Name: Date:

Ms. Centonze Period:

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| **Patterns of Time**  *There is no one concept called “time.” Every culture has its own way of measuring time, its own idea of time. We think of a 35-40 hour workweek, a seven day week, a 15 minute break, a two day weekend and an eight or less hour work day. Other cultures have different ways of dividing up, or patterning time.* |

The basic unit of Iroquois time was the **cycle of the year.**Like so many parts of Iroquois life, the year was thought of as having two parts, summer and winter. Summer was the growing season and winter the season when the earth slept. Each season brought different work, such as planting, harvesting or hunting.

  Their year was divided into moons which were the periods of time it took for the moon to go through its phases (about a month). Many of the names of their months were connected with the seasons, such as “The Frogs Are Peeping,” “The End of Leaves,” and “When I Cough.”

  The Iroquois also seemed to have had weeks, although their weeks were a little different from ours. There were no days of rest. Their week was not separated into days of work and days of rest; each day followed the last in endless repetition.

The Iroquois day was also different from ours. It was not divided into seconds, minutes and hours. Nor was it marked by three meals, because the Iroquois only ate one meal a day. But since the cooking pot was always simmering over the fire, you could help yourself if you were hungry.

The Iroquois did notnumber their years with each year having a larger number than the last - 1989, 1990, 1991. We do not know how the Iroquois could tell one year from another unless it was by referring to some event that happened during a certain year. They thought of years in terms of generations: my father’s time or my great-grandfather’s time.

The Iroquois year began when the earth began to stir or thaw after the long cold snowy sleep of winter. One of the first signs that the earth was awakening was the spring run of fish. The fresh fish cooked over the fire must have tasted delicious after the dried food eaten throughout the winter. During the time of year we call March, when the days   were warmer, but the nights were still cool, it was time for the people to leave the village to tap the maple trees and gather the sap. The thin sweet sap was boiled down into syrup and made into sugar. This (maple) syrup was the only sweetener they had.

For this gift, the people held the first festival of the spring, the name of which we translate as “Thanks to the Maple.” The purpose of the festival was to give thanks to the maple and to the forest and to the Creator for both. It was also meant to give thanks for these things and to express a general feeling of happi­ness about their life. The day-long ceremonies included dancing, games, and the burning of sacred tobacco, ending with a feast.

When the leaf of the oak had grown to the size of a squirrel’s ear, it was time for planting. This some­times happened during what we call April, but usually not until our May or June.The seeds were soaked in water and herbs to help them grow. At the time of planting, work parties of women and children took the seeds outside the village and planted them in little hills - the corn, beans and the squash, “our supporters, the three sisters.” As they put the seeds in the earth, the sounds of their joking and laughter could be heard throughout the field.

After the seed was planted, the people held a “Planting Festival.” This was followed in June with the “Strawberry Festival” to celebrate the first fresh fruit of the year. Both of these lasted a day.

As the warm spring days turned to the heat of the summer, the corn grew tall in the fields. The time for the “Green Corn Festival” grew near. This was usually held in what we call August when the corn was ready to eat. It was a time for honoring not only the Master of Life but also his mother, the Corn Mother, from whose body the first crops grew. It was a time for the entire community to rejoice together, for now the people knew the crops would be good. On the first day of the festival, the chil­dren who were born since midwinter were named. Speeches were made and the Thanksgiving Address was given. Then the Feather Dance was performed. This was the most im­portant and probably the most beau­tiful of all the dances with which the Iroquois worshipped the Master of Life. After these rituals, tobacco was burned, other dances were held, and the people played games.

These daylight rituals were fol­lowed by social dances in the eve­ning, when the people were again in the realm of the left-handed twin. While the activities of the day were serious and quiet, the festivities of the night were gay and lively.

1. We think of a year as having four seasons. What seasons, did the Iroquois think a year had?

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1. How did the Iroquois name their months? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Name an example: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What month do you think that would be for us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How was the Iroquois week different from ours?

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Whose week would you prefer? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Did the Iroquois number their years as we do? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How could they tell one year from another? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What was the most important space and activity of the *summer*? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. When is the beginning of a U.S. year? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What symbolized the start of a new Iroquois year? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Which do you think makes more sense?

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1. What was the first festival of the new year?

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1. The Iroquois knew it was time to plant when the lead of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The next two festivals were the P \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Festival and the S \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Festival.
3. When was the G \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Festival held? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What happened on the first day of the festival of this festival?

1. During the Green Corn Festival there were daytime activities and nighttime activities. What was done during the day? What was done during the night?