

We are the Mohicans of  
Wisconsin Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation

# OUR PEOPLE OUR CULTURE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Teacher Notes .....	1
Vocabulary .....	3
I. Enduring Knowledge.....	4
II. Prior Knowledge.....	5
III. Teaching with Video .....	6
IV. Assessment .....	9

## Teaching the Curriculum

The curriculum is set up to be used with the DVDs, and it contains suggestions on how to develop lesson plans to go with the DVDs. The other materials supplied are maps, pictures, tribal symbols, and contact information for the tribes. Each lesson plan has learning targets, questions on prior knowledge, an introduction to main ideas and vocabulary, viewing guides, historical information, a discussion on the current goals of tribes, and assessment suggestions.

The DVD *Native American Tribes of Wisconsin* summarizes the big ideas found in the individual DVDs for each tribe currently living in Wisconsin. DVDs about individual tribes can be used to enrich the curriculum; teachers can, for example, use techniques such as Jigsawing to help students share information presented on DVDs about the individual tribes.

As background, it is important that teachers:

- 1) Identify which Wisconsin American Indian tribes and bands are indigenous to Wisconsin and which migrated here after Europeans began colonizing eastern America. See the list below for details.
- 2) Understand that the words *Chippewa*, *Ojibwe*, *Ojibwa* and *Ojibway* are essentially interchangeable. *Chippewa* is used more commonly in the United States, and the others are used more commonly in Canada. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction American Indian Studies Program reports that most bands in Wisconsin use *Chippewa* in legal documents and *Ojibwe* in more common use. This curriculum will, as a rule, use *Ojibwe* with the understanding that alternative spellings occur and are acceptable.
- 3) Convey the difference between *Nations*, *Tribes*, *Bands* and *Clans*. A *nation* and a *tribe* are on the same level, but a *band* is a subgroup of a *nation* or a *tribe*, and a *clan* is comparable to a family name.
- 4) Note that the formal, federally recognized name of a tribe or band can differ from the preferred usage. For example: Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin is the federally recognized name of a Wisconsin American Indian tribe that prefers to be known as The Oneida Nation. Therefore, the following list includes the preferred-use names of the 11 Native American groups living in Wisconsin.

The Lake Superior Ojibwe tribe is represented in Wisconsin by six discrete bands:

**St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin**

**Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe**

**Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**

**Sokaogon Chippewa Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**

**Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**

**Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**

The Ojibwe tribe first lived in the eastern areas of North America. In the 1600s, pressure from European settlers caused the Ojibwe people to begin a great migration westward to find new land. They were part of a confederacy called the Three Fires Confederacy, which was comprised of the Ojibwe tribe, the Potawatomi tribe, and the Ottawa tribe. The Ojibwe settled along the shores of Lake Superior, the Potawatomi along the western shore of Lake Michigan, and the Ottawa in what is now Michigan.

**The Menominee Nation:** For thousands of years, the Menominee tribe lived throughout the region that is now Wisconsin. Over time they were forced to cede more and more of their land until all that was left was the small reservation where they live today. In 1954, the tribe was “terminated,” which meant it was dissolved; the reservation then became a county. In 1973, the tribe was “restored” and today is well known for its successful and sustainable forestry practices.

**The Ho-Chunk Nation:** This tribe was formerly known as the Winnebago and was indigenous to parts of what is now Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The tribe was not recognized by the government until 1963. The people were not given a reservation because the government had wanted them to move to Nebraska under the Indian Removal Act of 1830. In 1994 they changed their name to Ho-Chunk, which means “Big Voice,” because they had successfully retained their right to live as a tribe in Wisconsin.

**The Forest County Potawatomi:** This group migrated with the Ojibwe and Ottawa in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The Forest County Potawatomi tribe was ultimately forced to buy land in Forest County.

**The Oneida Nation:** This tribe is part of the Iroquois Confederacy and moved from New York in 1800. Their leaders were coerced into making the move by a missionary, who tricked them into giving up their land and moving to an area of Wisconsin that was not considered useful to the Europeans for farming.

**Stockbridge-Munsee Community:** This tribe, also known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, moved to Wisconsin from New York. Their lives were affected by Europeans early in the history of the colonization of North America and they were moved first to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and then they were moved to Indiana. They were eventually invited by other tribes in Wisconsin to move here.

**Vocabulary:**

A list of some key vocabulary words are suggested for a word bank. You may wish to add to these words as your unit progresses.

- **Anishinaabe:** Native word meaning “original or first man.”
- **Assimilation:** the process whereby the culture of one population is absorbed into that of another population.
- **Band:** one of the groups that comprise a tribe; the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, for example.
- **Clan:** similar to an extended family; historically known by a symbol, such as The Turtle Clan, and is now identified by family surname or family relationship.
- **Confederacy:** a league or compact for mutual support or common action; for example, Iroquois Confederacy, Algonquin Confederacy. Historians believe this form of organizing independent groups provided the framework for setting up the relationship between state governments and the federal government in the United States.
- **Culture:** shared beliefs and values of a group; the beliefs, customs, practices and social behavior of a particular nation or people.
- **Indigenous:** the original people; the first people to live in a particular place.
- **Migration:** a movement from one place to another; the process of moving from one region of a country to another.
- **Muh-he-con-ne-ol:** place where the waters are never still.
- **Private Property:** the idea that a person can legally own a particular, defined plot of land. (*American Indian culture did not include this concept; it was believed the land belonged to everyone and could not be owned, just as air that was breathed by all could not be owned by an individual. The European settlers’ claim of land ownership clashed with Native American beliefs about ownership.*)
- **Regalia:** special clothing, decoration or insignia indicative of office or membership.
- **Seventh Generation:** concerns the effect of individual or group actions on the environment; means that actions should be intended to keep the environment healthy for seven generations into the future.
- **Sovereign:** independent self-government; not ruled by any other state.
- **Subsistence Farming:** when a person raises food to provide for his or her family but does not generate significant income.
- **Sustainable:** a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged.
- **Treaty:** an agreement between states, such as a formal contract or agreement negotiated between countries, sovereign nations, or other political entities.
- **Tribe:** a society whose members have ancestry, customs, beliefs and leadership in common. Also called a *Nation*.

## I. Enduring Knowledge:

In order to live as fully educated citizens in a democratic nation that is increasingly diverse, students will understand the history of the United States, beginning with the country's indigenous peoples and their stories, and including government actions that have hurt or helped Native Americans. Students will also learn about the lives of contemporary Native Americans in Wisconsin in order to overcome any persistent stereotyping.

### Learning Targets:

- Students should understand what the term *sovereign nation* means and how it applies to Wisconsin Native American groups today.
- Students should know the historical challenges of this Band in Wisconsin, which moved to Wisconsin from New York, and understand how the Band nearly disappeared as a distinct group.
- Students should be aware of the lives of members of today's Mohican Nation and the goals they have for their future.
- Students should know the particular historical challenges the Mohican Nation faced over time as the Europeans moved into the United States, including land cession, land allotment problems, and abrogation of treaties.
- Students should have an understanding of the impact of the Removal Act (1856) on American Indians living east of the Mississippi River.
- Students should know what the Stockbridge-Munsee Community is currently doing to develop its the culture of its people and also to preserve its heritage.
- Students should have an appreciation for the injustices endured by the Mohicans, and should recognize the ongoing stereotypes and prejudices faced by contemporary American Indians.
- Students should understand the importance of language to the transmission of culture, and how removal, allotment, termination, and the boarding schools' attempts to force assimilation on the Mohican people nearly destroyed their culture. They should also understand what the Band is doing to retain its culture, while simultaneously living and thriving in the 21st century.
- Students should have an appreciation for the injustices endured by the Wisconsin Native Americans and should recognize the ongoing stereotypes and prejudices faced by contemporary American Indians.

## II. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Discuss the Mohican Nation area in northern Wisconsin. Ask students if they have ever traveled to this area. What makes this area different than our own area? Are the towns farther apart? Are there more forests, lakes, and rivers? Are there any other differences compared to our area?

If students are from this area of Wisconsin you may want to discuss some personal interaction the students have had with members of the Mohican Nation. You may want to explore their understanding of tribal organization or tribal life. You should make a list of questions the students have about the Mohican Nation.

## III. INTRODUCTION TO MAIN IDEAS AND VOCABULARY:

Teacher materials provide an overview of American Indian tribes and bands in Wisconsin. However, since the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of the Mohican Nation is significantly different from the other bands in Wisconsin, more details are provided here about this particular group. Teachers can select the degree of historical detail to teach in introducing this DVD. However, decisions should be aligned with the suggested teaching targets found above.

### **Historical Overview:**

The Mohican Tribe was indigenous to the eastern woodlands and lived along the Hudson River in what is now New York. It was part of the Delaware Confederacy. During Dutch and English colonization of the eastern seaboard and woodlands, 90 percent of the Mohicans died of causes such as war, European diseases to which they had no natural immunity, and alcohol. The surviving members of the tribe made an unsuccessful effort to understand the ways of the new colonists and to make their case for retaining their traditional land.

- **1730:** Missionaries converted the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans to Christianity and they were moved to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where pressure mounted for assimilation into the European culture. However, the Native Americans were never fully accepted and became slaves or were made otherwise dependent on the Europeans because they could not find independent employment and did not own land. They were forcibly moved eight times.
- **1856:** Under the Indian Removal Act, the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans were moved to Wisconsin.
- **1934:** Indian Reorganization Act. This act was a turning point for the tribe because it was legally allowed to regroup as a sovereign nation.
- **1936:** The tribe moved to its current reservation. This is the first time since the very first Europeans arrived in America that they have lived in one place for more than 50 years. "Finally," they say, "we shall move no more."

Today the Stockbridge-Munsee Community reservation includes a golf course, lodges and a casino. The economic benefits from this development enable the Band to employ members and non-members, and provide housing, health clinics, education, libraries, museums, and many social services.

## IV. Teaching with Video:

This video presents a Band of Native Americans living in northern Wisconsin called the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. As students look at this group of Native Americans' lives they will discover many important facts about these people. They will find out where the Stockbridge-Munsee Community came from, why they came to Wisconsin, and how long they have lived here. The class will discover problems facing the Mohican Nation and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community in the past and the present. By watching this video, students will learn about plans of the tribe for future generations of Stockbridge-Munsee Community children.

### Opening

#### **We are the Mohicans of Wisconsin Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation: Our People, Our Culture**

This portion of the video teaches that fire is the grandfather and a sacred place where past stories can be passed on to future generations. It states that members of the Mohican Nation are descended from the Anishinabe: *the first one or the first people*.

The beginning of the video speaks about honor and respect for all people and for themselves. It talks to the children about growing strong, being contributors, and passing on the Mohican Nation way of life.

#### **Ideas for classroom lessons:**

##### **Role Play:** (See Teacher Notes)

Show the campfire and discuss with students the values that are expressed in this part of the video. Pick some class members to be the elder and two grandchildren, and ask fact-based questions: What is the name of the band? (*Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians.*) What were some of the expectations of the elder for his grandchildren? (*Honor to land, honor to other people, grow strong.*)

#### **Classroom discussion:**

What expectations do you think your parents have for you? Are they the same as the elders have for Stockbridge-Munsee Community children?

### Chapters 1 & 2

Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the very beginnings of the Mohicans. Teachers may wish to discuss any of the following key points:

- The Mohicans are proud of the symbol they use to represent their tribe. It has been designed to represent the many trails they traveled to get to this present day.

- Living in the area we now call New York, the Mohicans were a strong tribe and were one with their environment.
- The Mohicans lived along the shore of what is now the Hudson River, and they were waiting on the shore when the Dutch explorer Henry Hudson sailed up the river.
- Munsee Indians lived near the Mohicans and had similar lives and problems as the Mohicans. This brought the two groups together.
- Explorers came to the area and brought many useful items for the Native Americans, such as pots, blankets, and axes. However, they also brought a demand for more and more land, and they brought war, disease and alcohol.
- Soon the Mohicans were without land, and almost 90 percent of the tribe was gone.

**Classroom discussion:**

- The video talks about the injustice to the tribe. What were some of these injustices? (*Failure to stand up to treaties, not accepting different ways of thinking, introducing war weapons, diseases to which they had no natural immunity, and alcohol.*)
- What were some positive things brought by the Europeans? What were the negative things that were brought by the explorers? (*Pots, axes, and blankets were good items, while weapons of war, disease, alcohol, and taking away culture hurt the tribe.*)
- What have you learned from this portion of the video that you did not understand before seeing the video?

### Chapter 3

In 1730 the Mohicans started to move west. As they moved, their name changed depending on their location. Today this Band is called the Stockbridge- Munsee Community, or the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians.

The Mohicans were thoroughly colonized; they lost their Native language, dressed like the colonists, and practiced the religion of the Europeans. Even though they were colonized they were never accepted, and people in the colonies considered them offensive; they were slaves, subjects, and dependent on the colonists.

This group continued to move to the west; eventually they moved to Wisconsin. The Munsee Tribe joined the Mohicans in Wisconsin. In 1856, under the Indian Removal Act, the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans were moved to a reservation in Wisconsin. This act finally gave them a reservation of their own.

Allotment to the Mohicans was a bad thing. The people were given small parcels of land but no money so that they would borrow money on the land. The group had no way to pay back the money and soon lost the allotted land. The General Allotment Act hurt the people another way: it was meant to split up families because no two family members were allowed to have land next to each other.

John Collier helped in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. This act was a turning point for the tribe because it was legally allowed to regroup as a sovereign nation. In 1936 the group finally had a place where they could live. The Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians have now lived in the area for over 50 years.

**Classroom discussion:**

- What caused the Mohicans to become dependent on the colonists? *(The land was taken away from them, disease took away large numbers of tribal members, and alcohol created problems. They fought many wars with the colonists. Europeans never accepted the Native Americans.)*
- Did moving west to Wisconsin help the Mohicans? Why or why not? *(They were never accepted by the people and did not have money to support their families. This caused them to sell their allotted land.)*
- What finally happened to help these people? *(The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act gave them sovereignty. They had a reservation and a final home.)*
- What is sovereignty? *(Recognition that allows people to set up their own government. They can set up laws and rules for their people.)*
- How could the lives of members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community have been different? *(The Europeans could have been fair and shared land, and honored treaties.)*

## Chapters 4 & 5

There are many tribes and bands in Wisconsin and there are similarities, but also individual differences. The biggest difference is that the Mohicans dealt with the Europeans for longer. Because of the Europeans, this tribe has lost more lives, land, and cultural ways than any other tribe in the Wisconsin.

In early days there were no jobs on the reservation. Today there are jobs. There is employment, people can go to college, and they have more opportunities. On the reservation the Band provides health facilities, police services, a fire department, and a Mohican family center. The Mohicans feast together, and they are looking forward together.

Young people are pushing to get back their Band's traditional ways. They want to learn about leaders such as John W. Quinney, an activist and great leader. Quinney traveled to Washington, D.C. often to get help for his people. In an Independence Day speech he delivered in 1954, Quinney spoke up for the Mohicans and talked about the severe injustices inflicted by the U.S. government on the Mohican people.

The Mohican Nation wants people to get to know its members on a level other than the casinos. They invite outsiders to their powwows, where they keep their traditions alive. They want the public to see their rich lives and spirituality.

**Classroom discussion:**

- What makes the Mohican Nation different from any of the other tribes? What makes it similar? *(Early meeting with Europeans, constant moving with no land of their own, a destroyed culture. They believe in bringing back traditions, they want to help their people have better lives, and they want to be open to the public.)*
- John W. Quinney was important to this nation. How did he help the Mohican Nation? *(He spoke well and traveled to Washington D.C. to talk for his people.)*
- If you were to attend a powwow, what would you see? What is the importance of a powwow? *(You would be seeing a celebration of the historical traditions of these people. You would see the regalia that the dancers wear. As you participated, you would learn about their feelings toward the earth and spiritual life.)*

**V. Assessment:**

Students could choose one of the following options. The work could be done as homework or at school.

- Create a sequential picture time line of the migration of the Mohicans. *(This would cover historical and present events, including the Mohicans' life before, during, and after arrival of the Europeans.)*
- Write about the Mohicans' life. What in their history influenced you the most? What is something you will remember about this band of Wisconsin Indians for the rest of your life? Make sure you answer with specific details.

You may answer the following about culture:

- What is culture? Name some of the parts of a culture *(language, ceremonies, dress, and food)*. Why is it important to save the culture of a group of people? What steps are the Mohicans taking to save their culture?
- What have you learned about the life of these people that has changed your thinking?

The Native American Educational Series is a high-quality education resource designed to increase awareness and understanding of the cultural heritage, customs, and future of the Native American tribes of Wisconsin. This valuable collection of video programs, complete with curricula designed by expert education consultants, highlights American Indian heritage and history, interprets tribal traditions and customs, and examines the future of America's indigenous people through their respect for land and nature.

The Native American Education Series is produced through a unique partnership of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Great Lakes Intertribal Council, Discover Mediaworks, Native American Tourism of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Education Association Council, Wisconsin Counties Association, and participating tribal governments.