

# Social Studies 4/5 – Intro to Forestry

**Learning Goals:**

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings

**Materials**

Pencil  
Pencil crayons or markers  
Copy of the article (digital or printed)

**Activities**

Read the article and complete the question below

## Forests and First Nations People

Long before the arrival of European settlers, the forest played a very important role in the lives of First Nations people. It supplied them with materials for lodging and transportation and was the habitat for the wildlife they used for food. They even made clothes and baskets for collecting food out of cedar.

All First Nations believed that their values and traditions, as well as all the goods nature provided them, were gifts from the Creator. One of the most important and most common teachings was that people should live in harmony with the natural world and all it contained.

People gave thanks to everything in nature upon which they depended for not only survival, but also development as individuals and as members of their communities. First Nations treated all objects in their environment—whether living or non-living—with the utmost respect.

**Transportation:**

Some First Nations people made canoes using several types of trees. Birch bark was used for the body of the canoe and cedar was often used as the frame. It was sewn together using spruce, pine, or larch roots and waterproofed using pitch from spruce or pine trees.



Birch is not as common on the West coast, so "dugout" canoes were constructed by using cedar trees and digging out the middle.



### **Medicine:**

Many trees were also used in medicine. Leaves and bark of cedar was used to treat coughs, swelling, and burns. Cedar also was used to help prevent scurvy - an illness caused by lack of vitamin C. Spruce gum (made from the sap) was a source of vitamins and minerals.

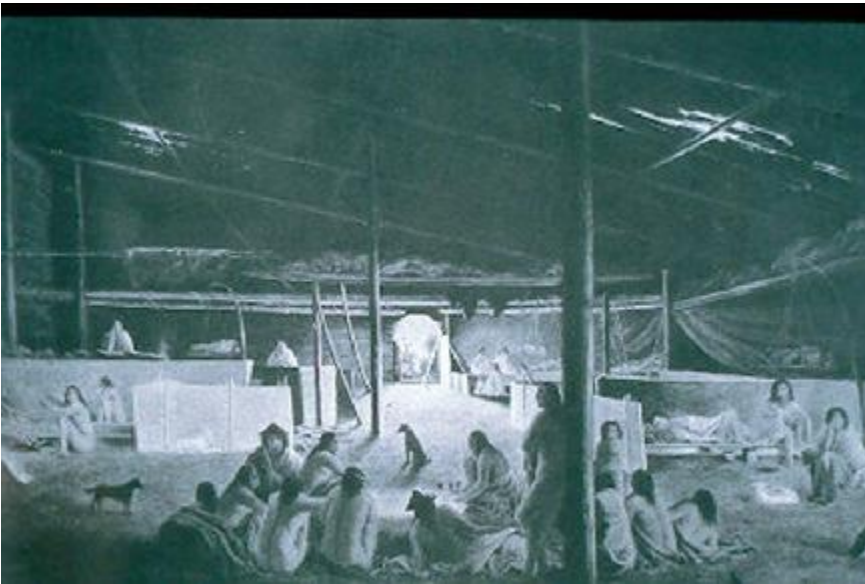
### **Shelter:**

All First Nations people used wood to some degree in constructing their homes.

Some First Nations people followed the migratory patterns of their food source, so their homes had to be packed up and moved with them. For example, Plains First Nations made tipi's of poles that were usually made from long slender pine trees. The average tipi cover consisted of 12 buffalo hides stitched together. To prevent drafts and to provide interior ventilation, an inner wall of skins about two metres high was often fastened to the poles on the inside. The poles were from, you guessed it, trees.



Some massive forests of red cedar along the Pacific Coast allowed the First Nations who lived in this part of the country to build huge homes. One of the largest traditional homes ever recorded from the pre-contact era was in a Coast Salish village. It was 170 metres long and 20 metres wide. Because Pacific Coast houses were so large, they could accommodate several families, each with its own separate living area and hearth.



**Answer the questions below.**

1. Traditionally, how did First Nations people depend on forests?

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2. Can you think of three ways that the introduction of "commercial" (for sale) forestry impacted the traditional First Nations way of life?

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**Extension: Click the link to learn about building a shelter.**

<https://www.ecoparent.ca/eco-parenting/build-outdoor-play-shelter-materials-nature>