

Glengarry Pioneer Museum

Season 2016

One Room Schoolhouse Education Program Teacher's Pre-visit Unit Plan



Blast into the Past & Discover Your Local History



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Lesson 1: THE ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

Before the first schools were built, pioneer children would just gather in someone's home to learn. Once parents had enough money to build a school, and pay for a teacher, a one room log cabin would be built; there would be a chair, not even a desk, for the teacher, a stove in the middle and desks for the students were often just rough planks, without backs, to write and sit on. There were blackboards at the front and hooks at the back where students hung their lunch pails and coats. There was an outhouse outside for the bathroom.

Schools were named in School Sections (S.S.) combined with a number (i.e. the school in McCrimmon Corners was named S.S. #1 Lochiel). Schools were only one room where grades 1 through 8 were taught by one teacher. Some records show that there were up to 100 students attending school at a time! While some students were learning from the teacher others would be doing seat work and memorization; often the older children would help the younger ones.

School day

Before going to school in the morning, boys would have been expected to get up and help with chores and girls would have helped to get younger children, breakfast, and lunches ready. Children had to walk to school, even in the winter; sometimes up to 2 kilometers. They would bring a warm potato from home to keep their fingers warm on the long walk and would then eat it at lunchtime. School often started at 9am, so children got up early. The teacher would ring the bell to summon the children – they lined up, shortest to tallest, and quietly entered the classroom. They would greet the school teacher and curtsy or bow. They would then say the Lord's Prayer, sing "God Save the Queen" and answer to roll call. Boys sat on the left and girls sat on the right. Lunch was always eaten outside unless the weather was poor. Lunch lasted an hour and there was no other recess time. Children didn't have a schoolyard with a play structure. They had to come up with their own games. Class was dismissed at 4pm; children then had to walk home and help out with evening chores.

Holidays

The school year started in January until December with summer holidays being in July and the first two weeks of August. Children would also have a holiday at Christmas time from December 22nd to January 3rd. Other reasons for holidays would include: a snowstorm, spring floods, local funerals, Sons of Scotland's picnics, Royal events such as the King's coronation or death, and epidemics (i.e. diphtheria, smallpox, etc.)

School supplies

As paper and books were not very plentiful; students would write on slates, they also had to bring all their own materials. Books were a very rare commodity – a classroom might only have a handful. Often times, school books were used for generations. When students memorized a lesson, they would first **recite** it to the teacher, and then write it down on their slate and get it checked by the teacher before finally, neatly writing it down in their copy books. Schools rarely had libraries. When they did, they had very few books. S.S. #2 Kenyon got its first "library" in 1906.

The 3R's

Students would learn the 3R's: reading, writing and **arithmetic**. Penmanship was also very important! Students would spend hours learning how to write with a quill or on a slate. Students were required to do a lot of **memorization** work; addition facts, multiplication tables, provinces and capitals, etc. Senior grades were required to memorize 200 lines of poetry and junior grades 100 lines.

Chores

One of the older boys in class might have been asked to go to the school ahead of class to start the fire in the stove or to bring in firewood and fill the water cistern. John Archie McCrimmon was the first paid **caretaker** at S.S. #2 Kenyon and 8 Caledonia in 1895. He was paid 4.00\$ a year; previously the caretaker would be allowed to keep the ashes to sell them in Vankleek Hill to be made into potash. Each man sending a child to school would have to supply a half cord of wood or 75¢ to the school before March to help heat the school.

Teacher

Families of students would often take turns boarding the local teacher if there was no place for them to live. Teaching was initially a male dominated field until eventually, by the 1860s, 50% of teachers were female. By the end of the century it can be said that the majority of teachers were women. This is due to two reasons: women could be paid less¹ and it was believed that young children needed a more gentle and kind rearing, which women were more apt to give. However, once a woman wed she could no longer teach. Teaching was not a very well paid job. In 1864, Miss Jessie McLeod was paid 125\$ to teach school at S.S. #2 Kenyon and 8 Caledonia (McCrimmon West) and would have to board with the families in the section.

Dunvegan

There had been a school in the vicinity of Dunvegan in the early 1800's but it burnt down; many students outgrew school age before another school could be built and lacked an education. For a year, school was held in a Mr. David Urquhart's house. Then, in 1860, Dunvegan built its first school; a log cabin with a box stove and rudimentary benches and desks. The brick Dunvegan Village School (S.S. #3 Kenyon) opened in 1896. It closed in 1965 and students were transported to Maxville Public School. In that year, it was sold to Kenyon Presbyterian Church and used as a Sunday school. In later years, the Dunvegan Recreation Society used the building for their meetings. Today, the school stands in the same place and is the home of one of the museum's volunteers.

Pictured right is the S.S. #3 Kenyon.



¹ Male teacher's salary in the Stormont Dundas and Glengarry counties in 1860 ranged between 260 and 280\$ a year, while a female teacher's salary was between 130 and 165\$.

Lesson 2: LIFE AS A CHILD

Pioneers had large families. Children were expected to help with work as soon as they were old enough. They were meant to be seen not heard and had to be very obedient; they of course still found time for fun!

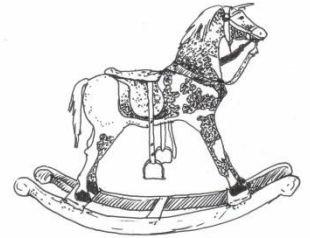
Chores

Children were expected to help their parents out on the farm. Boys would help their fathers with the chores (feeding/milking livestock, chopping wood, hauling water into the house, etc.); while girls would help their mothers cook, do laundry, clean, mend clothes and look after the younger children. By helping their parents, children learned the skills they would need to live on their own; boys learned how to become farmers and girls learned how to become good mothers and wives. During pioneer days making butter was primarily a child's job. They would use a **butter churn** (see image on the left) to churn the cream. This was a time consuming process and easily took up a half hour. They then had to separate the butter and the buttermilk (which could be used for baking or fed to the animals).



Pioneer games and toys

Families didn't have a lot of money so oftentimes children would make their own toys; girls would make dolls to practice their sewing skills and boys would use paper and material scraps to make toy animals and other toys. They also came up with their own games (i.e. Blind Man's Bluff). Children did not have much time for play as they were very busy helping their parents and completing their chores. A lot of their play revolved around work. This rocking horse is one of the museum's artefacts and is made out of real horse hair and hide. It would have been a treasured toy.



School

Pioneer children often had to stay home to help their parents on the farm. Attendance was very poor: they would miss many days in the spring and fall during planting and harvest season, especially the older boys. Just like today, there was no school during the summer months. Christmas time was always very exciting; the teacher and students would put on a Christmas concert or play in the evening that everyone in the community attended (see image below). Not very many children went to high school. At the time, and until 1947, you had to successfully pass an **entrance examination**. If you passed, and your parents could afford to send you, you would have to live in town with relatives or at a boarding house while attending high school.



Lesson 3: THE 3R'S

3 basic subjects were taught in pioneer school. While the teacher was busy teaching one class a new subject, the other children would occupy themselves with **seatwork**. Older children would help out the younger ones. Younger children heard each lesson repeated so often that by the time they reached that grade they would already be very familiar with the lessons.

Reading: When children started school they would have a copy of the alphabet written down on a shingle. Students would read out of their **readers**. Once they learnt everything in the first one they would move up to the second and so on until they reached the 5th. This way they could learn at their own pace. Pronunciation and elocution were very important. Students would have to memorize a text in their reader and recite it to the teacher. All the texts contained some kind of moral content or a lesson to be learned.

Writing: **penmanship** was very important. There would be absolutely NO writing with the LEFT HAND. Students would practice their penmanship for hours. Paper was rare; students would start by writing something down on their **slate**. Once approved by the teacher they would have to write it down in their **copy books** – flawlessly.

Arithmetic: students would learn their multiplication tables by heart until they knew them inside out. They would practice counting by using an abacus or dried peas and corn kernels. The teacher would give the children a math problem to solve; she would only repeat it once and they would not always be allowed to write anything down. They had to solve it in their heads as quickly as possible. If they knew the answer, they quietly raised their hand until they were called upon.

Spelling bees: every Friday afternoon there would be a spelling bee to see who could “spell down” the entire class. The teacher would pick two captains to form the teams. The last man, or girl, standing won. Sometimes even the parents came out to watch the spelling bee or a teacher would challenge another school to a **spelling bee**.

Lesson 4: PIONEER SCHOOL RULES

There were many rules to be followed, by the students and the teacher, in class during the pioneer days, just like there are rules in your classroom today.

Rules for Students:

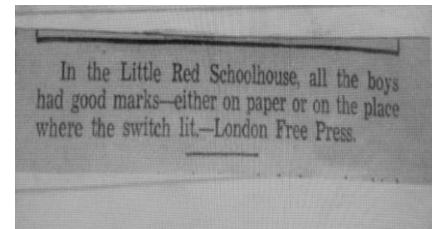
1. Respect your **schoolmaster**. Obey him and accept his punishments.
2. Do not call your classmates names or fight with them. Love and help each other. At Pioneer School we follow the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."
3. Female students will conduct themselves as ladies, males as gentlemen. Good manners will be expected.
4. Never make noises or disturb your neighbors at work.
5. Directions are given only one time in Pioneer School so you must listen carefully.
6. Be silent during classes. Do not talk unless it is absolutely necessary.
7. When you wish to speak, you must raise your hand, wait to be recognized and then stand beside your desk before speaking.
8. When speaking, proper language will be used at all times.
9. Do not leave your seat without permission. Good posture will be assumed by all students.
10. There will be no looking out of the doors and window. There will be many distractions throughout the day.
11. If there is a need to use the restroom, you can only ask "May I be excused?" The pioneer teacher did not like the words toilet, bathroom or **outhouse**. No more than one student at a time may go to the washroom.
12. At the end of class, wash your hands and face. Wash your feet if they are bare.
13. Bring firewood into the classroom for the stove whenever the teacher tells you.
14. Go quietly in and out of the classroom.
15. If the master calls your name after class, straighten the benches and tables. Sweep the room, dust, and leave everything tidy.

Rules for Teachers:

1. Teachers will fill the lamps and clean the chimney every day.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
4. Male teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Female teachers who marry or engage in improper conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each day's pay a goodly sum of his earnings. He should use his savings during retirement years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, visits pool halls, or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop, will give good reasons for people to suspect his worth, intentions, and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labor faithfully without fault for five years will be given an increase of 25 cents per week in his pay.

During pioneer days students could be punished for something as simple as whispering to their neighbor during class. A student that arrived late was not allowed to enter the schoolhouse and could be made to wait outside until all the other students came in after lunch hour. At the time, physical punishment was considered acceptable and teachers would often times use a **strap** to punish unruly students. When students misbehaved in class, their parents always found out about it. Often times the consequences at home were even more severe than the ones in class. School was a privilege and a time for learning – students could not waste their classmates or their teacher’s time! It is said that the **hickory stick** was a constant fear for the would-be-idler.

- Stand in a corner.
- Stand with your nose inside a circle drawn on the blackboard.
- Stand with arms outstretched holding a log.
- Write lines.
- Wear a **dunce cap**.
- Stay after class and wash blackboards.
- Miss recess.
- Boy made to sit beside a girl (or vice versa).



In the Little Red Schoolhouse, all the boys had good marks – either on paper or on the place where the switch lit – London Free Press.

Lesson #1
THE ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

Make believe you are a pioneer student and write a journal entry describing your day at school. Include a description of where you might have lived with your family and the chores you had to do before and after school.



Lesson # 2
LIFE AS A CHILD

Activity 1: Playing Games

Blind Man's Bluff: This is a variation of Hide and Seek. Players form a circle while one person is blindfolded and put into the middle of the circle. They must try and tag someone while blindfolded. Once they “catch someone” they must feel their head and neck to try and identify them. If they guess right, the person who got caught assumes the role of the “blind man”; if they guess wrong then the game resumes.

Spelling Bee: challenge your class to a good old fashioned spelling bee! Make two teams, or select two captains to form their own teams, and see who can “spell down” the entire class! When a student misspells a word they are eliminated and the following participant in the opposite team gets a chance to spell it correctly.

A group of young boys with lacrosse sticks.



Lesson #3
THE 3R'S

Find the terms in the list below in the word search puzzle! The words can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.

T	Z	A	R	E	C	I	T	A	T	I	O	N	M	C
S	O	C	C	Q	U	I	L	L	U	T	S	M	U	M
T	M	P	D	O	U	T	H	O	U	S	E	S	P	N
O	Y	K	K	S	E	A	T	W	O	R	K	R	E	Z
V	Y	M	E	M	O	R	I	Z	A	T	I	O	N	M
E	Z	I	I	G	O	X	G	K	Q	U	P	O	M	C
S	R	E	A	D	I	N	G	F	Y	A	Z	D	A	O
O	P	Y	J	R	L	O	G	C	A	B	I	N	N	P
X	P	N	H	X	P	Z	M	M	Q	I	J	W	S	Y
S	C	H	O	O	L	M	A	S	T	E	R	U	H	B
K	E	S	A	R	I	T	H	M	E	T	I	C	I	O
Q	B	L	W	I	R	P	I	O	N	E	E	R	P	O
W	V	A	L	G	N	V	A	Y	T	K	B	O	O	K
Z	K	T	S	F	G	K	W	R	I	T	I	N	G	K
G	N	E	S	C	H	O	O	L	H	O	U	S	E	K

ARITHMETIC	SLATE
BOOK	STOVE
COPY BOOK	WRITING
INK	
LOG CABIN	
MEMORIZATION	
OUTHOUSE	
PENMANSHIP	
PIONEER	
QUILL	
READING	
RECITATION	
SCHOOLHOUSE	
SCHOOLMASTER	
SEATWORK	



Lesson #4
PIONEER SCHOOL RULES

Complete the chart comparing the past, present and future.

Name some rules that are similar or different to the ones in the past. Then imagine what that rule might be like in the future.

Example:

	Past	Present	Future
Similar	Go quietly in and out of the classroom.	Go quietly in and out of the classroom.	Leave the classroom noisily.
Different	The teacher made you wear a dunce cap if you misbehaved.	The teacher makes you visit the principal if you misbehave.	The teacher will give you a sticker if you misbehave.

	Past	Present	Future
Similar			
Different			

Color in the image and describe what you see.



GLOSSARY

A

Abacus

A frame with wooden beads on metal rods or wire, which settler children used to help them learn arithmetic.

Arithmetic

Another word for “Mathematics”.

B

Butter churn

A container with a dasher (agitator) used for making butter.

C

Caretaker

A student or adult who lives close to the school and is in charge of certain daily duties such as lighting the fire.

Copy books

Oftentimes homemade, these books contained unlined paper folded in half and bound with white or black thread in a book-binder’s stitch. The cover was made out of a heavier piece of paper. Once a student learned a lesson to their teacher’s satisfaction they would write them down in their copy books.

D

Dunce cap

A paper hat, shaped into the form of a cone, worn by students who made mistakes or didn’t know their lessons. It was meant as an insult.

E

Entrance examination

Students had to successfully pass an exam to be allowed to go to high school.

H

Hickory stick

A hickory stick, or a **strap**, would be used to hit students on their behinds or their palms as punishment for misbehaving.

M

Memorization

Learning by committing something to memory (also called learning by *rote*).

O

One-room school

A school building in which all the children from grades 1 to 8, were taught in one room by one teacher.

Outhouse

An outdoor toilet; also called a privy.

P**Penmanship**

The art of writing.

Q**Quill pen**

A pen made from a feather.

R**Reader**

A book containing the alphabet, numbers, and poems used by children learning to read.

Recitation

Repeating something aloud by memory.

3R's

The 3 basic subjects taught in one room schoolhouses: Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.

S**Schoolmaster/schoolmistress**

Students would address their teachers by this name.

Seatwork

Students would learn their lessons in their seats while the teacher was busy teaching one of the other grades. They recited their lessons out loud so the teacher knew they were at work.

Slates

A small blackboard students used to write their lessons on.

Spelling Bee

A competition where students are asked to spell words.