

## 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 does it mean to live in a good way with the land?

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

**Lesson Summary:** We can use the Grandfather Teachings and other traditional teachings to help us live mino bimaadiziwin.

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**Big Idea:** The Grandfather Teachings can help us live in a good way with the land.

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

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

## Start Your Thinking

The Anishinaabe people have an important teaching known as *mino bimaadiziwin*, or “living the good life.” This teaching can help us do all things in life in a good way.

To begin this lesson, carefully read the news story below and make a decision: were the two men living the good life? Even if *mino bimaadiziwin* is new to you, see if you can find any details in the story that can help you make your decision. Be sure to give at least two reasons for your decision at the bottom of this page.

Two Men Fined for Ignoring Fishing Limits	Were these two men living the good life? (you can mark your decision at any spot on the arrow)
<p>On September 30, 2021, a conservation officer was patrolling an area along the Winisk River. He noticed two non-Indigenous men loading heavy coolers into the back of an SUV, so he stopped to check on the situation. Inspecting the coolers, the officer found more than 100 brook trout—far more than the limit of what the men were allowed to catch. The two men were found guilty of breaking the fishing regulations. As a consequence, they had to pay more than \$3,000 in fines and lost their fishing licences for a year.</p>	 <p>Yes, absolutely!</p> <p>In some ways yes, in some ways no</p> <p>No, not at all!</p>
<p><b>Describe two reasons for your decision</b></p>	
<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	

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

What would happen if everyone acted like these two people and didn't live in a good way with the land? What could happen to the land and living creatures if we don't live in a good way?

In the box below, describe what might happen to the land if we don't live in a good way. You can use words, symbols, or pictures to create your description. If you have access to a phone or tablet, you could even make a voice recording of your thoughts.



**What might happen to the land if we don't live in a good way?**



### Think About the Lesson Challenge

In this lesson you'll explore how important Anishinaabeg teachings can help us live in a good way with the land.

Before moving on to the next part of the lesson, let's pause and think of at least three actions that we could take to live in a good way with the land.

On page 5 you'll find a space for you to note your thoughts. This page will be your Thoughtbook, a place where you can grow your thinking about what it means to live in a good way with the land. You can use words, symbols, pictures—whatever way you think is best to describe your ideas (you could even use a digital device such as a tablet for your Thoughtbook).

You can add to your Thoughtbook in this lesson and in other lessons. Then when you're done all the lessons, you'll use your ideas to respond to the lesson challenge: **describe three actions that we can take to live in a good way with the land.** 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 these actions. You can describe more than three actions if you choose.

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



**My Thoughtbook:** What actions could 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.

## Grow Your Thinking

People who are not familiar with the teaching of mino bimaadiziwin might think that “living the good life” means that they have the freedom to do whatever feels good or whatever they wish. For example, the fishermen in the news story at the beginning of this lesson might have thought they were living the good life because they were having fun catching so many fish.

Mino bimaadiziwin does not mean that we can do whatever feels good or fun. Whenever we wonder about what living the good life means, we can use other Anishinaabeg teachings to help us make wise choices.

We can use the Seven Grandfather Teachings as guides to living in a good way with other people and with the land. The Seven Grandfather Teachings are big ideas or principles that can help us maintain balance in our lives and balance with our world and environment. Many Indigenous peoples use similar teachings. For the Anishinaabe people, the Seven Teachings are

- Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom)
- Zaagi’idiwin (Love)
- Minaadendamowin (Respect)
- Aakode’ewin (Bravery)
- Gwayakwaadiziwin (Honesty)
- Dabaadendiziwin (Humility)
- Debwewin (Truth)

There are many versions of the story about how the Grandfather Teachings came to be.

“...the Creator gave the seven grandfathers the responsibility to watch over the people. ...the seven grandfathers, seeing that the people were living a hard life, sent a messenger down to the earth to find someone who could tell what Ojibway life should be and bring him back. The messenger searched all directions—North, South, West, and East—but could not find anyone. Finally, on the seventh try, the messenger found a baby and brought him back to where the grandfathers were sitting in a circle. The grandfathers, happy with the messenger’s choice, instructed him to take him all around the earth so the baby could learn how the Ojibway should lead their lives. They were gone for seven years. Upon his return, as a young man, the grandfathers, recognizing the boy’s honesty, gave him seven teachings that he could take with him.”

Source: Susan Maniwabi, “The Seven Grandfather Teachings,” in *Historical and Contemporary Realities: Movement Towards Reconciliation* (Ecampus Ontario. n.d.), <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/movementtowardsreconciliation/chapter/the-seven-grandfather-teachings/>. This work is licensed under the CC BY-NC 4.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), except where otherwise noted.

**What are some examples of what the Seven Grandfather Teachings might look like?**

1. Read each of the Seven Grandfather Teachings below as well as the examples and non-examples.
2. Then in the right-hand column, write down two or three key words that can help you remember the meaning of each Grandfather Teaching (an example has been done for you).



Seven Grandfather Teachings*	This is an example of the Grandfather Teaching	This is not an example of the Grandfather Teaching	Key Words That Describe This Grandfather Teaching
<p><b>Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom)</b></p> <p>Wisdom, a gift from the Creator, is to be used for the good of the people. The term wisdom can also mean <i>thoughtfulness</i> or <i>intelligence</i>. We must use good judgment or common sense when thinking through situations and decisions. We seek the wisdom of our Elders because they know how to use their knowledge and skills to provide guidance or important lessons.</p>	<p>Cara and Samuel are always excited when they get to spend time with their grandparents. While Grandmother cooks with them she tells stories about her grandparents. And Cara and Samuel always listen closely when Grandfather takes them for walks in the bush and shows how the land looks after them.</p>	<p>Cale doesn't care what the Elders have to say about the land or the old ways. He thinks that the Elders' stories are out of touch with modern life.</p>	<p><b>Thoughtful</b></p> <p><b>Thinking through</b></p> <p><b>Good judgment</b></p>
<p><b>Zaagi'idiwin (Love)</b></p> <p>Love is one of the greatest teachers. Being able to demonstrate love means that we must first love ourselves before we can show love to someone else. Love is unconditional; it must be given freely. When we give love freely it comes back to us.</p>	<p>Even though he doesn't get paid to do it, Jordan shovels snow away from neighbours' houses. In the summer he helps with other chores around the homes of Elders.</p>	<p>Nathan asks Erika why she never holds doors open for other people or says hello to strangers. She says there's no point in being kind to strangers because she won't get anything in return.</p>	
<p><b>Minaadendamowin (Respect)</b></p> <p>Respect grows when a person takes the time to establish a deeper relationship with another person. This respect also applies to all of creation. Respect is mutual and reciprocal: to receive respect one must give respect.</p>	<p>Alissia is really busy with her school work and her job, but every Wednesday she goes to have tea with her aunts.</p>	<p>Destiny knows that she should spend more time getting to know her aunts, but she is really busy with her school work and her job.</p>	

Table continued on next page



<p><b>Aakode’ewin (Bravery)</b></p> <p>We need to be brave to do the right thing even if it’s not popular or easy to do. It takes bravery to stand up and do what it is right.</p>	<p>Sia really wants to go out with her friends tonight, but she also has a school assignment to finish. She decides to stay home and do her assignment even though her friends will make fun of her.</p>	<p>Paul is out driving his family’s quad after school and accidentally dents the gas tank. He knows that his dad might get made so he doesn’t tell his dad about the dent.</p>	
<p><b>Gwayakwaadiziwin (Honesty)</b></p> <p>We must be honest in our words and actions. Being honest starts with being truthful to yourself. Being honest with yourself makes it easier to be honest with others.</p>	<p>Clay wanted to blame his friends when he didn’t do well on the test—they kept sending him funny videos. He knew, though, that it was really his responsibility to focus.</p>	<p>Dreyden didn’t tell his parents that he got a low score on his exam.</p>	
<p><b>Dabaadendiziwin (Humility)</b></p> <p>Being humble is knowing your place within creation and knowing that all forms of life are equally important. We need to show compassion (care and concern) for all of creation.</p>	<p>Every winter Grandmother and Grandfather leave fat and seeds in the trees for the chickadees. This food helps the chickadees survive the cold weather.</p>	<p>When a local chief asks a mining company why it is polluting a creek, the company says, “It’s just a small creek so it really doesn’t matter.”</p>	
<p><b>Debwewin (Truth)</b></p> <p>All the teachings work together. You are not being honest with yourself if you use only one or two of these teachings. Leaving out even one of these teachings means that you are not embracing the teachings.</p>	<p>The students and teachers use each of the Seven Grandfather Teachings to design a plan for their new school.</p>	<p>The government says it will use some of the Seven Grandfather Teachings when it designs plans for the new arena.</p>	
<p>*Adapted from: Susan Manitowabi, “The Seven Grandfather Teachings,” in <i>Historical and Contemporary Realities: Movement Towards Reconciliation</i> (Ecampus Ontario. n.d.), <a href="https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/movementtowardsreconciliation/chapter/the-seven-grandfather-teachings/">https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/movementtowardsreconciliation/chapter/the-seven-grandfather-teachings/</a>. This work is licensed under the CC BY-NC 4.0 license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/</a>), except where otherwise noted.</p>			

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

Now let's decide what it might look like when people use the Seven Grandfather Teachings as guides to living in a good way.

1. Decide which of the Seven Grandfather Teachings is being followed or shown in each of the situations (you can choose more than one teaching).
2. In the right-hand column, provide a reason for your decision. Remember that you can use the key words from pages 7 and 8 to help with this (an example has been done for you).

**The Seven Grandfather Teachings:**

- Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom)
- Zaagi'idiwin (Love)
- Minaadendamowin (Respect)
- Aakode'ewin (Bravery)
- Gwayakwaadiziwin (Honesty)
- Dabaadendiziwin (Humility)
- Debwewin (Truth)



Situations	Which Grandfather Teaching is being followed or shown?	Reasons That Support My Decision
When Quinton's friends make fun of a new student, he tells them to stop even though he knows they will make fun of him, too.	<b>Bravery</b>	<b>I chose bravery because Quinton did the right thing, even though his friends wouldn't like it.</b>
The students decide not to use pesticides to kill weeds in the school garden. They know that although they will get rid of weeds, the pesticides will also hurt other living things.		
When the Elder starts telling the story, Alissia puts her phone down and listens carefully. Even though it's at least the tenth time that she's heard the story, she knows that she might learn something important.		
Joy is really interested in cooking and using ingredients from the land. She asks an Elder to show her which plants could be used in her recipes.		
Ryan knew that no one would notice if he harvested all the wild rice, but he knew that wouldn't be living in a good way. He only took what his family needed.		
Warren is trying to be kinder to himself: instead of thinking negative things, every morning he writes down three positive things about himself.		
The owner of the mining company apologized and admitted that his company had polluted the lake.		

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

Think back to the beginning of this lesson and the two men who were overfishing in Northern Ontario. Revisit your initial decision, this time using what you now know about mino bimaadiziwin and the Seven Grandfather Teachings.

**Were the two men living the good life?**

My First Decision (from page 2)

Now I think ...



Yes, absolutely!

In some ways yes, in some ways no

No, not at all!



(you can mark your decisions at any spot on the arrows)

To support your decision, decide which of the Seven Grandfather Teachings the two men showed—or did not show.  
Check Yes beside any Grandfather Teachings the two men showed  
Check No beside any Grandfather Teachings the two men did not show

Seven Grandfather Teachings	Which Teaching was shown?	What details from the situation support your decision?
<b>Nibwaakaawin</b> (Wisdom)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Zaagi'idiwin</b> (Love)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Minaadendamowin</b> (Respect)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Aakode'ewin</b> (Bravery)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Gwayakwaadiziwin</b> (Honesty)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Dabaadendiziwin</b> (Humility)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Debwewin</b> (Truth)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**Check Your Progress**

To learn more about how *mino bimaadiziwin* and the Seven Grandfather Teachings might help us live in a good way with the land, talk to someone you know. This could be another student, a teacher, a friend, a relative, a Knowledge Keeper, or an Elder. What do they say that living in a good way with the land might look like?

After your conversation, revisit your Thoughtbook on page 5 and your first thoughts about actions that we could take to live in a good way with the land. Try using what you heard in your conversations to add to or change your ideas.

Let's look at another situation where people were interacting with the land and each other. To complete this part of this lesson, follow these steps:

1. Read the situation below.
2. Decide whether the mining company and the community leaders were living the good life.
3. To support your thinking, decide which of the Seven Grandfather Teachings the mining company and the community leaders showed or did not show.

**The Situation**

The De Beers mining company is asking the government of Ontario to approve a landfill in a wetland area near James Bay. The landfill would be used to store waste materials from the mine demolition. The area where the landfill would be located is a place that is important to the lives of Kattawapiskak Cree people, the Attawapiskat First Nation said.

De Beers has applied to store 97,000 cubic metres of waste from the Victor diamond mine in the landfill. The isolated mine, the province's first and only diamond mine, is about 90 km west of Attawapiskat.

"We don't want a disaster in our traditional territory," said local council member Jack Linklater in a release.

De Beers in 2017 cancelled plans for a mine expansion after failing to get community support. The mine closed in 2019. It produced about 600,000 carats of diamonds per year.

Source: Reuters, "Canada First Nation Group Opposes De Beers Waste Dump on Traditional Territory," April 6, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mining-canada-debeers-idUSKBN2BT1OP>.

Were the mining company and the community leaders living the good life?				
Mining company		Community leaders		
↑		Yes, absolutely!	↑	
↓		In some ways yes, in some ways no	↓	
↓		No, not at all!	↓	
(you can mark your decisions at any spot on the arrows)				
To support your decision, decide which of the Seven Grandfather Teachings the the mining company and the community leaders showed—or did not show.				
Check Yes beside any Grandfather Teachings that were shown				
Check No beside any Grandfather Teachings that were <i>not</i> shown				
Seven Grandfather Teachings	Which Teaching did the mining company show?	Which Teachings did the community leaders show?	What details from the situation support your decision?	
<b>Nibwaakaawin</b> (Wisdom)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Zaagi'idiwin</b> (Love)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Minaadendamowin</b> (Respect)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Aakode'ewin</b> (Bravery)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Gwayakwaadiziwin</b> (Honesty)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Dabaadendiziwin</b> (Humility)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Debwewin</b> (Truth)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		



## Reflect on Your Thinking

### Think About the Lesson Challenge

In this lesson you've explored some examples of how traditional teachings can help us live in a good way. Teachings such as mino bimaadiziwin and the Seven Grandfather Teachings can guide us in living in a good way with each other and with the land and all other living things.

Back on page 3 you described what might happen to the land if we don't live in a good way. Now see if you can use what you've learned to describe what might happen to the land if we follow mino bimaadiziwin and the Seven Grandfather Teachings. You can use words, symbols, or pictures—whatever way you think is best to create your description.



**What might happen to the land if we live in a good way?**

### Think About the Overarching Challenge

Finally, let's go back to page 5 and your Thoughtbook. Read your first ideas about actions that we could take to live in a good way with the land. As you think about what you've learned in this lesson, answer these questions:

- Which of your first ideas would you keep?
- Which of your first ideas would you change?
- What new ideas would you add?

You can use words, symbols, pictures—whatever way you think is best to describe your ideas (you could even use a digital device such as a tablet for your Thoughtbook).

