



THE MOHICAN PEOPLE
THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS
A CURRICULUM UNIT FOR GRADES FOUR-FIVE

PART 2 BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

TIME ONE CLASS PERIOD

- OBJECTIVES**
1. Students will be able to identify the homelands of the Mohican people or Muh-he-con-ne-ok in what is now the eastern United States.
 2. Students will learn about the early ways of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok, how they lived and survived through the various seasons and what values they held and passed on to their children.
 3. Students will develop their skills in map-reading, listening, reading comprehension, recall, writing and oral expression.
 4. Students will grow in respect for differing learning styles of their classmates by discovering there isn't always only one correct answer.

MATERIALS Teacher Reference: *A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MOHICAN NATION, STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE BAND* by Dorothy W. Davids, Mohican Elder (Stockbridge-Munsee Historical Committee, 2004)
Teacher Resource Sheet # 2.1: Traditional Mohican Values
Student Resource Sheet #2.1: Early History and Culture of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok
Student Resource Sheet # 2:2 The Many Trails of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok
Activity #2.Z
Activity #2.Y
Student Social Studies/History notebooks for taking notes

CONTENT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND LANDS
PART 2 — BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

1. EARLY HISTORY AND CULTURE
 - A. Traveled from North and West
 - B. Settled in river valley "where the waters were never still"
 - C. Built homes called wigwams
 - D. Lives rooted in the woodlands and seasons
 - (1) Summer
 - (2) Fall
 - (3) Winter
 - (4) Spring
 - E. Where the Munsee lived
2. TRADITIONAL MOHICAN VALUES
 - A. Belief in Great, Good Spirit
 - B. Help the poor and those in distress
 - C. Assist Elders
 - D. Be kind to strangers



UNIT
PART 2

THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS
BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK, p. 2

- E. Be honest in every way
- F. Never steal
- G. Never kill anyone
- H. Work, don't be lazy
- I. Obey parents and other leaders

- PROCEDURE**
1. On a classroom map of the United States, have students identify New York State (including Long Island), Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut.
 2. Read with students the text of Student Resource Sheet #2.1: EARLY HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK. Be sure they can pronounce and distinguish between the name of the people and that of the river. Then have them find the states mentioned above on the map on Student Resource Sheet #2.2: THE MANY TRAILS OF THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK, noting only where the homelands of the early Mohicans are located. Note that besides New York, the homelands extended a ways into each of the other three states mentioned above, though that's difficult to see on this map. They should also note that the Munsee lived south and west of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok but some joined the Mohicans later in their history. (SRS #2.2 will also be used in later activities.)
 3. Have students, using their History or Social Studies notebooks, summarize in some way what they have learned from SRS #2.1. If you are familiar with outlining, use the one above in the Content section and have students recall information under the headings. Summarizing in paragraph form is helpful also, so long as the points in the outline above are included.
Working in pairs or small groups may help students remember important points, and sharing at the end in a general discussion will help students understand that different people remember different things when they read. This is one way to increase students' respect for individual differences in perspectives as students study and learn with each other.
 4. Now guide students through Activity #2.Z and then Activity #2.Y. These are two activities on Mohican traditional values using a very special book for small children. They are very important to emphasize since they help to dispel the stereotype — that they are primitive, uncivilized savages — that Native People have had to put up with throughout history.
 5. Finally, using Teacher Resource Sheet #2.1 as a reference, get back to TRADITIONAL MOHICAN VALUES in the outline above. After completing their list of values, have them give specific examples from their own lives how each can be lived today. Remind students again that present-day Mohican people try to live **these same values** in whatever spiritual path or religion they follow.





STUDENT RESOURCE SHEET #2.1
EARLY HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

UNIT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS
PART 2 BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

In the early 1700's, Hendrick Aupaumut, Mohican historian, wrote that a great people traveled from the north and west. They crossed waters where the land almost touched.* For many, many years they moved across the land, leaving settlements in rich river valleys as others moved on.

Reaching the eastern edge of the country, some of these people, called the Lenni Lenape, chose to settle on the river later renamed the Delaware. Others moved north and settled in the valley of a river where the waters, like those in their original homeland, were never still. They named this river the Mahicannituck and called themselves the Muh-he-con-neok, the People of the Waters That Are Never Still. The name evolved through several spellings, including Mahikan. Today, however, they are known as the Mohicans.

Because the Mohican people chose to build their homes near the rivers where they would be close to food, water and transportation, they were sometimes called River Indians. Their homes, called wik-wams (wigwams), were circular and made of bent saplings covered with hides or bark. They also lived in long-houses which were often very large,



sometimes as long as a hundred feet. The roofs were curved and covered with bark, except for smoke holes which allowed the smoke from fire pits to escape. Several families from the same clan might live in a

longhouse, each family having its own section.

The Mohicans' lives were rooted in the woodlands in which they lived. These were covered with red spruce, elm, pine, oak, birch and maple trees. Black bear, deer, moose, beaver, otter, bobcat, mink and other animals thrived in the woods, as well as wild turkeys and pheasants. The sparkling rivers teemed with herring, shad, trout and other fish. Oyster beds were found beneath the river's overhanging banks for some distance up the Mahicannituck. Berries,



**According to John W. Quinney, Hendrick Aupaumut committed the oral history of the Mohicans to writing in the mid-1700's, a non-Indian took the manuscript to be published and it was reportedly lost. When found, the manuscript's first page was missing. Two versions of the manuscript exist: one in the Massachusetts Historical Collection and one in Electa Jones' book STOCKBRIDGE PAST AND PRESENT. What is meant by the "north and west" and "waters where the land nearly touched" is not known. The Bering Strait theory is questionable, based on current research.*





UNIT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS
PART 2 STUDENT RESOURCE SHEET #2.1: EARLY HISTORY . . . p. 2.

cherries and nuts were abundant. It was a rich life.

Mohican women generally were in charge of the home, children and gardens, while men traveled greater distances to hunt, fish or serve as warriors. After the hunts and harvests, meat, vegetables and berries were dried. These along with smoked fish were stored in pits dug deep in the ground and lined with grass or bark.

During the cold winter months, utensils and containers were carved, hunting, trapping and fishing gear were repaired, baskets and pottery were created, and clothing was fashioned and decorated with colorfully dyed porcupine quills, shells and other gifts from nature.

Winter was also the time of teaching. Storytellers told the children how life came to be, how the earth was created, why the leaves turn red, and so on. Historians also related the story of the people: how they learned to sing, the story of their

drums and rattles, what the stars could teach them. Children learned the ways of the Mohicans, their extended family: how to relate to each person, as well as to all the gifts of the Creator, and how to live with respect and peace in their community. They also learned that they had responsibilities, so they began to learn skills.

In early spring, the people set up camp in the Sugar Bush. Tapping the trees, gathering the sap and boiling it to make maple syrup and sugar was a ceremony welcoming spring. There were many ceremonies during the year whenever something needed special “paying attention to,” such as the planting of the first seeds — the corn, beans and squash — and the time of harvest.

The Munsee, part of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware people, settled near the headwaters of the Delaware River just west of the Mohicans. Their lifestyles and languages were similar to those of the Mohicans.



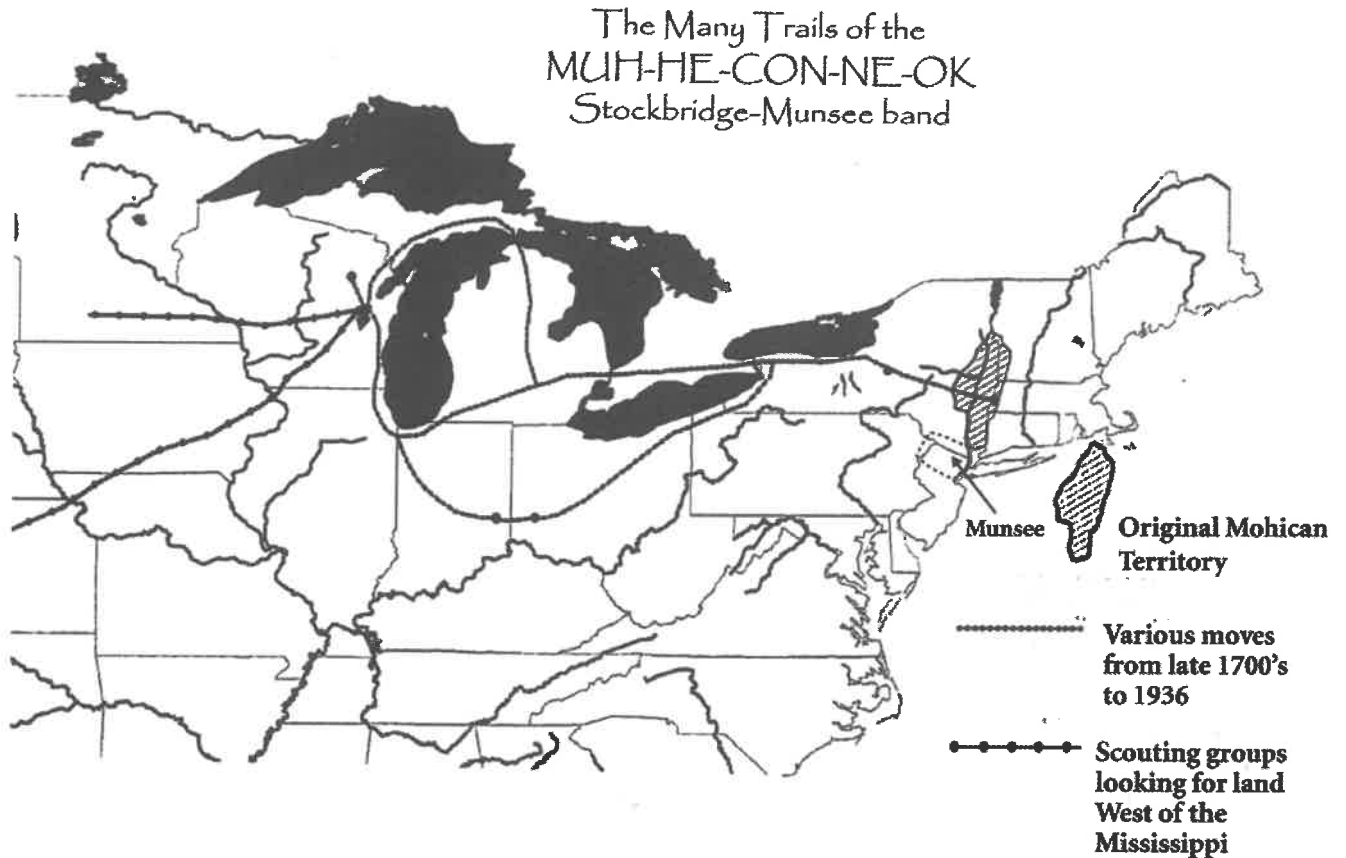


STUDENT RESOURCE SHEET #2.2
THE MANY TRAILS OF THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

UNIT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS

PART 2 BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

The Mohican lands extended from what is now Lake Champlain south nearly to Manhattan Island and on both sides of the Mahicannituck (Hudson River), west to Schoharie Creek and east into Massachusetts, Vermont and Connecticut.



From *A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MOHICAN NATION, STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE BAND*
by Dorothy W. Davids, Mohican Elder (Stockbridge-Munsee Historical Committee, 2004)
pp. 2 & 5





ACTIVITY #2.Z TRADITIONAL MOHICAN VALUES

UNIT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS

PART 2 BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

Focus Exploring traditional Mohican values
Materials Book, *MAMA'S LITTLE ONE*, student History/Social Studies notebooks
Level Grades 4 and 5

Framing

The book we will read describes some traditional Mohican values. A value is something that someone believes is important. In this sense, it is a behavior, or a way of acting toward yourself, others and the world. See if you can pick them out.

Suggested Procedure

1. Read the book, *MAMA'S LITTLE ONE*, either as a whole class, or in small groups.
2. After reading it all the way through, see if students can remember some of the values.
3. Write them on the board and have students copy them into their notebooks.
4. Read the book again, stopping after each page to identify values.
5. Discuss what each value is, and how it is acted out in the story.

Facilitation Notes

MAMA'S LITTLE ONE, by Kristina Heath, is a beautiful children's book about traditional Mohican values. Its text was adapted from a narrative by Hendrick Aupaumut. Some possible extensions from this work would be to choose a personal value and illustrate an example of living out that value.

Sample Processing Questions

- How did Little One learn about the values of his people?
- What were some of the lessons he learned?
- Why do you think it was important for the people in his community to learn these values?

Recommended Follow-up

After the completion of this activity, students could read the book to younger students, such as those in Kindergarten or first grade, and discuss Mohican values with them afterwards. To make sure that the students can lead a discussion with younger children, have them practice on each other and have those role playing the younger ones ask the kinds of questions small children might ask, like "Are there any Indians alive today?" "Do they live in tipis?" "What do Indians eat?" "What do they wear?" and so on. Your students could take Student Resource Sheets 1.A–1.H to show the class how Native People look and think today. Be sure to rehearse this presentation until all feel comfortable doing it.

Finally, those participating could have a discussion with the rest of the class as a follow-up to their work with younger children.





ACTIVITY #2.Y SOCIAL COMMITMENT

UNIT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS

PART 2 BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

Focus Practice the concept of living values
Materials Flip chart paper and markers
Level Grades 4 and 5

Framing

The Mohican People have always had values that were important to them and that they still try to live by today. They agree to try and act in a certain way with each other. This is sometimes called a social commitment because we agree (commit) to be together (social) in an agreed-upon way. We can create a social commitment for our class, so that we can agree to live and work together in a way that will help everyone learn.

Suggested Procedure

Task To create a boundary of hands, and fill in the middle with depictions (using words or pictures) of what is important to create a safe and respectful place.

1. Break the class into groups of 4-6.
2. Review the list of traditional Mohican values to help students think about what is important to them.
3. Brainstorm a list of words or phrases that describe how you want to be treated and how you want to treat each other, in order to make your class a safe and respectful place to be.
4. From this list, choose 10 that are most important to you as a class.
5. Make sure that everyone understands what each of the words means. For example, if someone says "cooperation," define it, so that everyone agrees what cooperation means for your group.
6. Take your large piece of paper and have everyone trace their hands around the edge (feel free to decorate your traced hands).
7. Give each group 2-3 words to write in the middle of the sheet.
8. Read the 10 words out loud and decide if you can agree to live by these ideas while in this class.

Facilitation Notes

The traditional Mohican values and *MAMA'S LITTLE ONE* remind us that living in community takes work, as well as agreement on norms and values. One thing to remember is that these are not rules but agreements. Rules are generally created to stop a certain behaviors (for example, no hitting, keeping your hands to yourself). A social commitment is created to encourage certain behaviors (for example, be respectful, help others). Creating a social commitment together can be used to remind those in the class about how they want to be together. So, at the end of class, have each group hang their poster of commitment on the wall.

Sample Processing Questions

- Why are these values important to you? Why are they important to us as a class/community?





UNIT
PART 2

THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS
ACTIVITY #2.Y: SOCIAL COMMITMENT, p. 2

- What can each of us do to try and live by these values? What is our responsibility?
- In *MAMA'S LITTLE ONE*, the young person was taught and reminded of the values in a respectful way. When someone forgets one of the values in our social commitment, how can we remind him or her in a respectful way?





TEACHER RESOURCE SHEET #2.1
TRADITIONAL MOHICAN VALUES

UNIT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS

PART 2 BACKGROUND: THE MUH-HE-CON-NE-OK

In Section II entitled "Indian History" of her book *STOCKBRIDGE PAST AND PRESENT*, Electa Jones includes the narrative of Mohican History said to have been written "doubtless by Captain Hendrick Aupaumut" but based on the collective recollections of traditional historians of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok down through the ages. In this History, education of the children began early in their lives and early each day, as Aupaumut details it. Here are some excerpts from the History:

"The Head of each family — man or woman — would begin with all tenderness as soon as daylight, to waken up their children and teach them, as follows: --

"My Children — you must remember that it is by the goodness of the Great, Good Spirit we are preserved through the night. My Children, you must listen to my words. If you wish to see many good days and evenings you must love all men, and be kind to all people.

"If you see any that are in distress, you must try to help them. . . . If you see anyone hungry you must give him something to eat; . . . If you see anyone naked, you must cover him with your own raiment. . . .

"My little Children, if you see aged man or woman on your way doing something, you must pity on them, and help them instantly. . . . And you must always listen to the instruction of old folks: thereby you will be wise. . . . And if you find any that will speak evil against you, you must not speak evil words back. . . . But live in peace with all people: thereby you will please the Great, Good Spirit, and you will be happy.

"My little Children — you must be very kind to strangers. If you see stranger or strangers come by the side of your fire-place, you must salute them, and take them by the hand, and be friendly to them; because you will be a stranger some time or other. . . .

"My Children — again listen. You must be honest in all your ways. You must always speak nothing but the truth wherever you are. . . .

"My Children — you must never steal anything from your fellow men, . . . if you allow yourself to steal, you will hurt your name, and disgrace your parents and all relations; and you will be despised by all good people.

"My Children — you must always avoid bad company. And above all, you must never commit murder, because you wish to see long life. . . .

"My Children — you must be very industrious. You must always get up early morning to put on your clothes, muk-sens, and tie your belt about you, that you may be ready to do something; by so doing you will always have something to eat and to put on. But if you will be lazy, you will be always poor. . . .

"My Children — you must always obey your Sachem and Chiefs, in all good counsels they give; never to speak evil against them, for they have taken much pains in promoting your happiness. . . ."

"Thus they inculcate instruction to their children day after day until they are





UNIT THE MOHICAN PEOPLE, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LANDS
PART 2 TEACHER RESOURCE SHEET #2.1: TRADITIONAL MOHICAN VALUES, p. 2

grown up; and after they are grown, yet they would teach them occasionally. And when young people have children they also teach theirs in like manner.— This custom is handed down from generation to another; at the same time it may be observed that there were some that did not take no pains to instruct their children, but would set bad examples before them, as well as there are such among civilized nations." . . . (Excerpted as written from Jones, pp. 18-20).

