



## A Lesson on Potawatomi Prairie by Cade Wessel

**Grade Level:** Grade 7

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 1 hour 15 minutes

**Lesson Keywords:** Reading, writing, vocabulary, imagination

**Lesson Description:** Through reading this story and completing the following activities, students will have learned new vocabulary, engaged in critical thinking writing skills, problem-solving, and deductive reasoning skills, and used their imagination to put themselves in the author's shoes. The students will have to pull from their own life experiences and relate them to a time when there was very little convenience to show how they would react.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.3: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.4a: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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## Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

**Instructions:** Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

### Potawatomi Prairie

by

**Content:** The Potawatomi tribe came to this area several hundred years ago and established a home here for many decades. In summer, the families all relocated to one large village, while, in winter, they set up separate, smaller camps. The following paragraphs describe a typical year for a Potawatomi family in this area a couple hundred years ago.

In the summer, we live in a big village where we use large poles to build our new house. Even though we cook outside, we build the roof so that it is a shelter over the cooking area as well. Therefore, the roof covers more than just the floor space, where we sleep. In the big village, my mother and I use a shoulder bone from a deer to plow our fields and plant our seeds. It is very difficult work; though, because of our work, we will have lots of food in the fall and can even share with other families if they do not have enough. We get to see our friends and the entire extended family, and there are so many things to see and do in the summer. All of that makes summer my sisters favorite season, and it really is a fun time for all of us. My siblings and I get to roam and explore and go swimming. My mother also likes it because being with our big family means there are people to help with the work and other people to talk with; she also gets to see her own brothers and sisters. My father gets to sit with the other men and he doesn't have to worry about us having enough food for a while. There is a lot of work to do, but everyone helps and there is company.

In the fall, we have plenty of food: big squashes and pumpkins and corn too. Every day, I am able to harvest even more beans. We dry the big gourds to eat in the winter, when we will have less food and when it will be too cold to want to search for more. My father found salt from a salt spring, which we are using to dry the meat. This is so exciting because we sometimes run out of meat before the winter ends or it starts to go bad and we are unable to eat it. I search for nuts and berries from the forest. Sometimes I eat them when I find them, but I try to bring most of them home and we dry those too. Soon we will move to our winter site.

It is now winter and when we started looking for a place for our winter camp, we saw deer and raccoons. Therefore, we knew this would be a good place for hunting, and that we will even be able to have fresh meat this year. We set up a wigwam, which will be our house for the winter months. We stuck one end of tree branches in the ground and then tied them together in the middle. In the winter, we cook inside and we had to remember to leave a gap for the smoke from the fire to get out. In order for the wigwam to stay warm on the inside, we had to paste bark on the outside to insulate it and to help trap the heat inside. Today, it is cold and it just snowed. My father says that he will be able to see the tracks of elk in the snow and can more easily hunt them now. He will soon go to hunt and my mother says that afterwards we will have plenty of food, but also plenty of work; we will have to cut the meat from the animal and separate the skin for blankets and rugs. If we don't have enough food in this location, we may move our camp to another place, with more animals. We will look for a place with even more animal tracks.

It is starting to get warmer, which means the spring is coming! In the spring, we can always find my favorite food maple syrup. We make a hole in a tree and then the sweet juice comes out of the tree. My father made a fishing net from deer sinew and will go out to fish soon. He tied shells to the bottom of the net and when they fill with water, it sinks to the bottom of the stream. This summer, my brother will get to fish, too. He has a line and a hook, which he uses to fish in the lake. Since we get fish in the winter only when we go out and cut through the ice, fishing is mostly a spring and summer job. I like fish and like to watch my father and my brother standing by the lake or the stream. My father likes the spring best. He says it is a time of hope because we start to see all the things that went to sleep in the winter waking up again. He hears the birds sing and sees the plants start to grow again. I like spring too because soon we will see the flowers.

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## Task 1: Vocabulary

**Instructions:** Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

**Q: 1 WordPhrase:** roam **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The speaker in our story says "My siblings and I get to roam and explore and go swimming." What does the word "roam" mean in this sentence

- A: move freely
- B: a very old place
- C: jump
- D: close your eyes

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "roam" correctly?

- A: I looked in my fridge for leftover roam.
- B: Roam wasn't built in a day.
- C: The mountains are my favorite part of my trip, my parents encourage us to roam.
- D: The river was full of roam in the spring

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** to harvest **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The speaker in our story says "...I am able to harvest even more beans." What does the phrase "to harvest" mean in this sentence?

- A: working to collect
- B: eat without water
- C: throw away
- D: burn

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the phrase "to harvest" correctly?

- A: Today I went to the grocery store to harvest some flowers.
- B: I can't wait to harvest these balloons for my birthday.
- C: When working on the farm, you learn to harvest many different crops.
- D: I stared longingly at the harvest moon.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** gourds **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The speaker in our story says "\"We dry the big gourds to eat in the winter...\" what does the word \"gourds\" mean in this sentence?

- A: pumpkin-like plant
- B: container for fluids
- C: playful attire
- D: skins

**Question:** which one of the sentences below uses the word "gourd" correctly?

- A: I was parched, I needed a drink from my gourd.
- B: I really liked the pumpkin-squash, but finding a big gourd was my favorite.
- C: This year we made our clothes out of gourd.
- D: Sitting around telling scary stories made me want to run to my gourd.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** insulate **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The speaker in our story says "...we had to paste bark on the outside to insulate it and to help trap the heat inside." What does the word "insulate" mean in this sentence?

- A: protect from the elements
- B: tear down
- C: set it on fire
- D: taste it

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "insulate" correctly?

- A: In the forest, we walked around until we found a talking insulate.
- B: My professor turned off the insulate, because we were not paying attention
- C: My father added big fluffy pads in the attic to insulate our roof before winter.
- D: I saw a big insulate man yesterday.

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## Task 2: Forum Discussion

**Instructions:** This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - Why do you think the tribe had to relocate...

After reading the story, what are the reason(s) for the relocation of the tribes between winter and summer? Do you think they liked moving for the winter or was it something they had to do? Why?

### 2 - The Potawatomi tribe are great hunter-gathers

The Potawatomi tribe are great hunter-gathers. They make nets and poles to fish for their food and know how to track animals to hunt and eat. Is this something they were born knowing how to do? If so, how come we don't still behave this way? If not, how did they learn these skills and why were they important then? Are they important now?

### 3 - The Potawatomi family greatly enjoys their life

In the summertime, the Potawatomi family greatly enjoys their life. They get to see family and friends, the children get to play, and they have plenty of food. Why do you think it is important for them to gather as a larger tribe? What are the advantages/disadvantages? Do people still use this tactic to survive or do you think it is a thing of the past? (explain)

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### Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** Imagine your family time-traveled 200 years into the past and became part of the Potawatomi tribe. Would your family migrate like the family from the story or would you find somewhere to stay put? At your current age, how do you think you could help the Potawatomi tribe in their yearly adventures? Would you help the father hunt or the mother cook? Use themes from the story to guide your answer. You are to write and post here 500 words essay on .... Make sure to provide specific examples.

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