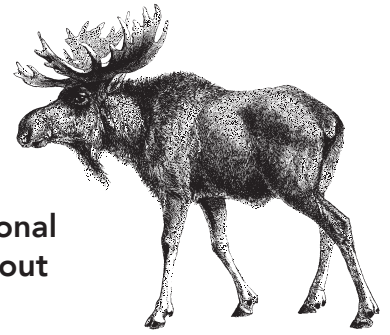


character curriculum

HOMESCHOOL WORKSHEETS



This plan is designed for students to develop positive values through the study of nature and favorable character traits. It can be modified to reach any K12 readiness level or learning modality. ESL learners are encouraged to draw from experiences in their personal backgrounds. K12 integrated character-building curriculum takes about one week, but it can easily be expanded to last two weeks or more.

INTRODUCTION

NATURE GUIDES

1. BACKGROUND

Read or summarize 'Yurees, totems, ancestors, & Nature Guides' to students.

2. INTRODUCTION TO ADVICE

Show examples to students from Your True Nature Bookmarks. (See page 2–3) Ask students to Think, Pair, Share what traits they noticed from each poem then brainstorm additional positive traits and facts they know about each example.

YUREES, TOTEMS, ANCESTORS, & NATURE GUIDES

Learning from nature is ancient wisdom. A totem is any being that watches over or assists a person or group of people. The concept is not limited to Native American culture, and can be found in cultures around the world, including Africa, Australia, and China. In fact, it is believed that totems originated in China.

The ancient Chinese held a belief system that embodied a great reverence for nature. Each life form exemplifies positive characteristics. Ancient Chinese clans adopted animals, plants, and/or certain natural objects for individual clan identification and emulation. It was believed that families originated, (had a blood connection), to their totems. Totems explain and record family origins, history, heritage, and customs. Clan members identified with their totems and endeavored to follow those positive attributes in their daily lives. Totems were not worshipped; instead they were revered.

In the Aboriginal culture, Yurees, (nature guides), are assigned to each Aboriginal person at significant passages in Aboriginal life. Yurees represent indigenous

animals, plants, and places, (Morrill). Once assigned a species, the individual becomes responsible for both the species and its environment. As caretakers, individuals become aware that their own well-being is inextricably linked with the well-being of their totemic species, as well as the overall well-being of the country (Bird Rose). Throughout a lifetime, Aboriginal individuals accumulate a number of different totems. Eventually within an Aboriginal community, all knowledge of flora and fauna is understood. In this way guardianship of the Aboriginal environment is ensured, (Ross).

In Native American culture, an animal totem can be the symbol of a tribe, clan, family, or individual. Totems accompany each person through life, acting as guides. Different animal guides come in and out of an individual's life, depending on need, direction, and growth.

Though individuals may identify with different animal guides at different times in their lives, one totem animal acts as the main spiritual guardian. This totem animal is with one for life, both in the physical and spiritual world. To receive guidance, one visualizes the totem, its place in the environment, and how it would react in a particular situation. A connection is shared with this one animal, either through interest in the animal and its characteristics, through dreams, or other interactions.

Choosing nature guides and making decisions through their inspiration teach students to use nature to learn. It builds respect and responsibility for the natural world. To choose a guide, the student becomes introspective, imagining positive characteristics that can be learned from nature. The chosen nature guide can have qualities an individual identifies with or would like to embody. The student can also choose a guide from appearance, special abilities, or the environment, just as ancient and aboriginal peoples have done for centuries.

The experience of creating a nature guide nurtures students' artistic expression and imagination, while fostering inquiry skills. A display of nature guides acts as a reminder to quiet the mind, make sound decisions, and acknowledge self-confidence. In classroom settings, student guides can be combined to show community diversity, enabling students to discuss relationships in both natural and human communities.



INTRODUCTION
ADVICE EXAMPLES

Advice
from a
BEAR



- Live Large
- Climb Beyond Your Limitations
- When Life Gets Hairly, Grin and Bear It
- Eat Well
- Live with the Seasons
- Take a Good, Long Nap
- Look After Your Honey!

Your True Nature

Advice
from a
BEAVER



- Keep Busy
- Be Constructive
- Chew Your Food Well
- Work Together
- Be Eager
- Build on Your Dreams
- Don't be a Stick in the Mud!

Your True Nature

Advice
from a
BLUEBIRD



- Rise Early
- Spread a Little Happiness
- Keep a Song in Your Heart
- Think Spring
- Be Colorful
- Feather Your Nest with Friends
- The Sky's the Limit!

Your True Nature

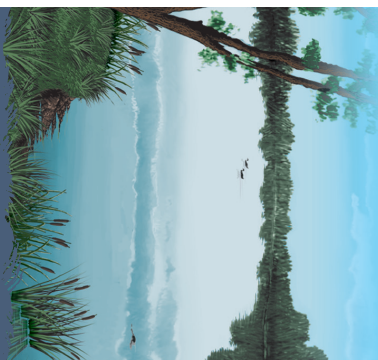
Advice
from a
FROG



- Make a Splash
- Look Before You Leap
- Don't Jump to Conclusions
- Enjoy a Good Swim
- Stretch Your Legs Often
- Spend Time at Your Pad
- Hop to it!

Your True Nature

Advice
from a
LAKE



- Be Clear
- Make Positive Ripples
- Look Beneath the Surface
- Stay Calm
- Shore Up Friendships
- Take Time to Reflect
- Be Full of Life!

Your True Nature

INTRODUCTION

GUIDE TO NATURE'S ATTRIBUTES

Attributes from Animals

Bat	sensitivity, adaptability
Bear	strength, largeness
Beaver	busy, constructive, collaborative
Bighorn Sheep	climbing abilities, headstrong
Bison	freedom, abundance
Butterfly	creativity, beauty, change
Cardinal	colorfulness, extroversion
Cat	stealth, intelligence, friskiness
Deer	gentleness, carefulness
Dog	loyalty, cheerfulness
Dolphin	curious, playfulness
Dragonfly	appreciativeness, imagination, movement
Eagle	protectiveness, hopefulness, vision
Elk	vocalness, noticeability
Firefly	brightness, delight
Fox	inquisitive, quickness
Frog	adaptability, timeliness
Giraffe	pride, gracefulness
Great Blue Heron	patience, keen lookout
Hawk	soaring, expansiveness
Honey Bee	collecting, essence, homing instinct
Horse	power, helpfulness, free spirit
Hummingbird	delicacy, nimbleness
Ladybug	usefulness, efficiency
Lizard	stillness, relaxed
Loon	solitude, tranquility
Moose	earthiness, balance, wildness
Mountain Goat	climbing abilities, family care
Otter	activity, confidence
Owl	wisdom, trust
Penguin	sharing, devotedness
Polar Bear	forcefulness, resilience
Rabbit	abundance, healthy

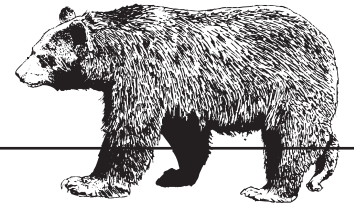
Raccoon	opportunism, flexibility
Sea Turtle	steadiness, grace, navigation
Squirrel	organization, busyness
Trout	submerged, hungry
Whale	rhythm, compassion
Wolf	leadership, mentoring, instincts

Attributes from Plants & Geological Features

Cactus	sharp, patient, conserving
Campfire	radiant, warm
Canyon	deep, enduring
Cave	deep, surprising
Earth	positive, diverse
Garden	cultivated, colorful
Geyser	faithful, inner strength
Glacier	slow, strong, moving forward
Lake	reflective, calm
Moon	illuminating, full
Mountain	patient, uplifting
Night Sky	unafraid, expansive, wonder
Ocean	rhythm, relaxed, free
Prairie	sunny, natural
Rainbow	colorful, inspirational
River	flowing, current
Snowman	jolly, well-rounded
Snowflake	sparkling, cool
Sun	brilliant, energetic
Tree	growing, rooted
Volcano	active, inner fire
Waterfall	splashy, musical
Wetland	calm, reflective
Wildflower	colorful, generous
Woodland	diverse, rooted

character curriculum

INSTRUCTIONS



PART ONE | SCIENCE

DISCOVER

1. PRE-NATURE WALK WORKSHEET

Focus students to find totem inspiration before the nature walk. Have students complete the 'Nature Walk Focus Questions' worksheet. For very young students, ask them to draw pictures on the back and label them with letters of any sounds they hear. Choose as many focusing questions as is appropriate for your group.

2. NATURE WALK

Remind them that animals must have sharp senses to survive in nature and that students should practice quiet, receptive behavior, so they will be successful at seeing and experiencing wildlife. Periodically stop and ask them to record on their 'Nature Walk Observations' worksheet.

3. PICKING NATURE GUIDES

Students will choose a personal nature guide, and will list of admirable characteristics, behaviors, abilities, and environmental connections. Have them discuss the inspirational significance with their families and/or friends, and add to their attribute lists.

PART TWO | VISUAL ARTS

CREATE

1. MAKING YOUR GUIDE

Provide a variety of art and construction materials for students to create their nature guides. For 3D, use play dough, salt clay, modeling clay, ceramic clay, paper mache, or recycled found objects. **OR** For 2D, draw a large outline of their subject on large white paper or card stock. Add color with paint or crayons. Stress to students that there are many solutions and to express themselves.

2. MAKING YOUR GUIDES ENVIRONMENT

Have students design and create an environment appropriate for their guides with paint, crayons, markers, etc. on a separate piece of paper.

3. COMBINE & COMPLETE!

When sculptures are finished, attach to dry backgrounds environments.

PART THREE | WRITING

DESCRIBE

1. WRITE ABOUT YOUR GUIDE

Using their field notebooks and completed sculptures for inspiration, students are ready to write about their chosen nature guide. Have students complete the essay format questions on the worksheet, 'Describe Your Nature Guide'. Model how to brainstorm and organize ideas from the field notebook and the completed sculpture. For the youngest writers, use a 'draw-and-write' process.

PART FOUR | HUMANITIES & HEALTH

PRESENT

1. PRESENT YOUR GUIDE

Have students use their writing pieces and sculptures to explicitly connect good decision-making to their nature guides' positive qualities and characteristics. Have them use creativity to develop presentations to showcase the lessons learned through their nature guide exploration. (See page for presentation idea formats)

2. SELF-REFLECTION

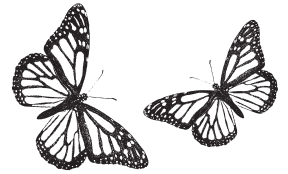
Answer the questions from the 'Nature Guide Self-Reflection' worksheet.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?! Explore nature guides further with the additional activities (on page 9).

NATURE WALK FOCUS QUESTIONS

Name _____



Answer before your nature walk:

1. In nature, what are you attracted to or interested in? Explain why.

2. Name something in nature that you admired in a TV show or movie. Include both the natural feature and the show in your answer.

3. When you go outside, what do you hope to see?

4. Do you ever dream about nature? What do you dream about?

5. Name an animal or plant you have made friends with or wish to make friends with?

6. What in nature frightens you?

7. What traits do you admire in a certain animal, plant, natural phenomena, or geological feature?

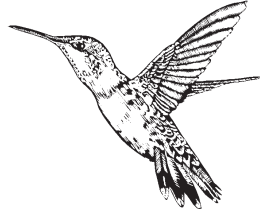
8. What natural traits are similar to yourself?



USE THE BACK TO DRAW PICTURES IF NEEDED

NATURE WALK OBSERVATIONS

Name _____



Date _____

Weather _____

Temperature _____

Five Senses

Sounds

Sights

Tastes

Smells

Touch

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Animal Type

Behavior

Habitat

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Plant Type

Description

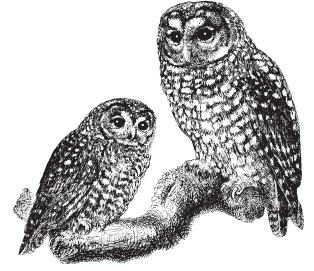
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



USE THE BACK TO DRAW PICTURES IF NEEDED

DESCRIBE YOUR NATURE GUIDE

Name _____



1. What does your nature guide embody and how does it make you feel?

2. Describe your nature guide's appearance, special abilities, habitat and other important details.

3. What did you learn from nature and your chosen subject?



USE THE BACK TO DRAW PICTURES IF NEEDED

NATURE GUIDE SELF-REFLECTION

Name _____

Answer before your nature walk:

1. What did you learn from your nature guide? Discuss insights you hadn't considered before this unit.

2. Where did you get your ideas? Be specific about the sources of your ideas.

3. Based on your nature guide, what advice would you recommend to others after this course of study?

4. After this course of study, generalize ways nature can inspire you.

7. Did you use humor in any of your presentation pieces? (puns, play on words, quips, etc.) Explain how you used humor. If you didn't use humor, discuss how you could add humor to one or more of your presentation pieces, (artwork, writing, display, presentation).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

EXPLORE MORE!

INTEGRATED

Display nature guide sculptures and use to aid in conflict resolution and as a reminder of ideas and values.

MUSIC & DANCE

Students put together a musical composition/dance which teaches the audience to care for their environment.

VISUAL ARTS & MUSIC

In Africa cultures, nature guides are represented by masks. The spirit of the mask can be a deity, ancestor, mythological being, or animal spirit. Believers accept that totem spirits have power over humanity. Masks are believed to be the dwelling place of the spirit they represent. The mask may be honored with ceremonies and gifts. Study different African style masks. Note design elements found in different masks. Create a nature guide mask and develop a dance inspired its meaning. Create simple instruments to complement the dance.

VISUAL ARTS & HUMANITIES

In China, a nature guide is a symbol of a one's ancestors. Learn about your family history from talking with elders, reading old letters, newspaper clipping, and looking at albums. Create a family nature guide in the style of a Chinese scroll, using watercolor washes to color shapes and India ink to create lines. Lines should be descriptive, flowing, and calligraphic.

HUMANITIES

Compare and contrast Northwest Coast Native American and Chinese totem artwork."

Your True Nature Character Education Curriculum is based on its popular Advice from Nature products. The company uses a portion of its profits to plant trees, fund environmental organizations, and support teachers with free curriculum and materials.

Advice from Nature is about listening to nature to discover life lessons and sharing one's best gifts. It all started with Advice from a Tree, then Advice from a River, Mountain, Garden, and Hummingbird. It has grown to include advice from over 85 different sources from Nature.

As the company received comments from teachers across North America describing how they were using Advice in their classrooms and their students' wonderful responses, Your True Nature launched its Educational Program of providing online curriculum and providing free bookmarks and posters to those requesting teaching materials.

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