

Inuits and Native Americans: Constructing Comparisons

Marika Schneider

Overview:

In this lesson, students study the geography, lifestyle, and culture of the Inuit from the Nunavut in northern Canada and compare the various features to those of the tribe from North America that they recently studied. Students work in small groups of 4-5 to research one geographic aspect of the Inuit lifestyle, creating a pictorial icon that represents their findings and attaching it to a map of the Nunavut. Each group then creates a three-dimensional display that represents geographic aspects of the Inuit lifestyle on one half of a board and geographic aspects of the local Native American tribe lifestyle on the other half of the board. The groups then present their displays to the class.

Geographic Question(s):

How are the daily lives of the Inuit of the Nunavut in the past and today similar and different from a Native American tribe in our state and how has the location of these groups influenced their lifestyles?

Connection to the Curriculum:

- Social Studies—both geography and history
- Art
- Public speaking

National Geography Standards:

#6: How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

#10: The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Oregon State Content Standards and Benchmarks:

- 1.1 Students will identify and understand the groups living in the Western Hemisphere before European exploration, their ways of life, and the empires they developed. (Oregon State Standards, History: U.S. History Benchmark 2)
- 2.1 Students will identify constraints on human activity caused by the physical environment. (Oregon State Standards, Geography, Benchmark 2)
- 3.1 Students will construct, create, present, and/or perform a work of art, using experiences, imagination, observations, artistic elements, and technical skills to achieve desired effect. (Oregon State Standards, The Arts: Create, Present, and Perform, Benchmark 2)

Grade Level(s): 4-5

Objectives:

Students will:

- (a) research the Inuit peoples' clothing, food, dwellings, jobs (including male, female, and children), traditions, and things they did for fun, in cooperative groups of 4-5 students using books and Internet resources.
- (b) draw an image that pictorially represents the aspect of the Inuit lifestyle that their group researched.
- (c) attach their images to a map of the Nunavut and share their findings with the class.

- (d) participate in a class discussion about the geographic features (landforms, climate, etc.) of the Nunavut and compare it to the lifestyle the Inuit people have led.
- (e) compare the Inuit tribe of the Nunavut to the local Native American tribe they studied prior to by creating a display where half of the board shows the Inuit lifestyle of the past and half of the board shows features of the local Native American tribe lifestyle of the past.
- (f) present their boards in their groups to the class, focusing on the one lifestyle aspect of the tribes that they researched initially (e.g. dwelling, food, etc.).
- (g) research the contemporary lifestyles of both the Inuit and local Native American tribes studied, creating a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the past of both tribes to the present of both tribes on separate Venn Diagrams.

Materials:

Books, pictures, and/or websites about the Inuit people

Butcher paper

Coloring supplies: crayons, colored pencils, markers

Construction paper

Glue

Map of the Nunavut/Map of local Native American tribe

Map of North America showing relative location of each tribe

Notebook paper

Overhead pens

Overhead projector

Pencils

Scissors

Supplies to construct three dimensional projects (see sample list attached)

Tribal Comparison project worksheet

Venn Diagram: Past vs. Present worksheet

Pre-lesson Preparation:

Prior to this lesson, students will have studied a tribe from their area and will create a map of their state showing where the tribe lived, as well as various geographic features of the landscape. Also, the map will include various artifacts (drawings and/or pictures) that represent a number of characteristics of the tribe studied, including: clothing, food, dwellings, jobs (including men, women, and children), traditions, and things to do for fun.

Also, a large map of the Nunavut is needed to complete this lesson. Place a map of Canada on the overhead and project it onto a large piece of butcher paper. Then, trace the enlarged map onto the butcher paper.

In order to show students the location of their tribe in comparison to the Nunavut tribe, you will also need to have a North American map and label it with the location of the tribe you are comparing to the Nunavut, as well as where the Nunavut tribe can be found.

Presentation Steps:

Anticipatory Set—

Before beginning this lesson, refer back to the local tribe studied by the class, as well as reviewing some of the information learned about how the tribe lived in the past, including their diet, dwelling type, etc.

Procedure—

Part #1: Research and Map Making

1. Hang the large map of the Nunavut created prior to the lesson up on the wall.
2. Ask students to look at the map and see if they can figure out where the land shown on the map is located in the world.
3. If no one knows where the land on the map is located, ask students to help you find it by giving a student volunteer directions to follow about whether they can find this land north, south, east, or west of the state the students live in. Eventually the class will realize that the map on the wall represents the province of Nunavut, located in the northernmost area of Canada.
4. Then, tell students that they are going to learn more about this area of Canada and the first people that ever lived in this region—the Inuit, otherwise known as Eskimos.
5. At this point, hang up the North American map that shows the location of the Nunavut as well as the tribe the students have studied before. This would be a great opportunity to talk about the geographic aspects that make these tribes different and/or the same. Ideas include discussing inland vs. coastal location, latitude/longitude, and geographic space each tribe includes.
6. After this discussion, break students up into cooperative groups of four students each, adding a fifth student to groups as needed. These groups will be responsible for researching various components of the Inuit lifestyle. Within these groups, students need to research Inuit clothing, diet, dwellings, jobs (males, females, and children), traditions, and things they did for fun. Place each of these six items on a piece of paper and have groups draw their topic to research.
7. Students will use books on the Inuit tribes, as well as Internet resources if possible, to find out information about the early Inuit. The students should research items true about the Inuit past, attempting to correlate the historical time period to that of the local Native American tribe they already studied.
8. For each day the students work on this project, begin the lesson by adding geographical features to the map landscape, such as latitude and longitude, the arctic circle line, major cities, and large waterways. A discussion should be led at some point about what the possible landscape in this area looks like, as well as the reasons for why this unique place looks as it does. (This is a great opportunity to refer back the discussion the class had when comparing the geographic locations of each tribe).
9. Depending on the number of groups, each group should research at least one category included in the list in step #5. Once the groups have found their information, they need to create a small graphic representation of their information that can be placed on the map. This image can be a drawing, picture, or small description. But, the emphasis is on creating a visual image.
10. When all groups have created their items, groups can come up and add their image to the map, sharing the information they learned about the Inuit's diet, clothing, etc. This way, every student in the class learns a number of different things about the Inuit people by doing a group share. It is necessary for each group to share their information about their icon so that students can get a brief overview of what they will need to include in their three dimensional comparison project.
11. As a class, discuss the differences between the Inuit people and the local tribe studied earlier in the year.

Part #2: The Construction Comparison Project

12. Once students have participated in creating a mental image of the Inuit lifestyle, begin to review the components of the three dimensional comparison project. Each group creates a board divided so that half of the board represents the local Native American tribe lifestyle of the past and half of the board demonstrates the Inuit lifestyle of the past.

13. Each group has to include visualizations of all six components researched above in the map activity. The board (such as a piece of cardboard or wood) the project is developed on must be no smaller than 12" x 16" and no larger than 18" x 24".
14. Review the aspects included for each tribe as a class, listing the types of food, dwelling, etc. on the Tribal Comparison Project worksheet.
15. Then, as a class, brainstorm a list of possible materials that students could use to create a three dimensional display of the two different tribes' lifestyles. These materials should be as natural as possible. In doing so, watercolors work best for painting and the base colors should be mixed. Students can also only use things from the outdoors and items they throw away, recycle, or cook with in their own homes. (This is done in an effort to prevent students from going out and buying plastic fish or building an igloo out of Legos).
16. Taking the list the class created, go through the required components on the Tribal Comparison Project worksheet and list the possible materials students could use to replicate the artifacts needed (e.g. igloo, fish).
17. Give students time to work through how they want to complete the project and assign themselves roles, creating a list of who will do what and bring what to turn in.
18. Students need time to work as groups on their projects.
19. When students finish their three dimensional presentations, they can begin to research how the Inuit and/or local Native American tribe live today verses how they did in the past. In doing so, have them complete the Venn diagrams (attached to lesson), comparing the Inuit lifestyle of the past verses today and the local Native American tribal lifestyle of the past verses today. You can either choose to have them complete a Venn Diagram for each tribe *or* a Venn Diagram that includes both tribes on the same chart.

Part #3: The Presentation

20. Students need time to determine how they are going to present their comparison board displays. All students need to participate in the presentation. Emphasis should be made to share more about the one aspect the group had to research initially. For example, the group who researched dwellings should share more about the past dwellings of the Inuit and the past dwellings of the local Native American tribe than they do about the other lifestyle features of the tribes.
21. Each presentation should be at least 4-5 minutes, with each student in the group speaking about one minute. Scoring of the presentations can be made by using the state's local speaking scoring guides.

Closure—

Now that students have learned about the historical characteristics of the Inuit people, lead a small discussion about how the students think the Inuit people live today. Incorporate the group's Venn Diagrams by compiling them into one large Venn diagram for the class. Show images of some of the cities located in that region, emphasizing to students that Native Americans in the United States, as well as the Inuit people in Canada, live very differently today than they once did in the past.

Assessment:

Students will have worked cooperatively in small groups of 4-5 students to research one of six aspects of the Inuit lifestyle of the past. The group will then have created an icon that pictorially represents their research and placed it on a large map of the Nunavut. After sharing a little about their icon, the group will have created a three dimensional display out of natural materials, where one half of the board represents the past lifestyle of the Inuit and one half of the board represents the past lifestyle of a local Native American tribe. All groups will have presented their board as teams after groups have completed

their boards, with each member of the group speaking at least one minute to create a 4-5 minute presentation. As a group finishes their display, they will have researched the contemporary lifestyles of the Inuit and the local Native American tribes and created a Venn diagram comparing the past lifestyles to the present lifestyles (if time allows).

Adaptations and Extensions:

Students working at lower levels—

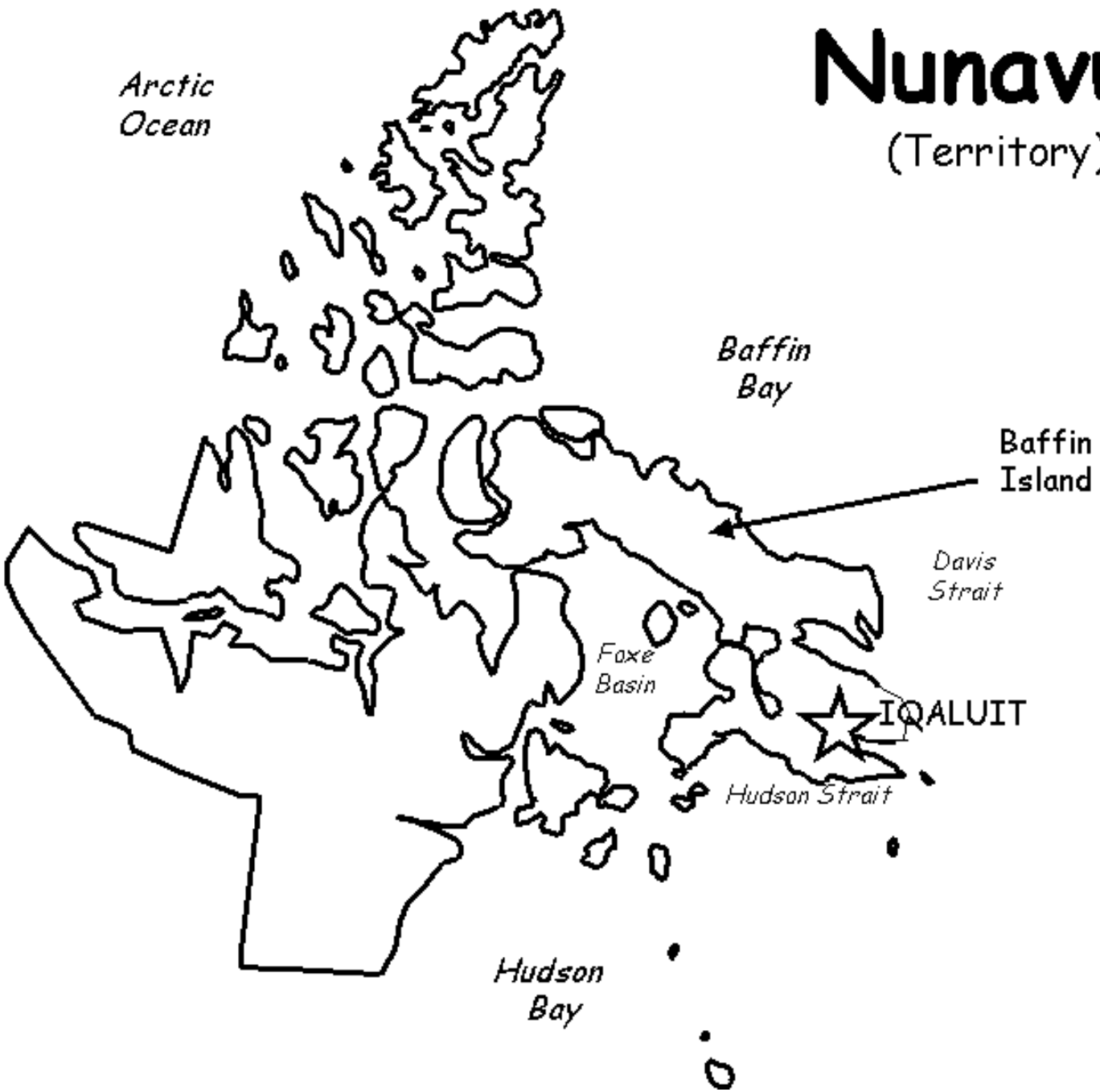
For students who have lower literacy development skills, the Internet is a good resource to find specific information for these students to work with. For a student who is working at a particularly lower level, provide a simplified sheet of facts about the student's research area to help guide the student towards success in finding information.

Students working at higher levels—

Students working at higher levels can be challenged to provide more information about the Nunavut and the Inuit people who live there by researching more information about the Inuit people to be able to share more with the class. Also, these are the students who may be required to complete the Venn diagram comparing the Inuit and Native American lifestyle pasts to the Inuit and Native American lifestyle present.

Nunavut

(Territory)



North America



©EnchantedLearning.com

Book List on the Inuit People and the Nunavut

A Promise Is a Promise by [Michael Kusugak](#) (1992)

Arctic Adventure: Inuit Life in the Eighteen Hundreds by [Dana Meachen Rau](#) (1997)

Baseball Bats for Christmas by Michael Kusugak (1993)

Dreamstones by [Maxine Trottier](#) (2000)

The Eskimo: The Inuit and Yupik People by [Alice Osinski](#) (1985)

Frozen Land: Vanishing Cultures by [Jan Reynolds](#) (1993)

The Girl Who Dreamed Only Geese: And Other Tales of the Far North by [Howard Norman](#) (1997)

Igloo (Native American Homes) by Yasmine A. Cordoba (2001)

The Igloo by [David Yue](#) (1988)

Inuit (Native Americans) by Barbara A. Gray-Kanatiiosh (2002)

The Inuit (Watts Library: Indians of the Americas) by [Suzanne M. Williams](#) (2003)

The Inuit by [Andrew Santella](#) (2000)

The Inuit? by [Bryan Alexander](#) (2002)

The Inuit by [Elizabeth Hahn](#) (1990)

The Inuksuk Book by [Mary Wallace](#) (1999)

Let's Go to the Arctic: A Story and Activities About Arctic People and Animals
by [Charlotte Ford Mateer](#) (1999)

Naya, the Inuit Cinderella by [Brittany Marceau-Chenkie](#) (2000)

Native Peoples (Discovering Canada) by [Robert Livesey](#) (1994)

Northern Lights: The Soccer Trails by Michael Kusugak (1993)

Nunavut (Hello Canada) by Lyn Hancock (1995)

The Polar Bear Son : An Inuit Tale by [Lydia Dabcovich](#) (1999)

Tikta'liktak: An Inuit-Eskimo Legend by [James Houston](#) (1990)

Very Last 1st Time by [Jan Andrews](#) (1986)

Whale Snow by [Debby Dahl Edwardson](#) (2003)

Where Did You Get Your Moccasins? by Bernelda Wheeler (1995)

Sample Brainstorm List for Supplies to Complete Comparison Project

Air dry clay
Toothpicks
Newspaper
Pine cones
Pine needles
Dried flowers
Sticks
Soil/mud
Watercolors
Glue
Scissors
Dried leaves
Styrofoam
Feathers
Vines

Baking supplies: corn meal, sugar, salt, etc.

Scoring Guide for 3-D Tribal Comparison Project

- 5—Project is turned in on time. The work is exceptionally neat, tidy, and uses only natural materials. Evidence of all six lifestyle aspects is clearly visible for both tribes.
- 4—Project is turned in on time. The work is neat and tidy, but may use some materials that are not “natural.” Evidence of only 4-5 lifestyle aspects is clearly visible for both tribes.
- 3—Project is turned in on time. The work is fairly neat, but glue or other items used to attach objects to the board are evident. Some items that are not “natural” are used to show lifestyle aspects. Evidence of only 4-5 aspects is clearly visible for both tribes.
- 2—Project is not turned in on time. The work is completed, but glue or other items used to attach objects to the board are evident or many items that are not “natural” are used to show the lifestyle aspects. Evidence of only 3-4 lifestyle aspects is clearly visible for both tribes.
- 1—Project is not turned in on time or not turned in at all. The work is not completed in full, with glue or other items used to attach objects to the board very visible and/or items used to construct lifestyle aspects are not “natural.” Evidence of only 1-3 or no lifestyle aspects are visible for both tribes.