

Winter Virtual Field Trip

Title: *Winter: Using Technology to Manage the Season's Challenges*

Duration: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will learn about how technology was/is used to address the challenges of winter in Connecticut.
- Students will learn about different methods for producing maple syrup and compare two indigenous origin stories about maple syrup.
- Students will consider the importance of food preservation, in the past and in the present.

Materials:

- [YFH Winter Video](#)
- Winter Video Handouts (see below)
- [Native American Food Ways activity sheets](#) (optional extension)

Key Terms:

- **Brine:** A solution of salt and water used for preserving and/or enhancing the flavor of food.
- **Brix:** A measure of the dissolved solids in a liquid. This is commonly used to measure and/or verify the sugar content of maple syrup.
- **Cash crop:** A crop produced to be sold, rather than to be used by the grower.
- **Curing:** A chemical or physical process (such as salting, drying, or smoking) used to preserve food (such as meat, fish, and some vegetables).
- **Fermentation:** The process of using harmless bacteria, yeasts, or other microorganisms to preserve food, as well as to alter its flavor and texture.
- **Native plant:** A plant that has been growing and evolving naturally (without human intervention) in a habitat or region for thousands of years (or longer).
- **Root cellar:** A pit or room dug into a hillside or underground that is used for storing vegetables at a cooler temperature in order to preserve them.
- **Root vegetables:** A vegetable grown for its fleshy enlarged root (such as carrots, turnips, or beets).

- **Spile:** A metal or plastic spout inserted into a sugar maple tree in order to harvest sap.
- **Tap:** To pierce something, such as a tree, in order to draw out liquid, such as sap.

PROCEDURE

Introduction (15 minutes): Invite students to discuss this question with a partner: “What would you need if you were going to go camping in the winter?” After a few minutes, ask students to share their responses and start a list on the board. Point out that their list likely includes some form of shelter (e.g. a tent), items to keep them warm (e.g. coats, blankets, fire), and food to eat (likely in preserved forms like canned or dried).

Explain that safely camping in the winter requires careful planning and preparation. Similarly, people living in this region hundreds of years ago needed to prepare for winter. They did not have the modern conveniences we have today like heated homes and grocery stores. That meant that they had to store up enough food, fuel, and other essentials to survive the harsh winter months.

Pass out *Winter Video Worksheet*. Explain that today the class is going to go back to the Yellow Farmhouse Education Center for another virtual field trip, this one focused on the winter season. As they watch, students should think about these questions:

What examples of technology are mentioned that helped people in the region that we now call Connecticut survive the winter in the past? Are they still used today? What modern technology do we have today to make life easier in the winter?

Virtual Field Trip (25 minutes): [Play video](#). You can play the video in its entirety, or stop and identify examples of technology after each segment.

0:00-5:15 Introduction and High Tunnel/Pack Room visit

5:15- 17:25 Maple Sugaring segment

17:25-16:03 Preserved Foods segment

Abenaki Maple Syrup Origin Story (15 min): Ask for a volunteer to paraphrase the brief version of the Mashantucket Pequot story of how maple syrup was discovered that was shared in the video.

Explain that there are many tribes throughout the north and northeastern parts of what is now the United States and Canada that have made maple syrup since time immemorial and each has their own legend or origin story about it.

As a class, read *Glusakabe Changes Maple Syrup: An Abenaki Legend*. Invite students to discuss how this story compares to the Mashantucket Pequot story. What is similar? What is different?

Closing (5 min): Explain to students that in the next lesson they will learn more about preserved foods and participate in a preserved foods taste test. As preparation, encourage students to look for examples of preserved foods at home, at the grocery store, or in the school cafeteria.

Winter Video Handouts

Technology used to survive CT winters in the past (that is no longer used)	Technology used to survive CT winters in the past (that is still used today)	Technology used to survive CT winters today (that was not available in the past)

Gluskabe Changes Maple Syrup: An Abenaki Legend

Long ago, the Creator made and gave many gifts to man to help him during his life. The Creator made the lives of the Abenaki People very good, with plenty of food to gather, grow, and hunt. The Maple tree at that time was one of these very wonderful and special gifts from the Creator. The sap was as thick and sweet as honey. All you had to do was to break the end off of a branch and the syrup would flow out.

In these days, Gluskabe would go from native village to village to keep an eye on the People for the Creator. One day Gluskabe came to an abandoned village. The village was in disrepair, the fields were overgrown, and the fires had gone cold. He wondered what had happened to the People. He looked around and around, until he heard a strange sound. As he went towards the sound he could tell that it was the sound of many people moaning. The moaning did not sound like people in pain but more like the sound of contentment.

As he got closer he saw a large stand of beautiful maple trees. As he got closer still he saw that all the people were lying on their backs under the trees with the end of a branch broken off and dripping maple syrup into their mouths. The maple syrup had fattened them up so much and made them so lazy that they could barely move. Gluskabe told them to get up and go back to their village to rekindle the fires and to repair the village. But the people did not listen. They told him that they were content to lie there and to enjoy the maple syrup.

When Gluskabe reported this to the Creator, it was decided that it was again time that man needed another lesson to understand the Creator's ways. The Creator instructed Gluskabe to fill the maple trees with water. So Gluskabe made a large bucket from birch bark and went to the river to get water. He added water, and added more water until the sap was that like water. Some say he added a measure of water for each day between moons, or nearly 30 times what it was as thick syrup.

After a while the People began to get up because the sap was no longer so thick and sweet. They asked Gluskabe "where has our sweet drink gone?" He told them that this is the way it will be from now on. Gluskabe told them that if they wanted the syrup again that they would have to work hard to get it. The sap would flow sweet only once a year before the new year of spring. The People were shown that making syrup would take much work. Birch bark buckets would need to be made to collect the sap. Wood would need to be gathered to make fires to boil the water out to make the thick sweet syrup that they once were so fond of. He also told them that they could get the sap for only a short time each year so that they would remember the error of their ways. And so it is still to this day, each spring the Abenaki people remember Gluskabe's lesson in honoring Creator's gifts and work hard to gather the maple syrup they love so much. Nialach!

Source: <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/1ebc3e2b-6eca-4a7e-a94a-1a8b35f2525b/Maple-Sugaring-Among-the-Abenaki.pdf>