



Native Ways

Teacher Packet

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Schoolhouse of Wonder is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing experiential natural and cultural history education to young people.

Introduction

At Schoolhouse of Wonder, we are dedicated to sharing the natural and cultural history of the Piedmont area with students throughout the region. We hope you and your students will enjoy the opportunity to travel back in time with us as you experience the everyday lives and dreams of the people who lived on this land long ago.

In this class, we will focus on the lifestyle of the Woodland Indians of the North Carolina Piedmont. This cultural history is a part of our rich local heritage.

We hope our class and the following program materials will help you share the wonders of this heritage with your students.

Notes on Teaching Native American Cultural History:

There are many creative and fun ways to celebrate our Native American cultural history with children. There are also some challenges involved in teaching Native American history. These challenges involve confronting and correcting harmful cultural stereotypes. For example, we have found that children often harbor a number of stereotypes about Native American people: native people are primitive, all native people live in teepees and wear headdresses, etc.

We believe that it is important to remind children that Native American culture is not obsolete, nor is it primitive, but it is a living part of our community. Children are often surprised to learn that our region is filled with American Indian people living modern lives. In fact, with more than 80,000 Native Americans living in North Carolina, our state has the largest Indian population east of the Mississippi River!

We also emphasize the fact that Native Americans have many different cultures in different places throughout the country. At every opportunity, we indicate the specific cultural identity of the tribes from which our activities derive, so that the children can begin to know the tribes individually.

Lifestyle

The forests and rivers of the Piedmont of North Carolina have been home to American Indian tribes for at least ten thousand years. At the time of European contact, the tribes of the North Carolina Piedmont included: Eno, Saponi, Occaneechi, Tutelo, Keyawee, Tuscarora, Cheraw, Sugeree, Waxhaw, Wateree, and Catawba. Dozens of different native dialects have been documented in North Carolina. However, the languages of most of the Piedmont tribes shared a similar base. These Eastern Siouan languages are in a family with dialects spoken by the Siouan tribes of the Midwest, such as the Lakota.

Highly organized tribes across the state carried on warfare, extensive trading systems, and confederacies with other tribes and nations. Everyday village life consisted of hunting, gathering, farming, fishing, and the manufacture of items such as cloth, tanned hides, pottery, wooden and stone knives, and hunting and farming tools. Most Piedmont houses were made by lashing together wooden poles, then covering the frame with bark, animal hides, or reed mats. These houses were often shaped like domes or small dome-topped long houses. The houses were typically located in guarded villages surrounded by palisade walls.

Life in the southeastern woodlands changed considerably after European contact. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European settlement, war, disease, and forced removal reduced the North Carolina Indian population drastically. The remaining tribes of the central piedmont area uprooted and moved to join other tribes and kinsmen such as the Catawba and Cheraw to the Southwest and the Saponi in the Northeast. Some of these newly formed tribes settled near land that tribe members had known from before European contact, while others established new homes in unfamiliar but sparsely populated areas. English quickly became a common language as people with different native languages who joined into one tribe needed to communicate with each other, and as it became the language of trade among tribes. It is from these surviving people that the present day Piedmont tribes descended.

Activity (k-3rd grade)

Explain that you are going to lead the class on an imaginary journey back to the 1400's, before the Europeans came to America. Have the children relax and close their eyes, then read them the following passage, allowing time as you go for them to imagine what you are saying.

I invite you to imagine yourself traveling back to a time before there was a school here, before there were cars or roads or settlers. Imagine the sounds that you might hear on this spot hundreds of years ago. Imagine that you are just waking up to start your day in a village of the Eno Indians. The first rays of sun are streaming through your door. You open your eyes to see the bark covered roof arching above you. You are covered by soft thick robes of animal skin. You smell smoke from the fire burning in the center of the lodge as it rises up to a smoke hole high overhead. Outside of the lodge are the sounds of the village awakening. The village is filled with round, bark-covered houses like yours. Some women are already hard at work pounding corn into flour and cooking corncakes on hot stones near the fire. Others are heading to the forests to fill their bark baskets with wild berries. A group of men huddle nearby to plan the day's hunting trip. A group of children gather for a game. Outside of the village, you can see the tribal cornfields stretching out before you. A deer steps out of the shadows in the forest. By the river, a few men are fishing with long spears held high over the water, and fishing baskets strapped to their hips. You step down to the bank to splash cool water on your face. You pause for a moment to see your reflection in the water, and consider your day ahead. What will you do with your day? What will you see and taste and hear? Let your imagination take you through the rest of your morning..... (Pause for a few moments) Take a moment to gather your thoughts and remember all the things you did and saw in your day... Now, I invite you to return to the present day.

Have the students open their eyes and share some of the smells, sounds, tastes and adventures of their journey to the past. You may wish to have your students write a short story about what it would be like to live in an Indian tribe. Remind them that all their clothes would be made from animal skins and they would have to gather all their food and cook it over a fire. They would cook with clay pots and work with stone tools. Still, they would have fun working and living together with their friends and family.

Activity (all ages)

Explain to the students that native peoples have given us a treasury of knowledge about how to survive on the land using local materials. The culture and lifestyle of the Piedmont Woodland Indians were shaped by the materials available in the forests, rivers, and fields around them. Brainstorm and discuss the basic needs of a tribal society:

- | | |
|----------|----------------|
| Food | Weapons |
| Water | Tools |
| Shelter | Transportation |
| Clothing | Medicine |

Take your students on a walk through a natural area near your school. Have them observe the natural materials around them and consider how local tribes may have used these objects.

Things to look for:

- Berries, nuts, and other plant materials for food
- Vines for making baskets
- Straight, thin sticks for making arrows
Arrows were made from many different kinds of wood. These include: rivercane (a bamboo-like plant native to North Carolina), sourwood shoots, split cedar shafts, and others.
- Clay for making pots
Clay can be found in creek banks and other exposed surfaces. Most clay had to be processed before it could be used.
- Long, straight sticks for making spears
Perfectly straight sticks are surprisingly hard to find! Most spears were straightened by heating over the fire.
- Flat stones on which to cook
- Stones that make clean edges when they break (for flint knapping).
In this area, chert, quartz, and rhyolite were all used.

Further learning (for 4th-5th graders)

Study the map of the tribes in this State. Have your students conduct research on the Internet and at the library to find information on the tribe closest to your school.

Food

The forests and rivers of North Carolina provided a large variety of food sources for the tribes that settled here. Food sources included: hunting and fishing, trapping, gathering, and farming. Wild foods included deer, elk, woodland buffalo, fish, birds, nuts, fruits, and even insects such as beetle larvae and yellow jackets!

Farming and Gathering

The Piedmont Indians adopted agriculture 2000-4000 years ago. With this change, the tribes settled and developed more permanent villages near waterways, where the soil was the most fertile. Many lifestyle changes accompanied this transition. Governing and military structures became more organized. Food storages became bigger. Pottery began to be used for cooking and storage, bows and arrows began to be used in hunting, and gardening took on an increasingly important role in the development of the foods and culture of this time period.

Corn, beans, and squash were the most widely used domesticated plants in all of North America. These three plants were such important food staples that they became known as the “three sisters.” They figured heavily in folklore, religion, and festivals. The Cherokee even use the same word, *Selu*, to refer to both corn and the first woman.

Corn was ground into meal and baked, or soaked in ashes from the fire and boiled until the kernels softened into “hominy.” Beans were mashed and baked into cakes, or mixed in stews with squash and corn kernels. Wild foods such as wild yams, blackberries, strawberries, acorns, chestnuts, and many more were gathered to add to the food stores.

The foods we eat today would be very different if it hadn’t been for thousands of years of plant knowledge and agricultural innovation passed down from the tribal people of the Americas. In fact, over half of the current world food supply consists of food first grown in the New World! Some of the foods first enjoyed by the Indian people of North and South America include:

Corn	Chili	Potatoes
Squash	Succotash	Peppers
Pumpkin	Beans	Tomatoes
Chewing gum	Cranberries	Sunflower seeds
Turkey	Maple syrup	

Activity (all ages)

Have your students imagine how life would be different without ingredients from the New World. For example, there would be no corn syrup for making candy bars and sodas, there would be no potatoes to eat, pancakes would have no maple syrup, Thanksgiving would have no turkeys, Halloween would have no carved pumpkins, pizzas would have no tomato sauce, and movies would have no popcorn.

Have your students count how many times in a week or a day they eat something that Native American Indians ate five hundred years ago. (hint: most candies and sodas are made with corn syrup.)

Recipes

Have a feast of Native American foods in your classroom! Baked apples, corn bread, turkey, beans, and succotash are all examples of American Indian cuisine. Other traditional foods are less familiar, but fun to experiment with. Recipes can be viewed online at:

<http://www.hawken.edu/class/grade3/amerin/amerindex.html>. Your students may particularly enjoy the corn pone, the fry bread, the Indian pudding 2, the sweet potato bread, the berry corn cobbler, and the pemmican 2. (Web site current as of 8/12/2004)

Even if you don't have the chance to cook with your students, you can still have a feast. At your local grocery store, or even in the school cafeteria, you may find some of these items: cans of hominy corn, succotash, blackberries, maple syrup, corn bread, parched corn and popcorn.

Along with cooking and eating the foods you prepare, you may wish to begin a discussion on what it would be like to cook in clay pots on the fire the way it was done long ago. For older students, you might discuss how traditional cooking may have changed over time as new ingredients and ways of cooking found their way into Native American Cuisine. For example, wheat flour was not available to Native people 500 years ago. However, now it is an important ingredient in Native foods such as fry bread.

Further learning (for 4th-5th graders)

Wild plants were an important source of food and medicine for all the southeastern tribes. While some plants growing around us today actually come from Europe or Asia, there are many Native American plants still growing in the area. Have each student pick a Native American plant that grows nearby to research how it has been used by people through history. These might include:

- Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
- Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)
- Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)
- Yellowroot (*Xanthorrhiza simplicissima*)
- Strawberry bush or bleeding heart (*Euonymus americanus*)
- White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

Further learning (for all ages)

If you have a school garden, consider developing a Native American gardening unit. As a class, research Native American gardening techniques, then plant corn, beans, and squash together as a way to celebrate the foods that were grown and eaten here hundreds of years ago.

For more information on beginning a Native American garden, try these resources or contact us.

- Native American Gardening: Stories, Projects and Recipes for Families, by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac
- The Ohio Historical Society: <http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/teachers/teachpag/nagarden.html>

Hunting

Hunting is an ancient skill that many Native American tribes once depended on to survive. Hunting was done with stone-tipped spears and arrows for large game, and blowguns for small game. Tribes might have created reliable places to find large game by keeping areas of the forest clear of trees to promote the growth of forage that attracted deer. Spears, nets, fishing line, and even poisons derived from plants were used for fishing. Hunting grounds for each tribe were often very large. The Tuscarora were known to hunt in an area that stretched from the Roanoke River to the Cape Fear and east toward Raleigh!

Hunting was an important part of the survival of the tribe. Animal hides could be used to make clothing, blankets, and glue. Animal bones were used to make needles, fishhooks, and knives. Animal tendons were used to make sinew rope.

Activity (all ages)

Hunting was an incredible skill that involved patience, observation, and silence. Many of the weapons the American Indians used were fairly short range so the hunters had to find ways to get close to the animals they were hunting by walking quietly and watching carefully. Take your class out for a walk in a nearby forest or field. Practice walking without making a sound as though you were trying to get closer to an animal.

Test your students' observation skills: Have them carefully observe a small patch of ground, then close their eyes as you or one of the students changes something in the area (i.e. moving a rock, or bending a leaf), then have them open their eyes and try to spot the difference.

Search the surrounding area for signs of animal life, such as tracks or burrows.

For more information on teaching tracking skills to children, read Tom Brown's Field Guide to Nature and Survival for Children, by Tom Brown.

Stories

Before European contact, there was no written language among Native American peoples. Storytelling was an important way to pass knowledge and values from one generation to the next. Among many tribes, storytelling was only done in the wintertime, and there were special ceremonies that went along with the telling of these stories, such as purification of the listeners and burning of sacred herbs during the telling. Regardless of how and when they are told, they offer us a special way to connect to history. Native American tales are not only great stories, but they often carry deeper messages such as ethical lessons or explanations of the natural world. Many of these stories are expressions of the human experience. They may explain how things came to be, teach us how to live and be thankful, or draw parallels between the human and natural worlds.

We recommend the following resources for Native American stories.

- Storytelling of the North Carolina Indians: <http://www.ibiblio.org/storytelling/> (offering information on traditional Indian stories and storytellers in North Carolina)
- Keepers of the Earth (book series) by Michael J Caduto and Joseph Bruchac (collections of Native American stories with follow-up activities)

- Native American Lore Index Page: <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/loreindx.html>
(large online collection of Native American stories)

(Web sites current as of 8/12/2004)

Activity (K-2nd grade): Pick out a Native American story from a story collection. Assign each child a character from the story that they can act out as you read the story out loud.

Activity (2nd –3rd grade): Have each student pick out a favorite Native American story to read to the class.

Activity (4th-5th grade): Read and compare several Native American stories. Encourage your students to consider what each story is explaining or what lesson it is teaching. Have the students come up with a story of their own to explain something in nature or to teach a lesson they think is important in their lives.

Games

Long before Columbus came to the Americas, Native American children were playing their own versions of entertainment such as marbles, string games, dart throwing, guessing games, and even gambling games. Games helped children develop strength, dexterity, and speed, which were important for life in the village.

Cherokee Butterbean Game

This is a gambling game involving six lima beans as dice. Color each of the beans black on one side. Leave the other side white. Place them in a basket and allow each player to toss the beans in the basket onto the ground. One toss = one turn. Keep score with stones or corn kernels.

Scoring

6 white.....6 points
 6 black.....4 points
 5 white or black.....2 points
 all other combinations are valueless.

For more information on games, read Native American Games and Stories, by Joseph Bruchac.

Contemporary Life

With a strong emphasis on history, children often miss the opportunity to learn about the issues of contemporary life for Native people. It may be helpful to include in your unit some activities that help children connect to the diversity and modernity of contemporary native culture. This is a great way to help children address stereotypes such as: native people are primitive, all native people live in teepees, all native people wear headdresses and buckskins, etc. You may find that several of the people in your classroom or in your school community have Native American ancestry.

The recent history of American Indian tribes, with their struggle to be recognized and to maintain their tribal lands, also provides an opportunity to teach older children about issues of discrimination, segregation, and racism. Even into the second half of the 20th century, tribes were pressured to abandon their cultural practices and ways of life in favor of “mainstream” American culture. In some places, schools were forbidden to teach children their tribal language. Parallels can be drawn between the discrimination against Native Americans and against other people of color that provide a powerful lesson on the importance of embracing the diversity of cultures and people in this country.

Activity (all ages)

Collect images of Native people to distribute among your students. Choose some stereotyped images such as thanksgiving scenes or cartoons. Choose also some pictures of contemporary native people, and some pictures of Native American life in the past. Have them compare and contrast the pictures, and ask them what the pictures say about the cultures of the people in them. For example, do they represent a specific person or tribe, or do they give a generalized depiction of all Indian people?

Going Further (4th-5th grades)

Have your students conduct research on the recent history of individual tribes such as: Catawba, Occaneechi-Saponi, Tutelo, Cherokee, and Tuscarora.

Resources

The following books and websites are great resources for continued teaching and learning about Native American cultures.

Books for All Ages

Cherokee Summer, by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith

This book features modern Cherokee life as seen through the eyes of a ten year old girl. She discovers Cherokee traditions such as basket-weaving, crawdad hunting, stomp dancing, and more. This book can help students compare modern and traditional Indian culture.

The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Legend, by Joseph Bruchac

Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Science Activities by Joseph Bruchac and Michael J. Caduto

This book, along with the other books of the Keepers series, offers Native American legends and activities that help teach science and environmental studies concepts.

Books for Kindergarten-3rd grade

Before You Came This Way, by Byrd Baylor

The Story of the Milky Way: A Cherokee Tale, by Joseph Bruchac

How Turtle's Back was Cracked: A Traditional Cherokee Tale, retold by Gayle Ross

Books for 3rd -5th grades

First on the Land: The North Carolina Indians, by Ruth Wetmore

This detailed history of Indian life is a wonderful source for background information for teachers as well as a text for student research projects. It offers tribe by tribe descriptions, accounts of daily life, and a synopsis of the Indian wars fought in North Carolina.

Websites

<http://www.occaneechi-saponi.org/>

A website dedicated to the culture and history of the Occaneechi and Saponi people, who had villages in the piedmont of North Carolina and Virginia through the 1700's.

<http://www.doa.state.nc.us/doa/cia/handout1.htm>

North Carolina Department of Indian Affairs educational handouts. These handouts include a general background on lifestyle, an overview of the history, and an adult reading list on North Carolina Native Americans

<http://www.nativetech.org/>

An educational web site that covers topics of ancestral Native American technology, housing, games, and more.

Teachers' Resources

Teaching Young Children about Native Americans: A website including tips on designing units about Native American Culture. <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eecearchive/digests/1996/reese96.html>

How to Teach About American Indians: A Guide for the School Library Media Specialist by Karen D. Harvey with Lisa D. Harjo and Lynda Welborn

A great resource for both school librarians and classroom teachers.

Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children ed. Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale

Local Resources

The Occaneechi Indian Village is a historic village complete with palisade walls and traditional bent sapling houses. It was created to reenact life for the Occaneechi Indians in the early 1700's. It is located in downtown Hillsborough and is open to the public. An Indian Village Day is held in the fall or winter of the year. To find out more about the village, please contact the Tribal Office at 919-304-3723.

If you would like more information on this packet, our field trip or summer camp programs, or other activities to supplement your curriculum, please contact us!

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