

**TRADITIONAL HOUSES AND SHELTERS: TRADITIONAL HOUSING DIORAMA GR: 6-8 (2 LESSONS)**

**Elder Quote/Belief:**

*“In long distance of traveling they had the ‘muskoks’ they made. The fire was built right outside. They were built out of moss and old limbs from the trees. They put branches across after they put on the moss, and they would layer it with more moss and branches. They looked for young trees. They looked for a comfortable place to build with an area they can see around the places. They stayed in the muskoks for 2-3 days just watching and hunting from the same area.”*

*-Simeon Kvasnikoff Sr., Port Graham*

**Grade Level: 6-8**

**Overview:**

Houses and shelters used by the Chugach people during first contact times around the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century were traditionally ciklluaq/sod houses, sometimes referred to as smokehouses or barabaras. These traditional houses were built in strategic locations close to a fresh water supply and food easily accessible. The Chugach people were traditionally nomadic people who traveled throughout Prince William Sound creating camps and settlements, some of which became abandoned villages. The Chugach people had walking trails in between some villages and would build shelters also known as ‘muskoks’ in resting areas along the way. They would build these emergency shelters, so other people knew where to find them. The shelters were sometimes used as check points or a location for passing messages to the people in another village. The hunters would sometimes utilize these shelters. The shelters were built out of surround materials available such as driftwood or spruce tree branches to help as a frame and then covered in layers of smaller tree branches, grass and mud.

**Standards:**

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content Science:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
<b>D 2</b> Culturally knowledgeable students are able to effectively participate in various cultural environments.	<b>G 1</b> History and nature of science. A student should understand the history and nature of science.	<b>Survival S 3</b> Students should know how to start a fire, prepare signals, and make temporary shelters.

**Lesson Goal:**

Students will learn of the types of traditional houses and shelters that were built and used in the Chugach Region.

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

- Learn about the different types of traditional houses and shelters that were traditionally used.
- Learn how the shelters were built so that they were strong enough to endure the winter months.
- Learn the Sugt’stun/Eyak vocabulary words.

**Vocabulary Words:** Sugt'stun Dialects

English:	Prince William Sound:	Lower Cook Inlet:	<a href="#">Eyak:</a>
House	Enaa	Enaa	yahd
Driftwood		pukilaaq	dAkinh
Grass		Weg'et	kidz
mud		qikuq	
fire		Keneq	dAq'aag

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

- Elder or Recognized Expert to share TEK on traditional housing and shelters.
- Research materials pertaining to Chugach Region housing and shelters.
- Natural materials collected from outside (sticks, branches, moss, dirt, grass, etc.)
- Cardboard (i.e. soda pop case bottom)
- Newspaper
- Glue/glue guns
- iPad, laptop, and printer for students

**Books/Documents:**

- [Fireweed Life and Times in Port Graham, Vol. 1, 2, 3](#)
- [Alexandrovsk -English Bay in its Traditional way, Vol. 1, Vol. 2, Vol. 3](#)
- [Chugach Eskimo](#)
- [Chenega Diaries](#)
- [The Eyak Indians of the Copper River Delta](#) by DeLaguna.

**Website:**

- [Jukebox – Port Graham and Nanwalek](#)
- Nick Tanape on “Temporary Shelters” (Starts at 2:50) <https://youtu.be/a9FbV68iOh4>
- Outdoor Survival Training –Student Manual for Alaska’s Youth
  - [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b66831\\_0e7bfb53142e42ada5ba4adf969d5e0b.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b66831_0e7bfb53142e42ada5ba4adf969d5e0b.pdf)

**Teacher Preparation:**

- Invite an Elder or Recognized Expert to share TEK on traditional housing and shelters.
- If an Elder is willing to come in, review the ways to show respect to guest with students prior to visit.
- Gather resources on traditional housing and shelters for students to use for their project and presentations.
- Scout out best places for students to gather natural materials to build dioramas.

### **Opening:**

How many of you know what were the traditional houses built by the Chugach Region's Sugpiat or Eyak people? The traditional houses and shelters were built in strategic locations where the ancestors could find a supply of food, water and materials to build a shelter out of the weather.

The Sugpiat traditional built *ciklluaq/sod houses* also known as a barabaras or smoke houses. These houses were built from found materials readily available such as; driftwood, spruce tree branches, moss, grass, etc.

The Eyak people traditionally built long houses. These long houses were known to be quite big and would house many family members as stated in the book, [\*The Eyak Indians of the Copper River Delta\*](#) by DeLaguna.

Today, we will be researching on traditional houses and shelters and then create a diorama of a traditional sod house or long house in a natural setting.

### **Activities:**

#### **Class I:**

1. If available, introduce the Elder or Recognized Expert.
2. Assign students (or let them choose a partner) to create a presentation and diorama.
3. Depending on community, the students will be building a sod house or long house.
4. For the presentation:
  - a. Research for any information and photographs of traditional houses and shelters that will help build a correct depiction of a traditional housing/shelter diorama and include photos of the construction process for the diorama being built and make sure to include required components.
  - b. Discuss the importance of copyrights on materials and photographs.
  - c. Ask the students to try to find copyright friendly photographs and if not, then they need to acquire permission to use photos in the presentation.
5. The presentation should also include the following:
  - a. Sugt'stun name/Eyak vocabulary words and names for the houses, shelters, and materials used to build them.
  - b. A short story or a quote by an Elder about traditional housing and shelters.
  - c. Paragraph description of the house or shelter and how it was typically used and what materials it was built with using both the English and Sugt'stun/Eyak words.
  - d. Extra credit will be when the presentation includes GPS coordinates or a map that shows location of the traditional house or shelter they researched.
6. For the diorama:
  - a. The model should be a close representation of the traditional housing or shelter that was researched.
  - b. Students can choose to follow the directions for sod houses given in [\*Alexandrovsk, Vol. 2\*](#), Page 53 (Also attached) or for long houses described in [\*The Eyak Indians of the Copper River Delta\*](#), Page 367.

**Class II:**

1. Allow time for the students to gather materials outside to build their diorama.
2. Allow time for the students compile the information to create their dioramas and presentations. Encourage creativity in their presentations, which could include narratives, native speaker, songs, etc.

**Class III:**

1. Share presentations to class/school/community.

***OPTIONAL CLASS IV:*** Show the websites/video listed above regarding temporary and emergency shelters. Have students build outdoor emergency shelters in the woods or on beach above high tide as in the Grade 3-5 Temporary Shelters lesson.

**Assessment:**

- The students can explain the different types of traditional houses and shelters traditionally used in the Chugach Region.
- The students created a diorama that correctly represented a traditional house or shelter.
- The student presentations included; how house or shelter was built, the materials used, Elder story and Sugt'stun/Eyak vocabulary words about the traditional house shelter researched.

# SOD HOUSE

According to Herman Moonin, the Aleuts built sod houses. They built a wooden frame with driftwood. The wooden frame was covered with grass, moss and mud.

For heat they would have a fire in the middle and a hole in the top to let the smoke out.

The windows were made of dried bear intestines.

The size of the sod house depends on how many people are going to stay in it.

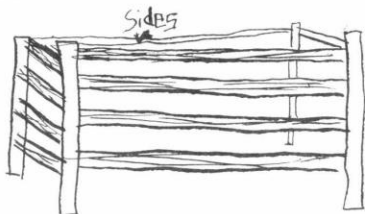
We built a model sod house in our class, and this is the way we did it.

## Material list

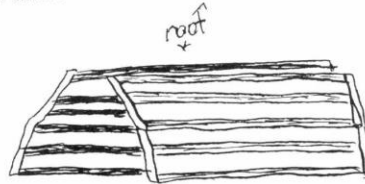
Strips of driftwood 1' long  
2' x 2' plywood  
Glue  
Wheat paste  
Oatmeal  
Paint (Green-Brown)  
Moss  
Newspaper

Step 1. Mix wheat paste. Place a full sheet of newspaper on the plywood.

Step 2. Build four walls that are 6' by 12'-on the fourth wall build a door.



Step 3. Build a barn-style roof frame.



Step 4. Attach the frame work together. Glue them and set to dry.

Step 5. Apply strips of newspaper and wheat paste to the frame work until it is completely covered. Then add newspaper to the sides to make it look bumpy. Let it dry overnight.

Step 6. After it dries, paint the sod house brown and the ground around it green. Then paint a second coat.

Step 7. After it dries, add moss around the sides and roof to make it look like grass growing. Glue on with Elmer's glue.  
Step 8. It is finished except for the touch-up work.



Story by Vincent Evans  
and Paul Swenning  
As told by Herman Moonin  
Layout by Paul Swenning

Article taken from *Alexandrovsk*, Vol. 2, Page 53

53