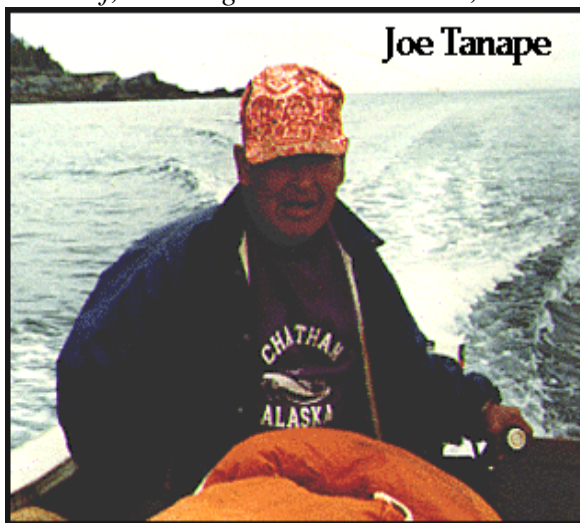


**CELEBRATIONS: SEAL DANCE GR: 3-5 (LESSONS 7-9)**

**Elder Quote/Belief:**

*“As I watched Joe Tanape, he gave me a gift into the past, a time so long ago, way before my time. As he prepared himself, standing in that unlit room, brown with leathery skin, his face and his body became a ‘T’! Joe’s head and as he danced his face to look and down my no longer could I but as a seal! He his own inner that he recalled played in his mind. was able to long ago, Grandfather qayaq, meeting the coastline.*



*the seal that he mimicked to moved to personify the seal he pursed his lips to shape like the seal. Chills ran up spine as he became the seal, see Joe Tanape as a man, danced moving his body to rhythm, the beat of a drum hearing as a child, which As Joe danced before me, I envision the memories of so remembering as he and his traveled in a skin boat with others as they traveled Closely watching the water*

*and seeing mammals swimming alongside. Watching seal antics and movements as they swam in the water. Little did Joe Tanape know his keen observation, appreciation and respect of the seals would allow him to share his dance to honor the seal and instill a wonderful gift to those who were able to witness such a beautiful performance.”*

-Nancy Yeaton in Memory of Joe Tanape, Nanwalek

**Grade Level: 3-5**

**Overview:** “In the winter people might arrange a dance at any time simply for amusement. The men danced first, afterwards the women, the latter having their own songs. The arrival of visitors from neighboring tribes who came to Nuchek during the summer for trading also gave occasion to dancing feasts. Whoever came first would begin the dance.”<sup>1</sup>

**Standards:**

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content Science:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
<b>A3</b> Acquire and pass on the traditions of their community through oral and written history.	<b>F1:</b> Develop an understanding that culture, local knowledge, history and interaction with the environment contribute to the development of scientific knowledge, and local applications provide opportunity for understanding scientific concepts and global issues.	<b>CE9</b> Students should have respected and appreciation for their own cultures as well as the cultures of others.

**Lesson Goal:** To learn a seal dance and how it relates to traditional dances that were created to honor and respect the animal/bird that has provided for our ancestors survival.

**Lesson Objective(s):** Students will:

- Explain why the seal (and other animal) dance was created.
- Learn the antics and movements of a seal and Nanwalek seal dance.
- Create a seal mask.

**Vocabulary Words:** Sugt'stun Dialects

English:	Prince William Sound:	Lower Cook Inlet:	<a href="#">Eyak:</a>
Dance	agnguahtua	agnguaq	
Seal	qaigyaq	qaigyaq	<a href="#">geeltaq, keeltaq</a>

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

- Local Elder/Recognized Expert
- Camera/tablet
- Computer/Smart Board to show video clips

**Websites:**

- Nancy Yeaton describing Joe Tanape performing the traditional Seal Dance
  - <https://youtu.be/KS-gHqLCxCU>
- Aaron Meganack teaching how to do the Seal Dance <https://youtu.be/g-KJMBNgcbk>
- Nanwalek Seal Dance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7x771gAhAQ>
- Nanwalek Seal Dancers (video clip also located on the webpage)
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=86&v=kkIzEEeXG2c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=86&v=kkIzEEeXG2c)
- Alaskan Native depicting a seal hunt <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9tjQTKzBI8>
- Harbor seal swimming <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=yfp-t&p=Alaska+harbor+seals+in+the+wild#id=20&vid=ba5f3468d86a731f7cc1d4de91998878&action=view>
- Harbor seal at the Sealife Center <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=yfp-t&p=Alaska+harbor+seals+in+the+wild#action=view&id=36&vid=501d2cfd55bd6c059ad7ec6b65877fda>

**Teacher Preparation:**

1. Contact Local Elder/Recognized Expert to come in the class and share knowledge about traditional dances and possibly share a traditional seal (or other) dance.
2. Review and mark for easy reference of the quotes to read to the students.
3. Review YouTube clips and have technology available to show videos to students in class.
4. Review Sug'tstun/Eyak vocabulary words.
5. Have a camera, iPad, smart phone available for pictures or videos.

OPTIONAL: Invite another class or parents for a potluck and watch the seal dance performance by the students wearing the hunting hats they made.

**Opening:** We will learn about traditional dances and why they were created. The dance we will concentrate on today, is the seal dance from Nanwalek. The seal dance was created to show respect to the seal that has provided much for the survival of our ancestors.

How many of you have seen a seal? Have you ever watched the seal move in the water? How about on the rocks/beach? Let's delve more about the antics of a seal so as you dance, you will be able to mimic the seal's movements!

Later in a different lesson, we will also be creating a seal hunting hat to enhance our seal dance that we will perform for others later.

### **Activities:**

#### **Class I-II:**

1. Introduce Elder/Recognized Expert
  - What kind of traditional dance(s) have you seen or performed? Do you know a seal dance?
  - Where did the dance originate from?
  - Who taught you the dance?
  - What does it mean?
  - When was the dance performed?
2. Have students take notes while Elder/Recognized Expert is presenting.
3. If possible, have the Elder/Recognized Expert teach the students the seal dance or a traditional dance that imitates an animal or bird.
4. After listening to Elder/Recognized Expert is finished have students view:
  - Harbor seal swimming <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=yfp-t&p=Alaska+harbor+seals+in+the+wild#id=20&vid=ba5f3468d86a731f7cc1d4de91998878&action=view>
  - Harbor seal at the Sealife Center <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=yfp-t&p=Alaska+harbor+seals+in+the+wild#action=view&id=36&vid=501d2cfd55bd6c059ad7ec6b65877fda>
5. On the white board or butcher paper, record the students' comments and descriptions of what they saw regarding the seals antics and movements.
6. Read Nancy Yeaton's quote describing Joe Tanape's seal dance:

*"As I watched Joe Tanape, he gave me a gift into the past, a time so long ago, way before my time. As he prepared himself, standing in that unlit room, brown with leathery skin, his face and his body became the seal that he mimicked to a 'T'! Joe's head moved to personify the seal and as he danced he pursed his lips to shape his face to look like the seal. Chills ran up and down my spine as he became the seal, no longer could I see Joe Tanape as a man, but as a seal! He danced moving his body to his own inner rhythm, the beat of a drum that he recalled hearing as a child, which played in his mind. As Joe danced before me, I was able to envision the memories of so long ago, remembering as he and his Grandfather traveled in a skin boat qayaq, meeting with others as they traveled the coastline. Closely watching the water and seeing mammals swimming alongside. Watching seal antics and movements as they swam in the water. Little did Joe Tanape know his keen observation, appreciation and respect of the seals would allow him to share his dance to honor the seal and instill a wonderful gift to those who were able to witness such a beautiful performance."*

7. Show the YouTube video of Nancy describing Joe Tanape's traditional Seal Dance performance. <https://youtu.be/KS-gHqLCxCU>
8. Ask students to purse their lips to make their face look like a seal.



*Rhoda Moonin, Nanwalek, demonstrating a seal face.*

9. Show the Step-by-Step instructions for the Seal Dance by Aaron Meganack.
  - a. <https://youtu.be/g-KJMBNgecbk>
10. Have the students stand up and practice the antics and movements of a seal following Aaron Meganack's instructions. Remind students to:
  - a. Keep pursed lips like a seal face throughout...
  - b. Encourage mimicking, such as; what are the flippers doing, how are the seals moving upper body? etc.
11. After students have practiced with their lips pursed and moving antics like seals, play the Nanwalek music used for the seal dance. (Can also use a drum if desired for more traditional.)
  - a. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=86&v=kkIzEEeXG2c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=86&v=kkIzEEeXG2c)
12. Encourage students to act like a seal, make the people who are watching, feel as though they are seeing a seal just as you heard Nancy Yeaton describes Joe Tanape's Seal Dance.
13. Introduce Sugt'stun/ Eyak vocabulary words to students.

### **Class II-III:**

1. Discuss with students how and why traditional dances were derived. Ask questions like:
  - a. Did you know Alaskan Native people had such respect for animals?

- b. Why do you think the animals were respected and needed to be honored?
  - c. What are some of the ways that our ancestors honored the animals?
2. The animals provided for survival and nothing was wasted. To do so, assured future successful hunts.
  - a. To show respect, everything was used on the animal for food, fur/feathers used for clothing or regalia, sinew for sewing, and bones for making tools.
  - b. Songs and dances to were another way of honoring the animal for giving themselves to hunters.
3. Many of the songs and dances were presented when there were festivals with many villages invited, this was a time to socialize, listen to stories, songs, and dances and find possible future husband or wife.
4. Have a discussion about when traditional dances might have been performed or created. Explain afterwards that the winters were long days of darkness, which provided time to share and create new songs, dances and stories. This was also an opportunity to reflect of all that is given and create time to honor the many animals that gave themselves to the hunters.
5. Have students view the following, the Native people in this video clip are from Kotzebue:
  - Alaskan Native depicting a seal hunt <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9tjQTKzBI8>
  - Learn to Seal Dance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7x771gAhAQ>
6. Discuss the videos and make a list of the things students observed in the dances.

#### **Class IV**

1. Ask students to practice the seal dance they have learned.
2. Invite others to come for a potluck and watch the dance performance.
3. Set the classroom up for the dance performance.

#### **Assessment:**

- Students can explain why the seal (and other animal) dance was created.
- Students can describe the antics and movements of a seal.
- Students successfully performed the Nanwalek seal dance.

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<sup>i</sup>Birket-Smith, Kaj. The Chugach Eskimo. Nationalmuseets Publikationsfond, 1953. p. 110



Nanwalek Seal Dancers during 2010 Gathering in Homer, Photo provided by Pratt Museum