

Traditional Sustainable Practices in Canada

Name: _____

Content: First Peoples land ownership and use

Curricular Competency: Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to — ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions

Curricular Competency: Develop a plan of action to address a selected problem or issue

Curricular Competency: Construct arguments defending the significance of individuals/groups, places, events, or developments (significance)

Curricular Competency: Ask questions, corroborate inferences, and draw conclusions about the content and origins of a variety of sources, including mass media (evidence)

Curricular Competency: Sequence objects, images, or events, and recognize the positive and negative aspects of continuities and changes in the past and present (continuity and change)

Curricular Competency: Differentiate between short- and long-term causes, and intended and unintended consequences, of events, decisions, or developments (cause and consequence)

Curricular Competency: Take stakeholders' perspectives on issues, developments, or events by making inferences about their beliefs, values, and motivations (perspective)

Curricular Competency: Make ethical judgments about events, decisions, or actions that consider the conditions of a particular time and place, and assess appropriate ways to respond (ethical judgment)

First Peoples Principles of Learning: Learning is reflective

First Peoples' Traditional Sustainable Practices

First Peoples in Canada have long used **ways of living with the land that keep it healthy**. These are called **sustainable practices** because they make sure the land, animals, and plants can keep providing for people in the future.

Some examples include:

1. **Seasonal Harvesting**
 - People gather plants, berries, and other resources **only during certain seasons** so that the plants have time to grow back. They didn't pick ALL the berries, or there would not be enough growth the next year
2. **Respectful Hunting and Fishing**
 - Hunters and fishers **only take what they need** and use every part of the animal. This keeps animal populations healthy and ensures that future generations can also rely on them. They didn't hunt ALL the fish, or there would be not enough fish the next year.
3. **Controlled Burning**
 - People sometimes **light small, controlled fires** in forests or grasslands. This might seem strange, but it helps **renew the land**, clear old plants, and encourage new plants to grow. It also reduces the chance of dangerous wildfires later.
4. **Never Taking More Than Needed**
 - People take only enough food or resources for themselves and their families. Nothing is wasted. This ensures the land and its resources **remain abundant** for everyone.

These practices show **respect for nature** and an understanding that humans are part of a bigger system. The land is not something to be used up, but something to **care for and share**.

The Honorable Harvest

A foundational teaching among many Indigenous cultures is the "Honorable Harvest," which outlines guidelines for interacting with nature.

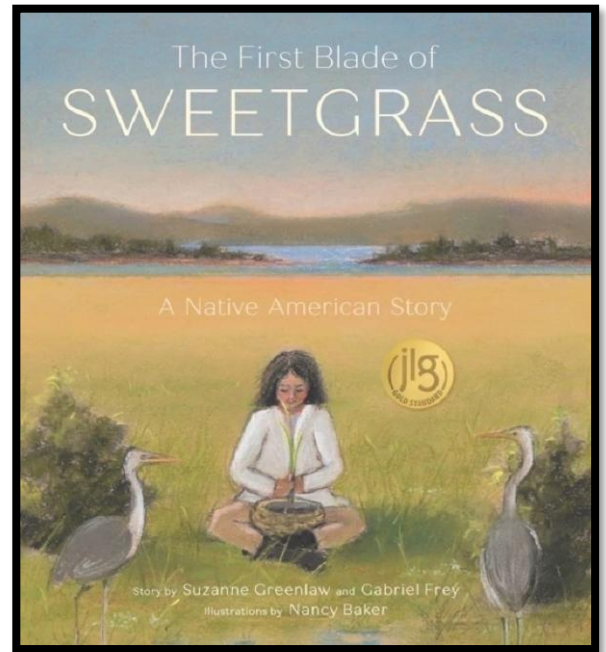
These principles include:

- **Never take the first:** Allowing plants to mature and reproduce before harvesting.
- **Never take the last:** Ensuring that enough remains for the ecosystem and future generations.
- **Take only what you need:** Avoiding overharvesting to maintain balance.
- **Use everything you take:** Minimizing waste by utilizing all parts of the plant or animal.
- **Leave some for others:** Sharing resources to ensure communal well-being.
- **Harvest in a way that minimizes harm:** Employing methods that cause the least disturbance to the environment.
- **Give thanks for what you have been given:** Expressing gratitude for the resources provided.
- **Reciprocate the gift:** Engaging in actions that give back to the Earth, such as planting seeds or offering prayers.

These teachings are integral to many Indigenous cultures and are often passed down through generations. They emphasize a reciprocal relationship with nature, where humans are stewards rather than exploiters.

Your teacher will read you a story: The First Blade of Sweetgrass. Reflect on the story, and write your ideas below:

How does the girl show respect for the land and the plants?



How does this story show the idea that people are caretakers of the land, not owners?

How is the way the girl harvests sweetgrass different from how people might treat land or plants in other ways?

What might happen if people didn't follow the "take only what you need" rule?
