

**CLOTHING: KAKIWIK ‘DECORATED BAGS’, THIMBLE, AND SINEW THREAD GR: 6-12 (3-4 CLASSES)**

**Elder Quote/Belief:**

“Not only did the women carry sewing kits, but so did the men, because when they were out hunting, they could mend the qayaq as needed.” –Nicka Tanape

**Grade Level: 6-12**

**Overview:**

Chugach people had much respect for their tools because they were stored in a beautiful decorated sewing bag, also called a ‘kakiwik’. Students will examine the traditional tools used to make (and later be stored in) the kakiwik. These tools were necessary for sewing a piece of clothing or repairing a boat cover. These tools consisted of a thimble, awl and needle. The thimble was made from a thick piece of hide, an awl was typically made from the bone of an animal, and needle was created from a bone of a bird/ animal, or carved out of ivory that was traded for with neighboring cultures.

**Standards:**

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content Science:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
<b>A3:</b> Culturally-knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community.	<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>CE2:</b> Students should have knowledge of traditional and contemporary sewing and clothing using skins and furs.

**Lesson Goal:**

To become aware of supplies necessary for sewing, used by both women and men. A seamstress used her awl to pierce a hole in her hide. A slender bird bone or ivory needle was used to pull the thread through the hole and a thimble to push the needle through the hide. A seamstress stored tools in beautifully decorated bags, or kakiwiks. Men carried similar bags, with tools for repairing boats and clothing.

**Lesson Objectives:**

Students will:

- Make a thimble out of rawhide
- Learn how to use a bone awl on leather and sew into that leather with a bone needle.
- Learn how to make sinew from a tendon.
- Create a kakiwik to store these tools.

**Vocabulary Words:** Sugt'stun Dialects

English:	Prince William Sound:	Lower Cook Inlet:	<a href="#">Eyak:</a>
Decorated bag	kakiwik	kakiwik	
awl			<a href="#">tAL</a>
ulu			weegshg
needle	mingqun	mingqun	
thimble	puksugsun	puksugsun	

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

In Kit:

Awl, thimbles, sewing needle, sinew

Ivory seal needle holder and thimble in case

Deer rawhide scraps \*If you need more rawhide, then you can order from any drum making supply company [www.furandhide.com](http://www.furandhide.com)

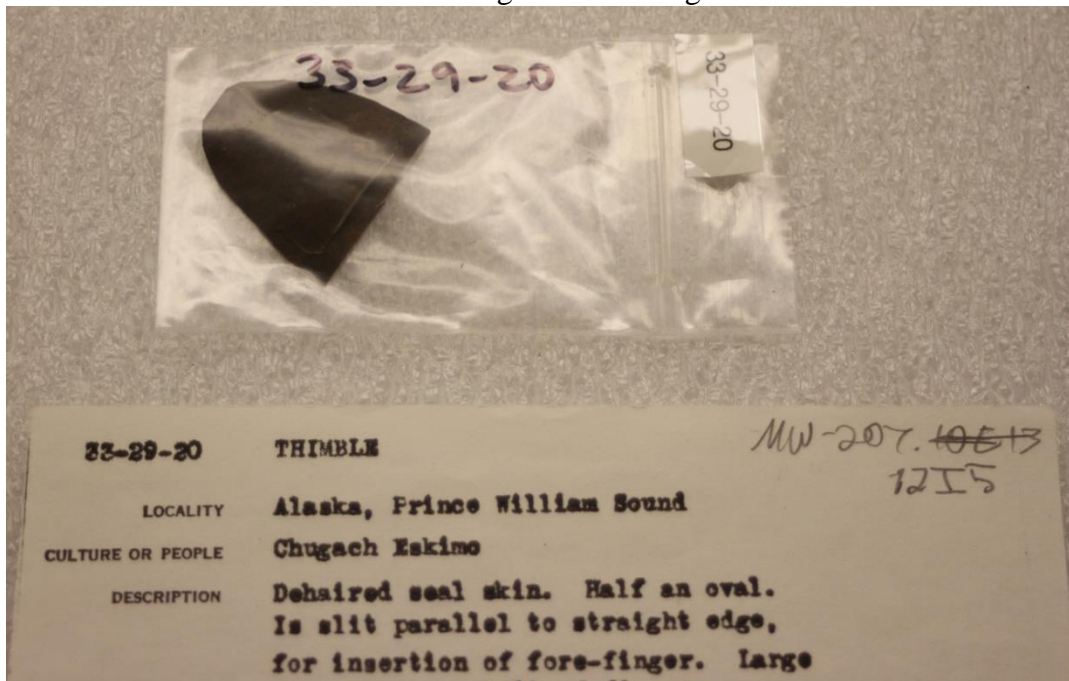
Sample sewing bag

Sample rawhide thimble

Pattern and laminated instructions for making a rawhide thimble

Pattern and laminated instructions for making a kakiwik, or sewing bag

Laminated sheet on thimble that belonged to the Chugach Eskimo of Prince William Sound



**Books:**

- *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage, The First Peoples of Alaska*
- *Alutiiq Traditions, An Introduction to the Native Culture of the Kodiak Archipelago*
- *Looking Both Ways -Heritage and Tradition of the Alutiiq People*
- *Chugach Prehistory –The Archaeology of Prince William Sound, Alaska* (refer to pg. 187-189 and for decorated bone tubes pg. 198-199)

**Websites/videos:****Making a bone needle**

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iojf3ln6\\_mI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iojf3ln6_mI)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8BJDVNVWio>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29DeMPiypHw>

**Teacher Preparation:**

1. Invite an Elder/ Recognized Expert who can share their knowledge of traditional materials used for making tools for their sewing kit.
2. Review with the students the proper ways to show respect for the guest speaker.
3. Locate and gather all materials needed for lessons

**Opening:**

Listen to the following excerpt found in *Chugach Prehistory* by Captain James Cook best describes the Chugach and their sewing implements.

*“Everything they have, however, is as well and ingeniously made, as if they were furnished with the most complete tool-chest; and their sewing, plaiting of sinews, and small work on the little bags, may be put in competition with the most delicate manufactures found in any part of the known world. In short, considering the otherwise uncivilized or rude state in which these people are, their Northern situation, amidst a country perpetually covered with snow, and the wretched materials which they have to work with, it appears, that their invention and dexterity, in all manual works, is at least equal to that of any other nation.”*

In this activity, we will be examining the different implements used for sewing and what the ancestors used to store these tools.

**Activities:****Class I:**

1. Have the students examine the sewing artifacts in the kit: different thimbles out of sealskin, awl, scraper, bone needle, and ivory seal needle holder.
2. Discuss the different sewing implements and how they were created with the resources that they had available.
3. Ask the students if they have ever made any tools out of bone. If so, what? How hard was it to make it? What did they use to make the tool?
4. Preview the hide scraper 3D model
  - [https://sketchfab.com/models/6a6fabd576b547f9a3d60fad95e21d68?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=model-shared](https://sketchfab.com/models/6a6fabd576b547f9a3d60fad95e21d68?utm_source=email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=model-shared)
5. Read the information from *Chugach Eskimo* (p. 75, 77, 78) and *Chugach Prehistory* (p. 185-189, 199, 237, 268) about their sewing tools.

6. Show the laminated sheets included in kit, picture of the thimble found in the Prince William Sound that belonged to a Chugach Eskimo
7. Pass around the sinew sample
8. Show students the process of making sinew for sewing thread and the picture of the whale's tail. Explain where the tendon in the tail was used for making sinew. (Sinew was also used from land animals they may have hunted, such as; moose and deer.)
9. Create a thimble out of deer raw hide following the pattern and instructions included in the kit. Explain how the traditional thimbles were traditionally made out of de-haired seal skin, but for this project will be using deer rawhide. Inform the students that they will use their thimble with the next project-making a kakiwik (decorated sewing bag).

### **Class II and III:**

1. Explain how the little cases or bags for materials used in sewing and for other articles were made from skins of various kinds, such as, seal skin or seal intestine.
2. Read the following excerpt from Chugach Eskimo:
 

*“Small sewing bags were either made up of urine bladders of sea lions and painted red, or, of the skin of a seal flipper taken off whole with the claws; it was in later times lined with cloth and had an edging of cloth at the top, and the outside was embroidered with beads. A sealskin bag was used by the men on hunting excursions. It had an oval bottom and was narrow at the top”.*
3. Display the sewing kit sample
4. Pass out the materials and instructions needed to construct a kakiwik (decorated sewing bag).
  - a. Felt or leather (preferably deer hide- because it is easier to sew than suede)
  - b. Glover sewing needles, size 6
  - c. Imitation sinew thread
  - d. Awl
5. During this class, have the students practice using the awl on a piece of leather.
6. If the students chose to make their sewing bag out of leather, then instruct them to make sewing holes along the edge of the bag with the awl.
7. Sew the kakiwik together with a needle.
8. Tell the students that they can get as creative as they like with their sewing bag, such as, adding buttons, beads, fur, or leather scraps. They can add anything they would like to make this sewing bag their own.

### **\*Optional Classes\***

#### **Class IV:**

1. Make a bone needle out of deer bone or even a chicken bone.
2. Read the excerpt out of *Chugach Eskimo*-
 

“Ordinary sewing needles were said to be out of copper and provided with an eye, but many bone needles and awls were found during the excavation and were doubtless far more common in prehistoric periods than those of copper”.
3. Assign students to research how to make a bone needle. For step-by-step instructions to making a bone needle can be found on following YouTube channels:
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iojf3ln6\\_ml](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iojf3ln6_ml)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8BJDVNVWio>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29DeMPiypHw>

4. Locate materials needed to make bone needle.
5. Allow time for the students to make the bone needle according to the instructions.

**Class IV:**

1. Make a needle case. Gather materials depending on type of needle case, hollowed bones could be ordered at a variety places.
2. Read the following excerpt out of Chugach Eskimo-
  - a. “Needles were stuck into a piece of eagle skin with the down and rolled up, but they had also a needle case consisting of an eagle wing feather, the upper end which was plugged with wood.”
3. Explain how the women had a great variety of cases for holding their needles. Needle cases differed widely in form and were made from an assortment of materials. These needle cases showcased the remarkable ingenuity of our ancestors to utilize all animal parts and their adaptation of ornamental designs to practical purposes.
  - a. One favorite form of a needle case was made from a section of the hollow wing bone of a goose or other large waterfowl. They would then plug each end with a wooden stopper.
  - b. Other needle cases would not use stoppers but rather insert a large swath of sealskin passed through the center. When this type of needle case is used the needles are thrust into the sealskin cord and are drawn into the case by pulling on the other end of the cord, and when needed can be withdrawn by a reverse movement. Show the carved ivory needle case that is carved into a seal as an example of this type of needle case.

**Assessment:**

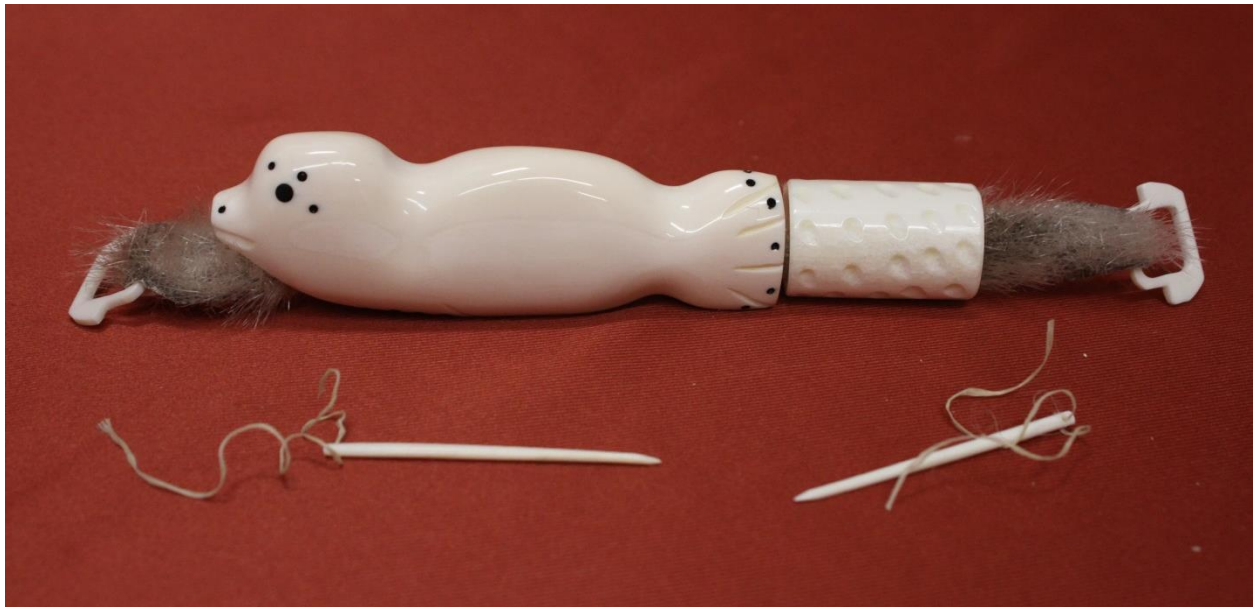
- Students can identify and demonstrate how to use the following sewing items: bone awl, rawhide thimble, bone needle, needle case, kakiwik (decorated sewing bag), sinew, and a hide scraper.
- Students can identify sinew and where it is found on the whale or animal.
- Students can identify rawhide and successfully made a thimble for their sewing project.
- Students can explain what a kakiwik is and describe how to make one from start to finish.
- Students can correctly say and point out the Sugt’stun/ Eyak words for decorated bag, sinew and thimble.



**Sinew – making thread**



Sugpiaq Sewing Bag  
Accession Date: 1882  
Source: William J. Fisher (collector)  
Museum: National Museum of Natural History  
Museum ID Number: E072497



IVORY NEEDLE CASE  
made by Jerome Saclamana



KAKIWIK- SEWING BAG  
made by Mary Babic