

The Inuksuk Project

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Description:

Students will design and build their own Inuksuk. The *Inuksuk*, which are stones placed by the Inuit in such a manner as to resemble a human figures, have long been recognized as the 'compass' of the Arctic. The orientation of the stones give guidance by marking a trail on the tundra for hunters.

Grade Level:

Elementary or Middle School or

Subjects:

Social Studies

Objectives:

Students will learn what an Inuksuk is, how it is constructed, and what place they have in the lives of the Inuit people while learning about the cultural significance of this stone formation. This lesson is designed to touch lightly on essential learning areas of geography, communication, art appreciation, and listening skills.

Materials:

1. *The Inuksuk Book*, by Mary Wallace, Owl Books 70 The Esplanade Suite 400, Toronto, Ontario M5E, 1R2 also distributed through Firefly Books, 230 Fifth Ave. Suite 1607, New York, NY, 10001.
2. Map of Canada outlining Nunavut.
3. Notecard for each student although they could use a half sheet of paper.
4. Student selects and finds his/her own stones and uses them in the project. The teacher may, however, want to bring in a supply of stones to class.

Procedure:

This project could be introduced in one day and after a few days students could show their final project; however, I'm choosing a six-day time frame so that while students are working at home, I'll be covering folk tales of the area.

Day 1:

Map/geography lesson to learn about location of Nunavut. Teacher builds a framework of understanding by drawing on students prior knowledge of the geography as well as by introducing new information. (see bibliography for suggested books and web cites.). The lesson will also contain a brainstorming session in which students imagine how people of the area communicated with each other over such a vast area land before the time of telephones and satellite dishes.

Day 2:

Review from previous day. Have them share other ways to communicate with others besides through words or talking. Ask students what types of symbols they use instead of words to communicate with others. Finally, show pictures of Inukshuuk, (note this is the plural spelling of the word) and share reasons the Inuit used them. (While showing examples I suggest using the Mary Wallace book pg 15, 17, 31, 33, 35, 39, 43, 47.) If time allows close with a short folktale. I suggest pg. 16 from the *Inquit, Threatened Culture* book mentioned in the bibliography.

Day 3:

Review uses of the Inuksuk; show the teacher model; and assign the project. Explain the process of building an Inuksuk to the students.

Day 4:

Answer questions for clarification from students. Share another folktale. Please refer to another section of our unit, which may work into our lesson time today and tomorrow using themes of study.

Day 5:

Presentation

1. Students bring in projects and reassemble them for the display.
2. Students place their display card beside their project.
3. Individuals share the reasoning behind building their Inuksuk.

Assessment:

See the Student Rubric below.

RUBRIC FOR INUKSUK PROJECT

Student's Name _____

Project stands unsupported by other materials 5 4 3 2 1

Project contains 6-15 rocks/stones 10 9 8 7 6
(one could allow for more points if more stones were used)

Diagram is neatly drawn and followed to
Aid in reassembly 5 4 3 2 1

Project includes brief explanation of
On display card of Inuksuk, the
Reasoning for structure or its special
Use, and diagram is included 10 9 8 7 6 5

Penmanship carefully completed,
All spelling is correct, card is in ink 5 4 3

Total _____/35

Teacher comments: