

Exploring Indigenous Place Names in Canada

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Grade Level 4-5
Duration 3 class periods

National Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

Element 2: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places
6. How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions

AZ Standards

ELA

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

4.RI.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

5.RI.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Craft and Structure

4.RI.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

5.RI.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

4.RI.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

5.RI.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

Arizona Social Science Standards

GEOGRAPHY

The use of geographic representations and tools helps individuals understand their world.

4.G1.1 Use and construct maps and graphs to represent changes in the Americas over time.

5.G1.1 Use and construct maps and graphs to represent changes in the United States.

Human-environment interactions are essential aspects of human life in all societies.

4.G2.1 Compare the diverse ways people or groups of people have impacted, modified, or adapted to the environment of the Americas.

Examining human population and movement helps individuals understand past, present, and future conditions on Earth's surface.

5.G3.1 Use key historical events with geographic tools to analyze the causes and effects of environmental and technological events on human settlements and migration.

HISTORY

Cycles of conflict and cooperation have shaped relations among people, places, and environments.

4.H2.1 Describe the cycles of conflict and compromise that occurred in the Americas during the convergence of Europeans, American Indians, and Africans in the Americas before and after European exploration.

5.H2.1 Use primary and secondary sources to summarize the causes and effects of conflicts, resolutions, and social movements throughout the historical timeframe.

Overview

Many students today know the place names of geographic features in the Americas. But do they realize that the Indigenous groups who were the first

to live here have their own place names for features in their homelands? Indigenous people know the names of the geographic features on their traditional lands. Their place names, in their traditional language, often reflect their cultural practices and stories.

Purpose

In this lesson students will learn that Indigenous groups living throughout North America have place names for geographic features. Using Canada as an example, they will explore the origin of modern place names and compare with Indigenous place names.

Key Vocabulary

Indigenous – groups or cultures that were the first to live in a certain place

sovereign territory – homelands ruled or governed by an Indigenous group

First Nations, Metis, and Inuit – the three groups of Indigenous peoples living in Canada; each has their own culture and language.

replenished - filled something up again or restored it to what it had been

resource – a plant, animal or mineral found in nature that can be used by people to help them live

basswood – a tree used by Indigenous groups as a resource; sap was used as a watery drink or boiled into syrup; young basswood leaves were used for food and the layer of new growth on the tree for soups and breads; parts of the leaves and bark were used for medicines

treaties – agreements made between Indigenous groups and the government of a country

Materials

- Our Home on Native Land map <https://native-land.ca/> (download for projection)
- Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada map (download as a PDF and save where it is easily accessible) <https://umaine.edu/canam/publications/coming-home-map/coming-home-indigenous-place-names-canada-pdf-download/>
- Physical Feature Maps for Students in Grade 4 http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/Physical_4th_PO5_Colors.pdf
- Arizona Indian Reservations (Color) map http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ_Reservations.pdf
- The Great Lakes worksheet
- Modern Place Names of the Great Lakes worksheet
- Indigenous Place Names of the Great Lakes worksheet
- Answer Keys

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Recognize Indigenous sovereignty in northern North America (Canada) prior to European exploration and settlement.
2. Use a map to gain information.
3. Identify the origin of both Indigenous and modern place names for the Great Lakes.

Procedures

Familiarize yourself with all maps prior to teaching this lesson.

<https://native-land.ca/>

http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ_Reservations.pdf

http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/Physical_4th_PO5_Colors.pdf

<https://umaine.edu/canam/publications/coming-home-map/coming-home-indigenous-place-names-canada-pdf-download/>

SESSION ONE

Prerequisite Knowledge: Students know the term “Indigenous” or begin the lesson with an explanation of this term.

1. Open the Our Home on Native Land map at <https://native-land.ca/>. Note the Disclaimer and explain as needed to students. Use the toggle search to display by **Territories** and center on the Americas.
2. Explain that the map shows colorful ovals and circles to mark the homelands of Indigenous populations in North and South America before European exploration and settlement. According to the map makers, there are no clear dividing lines between homelands because unlike Europeans who think in terms of owning land, Indigenous peoples live with the land. Many Indigenous groups hunted or seasonally moved within their homeland and shared homelands with other groups.
3. Zoom in slowly to share that more Indigenous group names appear as the map expands. Zoom back out to North America and ask, “From what the map shows, how much of North America was originally sovereign territory of Indigenous groups?” (100%--Students should recognize that all North America was originally the sovereign territory of Indigenous groups)
4. Use the zip code search tool on the map to zoom in to the location of your school. Identify on whose sovereign native lands it is located. Discuss whether the Indigenous group(s) still live(s) somewhere near your area. If needed, project the Arizona Indian Reservations (Color) map for help in deciding if there

is a reservation of this tribe near your school.
http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ_Reservations.pdf

5. Next, move the Native Land map to show only the area of Canada. Explain that later, students will be learning about Indigenous groups' place names for geographic features in northern North America, the country of Canada today. Zoom in slowly and show students the names of Indigenous groups in Canada. Also explain that the names Canada and America are not on the map because they are not Indigenous names for the land.

6. Turn off the **Territories** search toggle switch on the map - so that all switches are off- and zoom in to show geographic features. Review that there are two types of geographic features: **human and physical**. (If needed, project the AzGA Physical Feature Maps for Students in Grade 4 Color map to review types of physical features.

http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/Physical_4th_PO5_Colors.pdf) Have the class identify which physical features are shown on the northern North America section of the map. (rivers, lakes, mountains, islands)

7. Give examples of place names for physical features in your area (the Grand Canyon, the Colorado River, etc.,) and explain that Indigenous groups identify physical features in their homelands with place names. However, these Indigenous names are not the names usually found on a modern map.

8. Move the map to the area of the Great Lakes and enlarge. Ask what physical feature is shown. Toggle back to **Territories** and identify Indigenous tribes whose sovereign territory was in the Great Lakes area.

9. Share that students will be learning more about the Great Lakes and their modern and Indigenous place names and distribute *The Great Lakes* worksheet for students to read and complete. Collect for assessment if desired.

SESSION TWO

1. Project the PDF of Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada map.

<https://umaine.edu/canam/publications/coming-home-map/coming-home-indigenous-place-names-canada-pdf-download/> Review with students that Indigenous groups lived throughout North America before European exploration and colonization and that they gave place names to physical features in their sovereign lands.

2. Explain that this map shows the Indigenous place names of geographic features in Canada. Zoom in to the upper right corner to the map title, legend, and information. Read the map information, explain the

legend, and show examples of tribal place names in different areas of the map. As you explore the map, its creators would like you to explain that areas with few or no names only means that the cultural organizations and First Nations, Métis, or Inuit were not in agreement about having their place names included on the map at the time the map was made. Continue to show students the entire area of the map noting some of the Indigenous place names.

3. Zoom in to the area of the Great Lakes. Explain that, as they learned in Session One, the modern International Border between Canada and the United States goes through 4 of the 5 Great Lakes. Therefore only 4 of the lakes are shown in blue on this map. Lake Michigan, shown only in blue outline, is located entirely in the United States. Explain that they are going to learn how the Great Lakes were given the names we use today and will then compare those names to Indigenous place names for the lakes as shown on this map.

4. Lastly, scroll down to show the list of Southern Permissions. Explain that these are the Indigenous groups that provided their place names for use on this southern part of the Canada map.

5. Hand out student worksheet, Modern Place Names of the Great Lakes and read the directions to the students. Review the chart briefly as needed and have them complete the worksheet.

SESSION THREE

1. Begin this session by following the steps below to open Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada map in order to locate more information about the Indigenous place names.

a. Open Adobe Acrobat

b. Within Adobe Acrobat, select "File" then select "Open" and choose the Coming Home Map from the location where you saved it.

c. When Adobe Acrobat opens the map, a Layers symbol will show at the left side of the map. This opens the list of groups that gave permission for their place names to be used.

d. There will be a side bar where you can toggle names on or off. This will show the location of their place names on the map and provide the details you need in this session.

2. Project the map. Review how the Great Lakes got their modern place names and that European (French) explorers named all of them, even though some Indigenous tribal names and place names were used. Using the map, explain that the French were the first European explorers to see the lakes and meet the Indigenous tribes living there. The French traveled up the St. Lawrence River from the Atlantic Ocean in the early 1600s and by the mid-

1600s all 5 lakes were shown on French maps. Then discuss why the French explorers were the ones to name the lakes: (i.e., since the French were the first European explorers to see and make maps of the Great Lakes, they used their own names for them; they may not have known the Indigenous names or couldn't pronounce or spell them; there was sometimes more than one Indigenous name for a lake)

3. Share that today they will use the Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada map to locate Indigenous place names for the Great Lakes. They will identify each Indigenous place name and the English meaning of their place name. Zoom in on the legend to show how the Indigenous place names and their English meanings are written on the map. Then go to the area of the Great Lakes, zoom in and point out the Indigenous place names and their English meanings written on the lakes. (Note: There are several names near the edges of the lakes, but show students that they name rivers or islands, not the lakes. The lake names are printed in blue, other physical features are in black.)

4. Hand out the Indigenous Place Names of the Great Lakes worksheet and explain that together you will use the map to identify Indigenous place names for the 4 lakes.

5. Point to each lake one at a time and help students identify its modern name by its shape using the small maps on the worksheet. Then point out the Indigenous place name(s) and English meaning(s). Also identify the name of the tribe sharing the place name by showing students where tribal names are identified on the sidebar of the map. Two sources, *Charles Lippert and Jordan Engel, The Great Lakes: An Ojibwe Perspective (The Decolonial Atlas)* and *Karonhi:io Delaronde and Jordan Engle, Haudenosaunee County in Mohawk (The Decolonial Atlas)* provided the Indigenous place names for the lakes. Click on the Layer Visibility icon for each source and you will see tribal place names disappear/appear. This will show you which tribes provided the place names for each lake. Have students copy the tribe's name and place name's English meaning onto their worksheet in the appropriate place.

6. Repeat process with all lakes explaining vocabulary words as needed such as *replenished*, *resource*, and *basswood*. (See Key Vocabulary)

7. When all Indigenous place names' English translation and corresponding tribal name are recorded, have students compare modern and Indigenous place names by answering the 3 questions on the top of the next page.

8. Next, read aloud the information explaining reasons for naming a place. Be sure students understand the reasons and why some of them are

especially important to Indigenous tribes. Then have them follow the directions for filling out the chart.

9. End lesson by reviewing with students that Indigenous groups living throughout North America have place names for geographic landforms which help and guide them as they live and travel throughout their lands.

Assessment

ELA and Social Science

The Great Lakes, the Modern Place Names of the Great Lakes, and the Indigenous Place Names of the Great Lakes worksheets can be graded for completeness and accuracy. Mastery will be considered a score of 80% or higher.

A Vocabulary Test can be given with a focus on the Key Vocabulary for this lesson. Mastery will be considered a score of 80% or higher.

Extensions

Students could research the naming of the Niagara River and Falls and compare to the Indigenous place names given on the map. Use the sidebar layer of tribal names and go to *Charles Lippert and Jordan Engel, The Great Lakes: An Ojibwe Perspective (The Decolonial Atlas)*, click on the Layer Visibility icon and you will see tribal place names disappear/appear. This will show you which place names for the river and falls belong to this tribe.

Students could use the tribal source cited above with a copy of the **Reasons for Naming a Place** chart from the student worksheet to explore reasons why other Indigenous place names in the Great Lakes region might have been given.

Students could use the Inuit Heritage Trust and the Inuit Heritage Trust (Where We Live and Travel Map) in the sidebar layer to explore place names of the Inuit tribe for areas in Hudson Bay, Baffin Island, and the Labrador Sea. Using the **Reasons for Naming a Place** chart, students can explore the importance of Indigenous place names when living and traveling in Arctic lands.

Students could explore changes made from modern geographic place names back to Indigenous names (i.e., Mount McKinley to Denali.)

Students could explore the origin of local geographic place names.

Sources

Our Home on Native Land map <https://native-land.ca/>

The Canadian-American Center, The University of Maine “Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada” map
<https://umaine.edu/canam/publications/coming-home-map/coming-home-indigenous-place-names-canada-pdf-download/>

Individual Great Lakes Maps
<https://www.epa.gov/greatlakes>

Map of the Great Lakes - Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=88745>

North America map, Arizona Geographic Alliance
[N-AMER \(asu.edu\)](http://N-AMER.asu.edu)

Physical Feature Maps for Students in Grade 4,
[Physical 4th_PO5_Colors.pdf \(asu.edu\)](http://Physical_4th_PO5_Colors.pdf)

Arizona Indian Reservations (Color) map, Arizona Geographic Alliance
http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ_Reservations.pdf

USDA NRCS Plant Guide – American Basswood
https://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_tiama.pdf

What's in a name?
<https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/historyculture/upload/American-Indian-words.pdf>

Great Lakes Names Meanings
<https://www.eekwi.org/great-lakes/humans-and-great-lakes/great-lakes-name-meanings>

The Erie
[Erie | The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture \(okhistory.org\)](http://Erie|TheEncyclopediaofOklahomaHistoryandCulture.okhistory.org)