

Wabanaki Languages Educator's Guide

Introduction:

This unit focuses on Wabanaki citizens, their languages, and the importance of language sharers. Culture, the products, practices, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or social group, is intricately woven throughout the world's languages. Using a target language to explore one's own culture and the cultures that the target language embodies is an experience that creates learners who are aware of and engage with a variety of different perspectives in local and global society, and who are, ultimately, responsible and involved citizens of what is now called Maine and the world.

Guiding Questions:

1. Who are the Wabanaki?
2. Why don't all Wabanaki citizens speak their traditional languages?
3. How many Wabanaki languages are there?
4. How can learning about the Wabanaki languages help you grow and become an ally?
5. If the Wabanaki were the first people living here, in what we now call Maine, why don't we all speak a Wabanaki language?

Background:

Place-based education in what is now called Maine means we must teach about the Wabanaki Nations. Learning about the Wabanaki ensures:

- that no one can live in this space, we now call Maine, without knowing they live in the Dawnland
- we know our history and we cannot do that without acknowledging the: Mi'kmaq, Panawahpskek (Penobscot), Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), Peskotomuhkat (Passamaquoddy), and Abenaki Nations
- students learn about the imposed political boundaries that shape what we now call Maine
- schools teach about the continuous presence, governance, stewardship, adaptability, endurance, and resistance of the Wabanaki.

Introduction:

Share  Wabanaki Languages (grades K-3) before beginning lessons below.

Classroom Lessons:

[Animal Names](#): (grades K-5) In this lesson, students will learn how to say animal names in the Peskotomuhkati language. They will have the opportunity to learn, draw and label animals that live in this space we now call Maine in English and Peskotomuhkati.

[Thanks to the Animals](#): (grades 2-5) This lesson encourages students to think about their own responsibility in community and their connection to our Earth. The read aloud book, [Thanks to the Animals](#) is written by Allen Sockabasin, from the Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy) Tribe. The lesson also teaches students how to say 'thank you' in the Wabanaki languages.







[Language Sharers](#): (grades 6-8) This lesson was created by educators and Wabanaki advisors. It focuses on how Wabanaki Nations across what we now call Maine and Canada had their languages stolen when colonizers settled here. The teacher and students will talk about how this happened to Panawahpskek (Penobscot) citizens up until 1984. The public school on Álenape Ménehan (Indian Island) was led by Catholic nuns who did not allow students to speak any of their traditional language. It will also focus on Dwayne Tomah, a Peskotomuhkati citizen and language sharer.

[Three Sisters & Language](#): (grades 3-8) This lesson focuses on teaching the agricultural method of planting corn, beans, and squash together, while integrating Wabanaki language terms for each crop.

[Wabanaki Place Names](#): (Grades 4-8) In this lesson students will understand the land we now call Maine used to be all Wabanaki lands. Students will understand that many of the places in what we now call Maine still have Wabanaki names and how those names were created to describe the physical space they represent.

[Language Revitalization & Technology](#): (Grades 6-12) In this lesson students will explore how Wabanaki communities are using apps, recordings and digital tools to preserve and teach their languages. Students will listen to audio clips of Wabanaki speakers and learn more about the importance of Wabanaki language keepers.

Additional Resources:

-  Language Resources
-  aquatic animals matching game (Panawahpskek)
-  kisohe (the sun) Wabanaki languages
-  Wabanaki Greetings
-  Wabanaki online dictionaries
-  Three Sisters in Wabanaki languages

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