

Transportation

Learning objectives

- Students will learn about the various modes of transportation used during the First World War and how they helped Canada prepare for war.
- Students will learn about Canadian aviation aces.
- Students will explore aircraft training schools in Canada during the First World War.

Time required

30-40 minutes

Grades

7-12

Materials

- tiled map: *A Nation Takes Shape*
- image “Pancaking a Plane” (Appendix 7)
- image of First World War aircraft (Appendix 7)
- image of HMCS *Rainbow* (Appendix 7)

Set-up

Print the tiled map. Arrange your classroom to ensure it can accommodate the map.

Links to Canadian National Standards for Geography

Essential element 2:

Places and regions

- factors that influence people’s perceptions of places and regions
- the importance of places and regions to individuals and social identity
- changes in places and regions over time

Essential element 4:

Environment and Society

- types and patterns of human settlement
- transportation and communication networks in Canada and the world

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Introduction

Assemble the tiled map and have a class discussion about how people travelled in 1919 compared with today. Highlight the railway on the map and explain that Canada’s rail system was the primary form of travel before and during the war and became the main mode of transportation for soldiers during the war.

Just before the war, a railway boom in Canada had resulted in the construction of extensive lines across the country. However, rail companies overextended themselves, and immediately after the war, the Canadian government was forced to buy many bankrupt railways. The government amalgamated these individual companies into one, Canadian National Railways, or CN.

Highlight Canadian Forces Base Valcartier on the map as the main destination for soldiers across Canada. Ask students to consider how Canada’s rail system is used today and how transportation technology has changed.

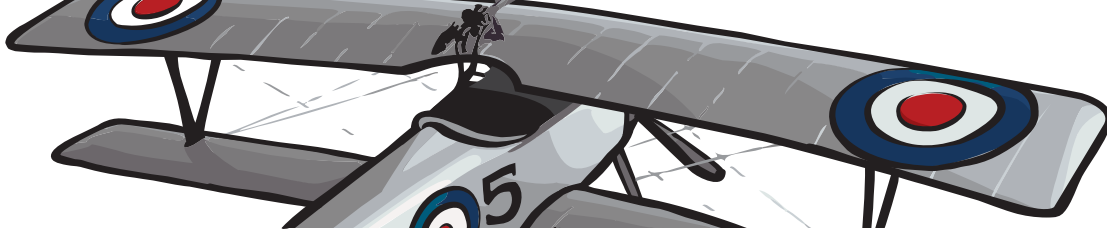
Development

Explain that when the war broke out in August 1914, airplanes were still a new invention. It was still an impressive feat to take off and land safely, let alone to try to shoot down another plane. Show students the image of a British poster instructing how to pancake a plane. Have students discuss the limitations of air travel during the First World War and how aviation technology has changed.

Refer to the tiled map and have students identify the training camps in Canada as well as any patterns they recognize (all training camps were in Eastern Canada and near big cities). Locate Camp Borden and note that it was the first British Royal Flying Corps (RFC) training location in Canada and was later the first training station for the newly created Royal Canadian Air Force between the First and Second World Wars. Explain that Canada did not have its own permanent air force until after the First World War and that these stations were established by Great Britain. Ask students to consider how Canadian weather may have influenced training at these stations (many planes were not built to withstand the climate in the winter) and why Canada was chosen for RFC training facilities (pilots needed somewhere to train and Canada was a great fit – far from the theatre of war with plenty of open space).

Show students images of aircraft from the First World War. Explain that military pilots were given the title of “ace” if they had shot down five or more enemy aircraft. At the time, aces like Billy Bishop and William Barker were celebrities, and the government spared no expense using their heroic stories in propaganda. Ask students if they think the government’s treatment of these pilots added to their fame and legacy. Note that many Canadian airports are named, or have been named, after these aces (the original airport in Calgary was named after Fred McCall, airports in Toronto and Owen Sound are named after Billy Bishop).



**Essential element 6:****The uses of geography**

- influence of geographical features on the evolution of significant historic events and movement

Conclusion

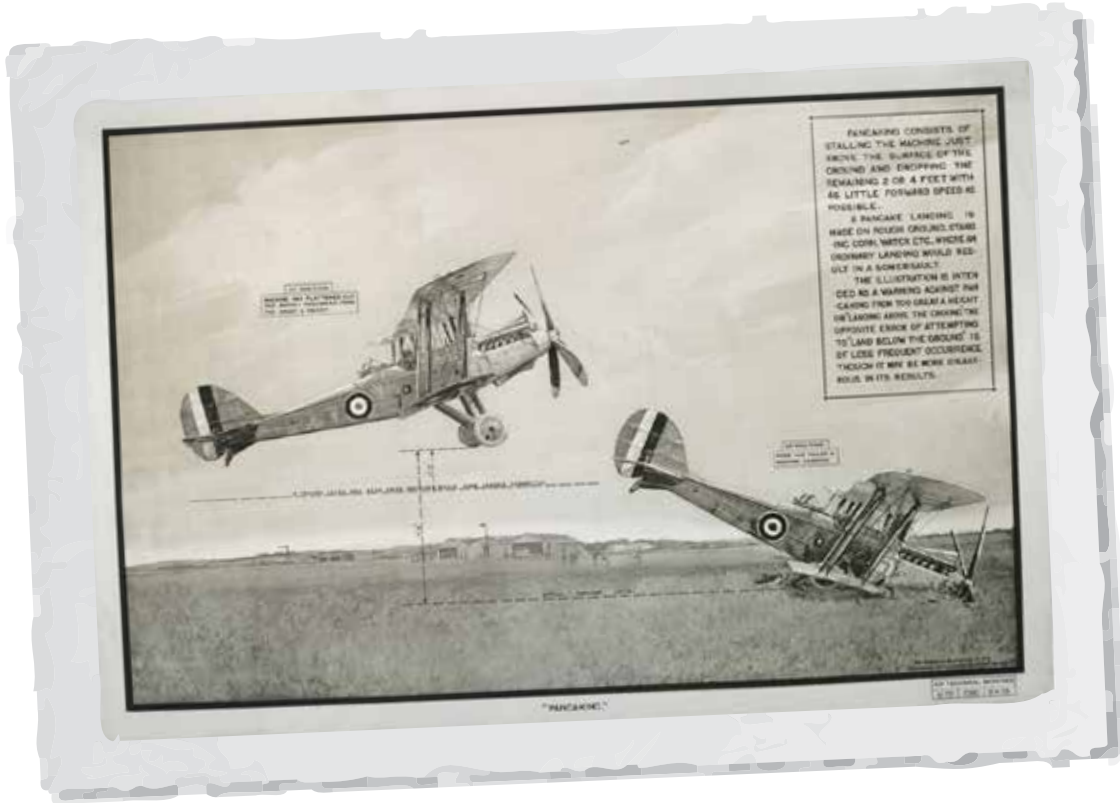
Highlight the navy signal stations on the tiled map. Ask students to consider how port areas and naval stations played a role in the First World War, and record their answers on the board. Explain that at the outbreak of war, Canada's navy was only three years old. Ask students what challenges Canada's navy faced as it entered the war, and write their answers on the board.

Now that students have a better understanding of the modes of transportation and their role in the war, have students write a paragraph explaining which force they would enlist in. Ask students to identify if they want to enlist in the navy, army (i.e., soldiers on the ground) or the British Royal Flying Corps. Have them locate an area on the map where they wish to undergo training and explain why they chose this area.

Extend your geographic thinking

Discuss how the advancement of aviation, railway and naval technology contributed to the development of cities farther north and how technology helped open the farthest reaches of Canada's landscape.

Now have your class find Churchill, Man. on the map and ask why it's not labeled. Explain that many of today's cities in the North were virtually unreachable by average Canadians at the time. Have your class find other cities that would have been difficult to travel to.



"PANCAKING", TRAINING POSTER, CWM 19700043-008



H.M.C.S. RAINBOW, GEORGE METCALF ARCHIVAL COLLECTION, CWM 19790602-053



WAR IN THE AIR, PAINTED BY CHRISTOPHER RICHARD WYNNE NEVINSON, BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART, CWM 19710261-0517