

Outdoor Education

Lesson 5 : Grades Gr. 3-6
Indigenous Medicine Plants



Indigenous Medicine Plants : Tobacco

Learning Intentions:

I understand the uses of traditional Indigenous tobacco.

I know the difference between Indigenous ceremonial tobacco and cigarette tobacco.



A Brief History of Indigenous Tobacco

Did you know Indigenous cultures of North America and South America have used tobacco in rituals and ceremonies for thousands of years?



With thanks, this pic is from:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americas_\(terminology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americas_(terminology))



Indigenous people grew tobacco as a crop even before corn or beans were farmed.

With thanks, this pic is from: <https://lfs-iherg.sites.olt.ubc.ca/>

When European adventurers first landed on North and South American soil, they connected with Indigenous peoples who shared their culture and knowledge of the land. Indigenous tobacco was shared in ritual and ceremonial forms.



With thanks, this pic is from:
<https://nbmediacoop.org/2019/03/14/peace-and-friendship-treaties-days-at-unb-an-annual-celebration-with-friends-and-allies/>

This picture shows a 2019 re-enactment ceremony of the Peace and Friendship Treaty between First Peoples of New Brunswick and the Government of 1760. It included a pipe ceremony where Indigenous Tobacco was used.

Europeans began to use tobacco in a different way by inhaling the smoke. To Indigenous people, this was abusing their sacred medicine plant.



With thanks, this pic is from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_smoking

Over time, Europeans cultivated tobacco in the Americas for profit in Europe. Indigenous people grew tobacco for ceremony and ritual. Did the Europeans misunderstand the use and importance of tobacco for Indigenous people?



With thanks, this pic is from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultivation_of_tobacco

Today, Indigenous people use tobacco in rituals and ceremony. European tobacco habits also persist in the form of inhaling tobacco smoke.



With thanks, this pic is from: <https://bcaafc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/BCAAFC-2018-19-Annual-General-Report.pdf>



With thanks, this pic is from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/alyssa-mosher-at-dettah-sacred-pipe-ceremony-1.4032181>

However, Elders teach that inhaling tobacco is disrespectful to the real purpose and use of this traditional medicine plant.

**What are the uses of Indigenous tobacco?
What's the difference between indigenous ceremonial tobacco and regular smoking tobacco?**

This video explains.

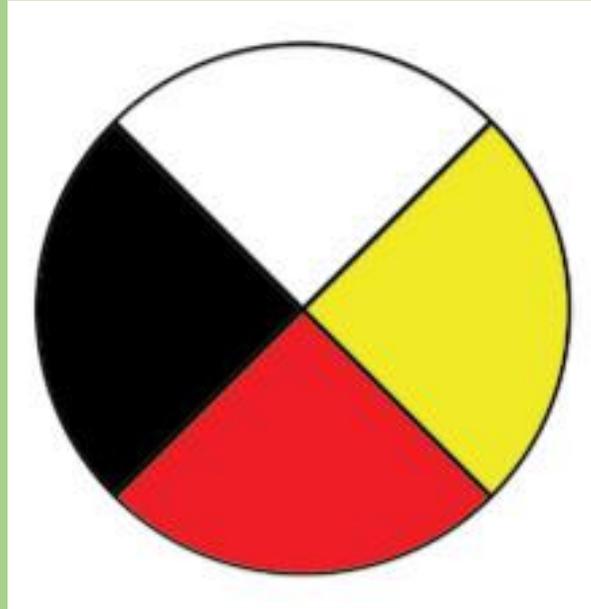
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXFPBD6k73I>



What did you learn from the video?



With thanks, this pic is from:
<https://carleton.ca/indigenous/resources/tobacco-offering-protocol/>



**Tobacco is considered the Chief of Indigenous medicines.
It is used to communicate with the creator and creation, in prayer.**

**Tobacco is used in sweat lodges for a
purification sweat.**



**Tobacco is used in pipe ceremonies where
people smudge by waving tobacco smoke
over themselves with their hands.**



With thanks, this pic comes from: <https://ualbertalaw.typepad.com/faculty/2019/02/tansi-n%C3%A4t%C3%B4temtik-photo-retrieved-from-wwwcbccanewscanadabritish-columbiasweat-lodge-thompson-rivers-13471801-if.html>

Offerings of tobacco are to thank the creator, nature (animals, plants, water, air, fire) and Elders.

Tobacco can be bundled to pass to an Elder as a gift for sharing wisdom, lessons or teachings.



With thanks, this pic comes from: <http://www.sgibnl.ca/mide-wiigwas-tobacco-tobacco-ties/>

Tobacco can be offered to water for thanks to the goodness it brings people.



With thanks, this pic comes from <https://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/reconciliation-can-flow-through-water-workshop-teaches/>

Natural Indigenous tobacco is often mixed with other local healing plants as an offering; among them sage, sweetgrass, cedar and the three plants pictured below.

Yarrow



With thanks, this pic comes from:
<https://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/2017/01/17/yarrow/>

Coltsfoot



With thanks, this pic comes from:
https://www.shutterstock.com/search/%09coltsfoot?page=2§ion=1&search_source=base_related_searches

Red Willow



With thanks, this pic comes from: <https://www.honey-plants.com/calendar/nova-scotia/red-willow/>

This is sacred tobacco, ceremonial tobacco: not tobacco found in cigarettes, smoking tobacco.

Ceremonial Tobacco



With thanks, this pic comes from:
<https://www.leaf2smoke.ca/ceremonial-.html>



Smoking Tobacco



With thanks, this pic comes from:
<https://www.canadianpackaging.com/features/145271/>



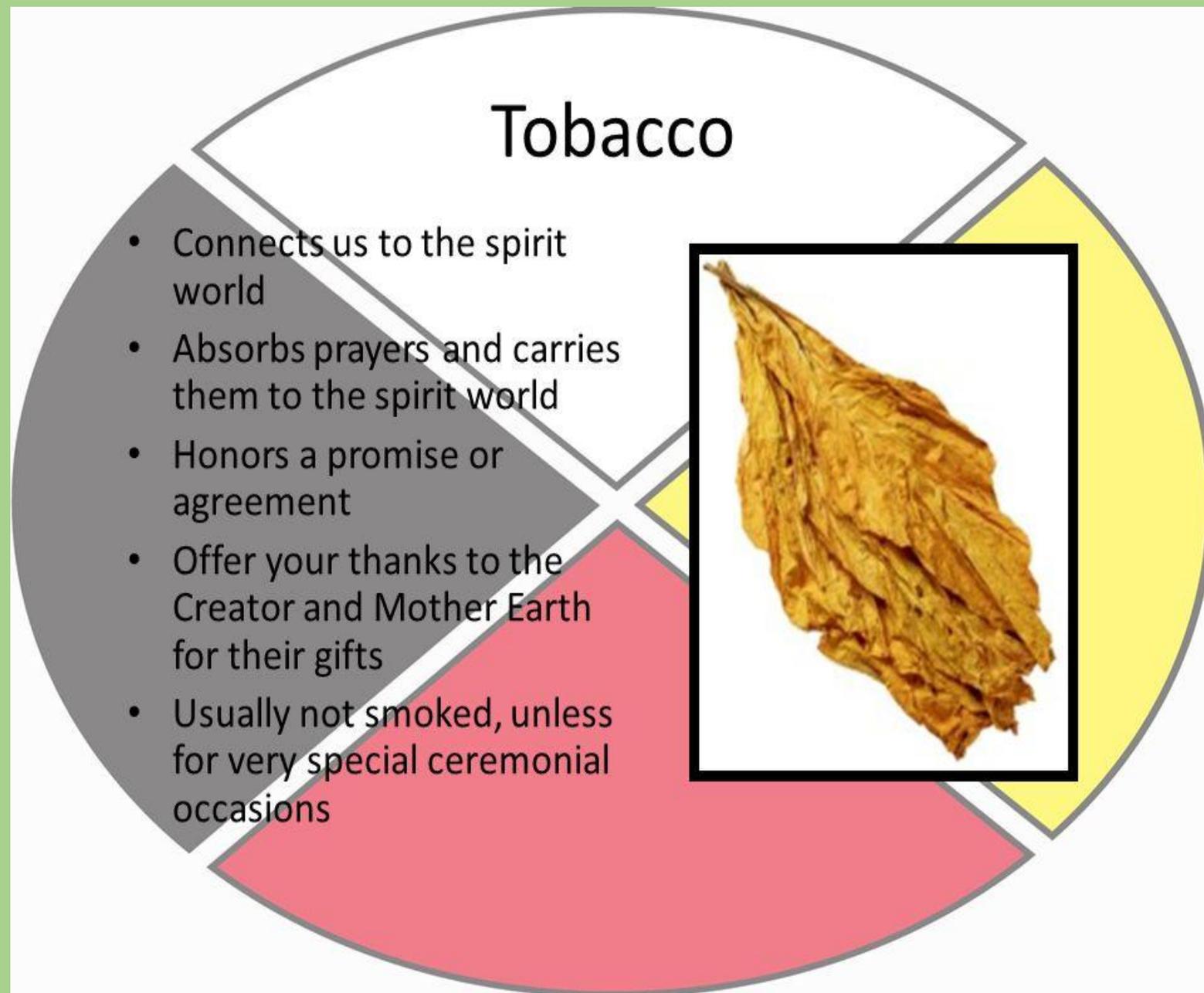
With thanks, this pic comes from:
<https://www.canstockphoto.com/black-pack-of-cigarettes-15434104.html>



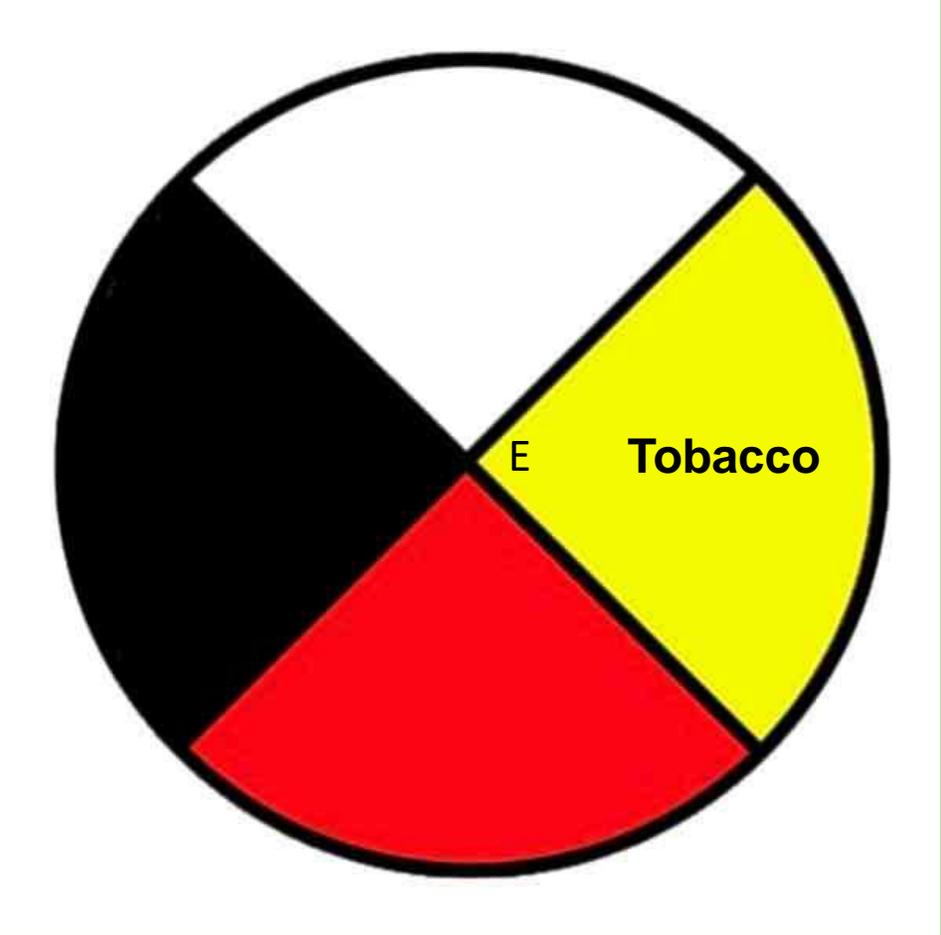
With thanks, this pic comes from:
https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_release/s/2019-08/uos-woi082919.php

Tobacco is the chief medicine in Indigenous culture and traditions.

In these traditions, this medicine has the power to purify one's spirit and to communicate with the spirit world and the Creator.



Now it's your turn. Go for a walk and think about Indigenous culture and the place of the sacred medicine Tobacco. How might you give thanks to Mother Nature or Elders?



**If you have an Elder nearby,
maybe you can ask them to go with you.
Maybe they'll tell you about their experiences
using tobacco medicine.**

Enjoy your walk.



With thanks, this pic is from: <http://legamel.ca/recreation/elders/>



With thanks, this pic is
from: http://digitalsqewlets.ca/sqwelqwel/xwelmexw/sqewlets_families-familles-eng.php