

**YUKON ARCHIVES**  
**The Alaska Highway: A Yukon Perspective**  
**Lesson # 1**

**LESSON TOPIC:**

Chapter 1: Development of Transportation in the Yukon

**SUMMARY:**

Students begin by asking their peers questions related to Yukon transportation in order to establish what experience and knowledge they already have. After reviewing both the text and photos in this section students are assigned a role or character from this period in history. Each student is asked to prepare a journal entry that depicts a day in the life of that character, with specific reference to transportation. As a final exercise, students are divided into small groups and asked to complete a summarizing exercise.

**MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

B.L.M. 1.1 “Find Someone Who...”

B.L.M. 1.2 “Dear Journal...”

Flip Chart paper and markers

**DURATION:**

1 ½ - 2 hours

**WARM-UP ACTIVITY:**

*Yukon Transportation Knowledge*

1. Explain to students that they are going to be exploring what early travel in the Yukon was like. This warm-up activity will help to determine the experience and knowledge students already have about Yukon transportation. Distribute one B.L.M. 1.1 “Find Someone Who...” to each student. Ask students to move about the class asking their classmates the questions on their sheet. When they find someone who has a correct answer to a question, they are to write that student’s name on the blank line (and if relevant, the answer to the question).

2. The first person to complete the sheet should yell out “Alaska Highway!” Teachers may wish to have students continue the activity until three students are finished, then ask students to return to their seats. (perhaps a small prize might be given to these three students..ie. a Yukon pin or ???)
3. Once students have returned to their seats, ask each of the three students to share their answers with the class. Stress to students that there is already knowledge and experience about Yukon transportation within the class and that they will now begin to discover even more about this exciting topic.

### **ACTIVITY:**

#### *Dear Journal*

1. Review the photos and text found in “Chapter 1: Development of Transportation in the Yukon”. Teachers may wish to read the text to the class and/or have students volunteer to read certain sections. As they review this material begin a class list on flip chart paper of the people/characters listed in this section. (Your class list should include: trappers, traders, big game hunters, prospectors, Overland Trail passengers, roadhouse owners, Frank Harbottle, J. H. McNeil-Superintendent of Works and Buildings, members of the Canada-U.S. Permanent Joint Board of Defense, Northwest Staging Route pilots, etc.).
2. Once students have read through this section and reviewed the photos, assign each student a character from the list generated in step one. (depending on the class size, more than one student may be assigned a role). Ask students to draft a journal entry that depicts some aspect of the life of the character with relevance to early Yukon transportation. Encourage students to use their creativity and imagination too! They may choose to use B.L.M. 1.2 “Dear Journal” as an outline, or they may wish to create their own.
3. When their journals are completed, encourage students to make an oral presentation to the class, sharing their journal entry and any reflections they might have regarding what that person’s life would have been like.

**WRAP-UP:***Reviewing Key Points*

1. Divide students into groups of three. On flip chart paper ask students to divide their sheet into three columns. Label the three columns:
  - 1) Early Travel
  - 2) Pre-1942
  - 3) Planning a Highway

Ask students to discuss as a group what they feel are the key points from each section. Encourage them to review the photos from this section in order to draw ideas from these unique primary sources.

2. After each group has identified and noted on their charts the key points, have the groups share their notes with the class.
3. Discuss any discrepancies as a class. Encourage students to question other groups. Remind students of the importance of developing the skill of summarizing.

**EXTENSIONS:**

1. Ask students to predict what sort of effect the building of the highway might have had on:
  - Yukoners who lived near the construction zones
  - First Nations peoples
  - Northwest Staging Route pilots
  - Future travelers to the Yukon

OR

2. Students are to assume they are a member of the Canada - U.S. Permanent Joint Board of Defense. They are to write a letter defending their decision to build a "tote" road between Dawson Creek, B.C. and Fairbanks, Alaska.

OR

3. Ask students to draw a self-portrait to include with the journals and display these, along with their journals, on the class wall. Encourage them to frame the journal and portrait with a “Yukon-type” theme.

**ASSESSMENT IDEAS:**

1. The journals and journal presentations could both be assessed. Points to consider in the marking might be:
  - How accurate was the portrayal of the character’s life?
  - Did the student mention the early transportation challenges?
  - Did the student demonstrate effective oral communication skills?

2. Each group could also be assigned a mark for completing the Key Points chart and for the actual presentation.