
A Lesson on Potawatomi Prairie

by Chelsea Klabik

Grade Level: Grade 3

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours

Lesson Keywords: Reading, Writing, Native Americans

Lesson Description: The goal of this lesson is to read and understand grade-level material. By reading and rereading the passage closely, and focusing their reading through a series of questions and discussion about the text, students will dwell on the day-to-day life style of Native American tribes. Using context clues, students will extract the meaning of unknown vocabulary words from the passage.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.3.4a: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1b: Provide reasons that support the opinion.

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: Potawatomi means People of the Place of the Fire or Keepers of the Fire. The tribe got this name long ago because they were responsible for keeping the fire for a group of Native American tribes. They came to this area a few hundred years ago and lived here a long time. As the seasons changed, they moved their house and had different jobs to do. In summer, the families moved to one big village with the other families. In winter, they set up small camps. Read about their lives in the different seasons. The paragraphs tell what it might have been like long ago.

Summer?

We are moving to the big village now. There, we will set up a big house. We will use long poles to make its roof and floor. I will help my mother plant. First we will dig in the ground with a big shoulder bone from a deer. It is hard work to dig and plant. After we plant, we will have a lot of food. My sister says summer is her favorite time. My mother likes it, too. She likes to be with our big family in summer. There is a lot of work to do, but everyone helps.

Autumn?

We have a lot of food. Every day, I pick more beans. We're drying the big pumpkins to save for the winter. My father hunts a lot. Soon we will move to our winter camp. I get nuts and berries from the forest. I eat some when I find them, but I bring most of them home.

Winter?

We saw deer and raccoons and knew this would be a good place for hunting. So, we set up a wigwam, which we made from branches of trees. We left a hole for the smoke from the fire to get out. We covered the outside of the wigwam with bark. Today, it is cold and it just snowed. My father says it's a good day to hunt. He will be able to see the tracks in the snow. My mother says we need more food. If we don't have enough food in this place, we may have to move our camp to another place, with more animals. In winter we cannot grow plants to eat.

Spring?

My father is going fishing. He has a net he made from deer sinew. So fishing is mostly a spring and summer job. My father likes the spring best. He says it is a time of hope. He hears the birds sing and sees the plants start to grow again. I like spring, too. Soon we will see flowers.

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: responsible **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in our story says "the tribe got this name long ago because they were responsible for keeping the fire..." What does the word "responsible" mean in this sentence?

- A: Guilty
- B: Accountable
- C: Important
- D: Blameworthy

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

- A: When I went to the fair, it was my responsibility to take care of my little sister.
 - B: It was responsible of me to leave the dirty dishes for my mother to clean.
 - C: As a student, I am responsible to finish my homework every night.
 - D: After I dropped my ice cream on the floor I felt very sad and responsible.
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Q: 2 WordPhrase: Tracks **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in the passage says "My father says it's a good day to hunt. He will be able to see the tracks in the snow." What does the word "tracks" mean in this sentence?

- A: A pathway
- B: A trail
- C: Metal rails
- D: Foot prints

Question: In context to the story, which one the sentences below uses the word "tracks" correctly?

- A: The animal tracks led us to a Deer and it's baby Fawn.
 - B: In order to track a criminal down, the police have to find clues.
 - C: The boy walked along the train tracks, looking for four leaf clovers.
 - D: During P.E. class, we ran a mile on the track.
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Q: 3 WordPhrase: Wigwam **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says "So, we set up a wigwam, which we made from branches of trees." What does the word "wigwam" mean?

- A: A fire pit
- B: A dome shaped hut or tent
- C: A heavy coat to keep warm
- D: A weapon used for hunting

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

- A: The hunter used a wigwam to kill his prey for dinner.
 - B: During the summer, the Queen vacationed in a fancy wigwam.
 - C: The Native Americans set up a wigwam to take shelter from the snow.
 - D: During the winter, many people wear a wigwam to keep them warm.
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Q: 4 WordPhrase: Sinew **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says "He has a net he made from deer sinew." What does the word "sinew" mean in this sentence?

- A: A strong string or thread
- B: Strong tissue that connects muscles to bones
- C: A material used for sewing
- D: Fur

Question: In context to the story, which one of the sentences below uses the word "sinew" correctly?

- A: The broken sinew in its leg meant that the racehorse had to miss the race.
 - B: The sinew of the U.S. Government is the president.
 - C: It takes intelligence and sinew to get a good grade on a test.
 - D: Thor had great strength and sinew.
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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 - Winter preparations

What do the Potawatomi people have to do to in order to prepare for the winter season? Use three specific examples from the text.

2 - Spring and hope

In the passage it says My father likes the spring best. He says it is a time of hope. In what ways can the season spring symbolize hope?

3 - Keepers of the fire

How do you think the Potawatomi people got the nickname? People of the Place of the Fire or Keepers of the Fire?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: Imagine you are a child that is a part of the Potawatomi tribe. In 250 words or more, describe the day-to-day life of a Potawatomi tribe member. Make sure to include the daily chores, and the specific preparations for each season. What would be the most challenging part of being in the Potawatomi tribe? Why?

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