

# **SPIES IN THE SHADOWS**

## **LESSON 1: SPY IDENTITIES AND METHODS: THE WAR OF 1812**

### **Overview**

In this lesson, students will discover and examine the methods of collecting information by looking at the differences in espionage and intelligence gathering during the War of 1812. In Part A, students will select a character involved in espionage or intelligence gathering from a provided list, and then create a profile of that person. In Part B, students will learn how British forces in Canada used military intelligence and espionage to successfully overcome its inferior numbers, ships, and equipment in the War of 1812.

### **Outcomes**

Students will:

- analyze and synthesize historical information
- identify key people, issues, and historical events
- explain social, economic, and political changes
- use appropriate vocabulary
- examine social and political challenges in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century
- communicate the results for specific purposes and audiences using different media, drawings, and oral presentations
- conduct research and gather information using a variety of resources
- formulate and answer questions

### **Duration**

two full classroom periods for each part (Part A and B)

### **Skills**

writing, researching, communicating, critical thinking, interpreting and analyzing, organizing, summarizing, presenting, media literacy

### **Materials**

- pens, pencils, markers
- chart paper, notebook paper, blank paper, Bristol board
- BLM 1 War of 1812 Spy Profile (for Part A)
- BLM 2 War of 1812 Timeline Questions (for Part B)
- BLM 3 War of 1812 Timeline (for Part B)
- *Spies in the Shadows*' website (The Secret Files, War of 1812: Choose Your Battles, Espionage Timeline, Canadian Espionage Links, Additional Links: War of 1812, and Elements of Intelligence History document)

## **Teacher Background and Notes for Part A**

During the War of 1812, spying methods and activities were limited to practices such as word of mouth, infiltration, and deception. Vast distances and limited ways to pass or send messages and facts left military commanders and spies with fewer options for conveying and discovering secret information. Collecting and gathering information was the most important tool available to those engaged in espionage activities. Civilians such as Laura Secord provided key intelligence to the British. Military leaders, such as Sir Isaac Brock, Lt. James FitzGibbon, Tecumseh, and others used intelligence to help win battles during the War of 1812 for Britain, preventing the US from assimilating Upper and Lower Canada.

During the War of 1812, the skillful use of military intelligence helped the British to win key battles, thus preserving sovereignty for Canada and maintaining existing borders around the Great Lakes. The population of the US outnumbered that of Upper and Lower Canada by about 15 to 1, making it essential that British and Canadian defenders make the best use of their soldiers, situations, and resources.

### **Part A: Spy Profiles: Espionage and Intelligence Gathering in the War of 1812**

#### **Teaching and Learning Strategies**

1. Inform students that in this activity they will investigate and discover how different people (military, politicians, citizens, Aboriginal peoples) used espionage and intelligence gathering during the War of 1812. Students will look at the characteristics and actions that these people took in the war. To begin the activity, divide students into small groups (a maximum of two to three students per group). Then have them choose one person from the list below to investigate.
  - US Secretary of War John Armstrong
  - Sir Isaac Brock
  - Billy Green
  - Lt. Colonel John Harvey
  - US President James Madison
  - US Secretary of State James Monroe
  - Laura Secord
  - Lt. James FitzGibbon
  - Captain Harry Smith
  - Tecumseh

2. Hand out **BLM 1 War of 1812 Spy Profile**. Tell them to briefly read over the BLM to become familiar with the information required for the person they chose to look up in Step 1.
3. Inform the groups that they will be using the *Spies in the Shadows*' website to locate information to fill-out different parts of the BLM. Tell them to click on the **Cryptography Laboratory** tab on the opening page. This will lead them to **The Great Cryptography Laboratory**, where they can scroll down to find **Additional Resources**. Then click on **The Secret Files** where they will find a series of index cards describing important people, including the person they chose, who took part in espionage and intelligence gathering. Remind students that they must also locate a photograph or drawing of the person to be placed on the BLM.
4. In their groups, suggest that students divide up the tasks on the BLM. For example, one student looks for the photograph or drawing while another finds out information on the person's nationality and occupation.
5. Invite students to look up additional information on the Home page by clicking on the following: **Espionage Timeline**, **Elements of Intelligence History** under the **Teacher's Lounge**, and **Canadian Espionage Links** and **Additional Links: War of 1812** under **Links**. Suggest they might also conduct research using print resources and other websites to fill-in their responses on the BLM. (**Hint:** Encourage students to use the classroom history textbook as another source for background information).
6. After the BLM has been completed, suggest the groups make a presentation to the class based on the information they have gathered about their chosen person. Invite them to pick one of the following:
  - a. In the role of the character, have students write and perform a short skit or vignette in which they depict the turning point in their character's participation in espionage or intelligence. Encourage students to use props, such as hats, clothes, and other items to make the scene realistic.
  - b. History is often told through stories, songs, or poems. Have students write one or more of these based on their chosen character and then perform it for the class.
  - c. Create a collage, draw a picture or illustration, make a multi-media project, a newspaper editorial cartoon, or some other type of artwork of their choosing about the person they investigated. Have them present it to the class explaining why this specific medium was the best way to portray their character.
  - d. Encourage students to create a series of "flash mob" sequences in which they depict a scene based on their research about the person. Tell students to rehearse their sequences several times prior to class to make for a polished performance.

- e. Tell students to write, direct, and shoot a short film using a video- or digital camera or some other device of an important scene from the character's life. Use props to enliven the scene.
  - f. As an alternative, invite students to come up with their own activity that would best represent the person they investigated. Remind them that the activity must be presented to the class.
7. As a wrap up activity, ask students what they learned about how people used espionage and intelligence, while researching and developing a profile of their character. What actions did the person take during the War of 1812 that either helped or hindered the outcome of the war for either side? In what ways did their actions represent espionage or intelligence gathering?

## Teacher Background and Notes for Part B

British forces in Canada during the War of 1812 used military intelligence to successfully overcome their inferior numbers and equipment. In Part B, students will discover how intelligence gathering was used by exploring in more detail a key battle from the **Espionage Timeline** or **The War of 1812 Game: Choose Your Battles**. The timeline and the game allow students to gain a more thorough understanding of battle strategies and real-life espionage with an emphasis on intelligence strategies and how they were used. The game also attempts to provide a historically accurate portrayal of some of the major battles of the war, including the difficulties of making decisions without accurate intelligence and the effects of unknown factors, such as weather, on the outcomes made and decisions taken. The battles in War of 1812 Game are as follows:

- The Battle for Detroit
- The Battle of Beaver Dams
- The Battle of Fort York
- The Battle of Stoney Creek
- The Battle of Washington

Other battles of the War of 1812 such as Battle of Lundy's Lane or the Battle of Queenston Heights are featured in the **Espionage Timeline**.

## Part B: Military Intelligence and the War of 1812

### Teaching and Learning Strategies

8. Suggest that students in pairs choose a battle from the **Espionage Timeline** or a battle from **The War of 1812 Game: Choose Your Battles**. For example, they might choose The Battle of Beaver Dams in which Laura Secord was involved. To prevent duplication, suggest they record the name of the battle on a "sign up" sheet that is displayed on chart paper in the class or on a piece of paper that is passed around the classroom

9. Hand out **BLM 2 War of 1812 Timeline Questions** and **BLM 3 War of 1812 Timeline**. Explain to students that they should use the following resources from the *Spies in the Shadows*' website to create their own personal timelines: **Espionage Timeline, The War of 1812 Game: Choose Your Battles, The Secret Files**, and resources listed in the **Elements of Intelligence History** document. (**Hint:** As in Part A, tell students that the classroom history textbook is another option to look for material to develop their timeline.)
10. Remind students that a timeline is a chronological sequence of related events along a drawn line that enables the reader to quickly understand relationships relating to, or limited by, time. In pairs, students should enter the start and end dates, and any other significant dates that are relevant to their chosen battle.
11. If computer access is limited in the classroom, suggest to students that they might wish to complete some of their research by logging onto the *Spies in the Shadows*' website or looking for other links or websites at home. Print resources might also be reviewed at or taken out from the school or community library. This provides students with enough time to play the **War of 1812 Game: Choose Your Battles** or explore the **Espionage Timeline** at home or their partner's home, or at the school or community library.
12. As students are collecting information with their partner, remind them that the purpose of the BLM is to create a more detailed timeline that highlights how espionage, deception, misdirection, and intelligence contributed to the outcome of their chosen battle.
13. Students will get a better idea of what details to place on their timeline by answering the questions on BLM 2. Then they can plot out the specifics on the battle and who and what was involved in the timeline on BLM 3. Tell students that their final timeline will be presented on chart paper or Bristol board.
14. After the timelines are completed, invite students to present their timelines to the class. Ask each pair to describe their battle and its importance to the forming of Canada. Have them point out how espionage and intelligence gathering added to the battle strategy.

### **Extensions**

15. Tell students to select any battle from the War of 1812, and have them choose one of the following activities:
  - a. What might have been the outcome of the battle, if secret information or messages, were never conveyed (e.g.: Billy Green not speaking with Lt.-Col. John Harvey or Laura Secord not delivering her warning to Lt. James FitzGibbon)? How might this have impacted the formation of Canada? Then suggest they create a story outline based on this idea.
  - b. Suggest students take on the role of either a commander of the British or US forces. In battle, what intelligence would they want to know about the

opposite side? What intelligence would they need to know to make reasonable decisions, and what intelligence do they actually have to make those decisions? How “time sensitive” is this information? Have them write their response in a short paper in which they explain the complexities of making such decisions under difficult circumstances.

16. Encourage students to consider the following statement: Canada won the War of 1812, but America won the peace. Speculate on what this statement means. Then agree or disagree with the statement by writing an opinion piece on the topic.
17. In pairs, tell students to research the Siege of Fort Erie in 1814. How did misinformation led to negative consequences for the combatants? How might the siege have ended, if the information available to both commanders had been accurate? Share their responses with another pair in which they discuss the causes and consequences of passing accurate and inaccurate intelligence.
18. In a small group, suggest that students discuss why both Canada and the United States think they “won” the War of 1812. Encourage students to look up some additional information in order to get a better perspective on this issue. Then have them create a T-chart on chart paper in which they write Canada on one side and the US on the other. List evidence that supports both sides. Based on the information presented, which side can most realistically claim victory? What evidence is more powerful in supporting this position?
19. Aboriginal peoples played a vital role in helping defeat the Americans in the War of 1812. Have students to look up information on the Aboriginal participation in the war. What were some reasons for their participation? Why did they decide to align themselves with the British instead of the Americans? Have students create either a multi-media presentation or collage that shows why the Aboriginal peoples sided with the British during the War of 1812. Or they could write a newspaper article at the time of the War of 1812 in which they report on the Aboriginal involvement in the war.