



Mardi Gras Secondary



Historic Homes • Gardens • Artifacts • Costumed Crafts People
Boat Tours • Gift Shop • Restaurant



Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at <http://www.vermilionville.org/vermilionville/educate/lesson-plans>.

Grade 7

Social Studies

Historical Thinking Skills

- **GLE #45:** Explain the point of view of key historical figures and groups in U.S. history (H-1A-M2)
- **GLE #50:** Conduct historical research using a variety of resources, and evaluate those resources for reliability and bias, to answer historical questions related to U.S. history (H-1A-M6)

Grade 8

Social Studies

Places and Regions

- **GLE #9:** Explain ways in which goals, cultures, interests, inventions, and technological advances have affected perceptions and uses of places or regions in Louisiana (G-1B-M4)

Physical and Human Systems

- **GLE #12:** Describe the causes and effects of cultural diffusion and the effects of cultural diversity in Louisiana (G-1C-M5)

Historical Thinking Skills

- **GLE #70:** Conduct historical research using a variety of resources, and evaluate those resources, to answer historical questions related to Louisiana history (H-1A-M6)

Louisiana History

- **GLE #75:** Describe the contributions of ethnic groups significant in Louisiana history (H-1D-M1)

Objectives

1. Students will analyze the roots of Mardi-Gras in French Louisiana.
2. Students will explain the importance of the Catholic religion in Acadian culture.
3. Students will describe the differences between New Orleans and Cajun celebrations.



Pre-Visit Activity

Materials needed: Mardi-Gras mask activity (document #1), rubber bands

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them [here](#), by clicking on

- Introduction to Vermilionville and
- Vermilionville PowerPoint

Prior to visiting Vermilionville, have students go home and ask 5 to 10 people the following questions:

- Why is Mardi-Gras celebrated?
- Where does it come from?
- Who celebrates it?
- What different places (cities/countries) celebrate Mardi-Gras?

The next day, lead a discussion on the students' pre-visit homework. Make a list of the different answers. Do not add too much personal input or correct students' ideas. Allow students to form their own opinions from each other. Give each student a Mardi-Gras mask activity sheet (document #1) to decorate, and hang them in the classroom.

Anchor Lesson

Materials needed: Mardi-Gras activities (documents #2-3-4)

Mardi Gras refers to events of the Carnival celebrations, beginning on or after the Epiphany (January 6) and culminating on the day before Ash Wednesday. *Mardi Gras* is French for "Fat Tuesday", reflecting the practice of the last night of eating richer, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season. Similar expressions to Mardi Gras appear in other European languages sharing the Christian tradition, as it is associated with the religious requirement for confession before Lent begins.

Mardi Gras falls on a different date every year because Easter is celebrated on a different date every year. Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, which occurs on March 20 or 21. Thus, Easter will always fall between March 22 and April 25. To find out when Mardi Gras is, you start with the date of Easter and back up six weeks (that gives you the first Sunday of Lent), and then back up four more days for Ash Wednesday. Mardi Gras is the day before Ash Wednesday.

On March 2, 1699, French-Canadian explorer Pierre Le Moyne Sieur d'Iberville, leading an expedition with his brother, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville, arrived at a plot of ground south of New Orleans, and named it "Pointe du Mardi Gras" when his men realized it was the eve of the festive holiday. His brother Bienville went on to establish "Fort Louis de la Louisiane", present-day Mobile, in 1702. In 1703, the tiny settlement celebrated America's very first Mardi Gras.

New Orleans was established by Bienville in 1718. By the 1730s, Mardi Gras was celebrated openly in New Orleans, but not with the parades we know today. In the early 1740s, Louisiana's governor, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, established elegant society balls, which became the model for the New Orleans Mardi Gras balls of today.



By the late 1830s, New Orleans held street processions of maskers with carriages and horseback riders to celebrate Mardi Gras.

The first Krewe was established in 1856 and it is called the Mystic Krewe of Comus. Comus held Mardi Gras parades from 1857 until 1991. In 1991, the New Orleans city council passed an ordinance that required social organizations, including Mardi Gras Krewes, to certify publicly that they did not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, in order to obtain parade permits and other public licensure. The Comus organization (along with Momus and Proteus, other 19th century Krewes) withdrew from parading rather than identify its membership.

In Cajun country, we celebrate Mardi Gras two ways. First, we have balls and parades like they do in New Orleans. Secondly, we also have what we call the traditional Mardi Gras, or the *Courir du Mardi Gras*. The *Courir* traces back to rural Medieval France, when villagers would celebrate spring together during what they called “feast of begging”. Those villagers would have been poor and short on food at the end of a long winter. They would disguise themselves and go through the countryside and make their way from castle to manor house to beg for food from the wealthy, dancing and singing in return for the generosity of the nobles. These traditions were carried to North America by European immigrants during the 17th and 18th centuries. The people of Louisiana have held on to many of their traditional customs, and the *Courir* is one of them.

In rural Acadiana communities such as Eunice, Mamou, Iota, Church Point, and Basile, to name a few, you can partake in those festivities. In the early morning, the runners will gather in a central meeting place, where the *Capitaine* and his co-captains will explain the rules and the traditions that must be followed. Some towns have people on horseback, some on trailers, some on foot, and others use a variation of all three methods. The *Capitaine* is the first to approach the houses along the route, to ask permission to enter on their property. At this point, some runners will attempt to sneak onto the property. They will be held in check by the *Capitaine* and his whip! Once on the property, the participants will play pranks on the farmers and beg for food for the communal gumbo that lies at the end of the route. A prized ingredient is a live chicken, which is usually thrown into the air for the *Mardi Gras* to chase through the muddy yards and fields.

Here at Vermilionville, we host a traditional *Courir* in the weeks preceding Mardi Gras. It is held yearly the 3rd Sunday before Mardi-Gras. It is a family friendly event and children, young and old, can get a chance to try and catch the chicken. Just remember to behave or the captain will whip you!





Have students put the different dates tied to Mardi-Gras on their calendar (Epiphany, Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, Easter).

Discuss the origin of Mardi-Gras and have students compare and contrast the different Mardi Gras celebrations we have in Louisiana.

Finally, give students the activities to complete (documents #2-3-4).

Post-Visit Activity

Students will write a narrative essay about one or more of the following topics:

- What would their costume look like if they were attending a traditional New Orleans ball? How would it differ from the traditional Courir costume?
- Predict what their experience at a traditional Courir de Mardi-Gras would be like.
- Write a letter to a relative in New York, describing how Mardi-Gras is related to south Louisiana's Catholic faith.

Evaluation

The teacher will assess the activity sheets for creativity, neatness, and completion. The teacher will read and grade the essay written during the Post-Visit Activity.



Document #1 - Mardi-Gras Mask Activity

Color the mask and cut it out. Use a hole-punch to make a hole near each end of the mask. Tie a rubber band through each hole and hook the rubber bands over your ears.



More ESL activities at weee.elcivics.com



Document #2 - Acrostic Poem

Acrostic poems are fun and easy to write. An acrostic is formed when the first letter in each line spells out a message, reading top to bottom. The message could be a single word or even a whole sentence.

For this acrostic poem, think of a word that starts with each of the letters in Mardi-Gras, then write it on the line next to that letter.

M is for

A is for

R is for

D is for

I is for

G is for

R is for

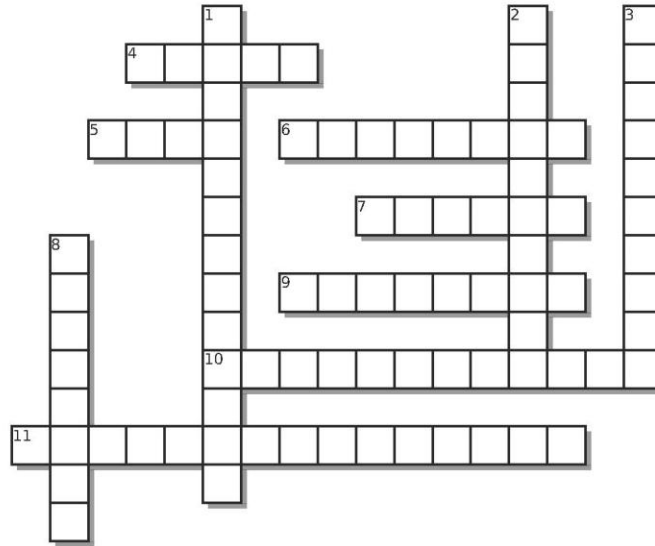
A is for

S is for



Document #3 - Mardi-Gras Crossword Puzzle

Test your knowledge of Mardi-Gras with this crossword puzzle.



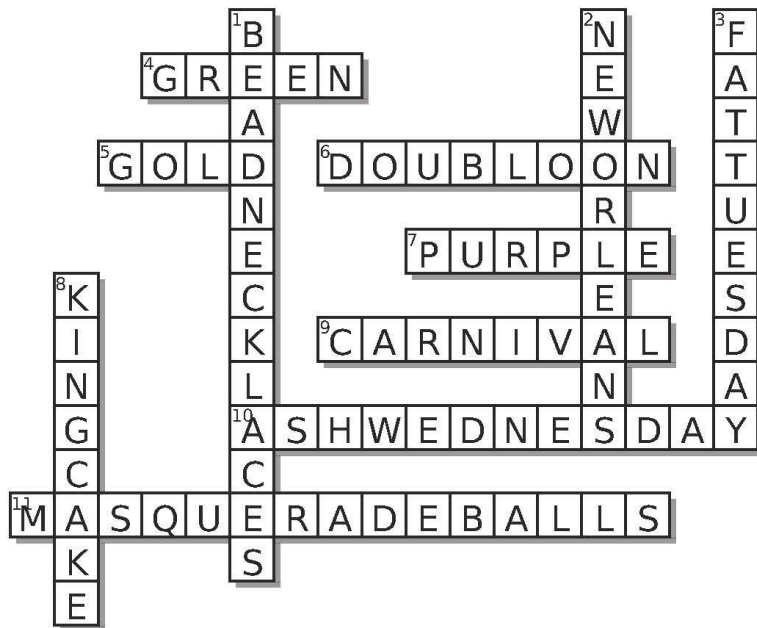
ACROSS

- 4 One of the official Mardi Gras colors; it represents faith
- 5 One of the official Mardi Gras colors; it represents power
- 6 A shiny, colored aluminum or plastic coin
- 7 One of the official Mardi Gras colors; it represents justice
- 9 In Brazil, people celebrate this equivalent of Mardi Gras
- 10 The day after Mardi Gras
- 11 People get dressed up and attend these

DOWN

- 1 These are thrown into the crowd during parades and worn around the neck
- 2 The city in Louisiana famous for its Mardi Gras celebrations
- 3 What Mardi Gras means
- 8 A sweet, doughnut-shaped cinnamon cake





Document #4 - Mardi-Gras Word Scramble

Rearrange the letters in each word or phrase below to make a list of words related to Mardi-Gras.

1. TAF EATDYUS	
2. DSEBA	
3. MASSK	
4. MUICS	
5. ECOMSTUS	
6. ACIAVLRN	
7. APRSADE	
8. EMAAEDURQS BSLAL	
9. SEETTR EIVFASSTL	
10. BOUDOLSON	
11. USTIEJC	
12. PELUPR	
13. TIFAH	
14. GEENR	
15. PRWEO	
16. GLDO	
17. ENW OLNSRAE	



1. TAF EATDYUS	Fat Tuesday
2. DSEBA	Beads
3. MASSK	Masks
4. MUICS	Music
5. ECOMSTUS	Costumes
6. ACIAVLRN	Carnival
7. APRSADE	Parades
8. EMAAEDURQS BSLAL	Masquerade balls
9. SEETTR EIVFASSTL	Street festivals
10. BOUDOLSON	Doubloons
11. USTIEJC	Justice
12. PELUPR	Purple
13. TIFAH	Faith
14. GEENR	Green
15. PRWEO	Power
16. GLDO	Gold
17. ENW OLNSRAE	New Orleans



Student Name: _____

Essay - Mardi Gras

CATEGORY	4 – Above Standard	3 – Meets Standard	2 – Approaching Standard	1 – Below Standard	Score
Focus on topic	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	Main idea is clear, but the supporting information is general.	Main idea is somewhat clear, but there is a need for more supporting information.	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information	
Introduction	The introduction is inviting, states the main topic, and previews the structure of the essay.	The introduction clearly states the main topic and previews the structure of the essay, but it is not particularly inviting to the reader.	The introduction states the main topic, but does not adequately preview the structure of the essay nor is it particularly inviting to the reader.	There is no clear introduction of the main topic or structure of the essay.	
Sequencing	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way they are presented sometimes makes the writing less interesting.	Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.	
Flow & rhythm	All sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud. Each sentence is clear and has an obvious emphases.	Almost all sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud, but 1 or 2 are awkward or difficult to understand.	Most sentences sound natural and easy-on-the-ear when read aloud, but several are awkward or difficult to understand.	The sentences are difficult to read aloud because they sound awkward, are distractingly repetitive, or difficult to understand.	
Word choice	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement of the words seems accurate, natural, and not forced.	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone.	Writer uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch, or flair.	Writer uses a limited vocabulary, which does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest.	



