

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
LITERARY ARTS

ARTIST:
LOUIS MERCIER



The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist's visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher's discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:

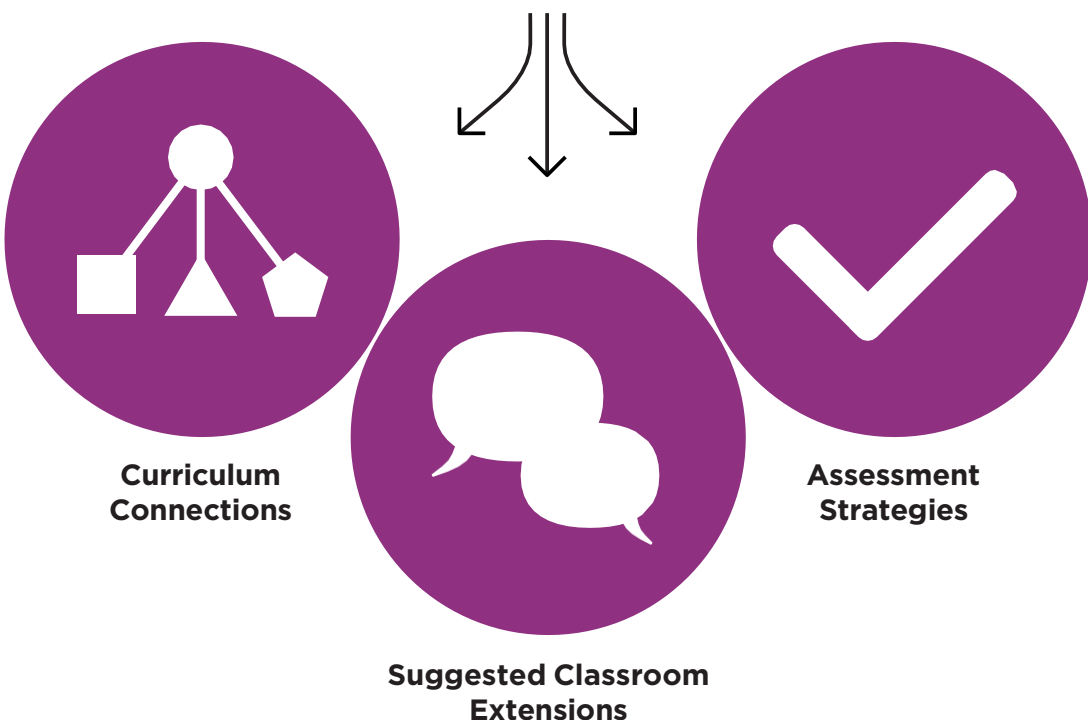


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STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS

FRENCH CANADIAN FOLKLORE

Program Overview

Artist Name: Louis Mercier

Artist Bio: Louis Mercier, known as L'habitant Voyageur, is a passionate ambassador of traditional French-Canadian music from Maniwaki, Quebec. Since 1984, he has performed over 3000 times across Canada, sharing his family's folkloric traditions including square dance, percussion, and toe-tapping rhythms. A high school math teacher by profession, Louis is driven to connect audiences with the past, present, and future of French-Canadian culture through music and storytelling.

Program Description: A rousing presentation of traditional French-Canadian music, dance and stories with an emphasis on the songs of the voyageurs. Performances for Kindergarten are 45 minutes in length

Artistic Discipline: Literary Arts, Music

Recommended Grade Levels: K - 12

Session Logistics: In person only

Cultural Contexts: French-Canadian Culture, North American History

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



FRENCH CANADIAN FOLKLORE

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
 - Compose or perform traditional songs, dance, or movement sequences inspired by French-Canadian folklore.
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing
 - Observe and describe elements of dance, music, and storytelling in performances.
 - Discuss how movement, rhythm, instruments, and voice communicate meaning.
- Strand C: Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts
 - Compare traditional forms with other cultural or regional traditions.
 - Understand the historical, environmental, and social significance of folklore in French-Canadian culture.

FRENCH CANADIAN FOLKLORE

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

K

Pre

- What kinds of music or stories do you hear at home?
- Have you ever danced to music? What did it feel like?
- What do you think a voyageur is?

During:

- What instruments or sounds do you hear?
- Can you clap or tap along with the beat?
- What animals or people do you hear about in the stories?

Post:

- What was your favourite song or dance?
- How did the music make you feel?
- What do you remember about the voyageurs?

GRADES
1-3

Pre

- What is folk music? Have you heard it before?
- Why do you think people tell stories with music?
- What do you know about French-Canadian culture?

During:

- What kinds of instruments does Louis use?
- What is a “voyageur,” and what did they do?
- Can you follow the rhythm with your hands or feet?

Post:

- What did you learn about life in the past through the music and stories?
- What do you think the music tells us about French-Canadian history?
- If you were a voyageur, what would you sing about?

GRADES
4-6

Pre

- What do you already know about early French settlers or voyageurs?
- How does traditional music help preserve culture?
- What kind of stories are usually passed down through generations?

During

- What cultural elements are shown through the music and dance?
- How do the rhythms and lyrics reflect the life of a voyageur?
- What emotions or values do you hear in the songs?

Post

- What did this performance teach you about French-

Pre

- How do oral traditions like folktales or songs preserve history?
- What role did voyageurs play in the development of Canada?
- Why might someone today want to share their cultural heritage through performance?

During

- How do rhythm and lyrics express the daily life of the voyageurs?
- What do the musical styles and instruments tell you about French-Canadian heritage?
- What storytelling techniques does Louis use to engage the audience?

Post

- How did this performance change or deepen your understanding of French-Canadian history?
- In what ways do traditional arts shape or reflect identity?
- How might your community share its history through the arts?

Pre

- What does it mean to be a cultural ambassador?
- How can music function as a historical and political tool?
- What role does storytelling play in national or regional identity?

During

- How does Louis Mercier use music and dance to represent French-Canadian life?
- How is the voyageur's experience romanticized or preserved in music?

Post

- How did this presentation reflect or challenge your understanding of early Canadian history?
- What are the connections between cultural preservation and education?
- How can you apply traditional forms of expression to share your own story or heritage?

LITERARY ARTS OVERVIEW

Literary Arts education consists of storytelling, poetry, and creative writing and is foundational to developing literate, reflective, and critically engaged members of society. By engaging with diverse stories, students gain insight into complex perspectives and histories, fostering inclusion and emotional resilience. Writing and sharing stories also supports mental health and builds a sense of community and belonging.

The **creative and critical analysis process** guide students in imagining, crafting, and reflecting on literary work. These frameworks align with MASC's core values and, when paired with artist-led sessions, empower students to become thoughtful creators and engaged learners.

Literary arts naturally support cross-curricular learning. In social studies, students explore historical context through narrative; in science they use writing to explain concepts. These interdisciplinary links help students see knowledge as interconnected and relevant to real-world applications.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **hasse-galerie** – A French-Canadian legend about a flying canoe that allows voyageurs to travel great distances in a short time.
- **Lutin** – A mischievous spirit or elf in French Canadian folklore, often associated with household mischief.
- **Rougarou** – A legendary creature, akin to a werewolf, said to prowl the swamps and forests.
- **Taoueille** – A sorceress in Acadian folklore, believed to have the power to cast spells and curses.
- **Coureur des bois** – French Canadian woodsmen and fur traders who ventured into the wilderness to trade with Indigenous peoples.
- **Voyageur** – French Canadian paddlers and porters who transported goods by canoe during the fur trade era.
- **Fiddle** – A bowed string instrument, central to French Canadian folk music.
- **Jig** – A lively dance in 6/8 time, often accompanied by fiddling.
- **Bones** – Traditional percussion instruments made from animal bones.
- **Washboard** – A corrugated metal board used as a percussion instrument in folk music.
- **Spoons** – A pair of spoons used as percussion instruments, clacked together to create rhythm.

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a color to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning