

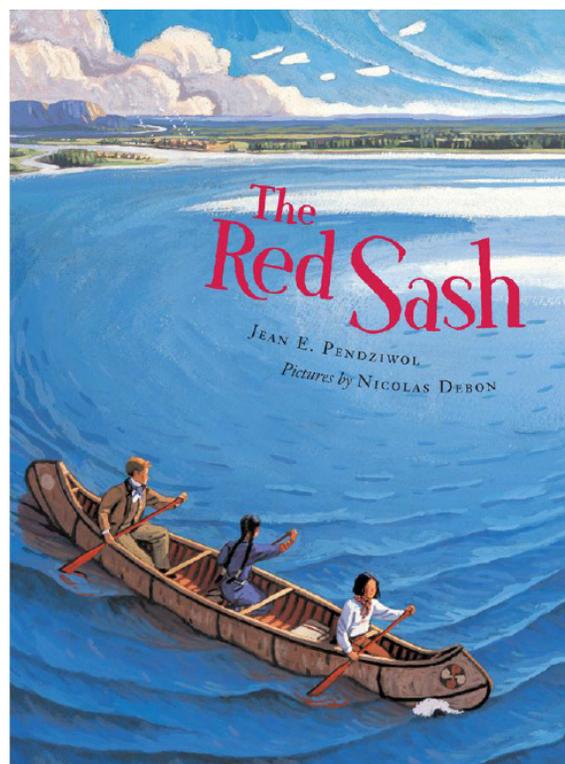
# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

Written by Jean E. Pendziwol and illustrated by Nicolas Debon

## ABOUT THE BOOK

In reading this book, you gain an authentic sense of the look and feel of a 19th-century Canadian fur trading post. The story centers on a young Métis boy who lives near the trading post of Fort William, on Lake Superior, nearly 200 years ago. In the winter, the boy's father guides voyageurs into the northwest to trade with Indigenous peoples for furs. Those same voyageurs paddle back to Fort William with their packs of furs, while another group comes in from Montreal bringing supplies. This is a time of feasting, dancing and trading stories around the campfire, a time called Rendezvous. In a storm, the boy saves a canoe carrying gentlemen from the North West Company, earning the gift of a voyageur's red sash.

The book also has helpful features, including a map on the endpapers, a small multilingual (French, Ojibwa and English) glossary and an informational note about Fort William and the North West Company.



### **The Red Sash**

**Written by Jean E. Pendziwol**

**Illustrated by Nicolas Debon**

**JUVENILE FICTION**

Reading Ages 5 to 8

978-0-88899-5-896

Hardcover with jacket

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jean E. Pendziwol has published several highly acclaimed picture books, including *Once Upon a Northern Night*, illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault, finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award and the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award. She is also the author of *Me and You and the Red Canoe*, illustrated by Phil; *Marja's Skis*, illustrated by Jirina Marton; and *Dawn Watch*, illustrated by Nicolas Debon. Jean's debut adult novel, *The Lightkeeper's Daughters*, was published in more than ten languages. Jean finds inspiration in the rich history, culture and geography of Northwestern Ontario, where she lives near Lake Superior.



## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nicolas Debon was born in Northern France and later moved to Nancy, where he studied art at l'École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, before moving to Toronto, Ontario, for ten years. His picture book *The Strongest Man in the World: Louis Cyr* won the Boston Globe–Horn Book Award. He is also the author / illustrator of *Four Pictures* by Emily Carr. Nicolas currently lives in France.



# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## BEFORE READING

### Do Your Research

Have students research the history of voyageurs in Canada and what this job entailed. Ask them to think about how this job is similar to or different from another job today.

Have students research the history of the fur trade and the role of the Métis and other Indigenous peoples within it, and create a map of the canoe routes used by voyageurs. Locate Fort William, where this story takes place.

Curriculum Connections: Geography, Canadian History

### Fur Trade

**For nearly 250 years, from the early 17th to the mid-19th centuries, the fur trade was a vast commercial enterprise involving European and Indigenous peoples across what are now Canada and the United States.**



# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## BEFORE READING

### The Red Sash

Using the title and the picture on the title page, ask students what this is and what they know about it.

Record their thoughts before reading the book. Revisit this after reading and do more research if students still have questions.

### Picture Walk

Conduct a “picture walk” through the story. Ask students what they notice about the setting and characters and what they think this story is about.

**Historically, the Métis sash had many functional uses. During the time of this story, the sash was used to prevent hernia and lower back injury when voyageurs were carrying heavy loads, and to hold a coat closed. The sash had fringed ends that were used as emergency sewing kits during a Métis buffalo hunt. It also served as a key holder, first-aid kit, washcloth, towel, emergency bridle and saddle blanket. The sash was and continues to be a symbol of pride and identification for Métis people.**

**Sources:**

**Arrowhead Sash:**

**<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/arrowhead-sash>**

**Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.:**

**[http://www.mmf.mb.ca/the\\_sash.php](http://www.mmf.mb.ca/the_sash.php)**

**Kikino Métis Children and Family Services Society:**

**<http://www.kikino.org/metis-culture/the-sash.php>**

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## BEFORE READING

### Word Work

There is a glossary at the back of the book. Introduce these key words prior to reading the book by having students make predictions about their meanings.

Word	Prediction
boule	
canot du Nord	
Gitchee Gumee	
makuk	
Nanabijou	
tikinaagan	
voyageurs	

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## DURING READING

The Métis culture contains aspects of French Canadian and Indigenous cultures. Ask students: Where do you see examples of both in this story? Create a T-chart to track examples from the text.

For example:

<b>Indigenous Culture</b>	<b>French Canadian Culture</b>
Live in a Wigwam	Small Houses
Set snares for hares on Traverse Island	Barns — Farm Animals
Wear moccasins	Wear boots

## Checking predictions

As you come across each of the words students have made predictions for in the story, have them use the text to check their predictions. Add a new column to the chart to record the accurate meanings of the words.

## Hard Life

The boy knows that the voyageur life is a hard one. The text says that “the winters are long and cold, food is difficult to find, and some of the rivers are wild.” Discuss with students why the boy still dreams of going with the voyageurs someday.

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## DURING READING

### Why Fur?

The young boy helps to unload “the pack of furs that have traveled from deep in the wilds of the Indian territories — wolf, muskrat, deer, fox, buffalo, mink ... but most important, beaver.” Discuss with students why these furs were collected. What do you think they were used for? Why was beaver fur the most important? (Beaver fur was preferred over other fur because it contains more barbs on the hairs which made it better suited to the felting process.)

Sources on beaver fur and pelt making:

Show students images of beaver hats worn during this time period.

Learn more about preparing the fur:

“From Pelt to Felt: the Making of a Beaver Top Hat.” Fur Trade & Rendezvous.

<http://www.alfredjacobmiller.com/explore/from-pelt-to-felt/>

“18th Century Fur Trade: The Beaver Fur Hat — The Fashion of Europe” by the White Oak Historical Society.

<http://whiteoakhistoricalsociety.org/historical-library/fur-trade/the-beaver-fur-hat/>

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

- Consider the use of language. How does the author's use of both the French and Ojibwa languages help the reader understand the boy's way of life?
- What is the significance of the red sash to the little boy?
- Why might the author have chosen The Red Sash as the title for this story?
- What do the events of this story tell you about the roles that Indigenous people and Europeans played in the fur trade?
- How is the Rendezvous celebration similar to or different from celebrations within your own family and culture? Create a Venn diagram to record similarities and differences.

### Birchbark Canoe

In the story, we see a number of birchbark canoes, as they are used by voyageurs. As a class, learn more about the making and use of birchbark canoes by Indigenous people and voyageurs.

### Fort William Historical Park

Fort William's history has been preserved and is shared at Fort William Historical Park. Visit the website to learn and get more information: <http://fwhp.ca/>

Many historical forts are operated across the country. Take your class on a trip to one to experience and learn more about this time period.

#### **Canot du Nord (North Canoe)**

**This canoe was “used in the interior, for voyages starting on Lake Superior.” The Canot du Nord was seven metres long, one metre wide and twenty centimetres deep, and it was usually navigated by four to six men.**

**Source: The Canoe,**

**<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/history/12.htm>**

# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

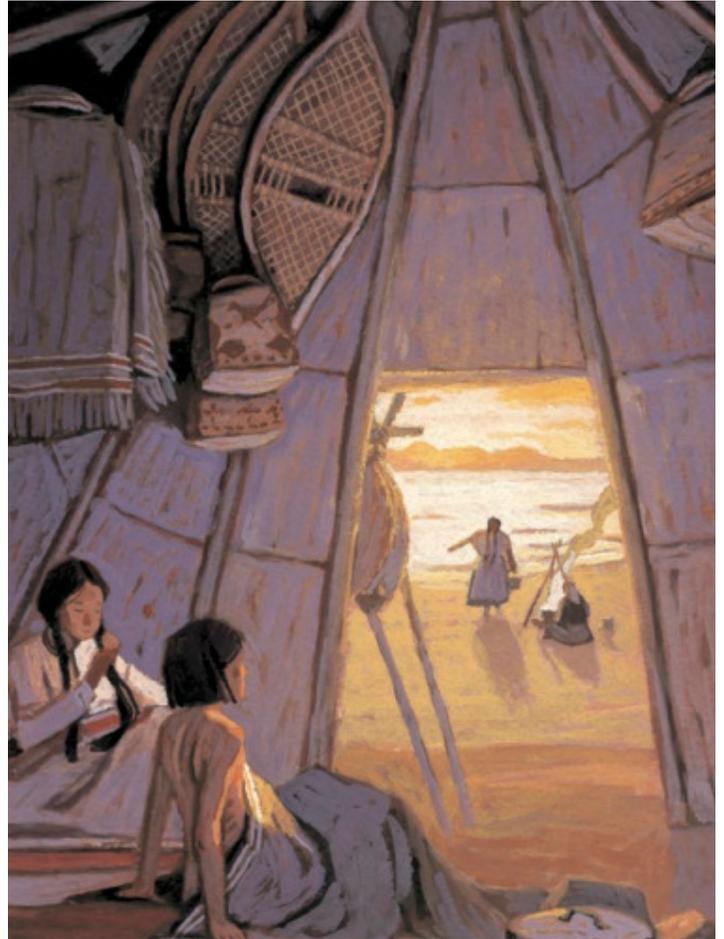
## AFTER READING

### Voyageur Adventures

Ask students to write a story in first-person narrative about adventures as a voyageur. Have them include information about their role, the places they traveled and hardships they faced.

### Legend of Nanabijou

Read the legend of Nanabijou, “who lies sleeping on the great sea Gitchee Gumee.” Look up present-day pictures of Nanabijou, the Sleeping Giant, located in Thunder Bay, Ontario.



# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Studies

As a class, compare societies from different eras and how different communities contribute to the evolution of Canadian identity.

Ask students to consider the way of life of the voyageurs and life at Fort William. In what ways is life in Canada today similar to or different from this time in history?

### Physical and Outdoor Education

Take your class canoeing.



# A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO THE RED SASH

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Connect to This Groundwood Text

*Northwest Passage* — by Stan Rogers, with pictures and commentary by Matt James  
ISBN 978-1-55498-153-3

For hundreds of years, explorers attempted to find the Northwest Passage — a route through Canada's northern waters to the Pacific Ocean and Asia. Others attempted to find a land route. Many hundreds of men perished in the attempt, until finally, in 1906, Roald Amundsen completed the voyage by ship. Today, global warming has brought interest in the passage back to a fever pitch as nations contend with each other over its control and future uses.

### Web Resources

Fur trade:

Foster, John E., and William John Eccles. "Fur Trade." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, published July 23, 2013; updated September 19, 2016.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/fur-trade/>

Goldi Productions. "The Fur Trade." *Canada's First Peoples*, 2007; accessed October 30, 2018.

<http://bit.ly/2vAanRu>

Sleeping Giant legend:

Reid, Stephanie. "Legends and Lore in Thunder Bay: Nanabijou — The Sleeping Giant." *Tourism Northern Ontario*, March 21, 2017.

<https://www.northernontario.travel/thunder-bay/legend-of-the-sleeping-giant>