

What's My Line?

This takeoff of an old TV show gets students to examine what they know about historical figures based on prior knowledge, inference, legend, and even tall tales. In the original *What's My Line?* A panel of four people had to figure out the usual career, hobby, or special characteristics of a mystery guest by asking yes-or-no questions. In this version, students recall descriptive words that fit what they know about the person (their prior knowledge) before they begin reading. Then, gathering information from a variety of resources, they describe the person with stronger and more accurate adjectives. This strategy continues during and after a unit as students refine their understanding and use new content to synthesize and analyze learning.

- Show students a picture of a person for their area of study. Ask students "Tell me what you know about Louis Riel"
- Place a transparency (of the Blackline Master) on the overhead and explain the meaning of the question "What's my Line?" Tell students they are going to find out more about the person's "line" by examining descriptive words, exploring information from different perspectives.
- Ask students to brainstorm words that most people would use to describe the person. As they share write the words in the box on the left-hand side of the transparency. Explain that new words will be added as they access more detailed information.
- Show students the resource materials you've gathered. Model reading a passage about Louis Riel aloud. In the box on the right-hand side of the transparency, write any new words you find to describe him.
- Students read resource materials and begin scanning for information. They can use sticky notes to mark text that indicates or implies character traits.
- Refer students to the box at the bottom of the transparency and explain that this is where they'll record their comments and reflect on their understanding after they have added this new layer of learning.

What's my line?

Name: _____

Historical Figure _____

When I think of

I think of these words:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

After reading and studying,

I would use these words to describe

- _____
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

My comments or reflections: