The French and Indian War was a struggle for control of much of North America. The British, the French and the Native Americas all had reasons for fighting in the war. Using your scenario card and the reading on the war, answer the following questions about your group.

What group do you represent?

What part of North America did you control before the war?

Why did you fight in the war?

What happened to your group at the end of the war?

How does your group feel about the results of the war?
Label Fort Lernoult
Using the map outline and key below, label the major parts of a British fort with their proper numbers.

**KEY:**
1 - Barracks
2 - Bastion
3 - Dry Ditch
4 - Embrasure
5 - Fort
6 - Headquarters
7 - Magazine
8 - Palisade/Stockade
9 - Parade
10 - Parapet
11 - Rampart
12 - Store
D.E. 3.1 – Essay: French and Indian War

In the 1740s the population of European Americans on the east coast was rising. The British colonials looked to lands west of the Appalachian Mountains for more space. These lands had traditionally belonged to Native American groups, but the French had 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 Duquesne with a letter asking them to leave. The attempt was a failure. In 1754 Washington began to build a British fort in the area, but the French presence was too strong. After a small battle, Washington surrendered the small fort he had managed to build. The incident set off more fighting between the British and the French. In 1755, the British sent General Edward Braddock to oversee the British Colonial forces, but he was killed in a battle with the French before he arrived at the fort.

After a year and a half small battles, the French and the English formally declared war in May 1756. For the first three years of the war, the French dominated the battlefield, defeating the English in battles mainly in upstate New York. Perhaps the most notorious battle of the war was the French victory at Fort William Henry, which ended in a massacre of British soldiers by Indians allied with the French.

In 1758 the British began to win key battles. They made peace with important Indian allies and, under the direction of Lord William Pitt, began using war strategies that worked better in the wilderness of the frontier. Also, several Indian groups started abandoning the French, which weakened France’s resistance to the strengthened British forces. By 1758 the French were outnumbered and outgunned by the
British. 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.

By September 1760 the British controlled the entire North American frontier; the war between the two countries was effectively over. In the Treaty of Paris of 1760 that ended the war, France surrendered 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 knocked down Fort Detroit 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.

Images courtesy of FCIT’s ClipartETC (http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/index.htm) and U.S. History Images (http://ushistoryimages.com/index.shtml)
D.E. 3.2 – Scenario Cards: French and Indian War

The French Point of View

We do not understand why the British think they own the upper Ohio River Valley. Their claim to lands in North America does not pass the natural border of the Appalachian Mountains.

We have been in this part of North America for over 50 years. We are allies with the Native Americans who have lived on this land for centuries, and they have granted us permission to build a fort and settlement here.

We think the British and their American Colonists are greedy, and want to take more land than is rightfully theirs. How dare they?

The British Point of View

Who do the French think they are? Clearly the land in the Ohio River Valley belongs to our colony of Virginia. We made this clear years ago. They have no right to push us off the land. They are greedy and only want to use the land for animal pelts which will make them rich back in Europe. For shame!

They have no desire to settle this land and make a better living here. Our colonists have needs! They want to live in the frontier and have plenty of room to farm and live their lives.
The Native American Point of View

We are in trouble. Both the French and British are fighting over lands that belong to neither of them. These lands have been our home for centuries.

We have allowed the French to use our lands because they treat us fairly. They respect our culture and trade with us. The British want our lands all to themselves. If they move here, they will force us off our lands.

We do not want to choose sides in this war, because both the French and British have become greedy, but we must. We will fight with the French to help save our cultures and ways of life.
Excerpts of a Letter from Sir William Johnson, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs to the Lords of Trade

July 1, 1763.

My Lords

...  

Your Lordships may please to observe by my letter before mentioned that I therein, represented the jealousy which the Indians in general entertained of the increasing power of the English, thro’ the insinuations of French Missionaries & others who had persuaded them that we proposed their entire Extermination, to which they in a great measure give credit from our occupying some old posts & erecting new ones thro’ out their Country.

In 1761, I had in a great measure removed these prejudices at the Conference which I then held with the Ottawa Confederacy at the Detroit and delivered them a handsome present (which is the surest method of proving the reality of Words to Indians) but as the Nations are Warlike, numerous and accustomed to receive considerable gifts & good treatment from the French for permitting them to occupy several posts, to the Northward & Westward of the Detroit, which custom I was in no wise enabled to continue to them, they began to look on our friendship as not very interesting, & indeed in general they have but an imperfect idea of friendship, unless they reap some considerable advantages from it, - The too general opinion which has lately prevailed, that they were an Enemy of very little power, or consequence & not worth our attention occasioned their being treated throughout the Country with a neglect, which never fails being resented by them.

Of this their discontent I have been advertised from their own mouths as well as from the accounts transmitted me by my Deputies and others. To prevent the evil consequences of which I took every possible measure to remove their inquietude by representing that their suspicions of us were without the least grounds, but notwithstanding all my endeavors, the Misisaga’s and Chipeweghs (who I am well informed have been greatly encouraged thereto by some Officers sent amongst them from the Gov. of New Orleans) have lately endeavored to surprise the Detroit, and now closely blockade the same, they have likewise totally defeated a Detachment of 100 men who were on their way from Niagara for that place with a large quantity of provisions which has fallen into their hands. The Fort at Sandusky on Lake Erie has likewise been taken & destroyed and ‘tis apprehended all the other outposts together with their garrisons have shared the same fate. Whilst in the mean time some Delawares on the
Ohio have infested the communication to Fort Pitt &c. destroyed several settlements, murdered many Traders and others, spreading an universal panic throughout the Frontiers.

I cannot help requesting the honour of your Lordships sentiments and instructions relative thereto, and at the same time must beg leave to represent that as I am of opinion all these evils have arisen from our considering the Indians as incapable of doing us much damage which was the cause of our treating them with indifference and neglect, so, to remove the prejudices they have entertained and secure their Confidence and esteem, no method will prove effectual, unless that of rewarding those who shall remain our friends with some marks of Favor by occasionally supplying their wants as they shall appear to deserve it, this will excite an emulation in those who are still wavering, and satisfy the doubts of those who suspect the reality of our inclination towards them, without which, meer words have in general not much weight with a People who judge by our actions and not our language to them.

I have the Honour to be
with the most profound respect
My Lords
Your Lordship most obedient
and most humble servant,
WM. JOHNSON
Chief Pontiac’s Speech

It is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands this nation which seeks only to destroy us. You see as well as I do that we can no longer supply our needs, as we have done from our brothers, the French. The English sell us goods twice as dear as the French do, and their goods do not last. Scarcely have we bought a blanket or something else to cover ourselves with before we must think of getting another; and when we wish to set out for our winter camp they do not want to give us any credit as our brothers the French do.

When I go to see the English commander and say to him that some of our comrades are dead, instead of bewailing their death, as our French brothers do, he laughs at me and at you. If I ask for anything for our sick, he refuses with the reply that he has no use for us. From all this you can well see that they are seeking our ruin. Therefore, my brothers, we must all swear their destruction and wait no longer. Nothing prevents us: They are few in numbers, and we can accomplish it.

All the nations who are our brothers attack them – why should we not strike too? Are we not men like them? Have I now shown you the wampum belts [beaded belts symbolizing an agreement or treaty] which I received from our great father, the Frenchman [King Louis XV]? He tells us to strike them. Why do we not listen to his words? What do we fear? It is time.

- Chief Pontiac of the Ottawa tribe addressing a gathering of Ottawa, Huron, and Potawatomie Indians, May 5, 1763
Pontiac’s Rebellion – Overview

The French defeat in the French and Indian War surprised and angered the Native American groups of the Ohio River Valley. The French treated the native groups fairly and respected their culture. When they learned that the British had taken over their lands, they were outraged.

The Native Americans were upset with the British for several reasons. First, the Natives resented the attitudes the British held about them. While the French had respected Native cultures and often married native women, most of the British felt that the Indians were savages with primitive customs. Second, British traders were not as fair as the French had been. The Indians had become dependent on European goods, and now had to trade with untrustworthy English traders. Third, the Native American groups were alarmed at how the British claimed their lands for their own. With more and more settlers moving into the Northwest Territory, the Indians feared they would lose control of all their land and be forced to move.

In early 1763 Sir Jeffrey Amherst, the new North American governor-general, upset the natives even more when he announced that he would not present annual gifts to the tribes, something the French had always done as a sign of respect. The Indians were insulted and angry.

Several Indian leaders, including a visionary known as the Delaware Prophet, began to preach for a return to traditional ways and for the rejection of contact with the British. Pontiac, a fairly unknown Ottawa chieftain, adopted this idea and held a great council on the Ecorse River in April 1763. It included members of many Native American tribes, including the Chippewa, Ottawa, Shawnee, Delaware, Miami, Potawatomi, and Hurons. Together, they planned to attack the fort at Detroit.

On May 1, Pontiac and fifty Ottawa visited Fort Detroit to evaluate the military presence and its ability to ward off an attack. Several days later, on May 7, Pontiac and around 300 men entered Fort Detroit with plans to attack using concealed weapons. The British had been told of Pontiac's
plan and were armed and ready to fight. Without the element of surprise, Pontiac withdrew without a fight. Two days later he and his men attacked the fort from the outside, killing all of the British soldiers and settlers they could find outside of the fort. They did not attack the French settlers, who they left alone. Eventually more than 900 warriors from a half-dozen tribes joined the siege. When the British received additional troops at Fort Detroit, they tried to attack Pontiac’s encampment. Pontiac was ready and waiting, and defeated them at the Battle of Bloody Run on July 31, 1763.

After several months of battle, no clear winner had emerged. Pontiac's followers began to tire of battle and left for home. Some made peace with the British before they left. On October 31, 1763, Pontiac stopped the siege and left for Ohio where he continued to push for resistance against the British.

It is unclear whether or not Pontiac was involved in the attacks on other British forts in the region. Some historians claim that he had made plans to attack all the British forts at the same time. Other historians believe that native groups learned of Pontiac’s siege and attacked their local British forts on their own. Nonetheless, Native Americans captured eight British forts in a series of attacks between May and June 1763. These forts included: Fort Sandusky on the shore of Lake Erie; Fort St. Joseph on the site of present-day Niles, Michigan; Fort Ouiatenon about 5 miles southwest of present Lafayette, Indiana; Fort Michilimackinac at present Mackinaw City, Michigan; Fort Venango near present Franklin, Pennsylvania; Fort Le Boeuf on the site of Waterford, Pennsylvania; and Fort Presque Isle at present-day Erie, Pennsylvania. An attack on Fort Pitt in present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in late June 1763 failed.

After 1764, Pontiac's influence among the native tribes dropped. He took trips into the South and West in an attempt to gather supporters, but few tribes were interested. He lived quietly for several more years before being killed by a fellow Indian.

One of the key results of Pontiac's Rebellion was the British decision to issue the Proclamation of 1763. Its purpose was to stop white settlement of the West until better agreements could be reached with the Native Americans. This angered the colonists who lived in the east, who were also upset that the British were trying to make them pay for debts from the French and Indian War.
DE 3.6 – Map: Detroit, 1760 – Fort Detroit
DE 3.7 – Map: Detroit, 1790 – Fort Lernoult
DE 3.8 – Life in a British Fort

During the 1700s life in frontier forts was difficult. Because they were isolated from the cities of the east, the forts lacked the resources to make living comfortable. Many times the forts were built quickly out of logs the soldiers cut from the forests around them. The forts and their buildings were crude structures that were cold in the winter and hot in the summer. They leaked when it rained and became fire hazards when they were dry. Because the ground was earth, it often washed away in heavy rains or was deep with mud. Keeping the fort livable required hard work. According to Colonel De Peyster, who was in charge of Fort Lernoult in Detroit in 1780:

The new Fort will give constant employment for this Garrison for some time to come, the ditches filling faster than we can sod, owing to extreme weather, and springs breaking out in all parts, which brings down the earth [walls] in great clods.

For the soldiers and civilians that lived in and around the forts, life could be very hard. Soldiers’ letters and diaries were filled with accounts of overwork, fatigue, disease, boredom, exposure to extremes of temperature, and desertion.

All the supplies for the fort, including food, had to be shipped from more populated areas. Supply trips often took weeks, and many times the food arrived spoiled. Other times Native Americans or enemies intercepted and destroyed the supplies before they could arrive at the fort.

When the forts received their food supplies without problems, soldiers could expect to get around seven pounds of bread, three pints of peas, and seven pounds of beef each week. However, rarely did the soldiers get as much food as they were promised. Soldiers would supplement their small rations with berries, nuts and other food found in the nearby wilderness, or with meat supplied by friendly Indians. As a whole, the British soldiers had not been trained in the forest survival skills that could have prevented some of their suffering, particularly hunger. Some fort commanders encouraged gardens near their forts.

Sickness and disease were common in the forts, which were overcrowded and often unsanitary. Scurvy was found where food supplies were meager, and dysentery was very common. Smallpox raged through many of the frontier forts, killing large numbers of soldiers and Indians.
Due to the shortage of doctors at the forts, soldiers could not count on proper treatment for sickness or battle injuries.

Despite the difficult living conditions, British frontier forts protected the citizens in local villages from attacks by Indians and their enemy, the French. Although constructed out of wood and earth, the British followed specific plans when building their forts. When the British built Fort Lernoult at Detroit, they followed a plan drawn by Captain Henry Bird.

First, they built a wall made of a pile of tree trunks about four feet high. In the top, they added long sharpened stakes about eight feet long. Then they buried the wall in an eleven foot high earth embankment that was twelve feet wide at the top and twenty-six feet thick at the base. On the outside of the wall, they dug a ditch about five to six feet deep and twelve feet wide, and then added a fence that was about twelve feet tall.

They left one entrance to the fort on the south side that faced the village. It was protected by a drawbridge, a blockhouse and two twenty-four pound cannon. Each wall of the fort had two cannon, and each corner – or bastion – had four smaller cannon.

The flat ground inside the fort was called the “parade.” In addition to being used as exercise grounds, the parade contained many buildings. The buildings inside the fort served various military purposes. They included military headquarters, housing – or barracks – for the soldiers and officers, warehouses for supplies, and a storage room for ammunition and gunpowder – called a magazine.

In 1779, Fort Lernoult in Detroit was home to 381 soldiers, not including the officers. When not engaged in battles, the soldiers helped repair the fort and stockade, cleared land outside the fort and engaged in military exercises.
D.E 3.9 – Glossary: British Fort Terms

**BARRACKS:** Buildings, like dormitories, to house soldiers and officers.

**BASTION:** A built-up corner of the fort that includes cannon and other defensive weapons.

**BATTLEMENTS:** The notched top of a wall with open spaces for firing weapons.

**BLOCKHOUSE:** Usually a two story wood building with an overhanging second floor. Used as a standalone fortification or as part of a larger fort, such as a corner bastion.

**DRY DITCH:** A ditch without water that surrounds the walls of a fort, hindering the advance of an attacker. They are often filled with sharpened stakes.

**EARTHWORKS:** A fort with main walls of earth. Also called ramparts.

**EMBRASURE:** An opening in the fort wall through which cannon are pointed to fire at the enemy.

**FORT:** An enclosed place or fortified building for military defense, usually equipped with earthworks, guns, a garrison of troops and permanent buildings.

**GUARD HOUSE:** A place for the off-duty guards to sleep during their tour of duty.

**HEADQUARTERS:** The quarters of the ranking officers and where orders are issued.

**MAGAZINE:** A room or building for keeping gunpowder and other explosives.

**NECESSARY:** The privy, or outhouse, of the fort.

**PALISADE:** A barrier of sharpened logs closely planted in the ground. Can be vertical or can project horizontally from earthworks. Also called a stockade.

**PARADE:** Level area or ground in the interior of a fort.

**PARAPET:** Earthen or stone platform around the top of the rampart in a fort. They usually have walls about seven feet high to protect the defenders.

**RAMPART:** A broad embankment of earth which surrounds a fortified place. In forts, it is considered to be the entire top of the fortification. In many fortifications, dirt ramps were constructed from the parade to the top of the rampart for weapons and troop access. Also called earthen works.

**STOCKADE:** A timber wall or defensive barrier. Also called a palisade.

**STORE:** Warehouse for storing clothing, equipment, and food.