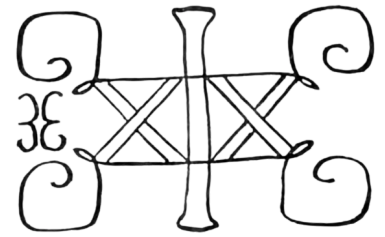


Wabanaki Languages Educator's Guide



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 can learning about the Wabanaki languages help you grow and become an ally?
4. 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.

Classroom Lessons:

[Lesson #1:](#) (grades 1-4) This lesson is called **Family Ties** and was created by the Penobscot Cultural and Historic Preservation. In this unit, students will learn about the unique family structure of the Penobscot people by exploring their own family relationships and comparing them to those of the Penobscots. Starting with the self and moving through nuclear and extended family and beyond, students will also explore their relationships with neighbors, community, county, state, nation – and ultimately, their global relationships.

Read alouds to be included with lesson:

- Francis, Lee Decora. [Kunu's Basket: A Story from Indian Island](#). Tilbury House Publishers: Thomaston, Maine. 2012. The story of Kunu, who wants to make a pack basket like the other men on Indian Island but has trouble until his grandfather intervenes. Appropriate for ages 5-12.
- Frey, Gabriel and Greenlaw, Suzanne. [The First Blade of Sweetgrass](#) Musquon must overcome her impatience while learning to distinguish sweetgrass from other salt marsh grasses, but slowly the spirit and peace of her surroundings speak to her, and she gathers sweetgrass as her ancestors have done for centuries, leaving the first blade she sees to grow for future generations. This sweet, authentic story from a Maliseet mother and her Passamaquoddy husband includes backmatter about traditional basket making and a Wabanaki glossary. Appropriate for ages 5-12.

[Lesson #2:](#) (grades 2-5) This lesson is called **Thanks to the Animals** and is shared by PressBooks. It 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.


Read alouds to be included with lesson:

- [Thanks to the Animals, read in English](#)
- [Thanks to the Animals, read in Peskotomuhkat](#)

[Lesson #3:](#) (grades 6-8) This lesson is called **Language Sharers** and 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.

Resources:

 Language Resources

Standards:

Geography:

- Students understand how physical and human geographic characteristics of a place as well as culture and experience influence people's understanding of places and regions in Maine, the Wabanaki Nations, the United States, and the world.

History:

- Students draw on concepts and processes using primary and secondary sources from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the Wabanaki Nations, the United States, and the world.
- Students will examine the causes and ramifications of discrimination, oppression, and genocide in the Holocaust and in the histories of the Wabanaki and African-Americans and how they have influenced historical and current events, developments, and ideas