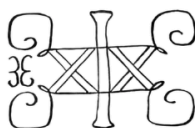


9-12 Financial Self-Determination: Wabanaki's Contemporary Financial Strategies Wabanaki Studies Educator Guide



Background:

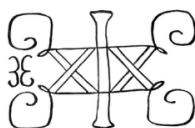
The Panawahpskek (Penobscot) Nation, Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy) Tribe, Mi'kmaq Nation, (Wolastoqiyik) Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, and Abenaki (collectively known as the Wabanaki Nations) have lived for thousands of years in the land we now call Maine. They are known collectively as the Wabanaki, or "People of the Dawnland" and have a rich cultural heritage deeply intertwined with their lands and resources. Despite historical challenges, such as the Maine Indian Land Claim Act of 1980, Wabanaki communities today are actively pursuing financial self-determination and creative ways to assert control over their economic futures and future generations. This unit investigates the innovative financial strategies employed by Wabanaki Nations to cultivate economic independence and self-sufficiency within their communities throughout what is now known as the State of Maine.

Guiding Questions:

1. How have historical factors impacted the economic circumstances of Wabanaki communities?
2. What are the key components of financial self-determination and how do Wabanaki Nations work towards achieving it?
3. What contemporary economic initiatives have Wabanaki communities implemented to promote self-sufficiency and prosperity?
4. How do geographic and environmental factors influence economic decisions and strategies in Wabanaki communities?
5. What role does education play in fostering financial literacy and empowerment within Wabanaki communities?
6. What are specialty cultural goods and services unique to Wabanaki communities?

Overview:

This interdisciplinary unit investigates how Wabanaki communities today navigate the complexities of financial sovereignty amidst a backdrop of historical adversity and ongoing economic challenges. Students will investigate the cultural, geographical, economic, environmental, and social aspects that contribute to the contemporary financial strategies of the Panawahpskek (Penobscot), Peskotomuhkati



(Passamaquoddy), Mi'kmaq (Micmac), Abenaki, and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Nations. Through research, reflection, discussions, and project-based learning, students will gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted efforts undertaken by Wabanaki communities to achieve economic self-determination.

By examining the intersection of social studies, science, and Wabanaki perspectives, students will develop a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding financial sovereignty for Wabanaki communities, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and respect for diverse cultural perspectives.

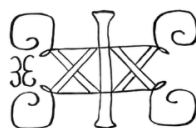
Objectives:

Social Studies Objectives:

1. Analyze the historical context of Wabanaki's economic experiences and their impact on contemporary financial self-determination.
2. Evaluate the significance of cultural resilience and community collaboration in Wabanaki economic initiatives.
3. Investigate the role of government policies, treaties, and land rights in shaping Wabanaki's economic opportunities and challenges.
4. Examine the interconnectedness of geography, resources, and economic decision-making within Wabanaki communities.
5. Critically assess the effectiveness of various financial strategies employed by Wabanaki Nations to achieve self-sufficiency and prosperity.

Science Objectives:

1. Examine the environmental factors influencing Wabanaki territories' economic activities and resource management.
2. Investigate sustainable practices and innovative technologies utilized by Wabanaki communities to enhance economic resilience.
3. Analyze the ecological impacts of economic development initiatives on Wabanaki lands and natural resources.
4. Examine the role of scientific research and indigenous knowledge in shaping Wabanaki's approaches to economic sustainability.



5. Collaborate on projects that integrate scientific principles with social and economic considerations to address contemporary challenges faced by Wabanaki communities.

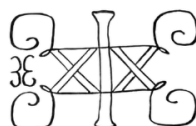
Prior Knowledge & Preparation:




For millennia, the Wabanaki have understood and valued the relationship between the environment and cultural traditions and recognized that human beings are part of the environment. Long before their contact with Europeans, the Wabanaki were successful stewards of the land. They were self-sustaining, thus they were able to self-determine their futures.

What gives the Wabanaki a sense of belonging? Their knowledge resides in languages, cultural practices, and teachings that span many generations and self-determination. This knowledge is based on long-term observation, experimentation, and experience with the living earth. European contact resulted in devastating loss of life, disruption of tradition, and enormous loss of lands for the Wabanaki. The imposition of international, state, reservation, and other borders on the land changed relationships between the people and their environments. Despite this disruption, the Wabanaki greatly influenced the history of the land now known as Maine.


Today, this influence continues to play a significant role in many aspects of political, legal, cultural, environmental, and economic issues. Understanding the history and cultures of present-day Maine requires acknowledging Wabanaki history from their perspective. Spend some time with the resources below so that you are prepared to teach your students about Wabanaki self-determination.


- [Wabanaki Studies Framework](#)
- Read ["A Brief Wabanaki Economic History"](#)
- Spend time with online modules:
 - [MOOSE Wabanaki Studies Learning Progression | Department of Education](#)




- Spend time with the DOE Wabanaki Studies website
 - [Wabanaki Studies | Department of Education](#)
-  Cultural Appropriation Resources
-  Meet The Five Nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy
-  Why: Cultural connections between the wabanaki and the environemnt

Lessons:

Lesson 1:  Lesson 1: Financial Self-determination in Wabanaki Communities


Lesson 2:  Lesson 2: Investigating Economic Decision-Making in Wabanaki Commu...

Lesson 3:  Lesson 3: Understanding the Economic Impacts of the Maine Indian Clai...

Lesson 4:  Lesson 4: Researching Unique Goods and Services in Wabanaki Commu...

Additional Resources:

 Wabanaki Spirit and Survival through Basketmaking

 Land Claims

[Vocabulary List for this Guide](#)

Wabanaki Confederacy Official Websites:

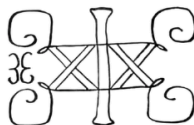
- Panawahpskek (Penobscot): [Penobscot Nation Website](#)
- Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy): [Passamaquoddy Tribe Website](#)
- Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) [Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians](#)
- Mi'kmaq (Micmac): [Mi'kmaq Nation Website](#)

Websites:

[Tribal Sovereignty – An Explainer, Maine Center for Economic Policy](#)

[Understanding Tribal Sovereignty](#)

[Maine Indian Basketmakers](#)



Alliance Abbe Museum

Articles:

[Economic and Social Impacts of Restrictions on the Applicability of Federal Indian Policies to the Wabanaki Nations in Maine – Ash Center](#)

[Tribal Sovereignty in Wabanaki Homeland: History, Policy, Connectedness and the Next Generations – Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners](#)

[The Serviceberry An Economy of Abundance](#)

Videos:

[*Video: Working to Recognize Wabanaki Tribal Sovereignty*](#)

Standards:

Social Studies Standards:

- C1: Historical Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and Patterns
- C2: Maine's History, Culture, and People
- E1: Economics and Financial Literacy (Personal Finance)
- E2: Personal Finance and Economic Decision-Making
- G1: Geography, Spatial Thinking, and Skills

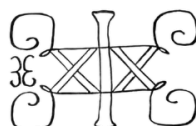
Science Standards:

- ESS1: Earth's Place in the Universe
- ESS3: Earth and Human Activity
- ETS1: Engineering Design
- LS2: Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics
- LS4: Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

ELA:

Reading Informational Text

RI.9-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.



- Students will read and analyze historical texts, government policies, and other informational documents related to Wabanaki economic experiences and financial strategies.

RI.9-12.2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis.

- Students will identify and analyze key components of financial self-determination, the impact of historical factors, and contemporary economic initiatives within Wabanaki communities.

RI.9-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

- Students will use a variety of sources, including texts, videos, and online modules, to research and understand the economic strategies of the Wabanaki Nations.

Writing

W.9-12.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

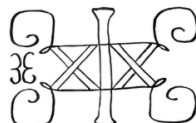
- Students will write reports, profiles, and reflections on their research findings about Wabanaki financial strategies and economic initiatives.

W.9-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.

- Students will create structured and coherent written documents such as research reports, project reflections, and presentations.

W.9-12.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

- Students will undertake research projects focusing on specific aspects of Wabanaki financial strategies, economic self-determination, and the impact of geographic and environmental factors.



W.9-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- Students will gather and evaluate information from a range of sources, ensuring the credibility and relevance of their research materials.

Speaking and Listening

SL.9-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Students will engage in discussions about their research findings, the historical context, and contemporary economic initiatives within Wabanaki communities.

SL.9-12.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

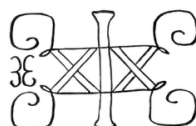
- Students will prepare and deliver presentations on their research projects, explaining the financial strategies and economic initiatives of Wabanaki communities.

SL.9-12.5: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

- Students will use digital tools such as Google Slides or ArcGIS StoryMaps to create engaging and informative presentations.

Integration into the Unit Lessons

Lesson 1: Financial Self-Determination in Wabanaki Communities



- RI.9-12.1, RI.9-12.2, W.9-12.2, SL.9-12.1: Analyzing historical and contemporary texts, writing explanatory reports, and engaging in discussions.

Lesson 2: Investigating Economic Decision-Making in Wabanaki Communities through Geographic and Environmental Factors

- RI.9-12.7, W.9-12.7, SL.9-12.4: Conducting research, integrating various sources, and presenting findings.

Lesson 3: Understanding the Economic Impacts of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 on Wabanaki Financial Sovereignty

- RI.9-12.1, RI.9-12.2, W.9-12.4, W.9-12.8: Analyzing legal texts, writing coherent documents, and gathering credible information.

Lesson 4: Researching Unique Goods and Services in Wabanaki Communities

- W.9-12.2, W.9-12.7, SL.9-12.5: Writing product/service profiles, conducting sustained research, and creating digital presentations.

Updated: March 2026

