



Thinking About Ways We Work Together

How do we work together to support our families and sustain our communities?

The two inquiries in this opener introduce students to the concept of co-operation and what it means to work together to accomplish a job. Inquiry 1 explores the foundational principles of co-operation, and Inquiry 2 examines a case study relating to rural electrification in Alberta. Students will begin to understand the role of co-operatives, credit unions and unions in shaping Alberta's industries and economy.

Learning Outcomes

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| <p>4.3.1 appreciate the factors contributing to quality of life in Alberta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ value and respect their own and other cultural identities ◦ demonstrate respect for the rights, opinions and perspectives of others <p>4.3.3 examine, critically, Alberta's changing cultural and social dynamics by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How does living in a particular community, region or province help shape individual and collective identity? | <p>4.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ work collaboratively with others to complete a group task ◦ share information collected from electronic sources to add to a group task ◦ consider the needs and points of view of others <p>4.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ organize and present information, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration ◦ respond appropriately to comments and questions, using language respectful of human diversity |
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INQUIRY 1:

Thinking About Ways We Work Together

What does it mean to work together?

Time

- One period

Materials

- Large pre-cut blank puzzle pieces (one piece per group)
- Felt markers
- *Student Learning Guide 0.1.1 – Working Together – How Did Our Group Do?*
- *Student Learning Guide 0.1.2 – How I Cooperate – Think of the Ways*

Purpose

This opening activity draws on the key principles of co-operation—listening, sharing, taking turns, contributing, encouraging and including. The activity reinforces the importance of working together by examining both the product and the process of co-operation. After learning about these principles, students will co-operate—work together to make a puzzle that reflects these principles. Afterwards, they will step back and consider to what extent they utilized these principles during the process of making their icons, pictures or symbols for the puzzle.



MUSIC
s m a r t



PEOPLE
s m a r t



PICTURE
s m a r t



SELF
s m a r t



Learning Activity



1. Arrange students into six (6) small groups (three (3) students per group is best) to design an icon, picture or symbol. Designate a different principle of co-operation — listening, sharing, taking turns, contributing, encouraging and including — to each group. Their task will be to create an icon, symbol or picture that illustrates the principle they have been assigned.
2. Students will need to decide on the best representation through discussing the principle, drafting and drawing it, and being prepared to explain it to the class. Give a 15 - 20 minute time limit and visit each group to ensure that they understand the directions.
3. When all the icons, pictures or symbols are finished, piece the puzzle together, post it on the wall, and ask each group to explain their puzzle piece to the class.
4. Once the assessments have been completed, engage in a whole group discussion about the concept of *co-operation*.

Potential Questions

- Why is it important to co-operate? Make a list of all the benefits.
 - What are the main differences between working together and going along with the group?
 - What are the benefits of co-operation?
5. Most important, analyze this activity by asking students to think about their own behaviours using the peer assessment of co-operative group work, *Student Learning Guide 0.1.1 – Working Together – How Did Our Group Do?*

Assessment



Ask students to complete *Student Learning Guide 0.1.2 – How I Co-operate – Think of the Ways*. This could be a good assignment for them to do at home with their families.

Follow-up the next day with these questions for critical thinking:

- What might the world be like if people didn't work together?
- Why is working together important to our families, or to our communities?
- What benefits do workers gain from working together in their jobs or occupations?
- Do you think that workers should have rights protecting them and how they work together?



Activities for Extension

1. More Co-operative Information and Activities

The websites below provide basic information about co-operative concepts and great ideas for activities that engage students in co-operative games and tasks. Remember, the more students practice these principles, the more likely they are to internalize and use them in their daily lives.

- *The Canadian Co-operative Association* has a huge storehouse of information and some videos.
<http://www.coopscanada.coop/>
- *Co-operatives and Rural Communities* (9:09 minutes)
http://youtube.googleapis.com/v/GDOiFnuac-Q&hl=en_US&fs=1&
- Alternative Team Building ideas can be found on the *Teachers' Network* at <http://teachersnetwork.org/NTOL/howto/start/teambuild.htm>
- *GoodCharacter.com* "Teaching Guide: Cooperation for Grades K-5"
<http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/Cooperation.html>
- *University of Missouri, Team Building Activities for Elementary Students*
<http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/1045?locale=enhttp://www.abcand123learning.com/2009/03/life-skills-lessons-cooperation.html>

2. *The Janitor—A Documentary* <http://www.unionbook.org/video/the-janitor-a-short>. This 7 minute video highlights the work world of a school custodian. A good lesson in what is work, and how we can support and respect people who work, no matter what their job is.

3. Show students the You Tube video of Johnny Reid's song *Hands of a Working Man* http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xhplnm_johnny-reid-hands-of-a-working-man_music. Retrieve or print lyrics from Metro Lyrics: Beyond the Words April 16, 2012 <http://www.metrolyrics.com/hands-of-a-working-man-lyrics-johnny-reid.html>. Sometimes seeing the words helps students focus.



Explore the song, helping students understand the central message and the ways in which the pictures and the power of the music complement the lyrics. Push students to think critically by asking them to consider the work of other men (not just fathers, but grandfathers, uncles, etc.). Repeat this activity, focusing on the work women do.



Working Together – How Did Our Group Do?

Our Group

Think about how your group worked together developing your icon, symbol or picture. How would you rate your group actions in the following categories?

Co-operation Skill	1	2	3	4	5	Describe what you did (evidence)
	LOW				HIGH	
Listening						
Sharing						
Taking turns						
Contributing						
Encouraging						
Including						

What could we do in the future to improve our co-operative behaviours?



How I Co-operate — Think of the Ways

Provide 2 or 3 ways that you co-operate with the following groups.

Your Family	Your Friends
Your School	Your Community





A Case Study: How did farmers co-operate in bringing power to rural Alberta?

Time

- One to two periods

Materials

- *Teacher Backgrounder*
- Web site: www.stories.coop/BattleRiverREA-60YearsintheMaking
- <http://www.stories.coop/stories/video/60-years-making> (14 minutes)
- *Student Learning Guide 0.2.1 – Battle River Rural Electrification Association — 60 Years in the Making*

Purpose

This case study provides a good real-life example of how the principles of co-operation played out in bringing electricity to Alberta's farmers. In it we continue to explore the concept of co-operation by focusing on one Alberta farm co-operative—the Battle River Rural Electrification Association (BRREA). This co-operative has provided electrical service for rural Alberta for over sixty years. It will be critical to review the Teacher Backgrounder for more information.



WORD
smart



SELF
smart



MUSIC
smart



Learning Activities

1. Visualization (about 10 minutes)

Students will individually and quietly create a picture in their minds while being prompted by the bulleted list of suggestions below. After each suggestion, provide a few moments for them to think about what you are saying. Don't go too fast.

Start by asking students to shut their eyes and put a picture of their home in their minds (pause).

Prompt them with the following suggestions:

- Think about your kitchen and consider the appliances. Picture as many as you can. (pause) Focus on one kitchen appliance (your favorite) and consider how it operates. (pause) What would you do if it didn't work because of a power shortage? (pause) Now go to your family or living room. Picture an entertainment machine (i.e. TV, radio, computer, etc.) in that room. (pause) Imagine life without that machine. What would you do for entertainment? (pause) Now go to your bedroom. Do you have anything in your bedroom that requires power? Picture that. (pause) Again, how would life be different if you didn't have that electronic device? (pause) Continue with your own ideas in a similar vein.

2. Share your thoughts - Ask students to open their eyes, and share their first thoughts with a partner about what they "saw." Engage the class in a discussion about the importance of power in our daily lives and how we often take it for granted.

3. Video pre-viewing - Ask students to think about life on farms and consider the power needs of farmers and their families.

- What things would be powered by electricity on a farm? List these.
- What questions might you ask to find out about life on the farm before electricity?

4. View - *Battle River REA - 60 Years in the Making*

<http://www.stories.coop/stories/video/60-years-making>. This video features the Battle River Rural Electrification Association (REA). This co-op is located in the city of Camrose and serves its surrounding area. Stop and start the video at various intervals to guide a discussion that focuses on photos from the past and present, stories that talk about life on farms before electricity and song lyrics that provide even more context. The main point is to help students consider how and why farmers got together to create power companies to serve rural needs.

- How and why did they come together to meet individual and group needs?

5. Use *Student Learning Guide 0.2.1 – Battle River Rural Electrification Association — 60 Years in the Making* to reinforce some of the key principles of a rural cooperative. You may want to discuss each of the underlying values in the chart to ensure students understand and connect the terms with the principles as explored in *Student Learning Guide 0.1.1* of the Opening Activity.



Here is a guide to use with Grade 4 students.

Principles	Underlying Value	Grade 4 Language
1. Voluntary and Open Membership	INCLUSION (Contributing)	People chose freely to be a member.
2. Democratic Member Control	PARTICIPATION (Taking turns, listening)	Everyone has a say in decisions.
3. Member Economic Participation	EQUALITY (Sharing)	Everyone contributes money and profits are shared.
4. Concern for Community	SOLIDARITY (Encouraging, caring)	Concern for Community

Values and Beliefs – Co-operatives are dedicated to the values of openness, social responsibility and caring for others. They are distinguished from other businesses in that profit or economic well-being are balanced with the interests of the community.

Assessment

Teachers can ask students to turn in *Student Learning Guide 0.2.1 - 60 Years in the Making* for formative assessment.

Questions for Deeper Thinking and Follow-up

- What are examples of other types of co-operatives? For example, worker co-ops (Canadian Worker Co-op Federation), retail co-ops (Federated Co-operatives' groceries and gas bars, Best Western Hotels), credit unions, farmer co-ops, housing co-ops, consumer co-ops (Mountain Equipment Co-op).
- Speculate on how someone might start a co-operative once a need has been identified?
- What are other examples of people expressing values of inclusion, equality, and caring for others as individuals? As an organized group?



Activities for Extension

The following web sites provide ideas for engaging students in exploring co-operative stories and initiatives:

Stories.coop: www.stories.coop/ This web site offers stories of co-operatives from Canada and around the world through videos, slide shows and written works.

Servus Credit Union: <https://www.servus.ca/my-community/community-involvement/initiatives/pages/feel-good-ripple.aspx>
“Creating harmonious communities is the credit union way. That’s why we were inspired to start The Feel Good Ripple. This concept of sharing reinforces our strong cooperative beliefs; it’s also the reason we share profits with our members. This demonstrates just how different we are from the banks. Isn’t it nice to know you can bank with people who share the same values as you?”

Also the story, “The Wizard’s Way” [https://www.servus.ca/my-community-](https://www.servus.ca/my-community/community-)

[involvement/initiatives/winphall-the-wizard/pages/default.aspx](https://www.servus.ca/my-community/community-involvement/initiatives/winphall-the-wizard/pages/default.aspx). This a magical tale that features a young dragon, named Roary who is struggling to manage his allowance, and a financial wizard named Winphall. The Wizard helps Roary protect his treasure by getting his spending under control.

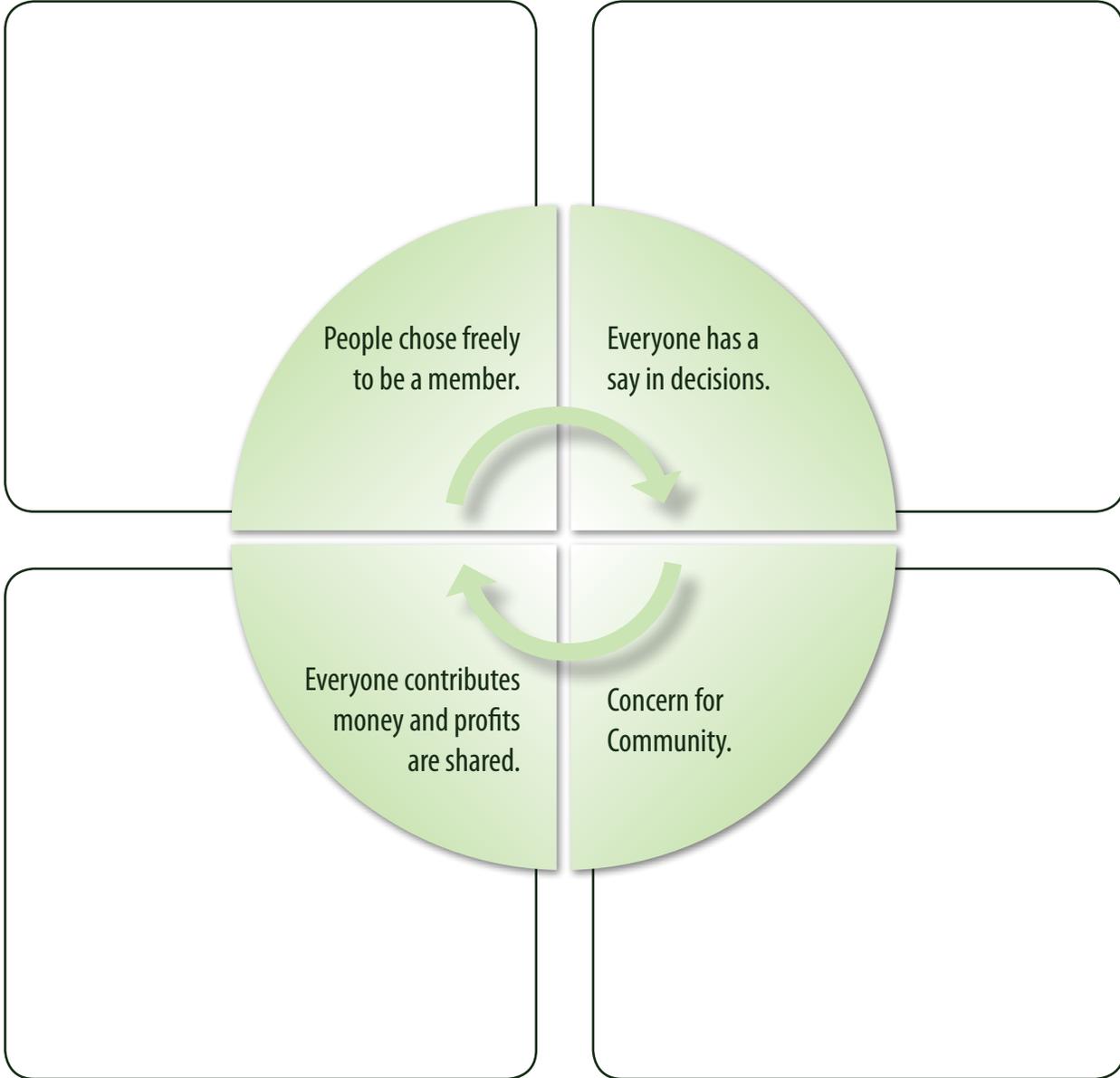
Moo2You: <http://www.moo2you.ca/roots.html>
“Why did dairy cooperatives start?”

“In the 1950s, the dairy industry faced a period of change and challenges. Many dairy farms specialized in producing one product, such as cheese or butter. Some people believed that dairy farms could benefit by combining the small community dairies into one large dairy processing company. Other people were loyal to their community dairies. However, dairy cooperatives were formed so that farmers could combine their resources, work together, and send their milk to one central place.”



Battle River Rural Electrification Association (REA) — 60 Years in the Making Video

Write evidence from the video of each characteristic of a co-op in the empty box.



What are beliefs and values shared by the farmers who built the Rural Electrification Associations?



Teacher Backgrounder

Co-operatives

Co-operatives are based on the co-operative values of “self-help, self-responsibility, democracy and equality, equity and solidarity” and the seven co-operative principles. This list has been condensed and reworded for Grade 4 (✓).

- Voluntary and Open Membership ✓
- Democratic Member Control ✓
- Member Economic Participation ✓
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training and Information
- Co-operation among Co-operatives
- Concern for Community ✓

Co-operatives are dedicated to the values of openness, social responsibility and caring for others. They are distinguished from other forms of incorporation in that profit or economic stability are balanced by the interests of the community.

From Rochdale Principles
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochdale_Principles

Rural Electrification Association (REA) History

Since the 1920s, Alberta farmers had petitioned the provincial government for rural electrification. However, the Great Depression hit and infrastructure development to rural areas was delayed

another 20 years. In 1946, the Social Credit government under Premier Ernest Manning, called for a plebiscite which asked the people of Alberta to decide whether or not power should be provided by private companies or publically through the government. Private ownership won by a narrow margin.

The Social Credit government advised farmers to unite together to form rural electrification associations to combine their own monies and work together to develop the needed infrastructure. Farmers formed limited liability organizations under the Co-operatives Associations Act called Rural Electrifications Associations (REA). REAs are farmer-owned, not-for-profit co-operatives. They distribute and provide service to their members. Over time, three hundred and eighty one co-ops were formed to bring power to rural Albertans.

There are many types of co-operatives: worker co-ops (Canadian Worker Co-op Federation), retail co-ops (Co-op Groceries, Best Western Hotels) farmer co-ops, housing co-ops, consumer co-ops (Mountain Equipment Coop). They all operate on similar principles in that they are owned and operated by the members and profits are shared among them.

From Wikipedia, Cooperative
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative>

More Background Resources

The Canadian Encyclopedia
http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1AR_TA0001903

Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, International Women's Day

<http://www.stories.coop/stories/video/dame-pauline-all-our-womens-stories-international-womens-day>

