

FOOD FROM THE SEA: SEA LION HUNTER GR: 3-5 (LESSONS 1-2)

Elder Quotation: “You can feed a village with a single shot.”

- ‘Sea Lion Murphy’ (Joe Kompkoff, Sr.) as quoted by John F.C. Johnson

Joe Kompkoff, Sr., raised in Chenega, was a great hunter, especially famous for his prowess in hunting sea lions. He became known as ‘Sea Lion Murphy.’ The Chenega Bay subsistence building is officially named after him.

Grade Level: 3-5

Overview: Sugpiat hunters traditionally focused on sea lions because of the enormous amount of protein and subsistence lifestyle resources they offered. The Sugpiat developed specialized techniques for the hunting, retrieval, processing, and preservation of this valuable sea mammal.

Standards:

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
D1: Acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with Elders.	Science C (3,4): A student should understand and be able to apply the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, systems, and processes of life science and should (3) develop an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms:.	L1: Students should understand the value and importance of the Sugt’stun language and be actively involved in its preservation.

Lesson Goal: Students learn about the tremendous value represented by sea lions for Sugpiat villages and how they were hunted, shared, consumed, and used.

Lesson Objectives: Students will:

- Decode the conservation message in a Chugach legend.
- Consider the specialized techniques involved in subsistence sea lion hunting and usage.
- Generate an informational presentation based on knowledge gained from oral interviews.
- Learn the Sugt’stun and/or Eyak vocabulary listed below.

Sugt’stun Dialects

Vocabulary Words:

English:	PWS:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
sea lion	<i>wínaq (pl: wínat)</i>	<i>wínaq (pl: wínat)</i>	<i>k’umah</i>
hunter		<i>pisurta (1); pisurtek (2) pisurtet (3+)</i>	<i>k’uch’iya’ (Good hunter)</i>

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Access to web video projection screen
- Nick Tanape Interview Keywords Worksheet (See below)
- Nick Tanape Interview Answer Sheet (See below)

- Sea Lion Hunter Interview Project Guidelines (See below)
- Bentwood visor prop for ‘Sea Lion Hunter’ to wear during interviews
- Video camera to record student interviews

Kit Library:

- Johnson, John F.C., et al. *Chugach Legends* pp.67-68
- Stamp, Bobby A. *Chenega as I Saw It – It’s People*

Web Resources:

Sea Lion Hunter Interview

<http://jukebox.uaf.edu/NanPG/nanwalek/html/23503.html> Retrieved 11.7.2017 Interview with Nanwalek sea lion hunter Nick Tanape, Sr. (1946-2018)

Section 1 (2:03) Personal Introduction

Section 6 (2:38) Seal and sea lion hunting, sharing, flippers

Section 7(3:08) When and where to hunt sea lion, retrieval considerations, sharing

Section 8 (2:20) Sea lion sharing, pelt preparation, freezing

Section 10 (First 1:20 of 2:55) Sea lion whisker use

Sea Lion Facts

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifeneews.view_article&articles_id=325

‘Traditional Uses of Sea Lion’ article by M. Turek (See below)

<http://www.seaotter-sealion.org/stellersealion/index.html> Sea lion facts

Scientific name: *Eumetopias jubatus*

Family: Steller sea lions are the largest of the otariids and the fourth largest of the pinnipeds, meaning “feather” or “fin” footed.

Lifespan: Males rarely live beyond mid-teens; females may live as long as 30-years.

Length and weight: The average adult male Steller sea lion is about 1,250 lbs. They grow up to 10-11 ft in length and weigh up to 2,500 lbs! Adult females are from 7.5-9.5 ft in length and weigh up to 770 lbs. At birth, Steller sea lions weigh 35-50 lbs and are about 3 feet in length.

Body: Steller sea lions have large, bulging eyes, and flat, square noses and long whiskers used to navigate underwater and find prey. The ears are visible and are turned downwards so that water does not enter them when the sea lions go underwater. When adult males age, they develop a “mane” of long, coarse hair. Steller sea lions are particularly agile on land and swim using their foreflippers. Males grow 2-3 times as large as an adult female.

Food habits: Steller sea lions are opportunistic and eat a wide range of fish including herring, pollock, salmon, cod and rockfishes, sculpin, Atka mackerel, capelin, as well as squid, shrimp and other fish. To survive, an adult sea lion needs to eat 5-6% of its body weight each day, but young animals need twice that amount. When males are defending their territories on the rookeries, they may go without eating for over a month! Interestingly, Steller sea lions do not need to drink water: the food they eat provides them with all the water they need. They do not chew their food; most is swallowed whole. Feeding often occurs in groups; often feed at night between 9 PM and 6 AM.

Predators: Include humans, sharks, and killer whales

<https://www.smithsonianchannel.com/videos/how-are-seals-different-from-sea-lions/35377>

(1:14) Quick review of physical differences between seals and sea lions

Teacher Preparation:

- Review Activity Plan and practice Sugt'stun or Eyak vocabulary.
- Contact your Local Education Coordinator or local Tribal Council for a list of Elders that could share his or her expertise on how to hunt sea lion and its subsistence uses.
- Before the Elder or Recognized Expert arrives, review with students how to respectfully interact with the Elder during his or her visit.
- Review Sea Lion data.
- Review attached article 'Traditional Uses of Steller Sea Lions' by M. Turek, 2007, October. *Alaska Fish and Wildlife.*)

Opening: Sea lions/*Wínat* are an incredible source of subsistence food and resources. A two year old sea lion/*wínaq* provides enough meat to feed a family of three 2 meals a day for two months.¹ An average adult male weighs over half a ton (1250 lbs.), a female 750 lbs. Is it any wonder that Sugpiat hunters went after sea lions/*wínat* to feed their villages? Sea lions/*wínat* continue to be valued and honored today.

Class 1 – Activities: Traditional Sea Lion Hunting

1. Have students listen to legend of “The Man and the Sea Lions” as told by Makari in *Chugach Legends* for some insight as to how the Sugpiat saw their relationship to sea lions/*wínat*. Read aloud the first half of the legend, pp.67-68, through the end of the second full paragraph which concludes *‘Tell me who owns this harpoon head. I found it in the wounded sea lion, but I do not know to whom it belongs.’* Conclude with the first line of the next paragraph, *“Afterwards they lived as before.”* [Note: The second half of the legend is more problematic and focuses more on the deliberate marooning of a hunting partner in order to steal his wife.]
2. Discuss legend content with class.
 - How do the sea lions/*wínat* treat the marooned hunter/*hunter*?
 - Sea lion invited hunter to warm up in sea lion house under the sea.*
 - How does the hunter/*hunter* respond?
 - He dives into the sea to the sea lions' house and offers to cure their wounded chief. Without explaining what the chief's problem is, the hunter bathes the wound and removes the harpoon head from the sea lion and hides it out of sight. The sea lions thank him with a trip home via a 'great stomach' that was the chief's baidarka.*
 - How does this story demonstrate the importance of respect for sea lions/*wínat* and sea lion hunters?
 - Demonstrations of hospitality, mutual assistance. The Sugpiat believed that all animals had a suq or spirit which permitted animals to change into humans and humans into animals. In this story sea lions and men showed each other respect through demonstrations of hospitality (the sea lions invited the cold hunter to their undersea home to warm up), kindness (the hunter cured the wounded sea lion chief), and gratitude (repaying the hunter with a stomach/baidarka to travel back to his village).*

Additional Elder Quotation regarding not leaving a wounded sea lion:

“I still hunt seal and sea lions. There’s a trick to it. I drop off someone with a rifle on the rocks where there are seals. Then I drive the boat away from the area. The seals think we have left, and they come back up to the surface where the person on the rocks shoots them. Sometimes, I’m the one to stay o(n) the rocks. You have to retrieve them before they sink. We get sea lions the same way.....If we shoot something and kill it, then we do everything we can to bring it home. There have been times when it seemed like we were out there for hours trying to get something off the bottom. We just don’t like to waste anything. That’s not our way.”

- Michael Vigil, *We Are the Land We Are the Sea*, pp.128-129

3. Direct students to listen carefully to Nanwalek sea lion hunter/hunter Nick Tanape, Sr. (1946-2018) in a Nanwalek Juke Box Interview describe sea lion hunting techniques and uses. Inform students that they will be writing a script of an interview with a fictional sea lion hunter/*pisurta*, then they will then perform and record. Distribute the Keywords handout (FFS 3-5 Sea Lion Hunter 1.1 Keywords)

4. Instruct students to complete the appropriate section of the handout as they listen to each of the Jukebox sections listed below.

Section 1 (2:08) Here the sea lion hunter/hunter introduces himself. He speaks softly so students will need to listen carefully. Who is the hunter/hunter and where is he from? (*Nick Tanape, Sr. from Nanwalek*) Why did he leave the village and why did he return? (*Left to go into the service, lived in New Jersey but returned because he didn’t want to lose connection with Native foods.*)

Section 6 (2:38) Why do people like seal? (*Especially enjoy seal fat to render into oil.*) What did the father of the hunter/hunter do with the sea lions he killed? (*His dad would bring one up to the village beach and everyone would come down to take some.*) What’s special about the flippers? (*The flippers go to the hunter.*) Was there any waste? (*Most every part was used.*) How did sea lion meat keep him connected to his village? (*His dad would send him salted sea lion when he lived in the Lower 48.*)

Section 7 (3:07) What is the difference between hunting seal and hunting sea lion? (*Dead sea lions sink faster than seals and must be hooked or sunk in place near the village where it can be collected at low tide.*) Why harvest a sea lion close to town? (*It’s difficult to tow sea lions very far.*) When does the hunter/hunter go out after sea lions? (*November, December, January*) What does the hunter do once he’s harvested the sea lion? (*Calls out on CB radio to invite villagers to come down to share the sea lion.*) If the students do not know what a CB is, then explain how it is a radio transmitter, a sort of public cellphone channel.

5. Review how interviews are conducted. Planning and research about the interview topic or person make for better interviews. In this case listening to Nick Tanape’s Jukebox interview is your research. Think about how to make an interview interesting. Too many obvious or closed questions with predictable yes or no or one-word answers are dull. *What’s your name? Where do you live? Are you a sea lion hunter?* Good questions are open-ended. Open-ended questions like; *“How did you feel when you killed your first sea lion? How did you learn*

about the tradition of sharing sea lion meat?” makes a more interesting interview. Follow-up questions build on an interviewee’s answer and go deeper into a topic of interest.

6. Announce that research and writing of Sea Lion Hunter Interview will begin next class.



Sea lions chasing spring hooligan (eulachon) in Alaganik Slough in the Copper River Delta.

Class 2 – Sea Lion Hunter Interview

1. Assign students into interview script teams.
2. Distribute ‘Interview Guidelines’ handout (FFS 3-5 Sea Lion Hunter 1.2) and review standards for interview project.
3. Allow students time to brainstorm, write, and practice script.
4. Explain that scripts must be checked to ensure that they meet the guidelines before the students can make their presentation.
5. Present and record interviews for use at final Food from the Sea lesson. If possible, have each ‘Sea Lion Hunter’ wear the bentwood visor (or make hunting hat- see attached pattern) for his or her interview. Interviewers may choose to use a ‘microphone’ prop.

Assessment:

- Students can explain the conservation message in the Chuagch legend “The Man and the Sea Lions.”
- Students successfully describe subsistence sea lion hunting techniques and traditions from an oral history interview.
- Students wrote and presented an informational interview with a sea lion hunter.
- Students correctly pronounced Sugt’stun or Eyak vocabulary words.

Traditional Uses of Steller Sea Lions Archaeologists Document Importance of Stellers

By Mike Turek



A 19th century painting by a Russian artist depicts a Steller sea lion hunter near a haulout. Alaska State Library Historical Collection, PCA 139-48.

Archaeological digs at prehistoric sites in Alaska are revealing that

Steller sea lions were profoundly important to Alaska's Native people.

Sea lions were harvested for meat, oil and blubber. Bone and whiskers were used for tools, sinews for cordage, intestines and stomachs for waterproof containers and clothing, and the skins were used for baidarkas (kayaks). Unalaska sites have yielded implements and decorative pieces fashioned from sea lion bone.

In prehistoric archaeological sites, sea lions appear to have replaced walrus as a distinct marine mammal species in coastal areas of Alaska dominated by a Pacific maritime climate. These areas include the Pacific coast of the Alaska Peninsula, Prince William Sound, the tip of the Kenai Peninsula, the Kodiak Island archipelago, and the Aleutian Islands. Aleutian Island sites with sea lion remains date to 3,000 years b.p. - before the present - (Anangula Island) and 4,000 years b.p. (Chaluka Village). Sea lions appeared to be the principal sea mammal in the latter site, comprising some 10 to 20 percent of all sea mammal bones found.

From four well-preserved sites on southwest Umnak Island in the eastern Aleutians, about 70 per cent of the archaeological biomass (meat weight) was represented by sea lions. The Lower Alaska Peninsula and the Sanak Island

projects have generated data over 12 field seasons, documenting 300 ancient village sites spanning the last 6,000 years. Nearly 100,000 marine mammal, bird and fish bones have been collected. Archaeological sites have also been found on Marmot Island, home to Alaska's largest Steller sea lion rookery.

Long-term changes in the North Pacific and Bering Sea ecosystems have been the subject of scientific investigations relying on archaeological and anthropological analyses. Data indicate that there have been significant variations in the distribution of key species over the last 5,000 years. During cooler periods the harvests of sea lions appears to have been greater than during warmer periods. Archaeological evidence from the Medieval Warm Period, 900 to 700 years ago, includes very few samples of sea lion remains. After 1400 a.d., well into the Little Ice Age, evidence indicates that harvests rose to levels not seen in the previous 4,000 years.

Anthropologists have estimated that the approximately 25,000 Aleut living in the region 400 years ago probably required between 5,000 and 10,000 Steller sea lions per year to meet basic subsistence needs. Other estimates more than double that number.

Sea lion hunting occurred between the middle of September and November, after the fur seals left the rookeries for the season. Hunting was done on the rocks at night by moonlight, and selected animals were captured and herded into corrals. After several nights of corralling, two or three hundred animals were driven or herded overland by the hunters. Herding the animals could take from five days to three weeks. The sea lions were driven to a village before hunters killed them with sticks and spears.



A Steller sea lion pup and mother and a haulout in Southeast Alaska.

Ivan Veniaminov, the Russian Orthodox missionary wrote of Pribilof Islanders in the 1830s harvesting as many as 2,000 Steller sea lions on St. George Island alone.

The Russian word, baidarka, referred to the Aleut's distinctively hatched, decked, skin boats. At the time of European contact, one and to a lesser extent, two hole baidarkas were common, the three-hole boat was likely developed by the Russians. Sea lion skins from sub-adult males were the preferred baidarka covering. A single hatch baidarka required four to six sea lion skins which were replaced three to four times per year.

Although the Aleut population dropped significantly following the Russian invasion, the need for baidarkas in the sea otter industry kept the numbers of boats and sea lion skins high. Russian sea otter hunting expeditions required several hundred baidarkas, expeditions with 600 to 800 boats are mentioned in the literature.

According to George Dyson, baidarka builder and scholar, "Baidarkas were being built by the thousands in the Russian-American colonies for close to 100 years." These skin boats were the key to Russian activity during the entire pre-American period. Almost anywhere they went, hunting, trading, or exploring, the Russians depended on the baidarka. Following the 1867 purchase of Alaska, the Americans took over the sea otter trade, which still required deck loads of baidarkas.

By the late 19th century the marine mammal populations in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea had collapsed. Petroff, collecting data for the 1880 US census described much smaller sea otter hunting parties consisting of "from 4 to 20 (two-hatch) baidarkas."

The collapse of the Steller sea lion populations in the late 19th century was so serious that the United States Government imported sea lion skins from California to Alaska so baidarka construction could continue.

Waldemar Jochelson, an ethnographer working in the Aleutians during 1909-1910 commented on the scarcity of marine mammals and skin boats, "The Atka Aleut still use skin-boats. . . but the Attu Aleut have no skins to cover their boats. . . ." Wooden skiffs had now taken the place of skin boats.

In 1910 the last sea otter hunt was conducted in 12 two-hatch baidarkas. Due to the economic depression and costs for fuel baidarkas saw a brief revival in the 1930s. In 1933 the anthropologist, Birket-Smith described construction of baidarkas, "Six large skins of spotted seal were necessary [single hole baidarka], for a two-hole baidarka, nine, and for a three-hole twelve skins. Skin of young sea lions might also be used . . ."

Today, Michael Livingston, Aleut master kayak builder has experimented widely with kayak construction finding that the hide of the Steller sea lion is the best marine mammal skin for covering kayaks.

Mike Turek works with the Subsistence Division at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Nick Tanape, Sr. Jukebox Project Interview (1996)

Name: _____

Section 1 (2:03) Personal Introduction

Nick Tanape, Sr. grew up in English Bay (*Nanwalek*) with _____ brothers.

His family didn't go to stores they lived a _____ life.

He left the village for a few years to _____.

But he always came back to the village in the summers to _____.

He moved back to the village in 1980 because he wanted to live _____.

Section 6 (2:38) Seal and sea lion hunting, sharing, flippers

That summer Nick Tanape shot a seal eating fish from his salmon net and then _____.

He likes the seal's _____ and heart. Many others really like the seal _____.

He and his father used to hunt for sea lions in the months of _____ and _____.

His father shot a sea lion and _____ it back to the beach in town for folks to _____.

The hunter gets to keep the sea lion's _____.

Section 7(3:08) When and where to hunt sea lion, retrieval considerations, sharing

When Nick Tanape brings home a sea lion he keeps it for himself OR shares it with the village.

Sea lions are heavy and, unlike seals, usually _____ after you shoot them.

He tries to shoot sea lions at high OR low tide.

He doesn't hunt sea lions too far away from the village because _____.

Section 8 (2:20) Sea lion sharing, pelt preparation, freezing

Nick Tanape observes that the sea lion population is steady OR changing.

The skin is eaten. First you have to _____ the hair off the hide.

Then you cut up the skin in small pieces and _____ it.

He doesn't salt the skin the way people used to before they had _____.

Section 10 (First 1:10 of 2:55) Sea lion whisker use

Nick Tanape keeps the seal and sea lion _____ to use on the traditional
_____ that work like a _____.

If the whiskers are on the right side of the hat it means that the hunter _____.

Tanape Interview Key Words - Answer Key

Jukebox Project Interview with Nick Tanape, Sr. (1946-2018) of Nanwalek (formerly English Bay) <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/NanPG/nanwalek/html/23503.html>

Section 1 (2:03) Personal Introduction

Nick Tanape, Sr. grew up in English Bay (*Nanwalek*) with _____ (6) brothers.
His family didn't go to stores they lived a _____ (*subsistence*) life.
He left the village for a few years to _____ (*to serve in the military*)
But he always came back to the village in the summers to _____ (*hunt and fish*).
He moved back to the village in 1980 because he wanted to live
_____. (*the subsistence lifestyle, enjoy Native foods*)

Section 6 (2:38) Seal and sea lion hunting, sharing, flippers

That summer Nick Tanape shot a seal eating fish from his salmon net and then _____
(*gave most of it away*)
He likes the seal's _____ (*liver*) and heart. Many others really like the seal _____ (*oil*).
He and his father used to hunt for sea lions in the months of _____ and _____ (*Nov, Dec*)
His father shot a sea lion and _____ (*towed*) it back to the beach in town for folks to
_____ (*share*).
The hunter gets to keep the sea lion's _____ (*flippers*).

Section 7(3:08) When and where to hunt sea lion, retrieval considerations, sharing

When Nick Tanape brings home a sea lion he keeps it for himself/lets everyone know they can share in the meat.

Sea lions are heavy and, unlike seals, usually _____ (*sink*) after they are shot.
He tries to shoot sea lions at high/low tide.
He doesn't hunt sea lions too far away from the village because _____
(*he can't haul the large animal in his skiff or tow it more than a few miles.*)

Section 8 (2:20) Sea lion sharing, pelt preparation, freezing

Nick Tanape observes that the sea lion population is steady/changing.
The skin is eaten. First you have to _____ (*singe*) the hair off the hide.
Then you cut up the skin in small pieces and _____ (*cook, boil*) it.
He doesn't salt the skin the way people used to before they had _____ (*freezers*).

Section 10 (First 1:10 of 2:55) Sea lion whisker use

Nick Tanape keeps the seal and sea lion _____ (*whiskers*) to use on the
traditional _____ (*Aleut bentwood hats*) that work like a _____ (*sun visor*).
If the whiskers are on the right side of the hat it means that the hunter _____ (*is right-handed*).

Sea Lion Hunter Interview Project Guidelines

Interview site: _____

Decide where your interview is taking place. Maybe it is a TV evening news item, a YouTube video, a Sea Mammal Hunter training video, or possibly a National Geographic episode?

Audience: _____

Who's listening to your interview? Different audiences require different presentations. You would use simpler vocabulary for preschoolers than you would for adults. The general public might need more information about the Sugpiat subsistence lifestyle than Alaskans would.

Introduction:

Introduce yourself as the interviewer by name and & your employer, i.e., Jane Doe of Channel 2 News. Introduce the hunter by name and village. Note that you may create a fictional sea lion hunter to interview. You do not need to follow the Jukebox interview exactly.

Content: The interview should provide your audience with at least three to five details of interest about sea lion hunting, sharing, and traditional use. Here are two sample questions that you may choose to use or not.

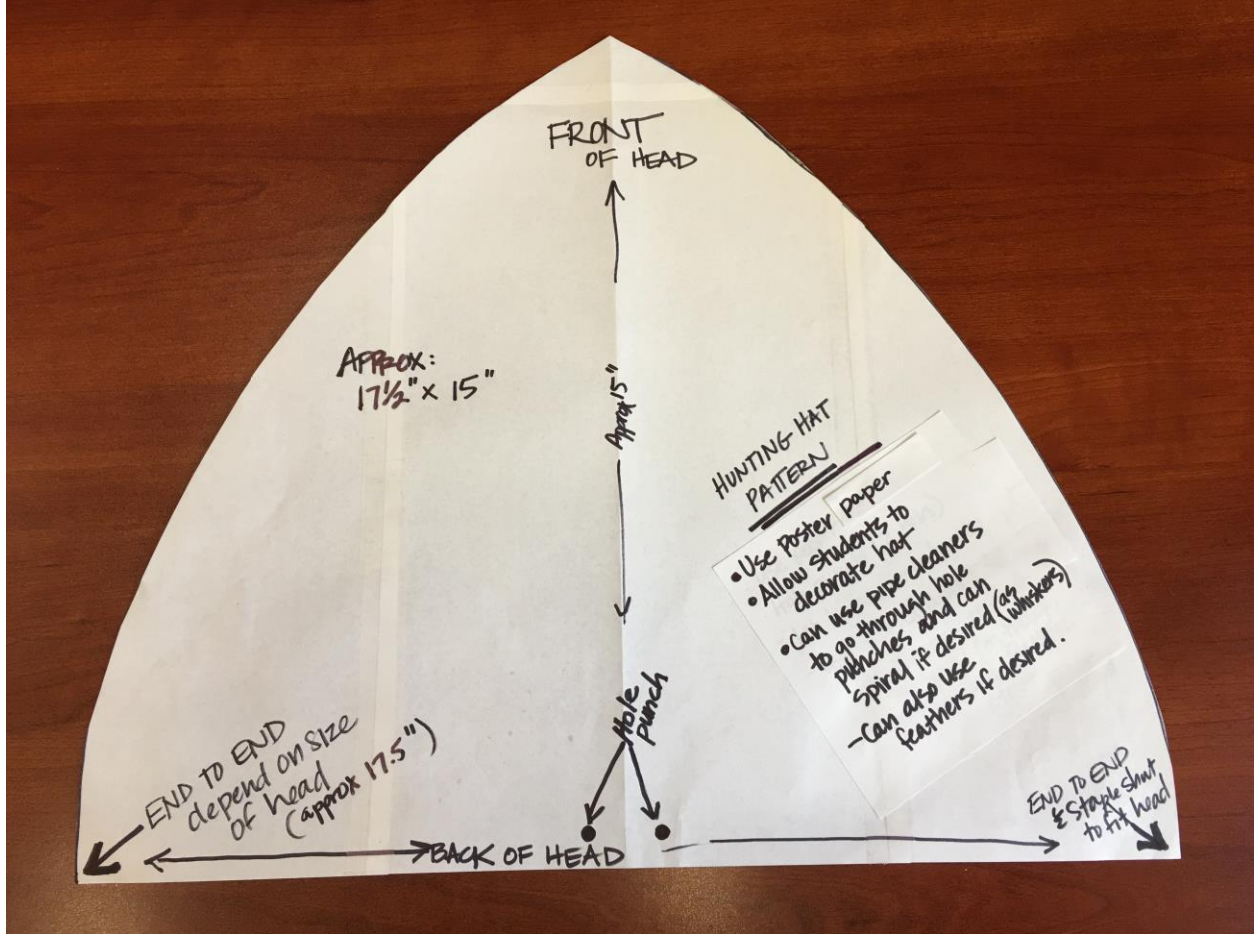
- 1) _What was your first sea lion hunting experience like? _
- 2) _What's the hardest part about hunting for sea lion? ____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____
- 11) _____
- 12) _____

Questions: The interview should include 10 -12 questions using a variety of open and closed questions. There should be at least one follow-up question, i.e., a question that builds on the hunter's answer to a previous question.

Close: The interview should conclude with a thank you (*Quyana!*) to the hunter and a brief summary statement to the audience about what they have just learned.



Hunting Hat Pattern





Side view of hat



Back view of hat