



Working Women in New France

This MysteryQuest examines documents related to the trial of the Black slave, Angélique, accused of being responsible for a deadly fire in Montreal in the early 1700s. Students consider the occupations available to women in New France at that time and assess the various tasks involved and the attributes required to undertake them.

A critical thinking challenge to accompany

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History

Torture and the Truth:

Angélique and the Burning of Montreal

<http://www.mysteryquests.ca/quests/18/indexen.html>

Author: Catherine Duquette

Editor: Ruth Sandwell

Series Editor: Roland Case

based on an approach developed by The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC²)

www.tc2.ca

Ages

11-14

Courses

Canadian history, social studies, civics

Key Topics

- women's work in New France

Critical Challenge

Taking on the persona of Amélie, write a letter to your cousin explaining your recommendations for the job she should undertake when she arrives in New France.

Broad Understanding

Students will learn about the various tasks and the attributes required to undertake an occupation available to women in New France.

Requisite Tools



Background knowledge

- knowledge of daily life in New France
- knowledge of the occupations open to women in New France



Criteria for judgment

- criteria for appropriate job (e.g., possesses the necessary skills, matches personal goals, satisfies living/working conditions)



Critical thinking vocabulary

- inferences



Thinking strategies

- data chart
- rating scale



Habits of mind

- attention to detail

Independent Study

This lesson can be used as a self-directed activity by having students individually or in pairs work their way through the guided instructions and support material found at <http://www.mysteryquests.ca/quests/18/indexen.html>.

Whole Class Activities

On the following pages are suggested modifications of the self-guided procedures found on the MysteryQuest website for use with a class of students. For convenience, each support material and set of directions found on the website is reproduced next to the relevant suggestions for whole class instruction.

Suggested Activities

Introduce the trial of Angélique

- Using *Introduction* as a guide, explain to students the challenge that is the focus of their investigation.

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1734, a fire occurred in Montréal that destroyed a hospital and 45 houses on rue Saint-Paul. Criminal proceedings were soon underway against Marie-Josèphe dite Angélique, a Black slave, and her White lover, Claude Thibault. The latter fled, leaving Angélique on her own to prove her innocence. Some twenty witnesses filed before the judge, all of them convinced that the slave of the widow Francheville was guilty, yet not one of them saw her set the fire.

Imagine you are Amélie, a young girl living in New France just at the time when Angélique was accused of starting the fire that burnt Montreal. It is the spring of 1734, and Amélie is looking forward to the arrival of her favorite cousin Rose, who will be arriving in New France. Rose is hoping to find work in Montreal to help her family and has written to ask Amélie what jobs might suit her interests, talents, and experience. Amélie's task is to use her knowledge of her 12-year-old cousin Rose and find out what kind of work would be most suitable for her.

- Using *The Task* as a guide, outline the activities that students will undertake.
- You may want to download and display pictures of life in New France and other related pictures.

THE TASK

Your task in this Mystery Quest is to take on the persona of Amélie, a young girl living in Montreal, the largest city in New France, in 1734. Amélie needs to decide what kind of work would best suit her young cousin Rose when she arrives from France.

In order to complete your task, you will need to identify possible jobs for your cousin. You will begin by establishing the jobs that are available for women in Montreal and the kinds of tasks involved in each job. Using your knowledge of your cousin's interests and talents, as well as your knowledge of the work available, you will apply the criteria provided to assess the suitability of five common jobs in New France. Based on your assessment, you will write a convincing letter to your cousin explaining your recommendation for the most appropriate job she should

Discovering work available to women in New France

- Ask students to think of the types of jobs that women in New France might have done. Instruct them to write down three possible jobs or write all suggestions on the chalkboard.
- Duplicate and distribute to students copies of *European Women in New France*.
- Using *Step 1: Establish jobs available to women in New France* as a guide, explain that the briefing sheet gives them a broad understanding of how women lived in New France. Ask students to share the information they found. Were the jobs they previously listed mentioned? Were some available jobs surprising?

STEP 1: ESTABLISH JOBS AVAILABLE TO WOMEN IN NEW FRANCE

You are to begin by thinking of the types of work that women might have done over two hundred and fifty years ago in New France. Take a few minutes to write down possible jobs available for women at this time in history. Once you have thought of possible jobs, read the briefing sheet *European Women in New France* to learn more about the kinds of work available to women in New France. The briefing sheet will give you a broad understanding of how women lived and what role they played in society. Now review the list you prepared. Were the jobs you previously listed mentioned in the article? Are some available jobs surprising?

MysteryQuest 18 Support Materials 1 (Briefing Sheet)

European Women in New France

The history of European women in New France starts when Les Filles du Roi arrive in Quebec City. They help to establish the population and settle the territories for France. By 1730, European women in New France are present in both rural and urban areas and their work is essential for the development of the Colony. Girls born in wealthy families are sent to school or have private tutors. They can then get married or enter the convent. Girls from poorer families might be sent to school for a short time if their presence is not necessary at home to help their mothers. Very few girls are in fact sent to school at this time. Again, marriage will often follow or they can enter the convent.

Yet, life in New France can be very different if you live in the country or in a city.

The main occupation of European women in New France is to raise children and take care of the household. If the woman is of a higher social status, she might have servants and slaves to help her keep her household. Poorer families do not have such luxury and depend on the work of older children. Thus, girls help their mothers in the house and boys help their fathers.

European women living in the country actively participate on the farm. They work in the garden, help with the harvest and with the animals, cook meals, make clothes for the entire family, and keep the household.

Women living in the city keep their households but have other possibilities open to them. They might, sometimes with their husband or alone, have their own business. They might keep taverns or hostels while the majority are servants or maids for wealthy families. Others might be seamstresses or cooks.

Another field in which we find European women working for their community is the religious sector. Nuns play an important role in the life of New France. They are the ones who take care of the sick and act as nurses. They are also teachers for young children, mostly girls. They administrate their lodging and even produce goods sold in the community. Poorer girls that enter the convent have the chance to gain an education from the other sisters.

Some women — mostly black or native girls — might be kept as slaves. They are bought by wealthy families to act as maids, cooks, or servants for their large households. Native slaves are called "panis."

Getting to know the market

- Using *Step 2: Learn more about each job* as a guide, learn about the types of jobs available to women in New France.
- Duplicate and distribute copies of *Learning About the Jobs* for students to use to record their findings.

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History
MYSTERYQUESTS
Torture and the Truth
Angélique and the Burning of Montreal

MysteryQuest 18 Support Materials 2 (Activity Sheet)

Learning About the Jobs

Type of Work	Tasks Involved in the Job	Required Skills	Working and Living Conditions
<i>Businesswoman</i> (innkeeper, laundry, broom maker)			
<i>Nun</i>			
<i>Servant/Maid</i>			
<i>Mistress of a large household</i>			
<i>Slave</i>			

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History®
MysteryQuest 18 - Working Women in New France
MysteryQuest 18 Home Website - Torture and the Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal

STEP 2: LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH JOB

Now that you have a general idea of the jobs a woman in New France might do, it will be helpful to learn more about the tasks involved in five common types of work that women performed:

- businesswoman (owner of shop, innkeeper, seamstress);
- nun;
- servant/maid;
- mistress of a large household;
- slave.

You can find specific information about each of these jobs in the "Primary documents" section of *Evidence in the Case*. These documents, organized according to each job, will help you find the following information:

- what is involved in the job;
- the required aptitudes or skills;
- the working and living conditions.

Record the information you find about each job on the chart *Learning About the Jobs*.

In completing this chart, you will have to think of the specific tasks involved in a job, what a person would have to know in order to do those tasks, and where the job might be done. This may require that you infer (make informed guesses) based on the information provided. For example, people who owned slaves kept the slaves in their houses. We can infer that the slaves probably received some food and lodging from their owners, but they would not have lived nearly as well as their owners did. As for the job of broom-maker, when we think about what a broom would look like in the 1700s, we can infer that perhaps the tasks involved in making a broom would include gathering fine twigs, preparing a handle, and fastening the twigs to the handle. We don't know the working or living conditions, but we can infer that since this was probably not a well-paying job, the broom maker likely made the brooms in her own home, which was probably not very luxurious.

- Explain that the documents they have already examined will give them some information, but they will have to make inferences and call on prior knowledge about what is involved in the job, the required aptitudes and skills, as well as the working conditions. Remind students that inferences have to be based on evidence.
- Point out that students will have to examine other documents to get a more complete list of the jobs available to women in New France. Direct them to the documents listed in *Evidence in the Case*.

EVIDENCE IN THE CASE

Secondary documents

Welcome

Introduction: The Trial in Context

Primary documents

Miscellaneous documents

François Montmorency de Laval, Pastoral letter against the extravagance and vanity of women in the church, Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques de Québec, 1887

Letters

Élisabeth Robbert de la Morandière (dite Madame Bégon), Extract of letters regarding dances, December 27, 1748 / January 18, 1749 / February 25, 1749 / March 6, 1749

Court documents

Juridiction royale de Montréal, Deposition of Louise Chaudillon, April 24, 1734
Jugements et délibérations du Conseil supérieur, Sentence rendered against Marie-Anne Sigouin found guilty of infanticide, May 7, 1732

Colonial correspondence

Agathe de Saint-Père, Letter on the goods produced in Canada, October 13, 1705

Charles-René Gaudron de Chèvremont, Indenture of Angélique Vignaud to Sieur Mailhot and his wife, December 15, 1736

Books

"Entering Religion", August 1, 1749, in *Travels of Pehr Kalm in Canada*, Pehr Kalm (Montréal: Pierre Tisseyre, 1977), p. 202

"Description of a convent of sisters in the city of Québec", August 8, 1749, in *Travels of Pehr Kalm in Canada*, Pehr Kalm (Montréal: Pierre Tisseyre, 1977), p. 228-231

Learn about Rose's qualities

- Using *Step 3: Learn about Rose's qualities* as a guide, explain to students that they are now ready to see which of the jobs they have analysed would be best for their cousin, Rose. Read aloud *Learning About Rose* or duplicate and distribute a copy of it.

MysteryQuest 18 Support Materials 3 (Briefing Sheet)

Learning About Rose

Rose is a 14-year-old girl living in France. She has two sisters and three brothers. They live with their parents in a small village where their father has a fairly prosperous farm. The boys work on the farm, the girls help at home. Rose's mother, your aunt, was fortunate enough to receive some schooling so she has taught all of her children how to read the Bible. There are not many suitable young men in the village for Rose to choose as a husband so it has been decided that she will come to Montreal to work. Other than being able to read and write her name, Rose's only other skills are domestic – she can sew and has helped her mother with other household tasks such as laundry, cleaning, and cooking. She is eager to learn but is very shy and has trouble meeting new people. The family has been able to raise enough money to send Rose off with 400 ecus* to help her get established. Rose does not know what kind of work she would like to do, but she is kind and loving and would like to feel she belongs somewhere.

*In several documents, you will find references to different coins used in New France. For example, a regular day labourer was paid 30 to 40 sols. For giving testimony about the fire, Louis Langois was paid 45 sols and his wife, Marie, was paid 30 sols. To help you understand the amounts, here are the equivalents for those coins:

1 liard = 3 deniers
12 deniers = 1 sol
20 sols = 1 livre
6 livres = 1 ecu

(Encyclopedia of Acadian-Cajun Genealogy & History: Money, <http://www.acadiancajun.com/money.htm>)

STEP 3: LEARN ABOUT ROSE'S QUALITIES

Once you have read the documents in *Evidence in the Case* and completed the chart *Learning About the Jobs*, you are to consider which one job is most suitable for your cousin, Rose. To do that you must learn more about Rose's background and skills. Read the description of Rose found in *Learning About Rose*.

- Instruct students to work with a partner to list Rose's attributes and skills. You may want to ask students to share their lists with the whole class if you think it will help them complete the remainder of the challenge more successfully.

Apply the criteria

- Using *Step 4: Apply the criteria* as a guide, explain to students that they are now ready to see which job Rose is most suited for. Point out that they will need to use criteria to make certain it is the right job for Rose. As a class, brainstorm possible criteria.

STEP 4: APPLY THE CRITERIA

Now that you have an idea of what Rose might be able to do, you must look to find the most suitable job for her. If the job is the right one, Rose will possess the necessary skills, it will match her personal goals, and the living/working conditions will be satisfactory to her.

The chart *Reviewing Each Occupation* will help you assess each job option. The left-hand column lists the five jobs you are considering. The other three columns list the criteria for an appropriate job:

- Rose possesses the necessary skills;
- the job matches her personal goals;
- the job provides satisfactory living/working conditions.

Refer back to the information you recorded earlier on your chart, *Learning About the Jobs*. Use the new chart *Reviewing Each Occupation* to indicate on the scale from "4" (Completely met) to "0" (Not met at all) how each job fulfills each of these criteria. For example, does Rose completely possess the necessary skills to be a businesswoman (4), or does she not have these skills at all (0), or perhaps she has them just a little bit (1). Circle the number that best fits your decision. After you have made your assessment, record the evidence you used in your decision. Remember, you may have to make inferences (conclusions based on evidence) from what you know about Rose's life in France and the way of life and available jobs in New France.

- Duplicate and distribute copies of *Reviewing Each Occupation*. Explain to students that the various jobs are listed down the left-hand column and the criteria for a suitable occupation are listed across the top of the other three columns. Students are to record the relevant information in the appropriate box and then rate how well the criteria are met for each occupation.
- Instruct students to use the information on the chart *Learning About the Jobs* to see to what degree each type of work fulfills the criteria. For example, does Rose possess the necessary skills to be a business woman completely, somewhat, or not at all? Remind students that they may have to make inferences from what they know about Rose, as well as the available jobs. Remind them also to note the evidence they used in their decision.

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History
MYSTERYQUESTS
Torture and the Truth
Angélique and the Burning of Montreal

MysteryQuest 18 Support Materials 4 (Activity Sheet)

Reviewing Each Occupation

Job	Possess necessary skills	Fits with personal goals	Satisfactory living/working conditions
Business woman	4 3 2 1 0 Completely Not at all	4 3 2 1 0 Completely Not at all	4 3 2 1 0 Completely Not at all
Maid	4 3 2 1 0 Completely Not at all	4 3 2 1 0 Completely Not at all	4 3 2 1 0 Completely Not at all

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History
MysteryQuest 18 - Working Women in New France
MysteryQuest 18 Home Website - Torture and the Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal

Step 5: Write your letter

- As a class, discuss job opportunities in New France. Ask students to consider Amélie's own likes and dislikes, as well as own aptitudes and talents. Guide students to consider aspects such as freedom, money, living conditions, being your own boss, and any other criteria students think are important.
- Using *Step 5: Write your letter* as a guide, instruct students to assume the persona of Amélie and write a letter to Rose. Explain that their letter should have three parts:
 - indicate what job they think is best suited for her;
 - write a description of the job (what will she do, where will she work);
 - convince Rose using the three criteria as the basis for their reasoning.
- Explain that they must try to persuade Rose that the type of work they are proposing is the best one possible for her. They should link their choice with the criteria and give a concrete example using their knowledge of the task.
- If you feel your students will be more successful if they are given an example, read aloud the following:

Dear Rose,

I think you should become a maid because you are a good housekeeper (Link to Criteria). If you become a maid, your job will be to take care of your employer's house - something I know you are very good at (Example using knowledge of the work).

STEP 5: WRITE YOUR LETTER

Now that you have assessed each of the jobs, it is time to write the letter to Rose. Taking on the persona of Amélie, write a letter to your cousin explaining what job she should look for when she arrives in New France. Your letter should have three parts:

1. indicate the one job you think she is best suited for;
2. write a description of the job (what will she do, where will she work);
3. convince your cousin using the three criteria as the basis for your reasoning.

You must convince your cousin that the type of work you are proposing is the best type for her. To do so, you must explain how your choice matches the criteria for an appropriate job. Provide information about Rose and about the job you have selected to show why that job is most suitable for your cousin.

Evaluation

- Use the rubric *Assessing the Evidence and Conclusions* to assess students' ability to identify relevant and important evidence and offer plausible conclusions.
- Use the rubric *Assessing a Persuasive Presentation* to assess students' ability to create a dialogue from the perspective of an 18th century person and support an argument with evidence.



MysteryQuest 18

Evaluation Materials 1 (Rubric)

Assessing the Evidence and Conclusions

	Outstanding	Very good	Competent	Satisfactory	In-progress
Identifies relevant and important evidence	Identifies the most important and relevant statements in the documents.	Identifies the required number of relevant statements including most of the important ones in the documents.	Identifies some relevant statements in the documents but important ones are omitted.	Identifies some relevant statements in the documents but none of the important ones are included.	Identifies no relevant statements in the documents.
Offers plausible conclusions	The conclusions are highly plausible and highly justifiable in light of the evidence.	The conclusions are clearly plausible and justifiable in light of the evidence.	The conclusions are plausible and justifiable in light of the evidence.	The conclusions are plausible but are barely justifiable given the evidence.	The conclusions are implausible and not justifiable given the evidence.



MysteryQuest 18

Evaluation Materials 2 (Rubric)

Assessing a Persuasive Presentation

	Outstanding	Very good	Competent	Satisfactory	In-progress
Clear arguments supported with evidence	Arguments are very clearly presented and thoroughly supported with very convincing evidence.	Arguments are clearly presented and well supported by the evidence, with only minor gaps or unaddressed issues.	Arguments are quite clear and consistent with the evidence provided, but key issues are inadequately addressed.	Arguments are somewhat clear and some evidence is offered.	No clear arguments are presented and the evidence is largely irrelevant or missing.
Appropriate perspective and tone	Is very convincingly written from the assigned perspective and highly appropriate for the intended audience.	Is convincingly written from the assigned perspective and largely appropriate for the intended audience.	Is generally written from the assigned perspective and often appropriate for the intended audience.	Some parts are written from the assigned perspective and may be somewhat appropriate for the intended audience.	Is not written from the assigned perspective and is not suited to the intended audience.

Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History®
MysteryQuest 18 – Working Women in New France
MysteryQuest 18 Home Website – Torture and the Truth: Angélique and the Burning of Montreal

Extension

- Invite students to work individually or as a class to pursue the suggested activities listed in *Extension*.

EXTENSION

Assume the role of Rose

Once you have written your letter, exchange it with another person. Take on the role of Rose answering her cousin. Tell her if she has convinced you or not, giving examples to support your opinion.

Compare how times have changed

In this MysteryQuest, you have taken on the role of Amélie, a young girl living in New France in 1734. Let us return to the present. Would your letter be much different if instead of writing in the context of 1734, you were writing to a French cousin in 2006? What type of work would you advise her to take? Would you use the same criteria?

Advise a male about his options

You now have a better idea of the work opportunities for women in New France. What about men? Suppose that instead of writing to Rose, Amélie was writing to her cousin, Nicolas. Using the documents available in Society, follow the steps explained in this MysteryQuest to determine what work would have been available and most suitable for a young man in New France.