

Gichi-Amikozow (Beaver)

*Maajii-Ojibwemowag (They Begin to Speak Ojibwe) – ANA Language Project
Teacher/Caregiver Supplemental Document*

Amik & the Seven Grandfather Teachings

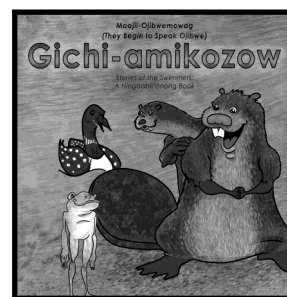
Many Anishinaabe communities have followed and continue to follow the Seven Grandfather Teachings, a set of Anishinaabe guiding principles passed down through generations. The goal of the teachings is to guide the Anishinaabe in living the bimaadiziwin (Anishinaabe way of life). It is said that Gichi-Manidoo gave the responsibility of watching over the Anishinaabe people to spirits known as the seven grandfathers. The grandfathers decided to send a messenger down to earth to find someone to spread Anishinaabe values. After searching

in all directions, the messenger found a baby. After finding this baby, the seven grandfathers instructed the messenger to bring the baby to Earth to learn the bimaadiziwin (Anishinaabe way of life). After seven years, the baby, now a young boy, returned with the messenger. The grandfathers then gave the child seven teachings to share with the Anishinaabe: Debwewin (Truth), Dabasendiziwin (Humility), Manaaji'idiwin (Respect), Zaagi'idiwin (Love), Gwayakwaadiziwin (Honesty), Zoongide'ewin

(Bravery), and Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom). All of these teachings are represented by an animal. Debwewin is mikinaak (turtle), Dabasendiziwin is ma'iingan (wolf), Manaaji'idiwin is mashkode-bizhiki (buffalo), Zaagi'idiwin is migizi (eagle), Gwayakwaadiziwin is gaagaagi (raven), Zoongide'ewin is makwa (bear), and Nibwaakaawin is Amik. It is said that Amik represents Nibwaakwin because they use their ability to cut trees and build dams which has a positive impact on their ecosystem, family, community, and themselves. The Amikwag remind us that we all have gifts and a purpose in this world.

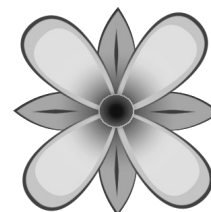
Three Amik Facts

1. Amikwag build dams and wiishan (lodges) using vegetation, mitigoonsan (tree branches), asinikaa (rock), and azhashki (mud); they chew down mitigoog (trees) for building material.
2. Amikwag are the largest rodents on Turtle Island (North America).
3. Amikwag usually spend five to six minutes underwater per dive, but they can hold their breath for as long as 15 minutes.

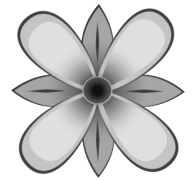


Ningaabii'anong Set: Gichi-amikozow Book Ojibwe Language Word List

- **DibaaJimowin**- a story
- **Aajim**- tell a story of
- **Gichi-ozow**- big tail
- **MewinZha**- long ago
- **Maang**- a loon
- **Miikawaadad**- it is handsome, is beautiful
- **Ina**- (yes/no question word)
- **Mino**- nice, good
- **Zhoomiingweni**- s/he smiles
- **Apiitenimo**- s/he is so proud of self
- **Bi-izhaa**- s/he comes
- **Noodin**- wind, it is windy
- **Omakakii**- a frog
- **Ahaaw**- okay, come on
- **Anokii**- work
- **Gichi-mitig**- big tree
- **Maazhise**- s/he has things go wrong, has bad luck



5 Reasons Why Amik is Important



1. They improve water quality

Amikwag build dams which reduces soil erosion while also retaining sediment. The sediment is good because it absorbs and filters out things that could pollute the nibi (water) such as heavy metals, pesticides, and fertilizers.

2. They Increase Plant Diversity

Amik activity can increase plant diversity by as much as 33%. Once land is flooded and mitigoon and other vegetation is removed, other plant species emerge in its place. This provides food and cover for new species.

3. They store water during droughts

Amikwag can help lessen the effects of drought because their dams store nibi on the surface and is absorbed into the sub-surface of the land. This can increase stream flow during dry periods, making ecosystems less vulnerable to droughts.

4. They minimize flood risk

Beaver dams help minimize flood risk by slowing the flow of water, which can delay and reduce flood peaks further downstream.

5. They create wetland habitat for other species!

Amikwag create wetlands by building dams and creating ponds, which creates habitats for other species including giigoonyag (fish), mammals, waterfowl, songbirds, amphibians, and insects.



Extra Resources:

More Amik Information & Facts

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/beaver>

Mini BBC Documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyNA62FrKCE>

Amikwiish camera footage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5hrzxqPOsg>

Ningaabii'anong Set: Gichi-amikozow Book Ojibwe Language Word List Continued

- **Amikwiish**- a beaver lodge
- **Nigig**- otter
- **Wiidookaw**- help
- **Biibaagi**- s/he calls out, yells
- **Gichi-gashkendam**- very sad
- **Agaji'iwemagad**- ashamed
- **Bagizo**- s/he baths, goes swimming
- **Gizhiyaadage**- s/he swims fast
- **Waabam**- see
- **Mawadish**- visit
- **Mashkawaa**- it is strong, hard, dense
- **Azhashki**- mud
- **Asiniikaa**- rock or stone
- **Mitigoonsan**- tree branches
- **Ambe Omaa**- Come here
- **Waabadan**- come see
- **Aanzinaagwad**- it looks changed
- **Niijiiwag**- friends
- **Oshki**- new, fresh
- **Miinawaa**- and, also, again
- **Zaagi'idizo**- s/he loves self
- **Ojibwewinikaazo**- s/he is named in Ojibwe
- **Mino-dibikak**- good night



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