

# Synopsis of Qimuksik · (Dog Team) DVD

by Jayson Kunnuk

- Dad teaching his son about survival: navigation, ice thickness
- Dad being a role model
- Tracking caribou by examining hoof prints and using the raven's flight direction and sound
- Skinning a caribou – special way to do this for clothing (instead of random use)
- Relationship with the dogs: man and dogs have a very special connection: they work together and one cannot live without the other. The man feeds the dogs and working with dogs has many benefits (unlike a skidoo, dogs don't run out of gas!). Dogs are useful for polar bear hunting. The dogs know where there is thin ice, know how to avoid danger while travelling. The dogs can find their way home, even during a white-out or blizzard.

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# Qimuksik · (Dog Team) DVD

(kee-mook-sik) · Spring 1945 · Historical Re-creation · 28 minutes

## Content Areas

Social Studies, History, Language Arts, Art

## Objective

Prior to watching **Qimuksik (Dog Team)**, students will complete a KWL Chart and will learn general information about Nunavut and the Inuit. Following the film, students will revisit their chart, adding any information they learned during the lesson. Students will then reflect on the film and illustrate a scene that they recall, complete with a brief description.

## Materials

- **Qimuksik (Dog Team)** DVD
- KWL Chart – 1 per student
- **Qimuksik (Dog Team)** Follow-up Assignment – 1 per student
- Chart paper with large KWL chart
- Classroom map of world and Canada

## Activity

- 1 Write “Life in the Arctic” on the board and break students into small groups. Give each student a KWL Chart (What I Think I Know, What I Want to Know, What I’ve Learned). If students are unfamiliar with the chart, explain that in the first column, students will list what they think they know about life in the Arctic. Stress that this is different from what they know. Encourage students to list anything that comes to mind, regardless of whether or not they are certain it is a true fact. In the second column, students will list anything they would like to learn about life in the Arctic.
- 2 Ask students if they are able to fill in the third column. Explain that as students learn information about the Arctic, they will add to the What I’ve Learned Column.



## Qimuksik · (Dog Team)



- 3 Assign the roles of Reader (shares the information with the class), Scribe (writes the information generated by the group), and Leader (group facilitator). Allow groups time to fill in the first two columns. Explain that although students are working in groups, each person is filling in his/her own chart. Stress that charts do not have to be identical – students in the same group may vary their information if they choose.
- 4 Once groups have had enough time to complete their charts, come together as a class and share. Have a large KWL Chart written on chart paper or use the overhead projector and list groups' ideas as they share. As students progress through the lesson, have them add to their chart and continue adding to the class chart as well.
- 5 Using a globe or a map of the world, point out the Arctic Circle to students. Explain that the Canadian Arctic is the region covering the portion of Canada north of the Arctic Circle. A second definition is the region north of the tree line. Ask students what they think that means. (Region farther north than trees can grow)
- 6 Explain to students that the name of the territory in the Canadian Arctic they will be studying is Nunavut, and it was created on April 1, 1999. Prior to 1999, this area of Canada was part of the Northwest Territories. The combined land and water area of Nunavut is approximately the same size as the area of Canada's five most eastern provinces – Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Quebec.

## Qimuksik · (Dog Team)

- 7 Explain that Nunavut is the newest of three territories in Canada, including Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories. Review with students that these three territories along with ten provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Québec and Saskatchewan) make up the country of Canada. Explain to students that the main difference between a province and a territory is that a province is a creation of the Constitution Act, while federal law creates a territory. Because of this distinction, the federal government has more direct control over territories, while provincial governments have many more rights.
- 8 Ask students if they are familiar with the word “Eskimo.” Explain that this word, which means “eaters of raw fish,” is considered an insult and is no longer used. “Inuit,” the Inuktitut term for “the people,” has replaced the term. Inuit make up about 85% of the population of Nunavut.
- 9 Explain that Nunavut is a harsh land. The land consists of tundra and mountains with an average winter temperature of -30 degrees C and 9 degrees C in the summer. Because it is so cold, the area is quite dry, with very little precipitation. During the summer, it never gets completely dark, and during the winter months, it never becomes completely light.
- 10 Ask students how different life in their community was 60 years ago. Discuss ways that life has changed, but explain that many things, although greatly improved now, were around 60 years ago (houses, cars, indoor plumbing, electricity, televisions, etc.).



## Qimuksik · (Dog Team)

- 11 Explain that 60 years ago, the Inuit of the Arctic were living in igloos, hunting for all their food and living completely off the land. Families travelled solely by foot, boat or dog sled.
- 12 The Inuit are a semi-nomadic society, which means that they spent much of their time travelling to different parts of the region, depending on where they would hunt. They built igloos and stone houses in the winter and sod houses in the summer. It has only been within the last 50 to 60 years that communities with homes and stores have been developed.
- 13 Explain that while there are stores in most communities now, food, clothes, toys, etc are very expensive, because everything must arrive by plane or ship. There are no roads connecting the communities of Nunavut. Because everything is so expensive, many Inuit still hunt native animals including seal, walrus and caribou for food and to make clothes and supplies.
- 14 Write the word “Inuktitut” on the board. Explain that while Inuit students now learn English in school, Inuktitut is the official language of the Inuit. The Inuit have spoken Inuktitut for thousands of years, however the syllabics, or written language of Inuktitut, was not invented until the late 1800s by Edmund Peck.
- 15 Explain that students are going to watch a video called **Qimuksik**, which means dog team in Inuktitut. The video takes place in the spring of 1945, near Igloodik, which is a community in Nunavut. The family is travelling by dog sled and hunting seal and caribou. Inuktitut is spoken, so students are able to hear the original language, and there are subtitles in English.
- 16 Stress to students the importance of hunting to the survival of the Inuit, particularly during the time period depicted by the film. Reiterate that if families were unable to hunt, they went without food and materials for clothes, tools and weapons.

## Qimuksik · (Dog Team)

- 17 Explain to students that the Inuit also traditionally eat much of their meat raw or frozen. There is a scene in *Qimuksik* when the family enjoys a meal of raw seal, and students will also see the family skin a caribou. Discuss with students their possible reaction to these scenes. Explain that while students might find skinning a caribou or eating raw seal meat unusual, or even “disgusting,” it is absolutely natural for people in other parts of the world to hunt for survival. Explain that when the Inuit hunt, they use every part of the animal and nothing is wasted, as they will see in *Qimuksik*.
- 18 Decide how students are going to view the film. One option is to have the teacher read the subtitles, or choose volunteers to read the subtitles aloud. Episodes are 28 minutes long, so students could take shifts of 5-10 minutes.
- 19 View *Qimuksik (Dog Team)*.





## Qimuksik · (Dog Team)

### Evaluation

- 1 Return to KWL Chart. As a class, fill in any newly learned information from today's lesson.
- 2 In pairs or small groups, have students brainstorm sounds, sights and scenes they remember from the film.
- 3 **Homework:** Students complete *Qimuksik (Dog Team) Follow-up Assignment*, sketching their most vivid memory and writing a caption describing what is occurring.

*Teacher Note: Individual KWL Charts should remain accessible to students throughout their exploration of Inuit culture. Encourage students to add to their chart and the class chart after each lesson.*



# Follow-up Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In ***Qimuksik (Dog Team)***, you are introduced to an Inuit family living during the spring of 1945. You hear them speak in Inuktitut, the native language of the Inuit, see them hunting for seal, and get a first-hand view of the Arctic tundra. What scene from the film is most vivid in your mind?

In the space below, illustrate something from the film that you remember. It can be a particular scene from the episode, an object or tool you saw, or a person you recall. In the space below your drawing, write a brief description of your illustration.



# Qimuksik · (Dog Team)

## KWL Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What I think I know	What I want to know	What I've learned

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Notes:


