



## A Lesson on Potawatomi Prairie by Rebecca Toth

**Grade Level:** Grade 6

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 45 minutes

**Lesson Keywords:** Potawatomi, grade 6, lesson plan, seasons,

**Lesson Description:** For this lesson, students will read the passage "Potawatomi Prairie" and answer a series of questions about the reading. Four multiple choice, three short answer and one essay question for a total of 100 points. The questions will test students on various levels of thinking, starting out relatively easy and gradually progressing to harder questions.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5: Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4a: 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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.5b: Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.

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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 lived in this area several hundred years ago. The Potawatomi shifted their homes and had different sets of chores in different seasons. In summer, the families all relocated to one large village, while, in winter, they set up separate, smaller camps. This page describes a typical year for a Potawatomi family a couple hundred years ago.

#### Summer

We use large poles to build our new house in the communal village. My mother and I use a shoulder bone from a deer to plow our fields and set our seeds. It is very difficult work, but we need to do it so we will have lots of food in the fall. We get to see our friends and the entire extended family, and there are so many things to see and do in the summer, which makes it my sisters favorite season it is really a fun time. 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. There is a lot of work to do, but everyone helps and there is company.

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#### Autumn

We have lots 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 and we are using it 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 cannot 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.

#### Winter

We saw deer and raccoons and knew this would be a good place for hunting, so that will help us have 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. We pasted bark on the outside of the wigwam to insulate the wigwam and to help keep 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 lots of food, but also lots of work; we will have to cut the meat from the animal and separate the skin to make blankets and rugs. If we don't have enough food in this place, we may move our camp to another place, with more animals.

#### Spring

In the spring, we can always find my favorite food, which is 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.

## 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:** Communal **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** "We use large poles to build our new house in the communal village." What does the word "communal" mean in this sentence?

- A:** People living separately from other members of the village.
- B:** People living together in a village.
- C:** People making fires.
- D:** People raising dogs.

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

- A:** I have a communal bedroom where I get to live all by myself.
- B:** The final exam was communal, covering everything we had learned since the beginning of the year.
- C:** The tin served as a communal grave for all single buttons.
- D:** My personal diary was communal; I never let anyone read it.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** Harvest **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** "Every day, I am able to harvest even more beans." In this sentence what does "harvest" mean?

- A:** To eat the beans
- B:** To destroy the beans
- C:** To party with the beans
- D:** To gather the beans.

**Question:** Which sentence uses "harvest" correctly?

- A:** Today we went out the the fields to harvest the potatoes before the cold ruined them.
- B:** We made sure to harvest all of the papers, burning them to a crisp.
- C:** They had to harvest the bananas, planting them in the ground quickly.
- D:** The harvest was fun because we got to sing and dance all night.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** Potawatomi **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** "The Potawatomi shifted their homes and had different sets of chores in different seasons." What does the term "Potawatomi" mean according to this sentence?

- A:** A type of animal.
- B:** A celebration that takes place during summer.
- C:** A tree that provides shelter during thunderstorms.
- D:** A tribe of people who move around during the seasons.

**Question:** Which sentence below uses the word "Potawatomi" correctly?

- A:** Each Potawatomi, the bears would wake up and go out hunting.
- B:** The river was very fast and Potawatomi.
- C:** The Potawatomi people celebrated the new season by eating and dancing.
- D:** The Potawatomi barked loudly and chased the cat up the tree.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** Wigwam **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** "We set up a wigwam, which will be our house for the winter months." What does the word "wigwam" mean in this sentence?

- A:** A structure that people live in during the winter.
- B:** A type of food that is yummy.
- C:** A basket that carries sticks.
- D:** A type of cloth people wear during winter.

**Question:** Which sentence below uses the word "wigwam" correctly?

- A:** The wigwam was nice and warm during the winter because we had a fire going.
- B:** The wigwam swam down the river, searching for food.
- C:** A wigwam just ran across the road and almost got hit by a truck.
- D:** With the wigwam in the backseat, the baby was laughing the whole car ride.

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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 the Potawami...?

In the passage, it is clear that the Potawatomi people move around during each season. Why do you think this is? Would it be smarter to stay in one place instead?

### 2 - Winter Season

Reread the Winter section. Why do you think they chose where to stay based on what type of wild life was in the area? In previous paragraphs they had talked about salted meats, why do they need to worry about hunting if they already had food?

### 3 - Spring

In the Spring section, why does the author talk about syrup and fishing? Why is it important for the reader to know what kinds of foods they ate and how they gathered them?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** Reread the Potawatomi Prairie passage and pay special attention to the activities that they do during each season. Also, make note of how they lived during each season. In the text box below, write 3-4 paragraphs (250 words minimum) on why you think that this tribe lived the way they did during each different season. Use specific examples to support your argument (at least 3).?

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