

Lesson 1.4

MAPPING IN WORDS

Objective: Students will create maps with descriptive place names in order to understand the personal relationship Wabanaki peoples had with their environment.

Materials:

- Paper, colored pens and pencils
- Rulers
- A model map of your town or community that can be projected

Timing: One to two class periods

Background Reading: Chapter One, Section Four

Procedure:

1. Discuss the way Wabanaki place names often represent the characteristics of a piece of land or water, while English or French place names often represent names of people who discovered a certain piece of land.

2. Project a map of your town or community by using an overhead or a computer projector. Discuss some of the place names on the map. Which are English or French? Which are Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac, Maliseet, or Abenaki? What do the names mean?

*Note: For clarification on the sources of place names, see *Maine Place Names and the Peopling of its Towns*, by Ava Chadbourne, or one of the other books listed on the "Other Resources" page for this chapter.

3. Ask students to make a list of some of their favorite places, or the places they know best in the area. Then, have students think of new titles for those places that describe the characteristics of the place, or tell something about the way the student relates to the place. They may choose places that they do not know the names of, if they like. For example, they might rename a bridge over a falls the "way over the rushing water."

4. Have students choose one of the places they've renamed and create their own map of it. Encourage them to make their maps as close to scale and as artistic as possible. They should title their renamed places on the map, and should provide a key at the bottom.

5. When they are finished, have students trade maps with a friend. Have them try to figure out what the real place names are and their location, based on the information provided by the map.

6. After students have traded maps, come back together for a group discussion. Ask questions similar to the following:

- What do you notice about describing a place based on its characteristics, versus referring to it by name?
- Was it hard to make up descriptive place names? Easy? Why?
- What do such place names say about a person's relationship to the place they are describing?
- What happens if you describe something poorly?

Evaluation: Assess students based on creativity, the artistic quality of their map, the accuracy of descriptive place names, and completeness. Students may choose to include their maps in their final unit portfolio.

Follow-up activities:

- Have students create directions for a route to follow around the school, based only on descriptive place names they create. Pair students up and have them follow each other's directions based on the descriptive phrases.
- Have students research the names of their town or city and the towns or cities that surround them. They should find the source of the name and its meaning. Create a class book of place names and their meanings in the nearby community.