impacted or shaped George Washington in particular? What do you already know about his role in America after the French and Indian War?
- Why is this war important to America’s history?
- Who do you think lost the most in this war? Why was this war, and European colonization in general, so devastating to native people? What lessons do you think are to be learned from this war?

Optional culminating activity: Create a Movie Trailer

14. Remind students of the movie trailers they watched at the start of class. Go over the details on slide 12, telling students to imagine they have been tasked with creating a new movie trailer that advertises a movie telling the story of the French and Indian War. In groups of approximately 5, students will create a 3 minute trailer that:

- ...conveys at least 5 facts about the French and Indian War (extra points given if you research and cover something new that was not addressed in class)
 - The trailer can (but does not have to) focus on one aspect of the war if students choose (i.e. one particular battle; one particular person involved, etc.)
 - Give your trailer a title
- ...is artistically creative:
 - Has a voice over that provides narration regarding the war and peaks viewer interest in coming to see the movie
 - Includes dramatic scene(s) that show snippets of interesting facts and information concerning the war (that will be covered in the movie)
 - Has a hook (this might be a line in the voice over, dialogue spoken between characters in the action, etc.) that draws the viewer in and leaves them wanting to learn more
 - Feel free to use music, props, costumes, etc. to make your presentation more interesting
- ...is obviously rehearsed and taken seriously by the actors, with all students contributing equally

Let students know how much class time they have to design and rehearse their trailer, as well as when they will be presenting for their classmates. On the day of student presentations, instruct them to create a chart on notebook paper that they fill in as they watch their classmates’ trailers:

Trailer Title	Facts I learned (at least 5)	What I liked and questions I have

Perspective Roles

Frenchman: Jacques Gladieux

Your name is Jacques Gladieux and you are a French fur trader living in New France in 1753. You have lived in New France for six years and have a lucrative business trading with the Native Americans. The natives trap animals such as beavers and foxes for their valuable fur. You then trade with the Natives, exchanging the furs for European goods such as iron pots and steel sewing needles. The Native American tribes in this region do not have the technology to make steel and iron products, so they are very eager to trade with you.

After six years in New France, you have made a comfortable life for yourself. You married a Native American woman named Onahtah, from the Iroquois tribe. She has been teaching you her language and has helped you communicate better with her people. You have made a lot of money living in New France and enjoy your life here.

However, things have started to change recently. English colonists from along the eastern coast have started moving into the Ohio Valley, where you do most of your trading. Some of them have started trapping the same animals that you buy from the Native Americans, which is upsetting the Native Americans. Other English colonists are cutting down the forest to build farms, which is reducing the amount of animals nearby, as well as taking land away that Native Americans have called home for hundreds of years. The English have no right to the land and their moving here is starting to negatively impact your financial well being.

- Describe how Jacques makes his living. What does he rely on for income?
 - How does he feel about the Native Americans and why?
 - How does he feel about the English colonists who are moving into the Ohio Valley and why?
 - What should Jacques do next?
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Englishman: George Washington

It is 1753 & you are 22-year-old George Washington, an American-born major in the Virginia militia. You have just received your first assignment from Virginia's Lt. Governor Dinwiddie, who is concerned because he believes the French are trespassing on Virginia's territory in the Ohio River Valley. Land such as this, and the resources it contains, is extremely valuable. The Governor must make sure the French are not trying to stake their own claim on what he feels is not theirs to take. He puts you in charge of some soldiers and sends you marching into the vast wilderness to order the French to vacate the area. Your country is depending on you and you are eager to do a good job. When you get to Fort LeBoeuf in the Ohio River Valley, you deliver a letter asking the French to leave. The French commander informs you that they will not. You return to Virginia to inform the Governor of the bad news.

The Governor is now angrier and knows he must get rid of the French or else risk losing England's rights to this valuable tract of land. He makes you an officer and sends you back with a militia force of 150 men and orders to build a fort and establish a strong hold in the Ohio Valley. Upon your arrival, much to your dismay, you and your men find the French already occupying a fort they called Duquesne (on the site of today's Pittsburgh). Even though you and your men are outnumbered, you attack a French work party, take some prisoners, and hastily construct a fort named Necessity. Even with your gallant effort however, you and your men are surrounded by French forces and are forced to surrender and return to Virginia. Interestingly, even though you were officially defeated by the French, you are hailed a hero for taking on the sworn enemies of England.

- Why are the English upset with the French?
 - Why do the English want the French to vacate the land they feel is their own?
 - How do you think Washington felt when the French would not leave Fort LeBoeuf as ordered?
 - What do you think you will be told to do next and how do you feel about this?
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Native American: Guyasuta

The year is 1753. You and your family have lived in North America for generations, making a happy life living off the land. However, over the past years, things have started to change. You have seen an influx of Europeans, particularly colonists from France and England, moving onto the land that you and your tribe occupy. While you are not incredibly fond of the increasing population, you have found that the Frenchmen who have moved into the area do offer an advantage to you. They are eager to trade for the furs you make out of the animals you are skilled at capturing. The French provide you with tools and other items made of iron (many of which you've never seen before) in exchange for your furs.

Lately, you have encountered more and more Englishmen, who seem to be pouring onto nearby land and view you as "savage." While they are also interested in trading for your furs at times, you've heard many stories of how the English are cruel to Native Americans and that they often try and cheat your people out of the land so that they can build their own homes. Also, you've heard that there is major tension growing between the English and the French. It seems they all want to claim the land in the Ohio Valley as their own, even though this is land that your people have lived on for centuries. There are rumors that a war between the English and the French is sure to take place soon.

- What is your main goal when dealing with Europeans? What benefits can you gain from the French and English? What problems might they present you with?
 - How do you feel about being viewed as "savage?"
 - What do you think of the rumors of a war between the English and the French? How would you feel if this actually happened? How might a war between the French and English benefit you? How might it endanger you?
 - What do you feel you should do based on the pending situation between the French and English?
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Who Fought the French and Indian War?

And no, it was not the French against the Indians.



At the end of the seventeenth century, North America was an extremely valuable piece of real estate, with the French, Spanish, and British all trying to claim as much land as possible (regardless of the Native people that were already living there.) The people living in Canada and America were pawns in a larger chess game. Between 1689 and the War for Independence, the major European powers engaged in a series of wars that were basically wars of colonial expansion, in which these countries fought for territory, raw materials and new markets for exports.

By the time the first three wars had been played out, England and France were left standing as the two major contenders, and England had acquired a good portion of Canada from France. In the last of the four wars, however, these two rivals fought for absolute dominion over North America. And it was the French and Indian War that most shaped America's destiny.

European Wars Fought in the Colonies

Date	European Name	Colonial Name
1689-97	War of the League of Augsburg	King Williams War
1702-13	War of Spanish Succession	Queen Anne's War
1740-48	War of the Austrian Succession	King George's War
1756-6	Seven Years War	French and Indian War

The French and Indian War, fought between England and France, began in 1754. Unlike the three previous conflicts, this war began in America. Increase in population and trade caused both France and Britain to seek new territories and markets. Since the end of King George's War in 1748, both France and England desired to expand into the rich Ohio River Valley, which was formally unclaimed by either side. To secure any new claim, communities, fortresses, missions and trading posts were usually established. Native Indians were used by both the French and the British to secure their hold on their claims. However, serious land disputes started to take place. For instance, the British established the **Ohio Company** to develop trade in the area. In 1750 a group of Virginian businessmen secured for themselves about 500,000 acres of the Ohio valley for settlement purposes. The same portion however, had earlier been claimed by **Joseph Celeron** for France. The French, in a precautionary move to keep the British from expanding into French colonies, began the construction of a fortresses in the Ohio valley. With a lucrative fur trade, access to the all-important Mississippi River, and the massive amount of land offered in the western frontier, French and British soldiers continued to butt heads over control of the Ohio Valley.

The conflict escalated when a young Virginian, **George Washington**, was dispatched by Virginia's **Governor Dinwiddie** to the Pennsylvania backwoods in 1753 to tell the French that they were trespassing on Virginia's territory. On this mission, Washington learned that the French had no intentions of leaving the territory. With this important intelligence, the young Virginian spent a few difficult weeks returning to Virginia where he delivered his report.

Soon after, this inexperienced twenty-two-year-old was made an officer and sent back with a militia force of 150 men and orders to build a fort. To his dismay, Washington found the French already occupying a fort they called **Duquesne** (on the site of today's Pittsburgh). Though outnumbered, the young George Washington and his men attacked a French work party, took some prisoners, and hastily constructed a fort that was aptly

named **Necessity**. However, surrounded by French forces, he had to surrender and return to Virginia. Even though defeated however, Washington was still hailed a hero for taking on the sworn enemies of England. When news of the growing conflict reached London, war was declared, and the **Seven Years War** had officially begun (referred to as the **French and Indian War** by Americans.) Without realizing it, George Washington had ordered the shots that began a worldwide conflict.

News of the fighting spread like wildfire and Governor Dinwiddie requested help from North Carolina and other neighboring colonies. The British ordered troops to set sail for America and in 1754, the North Carolina General Assembly answered Governor Dinwiddie's request for reinforcements. Members agreed to send troops to Virginia and to levy a special tax for defense of the frontier. North Carolina chose **Colonel James Innes** to lead approximately 450 North Carolina militias to meet with Washington and assist. The two leaders agreed to build a fort at the head of the Potomac River, called **Fort Cumberland**, which Innes then took command of.

The first phase of this war was a disaster for Britain and the English colonies. The 90,000 French in America, vastly outnumbered by 1.5 million English colonials, were better organized, more experienced fighters and had the most Indian allies. To the Indians, the French were the lesser of two evils; there were fewer French than English, and they seemed more interested in trading for beaver pelts than did the English, who were pushing the Indians off their lands. For many Indians, the war also provided an opportunity to repay years of mistreatment by the English. The Indians' rage exploded in the viciousness of their attacks, which were met with equal savagery by the British. Scalp taking was a popular Native American and British tactic, and the British commander, **General Edward Braddock**, offered his Indian allies five pounds sterling for the scalp of a French soldier. For the English side, the great disaster of this war came in 1755, when 1,400 redcoats, under British General Braddock, marched on Fort Duquesne in a poorly planned mission. Joining him was **General Edward Brice Dobbs**, who led around 84 North Carolinians into battle, including a band of North Carolina Rangers headed by **Major Hugh Waddell**. However, a much smaller force of French slaughtered the English, leaving only 500 survivors.

Things had gone badly everywhere for the English until there was a change of leadership in London, with **William Pitt** taking over the war effort in 1758. Pitt believed North America was critical for England's global domination. His strategy emphasized naval warfare and the conquest of North America, which Pitt viewed as the key to overall victory. He poured in troops and found talented new commanders in **James Wolfe** and **Jeffrey Amherst**. One of Amherst's novel tactics, when negotiating with some attacking Indians, was to give them blankets from the smallpox hospital. A string of victories between 1758 and 1760 gave the English control over the American colonies.

The death blow to the French cause was struck in Quebec in 1759. Commander Wolfe bravely sent his forces up a rocky embankment to surprise the French. The battle that followed on the Plains of Abraham killed Wolfe and the French commander, as the crucial stronghold was transferred to British hands. It would only be a matter of time before Montreal suffered the same fate in 1760, leading to the English ownership of Canada. The French chapter of North American history had ended in a bloody finale



In 1763, the **Treaty of Paris** brought peace and, with it, a complete British triumph. The English now owned all of Canada, America east of the Mississippi Valley, Florida, and a number of Caribbean islands. France lost its American colonies, except for a few islands in the French West Indies, and France's overseas trade had been crippled by the British navy.

Colonial Americans, now fully blooded in a major armed conflict, took pride and rejoiced at the victory they had helped win for their new

