

FOOD FROM THE SEA: COASTAL PEOPLE GR: PREK-2 (LESSON 1)

Elder Quote: “*Cacat pellakengapet qaterqat taingata nunanpt ’nun, pelaten ’lkepet uy’uucarnipet mermen. Meq unguarpet. Pirpak meq unguakan, Chuchachermiut unguaciput.*”
 “Of all the things we have lost since non-Natives came to our land, we have never lost our connection with the water. The water is our source of life. So long as the water is alive, Chugach Natives are alive.”

– Walter Meganack Sr., Port Graham, 1989ⁱ

Grade Level: PreK-2

Overview: 10,000 years ago Alaska was connected to Asia by the Bering land bridge. The ancient ancestors of the Natives peoples of the Americas ventured across the bridge in search of new lands to settle. What made them stop and settle here? What resources made our Chugach coastal communities such good choices?

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.	Geography B1: Know that places have distinctive characteristics	L1: Students should understand the value and importance of the Sugt’stun language and be actively involved in its preservation.

Lesson Goal: Students explore the connection between the geography of place and the resources needed to support communities.

Lesson Objectives: Students will:

- Locate their village/town on the globe and on the map of Alaska
- Discuss the subsistence foods available in Lower Cook Inlet/Prince William Sound, especially marine foods.
- Learn Sugt’stun or Eyak vocabulary listed below.

Vocabulary Words:

Sugt’stun Dialects

English:	PWS:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
Listen! (directed to 3 or more)		<i>Niicugniluci!</i>	
sea	<i>imaq</i>	<i>imaq</i>	<i>lahdz</i> (lit: forward, out to sea)
food	<i>neqet</i>	<i>neqet</i>	<i>Giyah</i>
food from the sea	<i>imarlat neqet</i>	<i>imarlat neqet</i>	

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Globe
- Map of Alaska with cities, towns, and villages
- Small plastic sea creatures (in kit)
- Tidal Edibles cards (in kit)

Kit Library:

- Sloat, Teri. *The Eye of the Needle*
- Poling, Donald Robert, *Chenega Diaries: Stories and Voices from the Past: Life and Times in Chenega, Alaska 1944-48*
- Salomon, Anne K., et al. *Imam Cimiucia = Our Changing Sea*

Web Resources:

- Bering Land Bridge
<http://geography.about.com/od/locateplacesworldwide/a/beringlandbridge.htm> Summary of Bering Land Bridge, info links.

Google Earth

- <https://earth.google.com/web/search/Chugach+Region/@59.94955844,-145.77225959,465.60311981a,1468849.49502155d,35y,0h,0t,0r/data=CigiJgokCVP3LIK0bD5AEVD3LIK0bD7AGcvWVaN5VkVAIbToZ3uFcFHA> Download program and zoom in on your community within the Chugach Region.

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 their expertise on the lesson content.
- Invite an Elder or Recognized Expert to share information on extent of local subsistence foods and how to harvests and enjoy traditional foods.
- Before the Elder or Recognized Expert arrives, review with the students, ways to show respect for the Elder during his or her visit.
- Download *Google Earth* and practice search for your village.
- *Optional:* Invite a parent to prepare a small seafood treat to share with students and Elder.

Opening: With the aid of Google Earth, or a globe and map of Alaska, explain that over 10,000 years ago people traveled from Siberia to Alaska across the Bering Strait land bridge searching for new places to settle. They spread out across Alaska and Canada and further south. These ancient people were the ancestors of all Native peoples of the Americas. 10,000 years ago there were many more glaciers here in Alaska. But glaciers are no place to live. People needed food and fresh water and shelter from the weather. The Sugpiat/ Eyak stopped here by the sea, on the shores of Lower Cook Inlet/Prince William Sound to make a new home, our village.

Help students to locate their village/town on globe and map of Alaska.

Ask students why the Sugpiaq/ Eyak people decided to make their home here on the seacoast, on the shores of Lower Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound? [*Accept all answers but steer*

students toward idea of abundant foods available from the ocean and on the beach.] Review Sugt'stun or Eyak vocabulary words.

Briefly identify traditional Alaskan villages along rivers, in the Interior, and along the coast and compare and contrast local coastal resources with those food resources of other villages (caribou vs. moose; walrus vs. sea lions; Arctic char vs. salmon, beaver vs seal...)



Seal skinning, Kimber Moonin, Tatitlek

Activities:

1. Introduce Elder/Expert and remind students to listen respectfully:
Listen!/Niicugnili!
2. Ask students to recall any food from the sea/*imarlat neqet* that they harvest and eat.
3. List foods on the board under Sugt'stun or Eyak heading of Foods/*Neqet*.
4. Invite Elder to add more types of traditional food/*neqet* to list.
5. Invite Elder to share stories of harvesting traditional foods from the sea/*imarlat neqet*.
6. Share this quote from Mary Kompkoffⁱⁱⁱ (1937-2018) of Chenega:

“Times were rugged, because of the weather. Sometimes they [*father and brother*] went and checked their traps for a week or so, and we lived off the land. There was always seal, bear, deer, sea lion, fish. My dad was also a good hand-liner. When he got a whole bunch of halibut, he'd share with the whole village, and that's how it was, that I can remember. Everybody shared.” -Mary Kompkoff, Chenega

7. Read *The Eye of the Needle* book aloud and invite students to comment on which foods from the sea they have eaten or are aware of. Are all the foods mentioned in the book available in our region? [Note: Although there are whales in the Chugach region they were not often harvested. The Eyak were not whalers. The last whale harvested in Prince William Sound was in the late 1800s.]
8. Distribute the small plastic sea creatures for students to identify and discuss how to locate and harvest. Are there any other foods from the sea/*imarlat neget*?
9. Display the Tidal Edibles cards and invite Elder to talk about eating bidarkis, sea cucumbers, sea weed, sea urchins...



Sea Cucumber

10. Ask the students, why did the Sugpiat and Eyak peoples settle here on the coast? Share the Elder Quote from Walter Meganack (see above) and discuss why living next to the ocean is such an important part of Sugpiat and Eyak cultures.
11. *Optional*: Share traditional sea food snack with the Elder, being sure to serve the Elder first and then the students.

Assessment:

- Students successfully located their village/town on the globe and on map of Alaska.
- Students listed and described the traditional sea food resources harvested and eaten in their community.
- Students correctly pronounced Sugt'stun or Eyak vocabulary words.

ⁱ Salomon, Anne K., et al. *Imam Cimiucia = Our Changing Sea*. Alaska Sea Grant College Program, 2011. p.12

ⁱⁱ Poling, Donald Robert. *Chenega Diaries: Stories and Voices of Our Past: Life and Times in the Native Village of Chenega, Alaska 1944-1948*. Chenega Future, Inc., 2011. p.242