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Collapse of the first Peace River Bridge at Taylor

Literacy Lesson with a local history focus Grades 7-9 (can be adapted for higher and lower grades)

Day 1: 40-60 minutes Day 2: 40-60 minutes

**could also be done in one day with a break

Overview:

Students will use information from multiple primary source texts to write a journal entry as one of the spectators watching the 1957 collapse of the first Peace River Bridge built at Taylor.

PREAMBLE:

This is a literacy and local history (Social Studies) lesson sequence connected to the Spaghetti Bridge Building ADST package. It is *not* a lesson about bridges. The bridge connection in this lesson is the October 16, 1957, collapse of the first Peace River bridge built at Taylor. This lesson sequence can be used before, during, or after a bridge building unit.

This lesson sequence is prepared following the SMARTLearning© Thinking Log framework. Using this framework helps students think more deeply, which leads to powerful writing. It is an inclusive way of teaching. Students of all skill levels in a class can (and do) participate. It is scripted, so that teachers unfamiliar with SMARTLearning© will be able to follow the framework.

For more information on SMARTLearning©, go to https://www.smartlearning.ca. Within SD60, contact Anita Yorke at ayorke@prn.bc.ca, Crystal Dutchak at cdutchak@prn.bc.ca or Kim Fraser at kfraser@prn.bc.ca.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1. What might it be like to witness a life altering historical event?
- 2. What influence does a bridge, or the lack of a bridge, have on a community?

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS from https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca

UNDERSTAND (Big Ideas)

- 1. Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world. (Grades 4-9, English Language Arts-ELA)
- 2. Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking. (Grades 6-7, ELA)
- 3. Human and environmental factors shape changes in population and living standards. (Grade 8, SS) (local factors and effect)

DO (Curricular Competencies)

- 1. Synthesis ideas from a variety of sources to build understanding (Grades 5-9, SS)
- 2. Apply appropriate strategies to comprehend written, oral, and visual texts, guide inquiry, and extend thinking (Grades 6-9, ELA)
- 3. Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts (Grades 6-9, ELA)
- 4. Respond to text in personal and creative ways (Grades 6-9, ELA)
- 5. Exchange ideas and viewpoints to build shared understanding and extend thinking (Grades 6-9, ELA)
- 6. Transform ideas and information to create original texts (Grades 4-9, ELA)

KNOW (Curricular Content)

- 1. Human responses to particular geographic challenges and opportunities, including climates, landforms, and natural resources. (Grade 7, SS)
- 2. Reading strategies (Grades K-9, ELA)
- 3. Forms, functions and genres of text (Grade 4-9, ELA)
- 4. Metacognitive strategies (Grade K-9, ELA)

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CORE COMPETENCIES: Communication

Communicating: Connecting and Engaging with others

- 1. Students engage in informal and structured conversations in which they listen, contribute, develop understanding and relationships, and learn to consider diverse perspectives.
 - a. Profile 3: I communicate purposefully, using forms and strategies I have practiced.
 - b. Profile 4: I communicate clearly and purposefully, using a variety of forms appropriately.

Collaborating: Working Collectively

- 1. Students combine their efforts with those of others to effectively accomplish learning and tasks.
 - a. Profile 2: In familiar situations, I cooperate with others for specific purposes.

CORE COMPETENCIES: Thinking

Critical Thinking and Reflective Thinking: Reflecting and Assessing

Students apply critical, metacognitive, and reflective thinking in given situations, and relate this thinking to other
experiences, using this process to identify ways to improve or adapt their approach to learning. They reflect on
and assess their experiences, thinking, learning processes, work, and progress in relation to their purposes.
Students give, receive, and act on feedback and set goals individually and collaboratively. They determine the
extent to which they have met their goals and can set new ones.

**The 'Reflecting on Learning' section at the end of the SMARTLearning© Thinking Log could be used as an artifact representing this aspect of the Core Competencies.

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Before starting the lesson sequence:

As for all lessons, go over all the links to photos, videos, and texts that students will view. Be wary of any triggers. The students will be writing as if they are living in 1957. Having additional information about the times will be helpful.

If your class has not yet been taught the phrase 'show, not tell' in writing, you will need to explain what it means. A mini-lesson beforehand with time to practice would be helpful.

Example:

Tell: The snow was deep.

Show: When Dad opened the door, the snow came up to his nose.

Students will need to work with a partner during the lesson. Arrange partners prior to starting. Partners should be sitting beside each other as they will have several conversations. Identify the partners as Partner A or Partner B (ie: the ones closest to the door/window/left side are Partner A. Everyone else is Partner B. It is helpful if they write which partner they are, as well as their partner's name, on the bottom of their papers.)

Materials

 1 copy of the SMARTLearning© Thinking Log per student

https://www.smartlearning.ca/pdfs/events/oct-23-20 20/very-smart-brain/Thinking%20Log%20-%20open %20with%20goal-setting%20before%20reading.pdf ***Add the end task and the goal before making copies for students.

- 2. 1 copy (or online access) of http://anengineersaspect.blogspot.com/2009/10/the-52nd-anniversary-of-peace-river.html to read to the students
- 3. 1 copy per student of

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rlACAs31Ob QtFKX6xHJ0VEdx9b7InmPJle8C9dOcO5o/edit?usp =sharing (The above link is a re-formatted version of this Alaska Highway news article:

https://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/opinion/larry-evans-the-collapse-of-the-peace-river-bridge-3503644)

Resources

- Historical photo, Figure 1, at https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/hrr/1963/1 7/17-003.pdf
- 2. Historical photo, Figure 3, at https://www.cgs.ca/pdf/heritage/111128%20-%2 0Cruden%20Peace%20River%20%20CHANGE S%20ACCEPTED.pdf
- 3. Newsreel clip of the Peace River Bridge opening (August 30, 1943)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1Q5I9aK52s

- 4. Newsreel clip of the Peace River Bridge collapsing (October 16, 1957)
 - -recording of actual collapse
 - -speculates on cause

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aptoRHYWgU

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KEY:

Text in black is the Thinking Log.

Text in blue is information for presenting the lesson.

Text in green italics is possible wording of what to say to students.

Text in orange is what to add to the Thinking Log before photocopying student copies.

Text in purple is sample sentence frames to display during the lesson sequence.

SMART BETTER TOOLS. BETTER LEARNING. LEARNING	Thinking Log
Name:	Nate [.]

Task: Write a journal entry telling about your experiences and thoughts while watching the big event of October 16, 1957. A second entry should tell how life has changed for you since the big event. You will be 'writing in role', in the first person narrative style. Your journal entries need to include some details that match those in the videos and texts presented. Some of the details should be uniquely yours. Remember to 'show, not tell' your feelings and actions. Your details need to be historically correct for the time (ex. no cell phones).

Before reading... connecting to the text

Activating prior knowledge...What do you know? Making Connections: to your life, other texts, the world...

- 1. Give students a copy of the Thinking Log.
- 2. Ask students: What do you know of the history of the Alaska highway? Have volunteers share what they know. (3-5 minutes) If students do not know anything, give a brief overview of the building of the highway.
- 3. What do you know about the bridge at Taylor? What do you think when crossing it? How might our lives change if that bridge was not usable? Have students sketch and/or write their thinking in the 'Activating prior knowledge...Making Connections...' box on the Thinking Log. Allow 2-4 minutes for filling in their thinking. Longer if many students are still working.
- 4. Share your thinking with your partner. Show what you wrote and/or sketched. While listening to your partner, notice what is similar and what is different in your thinking.
 - a. Reinforce that both partners need to share their thinking.
 - b. Allow 2-4 minutes for discussion before refocusing the class.

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5. Ask for volunteers to share what was similar or different in their and their partner's thinking. Have as many volunteers stand and share as time permits. (Minimum of 4.) Try to limit your comments to asking questions to clarify what was shared or saying "thank you" to the speaker.

Prediction/hypothesis... What important ideas do you think will unfold, and why?

- 1. I am going to give you some clues and information before we learn about a significant event on the Alaska Highway. Using the clues, develop predictions and/or questions about what we will watch and read today. There is a box for predictions and a box for questions on your Thinking Log. Explain what information led you to making each prediction and to developing your wonders and questions.
- 2. Refer students to the displayed sentence frames:
 - a. Using these examples may make it easier to write your predictions and questions. Some examples of how to write your predictions and questions are:

i.	I think	will happen because
i.	l wonder	because

- 3. Give the class the following clues: Have the photos ready to show so that students do not see the article titles.
 - a. Show the historic photo, Figure 1, from https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/hrr/1963/17/17-003.pdf
 - b. Tell students the following: Clue 2 is: "People were everywhere on the banks of the river looking at what we presumed was a major catastrophe unfolding."

 Larry Evans, Alaska Highway News,

 https://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/opinion/larry-evans-the-collapse-of-the-peace-river-bridge-350364
 4
 - c. Show the historic photo, Figure 3 from https://www.cgs.ca/pdf/heritage/111128%20-%20Cruden%20Peace%20River%20%20CHANGES%20 ACCEPTED.pdf This is a photograph of what was happening at the north end of the bridge.
- 4. Based on the photographs you saw and the clue you were told, what do you predict you will be learning about today? What questions do you have about what might have happened? What do you wonder? Write your thinking in the Predictions and the Questions/Wonders boxes on your sheet. Remember to justify your thinking. What clues/information/experiences led you to these predictions and questions? (3-4 minutes, more if most are still writing)
- 5. Share your thinking with your partner. Both partners need to talk about their predictions and questions. Pay attention to what was similar and what was different in your thinking. One partner will be sharing your thoughts with the whole class. Do not reveal which partner

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will be speaking yet.

- 6. Allow 2-4 minutes for partner discussion.
- 7. One partner, who I will choose, will be sharing one similarity or one difference to the whole class. Share your information using one of these formats: Refer to and read out the displayed speaking frames.
 - a. Both my partner, _____, and I thought _____. We thought this because _____.
 - b. My partner, _____, and I thought differently about _____ because ____
- 8. You will have a short time to rehearse what you are going to say to the class right now with your partner. Allow about 30-40 seconds for rehearsal. Both partners need to be ready to speak.
- 9. Partner A's, please stand up. When I call your name, share what you and your partner rehearsed. Have as many Partner A's as time permits share their partner's thinking. At least half, preferably all, partner A's should share. Try to limit teacher comments to asking clarifying questions or saying "thank you" to the speaker. Students may sit down after sharing.

Questions...What are you wondering...? Why?

This section is to be filled in at the same time as students are writing predictions. See the predictions section above for information.

S-t-r-e-t-c-h goal: What is your goal? Why is this a good goal for you? I plan to focus on:



- 1. Look at the goal section. I have set the goal for everyone today. The icons in the top row help you think in images, and the icons in the bottom row help you think in words. Combining both types of thinking is important.
- 2. Today will be challenging, as you need to keep **most** of the icons on the top row in mind. Circle all the icons you think will be helpful in your task. You will need to glean details from the images, videos, and readings to use in your writing.
- 3. Next, circle the 'what's important? why?' box in the bottom row. It is the fourth icon. Paying attention to what's important and why will help you focus on the key details and events; what caused them and what happened because of them.

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You could add the S-t-r-e-t-c-h goal to the Thinking Log before photocopying it for students, or you could have students write it in themselves. The amount of time you have and student age will determine the best option for your class. Have students underline or highlight the key words of the goal as you read it if it is photocopied for them. **GOAL:**

4. My S-t-r-e-t-c-h goal is to notice historical details in the images, videos, and texts, as well as notice what is important and how it impacted life in the area to use in my writing as a spectator watching the event.

During reading... processing information: thinking with the text & gathering what's important to remember

Chunk 1 Anniversay reprint of a 1957 news article:

http://anengineersaspect.blogspot.com/2009/10/the-52nd-anniversary-of-peace-river.html

- 1. I will be sharing information in three chunks, or parts. The first chunk is a newspaper article. I will read the article to you. While you listen, you will write or sketch connections you make, images that come into your mind, and words or phrases that give historical details in the Chunk 1 box (Have students put their finger on the correct box). All your work connected to this article will be in the Chunk 1 box.
- 2. I will read this article twice, allowing extra work time for a few moments after each time I read it.
- 3. Read the article, with short pauses at the end of each paragraph. Pause and remind students what they should be doing if necessary.
- 4. Give 30-60 seconds, more if needed, after reading the article for students to add their thinking to the box.
- 5. While I reread this chunk 1 article, you listen for more information to add to the Chunk 1 box. Remember to write or sketch connections you make, images that come into your mind, and words or phrases that provide historical details.
- 6. Reread the Chunk 1 article.
- 7. Allow 30-60 seconds (more if needed) when you stop for students to finish.
- 8. Share your thinking for Chunk 1 with your partner. Both partners need to explain what they wrote and sketched in their Chunk 1 box. The listening partner should be asking questions to help them understand. Pay attention to what was similar and what was different in your thinking. One partner will be sharing your thoughts with the whole class. Do not reveal which partner will be speaking yet.
- 9. Allow 2-4 minutes for partner discussion.

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10. Partner B, (the other partner) you will be sharing one similarity or one difference between you and your partner's thinking to the whole class. Share your information using one of these formats: Refer to and read out the (same) displayed speaking frames.			
a. Both my partner,, and I thought We thought this because			
b. My partner,, and I thought differently about because			
11. You will have a moment to rehearse what you are going to say to the class right now with your partner. Allow about 20-40 seconds for rehearsal.			
12. Partner B's, please stand up. When I call your name, share what you and your partner rehearsed. Have as many Partner B's as time permits share, at least half, preferably all. Try to limit teacher comments to asking clarifying questions or saying "thank you" to the speaker.			

Chunk 2 Newsreel videos:

Newsreel clip of the Peace River Bridge opening (August 30, 1943) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1Q5l9aK52s**The Union Jack was Canada's flag at the time.

Newsreel clip of the Peace River Bridge collapsing (October 16, 1957)
-recording of actual collapse
-speculates on cause
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aptoRHYWqU

The directions for Chunk 2 are very similar to Chunk 1.

- 1. After watching each newsreel (you will likely need to explain what a newsreel is) in the Chunk 2 box, write or sketch images you notice, as well as words or phrases the narrator uses, describing historical details. In Chunk 2, also record the emotions that the participants may be feeling. All your work will be in the Chunk 2 box.
- 2. I will show each newsreel twice. I will pause after each viewing to give you time to fill in the Chunk 2 box. Show the first newsreel twice before showing the second one. You may need to show the newsreels more than twice.
- 3. Give 30-90 seconds (more if needed) after each viewing for students to add their thinking to the box.
- 4. Share your thinking for Chunk 2 with your partner. Both partners need to explain what they wrote and sketched in their Chunk 2 box. The listening partner should be asking questions to help their understanding. Pay attention to what was similar and what was different in your thinking. One partner will be sharing your thoughts with the whole class. Do not reveal which partner will be speaking yet.
- 5. Allow 2-4 minutes for partner discussion.

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6.	Partner A, (the first partner) you will be sharing one similarity to the whole class. Share your information using one of these formats: Again, refer to and read out the displayed speaking frame.				
	a. Both my partner,, and I thought We thought this because				
7.	You will have a moment to rehearse what you are going to say to the class right now with your partner. Allow about 20-40 seconds for rehearsal.				
8.	Partner A's, please stand up. When I call your name, share what you and your partner rehearsed. Have as many Partner A's as time permits share, at least half, preferably all. Try to limit your comments to asking clarifying questions or saying "thank you" to the speaker.				
If this lesson sequence is spread over two days, this is a good place to stop.					
	stopping, have students think through the Reflecting on Learning section at the end of the ng Log.				

Chunk 3 Newspaper article, Alaska Highway News, April 2019, Larry Evans, personal recount https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rlACAs310bQtFKX6xHJ0VEdx9b7lnmPJle8C9dOcO5o/edit?usp=sharing

The directions for Chunk 3 are similar to both Chunk 1 and Chunk 2.

- 1. For Chunk 3, you will be reading a first person narrative of the event. The author, a local man, went to view the collapse of the Peace River Bridge as a young boy. While reading, underline or highlight words or phrases that show historical details and how the spectators were feeling at the time.
- 2. You may read with your partner if you prefer.
- 3. Encourage students to read the article twice.
- 4. When you have read the article twice and highlighted historical details, sketch or write the most important information in the Chunk 3 box. Think about 'what's important? Why?' when choosing what to add to your Cunk 3 box. Be selective choosing what goes into the box.
- 5. Give time for students to add their thinking to the box.
- 6. Share your thinking for Chunk 3 with your partner. Both partners need to explain what they wrote and sketched in their Chunk 3 box. The listening partner should be asking questions to help them understand. Pay attention to what was similar and what was different in your thinking. One partner will be sharing your thoughts with the whole class. Do not reveal which partner will be speaking yet.
- 7. Allow 2-4 minutes for partner discussion.

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8.	class.	1 V	nation using one of these forma	similarity or difference to the whole ats: Refer to and read out the
	a.	Both my partner,	, and I thought	We thought this because
	b.	My partner,	, and I thought differently about _	because
9.			to rehearse what you are going ut 20-40 seconds for rehearsal	g to say to the class right now with
10. Partner B's, please stand up. When I call your name, share what you and your partner rehearsed. Have as many Partner B's as time permits share, at least half, preferably all. Try to limit your comments to asking clarifying questions or saying "thank you" to the speaker.				
Reflect	ing: on g	goals criteria the	e task	
After re	eading	transforming unders	standings	
		<u> </u>		

- 1. If you do not think the writing space is large enough, supply students with paper, or where else to do their writing.
- 2. Reread the task with the students. Let's look at the task again. It is written at the top of the front page:
 - a. Write a journal entry telling about your experiences and thoughts while watching the big event of October 16, 1957. A second entry should tell how life has changed for you since the big event. You will be 'writing in role', in the first person narrative style. Your journal entries need to include some details that match those in the videos and texts presented. Some of the details should be uniquely yours. Remember to 'show, not tell' your feelings and actions. Your details need to be historically correct for the time (ex. no cell phones).
- 3. You need to pretend that you are tone of the spectators as you write. You will be using 'I' instead of 'he'/she in your writing. As spectator, explain what happened that day, and how you felt about each part of it. Remember to have details that match what you have heard, seen and read, and some that are uniquely yours.
- 4. Who might have been some of the spectators? Get ideas from students and display the list. Some ideas are: children, parents, bridge construction workers, engineers who designed the bridge, truck drivers, store owners, news reporter, a ferry captain....

If this lesson sequence is spread over three sessions, this is a good place to stop. Having time to consciously and subconsciously think about a writing topic leads to better writing.

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Before stopping, have students think through the Reflecting on Learning section at the end of the Learning Log.

- 5. Work with students to develop criteria for the task.
- 6. Allow 20-30+ minutes for writing. (review the task, steps 2-4 again if there has been a break).
- 7. When you think you are done writing, go back and check the task. Did you include all the components of the task? Check over the criteria. Add anything you missed. Reread your writing. Revise and edit your work.
- 8. Have students share their work with their partner (2-4 minutes).
- 9. There will be no reporting out unless some students want to read their own. Does anyone want to share their writing with the class? If yes, please stand up.
- 10. When sharing, students should be facing the majority of the listeners, or stand on a side to face the others.
- 11. When sharing is over, lead students through the 'Reflecting on Learning' box below.

Put a ✓ on evidence you met your stretch goal. Let students know they can (should) have more than one checkmark on their work. What strengths are you noticing in your work?
one checkmark on their work. What strengths are you noticing in your work?
☐ A ↔ B: What new ideas, connections, or questions came into your thinking?
Goal for next time:

©Susan Close Learning, 2019. SmartLearning Tool-kit: Thinking log, with goal just before reading.

ASSESSMENT:

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The image below is a relevant part of the SMARTLearning© ASK assessment. It can be used as a rubric to assess the end task. The writing can also be used as a Social Studies mark, with a focus on assessing the historical accuracy of the details.

Skills & Competencies	(AE) approaching	(SM) meeting	(FM) fully meeting	(EE) excelling
Imaging &	Generates images that show some understanding of an aspect of the text.	Generates images that demonstrate a literal or concrete understanding of the text.	Generates images that demonstrate a clear, accurate and complete understanding of the text.	Generates memorable images that demonstrate a thorough, accurate and nuanced representation of understanding.
Idea Development	Generates simple ideas with limited detail.	Generates logical ideas that include some relevant details.	Ideas demonstrate a deeper understanding of the text; includes some important ideas and descriptive details.	Includes a balance of significant ideas and rich supporting details.

Reflecting on Learning-for teachers

Reflecting on how this learning sequence went in your class is valuable.

Here are some possible topics to think about:

- 1. Student engagement and participation
 - a. Consider the engagement and participation of stronger as well as challenged learners
- 2. Quality of writing for the end task
- 3. Possible improvements or changes
- 4. Quality and quantity of learning vs time required
 - a. Was it worth the time spent?
- 5. How could you use this SMARTLearning Thinking Log format for other lessons? Other subject areas?

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If you have any comments or feedback on the lesson, please share them with Anita Yorke, Literacy Support Teachers, at ayorke@prn.bc.ca. Samples of student work would be greatly appreciated.

Predictions, Photo 1

From: The Peace River Highway Bridge- A Failure in Soft Shales

Figure 1

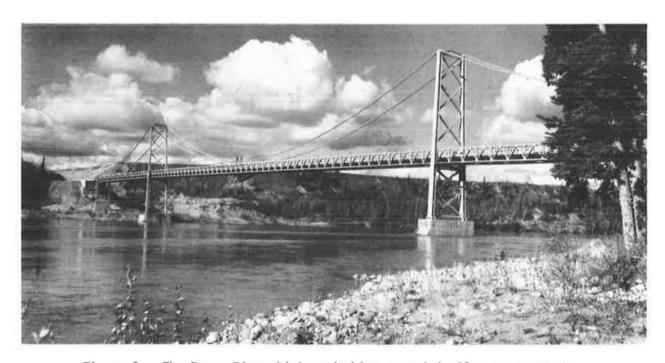


Figure 1. The Peace River highway bridge as originally constructed.

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Predictions, Photo 2

<u>The Peace River Bridge Collapse:</u>
Figure 3



Figure 3. View from west of scarp of landslide, North abutment and collapsed approach span in background

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RESOURCES DETAILS:

Predictions Image 1 is from:

https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/hrr/1963/17/17-003.pdf

- -an in depth treatise of the construction and destruction of the bridge
- -includes 6 photos, including one with the slide area marked out (Figure 6), showing the destroyed sections and land base
- -might be good for vocabulary, or importance of background info lesson

Predictions Image 2 is from:

https://www.cgs.ca/pdf/heritage/111128%20-%20Cruden%20Peace%20River%20%20CHANGES%20ACCEPTED.pdf

- -Geotechnical explanation of why the bridge collapsed, with authentic photos taken as the bridge collapsed.
- -14 photos of collapse and cause of the collapse

Chunk 1:

Clear, basic, Californian newspaper report of the collapse, from the day after http://anengineersaspect.blogspot.com/2009/10/the-52nd-anniversary-of-peace-river.html

Chunk 2:

Newsreel clip of the Peace River Bridge opening (August 30, 1943) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1Q5l9aK52s

Newsreel clip of the Peace River Bridge collapsing (October 16, 1957)

- -recording of actual collapse
- -speculates on cause

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aptoRHYWgU

Chunk 3:

Alaska Highway News, by Larry Evans

-personal story of watching the collapse and the consequences of it in town https://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/opinion/larry-evans-the-collapse-of-the-peace-river-bridge-3503644 -use the link below to print:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rlACAs31ObQtFKX6xHJ0VEdx9b7lnmPJle8C9dOcO5o/edit?usp=sharing

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Peace River Bridge, short history of it; (text prints in a pale shade of grey) https://ouralaskahighway.com/?portfolio_item=peace-river-bridge

Brief overview of the history of the Peace River Bridge and its collapse

- -published in 2014
- -photo rich
- -the pdf can be found in the 'Bridge Math Lessons' folder

Conference paper of why the bridge collapsed (a published version with inserted photos of above information).

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Alaska-Highway-Bridge-1943-1957-over-the-Peace-River-photograph-looking-south-west_fig1_273131940

Bridge photo (dated incorrectly–but they have acknowledged receiving the correct information Jan. 2022) http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/postcards/PC012386.html