

## **The Inuksuk: Symbolism and Cultural Identity Lesson Plan**

**Submitted by:** Blake Johnson

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### **Description:**

This activity allows students to get out doors while simultaneously allowing them to be creative in the construction of their own inuksuk (stone formation). Students can create their very own inuksuk with their own symbolism, while learning about the inuksuk that are present in Canada. This activity also encourages appreciation of Inuit culture and analytical thinking when applying similar symbolic concepts to their own landscape and lives. This lesson would be great as part of a unit on the Inuit people or the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics that uses the inuksuk as its symbol.

### **Grade Level(s):**

Suitable for Grades 4-7

### **Subject(s):**

Social Studies/World History

### **Duration:**

Two sections- 1 hour construction, and write up  
30 min class presentation

### **Goal:**

The goal is for students to recognize the importance of the Inuksuk as a tool of the Inuit people and a symbol of Canada and for students to apply the idea of the symbolic representation to their own lives.

### **Objectives:**

Students will

- build an Inuksuk with materials found outside of classroom such as sticks, leaves pinecones, etc. These materials can be collected beforehand from home or from the school's playground.
- identify aspects of their design adapted from Inuit culture and explain the design's symbolic significance.
- write a paragraph that compares and contrasts the impact of Inuit and American landscape and culture on design.
- Give an oral presentation to the class about their design that expresses knowledge and understanding of both the use of symbolism and Inuit culture.

### **Standards:**

This lesson meets WA state and national social studies by having students think analytically about location: what makes them who they are while simultaneously learning about other cultures like the Inuit's and appreciating their role in the world today.

### **Background Information:**

Before this activity, students will have examined the history of the Inuit people and how they used inuksuit in the past as navigation tools and how inuksuit are used symbolically today by the Inuit, Canadians and others around the world. They will also learn about standard "types" of inuksuit built by the Inuit. This will provide the basis on which to write a compare and contrast paragraph about the inuksuk created in class.

## **Materials**

- Outdoor materials (leaves, rocks, sticks, etc) for construction of Inuksuk.
- Glue or other adhesive to insure stable inuksuit.
- Note cards that identify points for comparison and contrast of student-created inuksuit to Inuit inuksuit.

## **Procedures:**

1. Each student will draft a design for their inuksuk so that they know what materials they need to collect as well as what the inuksuk (or each section of it) represents. Students may use Internet resources to see other examples of Inuit inuksuit for inspiration.
2. Each student will collect materials and construct their own inuksuk. While glue is drying, students will write a paragraph that compares and contrasts their own inuksuk to similar formations by the Inuit.
3. Each student will give a two-three minute oral presentation to the class about their completed project and the significance of its symbolism. Symbols can be representations of what influences each child or what helps to guide them, just as the Inuksuk guided the Inuit across the tundra.

## **Evaluation:**

Each presentation will be evaluated by both peers and the teacher based on the following 15-point rubric for project effort:

- |   |                 |               |                 |
|---|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| • Quality of Design and Construction:                                     | 3 Strong Effort | 2 Fair Effort | 1 Little Effort |
| • Understanding of Symbolism (Presentation)                               | 3 Strong Effort | 2 Fair Effort | 1 Little Effort |
| • Communication of Ideas (Presentation)                                   | 3 Strong Effort | 2 Fair Effort | 1 Little Effort |
| • Completion of Notecards (pre-writing)<br>added to peer score by teacher | 3 Strong Effort | 2 Fair Effort | 1 Little Effort |
| • Completion of Paragraph Analysis<br>added to peer score by teacher      | 3 Strong Effort | 2 Fair Effort | 1 Little Effort |

## **Additional Notes:**

Many resources can be found on the importance of inuksuit to the Inuit people. For more background information on the subject visit [www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca) or [www.ainc-inac.ga.ca](http://www.ainc-inac.ga.ca).