

Quill Pens

1. Grade Level

4th and 5th

2. Time Needed

1 hour

3. Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify several types of primary sources and describe the importance of primary sources to historical writing.
- Explain reasons for French settlement around Mobile Bay.
- Describe aspects of Colonial life in the colony at Mobile.
- Make a quill pen.

This activity supports the following Alabama Course of Study Content Standards for Social Studies:

4th Grade (2010)

6. Describe cultural, economic, and political aspects of the lifestyles of early nineteenth century farmers, plantation owners, slaves, and townspeople.

5th Grade (2010)

5. Explain the early colonization of North America and reasons for settlement in the Northern, Middle, and Southern colonies, including geographic features, landforms, and differences in climate among the colonies.

4. Materials Required

- Copies of the translated *Journal of Bertet de la Clue* journal entries*
- Copies of images of writing from *Journal of Bertet de la Clue**
- Copies of *The Founding of Mobile* handout*
- Copies of *Making a Quill Pen* instructions*
- 1 feather per student (available at craft stores like Michaels or Hobby Lobby)
- 1 cup of water per student
- Scissors
- Washable black paint or ink in cups- you can dilute washable tempera or acrylic paint with a few drops of water.
- Paper
- Paper towels
- Plastic aprons to protect clothing

*Materials can be found on the History Museum of Mobile Primary Sources Lesson Plan disk

5. Background Information

The French began the settlement and city of Mobile in the early 1700s. Artifacts that show the richness of their culture are highlighted in the History Museum of Mobile's permanent exhibit, *Old Ways, New Days: The Story of Mobile*. The main goal of this lesson is to help to familiarize your students with the French Colonial Period in Mobile, to familiarize them with primary sources (in this instance, the Journal of Bertet de La Clue) and to have them make and write with a quill pen just as the French did when they wrote documents in the early 1700s.

6. Lesson Outline

A. Introduction (5 min.)

Tell students:

The City of Mobile was founded by the French over 300 years ago. On orders from King Louis XIV of France, the Canadian explorer Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville and a small group of colonists and soldiers, started a colony in 1702 several miles north of the present day site of Mobile on the bank of the Mobile River. Shortly after setting up the colony, Iberville went back to France to report to the king. He left his younger brother, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, in charge of the new settlement. He had the colonists build a wooden fort called Fort Louis de la Louisiane.

Unfortunately, the river tended to flood the colony. In 1711, the town was moved south and rebuilt where the downtown area of Mobile is today. Life in the colony was difficult. Ships bringing supplies were often late, and colonists had to make do with what they had. They got most of the things that they needed from the land, the bay, and from trading with the Native Americans in the area.

In the 1720s, the French built Fort Condé, a fort made out of bricks and stone. The French controlled the Mobile area from 1702 until the end of the French and Indian War in 1763. France and Great Britain fought the war for control of North America. France lost the war to Great Britain. In the treaty that ended the war, France lost all its land east of the Mississippi River. This included Mobile.

B. Independent Reading (10 min.)

Tell students:

Now I want you to take a few moments to read the handout about how the city of Mobile began.

Give students a few minutes to read the *The Founding of Mobile* Handout or read it to them.

C. Review and Discussion Questions (5 min.)

Ask students:

- Why did the French settle around Mobile Bay?
- What items did they trade with the Native Americans?
- How do we know what happened back in the colony at Mobile 300 years ago?
- How do you think people who have written about history found out this information?

D. Short Lecture and Discussion Questions (10 min.)

Tell students:

Throughout history, people have made records of events by drawing maps, making drawings, writing journals and letters, and creating documents. Some official letters and documents from the colony at Mobile were sent to the King of France or his government officials. They were saved and kept in the French archives, a building where official documents are stored. People also passed down historical documents through families. Some of them are kept in private collections, and others have been donated by the families to museums.

These documents, maps, drawings and journals are called primary sources. They tell us about what life was like for people in the early colony. Using primary sources is very important to understanding the past because the sources are first-hand accounts and evidence of historical events. They were created by the people who experienced what was happening back then. Some examples of primary sources that we have today include letters, journals, maps, autobiographies, speeches, drawings, newspapers and photos. Back in the 1700s there were no photographs because they had not yet been invented.

We are going to look at an example of a primary source today. The History Museum of Mobile has the journal of a French sailor, named Bertet de la Clue, on display in its exhibit. Le Clue was a young sailor aboard the ship *Toulouse* on a journey from Toulon, France to the colony at Mobile in 1720. In the journal, he tells about the sea voyage, Dauphin Island, and the Native Americans who lived around the bay. I am going to read you some paragraphs from the Journal of Bertet de La Clue.

Read students the journal entries, show the primary source images of the journal entries on smart board or give them the handouts, and then ask some questions.

- What was Dauphin Island like when Le Clue arrived there?
- Do you think Le Clue really saw a rattlesnake that was 25 feet long?
- What other animals lived here in 1720?
- How is the way that we record information today, different from the way people recorded information in the 1700s?

E. Transition (2 min.)

Tell students:

Bertet de La Clue wrote his journal with a quill pen. Many letters and journals written during Colonial times were written with quill pens. Quill pens were often made out of goose feathers, but for writing finer lines, crow feathers were used. Today, we are going to make our own quill pens and write our own journal entries of what we did today. It is important that you listen to the directions that I am going to give you. I am going to demonstrate each step in making the quill pen. You will do each step when I tell you to do it. If you do not understand the step, please raise your hand and I will help you.

F. Procedure (28 min.)

Give students the following instructions. Hand out copies of the directions to students. It is important to demonstrate the steps.

1. Use scissors or your fingers to cut or peel off the bottom 3 inches of feathers leaving the quill bare below that point.
2. Soak the bare end in the cup of warm water for a few minutes.
3. Once soaked, use the scissors to cut the tip of the quill in a gentle curve. This becomes the nib.
4. Clean the nib carefully. Many feathers will have dried fat inside the tip of the quill. Scrape this out if you can.
5. Use scissors or the knife to cut a small slit in the center of the nib. This will help control the flow of ink.
6. Dip the quill into the ink and blot it gently on a paper towel if it is dripping.
7. Practice writing the alphabet on the sheets of paper by holding the quill at different angles. Re-dip and blot the quill as often as needed. Explain that writing with a quill pen is not a speedy process.

The Founding of Mobile

The French Colonial Era: 1702-1763

On orders from King Louis XIV of France, the Canadian-born explorer Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville and a small group of colonists and soldiers, arrived on the Gulf Coast in 1699 to start a French colony. He started the first colony, Fort Maurepas, near where present day Ocean Springs, Mississippi is located.



Iberville

In 1702, the French went on to start another colony along the Gulf Coast. They founded Mobile several miles north of the present day site of the city on a bank of the Mobile River. The Mobile River connected to a river network that led deep into the southeastern part of the North American continent. At the time, North America was largely wilderness with scattered Native American towns and villages. The French wanted to trade with the Native Americans. The Native Americans gave the French deerskins and animal pelts in exchange for European items like guns, lead balls for bullets, gunpowder, clothing, glass beads, needles, buttons, and knives.



Model of Fort Louis de la Louisiane

The French sent the deerskins and pelts to Europe where they were made into leather items like shoes, hats, and gloves. Mobile was the first European settlement in the state we now call Alabama.

Shortly after founding the colony, Iberville went back to France to report to the king. He left his younger brother, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, in charge of the new settlement. In 1702, under Bienville's direction, Charles Levasseur, a military engineer, designed and built Fort

A long, single-story building with a corrugated metal roof and white walls, identified as the original slave quarters. The building has several dark wooden doors and windows. It is surrounded by a grassy area and a line of trees in the background.

The French built their houses out of the natural materials that they found here. The houses had wooden frames. The shingles on the roof were also made of wood. The walls were made of braided cane or sticks. They plastered the walls with a mixture of crushed shells, sand, and clay. When the plaster dried it was almost like concrete.

This is a detailed historical map of the Mobile River basin and the Gulf of Mexico coast. The map is oriented vertically, with the river flowing from the top towards the bottom right where it meets the sea. Key features include:

- Rivers:** The main river is labeled "Rivière des Albamons". Other tributaries shown are "Rivière aux Cochons", "Rivière aux Chiens", "Rivière au Chevreuil", "Rivière aux Pins", "Rivière aux Chèvres", "Rivière aux Bœufs", "Rivière aux Vaches", "Rivière aux Moutons", "Rivière aux Porcs", "Rivière aux Oies", "Rivière aux Canards", "Rivière aux Poules", "Rivière aux Chapons", "Rivière aux Lapins", "Rivière aux Lièvres", "Rivière aux Cerfs", "Rivière aux Éléphants", "Rivière aux Rhinocéros", "Rivière aux Hippopotames", "Rivière aux Girafes", "Rivière aux Zèbres", "Rivière aux Antilopes", "Rivière aux Gazelles", "Rivière aux Chamois", "Rivière aux Ibex", "Rivière aux Mouflons", "Rivière aux Saïms", "Rivière aux Singes", "Rivière aux Orang-Outans", "Rivière aux Putois", "Rivière aux Musqu Shore

Map of Mobile Bay with Fort Louis marked by a red star and Fort Condé marked by a blue star

Journal Entries

Several of the French colonists kept journals about their travels and adventures in the New World. These journals tell us what life was like for people in the colony. Here are some entries from the colonists' journals. You can see the journal of Bertet de la Clue on display at the History Museum of Mobile.

Journal entries from, *A Voyage to Dauphin Island in 1720: The Journal of Bertet de la Clue*, translated and edited by Francis Escoffier and Jay Higginbotham

Le Clue writes about his arrival on Dauphin Island.

July 16, 1720:

p. 62.

"Our captains permitted us to go ashore at all times while the vessels remained in this country. As for what we did there, we took one of the prettiest houses to be found there and we could choose because the inhabitants of Dauphine Island had gone to establish another colony and had left their houses, although it would have been possible to transport them as they are made of wood. There remained on Dauphine Island only one officer with about twenty soldiers and two inhabitants who had gardens where they had some vegetables which they sold to us at high prices."

Le Clue writes about the Native Americans that lived around Mobile Bay.

July 16, 1720:

p. 63

"They have in their woods all sorts of wild beasts which they kill in large quantities and from which they derive a big traffic in skins, particularly with the Company of the Indies which trades for these skins guns, balls, gun powder and trousers.....

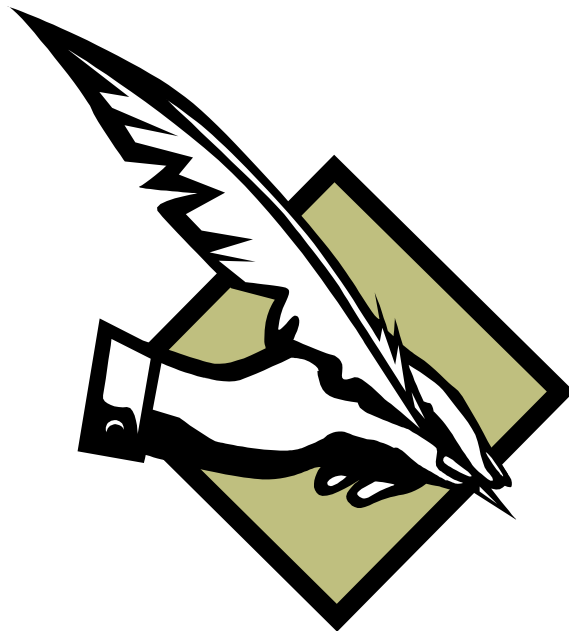
p. 65-66.

"There are snakes in this country which are very large and their bite is deadly. The savages cure it with an herb but if it is not on hand there is no remedy. I saw one which was fifteen inches in diameter and 25 feet long. They have at the end of the tail something that sounds like small bells. They are called *serpents a sonnette* (rattlesnakes).

There are many crocodiles and I have seen some while hunting. They hide themselves in the rushes. There is a large quantity of other animals such as wild cattle, bears, lynxes, foxes, beavers, otters, bobcats, roe deer, deer, wild turkeys, wild horses."

Making a Quill Pen Instructions

1. Use scissors or your fingers to cut or peel off the bottom 3 inches of feathers. This way the bottom of the feather won't get ink all over your hands.
2. Soak the bare end in the cup of warm water.
3. Once soaked, use the scissors to cut the tip of the quill in a gentle curve. This becomes the nib.
4. Clean the nib carefully so that you don't split it. Many feathers have dried fat inside the tip of the quill.
5. Use scissors or the knife to cut a small slit in the center of the nib. This will help control the flow of ink.
6. Dip the quill into the ink and blot it gently on a paper towel if it is dripping ink.
7. Practice writing the alphabet on the sheets of paper by holding the quill at different angles. Re-dip and blot the quill as often as needed. Writing with a quill pen is not a speedy process.
8. Then try writing your name or a short letter.



Le 4 juillet

Monsieur de Bienville commandant general du mississipi est venu
à bord et a confere avec nos capitaines et ils ont convenu que nous
leur laisserions le surplus des vivres que nous avons parce que la
compagnie en manque et parla que nous partirons le plus tot que
nous pourrons quant il est debarque nous avons salué de 4 coups
de canon Mr de Nalette est descendu à terre pour le soir et
Mr de Bienville fit doubler la garde et metre en hay et quant
Mr de Nalette passa son batit au char

Le 18

au matin nous avons vu deux navires nous avons mis pavillon
ils ont tiré un coup de canon et nous leur en avons tiré 3
pour leur avertir notre pavillon et eux en ont tiré encores deux
et sont venus mouillés et nous ont salué de 5 coups de canon
des deux navires il y en avoit un de dorquier qui haitoit charger
des passagers et de trois compagnies du regiment de la molle
l'autre haitoit charger des negres et venoit de guinee a 3 le 20
midy il est arrive un bateau a tarque qui venoit de la marine
et amenoit les prisonniers que les espagnols avoient faits à prusaca
lla et nous avons la trois nos capitaines nous permirent d'aller
rester à terre tant le temps que les uspeaux resteroient dans le pais
la ce que nous fumes nous primes une maison de plus colles
qu'il y hait et nous fumes les metres de choisir parce que les
abitans de l'ille Dauphinne estoient enales etablis une haute
colonnie et avoient les leurs maisons que nous occupames quoy quelle
puissent supporter parce qu'elles sont de bois il n'est resté dans l'ille
Dauphinne qu'un officier avec une interne des soldats et deux abitans
qui avoient des jardins ou il y avoit quelques herbes qu'ils nous mardoit
fort cher car une petite salade de pourpier fort mauvais nous
costoit quinze sols les oeufs six sols pierre et les poules y lient plus
il nia point du mouton et on tue fort peu du boeuf et nous
vivons comme des vrais sauvages nous allons beaucoup à la chasse

Donc commandant du Mississipi

et nous mangions tout les animaux que nous tuions corbe et hautes
 ie minimes un peu des manieres de vivre des sauvages bon nous
 en fit beaucoup des contes dont j'en eus beaucoup d'apocryphes. Le
 mississippi est un pays tres etendu tant du costé du nord que
 de l'est et de l'ouest la mer le borne au sud les terres sont
 occupées par des sauvages de differente nation dont en voici
 les noms noms des sauvages

les chac chouma les chicacha les seraqui les tete plates
 les goitanou les peanguicha les nepiquistia les mengaquinquin
 les miamis les osages les ilinois les cascatis les chiaou

le missouri est une
 riviere
 qui se
 jette
 dans le
 mississippi
 qui est
 pourtant
 plus con-
 siderable
 car deux
 rivières
 forment
 une ille
 ou est le
 blon de
 l'artagnan
 a 300 li
 de l'ille
 d'artagnan
 les namitegouy les gens du roche les quinquapou les mapquoting
 les renards les folles avoines les saqui les pou les sauteurs
 les ontagona les cris les tete de boules les siou les apichs
 les nadacou les natchitouché les duxtionis les aday les cadation
 les asoris les qu de singe les apolas les tomes les teinca
 les chaqueta les fourches les paragoula les bilocay les alibamou
 les chaqueta les missipipy les missouris les chagouacha
 les gorachay les colapissa les houma les chetimacha les torica
 les notche les gris gris les tiou les isou les arcanca
 les potagoué ce sont la culturent peu la terre leur plus forte

passion est la chasse ils tirent parfaitement bien une flèche et
 un coup de fusil ils ont dans leurs bois toute sorte de felle four
 dont ils en tuent quantité et en font un grand trophée surtout
 avec la compagnie d'indes qui se leur troque avec des fusils
 des bores de la poudre et des braves ils sont tous nus et nont
 qu'une petite peinture au tour du corps ou ils portent une gresse
 du bra qui leur part devant et derriere et leur couvre une partie
 de leur nudité et qu'ils laissent un bras ils ont tout le
 corps couvert de figures de serpent qu'ils se font avec la pointe d'un
 equille ou de brouille qui est le general du pays a tout son corps
 piqué comme cela et quant il est obligé de marcher a la guerre
 avec eux il se fait tout nu comme eux ils laiment extremement
 et le craignent de meime

Artagnan
 Louisian

ils haïment extrêmement la guerre et les braves ians quant nous
y habitons il y avoit deux nations qui avoient la guerre qui haïssent
les chacquetos et les chicachas quant ils se font des prisonniers ils
les font mourir de la manière la plus cruelle du monde ils commencent
à leur ôter la chevelure avec la peau de la tête puis ils les attachent
et les font brûler un membre après l'autre ils leur coupent par
intervalles des morceaux de chair qu'ils mangent et boivent de leur
sang puis ils remplissent celle avec du plomb fondu et pendant
ce traitement le passant chante toujours et leur reproche qu'ils ne
se font pas assez souffrir et que quant il auroit pris de leur nation
il les auroit bien plus fait souffrir que celle les anglais font leur
possible pour les porter à nous faire la guerre ils leur font des
propos et leur rendent meilleur marché que nous ils commencent
à dire que nous avions perdu le spirit qui est leur terme favori
quant on leur marque à quelque chose cela fait croire qu'ils ne
se rendent quelque jour ils ont pourtant une très haute idée
des françois et ils sont bien armés à la prise de paripicola qui
est une rade ou il y avoit un bon fort ~~ou il y avoit une~~ et une
grosse garnison espagnolle et six vaisseaux espagnols mouillés dans la
rade ce qui leur faisoit croire qu'on ne les pouvoit pas attaquer Mr
de Chamelen chef d'escadre des armées navales du roy de France arriva
dans ce pais la avec trois vaisseaux de guerre qui fut pour les
attaquer il ordonna à Mr de Bienville general du pais de prendre toutes
les trouppes qu'il pourroit ramasser pour attaquer le fort par terre dans
le temps que luy le canoneroit par mer ce que fit Mr de Bienville
car outre les soldats qu'il prit il amena quantité de sauvages
et surtout des chefs pour leur faire voir la force des bateaux
de France car ils appeloient nos vaisseaux des gros bateaux Mr de
Chamelen entra dans la rade remorque par des batimens de guerre
de qu'il parut les espagnols luy firent un très grand feu qu'il es-
saya sans tirer un coup de canon attendant de pouvoir faire couler toutes
ces batteries les sauvages qui voioient ce la disoient entre eux que
les ians de ces bateaux françois avoient perdu le spirit