

Exploring Our Heritage

SUNWATCH VILLAGE



Teacher Overview

Native people have lived in Ohio for nearly 12,000 years –thousands of years before Europeans came to the Americas. Over the years, prehistoric and late prehistoric people have left archeological records in the earth that offer clues to the past. When this evidence is pieced together by archeologists and historians, it can begin to tell a story about how these people lived. One such story is currently being told at Sunwatch Village in Dayton, Ohio.

Sunwatch Village is a partially reconstructed Fort Ancient settlement located along the Great Miami River. Descended from the Hopewell culture, the Fort Ancient were late prehistoric-period Native Americans who lived in southern Ohio, northeastern Kentucky, southeastern Indiana, and West Virginia between 1,000-1,650 AD. The Fort Ancient people who lived in Ohio lived in settlements of up to five hundred people which were composed of circular and rectangular houses around an open central area. The arrangement of buildings in conjunction with strategically placed poles marked important dates such as the winter and summer solstice.

Sunwatch Village was originally slated to be an incinerator site until preliminary excavations in the 1960s turned up Fort Ancient Period artifacts. Upon discovering the remains of an entire village, including an elaborate solar calendar, the site underwent excavation. Archeologists, curators, and volunteers began reconstructing the thirteenth century village. The reconstructed village includes five structures with thatch roofs, a native garden and prairie plants, portions of a stockade, and a large scale astronomical calendar made of posts.

In addition to hunting and fishing, the Fort Ancient people were Ohio's first farmers and cultivated corn, beans, and squash in mounded gardens. The ability to produce surplus food allowed these people to remain in permanent village settlements. They used storage pits and pottery vessels to store corn for consumption in the winter months. The archeological evidence suggests that Sunwatch Village was continuously inhabited for at least twenty years. When the resources surrounding the village were depleted, the settlements would move, usually every one or two generations.

There is also evidence that the Fort Ancient people built burial mounds for their dead, and that they may have been the culture who produced large earthworks like Serpent Mound in Adams County, Ohio. Both the fate of the Fort Ancient people and their descendents are unknown. Some speculate that they perished due to disease or war – others believe they were the ancestors of the Shawnee. Despite the uncertainty of their fate, their legacy of farming was continued by the later native peoples of Ohio.

Video Synopsis

In this heritage segment of *Our Ohio*, the hosts visit Sunwatch Village to learn about the lives of Ohio's earliest farmers, the Fort Ancient people.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the Fort Ancient people at Sunwatch Village, including their farming practice, village life, and artifacts. Students will also learn about the history of agriculture and compare the farming practice of Ohio's first farmers with that of Ohio's farmers today.



Ohio Academic Content Standards

Grade

4

Benchmark: History

2. Settlement: Describe the earliest settlements in Ohio including those of prehistoric peoples.

Benchmark: People in Societies

1. Cultures: Describe the cultural practices and products of various groups who have settled in Ohio over time:
 - a. The Paleo Indians, Archaic Indians, Woodland Indians (Adena and Hopewell) and Late Prehistoric Indians (Fort Ancient)

Benchmark: Social Studies Skills and Methods

1. Obtaining Information: Obtain information about state issues from a variety of print and electronic sources, and determine the relevance of information to a research topic:
 - e. Multimedia/Electronic Sources
3. Use primary and secondary sources to answer questions about Ohio history.
4. Describe how archeologists and historians study and interpret the past.
8. Formulate a question to focus research.
9. Communicate relevant information in a written report including acknowledgement of sources.

Grade

5

Benchmark: History

2. Settlement: Explain how American Indians settled the continent and why different nations of Indians interacted with their environment in different ways.

Benchmark: People in Societies

1. Cultures: Compare the cultural practices and products of diverse groups in North America including:
 - a. Artistic Expressions
 - d. Food
 - f. Shelter

Benchmark: Economics

2. Scarcity and Resource Allocation: Explain that individuals in all economies must answer fundamental economic questions of what to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce.

Benchmark: Social Studies Skills and Methods

1. Obtaining Information: Obtain information from a variety of print and electronic sources and analyze its reliability including:
 - a. Accuracy of facts;
 - b. Credentials of the source.
2. Locate information in a variety of sources using key words, related articles and cross references.
6. Thinking and Organizing: Draw inferences from relevant information.
7. Organize key ideas by taking notes that paraphrase or summarize.

Materials

- ☐ Computer lab/ Internet access
- ☐ Library or media center
- ☐ Colored pencils

Teacher Vocabulary

prehistoric tractor
nomadic agriculture
combine silo
late prehistoric

Procedure

ACTIVITY A: The Fort Ancient People – Test Your Knowledge

1. Start by asking students if Native Americans lived in Ohio, and who they were. Write students' answers on the board. Explain to students that a number of Native American tribes lived and flourished in Ohio before removal by whites between 1800 and 1840. Native peoples such as the Ottawa, Erie, Wyandotte, Delaware, Mingo, Seneca, Miami, and Shawnee, all lived in Ohio at one time.
2. Next explain to the students that before these tribes lived in Ohio, prehistoric Native Americans lived here as well. These people include the Adena, Hopewell, and Fort Ancient peoples.
3. Pass out **Worksheet A**. Explain to students that Native American cultures are diverse and unique in their own way, and that today they will be learning more about the Fort Ancient people. Direct students to fill out the "Facts You Know" column on the worksheet. Explain that for now, they will leave the other columns blank. For each row in the column, students will write down their pre-knowledge of how Native Americans in Ohio lived. Guide them to think about what types of houses they lived in; what kind of food they ate; did they grow food or hunt?
4. Now, show the *Our Ohio* segment "Sunwatch Village." As students watch the video segment, they will write down facts in the "Fort Ancient People Facts" column of **Worksheet A**. Students should also take notes regarding farming practice for use with **Activity D**.
5. Once students have viewed the video and filled out the "Fort Ancient People Facts" column, they will compare their answers in their completed columns and compare what they learned with what they already knew, and write their answers in the "**What's the Difference?**" column. For example, students will likely offer a tipi, like those of the Plains Indians, as an example of a dwelling. If so, their answer should state that they thought Native Americans lived in tipis, but learned that some, like the people at Sunwatch Village, lived in structures made of wood and thatch.

ACTIVITY B: The Fort Ancient People – A Closer Look

1. Now that students have tested their assumptions about Native Americans, they can take a closer look at the culture which inhabited the Sunwatch Village site.
2. Divide students into groups of three to four and pass out **Worksheet B**. Students will work in groups to research the topics pertaining to the Fort Ancient people in the fact finder. Like archeologists, students will identify artifacts and objects, perform research, and produce thumbnail sketches of each artifact. Students should work in the library and have access to the Internet to complete their research. Each group will present their findings to the class.

Procedure

ACTIVITY C: The History of Corn

1. Explain to students that corn was very important to the Fort Ancient people. Because they were able to produce large yields, as well as dry and preserve corn for consumption in the winter months, the Fort Ancient people were able to develop permanent communities.
2. Ask students if they ever thought about where corn came from, or considered the fact that corn has its own history.
3. Now, divide students into groups of three to four students and pass out **Worksheet C**. Students will use the worksheet to research the history of corn, how corn came under cultivation in North America by the native peoples, and the importance of corn to Native American life as shown by its prevalence in myth and legend. Students should spend a class period looking for information in the library and on the Internet to answer the questions in the worksheet.

ACTIVITY D: Ohio's First Farmers

1. Ask students if they have ever been to a farm, or have relatives that live on farms that they have visited. Ask what the farms were like. How do Ohio farmers cultivate crops today?
2. Reiterate that, as the video pointed out, the Fort Ancient people were Ohio's first farmers. They planted "Three Sisters Gardens," a combination of corn, beans, and squash. These plants complemented each other, a practice known as companion planting. The squash served to keep weeds at bay, while the beans provided nutrients such as nitrogen to the soil. The corn in turn offered long stalks for the squash to climb.
3. Pass out **Worksheet D** and have students compare and contrast farming techniques between the Fort Ancient people at Sunwatch Village and Ohio's farmers today. Students should refer to their notes to help answer the questions.



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Answer Key

WORKSHEET A: The Fort Ancient People – Test Your Knowledge

Fort Ancient People Facts:

1. **Types of houses:** wood/thatch constructed permanent homes
2. **Food:** hunted, fished, and farmed corn, beans, and squash
3. **Permanent settlements or nomadic:** permanent settlements
4. **Tools:** bow and arrow, clam shell hoe, digging sticks, flint tools
5. **Music:** bone flutes, turtle shell rattles

WORKSHEET B: The Fort Ancient People: a Closer Look

1. **Tool:** various types of flint tools – scrapers, knives, bone fishing hooks, bow and arrows, mortar and pestle of stone for grinding corn
2. **Jewelry:** Beaded necklaces, pendants, ornamental decorations made of bone, shell, coal
3. **Weapon:** Bow and arrow for hunting
4. **Pottery:** Clay pottery including pots, bowls with linear designs as decoration
5. **Burial Mounds:** small to large burial mounds, some in shape of animals (each artifact should include a small sketch and citation of source)

WORKSHEET C: The History of Corn

1. 7,000 years
2. Central America/Mexico
3. Maize
4. Teosinte
5. About 1,000 years ago; as Native peoples migrated north, they brought corn with them
6. Europeans brought corn back to Europe where it was introduced and cultivated
7. Native Americans grew corn in mounded "Three Sisters" gardens; the three sisters are corn, beans, and squash

8. Modern Ohio farmers grow corn in Ohio on large farms; corn is grown in rows; modern machinery and equipment like tractors and combines are used
9. Feed grain, ethanol, export, domestic consumption, sweeteners (all possible answers)
10. There are many Native tales of the origins of corn: "The Corn Mother," "The Hermit and the Corn," "How Corn Came to Earth," "Corn Mother," "The Three Sisters," among others. Each summary should include a summary of corns' origin and the Native American culture responsible for the legend.

WORKSHEET D: Ohio's First Farmers

1. **Used fertilizer:** Fort Ancient farmers: no; Ohio farmers today: yes
2. **How and where did they plant:** Fort Ancient farmers: planted on mounded hill gardens; used simple tools
Ohio farmers today: plant in large fields in rows, use fertilizer, pesticide, farm machinery
3. **Type of crop:** Fort Ancient people: corn, beans, squash
Ohio farmers today: primarily specialize in large crops of one or two varieties; corn, soy beans, wheat (these are the main crops grown, other answers may be acceptable)
4. **Storage:** Fort Ancient people: storage pits in the ground; pottery jars
Ohio farmers today: grain silos, grain elevators
5. **How the crop was used:** Fort Ancient people: for consumption by village families
Ohio farmers today: crop is for profit; sold as export, feed grain, for ethanol manufacture etc.
6. **Types of tools or machinery:** Fort Ancient people: simple hand made tools like a clam shell hoe and digging stick
Ohio farmers today: use machinery such as tractors, combines; use modern agricultural technologies like fertilizer and pesticide
7. **Challenges for both:** Fort Ancient people and Ohio farmers today both had to deal with weather, blight, and pests

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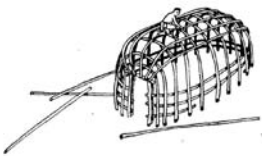


WORKSHEET A:

The Fort Ancient People – Test Your Knowledge

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Directions: Fill out the columns below to compare and contrast what you know about the Fort Ancient people, new information you learned, and how what you learned may be different from what you thought you knew about this culture.

	Facts You Know	Fort Ancient People Facts	What's the Difference?
What kind of houses did they live in?			
How did they get food?			
Did they live in permanent settlements or nomadic?			
What kind of tools or weapons did they use?			
Did they play music? What kind?			

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WORKSHEET B:

The Fort Ancient People – A Closer Look

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Directions: Use books and the Internet to find information about the objects listed in the Find It! column in the organizer below. For each object you will list facts on how it was made and used. As any responsible historian will tell you, you must cite your sources. In the Source box, include the Web address, or book where you found your evidence. Finally, like an archeologist in the field, use colored pencils to make a small sketch of the artifact you have found in the artifact sketch box.

Find It!	Facts	Source	Artifact Sketch
Tool			
Jewelry			
Weapon			
Pottery			
Burial mound			

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WORKSHEET C

The History of Corn

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Directions: Use books in the library and the Internet to research and answer the following questions.
Hint: an Internet search for the term "history of corn" will be helpful.

1. How long has corn been around?

2. Where did corn originally come from?

3. What is another word for corn?

4. What is the name of the grass from which corn was developed?

5. When did the native people of North American first acquire corn? How did they get it?

6. Corn is not native to Europe; in fact, corn was an unknown plant to the Europeans that came to the Americas. Today, France and Italy are in the top ten countries that produce corn. How did they get corn?

7. How did the Native Americans grow their corn, and what were the "Three Sisters"?

8. How do modern farmers in Ohio grow corn?

9. What are three uses for corn products grown in Ohio today?

10. Corn was very important to Native American life. Tales and legends of the origins of corn have been handed down from one generation to another through Native American oral tradition. Find an example of a Native American tale that describes the origin of corn and write a summary of that legend below. Be sure to include the title of the legend.

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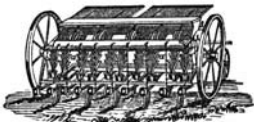
WORKSHEET D

Ohio's First Farmers

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Directions: Based on what you have learned about the Fort Ancient people and farming practice at Sunwatch Village, and Ohio's farmers today, use the worksheet to compare the farming practices of each.

	Fort Ancient People	Ohio Farmers Today
Used fertilizer?		
How and where did they plant?		
Type of crop		
Storage		
How was the crop used?		
Types of tools or machinery?		
Challenges for both		