

Aboriginal Circle

LET'S PLAY WITH WORDS

Did you know that many of the words you use are Aboriginal?

These include names of places like Toronto, Quebec and Winnipeg, as well as names of trees, animals and fish.



The word sequoia, which refers to a very tall coniferous tree, is of Cherokee origin. Two well-known animals, the chipmunk and the raccoon, owe their name

to the Algonquians; the first means "to go headfirst" and the second means "they rub, scrub, scratch." The word opossum, which refers to a North American carnivorous marsupial, comes from Powhatan.

First Nations often named places after a local animal. Akwesasne, a Mohawk village in Quebec,



is "the land where the partridge drums." Oka, another Mohawk village in Quebec, means "golden fish" in Algonquian, and Lake Erie means "lynx" in the Huron language.

Aboriginal words, especially from the Algonquian, are used for many everyday objects; toboggan means "a drag made of skins," while moccasin means "to keep my feet safe." The words skunk and caribou are also of Algonquian origin, and the word anorak, which means "coat," comes from the Inuit.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

Team sports such as lacrosse and hockey were invented by Aboriginal people! Ice skates were, however, first used in 19th century Halifax by British servicemen who enjoyed playing hockey with the local Mi'kmaq. Today, the National Hockey League has several players of Mohawk descent.

If You Seek...

You Will Find

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