

# 1867: THE JOURNEY BEGINS!

## Online Resource

**CELEBRATE CANADA**  
through  
**READERS' THEATRE**

**1867:  
THE JOURNEY BEGINS!**



*Canada 1867*

- Ontario
- Quebec
- New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia

 BY RON BENSON

By Ron Benson

© 2010 Curriculum Plus

By Ron Benson

Editor: Sylvia Gunnery

We acknowledge the financial support of The Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP) for our publishing activities.

Curriculum Plus Publishing Company

100 Armstrong Avenue

Georgetown, ON L7G 5S4

Toll free telephone 1-888-566-9730

Toll free fax 1-866-372-7371

E-mail [info@fraserdirect.ca](mailto:info@fraserdirect.ca)

[www.curriculumplus.ca](http://www.curriculumplus.ca)

# Background

## A Summary of the Script

This readers' theatre script is set in a present-day radio station where a program called *Making Mind Movies* takes listeners back to July 2, 1867, the day after Canada's Confederation.

In addition to the Announcer who introduces and closes this readers' theatre and the Host who acts as a facilitator to the conversation, two interested community members are audience to the conversation. The central characters are named for the provinces and colonies they represent. So, for example, the character who tells about Confederation from an Ontario perspective is named Ontario.

The purpose of this readers' theatre is to provide the students with an opportunity to further develop their oral reading fluency while learning how Confederation came to be.

## Coming to Confederation

The story of Confederation actually began more than 300 years before July 1, 1867, with settlers arriving from Europe, predominately from Britain and France, and meeting with the Aboriginal peoples who were here.

To ensure a peaceful co-existence between the Aboriginals and the newly-arrived settlers, many agreements and treaties had to be worked out. There was also the issue of the thirteen colonies which existed under British rule. Settlers there became very unhappy and wanted to break away from Britain and gain their own independence. It seemed that only a war would allow this to happen. The War of 1775 resulted in a win for the Thirteen Colonies and the formation of their own country – the United States of America. That war became known as The American Revolution.

The colonies that didn't form a part of the USA continued on as British North America. But soon, several of these colonies began to think about uniting and becoming a single British colony. That thinking was the beginning of the focused move toward Confederation. It was followed by conferences in Charlottetown (PEI), Quebec City (Quebec), and London (England).

From these conferences emerged the British North America Act and the approval of the British parliament. On July 1, 1867, Queen Victoria signed the British North America Act and the Dominion of Canada was born.

# Activities Before Reading

The activities you select to engage your students before they read, practise, and perform will depend on where you position this readers' theatre activity in your social studies planning. If you use it as an introduction to a study of Confederation, then your lead-in activities will be more focused on encouraging interest in the topic. If you place the readers' theatre as a culminating activity, you will want to use activities that encourage students to add to their understanding of how Confederation came to be.

To prepare the students for *1867: The Journey Begins!* the following activities are suggested:

- Hold a KWL conversation about Confederation, charting what students already know about the lead-up to the actual event (K) and inviting their questions (W).
- View related videos, such as You Tube's *Confederation: The Creation of Canada* as a source of information and perspective.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hph52hbhYZQ>

- Read aloud the first page or two of the script to familiarize students with the language, the atmosphere, the setting, the opening of the story, an introduction to some of the characters, and a sense of the story they will experience as readers and audience.
- Discuss the word "confederation." Invite students to identify other amalgamations/unions and to talk about some advantages and disadvantages of these events.
- Use the two-page map of Canada at the back of the script as well as the map on the cover of the script as a stimulus for conversation about how the map looked in 1867 compared to how a map of Canada looks today.

# Tips for Voice and Expression

<b>Character</b>	<b>Reading Level</b>	<b>Description</b>
Announcer	easy	The announcer opens and closes the script. This role requires a voice that has energy and enthusiasm, one that's engaging and inviting.
Host	challenging	The host greets the characters as they appear in the script, gives background information, and makes transitions in the storyline. The voice must convey a warm and inviting tone.
Ontario	moderate	Ontario is the first province to speak in this script. The character readily offers a lot of background and eagerly engages with the others. The character's voice conveys a sense of enthusiasm.
Quebec	moderate	Quebec's prime purpose is to give information about that province's decision to join Confederation. The tone of voice is matter-of-fact tone, coupled with a sense of cautious optimism about the future.
Nova Scotia	moderate	Nova Scotia, also a member of the first group that joined Confederation, is very eager to give background information.
New Brunswick	moderate	This province also joined Confederation on July 1, 1867. The character conveys feelings of accomplishment and hopefulness to the audience.
Community Members 1 and 2	easy	These characters are representative of a larger community that has come to hear the story of Confederation. Because the information presented by the leading characters is new to them, their voices hold a sense of wonderment and inquiry.
Prince Edward Island	moderate	This province did not become a part of the original Dominion of Canada. The character is determined to let others know of the role it played early in the Confederation conversations and of the reasons for not joining in 1867. There is a sense of confidence conveyed in the voice.
Newfoundland	moderate	Again, although Newfoundland did not join in 1867, the character conveys a sincere interest in being a part of the conversation. The character's voice conveys sincerity.
Britain	challenging	There is a sense of importance in this character's voice. This is not arrogance, but rather it conveys an understanding of the significant role Britain played in the years leading up to Confederation.

# Extending the Experience

- Invite your students to write on the topic Confederation, reflecting what they have learned from this readers' theatre. For example, they might write poetry (acrostic, cinquain, or diamante), a letter to a friend, a business letter, a TV or radio advertisement, a cartoon strip, or a collection of newspaper headlines.
- Arrange a visit to your school or public library to view materials related to Confederation. The librarians could talk about the collection before students survey them individually, with a partner, or in a small group.
- Compose and present Confederation chants, using some of the information in this readers' theatre script. (Or you might use the sample chant provided below.) Students could perform the chants as a choral reading for two or more voices. To keep the beat, instruments such as the tambourine could be added.

## *Confederation Chant*

*It's 1867 and we have to make a choice.*

*Do we join Confederation where we hope to have a voice?*

*Maybe we should wait to see how things work out in time,*

*And join a little later--the choice is yours and mine.*

*Confederation is the way to go*

*From the Maritimes to Ontario.*

- Create a diorama of the setting for *1867: The Journey Begins!* with all the characters in place in the radio studio.
- Create a game board to tell the story of the journey to Confederation. Have the students note the features of some familiar board games, such as Snakes and Ladders or Monopoly.
- Using the map of Canada at the back of this script as a reference, the students could:
  - Create a timeline showing the provinces and territories in the order they joined Confederation.
  - Design 5 questions that can be answered by using the information the map provides. For example: 1867 is the first year and 1999 is the last. What is the median year? What province or territory joined in that year?
  - Choose a province or territory of interest. Using the Internet, find and view a video. Record three new facts learned from this video.

## **Books of Interest**

*The Kids Book of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*

by Diane Silver with illustrations by John Mantha (Kids Can Press 2005)

*The Kids Book of Canada*

by Barbara Greenwood with illustrations by Jock MacRae (Kids Can Press 1997)

*Wow Canada! Exploring This Land from Coast to Coast to Coast*

by Vivien Bowers with illustrations by Dan Hobbs and Dianne Eastman (Maple Tree Press Inc. 2007)

## **Websites of Interest**

<http://www.nvo.com/ecnewsletter/canadaforkids>

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/kids/index-e.html>

<http://www.lac-bac.ca/confederation/index-e.html>

[http://www.youthsource.ab.ca/teacher\\_resources/ps\\_websites.html](http://www.youthsource.ab.ca/teacher_resources/ps_websites.html)

[http://www.library.barrie.on.ca/children/homework/sites/history\\_canada.htm](http://www.library.barrie.on.ca/children/homework/sites/history_canada.htm)

<http://www.nides.bc.ca/Assignments/Canada/Paper11/Confederation2.htm>

[http://canadaonline.about.com/od/confederationlessonplans/Canadian\\_Confederation\\_Lesson\\_Plans\\_K8.htm](http://canadaonline.about.com/od/confederationlessonplans/Canadian_Confederation_Lesson_Plans_K8.htm)