

Leaping Wolf

Leaping Wolf was a Native American boy. His father was the great chief of the Iroquois, who lived in a village of longhouses south of Lake Ontario.



Iroquois

Lake Ontario

The Iroquois were a powerful tribe. They were so great that no other tribe dared to attack them. They liked to fight, and all their games and dances had to do with war. When a shield was to be made, the people came together to pray to the gods for success in war. When arrows were to be made, the people prayed that the arrows might

go straight to the hearts of their enemies.

1. The Iroquois were a ____ tribe.
- a. peaceful
 - b. powerful
 - c. powerless
 - d. weak

The scalp dance was their special delight. They held it just as the twilight began to fall. The warriors daubed their faces with brightly-colored paints. They stuck feathers in their hair, and carried drums and horns and rattles. And as if they could not make noise enough with all these, they yelled and whooped as loud as they could.

warriors

The procession marched straight into the village. Then torches were lighted. A fire was made and the warriors formed in a circle round it.

Then the chief leaped out into the open space. He shouted the story of his wonderful deeds, and boasted of

the many warriors he had slain, while over his head he waved the scalps he had taken.

When the chief had finished his story, another warrior would leap out. Then, another and another, each one yelling the story of his bravery until he could yell no longer.

As each warrior finished, the people shouted, "That is good! That is good! That is good!"

The houses Leaping Wolf's people built were large enough to hold several families, and they are always spoken of now as the longhouses of the Iroquois.

Leaping Wolf had a good time in his village, for something was always happening or going to happen.

At the beginning of the year, when the moon was full, came the first great holiday for the people. At that time, the holy meeting was held. Then Leaping Wolf's father and all the other chiefs came together and made speeches to each other for four whole days. Leaping Wolf was never interested in the speeches; but at the close of the fourth day, there were games and dances, and in these he could take part.

In the early spring, Leaping Wolf's people had their second festival. At this time the people gathered for a dance around the maple trees. They believed that this dance helped to make the sap flow. Even the babies

were taken to this sugar festival, and when it was over, the mothers made all kinds of soups, sweetened with maple syrup.

2. Why did people dance around maple trees during the spring festival?

Then came the festival for corn planting; next, the strawberry festival; and last of all, the great autumn festival when the corn was harvested.

3. What was harvested during the great autumn festival?

During the long winter that came after the harvest festival, there was still much in Leaping Wolf's village to keep him amused and happy. Best of all, he thought, were the stories that his father used to tell.

"There is one star that never moves," said Leaping Wolf one night when he was out on the plain with his father.

"Yes," said his father. "Once there was no such star. But long ago, some Iroquois hunters were lost on the great plains. They walked on day after day till their corn gave out and they were nearly starved. At last they came into the land of some strange people.

"'Lead us to our homes,' said the hunters.

"The people said, 'A star shall be set in the sky to guide you.'

"Then this star that never moves shone out, pointing the way to the Iroquois' home. Ever since that time, this star has stood fixed in the sky. All other stars change their places. Sometimes they are high in the heavens, sometimes low; but this one star never changes. It stands in one place always, to guide the lost hunters to their homes."

4. According to Leaping Wolf's father, why is one star always in the same spot in the sky?

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Leaping Wolf believed that there was a spirit in the wind, in the sun, in the moon, in the trees, in the corn — in everything. He was afraid of some of these spirits; some of them he loved. He was sure that he had seen the spirit of the corn dressed in her long leaves and silken tassels. The spirit of the squash and the spirit of the bean were very fond of the spirit of the corn. Leaping Wolf was sure of this, for he often saw the bean and the squash twining their arms lovingly around the corn.

squash

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His father also told him that once there were terrible stone giants in the sky. These giants hated the earth people and tried to destroy them. One day, the giants made up their minds to kill all the earth children they could find; so they started forth with great clubs over their shoulders.

"We will fight them," said the brave Iroquois. So the chiefs came out to meet the stone giants. They hid behind trees with their arrows ready, till by and by they saw one giant coming across the plain. He was taller than a tree, and scalps of earth children were hanging from his wicked club. Then the Iroquois warriors shot

their arrows at him as fast as they could.

"Brave, brave warriors!" whispered the west wind. So well pleased was the west wind with the brave Iroquois warriors, that he helped them fight the giants. He blew and blew and blew, till at last every one of them was blown into the lake and drowned.

"And that is why," said Leaping Wolf's father. "The Iroquois are so grateful to the west wind. That is why we hold a festival every year, in honor of our good friend."

5. Why do the Iroquois hold a festival in honor of the west wind each year?

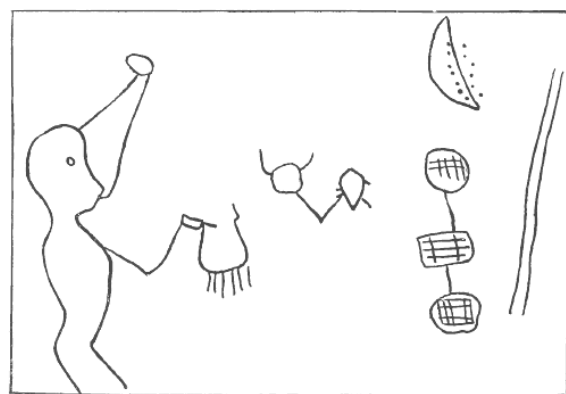
Leaping Wolf once wrote a letter to an Indian boy who lived in the west. His letter did not look like one that you would write, but Leaping Wolf's friend understood it and was, no doubt, pleased with it. Here is the letter.



The warrior on the right is Leaping Wolf starting out on a hunt. The two little Vs show that he was gone two suns — that is, two days.

The three heads show that he shot three does. Had they been three deer, Leaping Wolf would have made horns on the heads. But as he drew no horns, his Indian friend in the west knew that they were three does.

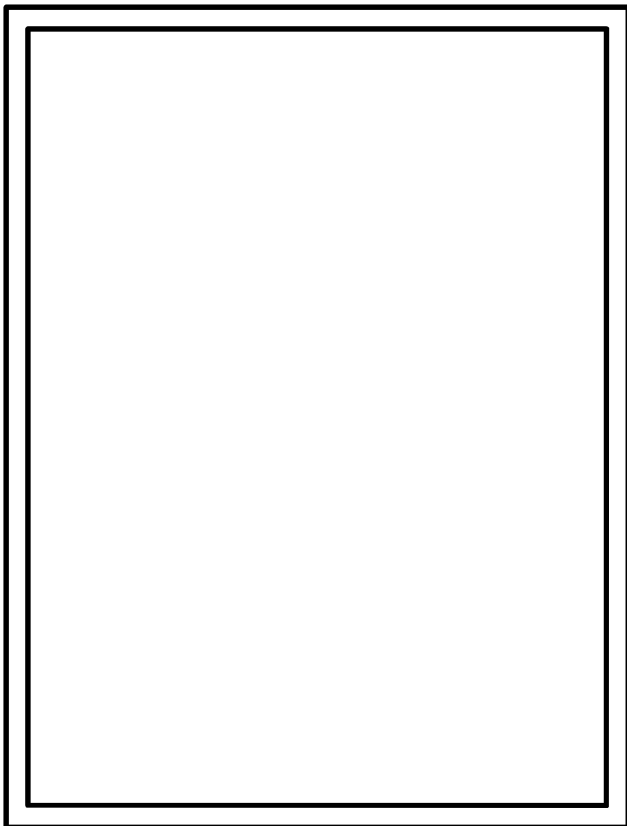
Leaping Wolf's friend also wrote a letter. When Leaping Wolf read it he said, "My friend's father is a brave warrior." Here is the letter.



The man on the left is the father setting out to buy shells. There is a shell in the picture, just above the moons. This warrior met an enemy and killed him, for there is the enemy's

scalp. The three black circles show that the father of Leaping Wolf's friend traveled three dark nights. The two upright lines at the end show that the letter is finished. That was the friend's way of closing his letter, instead of signing himself, as you would, "Yours very truly."

Write a letter to your friend illustrating something that you did. Use pictures like Leaping Wolf used.



One day little Leaping Wolf was sitting in the doorway of his longhouse, making story pictures for his father.

"Soon you will be big enough to go into battle with me," his father was saying. Leaping Wolf's eyes shone

brightly. He seized his arrows in his little fist and wished that he were big enough to go into battle that very day.

"We have had no war with those people across the lake for a long time," said Leaping Wolf's father. "They are cowards. They have no warriors, and their chiefs are weak. Ugh!"

Then Leaping Wolf said, "Ugh!" For whenever his father scowled, Leaping Wolf, too, said, "Ugh!"

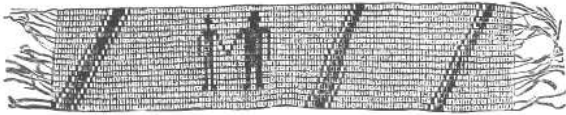
Even while they were talking, interesting things were happening up in Canada across the lake. For Samuel de Champlain, a great French explorer, had come from over the sea and had brought a number of people with him. Already, these Europeans were living on the St. Lawrence River.



Samuel de Champlain (1574-1635)

While the little village of Samuel de Champlain was being built, some of the Native Americans in the

neighborhood came to visit it and trade. Now, these were the very people that Leaping Wolf's father had called cowards. So when they saw the Europeans' guns, they said, "Come with us and fight our enemies."



Wampum belt used in trade.

"Who are they?" Champlain asked.

"They are the Iroquois, and they live on the other side of the lake. We hate the Iroquois, for we can never conquer them in battle."

"Perhaps this will be a good way to win the friendship of these Indian neighbors of ours," thought Champlain. So he promised to help them against the Iroquois.

Champlain

Then the Indian chief called all his warriors together and came to Champlain's village.

"First we must have our war dance," said the chief. So the warriors went into the forest and spent the whole day painting themselves and fastening feathers in their hair.

When it was dark they built a great fire; and danced around it all night long, whooping and yelling and leaping.

"Are these Indians mad?" Champlain wondered as he watched them. But the Indians were not mad. It was only their way of getting ready for battle.

It was all very strange to him, and Champlain was glad enough when morning came and the Indians were ready to set out.

After a long march, Champlain and the Indians who were with him met the Iroquois. At once, both tribes began to howl and yell. This was the Indian way of beginning battle.

battle

All night long, the two Indian tribes kept up their yelling and howling; but at the same time, they were busy getting ready for battle.

In the morning, they were to begin to fight. Then, when all was ready, Champlain went out and stood in front of his Indian warriors.

The Iroquois were speechless with terror. Who was the white-faced warrior? Where did he come from? And what was that he carried in his hand?

Then Champlain raised his gun and fired. "Bang! Bang! Bang!" Three of the Iroquois fell dead.

For a second, the enemy stood staring at the dead men. What kind of an arrow was it that could kill like that? Then with a great whoop the Iroquois turned and ran.

Champlain ran after them and fired his gun again. "Bang! Bang!" And down went more of the fleeing Iroquois. With every shot from the gun, the Indians yelled louder and ran faster. Many of them were taken prisoner. Those that reached their homes alive talked for days of the white-faced warrior and of the wonderful arrow that he carried.

6. With what weapon does Champlain surprise the Iroquois?

- a. arrow
- b. bow
- c. cannon
- d. gun

"It blazed fire!" they said.

"And it made a great noise."

"It was very strange."

Meantime, Champlain's Indians were getting ready to rejoice over their victory.

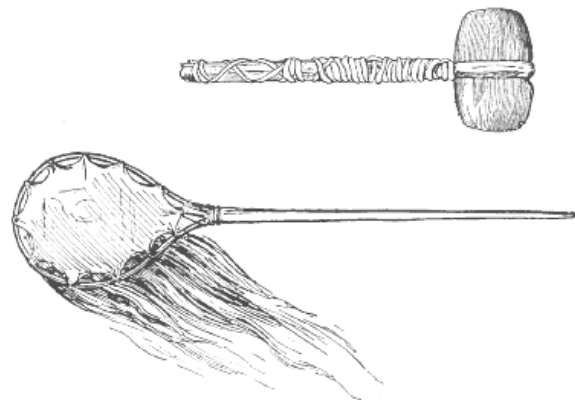
"What are you going to do?" Champlain asked.

"We are going to have our scalp dance," said the Indians.

Champlain wondered what a scalp dance could be, and he soon found out. For again the Indians went into the forests to smear themselves with paint and to stick feathers in their hair. At last they were ready to come out. They carried drums and horns and rattles, and each warrior whooped at the top of his voice.

Then torches were lighted. A fire was made, and the warriors formed in a circle around the fire.

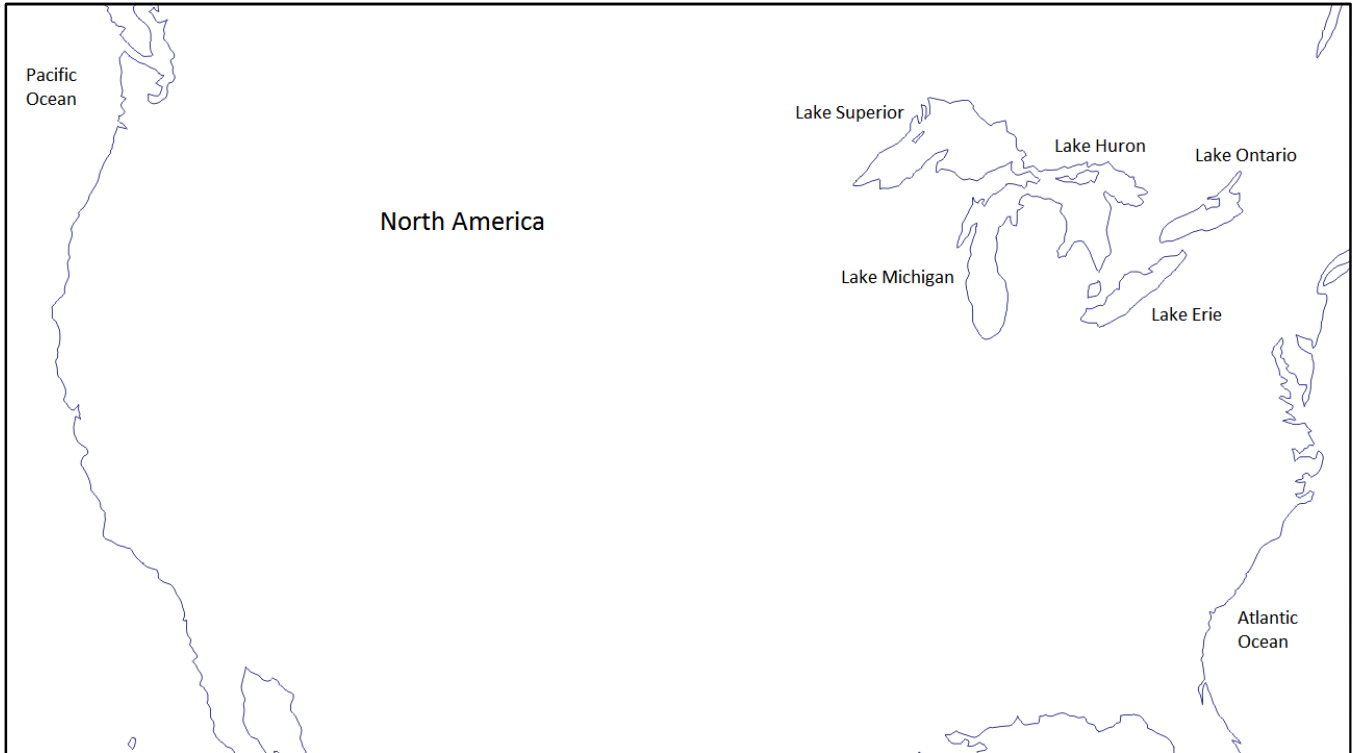
Champlain watched the chief and the warriors as they danced and shouted and swung their scalp poles round and round.



Tomahawk (above) and scalp pole.

"These Indians are a strange people!" he thought, not understanding the ceremony.

When Champlain went back to France, he had wonderful stories to tell of his Native American neighbors, and of the strange battle he had fought with Leaping Wolf's people across the river.



7. Leaping Frog’s tribe of Iroquois lived south of Lake Ontario. Color Lake Ontario green on the map above.

8. Which ocean is closer to Lake Ontario?

- a. Atlantic Ocean
- b. Pacific Ocean

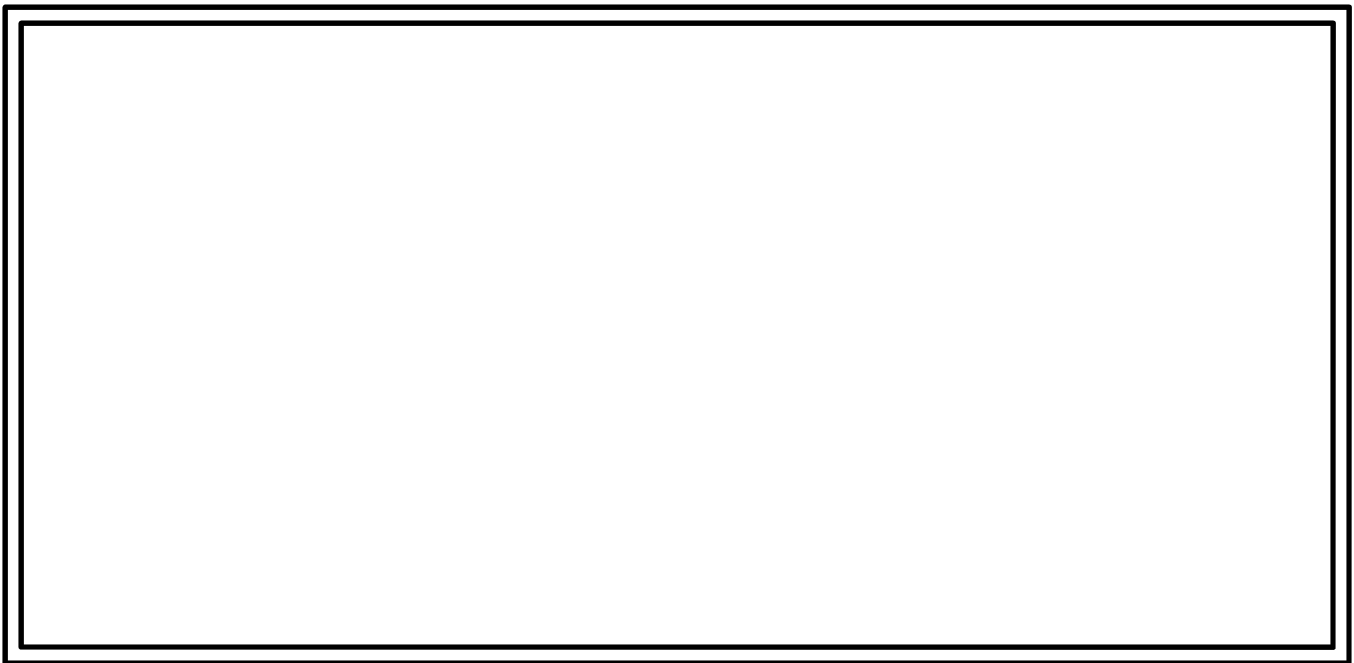
9. Lake Ontario is located on what continent?

- a. Africa
- b. Asia
- c. North America
- d. South America

10. Imagine that you are an Iroquois warrior. How might you react to seeing guns for the first time? Explain your answer.

Handwriting practice area consisting of ten sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

Illustrate a scene from the life of Leaping Wolf.



Click here for the workbook answer key: <http://bit.ly/1qNUAba>