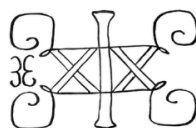


PK-12 Wabanaki Studies Nature Guide



Background:

This educator guide is designed to support teachers in integrating Wabanaki cultural knowledge with science and environmental studies across grade levels. The Wabanaki—the Abenaki, Panawahpskek (Penobscot), Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy), Mi'kmaq (Micmac), and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet)—have lived in the region now known as Maine and Eastern Canada for thousands of years. Their knowledge of the land, plants, animals, and cycles of nature has been passed down through generations and remains vital today.

Introduction:

In this educator kit, you will find a variety of lessons and guides that explore the Wabanaki Nations' deep relationship with the natural world. These resources highlight the cultural knowledge, stories, and ecological understanding that the Wabanaki have developed over thousands of years in what is now known as Maine, New England, and Eastern Canada.

Each lesson is designed to support student learning in science, social studies, and environmental literacy through a Wabanaki perspective. By engaging with these materials, students will gain a deeper appreciation for Indigenous knowledge systems, the importance of place-based learning, and the vital role of land, animals, plants, and water in Wabanaki life.

These lessons are intended to be taught with respect, openness, and a commitment to honoring the voices and traditions of the Wabanaki.

Guiding Questions:

- How do Wabanaki relationships with the land, plants, and animals shape their culture and daily life?
- What can we learn from Wabanaki knowledge systems about caring for the environment?
- In what ways do Wabanaki stories, language, and practices reflect a deep understanding of nature?
- How can students observe and connect with the natural world through a Wabanaki cultural lens?
- Why is it important to preserve and learn about Indigenous ecological knowledge?
- How can exploring Wabanaki science and traditions enhance our understanding of Earth and life sciences today?

Curriculum Lessons

Lessons for Elementary

- ☰ Exploring Wabanaki Languages in Nature (K) (k)
- ☰ Our Environment - 1st Grade (1st)
- ☰ Wabanaki and the Universe Lesson - 1st Grade (1st)
- ☰ Animals - 1st Grade (1st)
- ☰ The Environment (2) (2nd)
- ☰ Protecting Pollinators (2)
- ☰ Nature Journals (2)
- ☰ Birchbark (3) Science/Engineering 3
- ☰ Three Sisters (Ecosystems) 3
- ☰ Science - moons 3
- ☰ Emerald Ash Borer- Grade 4
- ☰ Uncovering Time (Earth Science) (4)
- ☰ Wabanaki Stewardship: Our Relationship with Water (5)
- ☰ Protecting Our Environment Today & Developing a Relationship with the Natural World Ar... (5)
- ☰ Stewards of the Land: Caring for Blueberries, Bees, and Traditions (5)
- ☰ Exploring Sacred Wabanaki Plants (5)


Resources for Elementary:

- ☐ Winter Solstice
- ☐ kisohs (the sun) Wabanaki languages

Lessons for Middle / High School

[Activist Art of Wabanaki Poetry](#)

- ☰ 6-8 Wabanaki Water Stewardship Educator Guide
- ☰ Food is medicine, medicine is food
- ☰ Wabanaki Riches: The Wabanaki Food Year
- ☰ KWWNM in the News
- ☰ Preserving Shell Mounds: Taking Action to Protect Wabanaki Culture
- ☰ PK-12 Getting Outdoors! Educator's Guide
- ☰ Wabanaki Medicine and Moons Educators Guide

- Dried Plants (Nicole, Jazz, John Neptune)
- Videos by Jazz Thompson:
 -  Foraging Fiddleheads with Jazz Thompson

- [▶ Foraging Wild Strawberries with Jazz Thompson](#)
- [▶ Foraging Beach Peas with Jazz Thompson](#)
- [▶ Foraging Sweet Fern with Jazz Thompson](#)
- Binder Information
- Posters and Laminated Informational Cards
- Nature Cards

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Preparation:

- Go through lessons and pick out some that you would like to try in your classroom! Don't feel locked into the age level that lesson was originally designed for!
- Minimize prolonged light exposure and excess moisture for dried plants by storing them in a cool dry place when not in use

Vocabulary List:

- **Wabanaki** - the term means "People of the Dawnland". When used in context, the term Wabanaki refers to the Indigenous nations in what is now known as Maine – the Abenaki, the Panawahpskek (*Penobscot*), the Peskotomuhkati (*Passamaquoddy*), the Mi'kmaq (*Micmac*), and the Wolastoqiyik (*Maliseet*).

Learning Objectives:

- Students will explore the natural world through Wabanaki knowledge systems, recognizing land, water, plants, and animals as relatives in a web of reciprocal relationships.
- Students will practice careful observation and attentiveness in nature, learning through direct experience guided by Wabanaki values of respect, reciprocity, and connection.
- Students will engage in place-based learning rooted in Wabanaki relationships with their homelands, acknowledging both ancestral knowledge and its ongoing presence today.
- Students will deepen their understanding of seasonal cycles, food systems, and ecological change by learning from Wabanaki ways of knowing and living with the land.



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