

YUKON ARCHIVES
The Alaska Highway: A Yukon Perspective
Lesson # 4

LESSON TOPIC:

Chapter 4: Northwest Staging Route

SUMMARY:

Students begin by examining the photos from this section, then choosing one to describe using a Response Guide. After a review of the text and general class discussion, students work in pairs preparing a mock interview of one of the characters from the photos. The interviews are then presented to the class. A final class discussion focuses on: 1) the role of the Northwest Staging Route, 2) its impact on the local communities, and 3) the significance of archival material in understanding the Yukon's history.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

B.L.M. 4.1 "Response Guide"

DURATION:

1 ½ - 2 hours

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:

What's In A Picture?

1. In pairs, students will review all the photos and captions from this section. Encourage them to discuss what historical significance the photo demonstrates (or in other words, what special story might this picture be telling?) They are to then choose five of the photos that they wish to have a closer look at.

2. As they review the five photos they have chosen, have one student describe the photo to the other student. The other student will act as a recorder, completing a Response Guide for each photo. (B.L.M. 4.1)
3. Ask each pair to choose one of the Response Guides to share with the class.

ACTIVITY:

Mock Interviews

1. Begin by asking students to review the text and photos for this chapter. Teachers may want students to focus on a few key questions as they review the materials. For example:
 - Where was the Northwest Staging Route and what was its purpose?
 - What did the United States use these airports for?
 - How were the Alaska Highway route and the Northwest Staging route linked?
 - What role did the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) have in controlling the airports?
2. Ask students to take one more look at the photos from this section. They are to choose one person from the photos that they feel looks like an interesting “character”.
3. Each student will prepare a minimum of 10 open-ended questions that a newspaper reporter might ask him or her as they role play the characters they have chosen. (e.g. if they have chosen Grant McConachie on the overturned boat, they will design 10 questions that a reporter might ask McConachie). Teachers may want to first brainstorm with the class a possible list of questions a reporter might ask. (and/or invite a local newspaper report in to share interview tips)
4. Divide the class into pairs (could be the same pairs from the Warm-up Activity) and ask one student to role-play the newspaper reporter, the other to play the character. They should prepare to present the interview with the class (each person will have a turn playing the reporter, then the “character”). Encourage students to bring a prop or costume piece for the presentation. Teachers might consider taping the interviews, (and even changing it to a TV

newscast). It's always fun for students to then see themselves on a TV screen.

WRAP-UP:

Class Discussion

A final class discussion might include questions such as:

- What would life have been like for pilots during the 1930s and 40s and for locals living in the communities with airports? etc.
- How would things have changed after WWII?
- What can we learn from these archival photos that is unique?
- What specific details about life during these times can you note from the photos, which are not detailed in the text?
- What role do the archival photos play in the Yukon's history?
- How important was the Northwest Staging Route to Yukoners?, to the Americans?
- How did the route change the lives of those living in the communities?

EXTENSIONS:

1. Invite a pilot in (if possible from this era and/or with small plane experience) to speak about the challenges and excitement of flying the Northwest Staging Route. Students could each have 1 or 2 questions prepared for the guest.
2. Arrange a visit to the Yukon Archives building to view the actual photos. Have a staff member prepare a presentation for students on the Northwest Staging Route. Students again could have questions prepared ahead of time for the Yukon Archives' staff. Students could have a general tour of the building and learn what is the purpose of the facility and what are some other interesting documents there.
3. Ask students to write a travel log, assuming the role of a pilot who would regularly fly the Northwest Staging Route.

ASSESSMENT IDEAS:

1. Students could design their own rubrics to assess their response guide (i.e. 1 mark for completing each section, 1 mark for quality and detail of each, 1 mark for presentation to the class - total of 3 marks)
2. The interview could be assessed based on a score of 5. An example scoring guide might be 1 mark for each of the following:
 - Were there 10 open-ended questions prepared?
 - Did pairs work well preparing their interviews and stay on task?
 - Were students prepared for the interview presentation?
 - Did the interviewee answer each question thoughtfully and realistically?
 - Did the pair put the extra effort into bringing a prop or costume piece?