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U.S. Endowment
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FORESTS OF THE FIRST STEWARDS

6th - 8th Grade Discussion Guide

Lesson Plan: The History of Forestry in the Menominee Nation

EPISODE OVERVIEW:

The Cultural Preservation Museum and Logging Camp

We start our journey with the history of the Menominee Nation. We meet historian, David Grignon at the logging camp/museum, who educates viewers on their history of the people, their land, and their connection to sustainable forestry, as we take viewers on a visual tour of the museum and logging camp. We hear from Tribal Chairman, Joey Awonohopay, giving further connection to Menominee culture and history, and ultimately tying into the Menominee Tribal School.

Neopit - Menominee Tribal School

Our next stop is the Tribal Forestry School where we meet up with an educator who gives further context on the connection to the forest, as we tag-along with students into the forest to do the yearly tapping of the Maple trees. Through this we learn the historical, economic, and cultural importance of the maple tree and the syrup it produces.

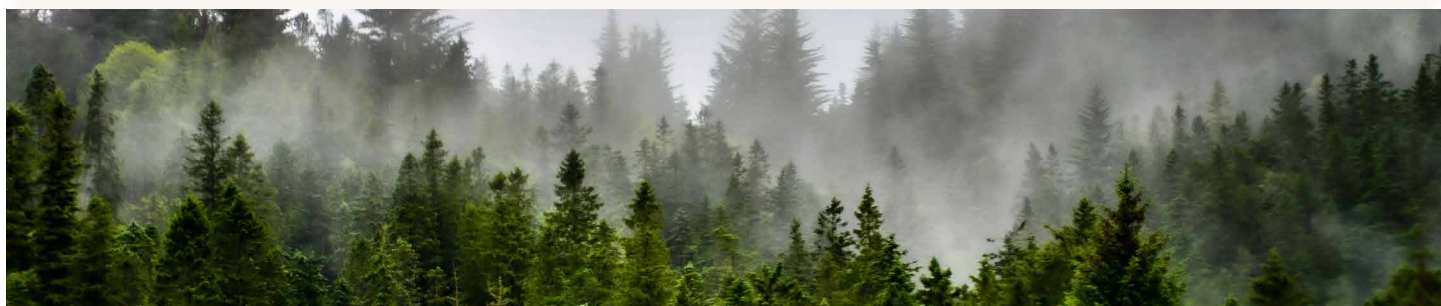
Warm up

What does sustainability mean, and who decides how land should be used? How, if at all, have these concepts changed over time?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Analyze the historical relationship between the Menominee Nation and forest stewardship.
- Evaluate how cultural values and traditional ecological knowledge contribute to sustainable forest management.
- Examine the ecological and economic significance of maple trees and maple syrup production within the Menominee community.





Lesson / Activity Time (45–60 minutes total)

Introduction: 5 minutes

Video / Content Exploration: 10–15 minutes

Activities: 20–25 minutes

Reflection & Discussion: 10 minutes

Assessment: 5–10 minutes

Activity Summaries

Students engage in collaborative and analytical activities exploring:

- Indigenous land stewardship practices
- Sustainable forestry vs. industrial logging
- Cultural and economic importance of maple syrup production

INTERMEDIATE VOCABULARY

- **Forest Stewardship:** The management of forests for all goods, benefits, and values that can be sustained for present and future generations
- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK):** Knowledge developed by Indigenous communities over generations through direct relationship with the environment.
- **Biodiversity:** 1. The variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions, and structures of plants, animals, and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene





pools, and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local through regional to global. 2. An index of richness in a community, ecosystem, or landscape and the relative abundance of these species.

- **Ecological Silviculture:** A system for managing forestlands that emulates natural disturbances and forest processes, often used to help protect rare species and sustain biological diversity in addition to producing timber. This approach uses an understanding of forest ecosystems to achieve integrated environmental, economic, and societal outcomes.
- **Natural regeneration:** Regrowth of the forest after a harvest through seeds, seedlings, or vegetative sprouts that originate from within or from adjacent forest stands.
- **Resources:** the natural resources of an area (e.g., timber, grass, watershed values, recreation values, wildlife habitat)
- **Sustainability:** the long-term capacity to maintain the health, productivity, diversity, and overall integrity of forests, ranging from stands to ecoregions, in the context of human activity and use

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Menominee Nation of Wisconsin has managed its forest sustainably from time immemorial, harvesting timber while maintaining forest health. Their practices are rooted in cultural values and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. For the Menominee Nation, maple syrup production is both an economic activity, and a cultural tradition passed down through generations.

Learning Procedure

1. Introduce key concepts and vocabulary.
2. Present episode segments:
 - a. Cultural Preservation Museum & Logging Camp
 - b. Tribal Forestry School and maple tapping
3. Guide students through activities analyzing the connection between culture, ecology, and economy.
4. Facilitate group discussion and reflection.
5. Assess understanding through a short quiz, essay, or presentation.

Activities (Choose 2-4)

Activity 1: Cause & Effect Mapping

Students create a digital or physical diagram showing relationships between:

- Forest management practices
- Ecosystem health
- Community well-being

Activity 2: Maple Case Study

Students analyze the importance of maple trees/sugar bushes:

- Ecological role
- Economic value (syrup production)
- Cultural significance

Activity 3: Compare & Contrast

In pairs or small groups, students compare:

- Menominee forestry practices
- Modern commercial forestry

*Focus on sustainability, biodiversity, and long-term impact.



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Activity 4: Career Path Exploration

Students explore careers in forestry, conservation, or environmental science, referencing resources like the SAF career guide.

- Example assignment:
 - Pick any general career and depict how it connects to forestry (data scientist, biologist, lawyer, etc.)

Reflection / Discussion (Choose 1-2)

Students respond to prompts in small groups or whole-class discussion.

Data Collection

Students gather and record:

- Examples of sustainable practices
- Impacts of forestry practices (short term and long term)
- Observations from the maple tapping process

*Findings can be organized in charts, diagrams, or notes.

Discussion Questions

- How does the Menominee Nation balance economic needs with ecosystem health?
- What role does culture play in environmental decision-making? What factors outside of culture influence individual and collective environmental decision-making?
- How is maple syrup production both an economic and cultural practice?
- What can modern forestry industries/practices learn from Indigenous stewardship?

Storytelling Prompts

- Choose a time frame (e.g. 1800-1900, 1970-1980, 1450-1500, etc.). Write a narrative from the perspective of the forest over that time scale. Observe what you see and hear.
- Tell the story of a maple tree and its connection to the community. Assess what it gives and/or takes from the community.

Assessment (Choose 1-2)

Essay Prompts

- Analyze how Menominee forestry practices demonstrate sustainability.
- Evaluate the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in modern environmental management.

Short Quiz

1. What is sustainable forestry?
2. What is one benefit of maple syrup production?
3. Define Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
4. How do the Menominee maintain biodiversity?

Group or Individual Presentation

Students present on one topic:

- Menominee forestry practices
- Maple syrup production
- Indigenous knowledge and sustainability
- Careers in forestry



Standards Alignment

- NGSS (Science)
 - HS-ESS3-3: Create a computational or conceptual model to illustrate relationships among natural resources, sustainability, and human populations.
 - HS-LS2-7: Design or evaluate solutions for reducing human impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Common Core (ELA)
 - RI.9-10.3 / RI.11-12.3: Analyze how a series of ideas or events develop throughout a text or multimedia source.
 - SL.9-10.1 / SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in collaborative discussions.

References

For additional information:

- <https://menominee-nsn.gov/CulturePages/BriefHistory>

References

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- <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](#)