

# Royal Proclamation of 1763

## Part 1: Information for students on the Royal Proclamation of 1763

### Procedure:

1) Working with a partner read the following information one paragraph at a time. After you have read each paragraph make up a question that has an answer that will identify the main point of the paragraph. (The paragraphs are numbered for you to read and work on one at a time) Example for paragraph 1: What does the Royal Proclamation tell us about history and why it is important?.

2) Once you have finished reading the information and writing your questions go back and write out the answers for your questions.

~~3) After you have answered all of your questions write a 5 to 10 line summary of the information that identifies the most important points.~~

### The Royal proclamation of 1763

1) If you look up the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in many history books or encyclopedias you may not find very much written about it. As far as world history is concerned it is not considered very important. In Canada however this document written by King George III of England in 1763 has been extremely important and in fact has great relevance to this day. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is a good example of how history is more than facts and old stories. It is not only about events that shaped the past but how those events continue to effect the present as well.

2) One of the major issues in British Columbia today is the settlement of land claims by First nations. Unlike most of the rest of Canada First Nations people in BC have, with a few exceptions, never made treaties or agreements about how the lands they have traditionally lived on were to be used or developed. As a result there are to the present day in BC many Aboriginal claims to land that have never been resolved. These land claims have not only been complicated but controversial.

Why Aboriginal have land claims in BC have been so complicated and controversial and why do they remain so to this day? Part of the reason has to do with the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and disagreements over whether or not it applies to BC.

So what was this Royal Proclamation and why does it still matter?

### Setting the scene:

3) In 1756 England and France became involved in a war that came to be known as the Seven Years War. This was an important war especially to the politics of North America. This was because one of the outcomes of England's victory was that what had been the French North American Colonies, New France (Quebec) and a large part of French territory in what is now the United States, came under British rule.

4) However, even though England won the war they had serious problems in North America. The original 13 American colonies were becoming more and more resentful of English rule. Most of the non Aboriginal population of the American colonies had lived in North America for several generations and for over 200 years. They no longer felt any real connection to England. In fact they were very close to rebelling against England and becoming independent. (These 13 colonies in North America eventually become the United States of America.)

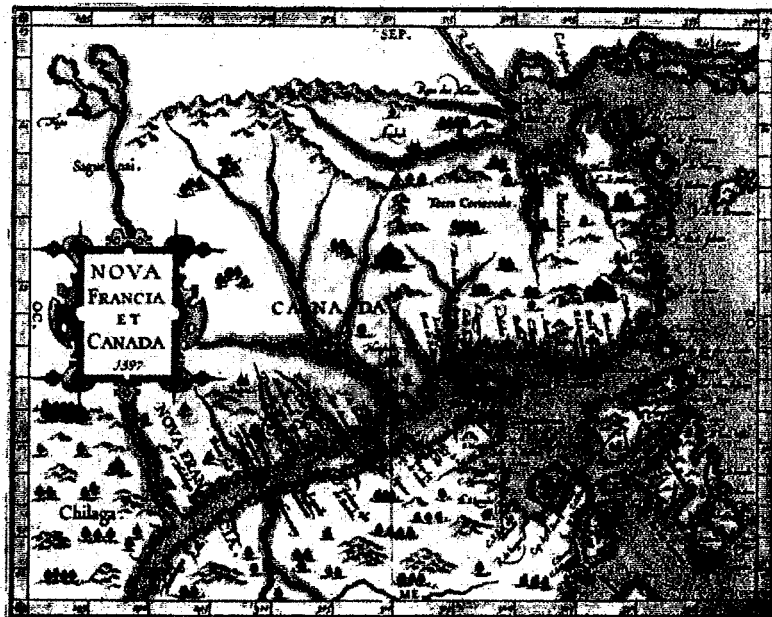
5) The "Americans" as the settlers of the 13 colonies came to be known were a problem for the British and they needed to be controlled. Not only that, but the British also needed to be able to collect taxes from them. If the Americans started to settle remote parts of North America they would be difficult to tax and control.

6) A second problem for the British was the hostility some of the Aboriginal population had for them and for the Americans in the 13 colonies. In fact the Seven Years war is sometimes referred to as the "French and Indian War" because it was not only the French and the British who were fighting but also a large number of Aboriginal tribes. The British had Aboriginal allies but at the end of the war they were very concerned about the possibility of on going hostility towards and from Aboriginal tribes.

7) The map below shows the parts of North America that were French but became British Territory after the Seven Years War. On the map these areas are called "Indian territory". This is because in 1763 this area had not been settled by Europeans and was used by the French mainly for fur trading with the native population. The native inhabitants of the territory had supported the French during the war and did not like or trust the British.

8) It was the possibility of endless conflict with Aboriginals that led the British King, George III, to issue the Royal Proclamation. This proclamation was mainly an attempt by the British to assure natives in the "Indian Territory" that their lands would not be overtaken by European settlers. In order to do this the Proclamation had these conditions:

- King George reserved the western lands ( in the US this was known as the Ohio Valley. In Canada it was part of what is now western Ontario and northern Quebec) to the "several nations or tribes of Indians" that were under his "protection" as their exclusive "hunting grounds." Non natives were forbidden entry to these lands.
- As ruler of this territory, however, the King claimed ultimate "Dominion" over the entire region. He further prohibited any private person from directly buying the interest of native groups in their ancestral soil. In other words no one but the King (the government) could make land deals with natives. This also meant that as far as the British were concerned the land belonged to the government of Britain.
- As detailed in the Proclamation, King George III set out a procedure whereby an "Indian group", if they freely chose, could sell their land rights (i.e. make a treaty) to properly authorized representatives of the British monarch.
- The Royal Proclamation resulted in the establishment of the British Crown, and later the Government of Canada, as the central agent in the transfer of Aboriginal lands to colonial settlers. The important point here is that Aboriginal lands could only be occupied or used by non Aboriginals if there was a treaty with the government that would allow it.





# Student Activity 1

Your task in this activity is to look at the Royal Proclamation of 1763 from three perspectives:

- An American living in one of the thirteen colonies.
- An Aboriginal living on the "Indian territory".
- A representative of King George III in North America.

Use the information provided here to help you develop each perspective. (You are to take all three perspectives.) The first provides some ideas on how Americans in the thirteen colonies might have felt. The second reading on the famous chief of the Ottawa Aboriginal nation, Pontiac, helps with the Aboriginal perspective. The third gives you some ideas on how the King and his government saw the need for the Proclamation.

## 1: The Americans in the thirteen colonies

[www.ushistory.org/us/9a.asp](http://www.ushistory.org/us/9a.asp) *Note: This is for identification of the source. Students need not go to the sites.*

Despite the Treaty of Paris, many Native Americans continued to fight against European settlement of land west of Appalachia. Ottawa Chief Pontiac led numerous attacks against British and colonial expansion and settlement and his violent aggression is one reason Britain issued the Proclamation of 1763.

But what seemed simple to the British was not acceptable to their colonial subjects. This remedy did not address some concerns vitally important to the colonies. Colonial blood had been shed to fight the French and  
Aboriginals, not to cede land to them. What was to be said for American colonists who had already settled in the West?

In addition, the colonies themselves had already begun to set their sights on expanding their western boundaries; such planning sometimes even causing tension among the colonies. Why restrict their appetites to expand? Surely this must be a plot to keep the American colonists under the imperial (British) thumb and east of the mountains, where they could be watched.



*Pontiac, Chief of the Ottawa - by John Mix Stanley, 19th century*

Consequently, this law was observed with the same reverence the colonists reserved for the mercantile laws. Scores of wagons headed westward. How could the British possibly enforce this decree? It was nearly impossible.

The Proclamation of 1763 merely became part of the long list of events in which the intent and actions of one side was misunderstood or disregarded by the other.

## 2: Pontiac

<http://ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=306&nm=Pontiac>

Pontiac was born around 1720. His father was an Ottawa Indian, and his mother was a Chippewa. His family raised Pontiac as an Ottawa, although he had numerous friends among his mother's people. Little is known of his early years. He probably traded with the French merchants that moved into modern-day Michigan and Ohio in the late 1600s and 1700s. By 1755, he had become an important leader of the Ottawas.

Pontiac subscribed to the spiritual beliefs of Neolin, a teacher among the Delaware Indians during the 1760s. Neolin encouraged his fellow Indians to forsake all English goods and customs. He felt that the natives' dependence on these items had infuriated the Creator. The reason why the Native Americans in the Ohio Country currently suffered at the hands of the English was because they had forgotten the true ways of their people. European ways would condemn the Indians to the natives' equivalent of eternal suffering. Indians had to separate from white ways and not become dependent on them.

Pontiac concurred with Neolin's views but also felt the Native Americans had to remain militarily strong to drive the Europeans out of the Ohio Country. This became especially important with the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763. The Treaty of Paris (1763) turned all French lands in North America over to the English. Native Americans feared the loss of their traditional ally and also believed that British settlers would flood the Ohio Country. To prevent the incursion of Whites, Pontiac and the Ottawas encouraged Ohio Country natives to rise up in 1763. The Ottawas attacked Fort Detroit in May 1763. Many people today view this as the beginning of Pontiac's Rebellion. The Shawnee Indians, the Munsee Indians, the Wyandot Indians, the Seneca Indians, and the Delaware Indians also raided English settlements in the Ohio Country and in western Pennsylvania during 1763. In the autumn of 1764, the English military took the offensive against the natives. Colonel John Bradstreet and Colonel Henry Bouquet each launched invasions of the Ohio Country from Pennsylvania. Both men were successful in subduing the native population.

Pontiac's Rebellion essentially ended in the autumn of 1764, but Pontiac did not formally surrender to the English until July 1766. The English promised him no harm as long as he agreed never to wage war against the British again. Pontiac spent the remainder of his life with his family on the banks of the Maumee River. In 1769, a Native American murdered Pontiac. It is not clear why he was killed. The English may have paid a man to kill Pontiac to deprive the Ottawas of one of their leaders. On the other hand, it may have been the work of a group of Native Americans who were upset with Pontiac's refusal to wage war against the English. Pontiac's death, like most of his life, remains a mystery. His dream of a united Native American front against the Europeans did not end with him. Other native leaders, such as Tecumseh and Little Turtle, would also try to form Indian confederations to stop the westward expansion of white settlers in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

### **3: The Royal Proclamation:**

[http://www1.canadiana.org/citm/themes/aboriginals/aboriginals3\\_e.html#royal](http://www1.canadiana.org/citm/themes/aboriginals/aboriginals3_e.html#royal)

The British, who now controlled Québec, wanted settlement to take place within the colony, but also wanted to ensure Aboriginals had their own land for reserve settlements. This was especially important as the British expected an overflow of settlers from the Thirteen Colonies to move north. However, this move to protect Aboriginal land ultimately frustrated British settlers and merchants in the colony.

Britain did not want land deals to be done by the settlers to protect Aboriginal interests. The Royal Proclamation hints at the reason: it notes that British interests were, prior to 1763, responsible for "great fraud and abuses" in obtaining land from Aboriginals that had caused the latter "great dissatisfaction". After all, only a decade earlier, the Mohawk had broken the covenant chain with the American colonies due to Anglo-American settlement that had occurred on Aboriginal lands without permission. After spending years fighting the French in North America and abroad, the British wanted to gain the allegiance of the Aboriginals to prevent further costly and bloody frontier wars, as more British settlers arrived.

Thus, they ensured that any future negotiation with Aboriginals was to be in done in public by representatives of the British crown, and that the final results of such negotiations would be recorded in written treaties. The proclamation also gave Britain the right to purchase Aboriginal hunting and fishing grounds, but gave Aboriginals the right to hunt and fish on these acquired lands. This would be very important in future claims and court cases by Aboriginal nations.

In October and November 1768, a conference was held at Fort Stanwix, New York, to fix the boundaries of the reserved hunting grounds provided for in the Royal Proclamation between all sides of the covenant chain. The Iroquois thanked the British for 'polishing the chain' when its sides had grown dull.



**Procedure:**

You will choose one of the three perspectives and complete one of the tasks below:

- 1) An American colonist’s protest poster that makes at least three points on why you oppose the Royal Proclamation.
- 2) A list of speaking notes Chief Pontiac could use to persuade his people to fight against the American/British settlement of your traditional lands
- 3) A letter from representative of King George III which explains to the American colonists the important reasons for the Royal Proclamation.

	9-10	7-8	5-6	0-4
<b>Poster</b>	The poster is persuasive and creative. There is obvious attention to detail and the poster shows that the student understands how the Royal Proclamation affected this group of people.	The poster is persuasive and creative. The poster shows that the student understands how the Royal Proclamation affected this group of people.	The poster shows that the student understands how the Royal Proclamation affected this group of people.	Requirements have not been met.

	9-10	7-8	5-6	0-4
<b>Speaking Points/ Letter</b>	The speech/letter is organized and creative. There is obvious attention to detail and the speech/letter shows that the student understands how the Royal Proclamation affected this group of people.	The speech/letter is persuasive and creative. The speech/letter shows that the student understands how the Royal Proclamation affected this group of people.	The speech/letter shows that the student understands how the Royal Proclamation affected this group of people.	Requirements have not been met.