

Perspective Roles

Frenchman: Jacques Gladieux

Your name is Jacques Gladieux and you are a French fur trader living in New France in 1753. You have lived in New France for six years and have a lucrative business trading with the Native Americans. The natives trap animals such as beavers and foxes for their valuable fur. You then trade with the Natives, exchanging the furs for European goods such as iron pots and steel sewing needles. The Native American tribes in this region do not have the technology to make steel and iron products, so they are very eager to trade with you.

After six years in New France, you have made a comfortable life for yourself. You married a Native American woman named Onahtah, from the Iroquois tribe. She has been teaching you her language and has helped you communicate better with her people. You have made a lot of money living in New France and enjoy your life here.

However, things have started to change recently. English colonists from along the eastern coast have started moving into the Ohio Valley, where you do most of your trading. Some of them have started trapping the same animals that you buy from the Native Americans, which is upsetting the Native Americans. Other English colonists are cutting down the forest to build farms, which is reducing the amount of animals nearby, as well as taking land away that Native Americans have called home for hundreds of years. The English have no right to the land and their moving here is starting to negatively impact your financial well-being.

- Describe how Jacques makes his living. What does he rely on for income?
- How does he feel about the Native Americans and why?
- How does he feel about the English colonists who are moving into the Ohio Valley and why?
- What should Jacques do next?

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Englishman: George Washington

It is 1753 and you are a 22-year old George Washington, an American-born major in the Virginia militia. You have just received your first assignment from Virginia's Lt. Governor Dinwiddie, who is concerned because he believes the French are trespassing on Virginia's territory in the Ohio River Valley. Land such as this, and the resources it contains, is extremely valuable. The Governor must make sure the French are not trying to stake their own claim on what he feels is not theirs to take. He puts you in charge of some soldiers and sends you marching into the vast wilderness to order the French to vacate the area. Your country is depending on you and you are eager to do a good job. When you get to Fort LeBoeuf in the Ohio River Valley, you deliver a letter asking the French to leave. The French commander informs you that they will not. You return to Virginia to inform the Governor of the bad news.

The Governor is now angrier and knows he must get rid of the French or else risk losing England's rights to this valuable tract of land. He makes you an officer and sends you back with a militia force of 150 men and orders to build a fort and establish a strong hold in the Ohio Valley. Upon your arrival, much to your dismay, you and your men find the French already occupying a fort they called Duquesne (on the site of today's Pittsburgh). Even though you and your men are outnumbered, you attack a French work party, take some prisoners, and hastily construct a fort named Necessity. Even with your gallant effort however, you and your men are surrounded by French forces and are forced to surrender and return to Virginia. Interestingly, even though you were officially defeated by the French, you are hailed a hero for taking on the sworn enemies of England.

- Why are the English upset with the French?
- Why do the English want the French to vacate the land they feel is their own?
- How do you think Washington felt when the French would not leave Fort LeBoeuf as ordered?
- What do you think you will be told to do next and how do you feel about this?

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Native American: Guyasuta

The year is 1753. You and your family have lived in North America for generations, making a happy life living off the land. However, over the past years, things have started to change. You have seen an influx of Europeans, particularly colonists from France and England, moving onto the land that you and your tribe occupy. While you are not incredibly fond of the increasing population, you have found that the Frenchmen who have moved into the area do offer an advantage to you. They are eager to trade for the furs you make out of the animals you are skilled at capturing. The French provide you with tools and other items made of iron (many of which you've never seen before) in exchange for your furs.

Lately, you have encountered more and more Englishmen, who seem to be pouring onto the nearby land and view you as "savage". While they are also interested in trading for your furs at times, you've heard many stories of how the English are cruel to Native Americans and that they often try and cheat your people out of the land so that they can build their own homes. Also, you've heard that there is a major tension growing between the English and the French. It seems they all want to claim the land in the Ohio Valley as their own, even though this is land that your people have lived on for centuries. There are rumors that a war between the English and the French is sure to take place soon.

- What is your main goal when dealing with Europeans? What benefits can you gain from the French and English? What problems might they present you with?
- How do you feel about being viewed as "savage?"
- What do you think of the rumors of a war between the English and the French? How would you feel if this actually happened? How might a war between the French and English benefit you? How might it endanger you?
- What do you feel you should do based on the pending situation between the French and English?