

Geography 9

Overarching Question: What does it mean to live in a good way with the land?

Overarching Challenge: Describe at least three actions we can take to live in a good way with the land, using the format of your choice (for example, photos, traditional art form, or song.)

Lesson Question: What meaningful actions could help make our community more livable?

Lesson Challenge: Identify at least two important ideas or lessons that we could learn from the land to make our community more livable.

Lesson Summary: In this lesson, you'll explore how important ideas and lessons from the land might be used to make communities more livable.

Big Idea: The land can send us important lessons about how to live mino bimaadiziwin.



Lesson Question: What meaningful actions could help make our community more livable?

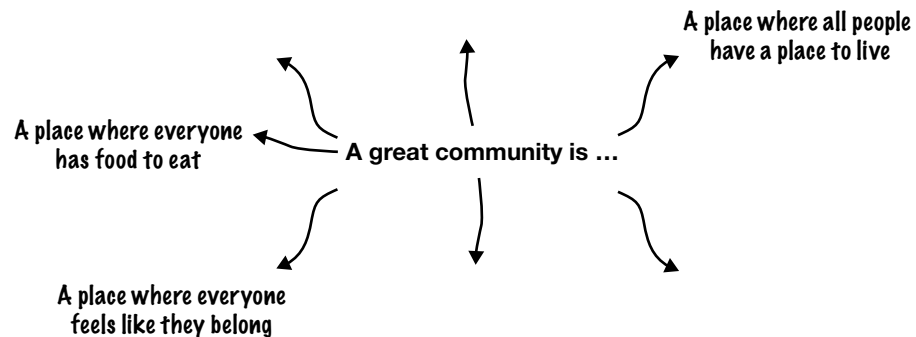
Lesson Challenge: Identify at least two important ideas or lessons that we could learn from the land to make our community more livable.

Start Your Thinking

You may not think about this often, but communities are all around you. Sometimes communities are physical places like your town or your school. Communities are also the connections or relationships between people. Communities are important because they can provide the basics for living, but they also can provide opportunities for connection and belonging.

To begin this lesson, think about the communities that you have experience with. These could be the communities you are part of, like your family, town, or school, or other communities that you know of. As you think about these communities, ask yourself this question: what makes a *great* community?

Use the space below to write at least two words or phrases that describe a great community (some examples have been included to get your thinking started).





Think About the Lesson Challenge

Even if we are part of communities that are already great, there might be ways for them to grow and change to become even better. It's not always easy, however, to know where to look for ideas that can be used to make communities more livable for everyone.

In this lesson, you'll explore how lessons and messages from the land could be help us create more livable communities.

You've probably already discovered that the land is one of the most important teachers. If we can be quiet and deeply watch, listen, and feel, we may discover that the land will teach us important lessons about how to live mino bimaadiziwin. We can also learn important ideas or lessons from the land that could be used to improve a community.

Take a moment to think about what lessons from the land could be used to improve communities. What do you think the land can teach us about improving our communities?

Think of a community that you are part of or that you know about, and then follow these steps:

1. Write the name of the community at the top of the space. This could be a community that you belong to, like your hometown, your school, or a team. It could also be a community that you know about but don't actually belong to.
2. On the left-hand side, use words or pictures to describe at least one lesson from the land that you know about or have learned.
3. Then on the right-hand side, use words or pictures to describe how the lesson from the land could be used to improve the community.



A community that I am part of or that I know about:	
A lesson from the land that I know about or have learned:	How could this lesson be used to improve this community?

Grow Your Thinking

Every time that we interact with the land, we have an opportunity to learn from it, whether we learn through observing the changing seasons and the movement of animals or through experiences like hunting, working with plant medicines, and participating in ceremonies.

Tiny but Powerful Teachers: Mosses

Mosses have been on Earth for at least 350 million years. Although mosses are very small, have no roots, and do not produce flowers, fruits, or seeds, they have lived through and survived everything that has ever happened on the planet.

How are mosses able to do this?

- Some mosses have learned to live in very wet places. Others have learned to survive even when they lose almost all of their water.
- Mosses are able to grow in many different environments, and conditions. Some mosses even grow better after wildfires.
- Mosses often grow in large groups, forming thick green clumps or sheets.

Adapted from Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Ancient Green: Moss, Climate, and Deep Time," *Emergence Magazine*, April 22, 2022, <https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/ancient-green/> and *Gathering Moss* (Oregon State University Press, 2003).

Which important ideas or lessons might the mosses be trying to teach us?	Write down two details or pieces of evidence from the story that support your decision:
<p>Put a checkmark beside the lesson(s) that the mosses might be trying to teach. (You can also add your own ideas)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A. Small creatures are not as important as big creatures.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B. We are stronger when we stick together.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> C. As the world changes, we can change too.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> D. Wisely use your resources.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>

At the beginning of this lesson, you started to describe the features of a great community. Your description probably included important features that are often used to describe a **livable community**. What makes a livable community?

The criteria for livable community could include the following:

- **Basic needs are met.** A livable community provides all basic needs for all people. Basic needs include safety, clean water, clothing, housing, food, and transportation.
- **Opportunities to live, work, grow, and play for all people.** A livable community makes sure that all people are actively engaged in life. For example, a livable community could create work opportunities for every person who wants to work or provide affordable and fun social activities.
- **Connections and relationships with other people.** A livable community makes sure that every person feels respected and included, regardless of their identities. For example, a livable community could develop opportunities for people from different age groups to learn from each other, or provide affordable clubs, groups, and gatherings.
- **Connection and relationships with the land.** A livable community makes sure all people benefit from being connected to the land. For example, a livable community provides places such as parks and other areas to access the land.

Take a moment to revisit your ideas about a great community from page 2. This time, see if you can match your ideas with the criteria for a **livable community**. Add your ideas in the space below. For example, “a place where all people have a place to live” could match with the feature “basic needs are met” (this example has been done for you). Some of your ideas could match with more than one criteria for a livable community.



Criteria for a Livable Community	Ideas That Match With the Criteria
Basic needs are met	• A place where all people have a place to live
Opportunities to live, work, grow, and play for all people	
Connections and relationships with other people	
Connection and relationships with the land	

At the beginning of this lesson, you also thought of a community that you belong to or knew about. What makes that community very livable? Are there any ways in which the community might improve and become more livable? Remember that communities that are already great can be made even more livable.

Think about how the community might be more livable by following these steps:

1. **Choose a focus community.** This could be the community that you thought of on page 3, or a different community. Remember, a community could be a place like a town or school, or it could be a group like a team or club. Write the name of the community at the top of the space below.
2. **Decide what makes the focus community very livable.** Try using the criteria for a livable community to help you think of at least two features that make the community very livable. For example, if your focus community provides all Elders with comfortable housing, you might note “comfortable housing for Elders” as an example of how basic needs are met. This example has been included for you.
3. **Decide what might make the focus community more livable.** Try using the criteria for a livable community to help you think of at least two ways that your selected community could be made even more livable. For example, if it is challenging for young families to afford a home, you might note “provide more affordable housing” as an example of how livability might be improved. This example has been included for you.



A community that I am part of or that I know about:		
Criteria for a Livable Community	What makes this community very livable?	What actions could help make this community even more livable?
Basic needs are met	comfortable housing for Elders	The community could provide more affordable housing for young families
Opportunities to live, work, grow, and play for all people		
Connections and relationships with other people		
Connection and relationships with the land		

Check Your Progress

To help you think of more ways that a community might be made more livable, talk to someone you know. This could be another student, a teacher, a friend, a relative, a Knowledge Keeper, or an Elder.

What ideas do they have about what actions might make a community more livable? Do they have any suggestions about how we can learn from the land to make a community more livable? You can add any ideas that you learn from this conversation to the space on page 6.

It's often easy to think of how our communities might be made more livable; it can be more challenging to think of the actions that would actually work and be successful. If we look to the land as our most important teacher, we can learn important ideas or lessons that can help us create more livable communities.

It's important that we take the time to use these important ideas and lessons to think of meaningful actions to make communities more livable.

The criteria for a meaningful action include the following:

- People can accomplish or complete the action by themselves or with others. If an action can't be completed by individuals or groups of people, it probably won't be meaningful.
- The action is guided by important teachings and values. These include the Seven Grandfather Teachings and other important ancestral Anishinaabe values.

On page 6 you suggested some actions for making a community more livable; which of these actions would be the most meaningful? Using the space below, choose at least one action that best meets each of the criteria for a meaningful action.



Criteria for a Meaningful Action	Action That Meets the Criteria	Reason why you selected this idea
People can accomplish or complete the action by themselves or with others		
The action is guided by important teachings and values		

Finally, let's use what you've learned in this lesson to suggest actions that can make a community more livable. Follow these steps:

1. **Choose a focus community.** This could be the community that you chose earlier in this lesson, or a different community that you belong to, or one that you know about. Write the name of your focus community at the top of page 10.
2. **Read the three examples on the next page.** As you read these examples, think about what important ideas or lessons might be learned from the land.
3. **Decide what lessons the land is trying to teach.** You can choose any of the messages that are included, or you can suggest your own. Make your choices in the left-hand column of page 10.
4. **Decide what actions might make your focus community more livable.** Use the important ideas and lessons from the land along with the criteria for a meaningful action to help you think of what might be done to make the community more livable. Describe any actions that could make the community more livable in the right-hand column on page 10. Remember to use the criteria for a livable community and the characteristics of a meaningful action to guide your thinking.

Example A: Learning from trees

Forests are tree communities. Just like communities of people, tree communities are made up of a big web of relationships. Older trees (like parents) feed their younger saplings (like children) to help them survive and grow. When the large, old trees eventually fall, it's the younger trees' turn to take their place in the sunlight. Science has shown that trees are social and even intelligent, communicating with one another in many ways. For example, their root systems are very closely connected. As a result, trees can use these systems to share water and nutrients, and also to send danger signals. Tree communication is not always underground, though. Trees can also communicate through the air, sending signals in the form of an invisible gas that warns other trees of danger nearby.

Example B: Learning from bears

In many ways, bears are very similar to humans. Like people, each individual bear has a unique personality. Like human mothers, mother bears are protective of their young, are sensitive to their children's needs, and can even be strict when teaching their children important life lessons. Bears are also very social. They form connections with one another and rely on these relationships for their emotional well-being, sharing resources, and protection. Bears are very intelligent animals, and one thing they know a lot about is getting good rest. They hibernate every winter, and this period of rest lets them save energy so that they can survive the rest of the year. Scientists that study bears have found that when bears skip this period of rest, their health suffers. For example, they struggle to stay at a healthy weight and don't have the energy to care for themselves or other bears they have bonded with.

Example C: What are the wolves saying?

Like humans and other primates, wolves live in complex social groups. They live and work in packs, experiencing successes and failures as a team. A pack survives by relying on the ability to co-exist peacefully with one another and to work together to achieve shared goals. Each wolf can kill or injure other wolves, but they understand that they are stronger as a team. So, wolves use many forms of communication to avoid conflict, live together peacefully, and form strong bonds. They clearly communicate with members of their pack so that each wolf can adjust its behaviour to be a better fit for the situation. By sending each other clear signals, they can avoid misunderstanding emotions. As a result, the wolf pack can hunt larger prey, better defend themselves, and increase their chances of survival.

Lesson Question: What meaningful actions could help make our community more livable?



My focus community:		
What important idea or lesson is the land sending? Select one (or more) of the options below, or suggest your own idea.	Criteria for a Livable Community	What meaningful actions could be used to make the community more livable? Use the learning from the land to help you think of actions that might make the focus community more livable.
<input type="checkbox"/> All living things need connection and relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Working together and sharing resources helps us survive and grow <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships can help keep living things healthy and happy <input type="checkbox"/> Resting and being quiet are important to living the good life <input type="checkbox"/> A team is more powerful than a single person or animal <input type="checkbox"/> Clear and consistent communication benefits everyone <input type="checkbox"/> Add your own important idea or lesson:	Basic needs are met	
	Opportunities to live, work, grow, and play for all people	
	Connections and relationships with other people	
	Connection and relationships with the land	
	A meaningful action is one that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people can accomplish or complete by themselves or with others • focuses on the criteria for a livable community • is guided by important Anishinaabe teachings and values 	



Reflect on Your Thinking

Think About the Lesson Challenge

In this lesson, you've practised using important ideas and lessons from the land to help you think of actions that could make a community more livable.

At the beginning of this lesson, you thought of how important ideas and lesson from the land could be used to improve a community. To end this lesson, take a moment to think of how you might use these important ideas and lessons to help make a community more livable. Guided by learning from the land, what actions could *you* take to help make a community more livable?



Lessons from the land that I know or have learned:	How could I use these lessons to help make a community more livable?

Think About the Overarching Challenge

If you completed the geography launch lesson ("What does it mean to live in a good way with the land?"), you probably started a Thoughtbook. In this Thoughtbook you began thinking about ways to respond to the challenge:

Describe three actions that we can take to live in a good way with the land.

After you're finished the geography lessons, you'll use what you've learned to respond to that challenge. You can use the format of your choice—a song, a traditional art form, photographs, a poem—whatever you think would be best to describe the actions we can take to live in a good way with the land.

Revisit your Thoughtbook now or use the space on page 13 to reflect on the actions we can take to live in a good way with the land. As you think about what you've learned in this lesson about using important ideas and lessons from the land to make communities more livable, answer these questions:

- What actions would you add to your Thoughtbook?
- Would you change any of the ideas that you already have in your Thoughtbook?

Lesson Question: What meaningful actions could help make our community more livable?



My Thoughtbook: What actions can we take to live in a good way with the land?

Use words, symbols, or pictures to describe three (or more) actions that we can take to live in a good way with the land.