

The Great Lakes

Name _____

North America has five very large lakes called the Great Lakes. They are in the eastern part of the continent. Their names are Lake **Superior**, **Michigan**, **Huron**, **Erie**, and **Ontario**. Together, the 5 lakes form the largest area of fresh water on Earth. Four of these lakes form part of the boundary between the United States and Canada. The fifth lake is completely inside the United States. Of the Great Lakes, Lake Superior is the largest and the deepest. Lake Ontario is the smallest. Lake Erie is the shallowest and Lake Huron has the longest shoreline. Water from the Great Lakes flows to the **Atlantic Ocean** through the **St. Lawrence River**. The Great Lakes have been important to people since Indigenous groups first lived there. Look at the two maps below to learn more about the Great Lakes. Then answer the questions.

Map of the Great Lakes



North America



1. Look at the map of the Great Lakes above. How many lakes make up the Great Lakes? _____
2. Find the Great Lakes on the map of North America and draw a circle around all of them.
3. What country borders the United States on the north? _____
4. Find the dotted line in 4 of the lakes on the Map of the Great Lakes. What is the reason for that line? _____
5. Which Great Lake has no dotted line? _____
6. Which Great Lake is entirely within the United States? _____

Modern Place Names of the Great Lakes Name _____

Below is an explanation of how the Great Lakes got their modern place names. The first European explorers to visit northern North America (Canada) were from France and England. The first of these explorers to see the Great Lakes were French (from France). Read the chart and answers the questions below.

How the Great Lakes Got Their Modern Place Names

Lake Huron was named by French explorers for the Indigenous people who lived by the lake, who the French called the Huron. The French named it “Lake of the Huron Indian”. Like all Indigenous people, the Indigenous people the French called the Huron have a name they call themselves. They are the Wyandot and Wendat, which means “Us, The People” in English.

Lake Michigan was named by French explorers who used the same name given to the lake by the Indigenous group called the Ojibwa. It was called “Mishigami”, meaning “Great Water”.

Lake Erie was named by French explorers for an Indigenous tribe who lived along the southern shore of the lake. The name “Erie” comes from one of the many French spellings for the name of that tribe.

Lake Ontario was named ‘Lacus Ontario’- “great lake”- by a French explorer based on the Iroquois and Huron tribal name for it: “ontari:io” meaning “beautiful lake”.

Lake Superior was named by the first French explorers who called it “*le lac superieur*” or “Upper Lake” because it is above Lake Huron.

1. Which European explorers gave the Great Lakes their modern names? _____
2. Which 2 lakes have French names for Indigenous groups who lived near the lakes?

3. Which lake is named for its location? _____
4. Which 2 lakes have names that describe the lake in some way? _____

5. How do the names describe the 2 lakes?

6. How many lakes have names that were first used by Indigenous groups? _____

Think about this:

Why did French explorers give the lakes new names?

Indigenous Place Names of the Great Lakes Name _____

Use the information from the “*Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada*” map to discover Indigenous place names for each lake below.



Lake Superior

1. Modern place name came from French explorers who called it '*le lac superieur*' or "Upper Lake" because it is above Lake Huron.

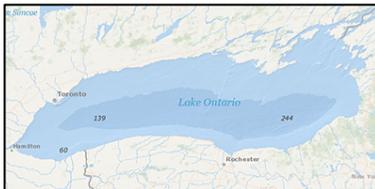
2. Name of Indigenous tribe and English meaning of their place name-



Lake Erie

1. Modern place name came from the French explorers' name for an Indigenous tribe who lived along the southern shore of the lake. The name Erie comes from one of the many French spellings for the name for that tribe.

2. Name of Indigenous tribe and English meaning of their place name-



Lake Ontario

1. Modern place name came from a French explorer using the Iroquois and Huron tribal name for the lake: "ontari:io" meaning "beautiful lake".

2. Name of Indigenous tribe and English meaning of their place name-



Lake Huron

1. Modern place name came from French explorers for the Indigenous people they called the Huron, who lived by the lake.

2. Name of Indigenous tribe and English meaning of their place name-

1. Compare the modern and Indigenous place names for each lake. List any of that are the same or alike. _____
2. How much of Canada was sovereign territory of Indigenous peoples? _____
3. Why do you think the French explorers didn't use Indigenous names for all the Great Lakes?

Reasons for Naming a Place

The Indigenous place names on the map of Canada were shared by the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and people. Information from the map tells us that the place names mark the **locations of gathering places, communities, places of danger** and of **beauty**, and the places **where treaties were signed**. Also, geographic place names can describe a **location; how it looks, what it is like, or where it is at**. Last of all, place names can show places where **resources** such as plants and animals can be found.

Below is a chart listing these reasons for giving a place a name. Look again at the Indigenous place name meanings you found on the map and write the meanings where you think they might fit. Not every row will have an answer.

Reason for naming

Gathering places	
Communities	
Describes a location	
Place of danger	
Place of beauty	
Has resources needed to live	
Where treaties were signed	

Answer Keys

The Great Lakes – 6 points possible

1. 5
2. NA map is circled correctly
3. Canada
4. It shows the boundary between U.S and Canada
5. Lake Michigan
6. Lake Michigan

Modern Great Lakes Place Names - 9 points possible

1. The French
2. Lake Huron and Lake Erie
3. Lake Superior
4. Lake Ontario and Lake Michigan
5. Great (Water) and Beautiful (Lake)
6. 2 (named in #4)

Indigenous Place Names - 17 points possible

Lake Superior

2. ANISHINAABE'S SEA -Objibwe

Lake Erie

2. WHERE IT IS REPLENISHED, BASSWOOD AROUND IT, HAT - Mohawk
CHAIN OF LAKES SEA -Objibwe

Lake Ontario

2. BEAUTIFUL LAKE -Mohawk, LEADING SEA -Objibwe

Lake Huron

2. GREAT CROSSWATERS SEA -Ojibwe

1. Lake Ontario is “Beautiful Lake” in both place names.
2. All of Canada was sovereign territory of Indigenous peoples.
3. Answer will vary but could include: the French didn't know the Indigenous names; there were sometimes more than 1 Indigenous name for a lake; the French were the ones making the maps.

Reason for naming - 8 points possible Those in red must be in rows indicated. Those in black may vary.

Gathering places	
Communities	
Describe a location	HAT, ANISHINAABE'S SEA, CHAIN OF LAKES SEA, LEADING SEA, WHERE IT IS REPLENISHED, GREAT CROSSWATERS SEA
Place of danger	GREAT CROSSWATERS SEA
Place of beauty	BEAUTIFUL LAKE, GREAT CROSSWATERS SEA
Has resources needed to live	BASSWOOD AROUND IT, WHERE IT IS REPLENISHED
Where treaties were signed	

