



FORESTS OF THE FIRST STEWARDS

3rd - 5th Grade Discussion Guide

Episode/Lesson Plan # 1 - The History (Grades 3-5)

INTRODUCTION

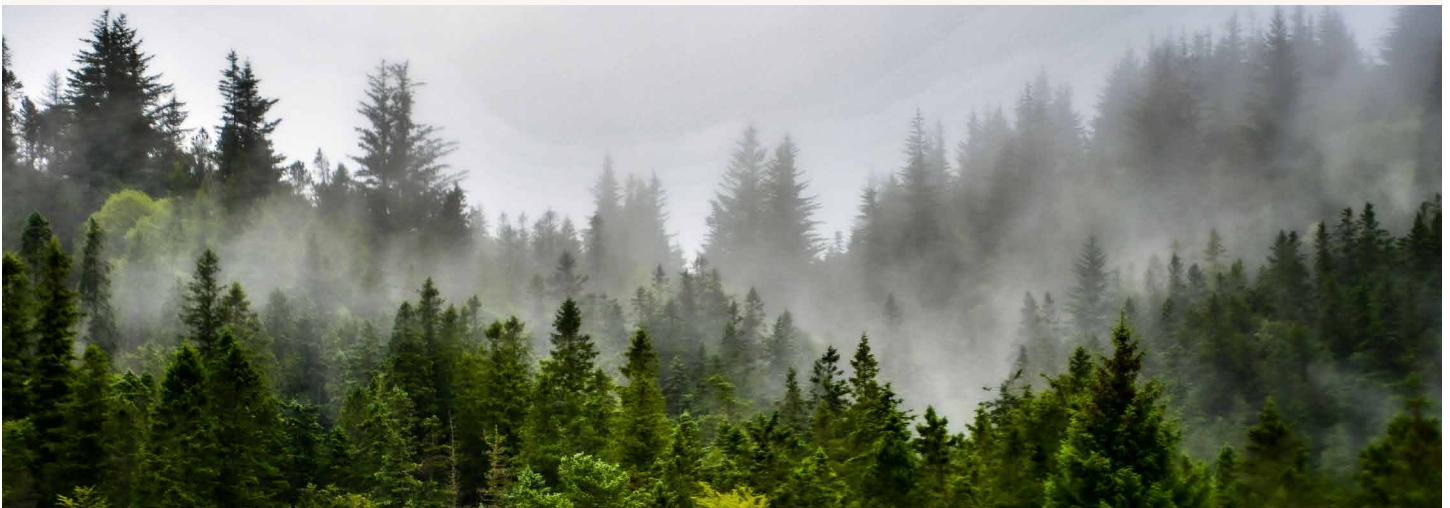
Welcome to the Menominee Forest! The Menominee Nation has lived in northeastern Wisconsin for thousands of years. Their home is full of beautiful forests, with trees like maple, pine, birch, and oak. Some of these trees are over 200 years old, and some are so tall they almost touch the clouds!

Long ago, the Menominee started at the mouth of the Menominee River. From there, their five clans - Bear, Eagle, Wolf, Moose, and Crane - spread across their lands. Today, they still live on a part of those lands, carefully taking care of the forest.

The Menominee have a special way of living with the forest. They make sure the forest stays healthy for the future while supporting their tribe. They know which trees to harvest, protect wetlands and sacred places, and blend their traditional knowledge with modern science. Because of this care, the Menominee Forest is still thriving, even after hundreds of years of people using its lumber.

The forest isn't just home to trees - it's home to people, animals, and stories. The Menominee also uses the forest to create wood products, like running the sawmill and making maple syrup from the trees they tap each year. These practices show how people can live with the forest in a way that is respectful and sustainable.

In this episode, we'll explore Menominee's history at the Cultural Preservation Museum and Logging Camp, and we'll visit the Tribal Forestry School to see how students connect with the forest today. You'll learn about the trees, the syrup, and the traditions that have been passed down for generations.





Educational Partners:



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES (GRADES 3-5)

- i. Learn about the history of the Menominee Nation and how they take care of their forests.
- ii. Discover why maple trees and syrup are important for the Menominee people and their community.
- iii. Experience forest connection hands-on.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

This lesson aligns with the following standards:

1. NGSS (Science)

- a. 3-LS4-3: Construct an argument with evidence that some organisms and environments change over time.
- b. 4-ESS3-1: Obtain and combine information to describe how humans use natural resources.

1. Common Core (ELA)

- a. RI.3.3 / RI.4.3: Describe the relationship between a series of events, concepts, or steps in a process.
- b. SL.3.1 / SL.4.1: Engage in collaborative discussions, expressing ideas clearly and providing evidence.

LESSON TIME ESTIMATE AND SUMMARY

(Approximately 30-45 minutes total)

Learning Objective	Activity	How Students Show They Learned	Time Estimate
Learn about Menominee history and forest practices	Watch the museum/logging camp segment; discuss Menominee clans and forest history.	Students act out a short story or create a "forest character" to share with the class.	10-13 min
Discover why maple trees and syrup are important	Watch the Tribal Forestry School segment; taste maple syrup; discuss its uses	Students create a quick "maple tree map" showing the tree, syrup, and what it provides to people; share with the class	10-12 min
Experience forest connection hands-on	Sensory exploration (touch leaves, bark, seeds), snack activity, or short movement game	Students describe or show one thing they discovered; tell a short story connecting it to the forest or episode	15-20 min



BEGINNER VOCABULARY

1. **Silviculture:** The art and science of taking care of forests to keep them healthy, productive, and resilient. Think of it like taking care of the forest like a gardener takes care of their garden, planning, planting, and caring for trees so the forest thrives.
2. **Forest stand:** A section of forest where the trees are similar and grow together, often managed as one group. Think of it like a neighborhood of trees, all living together in the same area.
3. **Natural regeneration:** When a forest grows back on its own, without human intervention, from seeds, sprouts, or roots. It's nature doing the work, letting new trees grow where they naturally want to. Think of it as forest self-repair.
4. **Selection harvest:** A harvest method where selected trees are removed, usually the older or less healthy ones, while leaving the rest of the forest standing. This helps to create a balance in tree age classes in a forest stand, and helps new seedlings grow in the small gaps, keeping the forest healthy and diverse. Think of it like thinning out a garden so the healthiest plants have space to thrive.
5. **Maple Syrup Tapping:** The process of collecting sap from maple trees to make syrup. Small holes are carefully made in the tree so the sap can flow out, and then the sap is boiled down into sweet syrup. Think of it like gently squeezing juice from an orange, then cooking it to make something yummy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

• The Menominee Nation and Forest

- The Menominee Nation is located in northeastern Wisconsin, with its tribal government in the Village of Keshena.
- They have lived in this area for over 10,000 years and are indigenous to Wisconsin.
- Their origin began at the mouth of the Menominee River, where their five clans - Bear, Eagle, Wolf, Moose, and Crane - were formed.

• Forest Description

- The Menominee Forest is a living example of the Lake States boreal forest that existed before widespread logging.
- Trees include maple, aspen, birch, hemlock, ash, basswood, red oak, and white pine. Some trees are more than 200 years old and can grow over 200 feet tall.
- The forest is so large and healthy, it can even be seen from space.

• Sustainable Forest Practices

- Menominee forest management blends traditional knowledge with modern science.
- Practices include:
 - i. Sustained-yield harvesting: Cutting trees carefully so the forest stays healthy long-term.
 - ii. Selection harvest: Removing only certain trees, leaving others to grow.
 - iii. Natural regeneration: Allowing forests to grow back naturally from seeds or roots.
 - iv. Roughly a quarter of trees are left unharvested to protect forest health.



• Cultural Importance

- Sacred sites, wetlands, and wildlife refuges are protected.
- Since 1908, the Neopit sawmill has employed Tribal members and woodworkers, providing steady jobs.
- Maple trees are important both culturally and economically; tapping them for syrup connects students to the history and traditions of the Menominee.

• Interesting Fact for Teachers:

- A study by Dartmouth College and the University of Wisconsin–Madison found that after more than a century of harvesting, the Menominee forest is more mature, with higher tree volume and fewer invasive species than nearby non-Tribal lands.

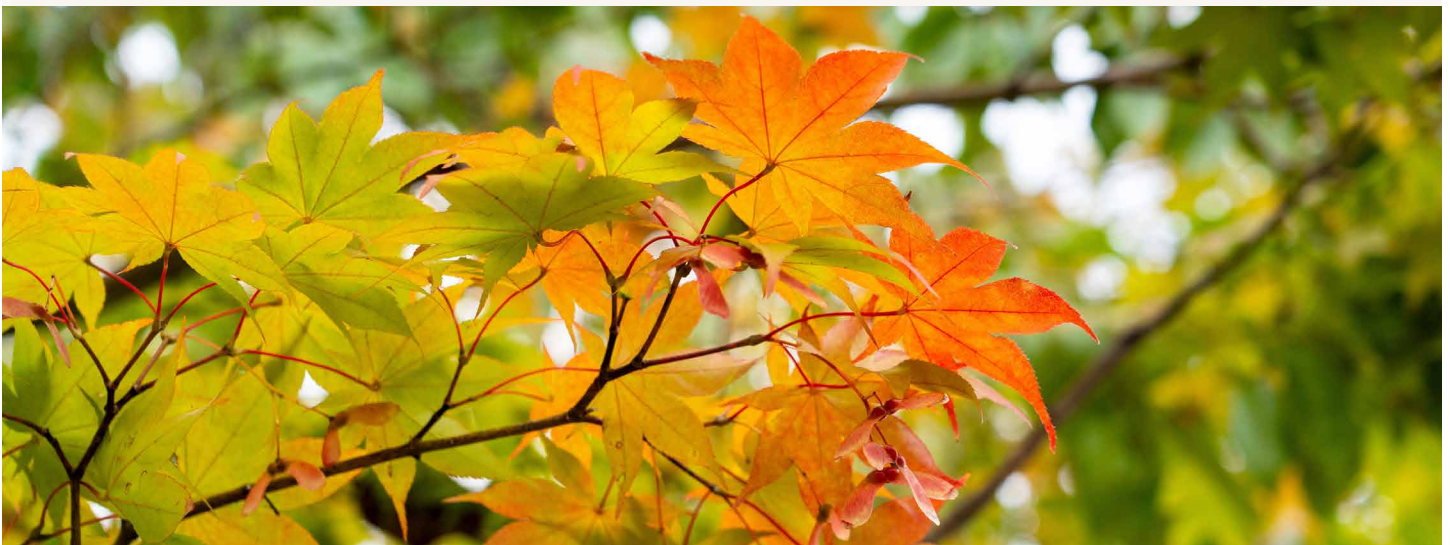
LEARNING PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

- Show a short clip or image from the Cultural Preservation Museum or logging camp to spark curiosity.
- Facilitate a discussion:
 - What do you think life was like for the Menominee people long ago?
 - How do you think they took care of the forest?
- Briefly introduce the Menominee Nation and their connection to the forest.

2. Activity 1: Learn about Menominee History and Forest Practices

- Students explore Menominee history and forest management through video and storytelling.





3. Activity 2: Discover Maple Trees and Syrup

- Students learn how maple trees are used and why maple syrup is culturally and economically important.

4. Activity 3: Experience Forest Connection Hands-On

- Students engage in sensory exploration and reflect on their personal connection to the forest.

5. Conclusion

- Facilitate a discussion:
 - What surprised you most about the Menominee forest?
 - Why is it important to take care of forests?
- Students share one thing they learned or one story they created.

6. Teacher Tips:

- Keep explanations short and use analogies to make complex ideas relatable (i.e., forests like gardens or neighborhoods).
- Encourage discussion, movement, and drawing.
- Adjust activity timing as needed depending on student interest and engagement.





ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Learn about Menominee History and Forest Practices

- Objective: Describe the history of the Menominee Nation and their forest practices.
- Materials: Museum/logging camp video segment, paper, crayons/colored pencils/markers.
- Steps:
 - Watch the museum/logging camp video segment. Pause at key points to highlight Menominee clans and forest stories.
 - Introduce vocabulary terms (i.e., silviculture, forest stand, natural regeneration, selection harvest).
 - Discuss with students:
 - Which story or fact surprised you most?
 - Students create a “forest character” representing an element of the forest or a Menominee story. They can draw or act out their character.
 - Students share their character/story with the class or a partner.
- Tips:
 - Younger students can draw rather than act out.
 - Encourage using vocabulary words in their story or description.

Activity 2: Discover Maple Trees and Syrup

- Objective: Explain why maple trees and syrup are culturally and economically important.
- Materials: Tribal Forestry School video segment, maple syrup sample (optional), paper, crayons/colored pencils/markers.
- Steps:
 - Watch the video segment about maple syrup tapping. Pause to highlight key points (how sap is collected, why maple syrup matters).
 - If available, let students taste a small sample of maple syrup.
 - Students create a “maple tree map”: draw the tree, the sap, and what the syrup provides for people and animals.
 - Students share their maps with a partner or the class, explaining one thing they learned.
- Tips:
 - If tasting isn’t possible, show pictures of maple syrup being used in foods.
 - Encourage students to include at least one vocabulary word in their map.

Activity 3: Experience Forest Connection Hands-On

- Objective: Experience the forest through sensory exploration and storytelling.
- Materials: Leaves, bark, seeds, small forest items, snack (optional), paper, markers/colored pencils/crayons.
- Steps:
 - Let students touch, smell, or examine small forest items. Encourage describing textures, smells, or observations.
 - Optional: provide a small forest-themed snack.
 - Students tell a short story or share one observation connecting it to the forest or something they learned from the episode.
- Tips:
 - Younger students can draw their story instead of telling it aloud.
 - Can be done outdoors or indoors.
 - Use prompts like: If you were a tree, what would you see or feel? to use imagination.



References

For additional information:

- <https://menominee-nsn.gov/CulturePages/BriefHistory>
- <https://www.menominee.edu/sustainable-development-institute>
- <https://www.mtewood.com/>

Additional Resources from LEAF: Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program:



LEAF-Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

- [Lesson 1: American Indians and the Forest](#)
- [Lesson 7: Sustaining Our Forests](#)
- [Career Profile - McKaylee Duquain](#)
- [Wisconsin Forest Tales](#)
- [K-1st Grade Field Enhancement - Sensing the Forest](#)
- [2nd-3rd Grade Field Enhancement - Observing Forest Interactions](#)
- [4th Grade Field Enhancement - Unlocking a Forest's Past](#)
- [5th-6th Grade Field Enhancement - Studying Forest Layers](#)
- [5th-6th Grade Field Enhancement - Woods Worth](#)
- [5th-6th Grade Field Enhancement - Competition in the Forest](#)