The Great North Storybook

Episode 4 — The Runners of the Woods

“Always farther.”

Explorer: _____ **Listen to the story first — then play!**

Story Words

1. Coureur des bois — French for “runner of the woods”: a trader who paddled deep into the forest to trade with the peoples who lived there, bringing back beaver pelts.

2. Portage — Carrying your canoe on your shoulders and your packs on your back, over land, to get around rapids or from one lake to the next.

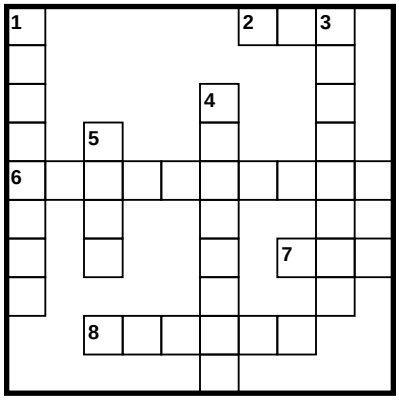
3. Toboggan — A flat sled for dragging goods across the snow. The word comes from the Mikmaq language — the runners learned it, and winter travel, from the peoples of the forest.

4. Charter — An official paper signed by a king that starts a company and gives it special rights. In 1670, one charter created the Hudson’s Bay Company.

5. Birchbark canoe — A canoe made of birch bark, sewn together with roots and sealed with spruce gum. One man could carry it on his shoulders — yet it could carry four men and all their goods down a roaring river. No nails. No metal at all.

Crossword

Fill the grid using the story clues.



Word bank: *BAY, BOIS, GOOSEBERRY, GUM, MONTREAL, OTTAWA, SAVIGNON, TOBOGGAN*

Across

2. The birchbark canoe was sealed watertight with spruce ___. (3)

6. The fruity nickname the men of Quebec gave Groseilliers. (10)

7. The company created by the king’s charter in 1670: the Hudson’s ___ Company. (3)

8. The river the runners paddled up, away from Montreal. (6)

Down

1. The young Huron man who sailed away to France while Étienne stayed in the forest. (8)

3. The big town that grew out of little Ville-Marie. (8)

4. The flat sled the runners dragged behind them over the snow. (8)

5. The runners of the woods, in French: coureurs des ___. (4)

Word Search

Find and circle the ten story words.

A	C	P	F	P	F	O	K	A	C
B	P	A	U	W	G	O	E	P	A
L	O	D	R	E	T	T	T	S	N
A	R	D	S	B	O	T	T	N	O
N	T	L	Y	E	B	A	L	O	E
K	A	E	O	A	O	W	E	W	E
E	G	G	R	V	G	A	R	S	R
T	E	Z	E	E	G	E	T	H	E
R	N	F	E	R	A	E	A	O	N
W	S	A	U	T	N	O	A	E	S

CANOE

BEAVER

PADDLE

PORTAGE

TOBOGGAN

SNOWSHOE

OTTAWA

FURS

KETTLE

BLANKET

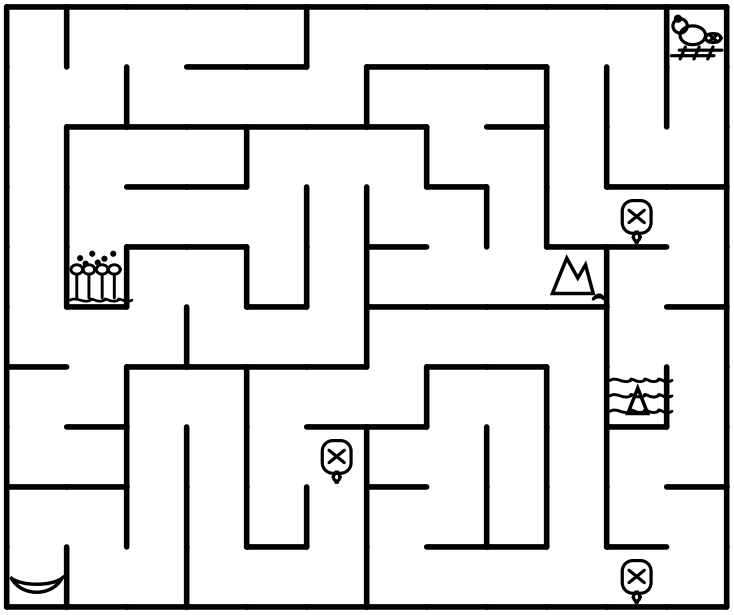
Draw a Line to Match

Draw a line from each word to its clue.

Étienne Brûlé	built one of the first hospitals in the country, at Ville-Marie
Savignon	told the runners where the finest beaver country in the world lay
Gooseberry	the teenager who asked to go and live in the forest
Jeanne Mance	the nickname of Médard des Groseilliers
The Cree	the young Huron man who sailed to France

The Great Canoe Trip

Draw the canoe route to the beaver country.





START — Montreal. Load the canoe and paddle away!

FINISH — The finest beaver country in the world! The Cree told the runners it lay beyond Lake Superior.

Watch out for:
- the foaming rapids
- the mosquito swamp
- the sharp rock that tears canoes

Bonus: three beaver pelts hide on the true route — collect them all!

Talk It Over

What did a coureur des bois carry in his canoe — and what would you pack in yours?

Ask a grown-up, then tell them what YOU think.

Draw or Write

Draw a coureur des bois packing a canoe. Label five things he cannot leave behind.