



## Saskatchewan Grain Elevators

A grain operator will visit the classroom. From this visit, students will gain an understanding of exactly what Saskatchewan grain elevators are used for, how they are built, how they are operated, and the history behind them.

**Outcome:**

RW4.2 Investigate the importance of agriculture to the economy and culture of Saskatchewan.

**Indicator:**

RW4.2 f. Trace the steps of a food product from the farm to the plates of consumers, and identify the various careers that contribute to this process in the agriculture and food processing industries.

RW4.2 g. Analyze the significance of Saskatchewan agricultural commodity exports to the province.

**Questions to Guide Inquiry:**

1. What is the function of a grain elevator?
2. How is the grain elevator constructed?
3. How have elevators changed over the years?
4. Why are grain elevators in our province disappearing?



About  
45 minutes  
over 2-3 days

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- \* pictures of elevators
- \* letter writing material

## Teacher Background

Excellent information on grain elevator operation and structure can be found at [http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/grain\\_elevators.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/grain_elevators.html).

## Before Activity

Display pictures of grain elevators for students to see as they enter the room. Ask students what they know about these structures. (Familiarity with the structure will differ, depending on the student demographics). Indicate there will be someone coming to the class who knows a great deal about these structures. This person is someone who works at a grain elevator.

Use a think/pair/share to generate questions to pose when the operator comes. See <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/strats/think/index.html>  
Ask for a student to volunteer to thank the speaker.



## During Activity

Share the curricular outcomes, indicators, and guiding questions with the guest speaker beforehand and give him/her an idea as to the questions the students will be asking.

Make sure, previous to the visit, that habits of effective listeners are reviewed with students.

A student will thank the speaker.

## After Activity

Students reflect in their journal by writing off the stem, I learned that....

Students will write a class thank you letter to the guest speaker with each student contributing one sentence describing the most important/interesting/significant thing he/she learned.

## Assessment

Teacher Checklist

- ✓ Could students generate meaningful questions?
- ✓ Did student journal indicate understanding?

## Lesson Resources

This site provides details on an elevator's purpose, structure, and operation. Diagrams are provided. [http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/grain\\_elevators.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/grain_elevators.html)

A website providing details of instructional strategies. [www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/saskschools](http://www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/saskschools)

A site for students to read about what happens at a grain elevator, the journey to markets, and the new shape of elevators. Numerous links to photographs. <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/strats/think/index.html>

This site provides information on the history of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and contains many excellent photos of elevators. <http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/wheatpool/gallery.php>

## Cross Curricular Connections

### ELA

Students are practicing the behaviours of effective listeners and speakers. Students are composing a letter with audience, purpose, and situation in mind.



Old wooden elevator in  
Asquith, SK



Elevators used to be in every town but are slowly disappearing

1842 - The first grain elevator is built by Joseph Dart of Buffalo, N.Y. Powered by steam, Dart's bucket elevator raised grain from lake boats to storage bins, where it remained until being shipped or milled. The elevator had a storage capacity of 55,000 bushels.



## Further Investigation

A visit to a grain elevator might be arranged as an alternative to a grain operator coming into the classroom. Possibly assign photography duties so interior pictures could be shared during classroom discussion back at school. Note: See Lesson 19 which is a lesson plan structured around such a visit.

The number of grain elevators in Saskatchewan is declining. Ask your students to research as to why this is the case. What are these older wooden elevators being replaced with?

Have students visit the following site to learn more about grain elevators. If a grain elevator operator is not available, a lesson could be built around this site. [www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/saskschools](http://www.aitc.sk.ca/educational-resources/saskschools)



In 1950 there were 3,035 elevators and in 2004 there were 197 elevators.



Some elevators are still in use

visiting the elevator