SECTION 3: 1761 – 1796
BRITISH DETROIT

INTRODUCTION:
This unit helps third grade students understand the life and culture in Detroit during the British occupation between 1760 and 1796. This unit includes a comprehensive background essay, as well as three lesson plans. The lesson plans include viewing and analyzing primary sources such as maps and documents. The unit includes a list of additional resources and copies of worksheets and primary sources needed for the lessons.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
• What impact did the French and Indian War have on the French, the British and the Native Americans in Detroit and Michigan?
• Who was Chief Pontiac, and how does his rebellion show a change in the relationship between Europeans and Native Americans?
• Why was the fort at Detroit important to the British? What was life like in and around the fort?

MICHIGAN GLCE – THIRD GRADE

Social Studies
• H3 – History of Michigan Through Statehood
  o 3-H3.0.1 – Identify questions historians ask in examining the past in Michigan.
  o 3-H3.0.2 – Explain how historians use primary and secondary sources to answer questions about the past.
  o 3-H3.0.3 – Describe the causal relationships between three events in Michigan’s past.
  o 3-H3.0.8 – Use case studies or stories to describe how the ideas or actions of individuals affected the history of Michigan.

English Language Arts
• Reading:
  o R.CM.03.01 – Connect personal knowledge, experiences, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in text through oral and written responses.
  o R.CM.03.02 – Retell in sequence the story elements of grade-level narrative text and major idea(s) and relevant details of grade-level informational text.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Students will:
• Learn about the impact of the French and Indian War in Detroit, Michigan, and North America.
• Consider multiple perspectives in history, particularly the points of view of the French, British and Native Americans.
• Learn about Chief Pontiac and the Native Americans that fought to protect their homelands.
• Understand the role of a British fort in North America during the late 18th century.
• Practice mapping skills by creating and labeling a map of a British fort.
BACKGROUND ESSAY:

Who Owns North America?

As the French fur trade in the Great Lakes region prospered in the middle of the 1700s, other nations entered the area – first the British and then the Americans. These nations fought over control of large parts of the Western Hemisphere. Many battles took place to decide which nation would control the region and the forts, and therefore, the fur trade. The Native Americans had been there the longest, so foreign powers often sought their help in the battles. Almost as often these foreign powers made promises to the Native people that they did not keep.

The flag at the fort in Detroit changed many times between 1760 and 1813. Here’s how the changes occurred to the French fort that Cadillac established in 1701.

The French and Indian War

In the 1740s, the population of European Americans on the east coast was rising. The British colonials looked to lands to the west of the Appalachian Mountains for more space. These lands had traditionally belonged to Native American groups, but the French had also claimed them. Around 1750, the French and the British began to argue over who owned the land in present-day western Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1753, the French began to settle the Ohio River valley, near present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The British, who felt this land belonged to the colony of Virginia, sent a young officer named George Washington to the French fort with a letter asking them to leave. The attempt was a failure, and the British and French continued to fight over control of the area until war was declared in 1756.

The bulk of the fighting in the French and Indian War took place in New York colony and Quebec, Canada. At the beginning the French won several key battles, but by 1759 the British had gained most of their New York forts back and had started to capture forts in Canada. In the summer of 1759, the British laid siege to Quebec, knowing it was a strategic French stronghold in the new world. The fighting lasted almost three months, until the French surrendered in September 1759. At this time the British had control of all of North America except Montreal and Detroit.

In the Treaty of Paris in 1760 that ended the war, France ceded all of its land in North America, including Detroit, to the British. In September 1760, British Major Robert Rogers arrived in Detroit and took control of the city from the French.

The British renamed the French Fort Ponchartrain “Fort Detroit.” In 1778 they razed Fort Ponchartrain and built a new fort on a bluff above the village. They named it Fort Lernoult for Richard Lernoult, the British commander in charge of Detroit at the time. The British controlled Detroit from 1760 until 1796, over 12 years after Detroit and Michigan became part of the United States during the American Revolutionary War.

Pontiac’s Rebellion

By 1763, Ottawa Chief Pontiac was unhappy with the British, who had taken much of the Native American lands in Michigan. The French had tried to deal fairly with the Native Americans, but he feared the British wanted all of his people’s land and would cheat them out of it.

Pontiac decided that the only way to protect his people was to unite all the Native American groups in Michigan and attack the British. Their goal would be to kick them off their lands and send them back from where they came.

Pontiac held a great council on the Ecorse River. It included members of many Native American tribes, including the Chippewa, Ottawa, Shawnee, Delaware, Miami, Potawatomi, and Hurons. Together, they planned to attack Fort Detroit. Other Native American groups in Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania launched their own attacks on British forts.
Between May and October, eight Great Lakes forts fell. Unable to get Detroit to surrender, Pontiac and his allies held Fort Detroit under siege.

By October, the winter was getting closer and many of the groups tired of battle and went home. Pontiac then discovered that the British and French had signed a peace treaty, which meant he could no longer count on the support of the French in his attacks. In 1763 Pontiac surrendered his attack on Fort Detroit.

**American Revolution**

During the American Revolution Detroit was controlled by the British, but it was not a colony. It was not directly involved in the war for independence, but instead was a strategic stronghold for the British in North America. Detroit housed several American prisoners of war during the war.

After America won independence from Great Britain in 1783, the new nation fought both the British and Native Americans for control of Great Lakes forts. The British refused to surrender Detroit, and the Americans had a difficult time reaching the fort and village because much of Ohio was controlled by Native American groups that did not want the Americans to take their land.

The conflict between Native American groups and the young United States was called the Northwest Indian War. Many Native Americans in the Northwest Territory had sided with the British in the Revolutionary War. When the British ceded this land to the United States after the Revolutionary War, the Native Americans were angry. The British had not consulted them before they surrendered the land. As a result, many tribes organized into the Western Indian Confederacy and fought against the U.S. forces that were trying to claim their lands. Under the leadership of Blue Jacket of the Shawnees and Little Turtle of the Miamis, the Western Indian Confederacy won several battles against the Americans in 1790 and 1791. They were encouraged and supplied by the British, who had refused to evacuate British fortifications in the region.

In 1791, President George Washington ordered General “Mad” Anthony Wayne to organize and train a proper fighting force. Wayne took command late in 1793. He led United States forces to a victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, which finally brought the conflict to an end. Indian tribes were forced to cede extensive territory, including much of present-day Ohio, in the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.

In 1796, after Colonel John Francis Hamtramck secured the village for the Americans, the British surrendered Detroit to Captain Moses Porter. Over ten years after Detroit officially became property of the United States, it finally was controlled by American troops.

**War of 1812**

Although the United States had controlled Detroit and Michigan since 1796, tensions continued to grow between the Americans and the British, who occupied Canada across the Detroit River. In 1812, the Americans made the decision to declare war on England because they were interfering with trade in Europe and forcing Americans into service in the British Royal Navy. The Native American groups in Michigan and Canada, still angry with the United States for stealing their land, sided with the British in the conflict.

The young United States was not prepared to fight a war against a key European power. Nonetheless, it determined that its best chance in the war was to try to conquer Canada. They appointed General William Hull to command troops from Ohio to fight the British at Detroit. Hull’s troops and officers were not well trained and had little knowledge or understanding of war tactics, and Hull struggled to keep them under his control.

In the middle of 1812, Hull and his troops reached the fort at Detroit. Hull, who also served as Governor of the Michigan Territory, was concerned by the number of civilians living in the village. He did not want to engage the British
in a battle that could injure or kill innocent Americans. He was also concerned by the Native Americans alliance with the British, and had reason to believe that they would attack Detroit and leave no prisoners.

The British, under control of Major General Isaac Brock, knew about Hull’s concerns and fooled him into believing that the British and Native American force was larger than it was. Brock, stressing the loss of innocent lives should a battle take place, convinced Hull to surrender Fort Detroit to the British in August 1812. Hull was later court-martialed and sentenced to death as a traitor for surrendering Detroit, but was pardoned by President James Monroe.

The British controlled Detroit for almost a year. Admiral Oliver Hazard Perry’s victory over the British in Lake Erie opened the way for Americans to recapture Detroit. General William Henry Harrison sent General Isaac Shelby from Ohio to reclaim Detroit for America. After two skirmishes against the British on the journey, Shelby entered Fort Detroit. The final flag of the region became American.

After the Americans reclaimed Fort Detroit, the Native nations fought a final battle in Canada, called the Battle of the Thames, against the foreign military powers and settlers. The great Shawnee Chief Tecumseh united many Native nations with his warnings that American settlers would destroy them. The American leader of this battle was General William Henry Harrison. Natives said the General had wrongfully taken a large tract of land for American settlers. Tecumseh’s warriors fought with the British against General Harrison. Tecumseh was killed in the battle, and General Harrison won when the Native nations stopped fighting to mourn the death of their great leader.

LESSON 1: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES: FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

Materials Used:
- Data Elements:
  - DE 3.1: Essay - French and Indian War
  - DE 3.2: Scenario Cards:
    - French
    - British
    - Native Americans
- Worksheets:
  - WS 3.1: French and Indian War Worksheet

Lesson Sequence:
1. Explain to the students that they will learn about the French and Indian War, namely the impact the war had on the French, British and Native Americans that lived in and around Detroit.
2. As a class, read or review DE 3.2: Essay – French and Indian War.
3. Break the students into three groups. Each group represents one of the cultures: French, British, and Native Americans. Give each group their scenario card from DE 3.2 that addresses the impacts the war had on their group.
4. Instruct the French group to go to the outskirts of the classroom, and explain that the war has lost them their homes in Detroit and North America. Instruct the Indian group to go to the far corner of the room, and explain that they are regrouping after losing their allies, the French. Finally, instruct the British group to sit wherever they would like, since they own all of the land and can do what they please.
5. One at a time, have each group read their scenario card aloud to the class. Lead a brief discussion about their arrangements in the room and the information they just read on their cards. Suggested questions may include:
   - How do you feel about where you are in the classroom? Is it fair?
   - How do you think members of your group felt when this occurred in real life?
6. Pass out WS 3.1: French and Indian War Worksheet. Explain that each group will have ten minutes to answer the questions on the handout. They need to include their reasons for fighting in the war, an explanation as to the results of the war, and their feelings about it.
7. Have each group present their answers to the class.
8. Afterwards, lead a class discussion about the different perspectives. Questions may include:
   o Which side was right?
   o Was more than one group right? Wrong?

LESSON 2: PONTIAC’S REBELLION

Materials Used:
- Data Elements:
  o DE 3.3: British Perspective
  o DE 3.4: Chief Pontiac’s Perspective
  o DE 3.5: Pontiac’s Rebellion Overview

Lesson Sequence:
1. Explain to the students that after the British took control of North America and Detroit after the French and Indian War, life was very different for the people who had lived in Detroit under the French.
2. The British let the French settlers stay, and allowed them to practice their religion. For the most part, the French settlers who stayed in Detroit didn’t mind the British rulers.
3. The Native Americans, on the other hand, did not like the British. They felt that the British treated them poorly. In 1763, Chief Pontiac was frustrated with the British. He organized a meeting of tribal leaders from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana to discuss how what they could do.
4. Explain to the students that they will be learning about Pontiac’s rebellion and its impacts by reading sources from both the British and the Indian perspectives.
5. Make a chart on the board, one for each group.
6. As a group, read DE 3.3: British Perspective. Ask students to list the reasons why the British were in Michigan, and what they were doing there. Ask them also about how they viewed and treated the Indians.
7. As a group, read DE 3.4: Chief Pontiac’s Perspective. As students to list the reasons why the Indians decided to attack. Write them on the proper place on the chart.
8. Read DE 3.5: Pontiac’s Rebellion Overview as a class. Lead a discussion about the results of the rebellion.
   a. Who won? Why?
   b. Do you think the outcome was right, or fair?
   c. How do you think it should have ended?

LESSON 3: LIFE IN A BRITISH FORT

Materials Used:
- Data Elements:
  o DE 3.6: Map - Detroit, 1760 – Fort Detroit
  o DE 3.7: Map - Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult
  o DE 3.8: Essay: Life in a British Fort
  o DE 3.9: Glossary – British Fort Terms
- Worksheets
  o WS 3.2: Diagram - Blank Fort

Lesson Sequence:
1. Pass out DE 3.9: Essay: Life in a British Fort to the students. Read together as a class, and host a discussion using the following questions as a guide:
   a. How were frontier forts built? Who built them? What were they made from?
   b. Who lived in the frontier forts? Where did the soldiers live? Where did the villagers live?
   c. What made living in a frontier fort hard?
2. Show the students DE 3.6: Map – Detroit, 1760 – Fort Detroit and D.E. 3.7: Map – Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult. Explain that these are two different forts that once were built in Detroit. Explain that one fort was built by the French and the other by the British. Lead a discussion where the students compare and contrast the features of the forts.

3. Pass out DE 3.9: Glossary – British Fort Terms. As a group, go through the list and discuss the meanings of each term. Use DE 3.7: Map – Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult to show where each term is on the fort.

4. Break the students into small groups of 3-4. Give each group a copy of WS 3.2: Diagram – Blank Fort. Ask them to work together by labeling the fort with the glossary terms. They can use DE 3.7: Map – Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult as a reference. Let them know that there is no key for the placement of the buildings, so they need to discuss together where they think the buildings would be located.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Books:**


**Links:**

History.com, French and Indian War: [http://www.history.com/topics/french-and-indian-war](http://www.history.com/topics/french-and-indian-war)

History.com, War of 1812: [http://www.history.com/topics/war-of-1812](http://www.history.com/topics/war-of-1812)


NC Department of Cultural resources, French and Indian War Interactive: [http://www.ncdcr.gov/interactive/french_indian_war/index.html](http://www.ncdcr.gov/interactive/french_indian_war/index.html)

Ohio History Central, American Revolution:  

Ohio History Central, French and Indian War:  http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=498

Ohio History Central, Pontiac’s Rebellion:  http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=539