



Ojibwe Moons



Overview

Through careful observation and inquiry the Native American Ojibwe learned seasonal lessons necessary for survival. Their knowledge of the environment is reflected in the names they used for the monthly moons and is a phenological record based on their life experiences. Other Native American tribes had different names for the same phenomenon.

Standards/Benchmarks *

- Demonstrated command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. ELA (1.10.1.1.)
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization. ELA (1.10.2.2)
- Men and women throughout the history of our cultures, including Minnesota American tribes have used engineering and scientific inquiry. Science (1.1.3.2.1)

Background

Native Americans of the northern and eastern United States kept track of the seasons by giving distinctive names to each recurring full moon. These names referred to the entire month in which the moon occurred. Although there was some variation in the moon names, the names were similar in the Algonquin tribes from New England to Lake Superior. Ojibwe moon names (on the *calendar*) are sometimes different. Later, European settlers followed the custom and created some of their own names.

Moon Phases

We see the moon because it is reflecting sunlight somewhat like a mirror. As the Earth orbits around the sun, the moon is orbiting around the Earth. It takes the moon about 4 weeks (a month) to orbit Earth and during this trip the moon reflects varying amounts of light.

As the moon orbits Earth it is sometimes between the Earth and the Sun. When in this situation the moon is not reflecting any light toward the Earth and the bright sunlight obscures our view of the moon, this phase is called the *new moon*. On the *Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar* the new moon is shown as a dark circle.

Each night as the moon moves a little farther in its orbit, we can see a small sliver of moon reflecting sunlight. This is called a *crescent moon*. As the moon continues along its orbit more and more of the moon is reflecting sunlight *waxing*. Sometimes we may even see it during the day. About a week after new moon, we can see what looks like a half-moon – it is a quarter of the way around the Earth so it is also called the *first quarter moon*.

Each night more of the moon's surface reflects sunlight (so it looks like it is increasing in size – but we're just seeing more of it.) Now the moon is

Time:

50 min

Skills:

Data collecting
Recording
Interpreting
Writing creatively

Vocabulary:

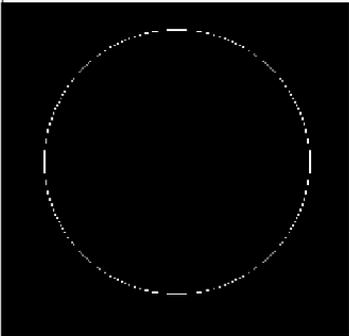
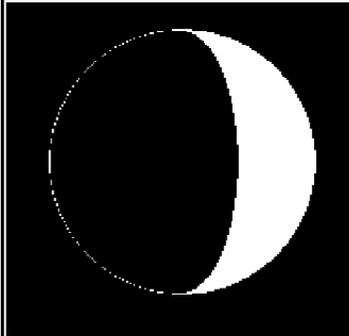
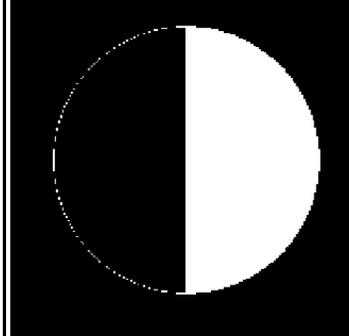
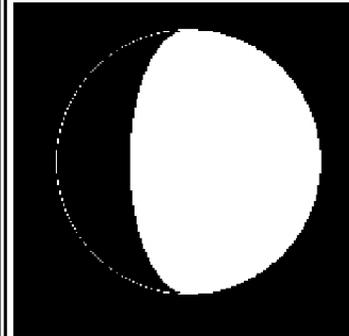
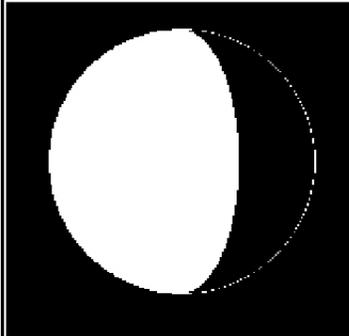
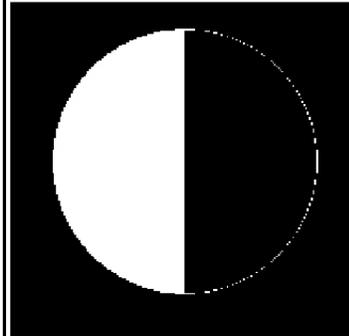
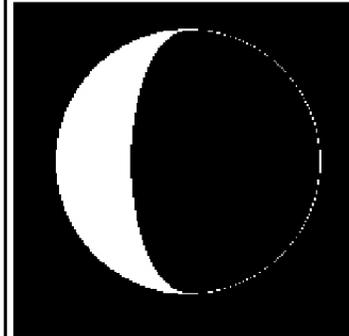
new moon
full moon
waning moon
waxing moon
moon phases
phenology
Ojibwe

Materials Needed:

- *Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar*
- *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back - A Native American Year of Moons* (See Resources);
- Ojibwe Moons (Blackline Master)

about 2 weeks into its orbit and it is on the side of the Earth where the sun can light all of the moon surface that we can see. This is called the full moon.

As the moon continues to orbit, it appears smaller and smaller (*waning*) until it is again dark – a new, new moon. Then the cycle repeats.

			
New Moon	Waxing Crescent	First Quarter Moon	Waxing Gibbous
			
Full Moon	Waning Gibbous	Last Quarter Moon	Waning Crescent

The Activity

Warm Up

Ask students to share what they have noticed about the moon.

1. Tell students that they are going to use the *Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar* to find the new moons for each month. Under the new moon will be an Ojibwe name for the new moon. They will write that name behind the month on their Ojibwe Moons (Blackline Master) sheet.
2. Explain that in Native American cultures, there are 13 moons during the year and each has its own name and story based on what is happening in nature. Read the first page of *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back*. (See Resources). Read the monthly phenology in the calendar and discuss what is happening in nature and how that may have played a part in naming the moon. Read some additional poems from *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back*.
3. Have students find the name of the new moon in their birthday month. If they could choose any name for their birthday moon, what would they select? Discuss what is happening in nature during their birthday month. Have them write the name they choose and why.

Wrap Up & Assessment

Have students present the name they chose for their month and why. Can students use the information on the calendar to complete the following data sheet?

Questions

- Discuss the months and names of the moons. Why do you think they were named what they were named? Ojibwe life was closely related to seasonal activities. The names of each moon are influenced by natural phenomena, animal activity, and cultural practices and beliefs.
- In the Native American culture, there is variation in the names of the moons. Why do you think this might be? The area in which the Ojibwe people live is so vast, not all Ojibwe people use the same names for the moons.

Extension

Use the calendar to find a date when the moon is visible during the day. Take students outside to find the moon. What phase do you see? When will it be full moon? Encourage students to watch for full moon with their parents.

Resources

- Bruchac, J. and London, J. *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back A Native American Year of Moons*
- *Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar*

* Minnesota Academic Standards

Standards Met

Subject	Code	Standard	Benchmark
ELA	1.10.1.1	Demonstrated command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	a. Print all upper and lowercase letters. c. Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences. d. Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns. e. Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future.
	1.10.2.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization.	b. Use end punctuation for sentences. d. Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words. e. Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.
Science	1.1.3.2.1	Men and women throughout the history of our cultures, including Minnesota American tribes, have used engineering and scientific inquiry.	Recognize that tools are used by people, including scientists and engineers, to gather information and solve problems.

Name _____

Ojibwe Moons

In many Native American cultures, moons were named as a way to keep track of the seasons. Using our *Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar*, find the Ojibwe names for the new moons for each month.

Month	Ojibwe Name for the New Moon
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	

Did any month this year have two new moons? _____

What is the name of the new moon in the month of your birthday? _____

If you could name the new moon in your birthday month any name you wanted, what would you name it? _____

Why would you choose that name? _____

