

**CLOTHING: SPRUCE ROOT HATS GR: PREK-2 (LESSON 9)**

**Elder Quote/Belief:**



*“Spruce roots were strong and woven so tightly that it made a basket or a hat waterproof. My ancestors were geniuses! How did they come up with all these ideas?”*

- Mary Babic/Cordova

**Grade Level: PreK-2**

**Overview:**

There are many traditional uses for spruce roots. This lesson is designed to teach students the importance of the tightly woven spruce root hats were waterproof and decorated to shown their symbolism.

**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:**

The Chugach people used clothing as a form of expression. One important article of their clothing was spruce root hats. These hats had designs painted, embroidered, and decorated to show their honor and respect to the plants and animals that gave them strength and support.

**Lesson Objective(s):**

- Students will learn what spruce roots are by seeing them and touching them.
- Students will hear how spruce roots were woven to make hats.
- Students will learn designs and materials used to decorate a spruce root hat and their meaning.

**Vocabulary Words:** Sugt'stun Dialects

English:	Prince William Sound:	Lower Cook Inlet:	<a href="#">Eyak:</a>
Sea lion whiskers	winam ungai	winam ungai	
Spruce root			Geets'

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

In kit:

- Laminated photos of Chugach spruce root hats
- A spruce root with bark on, a spruce root without the bark, and a split spruce root. They are all tagged for teacher's information.
- Directions on how to make a conical shaped spruce root hat.
- Pattern for spruce root hat
- Stencils of different designs that were painted on hats with a description
- Instructions on how to make imitation seal whiskers.
- Chugach A to Z poster

Books:

- The Alutiit/Sugpiat- A Catalog of the Collections of the Kunstkamera)
- *Inartalicirpet-Our Weaving Ways* from Aluutiq Museum

Need to locate and gather for lesson:

- Heavy poster board (24 x 36). Each piece will make two hats.
- Markers
- Glue
- String
- Scissors
- Beads, shells, heavy fishing line

### **Teacher Preparation:**

- Invite an Elder/ Recognized Expert who has led a traditional lifestyle in your region.
  - Ask him or her to share subsistence values, experiences, and stories.
  - Ask the Elder to share their knowledge of these traditional materials used for weaving hats or baskets.
- Review with the students the proper ways to show respect for the guest speaker.
- Review pages 10 and 11 -Alutiiq Museum's, *Inartalicirpet-Our Weaving Ways* before the class begins.
- Review directions on how to make this project with the students- A spruce root hat.
- Familiarize yourself with the materials and resources in kit.
- Make copies of the spruce root pattern for each student.
- Gather enough poster boards for each student to make a hat
- Soak the weaving roots for fifteen minutes before class.
- Put up the Chugach A to Z poster.

### **Opening:**

If you recall, yesterday, we made our version of a seal gut parka as one form of clothing used in expressing one's self (point to the seal gut parka on poster).

Today, we will be learning about spruce roots hats, their design elements and why these certain designs were chosen. Point out the spruce root hat on the *Chugach A to Z* poster. Ask the students:

Why do you think the Chugach wore these spruce root hats?

Have any of you seen a spruce root before?

Did you know that we live in a spruce tree forest?

Have any of you ever heard of weaving with these roots to make a hat or basket?

Show students the spruce roots in their different stages of harvest. (Each root is tagged with the description of how they have been harvested.) Pass these roots around and allow the students to tug on the soaked roots, so they are able to feel how strong these roots are. It will give them an idea on why these roots were chosen for the hunting hat. Discuss the traditional uses of these roots. So today, we are going to be making a paper version of the spruce root hat and decorate it with one of the traditional designs.

### **Activities:**

1. Show students laminated photographs of the spruce root hats and read to them excerpts out of *Inartalicirpet Our Weaving Ways*, pages 10 and 11 design elements.
2. Hand out a pattern to each student along with a piece of poster board.

3. Read aloud the instructions on how to make a spruce root hat to the students.
4. Once the hats are cut out, the students will decorate them based on the designs in the instructions. Explain the stencil designs and why the hunter may have chosen these designs. Ask the students, why they thought did some of the hunters choose a particular design and/or color? What do they think the hat says about the person wearing it?
5. If students have time, they can add beads or imitation seal whiskers.
6. Teacher and assistant can help them with closing up the hat and also adding string to tie around their chin.
7. Once everyone has completed the project, tell the students that the hats were originally used to hunt with. Have the students present their hats to the rest of class. Make sure the students discuss why their hat looks the way it does.
8. Put the hats on display so that the rest of the school can see them.

**Assessment:**

- Students able to identify spruce roots in their different stages of harvest.
- Students can explain how roots made a traditional waterproof hat.
- Students can identify plants and animal designs that decorated a spruce root hat.
- Students can correctly say and point to the different Sugt'stun/Eyak words for sea lion whiskers and spruce root.

