

ANNEX
BASKET

OBJECTS

TELL THEIR STORIES



INDIGENOUS CULTURES
EDUCATION KIT





ANNEX - BASKET

ANNEX 1 – ANSWER KEY

Draw upon prior knowledge and ask questions.

WORKSHOP 2: Defining the terms in your own words

Instructions: Write down key words for every term in the thematic circle of concepts.

WHAT IS A TERRITORY?

An area of land that makes up a coherent physical, administrative and human unit.

A national ancestral territory is a relatively well-defined area that an individual or group claims or uses and over which it has some authority. For example, a child's room is her territory.

WHAT IS A NATURAL RESOURCE?

Natural resources are found in nature. Mineral or biological, they sustain human life and economic activities. Some natural resources are renewable, like water, agricultural land, forests and animal and plant species.



WHAT IS A WAY OF LIFE?

The customs of a person or group of people who share characteristics through their economy, culture and social habits (e.g., sedentary, nomadic).

WHAT IS AN ECONOMY?

An economy is a system of human activities to produce, exchange (buy or sell), transport and distribute (retail) good and services.

WHAT IS A RELIGION?

There was and still are many religions on Earth. They each have their own characteristics and mythologies.

A religion is a system of human beliefs in a sacred value. There are specific rituals related to each belief.

WHAT ARE TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES?

A tool is an object used to carry out a particular function. Different groups have their own skillful ways of creating their own tools.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

A community is a group of people who live in the same place or share common interests, like a territory, family or religion. Examples of a community include the Abenaki and the women and men of a particular group.



ANNEX - BASKET

ANNEX 2 – IDEAS FOR TEACHERS TO SPARK DISCUSSIONS AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEOS

Video 1: My Father's Tools

TECHNICAL OBJECTS: What techniques and tools are used to make the object?

NATURAL RESOURCES: What natural resources are used in each step of the object's design? How are they obtained? Are the resources still available? Who finds them?

TERRITORY: Where are the materials used to make the object found?

COMMUNITY: Does everyone in the community make the object? Does everyone in the community use one?

Video 2: Jonathan Lainey

TECHNICAL OBJECTS: Did some resources need to be transformed before they were made into baskets? What other objects did women make using ash? (eyeglass cases, cigar cases, fans, trays, centrepieces and chair seats made with porcupine that the Mi'kmaq were especially skilled at making).

ECONOMY: In the 19th century, basket weaving was central to the Abenaki economy. Why? What was the Abenaki economy based on before basket weaving? (use of the territory to gather resources, hunt, fish and trade furs).

Explain how the Abenaki economy shifted in the 19th century (more limited access to resources on the territory). Who purchased Abenaki baskets?

RELIGION: We learned from the video that women had a lot of power. Besides basket weaving, what did they do? (led several ceremonies and possessed knowledge).

COMMUNITY: What role did women play in basket-making? (weaving and selling) How did basket-making impact the role and position of women in the community? (helped them reclaim some of their traditional power).

TERRITORY: How did the community's relationship with the territory change? (increasingly limited access due to colonization).



ANNEX - BASKET

NATURAL RESOURCES: What resources were used to make baskets? (ash, vanilla sweetgrass, birch bark, moose hair that could be dyed for embroidery and porcupine quills).

WAY OF LIFE: Did the way of life remain the same over time? What changed? How did the community adapt? (because settlers limited access to the territory, the Abenaki became sedentary and blended some of their traditions with foreign practices.)

Video 3: Jacques T. Watso, member of the Odanak Band Council

ECONOMY: Does basket-making play the same economic role today as it did in the past? (basket-making was once an economic driver. Today, it is more of an artistic practice and a means of cultural transmission.)

RELIGION: Is the object used to mark significant life events such as birth, marriage or death? Does the object have religious significance? (it is used during religious ceremonies to hold the tobacco that is offered to the creator.) Is it part of a myth? (ash, which is the raw material used to make it, is part of the Abenaki creation myth.) What role does the material play in the community's spiritual life? (Abenaki consider themselves to have been created out of ash trees.)

COMMUNITY: Do all members of the community make baskets? (women only) What were the women's basket-making tasks? What were the men's? (Abenaki women and men had very different social roles. Women wove baskets. Men selected, harvested and prepared the raw materials.) Besides the Abenaki, did other communities make ash baskets? Which? (Mi'kmaq).

TERRITORY: In what type of environment does the ash tree grow? (wetland forests) What is the land currently used for? (agriculture).

NATURAL RESOURCES: Who selects the resource? (male members of the community) What do they look for and what do they try to avoid when choosing trees? What are the risks to the resource's survival? (human and emerald ash borer, which Jacques calls *tordeur*).

WAY OF LIFE: How did the ways of collecting ash change? (it grows much further away from where the community lives. Members no longer hear men cutting down ash because the trees are in another municipality.)



ANNEX - BASKET

Video 4: Barbara Watso, Abenaki basket weaver

TECHNICAL OBJECTS: What tool is used to thin the wood? (crooked knife) What part of the basket is made first? (base).

ECONOMY: How much were the baskets sold for? (\$10 for a dozen) Did children contribute to the community's economy? (children helped weave baskets and sometimes sold them. This was a way to pass knowledge down to them.)

RELIGION: What was the funeral basket for Barbara's son made from? (only vanilla sweetgrass).

COMMUNITY: How did the community sell baskets? (men sold them outside the community in the United States and women made them within the community.) Were baskets ever given to family members as gifts? (baskets were likely gifted to family members to mark events such as weddings, funerals, etc.)

TERRITORY: On what territory were the baskets sold? (in the United States and Québec).

NATURAL RESOURCES: What materials were used to make baskets? (ash and vanilla sweetgrass).

WAY OF LIFE: Who passed on basket-making knowledge? (it was traditionally passed on within families, from mother to daughter or grandmother to granddaughter.)



ANNEX - BASKET

ANNEX 3 – ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Discover how other Indigenous communities make baskets: Iroquoians use corn husks; Inuit use marine mammal pelts and hay; the Mi'kmaq use other materials. Compare Iroquoian and Abenaki basket weaving.

➔ **MI'KMAQ BASKETS:**

<http://collections.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/1980.78.34>
or <http://collections.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/ACC5450A-B>

➔ **IROQUOIAN BASKETS:**

<http://collections.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/M978.86.1-2>
or <http://collections.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/M992.7.192.1-2>

➔ **INUIT BASKETS:**

<http://collections.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/ME982X.187.1-2>,
<http://collections.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/M999.105.38>
or <http://collections.musee-mccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/M999.105.40>

- **Art class: Make baskets using different materials**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NZpheZXuTk>

- Take the class to see American black ash trees, discuss the emerald ash borer and how it impacts the environment and related cultural practices.
- Compare the maps of the ancestral territory of the Abenaki and those of the two villages of Odanak and Wolinak today to understand how the land changed over time. Identify waterways, agricultural areas, forested areas, etc.

➔ **ANCESTRAL TERRITORY:** <https://gcnwa.com/en/history/>

➔ **ODANAK:** https://caodanak.com/wp-content/uploads/carte_odanak.jpg

➔ **WOLINAK:** <https://cawolinak.com/codefoncier/carte-wolinak-couleur/>



ANNEX - BASKET

- Create a timeline to understand the chronology of the key events that marked Algonquin societies and the Abenaki in particular.
- Read the creation myth that links the American black ash and Abenaki:
https://www.histoiresdecheznous.ca/v1/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&lg=Francais&fl=0&ex=804&sl=8885&pos=1&pf=1
- Explorer the vast resources of the Musée des Abénaquis:
<https://museeabenakis.ca/>

Additional resources

Abenaki history

<https://gcnwa.com/en/history/>

https://www.nfb.ca/film/waban-aki_en/

https://www.fort-odanak.ca/abenakis_quebec-abenaki_quebec-eng

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/abenaki>

<https://www.lafabriqueculturelle.tv/capsules/11780/abenakis-la-langue-qui-ne-voulait-pas-mourir>

Baskets

http://www.humainaucoeurdulacst-pierre.com/lac_saint_pierre-lake_saint_pierre/industries/vannerie_abenakise-abenaki_basket_weaving-fra.html

<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/premiere/emissions/facteur-matinal/segments/entrevue/128093/abenakis-maine-documentaire-niona-histoire>

<http://veritablesexperts.com/Contenu/ressvegetalesmenupr.html>