

The Tree of Life:



The Cedar Tree

A first look at the First Peoples' respect and use of the Cedar Tree.

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TpT store: Angela's Primary Creations

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Table of Contents...

	Page
Who are the West Coast Peoples?	2
Respecting the Cedar Tree	3
Using the Cedar Tree- Bark	4
Using the Cedar Tree- Wood	5
Check Your Reading	6
Blessing for the Cedar Tree.. . . .	7
Words to Know	8
More to Check Out!	9



Cedar bark



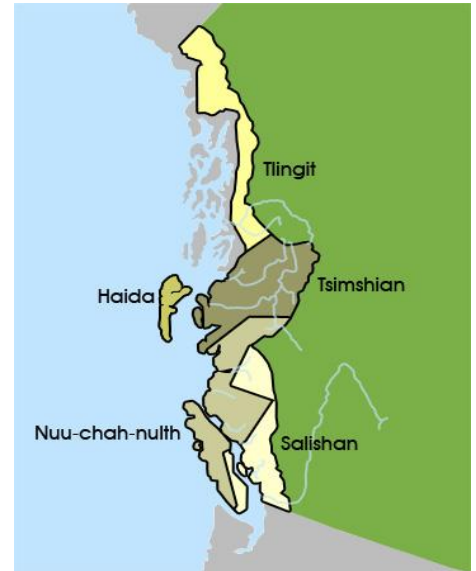
Cedar needles

Who are the West Coast Peoples?

The people who first lived in British Columbia have special names. We call them Aboriginal Peoples.

One group of aboriginal people is the West Coast Peoples.

The West Coast Peoples is made up of five different tribes.



Aboriginal People lived before houses, schools and even before cars and stores.

They lived "off the land", which means they used everything from nature to help them survive.

The West Coast Peoples loved all of nature and one of the most important parts of their life was the tall, tall Cedar (see-der) Tree.

The Cedar Tree was called "The Tree of Life" by the West Coast Peoples because they used the tree in every part of their life for many, many things.



Respecting the Cedar Tree

The West Coast Peoples showed love and respect for every part of nature that they used.

This was also true about the Cedar Tree.

Before a tree was cut down in the forest, the West Coast Peoples would gather around the tree.

They would bless the tree and say thank-you to the tree for giving itself to help the tribe.



Using the Cedar Tree- Bark

The West Coast Peoples used every part of the Cedar tree and each part of the tree was used in a special way.

The bark would be taken off in long strips.

It would be rolled and later pounded until it was soft and ready to weave. The women would make baskets, blankets and clothes.

Cedar clothing was warm and kept the people dry.

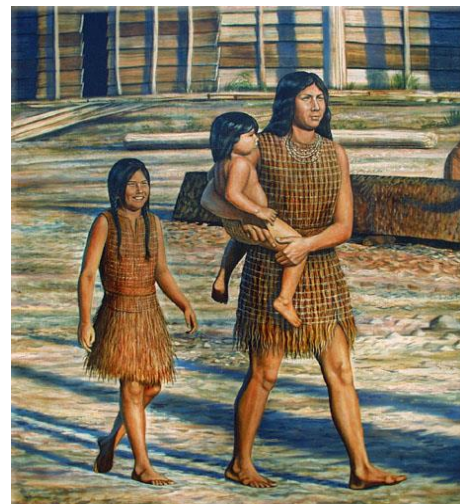


Weaving baskets



Strips of cedar bark.

Cedar skirt.



Cedar clothing for the family.



Using the Cedar Tree- Wood

The wood of the Cedar tree was used for many things.

The wood was used for canoes, also called dug outs.



Men would carve totem poles that would welcome visitors.

Some totem poles would even tell stories.



These totem poles can be found at Stanley Park, Vancouver.

Masks would be worn at special ceremonies.



Moon Mask



Bear Mask.



Raven Mask.



Check Your Reading!

1. What are the Aboriginal People?
2. What tree is called the Tree of Life by the West Coast Peoples?
3. What did the West Coast Peoples do before they cut down a tree?
4. What was Cedar bark used for?
5. What was Cedar Wood used for?
6. What was a totem pole used for?
7. Why is the Cedar tree the "Tree of Life"?



A Blessing for the Cedar Tree



Tree Spirit Prayer

Great Spirit,

Blessings be here today as I come before you Honored One.
You have seen many sunrises and sunsets upon your branches,

Your sacred roots have been quenched by life giving rains.

Honored Tree Spirit, I give thanks to you,

... for the singing birds that you shelter

... for the music you sing in the breeze

... for listening to the voices of the creatures

... for echoing the ancestors strength

Respected One, I ask your permission and humbly request your
presence for my guided purpose as Great Spirit directs.

All things belong to you, Creator, all things are sacred.

So this day I honor you Tree Spirit and humbly Thank You.

... by Mitakuye Oyasin

... from Hanoochi: A Stars Poetry Collection



Words to Know...

Aboriginal - the people originally living in a nation, like Canada.

Bark- The outside of the Cedar Tree. Bark was used to make clothes, hats, baskets and blankets.

Cedar Tree- a tall tree found up and down the West Coast of BC and used by the West Coast Peoples for houses, boats, dishes, clothing and many other things.

"The Tree of Life" - What the Cedar Tree was called by the West Coast Natives because they used the tree in every part of their life for many, many things.

West Coast Peoples- a group of five different First Nations groups living on the west coast of the province British Columbia, Canada.

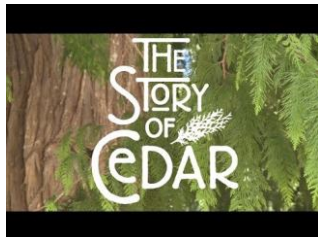
Wood- The inside of the Cedar Tree. Wood was used to make boats, masks, totem poles, and houses.



Be sure to check out!



A great story to read!



Story of Cedar, Sechelt Arts Fest 2015 (29 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlcT9Jx0T7g>



Coast Salish bark stripping, hat making (8 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95rPwCDHOCE>



Information for Teachers

I am a Grade One teacher in South Surrey, BC.

As the BC curriculum is changing, I discovered that aboriginal/ First Peoples information at an early primary level is lacking, so I created this booklet as a support material for a unit I created about Matter for my Grade One students.

It is intended for small group/ guiding reading, or to be enlarged and used with the whole class.

BC Curriculum (2015) Correlation:

<https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/documents.htm#fppol>

Science: Big Idea: Matter is useful because of its properties.

Content: Properties of matter determine their use i.e. cedar for canoes
(concept introduced: Cedar: Tree of Life)

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