

Lesson Plans – Grades 7-Higher Education: **Games of the North**



Subject Areas:
Social Studies • Reading & Language Arts • Native American Studies
Geography • Health & Fitness

Procedural Notes for Educators

Film Synopsis

Four Inuit athletes travel throughout Alaska competing in the ancestral games of strength. Acrobatic and explosive, these sports are vital for survival in the frigid, hostile Arctic. As waves of change sweep across their traditional lands, their role is stronger than ever.

A Note to Educators

These lesson plans are created for students in grades 7 through Higher Education. The lessons are designed to be 15 minutes in length for each activity. Each lesson can be adapted to meet your needs.

Accommodations for Special Learners: Classroom teachers are encouraged to make any accommodations necessary for their students, enabling all students to participate on some level.

Assessment

A variety of assessments can be created for each lesson. It is up to the classroom teacher's discretion as to what they feel is going to inform instruction.



Helpful Websites for Educators

- www.alaskanative.net
- www.ankn.uaf.edu
- www.alaskool.org
- www.echospace.org
- www.gamesofthenorth.com

Objectives and Curriculum Standards

Objectives

These activities are designed for students to take away a deeper understanding of the Inupiat people after watching the film *Games of the North*.

The Inupiat Tribe is comprised of an amazing group of people who learned to survive the harsh weather of the arctic through their games. Through these activities, students will make the connection that the ability to adapt to changes, while maintaining a strong sense of *mental-toughness* can be a key factor of survival.

Students will:

1. **Learn** about the history of the Inupiat people and understand the general dynamics of their culture.
2. **Explore** the concepts of preserving traditions and different ways of sharing and passing on knowledge to others.
3. **Analyze** the connection between the survival skills of the Inupiat people and their own challenges.
4. **Apply** the concepts of survival and fortitude to their own lives.



"No matter how much our circumstances change, I hope our people will always stop from time to time to do the same—renew the bonds that connect us across five hundred generations."

— Willie Hensley, Inupiat Leader

National Curriculum Standards

Geography Standards

- **Standard 1**
How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools and technologies to acquire, process and report information.
- **Standard 4**
The physical and human characteristics of places.
- **Standard 14**
How human actions modify the physical environment.
- **Standard 17**
How to apply geography to interpret the past.

NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts

- **Standard 7**
Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems.
- **Standard 8**
Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- **Standard 9**
Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions and social roles.

National Standards for Sport and Physical Education

- **Standard 1**
Students demonstrate motor skills and movement patterns to perform a variety of physical activities.
- **Standard 2**
Students understand movement concepts, principals and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.
- **Standard 3**
Students utilize appropriate motor skills tactics and movement concepts/principles while participating in physical activity.
- **Standard 5**
Students demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in a physical activity setting.
- **Standard 6**
Students choose physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge and/or social interaction.

National Education Technology Standards for Students

- **Creativity and Innovation**
Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.
 - **Communication and Collaboration**
Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.
 - **Research and Information Fluency**
Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate and use information.
 - **Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making**
Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources.
 - **Digital Citizenship**
Students understand human, cultural and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.
- THESE STANDARDS WERE NOT IN THE COPY...DO THEY EVEN BELONG HERE?**

Procedures & Materials/ Resources Needed by Activity

1 Did You Know?

Procedural Steps: Distribute Student Handout.

Objectives: Students will gain background knowledge of Alaska and of the Inupiat people.

Materials/Resources Needed: Student Handout; Highlighters (optional: student may highlight important ideas)

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes.



**"These aren't just games,
they are survival skills."**

— Big Bob Aiken (Inupiat)

2 Vocabulary

After viewing the film, you should have a deeper understanding of the Inupiat people. Some of the terms used in the film have a slightly different meaning when used in the context of the arctic north. Please write the definition you think best describes the term when used to describe the Inupiat people.

Procedural Steps: Distribute Student Handout.

Objectives: Students will understand the vocabulary words in context of the Inupiat and the *Games of the North*.

Materials/Resources Needed: Student Handout and Pencil/Pen.

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes.

3 Ideas for Action

Procedural Steps: Distribute Student Handout.

Objectives: Students will take what they learned from the film and apply it to their own lives.

Materials/Resources Needed: Student Handout and Pencil/Pen.

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes.

4 Writing Exercise

Procedural Steps: Distribute Student Handout.

Objectives: Students will write broadly about how the film made them feel and what it has made them think about.

Materials/Resources Needed: Pencil/ Pen.

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes.

5 What Would You Do?

Procedural Steps: Distribute Student Handout.

Objectives: Students will respond to scenarios related to the film and identify what they would do in that instance.

Materials/Resources Needed: Student Handout and Pencil/Pen.

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes.

6 Art Exercise

Procedural Steps: Distribute any needed art supplies.

Objectives: Students will artistically express themselves in response to the film.

Materials/Resources Needed: Depending on what supplies are available, a variety of mediums may be used. Pencil and paper, paint and art paper, or you may differentiate with your own teaching supplies.

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes. (Time may be extended for higher quality results.)



7 Digital Exploration

Procedural Steps: Distribute Student Handout, identify the technology at your school that would work and get students access to it.

Objectives: For students to identify the importance of understanding different cultures and how that changes ones perception on he/ she will view the world.

Materials/Resources Needed: In order for students to create a short film, they must have access to technology. Instructions can be adapted for this activity based on what is available to you at your school.

Estimated Time Required: The time requirements depend on how extensive you would like this activity to be. This activity can be an after-school or homework assignment, in which they can work with a partner or group.

8 Physical Education Exercise

Procedural Steps: Distribute material, explain the rules of the game, and organize students.

Objectives: For students to experience playing an Inupiat game.

Materials/Resources Needed: A stick or dowel, approximately an inch and a quarter in diameter and eighteen inches long. A small area on the floor, and a mat for contestants to sit on is optional.

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes.

9 In Review

Procedural Steps: Distribute Student Handout and blank paper for the exploration activity.

Objectives: An end cap that brings together all that was learned throughout the lessons. In the exploration activity, students are encouraged to take their knowledge that they gained and incorporate it in their life by creating a game authentic to the conditions that they live in.

Materials/Resources Needed: "In Review" Student Handout, Paper, Pencil/Pen.

Estimated Time Required: 15 minutes each for the In Review and Exploration Activities.



Educator Assessment

1. Student Assessment

- A variety of assessments can be created for each lesson. It is up to the classroom teacher's direction as to what they feel is going to inform instruction.

2. We'd Love to Hear From You

- Please take a moment to complete our Educational Survey online at www.visionmaker.org/edusurvey.

3. Additional Resources to Consider

- www.alaskanative.net
- www.ankn.uaf.edu
- www.alaskool.org
- www.echospace.org
- www.gamesofthenorth.com



Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 1: Did You Know?

Alaska as a State

Alaska is a land of many Native peoples—the Athabaskan, Inupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Central Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Aleut, Alutiiq, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people of Alaska living in cities, towns and villages separated by vast differences, each in a unique geographical region. Although there are many languages, creeds and philosophies, Alaska Natives share many common goals and values.

For thousands of years and to this day, the basic tenets of Native traditions have sustained Alaska Native people. A wealth of history, wisdom and knowledge passes from generation to generation, ensuring survival through the challenges of every age. Today, Native people face rapid changes through technological advances, a mixed cash and subsistence economy system, and a dominant popular culture imported from the Lower 48. In the past, Alaska Natives have dealt with issues such as disease, rapid loss of cultural identity, substance abuse and criminal activity. However, one of the basic strengths of all indigenous peoples is adaptability. The strength of traditions and the determination of today's Alaska Natives will overcome these obstacles.

The Inupiaq People

The Inupiaq people call themselves “The Real People,” and live in a region that stretches from St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea along the coastal area to the northern Canadian border and beyond. Their traditional territory also extends inland to the Brooks Range.

In this severe Arctic climate, cooperation was critical to survival. People worked together in groups related by kinship and marriage. A senior hunter and his wife led each family group of three or four generations. It was his responsibility to distribute the food that his crew harvested.

Traditional subsistence patterns depend upon season and location. Spring and Fall whale hunts occur as coastal and inland villagers respond to seasonal migration patterns. The hunters also take seals during this time.

The rivers and the sea also provide fish and crab. A spring herring harvest is followed by pink and chum salmon runs in late summer and early fall. Crab is harvested in the fall and winter and sheefish and whitefish are caught through the ice.

These traditional subsistence patterns led to the development of a complex tool kit. A sophisticated system of weapons and tools was developed for hunting the bowhead whale. The system included harpoons with toggle heads, lances, lines, seal bladder and seal skin floats.

The Inupiat were some of the last groups to encounter Europeans, with no sustained contact until the arrival of Yankee whalers in the 1850s. The adaptability and competitive spirit of these cultures carried them through change while helping them retain traditional values.

Significant Events in Alaskan History

October 18, 1867	Alaska was purchased by the United States. William Henry Seward was Secretary of State under President Abraham Lincoln when he began negotiating a deal for the United States to buy Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million—or 2 cents an acre. This purchase was mockingly referred to at the time as "Seward's Folly," since it was believed that Alaska possessed no valuable natural resources.
1890s	Gold rushes in Alaska and nearby Yukon Territory brought thousands of miners and settlers to Alaska. Alaska was granted territorial status in 1912.
January 3, 1959	Alaska was granted statehood and became the 49 th state.
1964	The massive "Good Friday Earthquake" killed 131 people and leveled several villages.
1968	The discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay and the 1977 completion of the Trans-Alaska pipeline led to an oil boom.
1971	The <i>Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act</i> authorized Alaska Natives to receive a title to 44 million acres of public land in Alaska and \$962 million in cash as settlement of their aboriginal claim to land in the state. The act established a system of village and regional Native corporations to manage the lands and cash payments.
1989	The Exxon Valdez hit a reef in the Prince William Sound, spilling between 11 and 35 million U.S. gallons of crude oil over 1,100 miles of coastline.
2010	Alaska still recovering from the effects of the Exxon Valdez spill, over 20 years later.

Alaska State Facts

Capital: Juneau, Alaska; Located in the southeast region of Alaska.

Motto: "North to the Future"; This motto was created by Juneau Richard Peter and was meant to represent Alaska as a land of promise.

Nickname: "The Last Frontier"

Seal: The state seal includes images of the aurora, icebergs, mining, farming, fisheries, fur seals and a railroad. The state seal was originally designed and adopted in 1910 while Alaska was still a territory.

Song: "Alaska's Flag"

State Flower: Forget-me-not

Population: 686,000 (according to the 2010 U.S. Census)

Alaska Area: 586,412 square miles (two and times larger than the state of Texas)



Historical Timeline of Major Events for the Inupiat People

1884	Sheldon Jackson appointed as general agent for education in Alaska.
1890	First missions established in Alaska north of the Bering Strait.
1891	Sheldon Jackson introduces Reindeer in Alaska.
1898	Gold Rush in Nome.
1918	Migratory Bird Treaty Act essentially made criminals out of most Alaska Natives who hunted ducks and geese in the spring as part of their diet.
1918-1919	Influenza Epidemic.
1924	Congress extends citizenship to all Alaska Natives, without terminating tribal rights and property.
1925	Diphtheria Epidemic confronts Nome, Alaska.
1928	Native children were given the right to attend public school.
1931	Control of education among the Natives of Alaska was transferred to the Office of Indian Affairs.
1936	Alaska Indian Reorganization Act is expanded to include Alaska Native governments.
1945	Alaska passes a law ending legal segregation in Alaska.
1955	Constitutional Convention, out of 55 delegates, only one Native.
1959	Alaska Statehood Act includes provisions to not take Native lands from Native people.
1966	Alaska Federation of Natives formed in Anchorage, Alaska.
1971	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act becomes law.
1980	Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which created millions of acres of refuges, national forest, scenic withdrawals and other protected areas.

Major Competitions for Native Games

World Eskimo Indian Olympics (W.E.I.O.)

An annual competition since 1906. W.E.I.O. draws contestants and dance groups across Alaska and northern communities in Canada, Greenland, Finland, Norway and Russia.

International Arctic Winter Games

Held every second winter since 1970, in different circumpolar host Nations, this international Olympic event draws athletes from Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Finland, Norway and Russia.

Native Youth Olympics

This annual highlight for Alaskan high school students has been held since 1971. In 2008, more than 30 teams from every corner of the state journeyed to Anchorage, Alaska, to compete.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 2: Vocabulary

Exercise 1: Vocabulary Predictability

Prior to viewing the documentary *Games of the North*, please take a moment to write a definition for each of the vocabulary words or phrases listed below. Use your prior knowledge to write what you think each word or phrase means. After viewing the documentary, go back and write down what you think the vocabulary word or phrase means now. If you changed your prediction after viewing the film, identify the clue words that helped you with the definition.

Additional Resource: Inupiaq words available at www.alaskool.org/language/dictionaries/inupiaq/dictionary.htm

Inupiaq - Singular
Inupiat - Plural
Inupiaq - Language

Aaktuq - self-asserting, proud of himself
Atanniutiksrq - judgment to come
Irrusriq - personality, inner man, motive, spirit

Games:

Predicted Meaning: _____

After Viewing: _____

Clue Words: _____

Survival Skills:

Predicted Meaning: _____

After Viewing: _____

Clue Words: _____

Unforgiving Arctic:

Predicted Meaning: _____

After Viewing: _____

Clue Words: _____

Polar Winter:

Predicted Meaning: _____

After Viewing: _____

Clue Words: _____

Endurance:

Predicted Meaning: _____

After Viewing: _____

Clue Words: _____

Traditions:

Predicted Meaning: _____

After Viewing: _____

Clue Words: _____

Mental-Toughness:

Predicted Meaning: _____

After Viewing: _____

Clue Words: _____



Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 3: Ideas for Action

Please answer the following discussion questions:

What ceremonies in your life celebrate your culture? What ceremonies are celebrated in this film?

Who in your life makes you see from a different point of view and why?

Discussion questions continued on next page.

The games in the movie are personal competitions for the athletes. What activity in your life is extremely challenging yet strictly personal and why?

What can you pass down to the younger generation and how would you go about teaching that knowledge?

What is the role of Elders in your culture?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 5: What Would You Do?

Please answer the following discussion questions:

1. If your culture was evaporating, what would you do to preserve it?

2. If you were in a situation that required survival skills, what skills do you have to overcome the challenge?

3. The word "survival" requires different skills depending on where you live. What survival skills are needed in an urban environment?

4. In the documentary *Games of the North*, there was a strong sense of identity, culture and family. What activities in your life are driven by the need to maintain something that is important to your family?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 6: Art Exercise

An important form of communication and expression in all of the Alaska Native cultures is through art. During this activity you are asked to respond to the film through artistic expression.

Exercise 1

Draw a scene which the video inspired you to create. For example, you may have envisioned a hunter on ice, alone in the arctic using his/her survival skills to finish their journey; you would then draw this scene that you had imagined.

Exercise 2

Another option involves artistic expression through words. Please write a poem, song or another form to describe Alaska Native culture, the games, tradition, passing on of values or any other big idea taken from the video.

**You may incorporate exercise 1 with exercise 2 by drawing a scene with your poem included in the art. Creativity is not limited but encouraged!*



Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 7: Digital Exploration

Exercise

Games of the North is a film that highlights a culture, which many are not familiar with. One of the big ideas in this film, and an Inupiat value, is to share and pass on knowledge. In the case of the Inupiat games, if the knowledge is not passed on it could be lost. Today technology is an excellent tool for us to share information.

In this activity you are asked to create a short film telling the story of another culture that you would like to know more about. You should have access to someone who is a member of this culture so that you can interview that person or group of people.

Find out more information about this culture by interviewing members: What are important beliefs and traditions? What is the language or dialect that is spoken? What are the rituals or customs? Those are just some examples of questions; you are encouraged to come up with your own!



Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 8: Physical Education Exercise

Exercise 1: Eskimo Stick Pull

Equipment Needed:

- A stick or dowel, approximately 1.25 inches in diameter and 18 inches long
- A small area on the floor
- A mat for contests to sit on (optional)

Instructions:

1. Two athletes sit facing each other on the floor with the soles of their feet touching.
2. Knees are bent at about 45 degrees.
3. The stick is placed slightly above their toes and grasped by the athletes, with the palms facing down.
4. One person's hands are on the inside and the other's hands are on the outside. All hands must be touching.
5. Once the pulling begins, athletes may not change their grip, nor may they jerk the stick.
6. Contestants use the strength of their legs, arms and back to attempt to either pull the stick out of their opponent's grip or raise their opponent off the ground and pull him over.
7. Spotters may be used during the competition. Spotters sit on the floor at right angles to the contestants and places their feet against the upper thighs of the athlete's sitting against the sides of their feet to keep the contestants from falling over sideways.



8. The winner of the competition is successful in two out of three rounds. The winner of a round is given the same hand position for the next round.

Exercise 2: Create Your Own Game

Now it is your turn to create a game! Please design a game or games that can be taught to others, which teaches the survival skills of the area in which you live. You should consider whether you live in an urban or rural environment, the traditions that you would like to pass down, and the age of the person who will be able to play your game. As you may have noticed in the film, both Elders and youth could play many of the games and some of the games required great athletic ability.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Games of the North Activity 9: In Review

Top 8 Takeways to Remember

The word "community" has been used to help identify the following key points to take away from *Games of the North: Playing for Survival*.

1 The Inupiaq are a group of Alaska Native people that live in the region that stretches from St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea along the coastal area to the northern Canadian border and beyond. The Inupiaq people are a group that thrives in some of the coldest conditions.

2 In the "unforgiving arctic" survival depends on agility, strength and endurance.

3 The games were created to pass the time in the long polar winters and to bring communities together. Each game is linked to the past. The games build strength, mental toughness and focus.

4 The games are a personal competition between yourself and no one else. The games teach skills for survival. Many of the Native games build endurance.

5 The Inupiaq people are aware that the younger generations, "the youth," must learn the traditions in order for them to not disappear. Inupiaq leaders are afraid the youth are losing interest in hunting and



other traditions. Leaders are giving youth opportunities to connect with their culture.

6 The indigenous athletic events, like W.E.I.O. and the Arctic Winter Games, unite Native people and allow an opportunity for comradery and the sharing of tradition.

7 An Inupiaq value is the sharing of knowledge; this is demonstrated in the film as the games are passed from generation to generation.

8 The games help the Inupiaq people adapt to change. As the film states, "The games you play are given to you so you are fully aware of who you are inside."

Credits

About the Author



Clare Gauster was born and raised in Kodiak, Alaska. She is currently an educator for the Anchorage School District in Anchorage, Alaska. Clare believes that one of the most important things a teacher can do is connect with students. When teachers integrate cultural activities into their

curriculum, students feel celebrated and are more able to understand those who are different from them. "We need students who can understand the world from more than one 'lens,'" said Gauster. She holds a Masters of Arts in Teaching and is completing work towards a Masters of Educational Leadership Degree with expected graduation in May 2011.

About the Producer/Director



Jonathon Stanton has proven his abilities to balance the unique demands of producing while staying true to the story through his resume in film and television. The wilderness has greatly influenced Jonathon's style by sculpting his sense of self. His experiences as an adventure athlete, outdoor

guide, photographer, writer and journalist have uniquely shaped his filmmaking career. In the past nine years of producing, he has followed his passions into a diverse range of genres including feature film, documentary, commercial, music video, television and corporate—always collaborating with the best team possible.

About VisionMaker Video

VisionMaker Video, a service of Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT), with major funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), is the premier source for quality Native American educational and home videos. Profits from video sales are invested in new NAPT productions. NAPT shares Native stories with the world through support of the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media.



NAPT

Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc.

VisionMaker Video 



Answer Key - Activity 2: Vocabulary

Games: Played in local villages and on the international stage. Traditional games are a personal competition that builds skills of mental-toughness, endurance and focus—all skills that are critical for surviving the harsh arctic weather.

Survival Skills: Skills that help you survive the grueling pain and fatigue that hunters in the arctic experience. One example of survival skills would be knowledge of how to defeat frostbit by walking on your knuckles.

Unforgiving Arctic: There cannot be mistakes in the arctic due to extreme conditions and the overall power of Mother Nature. It is critical for hunters to be able to navigate and know the land.

Polar Winter: The period of winter darkness in the Polar Regions, both northern and southern.

Endurance: The combination of mental and physical ability to meet your objective while in the arctic.

Traditions: Alaska Native beliefs and values that are passed down from Elders onto the younger generations.

Mental-Toughness: The ability to concentrate and stay focused when your body is telling you otherwise.

Definitions provided by the author of this Lesson Plan. Inupiaq words came from www.alaskool.org/language/dictionaries/inupiaq/dictionary.htm