

**Water in Minnesota:
L'eau hier et aujourd'hui au pays des 10.000 lacs**

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This unit is to be used in the context of an exploration of the place of water in Minnesota's heritage and culture (water uses over time and its current ecological problems). It may be used at the high school or university levels with learners of French at the intermediate-mid level of proficiency. The unit is multidisciplinary. Geography is explored as students learn to locate several bodies of water in the state. History is incorporated in the discussion of the role of water in early French explorations, especially the one at Lake Pepin. Ecology is addressed in the later lessons while exploring the causes and effects of Lake Pepin waters' pollution as representative of other MN lakes' pollution. This unit fits with the educational mission of teaching responsibility as students research the ecological challenges faced by a body of water in their town/city, watershed, region or county. Based on their research students articulate solutions to help alleviate the water ecological challenges faced by the body of water which they have studied.

Rationale:

Virtually all MN students have heard about the French Voyageurs who canoed the lakes and rivers of MN in the 18th century. They already have some background knowledge about the role of water for the Voyageurs to perform their trade (the transportation of furs). All MN students have had a lake experience of some type (be it fishing, canoeing, boating or swimming). In the land of 10,000 lakes every student has a connection to water: it is a key part of local culture. Students hear more and more about environmental challenges and protection these days. Exploring the issue of environment protection in relation to an element as part of MN culture as water makes the issue more relevant and interesting for students and teachers alike.

Unit Goals:

To realize the prominence of water in the geography of Minnesota.

To understand the role that water played in the exploration of the state by French explorers.

To learn about the exploration of one lake in the 18th century by French explorers: Lake Pepin.

To compare the challenges of life on Lake Pepin in the 18th century and today.

To learn about the biggest challenge faced by Lake Pepin today: water pollution, its causes and effects.

To become more informed citizens by researching the environmental challenges faced by a body of water known to students.

To consider what at the individual level each person can do to prevent water pollution.

To become sources of information on water pollution control for one's school/campus community.