

Qimuksik (Kee-mook-sik)

(Dog Team)

Spring 1945

Content Area(s): 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 episode, students will revisit their chart, adding any information they learned during the lesson. Students will then reflect on the episode and illustrate a scene that they recall, complete with a brief description.

Materials

- *Qimuksik (Dog Team)* DVD (included in **Exploring Inuit Culture Curriculum**)
- 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 North America

Activity

1. Write “Life in the Canadian 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).
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.



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.

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.

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A second definition is the region north of the tree line. Ask students what they think that definition 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 combined area of Alaska, California, Texas and Montana, the four largest U.S. states.
7. Explain that Nunavut is the newest of three territories in Canada, including Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories. These three territories along with ten provinces (Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador) make up the country of Canada. Explain to students that the main difference between a province and a territory is that each is created differently. 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, particularly in Canada. 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 -31 degrees F and 50 degrees F 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.).
11. Explain that 60 years ago, the Inuit of Arctic Canada were living in igloos, hunting for all their food and living completely off the land. Families traveled solely by foot, boat or dog sled.
12. The Inuit are a semi-nomadic society, which means that they spent much of their time traveling 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, everyday items such as food, clothes and toys 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.

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- 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.
- 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 Igloolik, which is a community in Nunavut. The family is traveling 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.
- 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.
- 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*.

- 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. The episode is approximately 30 minutes long, so students could take shifts of 5-10 minutes. Explain that subtitles are in Canadian spelling, and some words may be spelled differently.

- View *Qimuksik (Dog Team)*.

Evaluation

- Return to KWL chart. As a class, fill in any newly learned information from today’s lesson.
- In pairs or small groups, students will brainstorm sounds, sights and scenes they remember from the film. Have students complete *Qimuksik (Dog Team) Follow-up Assignment*, sketching their most vivid memory and writing a caption describing what is occurring. (Optional homework assignment)



(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.)

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KWL Chart



Name:

Date:

Topic:

What we Think we Know

What we Want to Know

What we Learned

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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 speaking 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 *Qimuksik (Dog Team)* that you remember. It can be a particular scene, an object or tool, a character, or anything that you recall from the film. In the space below your drawing, write a brief description of your illustration.
