



A Visit To A Saskatchewan Grain Elevator

The student will gain an understanding and appreciation of Saskatchewan grain elevators by participating in a tour. This lesson could be taught independently, with Lesson 12, or as part of an “Exploring Agriculture in Your Community” module.



Varies by experience

Outcome:

RW4.2 Investigate the importance of agriculture to the economy and culture of Saskatchewan.

Indicators:

RW4.2 f. Trace the steps of a food product from the farm to the plates of consumers, and identify the various careers that contribute to this process in the agriculture and food processing industries.

RW4.2 g. Analyze the significance of Saskatchewan agricultural commodity exports to the province.

Note from AITC: Other expected outcomes include:

- 👤 Students will be aware of the technological evolution of grain storage practices in Saskatchewan.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

1. How has grain storage changed over time?
2. Why has the grain elevator been associated with Saskatchewan?
3. How do grain elevators work?
4. How is grain transported and stored?
5. Who is involved in the operation of a grain elevator?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- * Students need sturdy walking shoes (NO open toed sandals!)
- * internet (optional)
- * Student journaling materials

Teacher Background

Grain elevators played a central role in the history of Saskatchewan, yet these structures are falling like dominoes across the prairie landscape. To understand the purpose and the form of grain elevators is to understand the grain economy which formed the basis of prairie settlement.

There are numerous tours of elevators offered in many parts of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Tourism website lists several including Briercrest, Swift Current, Esterhazy, and Moose Jaw. Some of the Western Development sites and various other locations have displays featuring the role of the elevator.



If your area has an operating grain elevator, it would be a valuable experience for your students to participate in a tour. Make certain the students understand the importance of safety during the visit. Ensure there has been adequate contact with the elevator operator prior to the tour. He/she should be aware of the age of the students and the questions likely to be asked. In addition, make certain all field trip requirements as set out by your school division, have been followed.

If it is not possible to take your students to a grain elevator, consider inviting a worker or grain buyer from the elevator into your classroom. See Lesson 12.

Excellent information on the topic may be found at http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/grain_elevators.html as well as http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/agriculture_and_food.html.

Before Activity

Activity One

Examine images of elevators with your students. These can be print or electronic. There are many sources of online images including <http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/elevators/index.html> and www.verlo.ca.

Activity Two

Invite students to create/answer reporter questions similar to those below: (Depending on student demographics and whether this is an independent lesson, students will be either predicting or reviewing).

-  What is this building?
-  Where do we find these buildings?
-  When were these most plentiful on the Prairies?
-  Why did so many disappear?
-  How do they operate?

Invite pairs of students to create questions they will want to ask the operator of the grain elevator during the tour.

Activity Three

Impress upon students the importance of safety. Possibly have students draw up a list of behaviours they expect they would need to follow to ensure everyone's safety. Make sure that wearing closed toed shoes (preferably sturdy running shoes) is on that list.

During Activity

Students tour the elevator, if possible during the month of September. This is traditionally when harvest takes place in our province and the elevator will be buzzing with activity. Students are encouraged to ask questions during the tour.



After Activity

Ask the students to document the activities of the day in a journal. Ask them to record five things they learned during the tour. Request them to reflect on the most interesting aspect of the tour and why it stood out. Submit journals.

Debrief with the entire class after the individual journal writing has been completed.

Assessment

Teacher Checklist

- ✓ Did student ask perceptive questions during the tour?
- ✓ Ask your tour guide if he/she would quiz and question students when the tour is finished. This would be an excellent way to discover what learning has occurred.
- ✓ Did student contribute meaningfully during the debriefing?
- ✓ Does the student journal reflect knowledge and understanding? (The journal rubric can be adapted to assess this entry)

Lesson Resources

These sites have images of elevators from across the province:

- ✎ <http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/elevators/index.html>
- ✎ www.verlo.ca/gallery/category/5-saskatchewan-grain-elevators/

This site provides information regarding the purpose and form of the Prairie grain elevators. An interior diagram is available. http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/grain_elevators.html

For information about elevator companies visit http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/agriculture_and_food.html



Cross Curricular Connections and Further Investigation

Look at the grain elevator from your community at <http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/elevators/cities/Image%20Gallery%20K.html>

Students research where else in the world that grain is a major crop. How is grain stored and sold in other areas of the world? Is grain storage and handling done in the same manner in Siberia as it is in Saskatchewan? How might our grain storage and handling techniques differ from methods used in the Ukraine? France? China?

Take the long flat drive along Highway 1 or Highway 16 for a vista of prairie sentinels en route. The Western Development Museum in North Battleford (306-445-8033) exhibits a “working” 1920s elevator; the village of Edam has converted theirs into a five-storey museum (306-397-5555), as has Hepburn, into the Museum of Wheat (306-947-2170). Indian Head draws tourists with the Craft-Tea Elevator and Restaurant (306-695-3516).

Math

The fact that grain is bought and sold while it is in an elevator could transfer nicely to mathematics. Questions can be developed to test mathematical foundations and deal with the buying and selling of Saskatchewan wheat, barley, or oats.