

The FLQ—Was the War Measures Act a Necessity or an Over-reaction?

Concept(s) Primary Source Evidence

Prepared for Grade(s) 10, 11, 12

Province NB

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Time Period(s) 1900-present

Time allotment Three 60 minute periods

Brief Description of the Task

Students will examine a series of photographs, videos and accounts detailing the activities of the FLQ throughout the 1960's and culminating in the October Crisis of 1970. From these various documents, students will assess the necessity of the invocation of the War Measures Act in 1970 and develop an historical argument explaining why they think the use of this act was justified or not justified at this point in Canadian history.

Objectives

Students will arrive at and defend a conclusion using multiple primary and secondary sources by:

1. identifying whether each document is a primary or secondary source.
2. identifying the providence.
3. assessing the reliability.
4. drawing inferences from each source about the question they are trying to answer.
5. checking for corroboration with other sources.
6. offering a conclusion that clearly and specifically answers the question offered for consideration.
7. supporting the conclusion with evidence from the various sources.

In a broader sense, students should

1. appreciate that historians are selective in the questions they seek to answer and the evidence they use.
2. recognize that interpretation is an essential ingredient of history.
3. employ processes of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and interpret the past.
4. challenge arguments of historical inevitability.

Required Knowledge & Skills

It would enhance the lesson if students already were able to do the following:

1. distinguish between primary and secondary documents
2. analyze visual, audio, and written documents
3. judge the reliability and usefulness of sources
4. make plausible inferences related to the question under consideration.

Detailed Instructions

Lesson 1:

1. There are many potential openings for this lesson that can generate curiosity and at the same time allow the teacher to assess students' prior knowledge. One possibility is to show one or two of the photographs given in **ATT 1 Resources on October Crisis**. Ask students to explain what these photos clearly show us and what they suggest to us. Supply only minimal information such as place and date (Montréal, 1970) at this stage so that you might assess their background knowledge and ideas about Québec and the independence movement. Ask them as well to generate some questions for further exploration. You could also give them **ATT 2 Analysing Traces** and have them complete what they can at this stage.

Some of the clips from CBC listed in **ATT 1** could also provide an engaging opening.

2. Have students read from their student text all information pertaining to the Quebec independence movement. Constructing a time line of the Quebec independence movement from the death of Maurice Duplessis in 1959 to the October Crisis of 1970 will give them an overview of this period in history. Be sure to distinguish the FLQ from other separatist and nationalist movements. Review relevant vocabulary such as francophone, anglophone, allophone, separatist, sovereigntist, federalist, and the like.

Lesson 2:

1. Discussion with students: When in history have governments stepped in to stop civil uprisings? What measures were taken and why? When do you think such actions are justified and when are they not? In what form, could or should a government intervene in situations of civil unrest?

Of course, it would also be worthwhile to explore the motivations of the FLQ: Why did they take such action? Is it ever justified to commit violent acts in a democratic country? However, this lesson focusses on the government's actions: was the War Measures Act necessary or an over-reaction?

2. Explain to students that they will have an opportunity to view a number of primary and secondary documents in addition to the opening source and textbook in order to answer this question. After having analysed these documents, students will write an historical argument detailing why they think the use of this act was justified or not justified at this point in Canadian history.

4. Return to the chart in **ATT 2** if you used it for the opening lesson and show again the source that was shown at that time. Ask students to use the context that they learned from the text book to elaborate and revise their initial answers. This a good moment to explain the importance of corroboration and context.

5. Supply additional copies of **ATT 2 Analysing Traces** and ask students to begin by reading the two documents "Chronology of the FLQ" and the "FLQ Manifesto" whose web sources are given in **ATT 1** and complete the charts in **ATT 2**. As a class, debrief their findings/conclusions.

6. If you wish to explore further the reasons behind the support for the FLQ (at least before the assassination of Pierre Laporte), **ATT 3 Income and Foreign Ownership Québec 1961** from the 1963 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism gives data for students. The 1961 statistics of the salaries of Quebec men based on ethnic origin revealed that French Canadian incomes, even in the province where they were the majority, lagged behind all other ethnic groups, with the exception of Italian and Aboriginal Quebecers. Moreover, the Commission statistics also support FLQ claims about foreign ownership.

For an appreciation of the fears of assimilation that is shared by many francophones, students could listen and interpret the song "Mommy, Mommy." Videos and words can be found at <http://www.vigile.net/Mommy-mommy>. Composed by Gilles Richer et Marc G  linas, the version by Pauline Julien made it popular. It was written in 1971, a bit after the October Crisis, but despite this possible anachronism, the mostly English words make it easily accesible for anglophone students. Other Qu  bec patriotic songs in French with English translations can be found at http://english.republiquelibre.org/Translations_of_poems_and_lyrics.

Lesson 3:

1. Review with students their findings from the previous two days.
2. Explain that today they will be going to the computer lab to hear/watch audio and video related to the October Crises of 1970. Distribute to students their own copies of **ATT 1 Resources on October Crisis** and furthe copies of **ATT 1**. Half the class is to listen to/watch clips 1, 3, 5 and 7. The other half is responsible for clips 2, 4, 6 and 8.

Students are to listen carefully and take notes on the video clips that they have not seen. Encourage students to take some time at home to view these other clips as they might be helpful in their argument of the assigned question.

3. If there is time this class, or the next, pair students who studied different sources and have each one share their results with the other in the manner of a jigsaw. This could also be done in a whole class discussion.
4. Discuss with the class the central question: Was the federal government justified or were their actions an over-reaction?

5. Explain to students that based on the information and the documents that they have seen they should now be ready to formulate an historical argument related to the assigned question. Go over the rubric with students so that they have a clear idea of how they will be evaluated.