

The Birchbark House Internet Activity

Based on the novel The Birchbark House by Louise Erdrich
<http://homepage.mac.com/cohora/ext/birch.html>

Directions: Bookmark the web page. Use the links to go to a site to find the answer. You'll need to do some digging on the sites. Use the Bookmark to return to the hunt's page.

1. The book is written in sections by season. Write an Anishinabeg name for a moon for each season. Select names that match something in the story.

Neebin _____ Dagwaging _____
Biboon _____ Zeegwun _____

2. Nokomis and Omakayas harvest the bark of a birch tree for their new home. Write three facts about how native people have used birch trees.

3. Omakayas finds a treat. Some heartberries are growing next to the path. She thinks of sharing them with her sister. She ends up sharing them with two bear cubs. What is another name for heartberries?

Many creatures enjoy eating the leaves and fruits of the heartberry. Write 3 of them.

4. There are 8 species of bears in the world. Review these bear facts. Which kind of bear do you think Omakayas met?

5. Deydey rewards Omakayas with a gift of the barrel of his old gun. He thinks it will make a good tool for scraping skins. Here are photographs of Anishinabeg / Ojibwe tools. Pick one and write a description of it.

6. Wild rice is an important food for the Anishinabeg. Compare your height to that of the wild rice reeds.

Height of wild rice reeds in feet. (Use the first number) _____

Your height in feet. _____

What is the difference? _____

7. Andeg, the crow, was a friend to Omakayas. In the story he cries, "Gaygo, Pinch!" Do you think the author had Andeg doing things that a crow could really do? Read the facts and decide. Explain. (If you cannot decide based on these facts, use an Internet search engine to find more facts about common crows.)

10. Ms. Erdrich's childhood helped prepare her to write this story. Explain.

In the opening pages of the story grown men abandon a baby with her dead family. Would you do that? Explain why or why not?

Extras:

Write a legend about Omakayas and the bears.

<http://homepage.mac.com/cohora/ext/birchtale.pdf>

Wild rice gathering. Which job would you choose to do?_____

Learn about Pow Wow dances. Which dance would be of special interest to Omakayas?_____

Complete the geography worksheet.

<http://homepage.mac.com/cohora/ext/birchgeo.pdf>

Write a biography of a character

<http://homepage.mac.com/cohora/ext/birchbio.pdf>

Trying new things - Food activity

<http://homepage.mac.com/cohora/ext/birchfood.pdf>

"Never let fear take your mind away. Always think." Deydey