



Getting to Know Animal Behavior

Organization:

Title: Getting to Know Animal Behavior

Summary: Students learn about the ongoing importance of hunting and trapping to local Indigenous groups and choose an animal of cultural significance to local Indigenous groups to research and learn more about.

Inquiry Question: Inquiry Question 3 (Hunting and Trapping): How does seeing oneself as a part of the natural world as opposed to a steward of the natural world foster a more holistic relationship with the land?

Duration: 1 class period

Learning Environment: Classroom, online, outdoor

Season: All

Materials:

- Videos, *Bappaasenh Gaa-bi-Njibaad (Where/How the Woodpecker Came To Be)* and *Weneboozhoo Miinwaa Zhiishiibag (Weneboozhoo and the Ducks)* shared by Barbara Nolan.
- Stories:
 - Rabbit Dance.pdf
 - Hunting and Trapping.pdf
 - *The Dancing Trees* (2021) by Anishinaabe author Masiana Kelly
 - *A Hunter's Story* found on page 19 of *The Learning Circle: Classroom Activities. Indigenous Affairs, Canada. 2012*
 - *Trapping is My Life* (1970) by John Tetso
- Language Learning.pdf
- Access to the QUILLS website for Language Learning
- Access to computers for research
- Cardboard or construction paper squares
- Markers
- Safety pins

Curriculum Links:

Grade 9 Destreamed: A1.1, A2.4, B1.1, B1.2, B1.3, B2.4, B2.5

Grade 10 Academic: A1.7, A1.9, A1.10, A1.11, D1.1, D2.9

Grade 10 Applied: A1.7, A1.9, A1.10, A1.11, D1.1, D2.7

Meta Data:

Content Type: Activity, language learning, storytelling

Bundle: Food

Theme: Global Climate Change

Subject Area: Biology, Environmental Education, History, Outdoor Education, Science

Curriculum Focus: 9, 10



- The teacher begins by showing students the videos *Bappaasenh Gaa-bi-Njibaad (Where/How the Woodpecker Came To Be)* and *Weneboozhoo Miinwaa Zhiishiibag (Weneboozhoo and the Ducks)* shared by Barbara Nolan.

In *Bappaasenh Gaa-bi-Njibaad* an old woman refuses to offer Weneboozhoo food and water. As a result, the woman turns into a woodpecker who has to work hard to find her own food. This story reminds us to be generous.

Anishinaabemowin:

Manpii dibaajmowining, maaba bezhig mindimoyenh gii-zaagtamwaan Weneboozhoo miijim miinwaa nibi. Mii dash maaba mindimoyenh gii-gweknaagzid. Baapaasenh aabdeg waa-gchinokiid wii-mkang miijim. Gmakowaabmigomi pane wii-gzhewaadiziying.

In *Weneboozhoo Miinwaa Zhiishiibag* Weneboozhoo tricks a group of ducks into being caught for food by convincing them to dance in a circle with their eyes closed. This story explains how the duck got its flat tail. It also teaches one not to be gullible when asked to do something that is out of the ordinary by someone one doesn't trust.

Anishinaabemowin:

Manpii dibaajmowaansing, Weneboozhoo gii-wenzhimaan Zhiishiiban wii-nsaad epiichi gaawtaagaa'aad miinwaa bzingwaabwaad. Dibaajmomgad maanda wa zhiishiibenh gaa-zhi-debnang wi mbagaanwed. Gkinoomaagemgad ge'e maanda dibaajmowaans ji-debwe'etwaasig gwaya gegkenmaasig gigigwejmigwad gegoo wii-zhichged.

These stories were originally shared to accompany interpretive signs at Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre (ELEEC). Stories can be accessed on the QUILLS website and on the ELEEC trail app. <https://elbowlakecentre.ca/app/>

Barbara Nolan is a proud Nishnaabe-kwe, formerly from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, who now resides in Garden River First Nation. Barbara speaks the Manitoulin dialect or central dialect of Ojibway.

- Teacher asks students what these stories reveal about the Anishinaabe relationship to animals.
- The teacher next reads **Rabbit Dance.pdf** found in *Keepers of the Animals* by Joseph Bruchac. The teacher asks students what this story reveals about the Kanyen'kehá:ka relationship to animals.



- Students can also read the text *The Dancing Trees* (2021) by Anishinaabe author Masiana Kelly and discuss what it reveals about the Anishinaabe relationship to the natural world.
- Teacher then introduces students to the cultural importance of hunting and trapping today and in the past to Indigenous groups in Canada. A worksheet containing background information for teachers can be found in **Hunting and Trapping.pdf**.

Discussion Prompts:

- Do you have experience with hunting and/or trapping? If so, why did you hunt/trap?
- Why do you think Indigenous peoples hunted in the past?
- Why do Indigenous groups hunt today?
- Who governs hunting and trapping practices?
- What should these practices prioritize eg. (*Honorable Harvest*).

Important points to cover in discussion include how hunting and trapping is vital for health, nutrition, culture, society and food security.

Optional Extension:

- Students read: *A Hunter's Story* found on page 19 of *The Learning Circle: Classroom Activities. Indigenous Affairs, Canada. 2012*. Source relays a short account of hunting by a First Nations Elder. Discusses how the Elder learned to hunt, and how hunting and trapping have changed.
- Students who are interested in this topic may wish to enrich their learning by reading *Trapping is My Life* by John Tetso.

Activity:

- In small groups, students brainstorm and come up with a list of animals they think provide(d) significant resources for local Indigenous peoples in the past and today. Students discuss how they think the animals were used.
- Anishinaabe Knowledge Keeper Autumn Watson from Curve Lake First Nation shared with QUILLS that the following animals were hunted locally by the Anishinaabe: Bear, Rabbit, Porcupine, Beaver, Duck, Deer, Squirrel, Moose, Fox, Wolf, Goose, Muskrat, Bull frog, Raccoon, Groundhog, pickerel, wall eye, bass.
- Use the **Language Learning.pdf** to teach students how to say the local animal species listed above in Anishinaabemowin and Kanyen'kéha. By going to the QUILLS online dictionary students can also listen to the words in language!
- Teacher discusses with students what hunters and trappers need(ed) to know about the animals they harvest(ed). Ie: life cycle, anatomy, food sources, seasonal behavior, feeding patterns, reproductive cycle, population numbers, how to identify animal homes, animal senses etc. What is important to emphasize here is that hunters understand their interdependence with animals. This intimate knowledge of animal



behavior developed by living in reciprocity with animals is what makes a proficient hunter.

- Yakothehtón:ni (Jennifer E. Brant) who sits with the Bear Clan and is a Kanyen'kehá:ka educator from Kenhtéke Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, shared with QUILLS that Indigenous community members also possess information about the creators' instructions to the animals, fish, and bird life. These instructions for the Haudenosaunee can be reviewed by revisiting the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen shared by Kanyen'kehá:ka (Akwesasne Mohawk Territory), Wolf Clan educator Liv Rondeau in the Indigenous Knowledge Bundle.
- Students choose one animal to research. Students find out information brainstormed above that hunters need(ed) to know (life cycle, anatomy, food sources, seasonal behavior, feeding patterns, reproductive cycle, population numbers, how to identify animal homes, animal senses etc.). After conducting research, students share their information with the class in the form of a Talking Circle. Instructions regarding how to conduct a Talking Circle in a good way are included in the Teacher's Guide.
- Students can play a version of the game *Headbands*. Students are tasked with figuring out what animal they are by circulating around the room and asking students a series of questions. The teacher will have the name of an animal pinned on the back of each student. Students refer to their research notes when asking and answering questions.

Please note that the learning represented in these activities reflects Big Idea C. in the Indigenous Knowledge Learning Bundle: "Reciprocity, Interdependence, and Holism are at the Heart of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being". To help your students learn more about these concepts, foundational to Indigenous knowledge, check out the Learning Activities titled: *Holism*, *The Honorable Harvest*, and *Our Responsibilities* found in the *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being with the Natural World* Learning Bundle (Grades 7-10).