



Lesson: Indigenous Trade Routes

(To follow Amplify CKLA 1, Knowledge 5, Lesson 10)

At a Glance

In this lesson, students extend their understanding of Incan roads by learning about trade routes used by indigenous people in North America, particularly the Abenaki, in the centuries before European settlement.

Primary Focus Objectives

- Students will analyze a painting to identify details about how the Abenaki lived before 1600 CE.
- Students will examine a map of indigenous trade routes and complete tasks to interpret the data on the map.

Formative Assessment

- Map analysis tasks worksheet

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4

Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.3

Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

Materials

- Vocabulary Card: Abenaki
- Focus Text: [Moose on the Loose, Unit 2: The Abenaki Before 1600, Learn It! "Connections," pages 1 and 2.](#)
- Image: [On the Abenaki Trail](#)
- Infographic: [Indigenous Trade Routes in 1400](#)
- "Indigenous Trade Routes" worksheet and crayons or color pencils
- Trading Game card template

Time Needed

Two 30-40 minute class sessions

Learning Activity

1. **Vocabulary Card.** Remind students about who the Abenaki are and why it is important for us to study how they lived long ago on the land we call New Hampshire. *(5 minutes)*
2. **Read the Focus Text.** Preview and read the two recommended pages from the Learn It! section "Connections" in the manner that best suits your students. Identify headings, key words, and images. *(15 minutes)*
3. **Examine a painting.** Project page 2 of Learn It! "Connections." Click on the image "On the Abenaki Trail" to open the pop up with caption. Click on the image again to enlarge it so the whole group can view the details. Follow the prompts in the caption to discuss the details in the painting. *(15 minutes)*



4. **Analyze the map.** Project “Indigenous Trade Routes in 1400.” As a whole group, preview the infographic by identifying and reading the headings, captions, and chart. Distribute “Indigenous Trade Routes” worksheet and support students as they complete the tasks. *(25 minutes)*
5. **Optional: Play a trading game.** If time permits, guide students to play a simple trading game based on objects in the chart on the infographic. See the Educator Rationale and Answer Guide for details. *(20 minutes)*



Educator Rationale and Answer Guide

Connection to Amplify

The Abenaki were flourishing in the land we call New Hampshire at the same time the Inca developed their civilization. Having learned about the importance of Incan roads, students consider how trade routes enabled the Abenaki to connect with other indigenous groups in North America to meet their needs. Students continue to develop CKLA skills through reading non-fiction, closely looking at and discussing an Abenaki painting, analyzing a map, and playing a trading game. This lesson also supports understanding of the social studies concept of needs and wants.

Vocabulary Card

Students may have been introduced to Abenaki history and culture in Kindergarten. If students need more background about the Abenaki, consider visiting Moose on the Loose [Unit 2: The Abenaki Before 1600](#) for the complete Learn It! section. For this lesson, it is most essential for students to understand that the Abenaki were the people living on the land we call New Hampshire at the time the Incan civilization was developing and flourishing. Like the Inca, and like communities today, the Abenaki used the natural resources available to them to meet their needs in a variety of ways. They developed traditions of storytelling, music, and art that continue to be practiced by Abenaki people today. It is also essential for students to understand that the Abenaki connected with other indigenous groups who lived near them and who lived far away, especially through trading with others to get supplies and materials they needed and wanted.

Examine a painting

Begin by asking students to look closely and share observations and questions, beginning with the phrases "I notice..." or "I wonder...". Tell students that this watercolor painting was created by artist Francine Poitras Jones, who is Abenaki and lives today in Vermont. She created these paintings based on knowledge about her ancestors that she learned from older members of her family. Students should observe that: 1. People appear to be packing a string of beads, a woven basket, a clay pot, and a bear skin; 2. Two people in the background are walking away along a path carrying packs; 3. The people are traveling in a group; 4. The colors of the leaves indicate it is autumn, the end of harvest, and a time to celebrate together. Ask students why they think the people are traveling. Ensure students understand that while Abenaki people made most of what they needed, there may have been other things they needed or wanted. Trading with other groups of people was a way to get those things.

This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson across two class sessions.



Analyze a map

Take time to identify the features of this map together before students complete the tasks independently, in small groups, or as a whole group. Projecting the map in color will enable students to complete the tasks. If you have a timeline in your classroom, show students where the year 1400 is located. Connect this year to information they have learned in the Early American Civilizations unit so that students understand that there were people living in the area where they live today at the same time as the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan civilizations. Discuss how the trade routes are shown, define unfamiliar words (turquoise, obsidian, cacao, cinnabar, caribou), and talk with students about where they see the most trade routes. Ensure students understand that more trade routes indicate more people living in that area. Answers: 1. What region did the Abenaki live in? **Northeast**; 2. Which resources come from that region? **Copper, furs, dried fish**; 3. Which resources do you think were hard for the Abenaki to get? Why? **Answers will vary but should come from Northwest, California, Meso-American, or Southwest regions because of distance.**

Optional: play a trading game

Provide each student with a trading card template. Explain that students should pick any eight objects from the chart on the infographic and create a card for each with a drawing and label. After students cut out the cards and two category headings, give them time to sort their own cards into needs and wants. Then, in groups of four, have students take turns trading with each other to get an even number of needs and wants. When someone gets an even set, the round ends. Consider having students combine their cards, shuffling, and dealing evenly for the second round. Students do not need to identify with a particular indigenous group or region. The goal is to solidify their understanding of needs and wants and how economic activity, like trading, helps people meet needs and wants.



ABENAKI

Part of speech: noun

Definition: The **Abenaki** are a group of Native American people. They have lived in New Hampshire for a long time.

How to use it: Long ago, the **Abenaki** used things from nature to make their food, clothes, and homes.



Source: Illustration by Francine Poitras Jones for the New Hampshire Historical Society.

INDIGENOUS TRADE ROUTES IN 1400

Trade in North America didn't start with Europeans! For thousands of years, indigenous groups in North America traded with each other. Each region in North America has different natural resources. The tribes exchanged items that they needed as well as luxury items.

Indigenous traders would travel long distances to trading centers. One trading center called Cahokia, which is near modern-day St. Louis, had a population of 40,000 people by the year 1400. That was bigger than most cities in Europe! The red lines below show popular routes used by indigenous traders.

The Abenaki participated in this trade. Things like beaver furs and dried fish were very useful for indigenous tribes in other parts of the continent. In return, they could get things like dyes, pottery, and bright colored feathers.



Region	Resources Traded
Northeast	Copper, furs, dried fish
Southeast	Tobacco, shells, pearls
Subarctic	Furs, caribou coats
Plains	Salt, meats, hides, tallow (animal fat)
Northwest	Fish oil, wood, whale products
California	Shells, soapstone, dried fish
Grand Basin	Buffalo robes, horns, obsidian, hides
Southwest	Blankets, pottery, turquoise
Meso-American	Corn, cacao, jade, cinnabar for red dye

1. Look at the list of resources traded. Which of these resources are necessities? Which are luxuries? Are there any that could be either?
2. Compare the resources from three regions from different parts of the continent. How do you think the geography of the region impacted what they traded? Did any regions have similar resources?
3. If you were an Abenaki in 1400, which of these resources would you trade for? Which do you think would be the easiest to get? Hardest? Why?
4. The United States didn't exist in 1400, but some of the trade routes are similar to modern state borders. Why do you think that is?



Indigenous Trade Routes

Color the name of the place using the same color it has on the map.

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Look at the things in the chart. Decide if they are **needs** (things we must have to live) or **wants** (things that make us happy).

Needs	Wants

1. What region did the Abenaki live in? _____
2. Which resources came from that region? _____
3. Which resources do you think were hard for the Abenaki to get? Why?



Trading Game Card Template

Needs		Wants	