

FIRST NATIONS: Native Cultures of Canada

UNIT OVERVIEW

Students examine the First Nations of Canada in this fast-paced unit. Exciting activities range from Inuit string games to constructing a teepee. In general, students participate in meaningful activities associated with the theme of each lesson which are followed by related overhead notes. This format helps to stress process rather than concentrating on memorization of factual information.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- 1. Land Bridge Theory** - Students role play the coming of the first people to North America and complete a map activity.
- 2. West Coast Art** (West Coast Culture) - Students make an animal drawing in the style of West Coast Native artists.
- 3. Teepee Time** (Plains Culture) - Students construct realistic teepees and decorate with traditional story telling symbols.
- 4. Making A Canoe** (Woodland Culture) - Students construct paper canoes typical of Woodland Culture.
- 5. Inuit Games** (Arctic Culture) - Inuit pastimes such as "The Rock Staring Game", "String Games" and "The Seal's Nose Kick" are played.
- 6. White Man's Gift** (European Contact) - Students act out a short Kiowa Native tale entitled "The White Man's Gift" which tells about smallpox and disease brought by Europeans to North America.
- 7. Review** - A review is included.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 1. Sign Language**
- 2. Wordsearch**
- 3. Crossword**
- 4. Mini Dictionary**
- 5. Movie Review - Pocahontis**
- 6. Dances With Wolves (View Segments)**
- 7. Enrichment Crossword**
- 8. Keepers of the Earth**

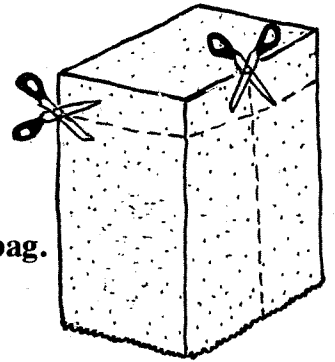


PLAINS CULTURE - TEEPEE TIME

NAME: _____

Instructions:

1. Cut off the bottom of a large brown paper bag and cut the bag up and down along the seam where it joins together.
2. Cut out the teepee pattern on the next page.
3. Lay the brown paper flat and trace the pattern onto the brown paper bag.
4. Cut the pattern out of the bag.
5. Crumple this paper bag pattern into a ball and soak with water.
6. Squeeze out any extra water.
7. Carefully uncrumple the wet paper and set out to dry.
8. Once the teepee pattern is dry, add coloured symbols using pencil crayons. The symbols start at the bottom and work their way around the teepee telling a kind of history. (Some symbols and their meanings are shown below)



9. Put glue on the tabs above and below the doorway and bring the shape into a teepee form. Press the tabs together and when the glue dries you have made a small sized teepee. Bend the smoke flaps at the top of the teepee outwards.

LESSON #5 - INUIT - Games

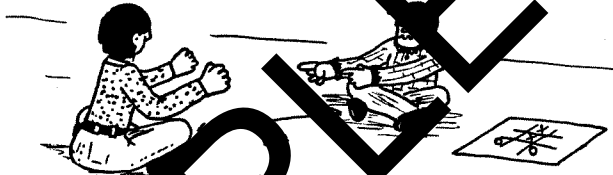
Student Objectives and Activities

- Students learn rules for and play three Inuit games.
- Students complete notes on the Inuit focusing on how Inuit have adapted to life in a harsh environment.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

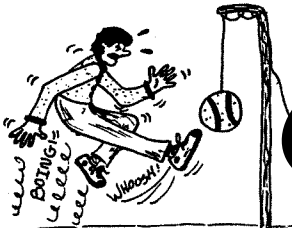
The Rock Staring Game

Start by demonstrating the rock game. Hold a rock in one hand but don't let students see which hand. Challenge students determine which hand has the rock - **without talking**. All students have to go by is facial expression and quickly learn to observe each other carefully. Give students one minute with the winner making an X or O.



Seal's Nose Kick

This athletic Inuit game is more competitive in nature and requires a bit of skill. Find a soft area (grass or snow) and hang a volleyball that has been placed in a plastic grocery bag from the branches of a tree. A tetherball which already has a rope attached will work even better. In a gym, the ball can be hung from a basketball net overtop of mats. Start low and move the ball higher similar to a high jumping bar. The rules are simple:



Students move back a few meters run toward the ball, jump and kick it. Students must kick the ball with whichever foot leaves the ground **last**. Students must land on two feet.

Cat's Cradle - String Games

This activity requires string or preferably wool which does not tangle as easily. Once each pair of students has a suitable piece of yarn or string in a loop, just let students follow the instructions and stand back. (Cats Cradle is easier shown than learned by following diagrammed instructions)

***** Note *****

For students who are really into this string stuff and would like to learn some of the more difficult steps of the Cat's Cradle game, an excellent book for kids called Cat's Cradle, Owl's Eyes: A Book of String Games by Camilla Gryski could be recommended as enrichment. (Kids Can Press)

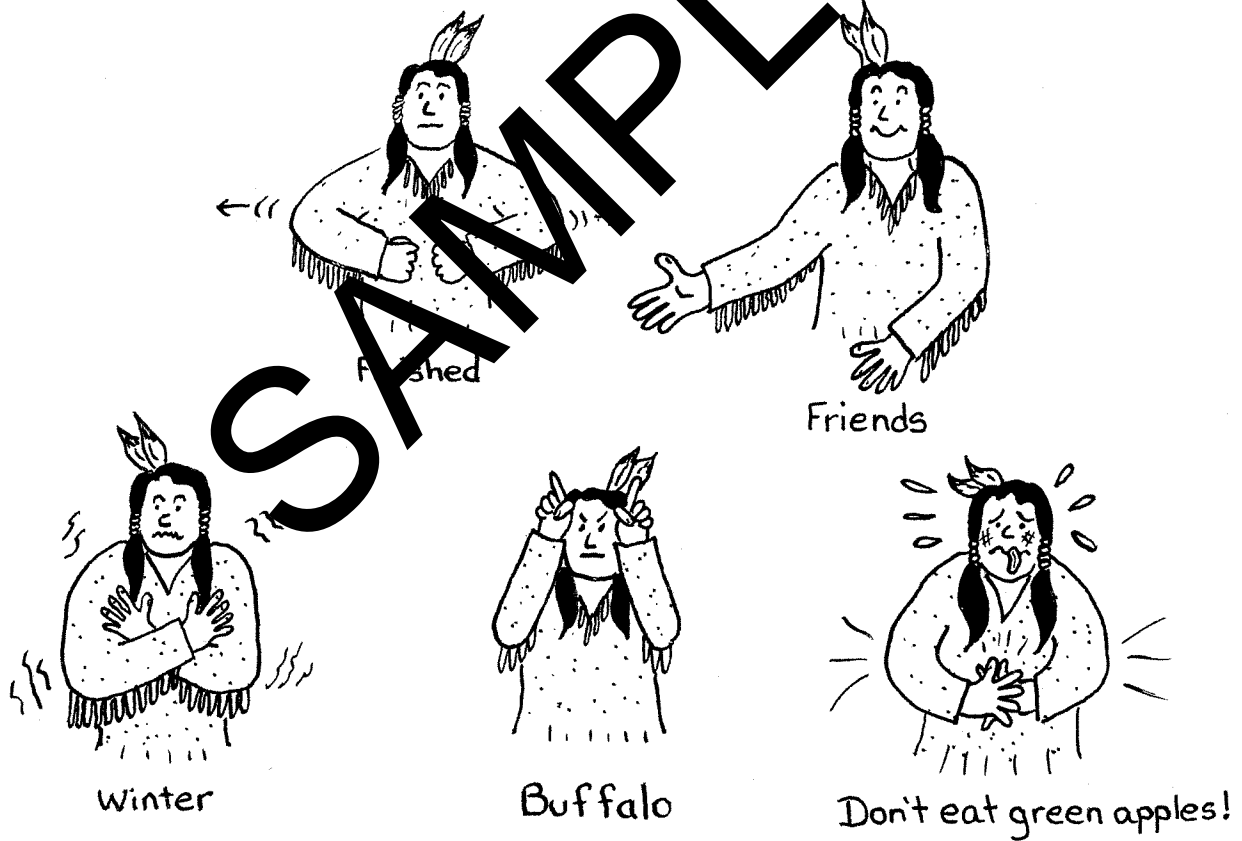
- Continue with the notes when the games are done.

OPTIONAL LESSON #1 - Sign Language

In pairs, students tell a simple story using sign language that they develop themselves. Write the following short conversation on the board for students to use as a guide.

- A Hello, how's it going?
B Not bad.
A Let's go down to the river and catch some fish.
B O.K., but first I have to finish carving this beaver sculpture for the potlatch.
A I have to go to the big hill to get some firewood for the potlatch too.
B See you at the river in one hour.
A Bye.
B Bye.

The rules are that once the lesson begins, **no one must speak a word**. (The teacher can even give the entire lesson without spoken word just to go along with the theme) After inventing and practising their signs, students can perform their play in front of their classmates. Included below are some samples of real sign language.



*** Note ***

This is one of my favourite lessons since there is absolutely no talking. The sign language also works well for going on trips to the library. Just say "It's OK to talk - as long as you use sign language."