

“... I knew William Hall well, and a braver, truer, more modest man, white or black, never lived”


- Dr. Henry Chipman

In honour of Nova Scotia Heritage Day, 2024, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is pleased to provide the biographical profile “William Hall: Nova Scotia Heritage Day Edition”. William Hall was a trailblazer. 2024 marks the 165th anniversary of Hall being awarded the Victoria Cross, the military’s highest decoration for valour. It is awarded only to those who have shown extreme bravery in battle. Hall was the first Black person and the first Nova Scotian to be awarded the Victoria Cross. His story is an essential part of the proud legacy of military service shared by many Nova Scotians.

The information found in the biographical profile provides opportunities for learners to learn the story of how Hall went from a boy who dreamed of sailing to a decorated hero. Through learning his story, learners can consider how he was shaped by his experiences growing up in Nova Scotia, and how through his actions, he continues to inspire others.

Note to Teachers:

The table below includes a selection of ELA and Social Studies outcomes that could be used to explore the biographical profile. Students can be encouraged to explore the stories of other prominent African Nova Scotians who overcame challenges to create opportunities for themselves and their communities by visiting the African Nova Scotian Biographical Profiles 5 or 6 provincial e-learning sites. Provincial e-Learning sites can be accessed by clicking the icon found on your gnspes landing page. Enrolment keys are as follows:

	<p>African Nova Scotian Biographical Profiles 5 Passwords: ANSProStudent5 ANSProTeacher5</p>	<p>African Nova Scotian Biographical Profiles 6 Passwords: ANSProStudent6 ANSProTeacher6</p>
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Grade 5

The following learning experience integrates language arts and social studies outcomes as students explore the ways that historians ask questions to build a deeper understanding of a topic. Within the African Nova Scotian community, oral history and oral tradition have preserved stories of resilience and survival for generations. They are important sources of historical information because for many years, the experiences of the Black community were not always included in written documentation. The history of the Black communities of Nova Scotia are kept alive in oral history and oral tradition, passed through stories in community by knowledge keepers and community Elders.

When historians gather oral history, they prepare well thought-out questions based on research. As students research the life of William Hall, they can begin to develop interview questions that they would like to pose to a community Elder or knowledge keeper, or another reliable source to find out more.

Language Arts 5

Learners will select, interpret, and combine information in multicultural contexts.

- Formulate relevant questions that guide research to build a deeper understanding of a topic
- Use a variety of text features in print and digital media to access information with increasing independence

Social Studies 5

Learners will investigate how we learn about the past, with a focus on Acadians, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, Mi'kmaq, and additional cultures.

- Investigate the role of oral storytellers, Elders, archaeologists, and historians.

Preparing for learning: To support students in investigating how we learn about the past, they will need explicit instruction to develop their understanding of:

- the roles of oral storytellers, Elders, and historians
- various strategies they can use to develop questions that deepen our understanding (this can include doing introductory research, brainstorming, and talking with peers)
- ways to use text features to support their comprehension of information text

Inquiry question: How can we learn about the past?

As part of an inquiry, students can:

- review the biographical profile of William Hall, using text features to develop comprehension and background knowledge
- discuss what they learned with a partner e.g., What was the most interesting thing you learned? Was there anything that surprised you?
- generate interview questions they would like to ask about William Hall and his impact on Nova Scotia
- refine their questions in small groups
- share the questions they generated with the class

Suggested resources

- William Hall: Nova Scotia Heritage Day Edition
- African Nova Scotian Biographical Profiles 5 Provincial e-Learning site

Grades 5 and 6

The following learning experience integrates language arts outcomes from grades 5 and 6 as students explore how visuals and words can be combined to communicate a message. Using the Adinkra symbols of the Ashanti in Ghana (found on the back of the biographical profiles), students consider how they can select symbols to convey what they have learned about William Hall. Students then go on to choose a symbol that represents them, and write a short piece explaining their choice.

Grades 5 and 6

Grade 5: Learners will create text, independently and collaboratively, using a variety of types of writing for a range of audiences and purposes.

- Include information and details that are relevant and purposeful for an intended audience, with growing independence

Grade 6: Learners will create text, independently and collaboratively, using a variety of writing for a range of audiences and purposes.

- Include information and specific details that are relevant and purposeful for an intended audience, with increasing independence

Preparing for Learning: To support students in considering how to communicate a message using visuals and written text they will need explicit instruction to develop their understanding of:

- how symbols can be used convey meaning
- why authors might choose to use a combination of visuals and written text to communicate with an audience

Inquiry question: How can messages be communicated using words and visuals?

As part of an inquiry, students can:

- discuss instances when symbols might better convey information or feelings for a specific audience or purpose (e.g., emojis, traffic signs, common symbols that appear as text features, etc.)
- discuss the Adinkra symbols on the back of biographical profiles

- How do these symbols communicate ideas?
- Read the biographical profile on William Hall
 - What symbol(s) could represent William Hall? Why?
- research other Adinkra symbols, focussing on the meaning behind them
- choose an Adinkra symbol and represent them and write an explanation of why they chose that symbol

Grade 6

The following learning experience integrates language arts and social studies outcomes as students explore Nova Scotian heroes from a variety of cultures. As the first Black person and the first Canadian to be awarded the Victoria Cross, William Hall is recognized as a hero. His character and actions contributed to the powerful legacy of military service within African Nova Scotian communities. By learning the story of William Hall, students can consider the traits that made him a hero, and how everyone benefits from learning about stories and experiences across cultures. As part of the learning experience, teachers can also use the biographical profiles of Barbara Cuffy, Marie Marguerite Rose, Thomas Peters, and Richard Preston found on the *African Nova Scotian Biographical Profiles 6* provincial eLearning site as mentor texts to support student writing.

Language Arts 6

Learners will select, interpret, and combine information in multicultural contexts.

- Use text features in print and digital media to access information independently
- Interpret relevant information from selected sources, with growing independence

Learners will create text, independently and collaboratively, using a variety of types of writing for a range of audiences and purposes.

- Include information and specific details that are relevant and purposeful for an intended audience, with increasing Independence

Social Studies 6

Learners will analyse the impact of cross-cultural understanding, inclusive of Acadians, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, Mi'kmaq, and additional cultures.

- Analyse the actions of local communities to support cross cultural understanding

Preparing for Learning: To support students in investigating how we learn about the past, they will need explicit instruction to develop their understanding of:

- ways to use text features to support their comprehension of information text (consider subheadings, text boxes, captions, etc.)
- ways to gather information from sources that is relevant to their topic

Inquiry question: What are the qualities of a hero?

As part of an inquiry, students can:

- discuss examples of heroes - What qualities do they possess? How do they demonstrate them?
- identify the qualities and personality traits that were raised in the biographical profile of William Hall. Students can discuss:
 - how the layout helped draw attention to these aspects of his life and personality traits
 - the evidence that shows how William Hall had the qualities of a hero
- research ways that communities and organizations have shared and celebrated William Hall's story
 - discuss why it is important for all Nova Scotia's to learn about William Hall
- choose another Nova Scotian hero to research and create a biographical profile to share their story with others

Suggested resources

- William Hall: Nova Scotia Heritage Day Edition
- African Nova Scotian Biographical Profiles 6 Provincial e-Learning site