**Language Arts, Social Science, Math, Science, Health, Art**

# Stewardship Through First Foods: Camas

## Overview

Camas is one of the important first foods for the people of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw. In this unit, Camas serves as the central lens for learning about stewardship, the responsibility to care for food, land, and community over time.

Through interdisciplinary lessons, students explore how Camas is traditionally gathered, prepared, and shared, and why careful practices are essential for ensuring Camas will continue to grow year after year. Students learn that stewardship is not a single action, but a long-term relationship grounded in observation, knowledge, and respect.

### ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

☒ Since Time Immemorial

☒ Sovereignty

☒ History

☐ Tribal Government

☒ Identity

☒ Lifeways

☒ Languages

☐ Treaties

☐ Genocide, Federal Policy, and Laws

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- Why are First Foods, like Camas, important to Indigenous communities, and how do they connect to land, health, and community?
- Why are careful harvesting and shared responsibility important for sustaining food systems?
- What responsibilities do people have to plants, land, and future generations?
- How do our actions affect plants, land, and people over time?



**Stewardship Through First Foods: Camas**
**3rd Grade**

As students engage with Camas across subjects, they examine how food systems connect to health, math, science, and cultural knowledge. Lessons highlight Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as a way of understanding ecosystems and making decisions that support balance and regeneration. Students learn that harvesting choices affect future food availability, and that people have responsibilities not only to themselves, but to the land, the plant, and future generations.

This unit can be taught in any season. While Camas is planted in the fall and harvested in the summer, learning about its full life cycle helps students understand seasonal rhythms and long-term care. Throughout the unit, students deepen their understanding of how Indigenous food practices continue today and why first foods remain central to cultural identity, health, and sovereignty.

## Background for Teachers

**Who are the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw:**
The People of the Confederated Tribes of Coos (***miluk*** and ***hanis***), Lower Umpqua (***quuiich***), and Siuslaw (***sha'yuushtl'a***) have called southwestern Oregon home since time immemorial. Their lives have been, and continue to be, closely tied to the lands, rivers, and the Pacific Ocean.
The geography and climate of this region provide an abundance of resources that support community life. These include

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will develop an understanding of stewardship through first foods, with a focus on camas. They will explore how food practices are connected to culture, health, math, science, and the care of the ecosystem.

Language Arts

- Understand the cultural importance of camas as a first food.
- Recognize that camas knowledge is passed down through stories, language, and practice.
- Identify how place, season, and environment shape food systems.

Math & Numeric Reasoning:

- Apply math skills to real-world situations using Camas-based story problems.
- Solve one- and two-step problems involving area, perimeter, fractions, multiplication, and division.
- Use mathematical reasoning to consider harvesting choices and sustainability.

Social Science

- Identify the geography of southwestern Oregon.
- Recognize that place, rivers, and boundaries are important to how communities live and work together.
- Become familiar with a timeline of share historical dates in the Tribes' homeland.

Science

- Construct a model of a beaver lodge through collaborative design and building.





cedar trees used for houses, canoes, and clothing; large and small land animals; fish and shellfish; and seasonal vegetables and fruits for food. Rain, lakes, rivers, and streams provide plentiful fresh water and shape how people live and move across the landscape.

Geographic boundaries have historically identified the lands of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Peoples. Our ancestral homelands extend from the forested slopes of Oregon's coastal mountain range in the east to the sand dunes and rocky shorelines of the Pacific Ocean in the west, encompassing nearly two million acres. These lands include the Siuslaw watershed, the western Umpqua watershed, and the Coos watershed.

Please use other SW Oregon maps for additional information and compare the geography.

## Cultural Notes:

Throughout this unit, students learn about Camas as a first food and as part of a long-standing relationship between people, land, and ecosystems. Camas has been gathered, prepared, and cared for by the people of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw since time immemorial. Knowledge about when to harvest, how to prepare Camas, and how much to take is based on generations of observation, experience, and shared responsibility.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES (CONT)

The Arts

- Engage in set design through construction and the use of classroom tools.
- Develop and represent the characteristics of assigned roles.
- Work together to understand the importance of each role, recognizing that all contributions are necessary to a shared outcome.

## MATERIALS:

**Language Arts:**
- Camas Narrative
- Camas Vocabulary Worksheet
- Camas Parts of Plant Worksheet

**Health:**
- Indigenize the Plate Activity

**Math:**
- Camas Field Math
- Camas for Next Year Math

**Science:**
- Geophyte PowerPoint
- Geophyte Environment worksheet

**Arts:**
- Build a Camas Oven Activity

## SUPPLIES

**Media & Primary Sources:**
- Access to outside media files and resources.





**Stewardship Through First Foods: Camas**
**3rd Grade**

This unit explores stewardship through first foods by focusing on relationships among people, plants, land, and future generations. Stewardship is presented not as a rule or behavior, but as an ongoing relationship grounded in knowledge, care, respect, and understanding.

Teachers do not need prior knowledge of camas or Indigenous food systems to teach this unit. The lessons are designed to support shared discovery alongside students. Educators are encouraged to approach this content with curiosity and openness, modeling respectful learning rather than expertise. When questions arise, it is appropriate to emphasize that some knowledge is held within families, communities, and Tribal Nations, and not all details are meant to be shared publicly or fully explained in classroom settings.

### First Foods and Stewardship

First foods are central to the cultural, physical, and spiritual well-being of Indigenous communities. Camas is one of these foods. Harvesting Camas requires careful timing, specific tools, and knowledge of how the plant regenerates. Traditionally, people harvest in ways that ensure Camas will continue to grow in the same place year after year. This practice reflects stewardship—an ongoing responsibility to care for food sources rather than use them up.

## VOCABULARY

- **Cedar Plank houses:** Traditional homes where families processed and stored foods.
- **Dormant**: When something is dormant, it is alive but not growing for a while, like a plant sleeping during winter.
- **Harvest:** To harvest means to pick or collect food from plants when it is ready to eat.
- **Regenerate**: To regenerate means to grow back or start growing again after being hurt or used.
- **Pollinate:** To pollinate means to move pollen from one flower to another, which helps plants make seeds or fruit.
- **Nutrient:** A nutrient is something in food or soil that helps plants, animals, and people grow and stay healthy.
- Ecosystem: An ecosystem is a place where plants, animals, and people live and work together with the land, water, and air.
- **Earth Oven**: A pit in the ground used to trap heat and cook.

### Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is a way of understanding the world that is based on long-term relationships with land, water, plants, and animals. In this unit, TEK is shown through camas harvesting practices, seasonal awareness, and respect for ecosystems. TEK is not a





historical concept; it continues to guide decisions today and supports healthy environments for future generations.

**Preparing and Cooking Camas**
Camas have traditionally been cooked in earth ovens for long periods of time. The slow cooking process transforms the bulb, making it sweet and digestible. While contemporary kitchens may be used today, these methods reflect the same principles of patience, care, and respect for food. Cooking practices are shared in this unit to help students understand the effort and knowledge involved in preparing first foods—not as a recipe to replicate, but as a way to understand cultural practice.

**Respectful Use of Knowledge**
Some Indigenous knowledge is shared for learning, and some is held closely within families and communities. This unit is designed for educational purposes and does not grant permission to recreate harvesting practices, share stories publicly, or treat cultural knowledge as curriculum content without care. Teachers and students are encouraged to learn respectfully, ask thoughtful questions, and understand that learning also includes knowing when to listen.

## Language Extension:

| **English** | ***miluk*** | ***hanis*** | ***sha'yuushtɬ'a uɬ quuiich*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| camas | ***ƛem*** | ***ƛe'me*** | ***auchiisii*** |
| Salmon | ***ƛelyeq*** | ***qalyeq*** | ***wi'ii (s), ɬt'iiyai (q)*** |
| Salmon Berries | ***q'emq*** | ***mi'ya*** | ***tɬ'uux*** |
| Bull Kelp | ***ƛalƛas*** | ***ƛalƛas*** | ***Pahuu*** |

## Options/Extensions:

Basic nutrition and facts as a health extension and utilization of earth ovens as a social science practice.





## Appendix:

The following activities are applicable across the entire grade spectrum and available for use as needed.

- Camas Meadows
- Camas Coloring Page
- Camas Maze
- Camas Maze – Teachers Guide
- Camas Hidden Words Puzzle
- Camas Hidden Words Puzzle– Teachers Guide





Lesson 1 - Language Arts: Comprehension & Writing

# Activity 1: Camas Narrative-Worksheet & Journal
# Activity 2: Parts of the Camas Plant-Worksheet & Journal

## Summary

This lesson centers on Camas as a First Food and explores its cultural importance within Indigenous communities. The narrative Camas Meadows provides a central reference for understanding how knowledge of First Foods is carried through story, language, and practice. The lesson engages ideas of food preservation, stewardship, and food sovereignty, and can take place in either indoor or outdoor settings.

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| **Standards** | • Primary*:* RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.5, RL.3.4, RF.3.4.A, RF.3.4.C, L.3.4.4, W.3.8, L.3.1.A, 2. L.3.1.A.3, 3.W.2 |
| **Materials** | • Camas Narrative<br>• Camas Worksheet #1<br>• Earth Oven Journal<br>• Power Point: Parts of the Camas Plant<br>• Plant Parts Identification Worksheet<br>• Parts of the Camas Worksheet with Teacher's Guide<br>• Parts of the Camas Plant Journal<br>• Camas Meadows Story |
| **Vocabulary** | • **Dormant:** When something is dormant, it is alive but not growing for a while, like a plant sleeping during winter.<br>• **Harvest**: To harvest means to pick or collect food from plants when it is ready to eat.<br>• **Regenerate**: To regenerate means to grow back or start growing again after being hurt or used.<br>• **Pollinate**: To pollinate means to move pollen from one flower to another, which helps plants make seeds or fruit.<br>• **Nutrient:** A nutrient is something in food or soil that helps plants, animals, and people grow and stay healthy.<br>• **Ecosystem:** An ecosystem is a place where plants, animals, and people live and work together with the land, water, and air.<br>• **Perennial:** Something that lasts a long time or reoccurs repeatedly. |





Lesson 2 - Social Science: Homelands of the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians

# Activity 1: Maps Tell Stories About Place
# Activity 2: Regions, Resources, and Responsibilities
# Activity 3: Oregon Timeline- What Changed and Why?

## Summary:

This lesson centers on the homelands of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw as places of enduring relationship, where knowledge of land and water has supported community life over time. It highlights how changes in access to land and resources have occurred, while Indigenous relationships to place continue in the present. The lesson connects place, history, and responsibility, framing stewardship as an ongoing relationship across generations.

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| **Standards** | • Primary: 3.G.GR.1, 3.G.GR.2, 3.G.HE.6, 3.G.HE.7, 3.G.HI.5, 3.H.CH.2. 3.H.CE.4, 3.H.CP.6 |
| **Materials** | • Oregon Base Map / Mapping Worksheet<br>• Oregon Timeline Worksheet<br>• Geological formations journal.png<br>• Untitled design (8).png |
| **Vocabulary** | • **Place-** A location where land, water, people, and relationships come together.<br>• **Homelands-** Places where Indigenous peoples have lived since time immemorial and maintain ongoing relationships to land and water.<br>• **Region-**An area defined by shared natural features, such as landforms, water, or climate.<br>• **Landform-** A natural feature of the land, such as mountains, valleys, rivers, or coastline.<br>• **Resources- s**omething provided by land or water that supports life, such as food, water, or materials.<br>• **Responsibility-** care for land and water that helps places continue to provide what communities need over time.<br>• **Environment** – land and water where people, plants, and animals live<br>• **Change over time** – how places and relationships shift across history<br>• **Continuity** -what continues, even as change happens |





Lesson 3 – Math: Story Problems, Area & Fractions

# Activity 1: Camas Field Math: Space, Growth & Patterns
# Activity 2: Sustainability Math: Camas For Next Year Math

## Summary

This lesson applies mathematical reasoning to real-world contexts through the lens of Camas harvesting and food systems. It explores area, perimeter, fractions, multiplication, and division while considering how quantity, space, and choice influence sustainability. Hands-on representations support the visualization of mathematical ideas. The lesson connects mathematical thinking to decision-making that supports regeneration and the long-term stewardship of food systems.

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| **Standards** | • Primary: 3.GM.B, 3.GM.C.5, 3.GM.C.6, 3.GM.A.1, 3.GM.A.2, 3.OA.A.1, 3.OA.A.2, 3.OA.B.5, 3NTB.A.1, 3.NF.A.1 |
| **Materials** | • Camas for Next Year Narrative<br>• Camas Field Area Worksheet<br>• Camas Field Story Problems Worksheet<br>• Camas for Next Year Worksheet |
| **Vocabulary** | • **Equation:** A math sentence that shows two things are equal, using numbers, symbols, and sometimes letters. For example, 3 + 4 = 7 is an equation.<br>• **Area:** The amount of two-dimensional space enclosed by a flat, closed space. It measures how many unit squares cover its surface.<br>• **Fraction:** A number that shows part of a whole, written with two numbers separated by a line, like ½ or 3/4.<br>• **Multiply:** To increase amounts through reproduction.<br>• **Equation:** Mathematical statement asserting two expressions are equal.<br>• **Dimensions:** The measurements of an object, usually showing its length, width, and sometimes height.<br>• **Harvest:** Seasonal gathering of mature crops.<br>• **Seed:** A small part of a plant that can grow into a new plant.<br>• **Bulb:** The part of the plant that grows underground. In some plants, this is the part that is eaten (Camas). |





Lesson 4 – Science: Ecosystems, Germination, Growth, & Food Classification

# Activity 1: Life Cycle of Camas
# Activity 2: Geophyte PowerPoint & Worksheet

## Summary:
This lesson explores the life cycle of Camas and other First Foods within interconnected ecosystems. It examines germination, growth patterns of perennials, and the role of geophytes in sustaining plant communities. The lesson highlights how environmental conditions and harvesting choices influence regeneration and the balance of the ecosystem.

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| **Standards** | • Primary: 3.LS1.1, 3.LS4.3 , 3.LS3.2, 3.LS1.1 |
| **Materials** | • Camas Life Cycle Narrative (Science)<br>• Plant Habitat Image<br>• Camas Habitat Worksheet<br>• Geophyte PowerPoint<br>• Plant Life Cycle Worksheet-side A<br>• Camas Life Cycle Worksheet-side B |
| **Vocabulary** | • **Perennial:** lasting or existing for a long or apparently infinite time; enduring or continually recurring.<br>• **Camas:** the bulb of the lily family, commonly eaten as a first food.<br>• **Ecosystem:** a system formed by organisms in interaction with their environment.<br>• **Lifecycle:** the series of changes in the life of an organism, including reproduction.<br>• **Germination:** the development of a plant from a seed or spore after a period of dormancy.<br>• **Geophyte:** A plant with a special underground food storage system.<br>• **Rhizome:** thick, underground stems that store energy and water while growing horizontally.<br>• **Corm:** short, solid, swollen stems that store energy and water.<br>• **Tubers:** swollen, underground stems or roots that store energy and water.<br>• **True Bulb:** bulbs that are characterized by fleshy, overlapping scales that store nutrients. |





Lesson –5 Health: Food Groups, Meal Balance, Healthy Food

# Activity 1: Understanding First Foods
# Activity 2: First Foods Relay

## Summary

This lesson explores relationships among camas and other First Foods, contemporary foods, and overall health through the lens of place, season, and gathering. Students consider where foods come from, when they are available, and how they are gathered, and compare these understandings with other ways of organizing food. Through observing, organizing, and experiencing gathering practices, the lesson highlights how food is prepared and shared across time and place. These experiences emphasize knowledge, care, and shared responsibility, and invite consideration of how traditional food practices continue to shape understandings of health and wellbeing today.

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| **Standards** | • Primary: 3.FNP.2, 3.FNP.3<br>• Secondary 3.WHP.7 |
| **Materials** | • First Food Illustrations<br>• First Foods Fact Sheet<br>• First Food Relay Cards<br>• Paper plates<br>• Cones/rope/tape |
| **Vocabulary** | • **Salmon:** Fish that live in rivers and oceans, caught with nets.<br>• **Salmon Berries:** A type of berry we pick gently with our fingers, the first berries to ripen every year.<br>• **Kelp (Bull):** A green vegetable that is a type of seaweed gathered from the ocean.<br>• **Camas:** An inland root vegetable traditionally harvested with a digging stick |





Lesson 6 – Art: Visual Arts (WRAP)

# Activity 1: Build A Camas Earth Oven

## Summary:

This lesson engages in the design and construction of a three-dimensional Camas oven grounded in cultural knowledge and historical practice. It explores how Camas are grown, harvested, and prepared, highlighting its importance within interconnected ecosystems and community life. The lesson integrates artistic processes, including construction and textile techniques, to represent relationships among food, land, and people.

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| **Standards** | • Primary: VA.1.CR1.3(2), VA.1.CR3(3), VA.2.CR2.3(1), VA.2.CR3(2), VA.7.RE1.3(1) |
| **Materials** | • Camas Narrative<br>• Build a Camas Earth Oven Narrative (if used in conjunction with Language Arts Lesson)<br>• Build A Camas Earth Oven Instructions<br>• Earth Oven Photos, Patterns and Templates<br>• Photos of Pretend Earth Oven<br>• Patterns/Templates for Leaves (various kinds)<br>• Patterns/Templates for Rocks (various sizes)<br>• Felt, Glue, Scissors, Tapestry Needles, Thread, Air Dry Clay |
| **Vocabulary** | • **Harvest**: To collect or pick parts of a plant for use or food at a proper time.<br>• **Earth Oven:** One of the oldest and simplest cooking structures; a pit, mound or chamber made of dirt, sand and rocks.<br>• **Canoe Bailer:** A wooden tool, usually made of cedar. with a handle to scoop water out of a canoe (for safety purposes). It can also be used as a bucket to move water into the Earth Oven.<br>• **Gastrointestinal:** The part of the body that is made up of the stomach and intestines and is responsible for food digestion. |





## Standards

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| **Language Arts** | Primary:<br>• 2.RF.3c - Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels.<br>• 2.RF.4 - Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension<br>• 2.RF.4c - Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.<br>• 2.RL.1 - Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.<br>• 2.RL.2 - Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.<br>• 2.RL.3 - Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges, including identifying the characters' feelings, the plot or problem, and how it is resolved.<br>• 2.RL.4 - Describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.<br>• 2.RL.5 - Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story, how the middle progresses the action, and the ending concludes the action.<br>• 2.RL.6 - Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.<br>• 2.W.1 - Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.<br>• 2.W.2 - Write multi-paragraph informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.<br>• 2.W.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.<br>• 2.RI.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.<br>• 2.RI.5 - Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.<br>• 2.RI.6 - Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.<br>• 2.L.1e - Use adjectives and adverbs and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.<br>• 2.L.1f - Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences. |





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| | • 2.L.4a - Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.<br>Secondary:<br>• TH.2.CR2.2 - Examine how historical context or cultural background shapes a play or performance.<br>• TH.9.RE3.2 - Use props to describe characters or settings |
| **Social Science** | • 2.G.GR1 - Use the information on maps and other geographic tools to locate, identify, and describe the physical and human features of the community.<br>• 2.G.GR2 - Utilize maps and globes to investigate and identify the world's physical geography.<br>• 2.G.GR3 - Utilize maps and globes to investigate and identify the world's political geography. |
| **Math** | • 3.OA.A.1 -Represent and interpret multiplication of two factors as repeated addition of equal groups.<br>• 3.OA.A.2 - Represent and interpret whole number quotients as dividing an amount into equal sizes.<br>• 3.OA.B.5 - Apply properties of operations as strategies to multiply and divide.<br>• 3.NBT.A.1 - Use place value understanding to round whole numbers to the nearest 10.<br>• 3.NF.A.1 - Understand the concept of unit fractions.<br>• 3.GM.B - Solve problems involving measurements and estimates.<br>• 3.GM.C.5 - Recognize area as an attribute of plane figures and understand concepts of area measurement.<br>• 3.GM.C.6 - Measure areas by counting standard and non-standard unit squares.<br>• 3.GM.A.1 - Understand that shapes in different categories may share attributes and that shared attributes can define a larger category.<br>• 3.GM.A.2 - Partition shapes into parts with equal areas and express the area of each part as a unit faction of the whole. |
| **Science** | • 2.ETS1.2 - Develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how the shape of an object helps it function as needed to solve a given problem.<br>• 2.PS1.1 - Plan and conduct an investigation to describe and classify different kinds of materials by their observable properties (e.g., color, texture, hardness, and flexibility).<br>• 2.PS1.2 - Analyze data obtained from testing different materials to determine which materials have properties best suited for an intended purpose. |
| **Health** | • 2.HRVP.2 - Demonstrate how to effectively identify and communicate needs, wants, and feelings in healthy ways. |





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| | • 2.HRVP.6 - Recognize bullying, cyberbullying, and teasing in multiple types of relationships and the need to tell a trusted source that can help |
| **Art** | • VA.1.CR1.2(1) - Make art with various materials and tools<br>• VA.1.CR1.2(1) - Make art with various materials and tools<br>• VA.1.CR1.2(3) - Collaboratively brainstorm multiple approaches to a problem<br>• VA.2.CR2.2(2) - Demonstrate safety for using tools and cleaning space<br>• VA.3.CR3.2(3) - Utilize personal reflection and feedback to refine capability<br>• VA.7.RE1.2(1) - Distinguish between different types of art<br>• VA.7.RE1.2(2) - Compare images that represent the same subject in different media<br>• TH.1.CR1.2(1) - Propose new details<br>• TH.1.CR1.2(2) - Collaborate with peers to conceptualize scenery<br>• TH.1.CR1.2(3) - Identify ways that voice and sounds can be used<br>• TH.2.CR2.2(2) - Contribute ideas and make decisions as a group to advance the story<br>• TH.3.CR3.2(1) - Contribute to the adaptation of dialogue<br>• TH.3.CR3.2(2) - Use and adapt sounds and movement in a guided drama<br>• TH.3.CR3.2(3) - Generate multiple representations of a single object<br>• TH.4.PR12(1) - Interpret story elements<br>• TH.4.PR1.2(2) - Alter voice and body to expand characters<br>• TH.5.PR2.2(1) - Demonstrate relationship between body and voice<br>• TH.5.PR2.2(2) - Explore technical elements<br>• TH.6.PR3.2(1) - Contribute and share with peers in experience<br>• TH.8.RE2.2(1) - Explain how personal preferences and emotions affect responses<br>• TH.9.RE3.2(1) - Collaborate on a scene<br>• TH.9.RE3.2(2) - Use props to describe characters or settings<br>• TH.10.CO1.2(1) - Relate character experience to personal experiences<br>• TH.11.CO2.2(1) - Identify similarities/differences from stories of multiple cultures |

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