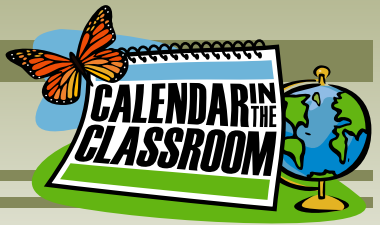




Ojibwe and Lakota Moons



Overview

Through careful observation and inquiry the Native American Ojibwe and Lakota people have learned seasonal lessons necessary for survival. Their knowledge of the environment is reflected in the names they use for the monthly moons and is a phenological record based on their life experiences. (Learn more about the Ojibwe and Lakota [Dakota] people by reading the resource listed below from the Minnesota Historical Society)

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 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.

Time:

50 min

Skills:

Data collecting
Recording
Interpreting
Writing creatively

Vocabulary:

new moon
full moon
waning moon
waxing moon
moon phases
phenology
Ojibwe
Lakota/Dakota

Materials Needed:

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



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 full moons for each month. Under the full moon will be an Ojibwe and a Lakota name for the full moon. They will write that name behind the month on their Ojibwe and Lakota Moons worksheet.
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 full 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 and Lakota culture is 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 the 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*.
online: <https://jeffersfoundation.org/programs/calendar-in-the-classroom/>
- Minnesota Historical Society. Dakota People and Ojibwe People*
online: <https://www.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn/native-americans>

Minnesota Academic Standards Met

3-D Science Standards

Science Practices:

2. Developing and Using Models
3. Plan and Carry Out Investigations
4. Analyzing and Interpreting Data
7. Engage in Argument from Evidence
8. Obtaining, Evaluating and Communicating Information

Crosscutting Concepts:

1. Patterns
2. Cause and Effect: mechanism and explanation
4. Systems and System Models

Disciplinary Core Ideas:

ESS1: Earth's place in the universe

3rd Grade: Record observations of the sun, moon, and stars and use them to describe patterns that can be predicted.

Ojibwe and Lakota Moons

In many Native American cultures moons were named as a way to keep track of the seasons. Using your Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar find the Ojibwe and Lakota names for the full moons for each month and list them in the chart below.

Months	Ojibwe Full Moon	Lakota Full Moon
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

Did any month this year have two full moons? _____

If yes, which month? _____

What is the name of the full moon in the month of your birthday?

Ojibwe name: _____ Lakota name: _____

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

Why would you choose that name?

