

CLANS OF THE ANISHINABE

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES OF WISCONSIN



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I. Enduring Knowledge:

Students will understand, through the Ojibwa version of clan structure based on animals, how people living together develop a system of organization within a community.

Learning Targets:

Students will learn how the Ojibwa have always respected animals and appreciated their contributions to humanity.

Students will understand how specific traits of each animal were used to set up clans within the Anishinabe tribe.

Students will learn the names of various clans and the specific animal trait that characterizes each.

Students will learn the rules within clan structure.

II. Teacher Background Materials:

Note: *Bolded words are found in the vocabulary list.*

Depending on the amount of time you have to incorporate lessons into your curriculum, in-depth background material has been provided here. This video concentrates on tribal structure, specifically **clans**, and the expectations governing them.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ELEVEN TRIBES

The following is a list of the eleven tribes and bands that currently live in Wisconsin and have reservations. It will also help to identify the tribes indigenous to Wisconsin in contrast to those who migrated here.

The eleven Native American groups living in Wisconsin are:

The Lake Superior Ojibwa (also called Chippewa) tribe is represented in Wisconsin by six discrete bands that now live on separate reservations:

1. The St. Croix
2. The Lac Courte Oreilles (pron. “la cooderay”)
3. Lac du Flambeau
4. Mole Lake Sokaogon
5. Bad River
6. Red Cliff

The Ojibwa originally lived in the Eastern areas of North America. In the 1600s they began a great migration westward to find new land because of the pressure from European settlers arriving on the East Coast. They were part of a confederacy called the Three Fires Confederacy, made up of the Ojibwa, the Potawatomi, and the Ottawas. The Ojibwa settled along the shores of Lake Superior, the Potawatomi along the western shore of Lake Michigan. The Ottawas settled in what is now called Michigan.

According to the Ojibwa legend, the first Ojibwa people lived on Madeleine Island in Lake Superior. They were banished from the island and moved East many generations back. Finally they experienced a prophecy telling them to return to the “land where food grows on water” (wild rice) and they migrated back to the midwest and part of central Canada.

The first interaction with Europeans occurred in the 1630s, when the French fur traders arrived.

7. Menominee Tribe. The Menominee lived in all but a small northern strip of what is now called Wisconsin, for thousands of years. Over time they were forced to cede more and more of their land until they were reduced to the small reservation they now live on. At one time in their history they were “terminated” (1954), which meant the tribe was dissolved and the reservation became a county. In 1973 the tribe was “restored,” allowing the establishment of a tribal government. This tribe is very well known for its highly successful sustainable forestry.
8. Ho Chunk (were called Winnebago). This tribe was indigenous to parts of what are now Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The tribe was not recognized by the government until 1963, and they were not given a reservation because the government had wanted them to move to Nebraska under the Indian Removal Act (1830). In 1994 they changed their name to Ho Chunk which means “Big Voice” partly because they had successfully retained their right to live as a tribe in Wisconsin by speaking out for their rights.
9. Potawatomi. This group migrated along with the Ojibwa and Ottawa in the late 16th century and early 17th century. The Potawatomi tribe was ultimately forced to buy land for its reservation in Forest County.
10. Oneida. This tribe is part of the Iroquois Confederacy and moved from New York in 1800. They were influenced to make this move by a missionary who tricked them into giving up their land and moving to an area of Wisconsin that was considered not useful to the Europeans to claim for farming.
11. Stockbridge Munsee Mohican. This tribe also moved to Wisconsin from New York. Because they were a tribe that was affected by Europeans early in the history of the colonization of North America, they were moved first to Massachusetts, to a place called Stockbridge. Then they were moved to Indiana and eventually were invited by some other tribes in Wisconsin to move here.

Vocabulary:

1. **Anishinabe:** Ojibwa word for “original people,” referring to the first indigenous people in the upper Midwest
2. **clan:** a division within a tribe based on animal traits and ancestry
3. **totem/dodame:** an animal serving as a symbol of a clan
4. **famine:** drastic food shortage
5. **epidemic:** contagious disease that spreads rapidly
6. **political succession:** the order to leadership based on a certain system
7. **inheritance:** receiving property based on your clan position

III. Prior Knowledge:

Discuss various divisions in society such as families, churches, clubs, sports, etc. Discuss the purpose of each and what it means to belong to that group.

Discuss different wild animals and traits of each. Compare these traits to those of humans. Have each student pick an animal that is most like him/her. Explain how the exercise is connected to the video.

IV. Viewing Guide:

A. Summary

The video describes the Ojibwa version of the importance of animals and how this transferred into clans based on animal traits. Seven specific examples are given. Rules within clan structure are explained and success of the system is described.

B. Have students complete the following during the film:

1. List each of the seven animal clans mentioned and the specific traits connected with each
2. List the three guidelines or rules based on clan membership.

V. Discussion Guide:

Use all or a portion of the following activities as part of a group discussion.

A. Make a group chart of the clans and traits.

- Bear
- Fish
- Crane
- Wolf
- Turtle
- Deer
- Bird

B. Together as a class, list the five membership guidelines.

1. Can't marry clan member
2. Determines **political succession**
 - **Inheritance**
 - Property rights
 - Follows father's lineage

C. Describe all the reasons that animals were used for clans.

D. Why are the old clans being rejuvenated today?

VI. Evaluation:

Evaluate students based on participation, group involvement, completed charts and lists. Have students write a one-page essay explaining clans in tribal structure.

VII. Extended Learning:

1. Research other tribal structures such as Navajo, Comanche, Ute, Seminole
2. Divide up into groups and pick an animal that you can agree for a clan. Have students draw an emblem to represent the group. Ask students to share reasons for choosing that animal.