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Features: Chapter 2: The Path to Confederation: 1860 – 1867 from Unit 1: Creating Canada: 1850 – 1890
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IN THE INTRODUCTION, you will be introduced to the discipline of history, as well as the inquiry skills and historical thinking concepts you will be using throughout this resource. Use the Introduction as a reference that you can turn back to throughout this resource.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the Introduction, you will be introduced to the discipline of history, as well as the inquiry skills and historical thinking concepts you will be using throughout this resource. Use the Introduction as a reference that you can turn back to throughout this resource.

**WHAT TOOLS CAN HELP US UNDERSTAND THE PAST?**

A historical perspective is the way one thinks about the past. Historians use historical thinking concepts to analyze and interpret the evidence they gather. These tools help them think about the past in different ways, allowing them to understand the events and people of the past.

**FORMULATE QUESTIONS**

A historical problem is a question about the past that you want to explore. It is important to have a clear and focused question that you can answer with evidence.

**INTERPRET AND ANALYZE**

Interpret evidence is to explain the evidence in light of the question. This involves looking at the evidence and coming to a conclusion about what it means.

**EVALUATE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS**

A historical account is a detailed description of events or actions. When evaluating evidence, historians must consider the accuracy and reliability of the sources.

**COMMUNICATE**

Communicating your findings is an important part of historical inquiry. Historians use various methods to share their findings, such as writing and giving presentations.
UNIT OPENER

There are two units in this book. Each unit has four chapters.

These bubbles contain questions from the viewpoints of the different historical thinking concepts. You will also see these bubbles throughout the chapters. Each colour always connects to the same thinking concept.

- **Purple** means Continuity and Change,
- **Orange** means Cause and Consequence,
- **Blue** means Historical Perspective, and
- **Yellow** means Historical Significance.

The timeline shows different events that occur throughout the unit.

The infographics reveal interesting information about the time period.

This is an introduction to the Unit Challenge, an activity that you will work on throughout the unit.
CHAPTER OPENER

The chapter opener introduces the theme and content covered in the chapter.

This is the main question that you will explore in the chapter.

These skills and ideas are covered in the chapter.

CHAPTER FEATURES

These questions represent the different historical thinking concepts. Each colour always represents the same thinking concept.

Important words are highlighted and defined directly on the page.

The figure reference tells you what the figure (image, photo, source, map, diagram, graph, or table) is about.

The Analyze question asks you to examine and interpret the figure (image, photo, source, map, diagram, graph, or table) in a different way.

Images from Nelson HISTORY7 shown above for the purpose of this sample material.
The History at Work features profile different careers related to history.

The Connecting to Our Past features profile young people who are actively connecting to Canada’s history—to people and events from our past.

Use the Check-In questions and activities to assess your understanding. Each question or activity is labelled with the historical thinking concept or the inquiry skill that it covers.
Each Focus On feature will help you look more closely at a historical thinking concept or an inquiry skill and practise using it.

Activity pages appear in every chapter to help you read, analyze, and create different kinds of maps and graphs, and read and analyze primary and secondary sources.
LOOKING BACK

You will have the opportunity to look back at what you have learned at the end of each chapter and each unit.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. Choose one of the topics below, and write a sentence summarizing the changes that took place in the chapter or unit on the topic of your choice.
2. Choose one of the topics below, and write a sentence summarizing the changes that took place in the chapter or unit on the topic of your choice.
3. Choose one of the topics below, and write a sentence summarizing the changes that took place in the chapter or unit on the topic of your choice.
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7. Choose one of the topics below, and write a sentence summarizing the changes that took place in the chapter or unit on the topic of your choice.
8. Choose one of the topics below, and write a sentence summarizing the changes that took place in the chapter or unit on the topic of your choice.

These questions and activities will help you apply your learning.

Each question relates to a historical thinking concept or an inquiry skill.

At the end of each chapter, you will complete a step in your Unit Challenge.

These activities will help you summarize what you have learned in the chapter.

The timeline shows different events you learned about throughout the unit.

The infographics reveal interesting information about the time period.

These instructions will help you complete your Unit Challenge.
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
How did different groups of people view the idea of Confederation?

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
What stayed the same and what changed for the colonies after Confederation?

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE
What were the consequences of Confederation on First Nations peoples and Métis?
In July 1867, some colonies of British North America united to form a country: the Dominion of Canada. The union of these colonies is known as Confederation. During the 1800s and early 1900s, other colonies and territories joined Confederation. The union of different colonies and territories was challenging because each had its own needs and concerns.

Today, we celebrate the coming together of the colonies and territories in Confederation every July 1st on Canada Day. Communities across the country mark the day with ceremonies, parades, concerts, and other events. As this photo shows, Parliament Hill in the nation’s capital, Ottawa, celebrates Canada Day with a spectacular light show and fireworks display.

In this unit, you will learn about the events and discussions that led to Confederation and the effects that Confederation had on different groups of people. You will then assess if Confederation was successful at unifying Canada.
Three colonies join together under Confederation to form the Dominion of Canada.

The United States passes the *Fugitive Slave Act*, resulting in a large number of Black people migrating to British North America. They used the Underground Railroad to escape slavery.

The Métis establish a provisional government with Louis Riel elected as president.

The federal government passes the *Manitoba Act*.

**UNIT 1: 1850–1890**

In Unit 1, you will explore the significant causes of Confederation and its consequences for various groups of people living in Canada. You will examine the events that contributed to the consequences, as well as the groups and individuals who played a central role.

As you work through Unit 1, you will learn how to identify important changes over time, determine the causes and consequences of those changes, and evaluate their impact on various groups of people. You will also learn how to use historical sources to interpret the past. At the end of the unit, you will respond to the Unit Big Question: *How successful was Confederation at unifying Canada?* by conducting an inquiry then writing an editorial, which you will present and defend at a press conference.

**What to Consider**

An editorial is an opinion-based article that is supported by evidence. In your editorial, you will take a position about which group you believe was most or least unified by Confederation.

**CREATE AN EDITORIAL**

**ESTIMATED POPULATION OF CANADA IN 1871** 3 736 904

Approximately 30 000 to 40 000 Black people came to British North America along the Underground Railroad.
Your editorial should include the following features:

- **Purpose:** What is the focus of your editorial? Which people, events, and consequences will you consider?

- **Historical thinking:** What caused the events and developments of Confederation? What were the consequences? Was everyone affected the same way? For the group that you selected, what were the long-lasting effects?

- **Research:** Which sources will you use to gather information and evidence? How will you check the evidence you find?

- **Perspective:** Whose perspective will you examine? What were the perspectives of other groups? What evidence will you use to support your opinion?

- **Conclusions:** What conclusions will you make about the success of Confederation in unifying the group that you selected? Was this group the most or least unified? What evidence supports your conclusions?

At the end of each chapter, you will use a log book to collect and record information and evidence about different groups of people and the effects of Confederation on each group. You will learn more about keeping a log book at the end of Chapter 1. You will use this information to help you write your editorial.
CHAPTER 2

THE PATH TO CONFEDERATION: 1860–1867
LEARNING GOALS
As you work through this chapter, you will
• understand the significance of Confederation
• identify the reasons for and challenges to Confederation
• analyze perspectives on the process of unifying British North America
• closely read primary source texts

Every July 1, many Canadians celebrate Canada Day. They paint their faces with red maple leaves, attend fireworks displays, and reflect on what Canada means to them. Why is July 1 officially Canada’s birthday? The answer has a lot to do with the people in this painting.

These are politicians and other leaders who attended at least one of three conferences between 1864 and 1867. The first conference was held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and was to include representatives from the Maritime colonies only. The goal of this meeting was to discuss a possible union of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick into one colony. However, representatives from the Province of Canada asked to attend. Their goal was to persuade the Maritime colonies of the benefits of an even larger union of colonies, known as Confederation. Two more conferences established the details of Confederation.

Artist Rex Woods created this painting, entitled The Fathers of Confederation, in 1967. What do you notice about the people in the painting? Who do you think may have been excluded from attending the conferences?

In this chapter, you will explore why some colonies joined together to form the Dominion of Canada on July 1, 1867. You will also consider whose voices were not heard in the decision making.
WHAT LED TO THE IDEA OF CONFEDERATION?

The colonies in British North America had been developing quickly. But between the colonies in eastern and western British North America was the vast expanse of Rupert’s Land and the North-Western Territory. This region was not a British colony, but it was controlled by the British through Hudson’s Bay Company.

A LAND DIVIDED

By 1864, Hudson’s Bay Company was looking to sell its interests in Rupert’s Land and the North-Western Territory, due to a steep decline in the fur trade. This area was home to thousands of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Look at the map in Figure 2.1. Who might be interested in gaining control of the region from Hudson’s Bay Company?

British North America and Surrounding Areas, 1864

**Figure 2.1** In 1864, British North America was made up of the regions shown in green on this map. **Analyze:** How might the expanse of British North America pose challenges to unifying it?
SEPARATE COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS

Although the colonies remained part of Britain, they operated independently of one another. They pursued policies that reflected their own best interests. Each colony had its own government of locally elected representatives, and each was dealing with political, economic, and military issues. Leaders in some of the colonies began to consider whether Confederation, a union of the colonies, was a possible solution to the issues. Read the speech excerpt from Thomas D’Arcy McGee in Figure 2.2. McGee was an Irish immigrant and member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. What obstacles might need to be overcome to make McGee’s vision for Confederation a reality?

THREATS FROM THE UNITED STATES

Geographically, British North America was very large, and its system of defence was inadequate for its size. This made the colonies and territories an easy target if the Americans decided to push north across the border. Many American settlers were already claiming lands south of the Great Lakes that were populated by First Nations such as the Potawatomi and Cheyenne. The Americans displaced these nations in pursuit of more land and resources. In what way was this similar to what was happening in British North America at the same time?

MANIFEST DESTINY

As they succeeded in advancing west, many Americans believed it was their manifest destiny, or obvious right, to take over all of North America. Examine the painting in Figure 2.3. What is the main message the artist is trying to convey about manifest destiny?

“I see in the not remote distance, one great nationality … all bound together by free institutions … and free commerce. I see a generation of industrious [hard-working], contented, moral men, free in name and in fact—men capable of maintaining, in peace and in war, a constitution [law and principles of a government] worthy of such a country!”

— Thomas D’Arcy McGee, Father of Confederation

FIGURE 2.2 Excerpt from a speech by McGee promoting Confederation in 1860. Analyze: Why do you think McGee repeats the word free in his speech?

FIGURE 2.3 Artist Emanuel Leutze produced this painting in 1861. It was the basis of the mural Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way on display in the United States Capitol where Congress meets. Analyze: What situations, symbols, and techniques does the artist use to represent manifest destiny?
THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
From 1861 to 1865, the United States was engaged in a civil war. It was a war of secession: a number of southern states wanted to break away from the rest of the United States. The main reason for this separatist movement was a disagreement about slavery. Most of the northern states had abolished slavery. But the southern states relied heavily on enslaved labour for their economic growth. The southern states tried to form a separate nation where slavery would be legal.

Britain declared itself neutral in the war. Neutrality meant Britain could continue to trade with both the northern and southern states. Britain strongly condemned slavery, but it also took measures to ensure the South did not cut off the supply of cotton to British textile mills.

The large army of the northern states won the war, keeping the United States together and ending slavery. This war caused the death of more than 600,000 Americans. It also increased American resentment toward Britain, and therefore toward British North America, for its divided support during the war. Examine Figure 2.4. What American threat is implied?

ANNEXATION BY THE UNITED STATES
After the American Civil War, the very large and well-trained American army had no battles to fight. Should it choose to, it could easily dominate the colonies in British North America where its borders were not well defended. British North Americans also feared that the American pursuit of manifest destiny would put them at risk of being taken over by the United States. Being taken over by another territory is known as annexation. Fear of American annexation grew when, in 1866, Massachusetts Congressman Nathaniel Banks introduced an Annexation bill in the United States Congress. A bill is the first step in creating a new law. Read the excerpt from the Annexation bill in Figure 2.5. How might this bill be used to support the idea of Confederation in British North America?

“Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America ... that from the date thereof, the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East, Canada West, and the Territories of Selkirk [Red River area], Saskatchewan, and [British] Columbia ... are constituted and admitted as States and Territories of the United States of America.”

— United States Annexation bill

FIGURE 2.4 In this 1861 cartoon, John Bull, the symbol of Britain, asks “Brother Jonathan,” a reference to the Americans, where they are running to. The Americans respond, “Just gwine [going] to take Canada.” Analyze: How would this cartoon increase fears of a United States invasion of British North America?

FIGURE 2.5 This is an excerpt from the July 2, 1866, Annexation bill, calling for the colonies of British North America to be incorporated into the United States. Analyze: What American attitude toward British North America does this bill convey?
THE UNITED STATES PURCHASES ALASKA

The Annexation bill did not pass. But the threat of annexation by the United States had been steadily increasing since 1859. It was then that Russia offered to sell Alaska to the United States. Russia lacked the financial resources to protect its interests in the region. Rather than sell Alaska to its European rival Britain, Russia approached the United States. The American Civil War delayed the sale, but the transaction was eventually finalized in March 1867 at a cost of $7.2 million (about $165 million in current Canadian dollars).

THREATS FROM IRISH NATIONALISTS

Another threat to the security of the colonies in British North America came from the Irish Republican Brotherhood, also known as the Fenians. The Fenians opposed British rule over Ireland. They began forming as a secret society in Ireland in 1858.

In the United States, some Irish soldiers who had served in the American Civil War joined the Fenians. They plotted an armed invasion of British North America. The Fenians believed that the British colonies were vulnerable to attack and planned to take them hostage until Britain granted independence to Ireland. Many colonists feared that sentiments among Fenian immigrants in the United States would spill over into British North America.

Look at the painting in Figure 2.6. It shows militia in Orangeville, Ontario, preparing to defend against the Fenian invaders. What does this painting reveal about British North America’s reaction to the Fenian threat?
FOCUS ON

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

To understand the past, historians research evidence of events, people, and developments. But how do they decide which stories to tell? Asking questions about the research they gather helps historians determine who and what might be historically significant and why.

When you think about the historical significance of various events, people, and developments, you can ask yourself the following questions:

- Did the event, person, or development create a long-lasting change?
- If so, how many people were affected, and were they affected profoundly or deeply?
- Was this the first time that an event such as this occurred or an idea such as this was introduced?
- Does this event, person, or development reveal something about the past that is different from the present?
- How did the significance of this event, person, or development vary for different people?
- Has the historical significance of this event, person, or development changed over time?

CASE STUDY: FENIAN RAIDS

The Fenian raids were a series of small, failed invasions into British North America that occurred between 1866 and 1871. They received a lot of attention from people living in the British colonies. Examine the evidence in this case study and answer the inquiry question: Were the Fenian raids historically significant?

The Fenians began their mission in April 1866, targeting Campobello Island, New Brunswick. The colonial government knew about the plan and was able to quickly put down the attack with only a few buildings destroyed. However, the attack raised fear in the people of New Brunswick.

On June 2, 1866, about 800 Fenians attacked farther west, crossing the Niagara River from Buffalo, New York, into Canada West. The Fenians clashed with an inexperienced colonial militia at Ridgeway, near Fort Erie. Many of the colonial soldiers were college students who had learned to fire a rifle only the day before. The Fenians won a victory here and advanced toward Fort Erie. The two sides fought another bloody battle until the Fenians were forced to retreat back into the United States when additional colonial militia and British troops arrived.

In total, 10 colonial soldiers were killed in the battle at Ridgeway. Examine Figure 2.7, which depicts a funeral of volunteer soldiers killed at Ridgeway. This image appeared in a British newspaper. What do you think the artist was trying to communicate to his audience?
A few days after the battle at Fort Erie, the Fenians captured and stole goods from two small villages in Canada East, near Vermont in the northeastern United States. Their aim was to take control of Montréal. However, colonial troops defeated the Fenians near present-day Saint-Armand, Québec, before they were able to reach the city.

The Fenian raids heightened the colonists’ distrust of American authorities. Read Figure 2.8. It contains part of a letter written by a young militia soldier about the Fenian raids. What does this excerpt tell you about the relationship between British North America and the United States?

"I ... am satisfied that a deep seated conviction [belief] was in the public mind of the Canadians that the American Authorities were not overly anxious to preserve peace on our borders. When one remarks surely the American Authorities were lax [not strict enough] in preventing the raid Canadians merely remark 'we never expected better of them' and rush on patiently to prepare for war against the Fenians.... They were surprised that the Fenians should have made the raid but scarcely at all astonished that they should have escaped the vigilance [attention] of the American Authorities."

— Alexander James Christie

After the Fenian raids, colonial officials decided to provide the militia with more training and better weapons. Support also grew for uniting the colonies to strengthen defenses. In the elections that followed the raid in New Brunswick, voters in the colony elected the politicians who supported Confederation, partly because of the Fenian threat.

**TRY IT**

1. Are the Fenian raids historically significant? Use evidence in this feature to answer at least two of the significance questions.
2. Are the Fenian raids relevant to us today? Why, or why not?
ECONOMIC ISSUES
North America had been a source of riches for Britain for more than 200 years. To keep control of the land and its valuable fur, fish, and timber resources, Britain had fought many lengthy and costly battles.

DEFENCE COSTS TO BRITAIN
In the 1860s, Britain helped protect the colonies in British North America from a possible takeover by the Fenians and from threats posed by American annexation. In 1862 alone, Britain sent more than 10 000 troops to British North America to defend it from any danger posed by the American Civil War. During the winter months, the St. Lawrence River was frozen, so soldiers could not travel inland by ship. Instead, they had to march a very lengthy distance northwest through New Brunswick to reach their posts in Canada East and beyond. Examine the image in Figure 2.9, which depicts this event. What do the details suggest about some of the challenges British soldiers faced protecting British North America?

FIGURE 2.9 This colour wood engraving on woven paper is entitled British Troops on the March—Canada. It was created by George C. Leighton and appeared in The Illustrated London News on March 15, 1862. Analyze: Who is shown helping the British soldiers on their mission?
Read the editorial statement in Figure 2.10. What does this source reveal about Britain’s attitude toward defending British North America in the 1860s?

“Conscious as we are of our inability to protect these colonies by land in case of war, we must naturally rejoice at any event which seems to place them in a position in which they would be better able to protect themselves.”

— Editorial, London Times

**FIGURE 2.10** This statement was published in the *London Times* on October 15, 1864. **Analyze:** Why do you think Britain would “naturally rejoice” if British North America were better able to protect itself?

### NEED FOR NEW MARKETS

Recall from Chapter 1 that the United States cancelled the Reciprocity Treaty with Britain in 1865. British North America lost the favourable tax rate it had enjoyed on goods exchanged with the United States. This had a negative impact on the economy of the colonies. As a result, they were eager to find new markets for their products and resources. Read the speech excerpt from George Brown in Figure 2.11. Brown was the leader of the Liberal Party in the Province of Canada and founder of the *Globe* newspaper. How does Brown explain that Confederation would offer a solution to the economic troubles?

**FIGURE 2.11** Excerpt from a speech by Brown given in Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 12, 1864. **Analyze:** What impact does Brown imply Confederation will have on the United States?

“But far in advance of all other advantages would be this, that union of all the Provinces would break down all trade barriers between us, and throw open at once to all a combined market of four millions of people. You in the east would send us your fish and your coals and your West India produce, while we would send you in return the flour and the grain and the meats you now buy in Boston and New York.”

— George Brown, Father of Confederation

### CHECK-IN

1. **FORMULATE QUESTIONS** Skim this section and record three to five questions you have about what led to the idea of Confederation.

2. **COMMUNICATE** Create an image-based message for social media that reflects Britain’s desire for its colonies in British North America to look after their own affairs.

3. **HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** Rank the reasons in support of uniting the colonies in order of significance.

4. **CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE** What were the intended and unintended consequences of the Fenian raids?
By the mid-1860s, British North America was facing various threats from the United States. Each colony was also dealing with challenges within its own borders. In the Province of Canada, the French-Catholic majority in Canada East and the English-Protestant majority in Canada West were locked in conflict. The Atlantic colonies needed ways to boost their economic development after the Reciprocity Treaty was cancelled. In the West, the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were facing financial problems after the end of the gold rush.

CONFLICTS IN THE PROVINCE OF CANADA

In the Province of Canada, ruling two very different groups with one government was challenging, especially as the population grew. The government grew politically unstable. In Canada West, Conservative Party leader John A. Macdonald and Liberal Party leader George Brown were bitter rivals. They were divided over many issues, in particular those concerning French rights. Brown wanted to diminish French political power in the Province of Canada and assimilate French Canadians. Macdonald wanted to uphold the rights of the French and protect their equal representation in the government. Both leaders eventually agreed that unifying colonies through Confederation offered a better chance of resolving the political conflict over Canada East. This is because Confederation would mean that Canada West and Canada East would each have its own local government but would also work together under one federal, or centralized, government.

Examine Figure 2.12, which depicts the moment at which Brown and Macdonald decided to work together. Why might this decision be considered a turning point on the path to Confederation?

FIGURE 2.12 This undated artwork by C.W. Jefferys is entitled George Brown and John A. Macdonald Meet to Inaugurate Confederation. The term inaugurate means to begin or introduce. Analyze: What details in the painting suggest that this meeting between the two leaders was significant?

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES TO CONFEDERATION?
Many people in Canada East were opposed to the idea of Confederation. But their political leader, George-Étienne Cartier, believed the union would deliver greater protections, more independence, and a better future for the French. Cartier may have been persuaded in this belief by the support Macdonald had shown in protecting French-Catholic rights in the Province of Canada. Read the quote in Figure 2.13. What is Cartier’s vision for the new, unified country?

**THE GREAT COALITION**

Macdonald, Brown, and Cartier formed an unlikely alliance in June 1864, known as the Great Coalition. The three leaders began working toward creating a federal system for the Canadas. But the goal was to expand the arrangement to include other colonies in British North America, as well as Rupert’s Land and the North-Western Territory. A legislative union would give more power to the central government for making laws and running the country. A federal union would give power to the central government, as well as to the provinces to run their own affairs.

Officials in Britain supported the idea of a union. But there were groups in every region of British North America that did not support the idea. They believed that uniting the colonies under one central government would cause more problems than it would solve.

**CONCERNS IN CANADA EAST**

Read the excerpt from a speech by Jean-Baptiste-Éric (J.B.E.) Dorion, a journalist and politician from Canada East, in Figure 2.14. What is Dorion’s primary concern about Confederation?

“[I]f union is attained, we shall form a political nationality with which neither the national origin, nor the religion of any individual, will interfere. It was lamented by some that we had this diversity of races, and hopes were expressed that this distinctive feature would cease. The idea of unity of races is utopian—it is impossible.... In our own Federation we will have Catholic and Protestant, English, French, Irish and Scotch, and each by his efforts and his success will increase the prosperity and glory of the new Confederacy.”

— George-Étienne Cartier, Father of Confederation

“I oppose Confederation because I foresee innumerable difficulties with the joint powers given to the local and general governments in several areas. These conflicts will always be resolved in favour of the general government and to the detriment of the often legitimate claims of the Provinces.”

— J.B.E. Dorion, anti-Confederationist from Canada East
CONCERNS IN THE ATLANTIC COLONIES

The Atlantic colonies had resource-based economies. They benefited from strong trade relationships with Britain, the United States, and beyond. Examine the population graph in Figure 2.15. Why do you think there was limited support for Confederation among those living in the Atlantic colonies?

NEWFOUNDLAND

Newfoundland’s economy was suffering in the 1860s due to a decline in the cod- and seal-fishing industries. Government revenue had decreased as a result. Almost one-quarter of the revenue the government took in was spent on providing relief to those struggling in poverty. Some vocal opponents of Confederation, such as merchant and mining entrepreneur Charles Fox Bennett, persuaded Newfoundlanders that the economic decline was temporary. He used fear tactics to further the movement against Confederation. Read his editorial comment in Figure 2.16. Why would Newfoundland’s geographic location provide a strong argument against the colony joining Confederation?

“We are chiefly and almost wholly by nature’s laws a fishing population, possessing rich resources in our fisheries ... The sending of Delegates [representatives] to Canada ... would entail a very heavy expense ... the sacrifice of our independent legislation [laws] and the control of our own rich colonial resources for the benefit of that nationality which ... can confer [grant] but few and trifling [insignificant] benefits on us.”

— Charles Fox Bennett, anti-Confederationist

FIGURE 2.16 Excerpt from an editorial Bennett wrote to The Newfoundlander, December 5, 1864. Analyze: Who does Bennett say will benefit from Confederation?
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
The people in Prince Edward Island had developed strong trading ties with Britain and the United States. Their main industries were timber, farming, and shipbuilding. Read Edward Palmer’s remarks in Figure 2.17. Palmer was premier of Prince Edward Island from 1859 to 1863. How do his concerns about Confederation compare with J.B.E. Dorion’s statement in Figure 2.14?

NOVA SCOTIA
Nova Scotia’s former premier Joseph Howe actively opposed Confederation. He wrote a series of 12 letters, called the Botheration Letters, that were published in the Halifax Morning Chronicle in early 1865. What is Howe arguing for in the letter excerpt in Figure 2.18?

NEW BRUNSWICK
In the mid-1860s, New Brunswick was split politically over Confederation. Anti-Confederation politician Albert J. Smith led his fellow opponents of Confederation to victory in the 1865 general election. How is the concern Smith notes in Figure 2.19 similar to the concerns expressed by other anti-Confederation leaders?

Smith resigned in 1866 due to pressure from Britain to reconsider a union among the colonies. Another election was called and former premier Samuel Leonard Tilley, a pro-Confederation politician, won.

FIGURE 2.17 Palmer delivered these remarks in April 1864. Analyze: What is Palmer’s main concern regarding Confederation?

“[W]e would submit our rights and our prosperity ... into the hands of the general government and our voice in the united Parliament would be very insignificant.”
— Edward Palmer, Father of Confederation

FIGURE 2.18 Excerpt from a Botheration Letter by Howe dated January 11, 1865. Analyze: What does Howe imply Nova Scotia might lose by joining Confederation?

“[N]ova Scotia, secure of self-government ... has been blessed with a good crop, an abundant fishery, a healthy season; her mining interests are extending; her shipyards have been busy all the year; her railroads are beginning to pay, and her treasury is overflowing... We have not a question to create angry discussion with the mother country, with our neighbours in the United States, or with the Governments of the surrounding colonies... Who says, then, that something should be done?”
— Joseph Howe, Nova Scotia’s former premier

FIGURE 2.19 Smith expressed this concern about Confederation in the winter of 1864-1865. Analyze: What do you think the phrase “we shall be at the feet of Canada” means?

“[[I]n a few years we shall be at the feet of Canada—Upper Canada—who will exercise control not only over Lower Canada but also over us.”
— Albert J. Smith, premier of New Brunswick
A POSSIBLE MARITIME UNION

As you read in Chapter 1, the Maritime colonies were dealing with many challenges. Arthur Hamilton Gordon, the lieutenant-governor of New Brunswick, was concerned that a union with the Province of Canada would destroy the Maritime colonies’ power and independence. Gordon instead believed that a Maritime union of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island offered a solution to many of their challenges. A Maritime union would also allow these colonies to pool their tax dollars to pay for much-needed infrastructure, such as roads and railways.

In September 1864, leaders from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island met to discuss the union of their three provinces at the Charlottetown Conference. You will learn more about the Charlottetown Conference later in this chapter. Figure 2.20 shows a sculpture of former premier John Hamilton Gray of Prince Edward Island (right) speaking with former premier of New Brunswick John Hamilton Gray (left) at the Charlottetown Conference. Both men had the same name but were not related, and they both went on to become Fathers of Confederation. Why do you think this conversation was so significant that it was commemorated in a sculpture 150 years later?
INCLUSION OF THE NORTHWEST REGION

By the time Confederation was being considered, the fur trade was in serious decline in British North America. The bison were disappearing, and some First Nations were suffering from food shortages, famine, and new diseases brought over by the settlers.

Despite not owning the North-Western Territory and Rupert’s Land (see Figure 2.1), Hudson’s Bay Company owned the rights to the fur trade in the region. Supporters of Confederation were eager to take over this vast land. They were worried about rumours that Hudson’s Bay Company was willing to sell its dominion over the region to the United States. Read the words of John A. Macdonald in Figure 2.21 and George Brown in Figure 2.22. Compare their perspectives to the American belief in manifest destiny that you learned about earlier in this chapter.

Supporters of Confederation believed they needed to convince people in Canada East and the Atlantic colonies to join the union. But they saw the lands controlled by Hudson’s Bay Company as something that simply needed to be purchased in order to create settlements. Why do you think this region was viewed differently in the questions and discussions around Confederation?

INCLUSION OF THE PACIFIC COAST

The end of the gold rush brought economic decline to the Pacific Coast. In 1866, the British government imposed a union on the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia to help improve their economic situations. The union, however, lacked a government responsible to the people because it consisted of many appointed, rather than elected, officials. With debt rising, British Columbia considered joining Confederation. This was a challenge since the colony was cut off from the rest of the colonies in the east by the vast expanse of Hudson’s Bay Company lands. Also, some people in this region supported annexation by the United States over Confederation.

CHECK-IN

1. **GATHER AND ORGANIZE** What were the main arguments against Confederation?
2. **EVALUATE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Which colony had the most to gain from joining Confederation? Which colony had the most to lose?
3. **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE** Create a multimedia report or dramatic performance in role as someone living in British North America in the mid-1860s. What are your concerns? Use the primary sources in this section to support your perspective.
HOW WAS CONFEDERATION ACHIEVED?

Think back to the last group project you were assigned at school. What challenges did the group face? How were everyone’s perspectives taken into account? How was the group able to make a final decision? Confederation dealt with these same questions. Bringing people together to unify a country was a great feat.

THE CHARLOTTETOWN CONFERENCE

In September 1864, representatives from Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick were planning to meet to discuss a Maritime union. When news of this meeting reached the Province of Canada, John A. Macdonald and other pro-Confederation leaders asked to attend. The conference was held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

The Charlottetown Conference was the first of three sets of meetings held between 1864 and 1866 to discuss and debate Confederation. Some of the objections to Confederation you read about earlier in this chapter resulted from the Confederation debates. Newfoundland was not represented at this conference. Colonies in the Pacific Coast region were not central to the discussions of Confederation at this time. Through lengthy speeches and many arguments, politicians from the Province of Canada and the Maritime colonies discussed the idea of a formal union.

Look at the photo in Figure 2.23. It shows delegates (representatives elected or chosen to act on behalf of others) at the Charlottetown Conference taking a break from the discussions. Compare this photo to the painting in the chapter opener. What similarities and differences do you notice?

FIGURE 2.23 This photo was taken on the steps of Government House in Charlottetown in September 1864. Analyze: What details in the photo suggest these leaders did not necessarily represent the interests of everyone living in British North America at this time?
WOMEN AT THE CONFERENCE
In addition to the daily discussions, there were various social events held during the conferences. The leaders’ wives and their unmarried daughters and sisters often attended the many dinners and parties.

At the time Confederation was being discussed, women could not vote. Refer to Figure 2.24 and Figure 2.25. Do you think the presence of some women at conference events was adequate to establish their collective voice in the decisions being made about Confederation?

FIGURE 2.24 Dancing at the Charlottetown Province House Ball, 1864, created by Dusan Kadlec in 1982. Analyze: What message about the role of women is the artist trying to convey in this painting?

“Although women were not part of the formal decision-making process that resulted in Confederation, some politicians’ wives played informal roles. Male politicians’ letters show that they discussed Confederation politics and their political decisions with their wives. Letters and diaries also suggest that politicians’ wives and daughters were included in social events during, for example, the Charlottetown Conference. At these events, women’s social skills could be put to use to build friendships and goodwill among delegates, which were necessary for the men to be able to work together on the Confederation project.”

— Carmen Nielson, Mount Royal University
Historians look to different types of sources to understand the past. These kinds of sources are created by someone who witnessed or experienced the events or conditions of the time under study. Primary sources can be a deliberate account of the past, such as a newspaper article, letter, or diary. They can also be material considered traces of the past, such as an advertisement or a restaurant menu.

Historians must ask questions and make observations and inferences to create an understanding about how and why events unfolded as they did. When the information in a historical source helps answer a question about the past, it becomes historical evidence. To uncover evidence in a primary text source, historians do a close reading, analyzing and evaluating what the source says. Figure 2.26 lists some of the questions that historians ask when they are closely reading a primary text source. Note that not all of the questions can be applied to all primary sources. Sources such as diaries and personal notes were not meant to be seen by an outside audience.

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<th>Question Category</th>
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| Source              | • What kind of document is it?  
• When and where was it created? Who wrote it? For whom was it written and why?  
• Is the author describing his or her own experiences, or those of others? |
| Content             | • What claims does the author make?  
• What evidence does the author give to support these claims?  
• What is the author’s perspective on the topic? How can I tell? |
| Writing style       | • What words or phrases does the author use? What do these words and details communicate to the reader?  
• What feelings does the writer express? |
| Audience response   | • What effect did this text likely have on its readers?  
• How might a different audience have responded to it? |

**Figure 2.26** When closely reading a primary text source, historians must consider a number of factors to develop an understanding of the source and its content, including whether it was written for an outside audience or not.

The editorial in Figure 2.27 was published on September 16, 1864. The Charlottetown Conference had ended on September 9. The discussions were scheduled to continue in a few weeks at a second conference in Québec City.

In this activity, you will do a close reading of Figure 2.27 to look for evidence that can help you answer the following inquiry question: In 1864, did most people in New Brunswick support the idea of Confederation?
“Politicians may go to Charlottetown and in secret session decide that Confederation is just the thing that’s wanted by this Province, and they may lay their heads together to devise ways and means of bringing about such Confederation at an early day; but when we see a disposition shown to cram this scheme down the people’s throats without giving them time for reflection, we certainly shall be the last to lend assistance to the accomplishment of such designs....

We cannot but express our indignation at the pusillanimous [cowardly] conduct of the Lower Province [Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and P.E.I.] delegates. They were sent to Charlottetown ... to discuss the question of a Union of their own Provinces. Under the blandishments [flattering words designed to persuade] of Canadian politicians, (who invited themselves to the Conference!) they placed the Union of the Lower Provinces entirely in the back-ground... They come back, of course, without having considered the subject which their Legislatures gave them for discussion, and admit themselves so overpowered by the “Canadian view” that they can think of nothing else.... There is now no guarantee that, when they appoint themselves to go to Québec to the Grand Conference of all, they will not resolve to annex the Provinces to the United States.”

— Saint John Morning Telegraph

Consider Figure 2.27. Write down everything you know about the creation of the source.
• What kind of document is this?
• When and where was it created?
• Who wrote it? Why did they write it?

Read the text again. What strategies did the author use to persuade readers?
• Which words or phrases does the author use? What details does the author communicate to the reader?
• What feelings is the author expressing?

What inferences can you make? What does this text suggest about whether, in 1864, people in New Brunswick supported the idea of Confederation?

Read the text carefully. Look up the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. Summarize the main ideas and arguments presented.
• What is the topic of this editorial?
• What opinion is expressed? What evidence is given to support this opinion?

Consider how different audiences might have responded to this text at the time.
• What response do you think regular readers of the Saint John Morning Telegraph likely had to the editorial?
• How might others in New Brunswick and in the other colonies have responded to this editorial?
THE QUÉBEC CONFERENCE

By the end of the Charlottetown Conference, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island had abandoned the idea of a Maritime union to consider a union with the Province of Canada. But now all of the leaders needed to work out the terms of Confederation.

A second conference was held in October 1864 in Québec City. Representatives from Canada West, Canada East, and the Atlantic colonies discussed and debated the needs and wants of the colonies.

COMPROMISES AND TERMS

The Maritimes wanted access to new trade partners in British North America. For this, they needed a railway to move their goods. Prince Edward Island wanted a ferry system to have better access to the mainland. It also wanted a solution to the land ownership issue so tenants could buy their own land. Canada East wanted special rights for religion, education, and language. John A. Macdonald of Canada West wanted a very strong central government. He drafted the majority of the resolutions (decisions) reached during the Québec Conference. Examine the report in Figure 2.28. Why do you think historians would want to preserve this draft version of the report rather than keep only the final, clean copy?

FRAMEWORK FOR THE DOMINION OF CANADA

The Québec Conference established that the federal government would consist of two houses. In the lower house, or House of Commons, representation would be based on population size. Smaller provinces, such as Prince Edward Island, would have fewer representatives. To provide some balance, the upper house, or Senate, would be based on regional representation. This meant that there would be a more equal number of members from Canada West, Canada East, and the Atlantic colonies.

It was agreed that the federal government would be responsible for “Indian Affairs.” It would absorb the debts of the colonies up to a maximum amount. It would also control all major sources of revenue, such as taxes related to trade. In return, each province would receive a payment from the federal government to help cover expenses. At the time, the payment amounted to 80 cents per person.
OUTCOME OF THE QUÉBEC CONFERENCE

As a result of the Québec Conference, only the Province of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia agreed to join Confederation. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland were not yet convinced the union was in their best interests. Read George Brown’s words about the results of the Québec Conference in Figure 2.29. Of the regions involved in drafting the Québec resolutions, which region does Brown imply will hold no power?

THE LONDON CONFERENCE

With the list of resolutions drafted, the Fathers of Confederation representing Canada West, Canada East, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia travelled to England to write the British North America Act. This legislation would officially end their status as individual British colonies. They would be joined together as a united, partially self-governing country by an act of British Parliament. The London Conference, which took place between December 1866 and March 1867, is represented in Figure 2.30. Why would creating a new country out of the colonies in British North America require a legal act of the British Parliament?

“...Conference through at six o’clock this evening—constitution adopted ... a complete reform of all the abuses and injustice we have complained of!! Is it not wonderful? French Canadianism entirely extinguished!”

— George Brown, Father of Confederation

FIGURE 2.29 Letter from Brown to Anne Nelson, his wife, October 27, 1864. Analyze: How would you describe Brown’s reaction to the results of the Québec Conference?

FIGURE 2.30 J.D. Kelly’s painting entitled The Fathers of Confederation at the London Conference, 1866, was reproduced as a colour poster in 1935. Analyze: What do the details of the people, room, and papers suggest about this meeting?
Bytown Museum Youth Council

By the time of Confederation in 1867, Ottawa had been the capital of the Province of Canada for 10 years. Before then, Ottawa was a tough lumber and military community called Bytown.

The mission of Ottawa’s Bytown Museum (Musée Bytown in French) is to explore and share the rich history of Ottawa and its people. The museum explores Bytown, from its earliest days to the present, through displays that include videos and artifacts from the past, such as clothes, photos, and paintings.

The museum also has a Youth Council (Figure 2.31) made up of 15 members ranging in age from 16 to 23, who learn about and promote Ottawa’s history. Through their work, the members become active citizens of their community. For example, they give tours to museum visitors and participate in City of Ottawa events such as Heritage Day and Winterlude. During these events, Youth Council members dress in period costumes and interact with the public.

Being part of the Youth Council also helps its members build their creative and teamwork skills. They research and write blog posts on subjects such as Bytown’s schools and historical burial grounds. In 2014, Youth Council members redesigned the museum’s Youth Activity Area. They also researched and chose the themes and artifacts that are explored in the Youth Activity Area. One theme looks at childhood in rural and urban Ottawa in the late 1800s. The display has interactive components such as books, historical toys, and access to historical resources through technology.

The Youth Council also wrote and produced a video, in which members talk about their experiences with the group. One member says that her work with the Youth Council helps her “build a sense of community.” According to another member, “meeting people that work at this museum, as well as other professionals in Ottawa … is something that will hopefully help me in my future career.”

The members of the Youth Council help people in their community gain new understandings of Ottawa’s history. Their work helps foster pride in their city and its history.

A Call to Action

1. Ottawa’s history is connected to Canada’s history as its capital city. In what ways does the history of your community connect to Canada’s history?
2. Members of the Youth Council share the history of Ottawa with their community in many ways. In what ways can you be an active citizen, learning and sharing your community’s history?
THE DOMINION OF CANADA

July 1, 1867, became known as Dominion Day. Figure 2.32 shows people gathered to hear the reading of Queen Victoria’s proclamation. In it, she declared that the Province of Canada (now split into two provinces, Ontario and Québec), New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia were officially united in the Dominion of Canada.

John A. Macdonald was appointed prime minister on July 1, 1867, and was elected to the position a month later. Queen Victoria also knighted him for his role in forming the new dominion. Agnes Macdonald, Sir John A. Macdonald’s wife, wrote about the impact of July 1. Read Figure 2.33. What does Agnes Macdonald indicate life with the new prime minister of Canada might be like?

In both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Queen Victoria’s proclamation met with protests. Many people believed Confederation was pushed on them due to their lack of voting rights. Read Figure 2.34. What other voices may have been missing in the decisions on Confederation?

“Confederation was a political deal between an exclusive group of politicians: all male, all property owners, and all of European origin. Though the new country was created out of the traditional territories of First Nations people, no First Nations people were involved in the discussions or consulted on the deal. Despite this, Confederation granted the federal government control over ‘Indian Affairs.’”

— Timothy Stanley, University of Ottawa

“Confederation was noisily into existence on the 1st, and the very newspapers look hot and tired, with the weight of Announcements and Cabinet lists. Here—in this house—the atmosphere is so awfully political that sometimes I think the very flies hold Parliaments on the Kitchen Tablecloths.”

— Agnes Macdonald

FIGURE 2.33 Excerpt from Macdonald’s diary, July 5, 1867. Analyze: What do you think she means by “the very flies hold Parliaments on the Kitchen Tablecloths”?

FIGURE 2.34 Statement from Professor Stanley, December 15, 2015. Analyze: Who does Stanley suggest had the most to lose with Confederation?

CHECK-IN

1. **FORMULATE QUESTIONS** What questions could you ask that would help guide your understanding of the conferences and Confederation?

2. **HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** Which person or event do you think was most significant to the outcome of Confederation and why?
In this chapter, you learned what Confederation is and why some people thought it was the best option for the colonies at the time. There were many reasons why Confederation seemed like a good idea. Britain wanted to be rid of the financial burden of defending British North America. The colonies needed a way to defend against the threat of annexation and invasion from the United States. A desire to protect resources was another factor. But satisfying the needs and wants of all the colonies was difficult. Not all people in British North America were consulted before the birth of the Dominion of Canada.

Summarize Your Learning
Now that you have completed Chapter 2, you are ready to answer the Chapter Big Question: Was Confederation the best option for the colonies? Summarize what you have learned by completing one of the following tasks:

- Write a brief speech in role as one of the Confederation leaders, explaining why you are for or against a union of the colonies. Include key facts and persuasive words to convince others to support your opinion.
- List three groups that were not represented in the Confederation process. Write a letter to the Fathers of Confederation proposing how Confederation could have been a more inclusive process.
**APPLY YOUR LEARNING**

1. **EVALUATE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Which colony do you think gained the most and which gained the least by joining Confederation in 1867? Give your reasons for both.

2. **CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE** What events were happening in the United States at this time that had unintended consequences leading to Confederation in British North America?

3. **INTERPRET AND ANALYZE** What role did the need for land and other natural resources play in Confederation? How did those needs lead the colonies to unite? Display your ideas on an illustrated and annotated map.

4. **HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** Which event do you think was most significant in arriving at Confederation? Conduct a debate on this question. Prepare three reasons to support your point of view using evidence from the chapter.

5. **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE** Choose any one of the groups not included in the process of Confederation. What do you think may have been the group’s point of view about Confederation? Write in role a social-media post that group members may have shared with their friends, giving their opinion on the matter.

6. **FORMULATE QUESTIONS** When you consider the voices that were not heard during the Confederation debates, what questions are raised for you? Choose a person or group that you would interview back then if you had the chance. What questions would you ask them?

7. **COMMUNICATE** What changes did the Great Coalition feel were needed at this time to improve the country? Design a pro-Confederation poster that calls for these changes.

8. **CONTINUITY AND CHANGE** How are the celebrations of July 1 the same today as they were in 1867? How are they different? What would account for some of the differences? Use evidence in this chapter to support your explanation.

**UNIT1 CHALLENGE CHECK-IN**

Record your responses to these questions in your log book.

1. Review the Focus On: Historical Significance feature on pages 54 to 55. Using the criteria provided, identify the significant ideas, events, and people leading to Confederation. Be sure to explain your choices.

2. Create a graphic organizer, such as a flow chart, in which you identify the different groups in different regions in British North America and the perspectives of each group on Confederation. How did each group react to the idea of Confederation? Then reflect on the effects of Confederation on each group, identifying which groups you think benefited the least and the most. Explain your thinking with reasons.

3. Review the description of the Unit 1 Challenge on pages 18 to 19 and the notes that you made in your log book for Chapter 1. What connections can you make between the issues in Chapters 1 and 2? Has your understanding of the issues changed?
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