



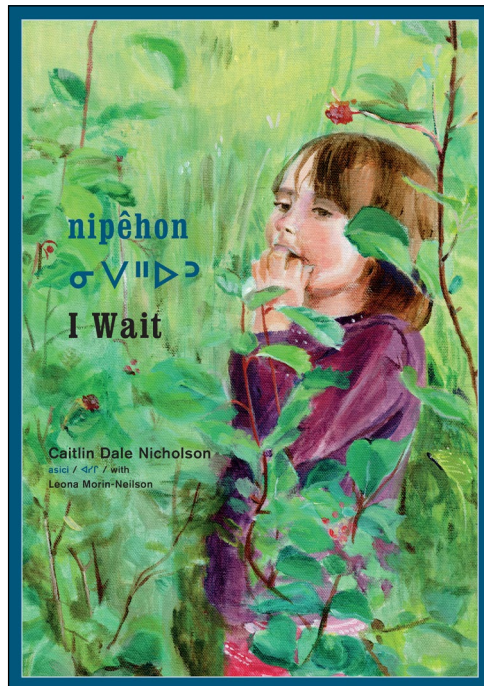
GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

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Written by Caitlin Dale Nicholson and Leona Morin-Neilson

Translated by Leona Morin-Neilson

Illustrated by Caitlin Dale Nicholson



**A quiet, gentle story written in Cree and English about
a family working together.**

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ages 4 to 7 / Grades K to 2

JUVENILE FICTION / People & Places / Canada; Indigenous Languages; Language Arts; Social Studies

Full-color illustrations throughout / 8.5 x 12.25 / 24 pages

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Ebook / 978-1-77306-504-5

groundwoodbooks.com

BEFORE READING

To increase students' oral language and written language skills, have students respond to any of the questions during discussions as a whole class, in small groups or in partners, and then record their responses in a journal, report or other written format.

► Cree is one of the largest language groups in Canada with dialects stretching across the entire country. See below for more about the languages.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/cree-syllabics>

COVER ILLUSTRATION

Looking at the cover of the book, pose the following questions:

- What do you see in the illustration?
- Who do you think is in this illustration?
- What do you think the person is doing?
- What season do you think this is? Why do you think that?
- What do you think the child is putting in their mouth? What clues do you see in the illustration that make you think that?

LANGUAGES

Looking at the title, ask students if they know what it says. Write the title down on the board. Discuss how you might pronounce the words. Keep a vocabulary list running for the duration of the story for both Cree and English words.

PICTURE WALK

Take a “picture walk” with students through the book. Discuss what you see in each of the illustrations (location, landscape, characters, activity, etc.).

OFFERING PRAYERS

In the book, it says, “nôhkom ayamihâw. ᓄᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂ Nôhkom prays. / nitayamihân. ᓄᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂ I pray.” Ask students to think about why they are praying. Prompt: What do you see them doing in the pictures? What else do you notice in the pictures?

See the websites listed on the last page of this guide for more information.

▶ Many Cree people pray to the Creator by offering tobacco with their prayers. Tobacco is one of the four sacred medicines (sweetgrass, tobacco, sage and cedar). Tobacco is often kept in a pouch called a tobacco pouch. Before picking plants from the earth, tobacco is offered to thank the Creator for providing them.

YARROW

Look at the illustration of the white flowers with yellow centers. It is wild yarrow. Ask students to describe this illustration. Write down the descriptive words that students generate. If possible, show a photograph of wild yarrow so students can generate additional descriptors of the plant and flower.

FEELINGS

Look at the last page of the story and ask students:

- What do you see the characters doing?
- How does this make you feel?
- How do you feel after you complete a task?
- How do you think they are feeling? What clues tell you that?
- Read the text and discuss why there is an exclamation mark after “We are done!” Discuss the purpose of this exclamation mark.

AFTER READING

TELL YOUR STORY

Have students generate on a graphic organizer (create your own) a list of things that they like to do with a grandparent or an adult. Once they have created a list, give students time to describe each activity in short sentences in a draft (one per page). Have students exchange stories and read them with a partner to get feedback on their work. Ask students to illustrate the story in a booklet format and share these with the class when complete.

PROCEDURAL WRITING

Ask students to predict what the characters are going to do with the flowers and leaves they picked. You can tell them that the characters are picking wild yarrow and share the recipe at the back of the book. Read the recipe together.

Make tea or a drink with the class. Then create success criteria based on the essential elements of a recipe. Do a shared writing activity as a class, creating your own recipe to follow for a drink. This can be extended to other recipes and individual writing opportunities.

DEDICATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing is often a result of something that interests us and is done with the help of others. Refer to the peer editing that students engage in with their own writing. Authors often write dedications and acknowledgments in their finished books as a way to thank those who supported their time and writing. Turn to the back of the book and read through the dedications and acknowledgments of both the author/illustrator and translator. Examine the key messages (e.g., learning lessons from others, different generations of people working together, patience, harvesting herbs, family, etc.) and discuss with students.

