



## *Mobilian Jargon Secondary*



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# Standards

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

## Grade 8

### Social Studies

#### Places and Regions

- **GLE #6:** Describe ways in which location and physical features have influenced historical events in Louisiana and the development of the state (e.g., Mississippi River/swamp in the Battle of New Orleans) (G-1B-M3)

#### Physical and Human Systems

- **GLE #11:** Explain why humans settled and formed societies in specific regions or why immigrant groups (e.g., Acadians) settled in specific areas of Louisiana (G-1C-M3)

#### Louisiana History

- **GLE #75:** Describe the contributions of ethnic groups significant in Louisiana history (H-1D-M1)
- **GLE #78:** Describe and analyze the impact of Louisiana's geographic features on historic events, settlement patterns, economic development, etc. (H-1D-M4)
- **GLE #80:** Trace the state's economic development and growth toward economic diversity (e.g., fur trade, tourism, technology) (H-1D-M5)
- **GLE #81:** Explain cultural elements that have shaped Louisiana's heritage (e.g., festivals, music, dance, food, languages) (H-1D-M6)

# Objectives

1. The learner will be introduced to the Mobilian language and pidgin languages.
2. The learner will create a new language and use it to barter with other groups.
3. The learner will explore communication techniques between French *courir de bois* and Louisiana Native Americans in early Louisiana.

# Additional Information

Materials needed: Document #1, document #2, pencils, scratch paper, items for language creation activity

# Pre-Visit Activity

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

**Mobilian dialect**, or Mobilian jargon as it is sometimes referred, was a pantribal pidgin language used among historic Native American tribes of Louisiana. The language used loanwords from Choctaw and served as a lingua franca among whites, blacks, and Native Americans in the South. Mobilian jargon also protected individual tribal languages. It was the language of trade. For a French trader, to be understood well was essential. Not being able to effectively communicate could result in dire consequences. The French *courir de bois*, or “runners of the woods”, used this language for business deals. Fur trade was big business during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and while out in the wild trapping, Native Americans worked closely with these *courir de bois* trading food and other supplies. Today, Native American words can still be found in our vocabulary and even place names. For example, Cajun French speakers more often than not refer to a raccoon as a *chaoui*, which is a Choctaw word. Other examples would be *choupique* (mud fish) or Plaquemine (Mobilian for persimmon). Encourage students to think of words or place names used in our local vernacular that may have Native American origins. For more information on this topic, refer to William Read’s “Louisiana Place Names of Indian Origin” (ISBN 978-0-8173-8072-4) and “The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana: From 1542 to the Present” by Kniffen, Gregory & Stokes (ISBN 0-8071-1963-6).

## Anchor Lesson

**Communicating and understanding – a classic game of telephone.**

Divide your class into 3-4 groups. Each group will designate a translator (it is important for each group to form a line with the translator at the rear so that he/she cannot hear the words at the beginning). Using document #1, give the first person in each group 3 words from any category (creatures, plants, people, etc...) and give the translator document #1. The object of the game is for the first person of each group to effectively repeat the words to the student behind them and, by the end, have the translator correctly translate Mobilian into English. The group with the correct translation at the end wins.

## Post-Visit Activity

**Create your own language**

Break the class into 3-4 groups again. Create a box for each group with 10-15 items in it (you can use pieces of paper with words on them, physical objects, pictures of objects, and abstract thoughts). Label the boxes 1-3 or 1-4 depending on how many groups you have. Next, have each group one at a time, come in front of class and examine their box of items.

10 minutes - The group will then name each item in the box using a new and original language that they create (use of other languages is not allowed). Students should spend time understanding the pronunciation of the words and meanings they are creating.

5 minutes – Next, the group will have a conversation amongst themselves in front of the class using the items from their box. This allows the group to practice their new vocabulary as well as allowing the other groups “learn” the language.

After all groups have completed this activity, present each group with a list of items. This is their trading list. Each group will need to obtain these items by bartering with the other groups using only the newly created vocabulary of their group and the others. During this activity, monitor students to ensure they are using only the vocabulary and no other languages, not even English! At the end of 10 minutes, the group with the most items acquired on their list wins.



# Evaluation

Students will be evaluated through their participation during the game of telephone and their effectiveness of working with others during the language creation exercise.

# Differentiation of Instruction

Students with hearing impairments may be placed at the front of the line during the telephone game and shown the words in written form before repeating to the next student.

Kinesthetic learners will benefit from the language creation activity by engaging with other students.





## Mobilian Word Lists

Creatures	
Mobilian	English
Tchuntchoupa	Alligator
Nita	Bear
Kankan	Chicken
Chaillekché	Crawfish
Nanni	Fish
Sapantak	Mosquito
Sainti-oulou	Rattlesnake

Other	
Mobilian	English
Pinni	Pirogue
Tayambo	Cup
Tananbo	Gun
Anounacha-bénilé	Chair
Mite	Come
Nichekine	Eye
Lowack	Fire
Tchouka	House
Bachepo	Knife
Atchi-ninack	Moon
Pissa	Look
Atchi-lachepa	Sun
Bana	Want
Oke	Water

Plants & Food	
Mobilian	English
Bissa	Blackberry
Pasca	Bread
Tantché	Corn
Šankolo	Cypress
Plaquemine	Persimmon

People	
Mobilian	English
Hinki	Father
Taik	Woman
Šnu	You
Na	I
Oše	Child
Illap	Him/her
Attak	Man/person

Descriptive words	
Mobilian	English
Loussa	Black
Billa	Fat
Houma	Red
Toutchino	Three
Toucoulou	Two
Fina	Very
Atta	White



## Mobilian Word Search



## Word Bank

Atchilachepa

Nita

Chaillekche

Pasca

Hinki

Pinni

Kankan

Lowack

Nanni

Sankolo

Sapantak

Tchuntchoupa



