

**TRADITIONAL HOUSING AND SHELTER: OUR SHELTERS GR: PREK-2 (2 LESSONS)**

**Elder Quote/Belief:**

*“The Aleuts built sod houses. They built a wooden frame with driftwood. The wooden frame was covered in grass, moss and mud. For heat, they would have a fire in the middle and a hole on top to let the smoke out. The windows were made out of bear intestine. The size of the house depends on how many people are going to stay in it.” - Herman Moonin, Alexandrovsk, No.2, Page 53.*

**Grade Level: PreK-2**

**Overview:**

In this activity lesson the students will learn about the traditional housing and shelters the Chugach Region ancestors designed and built.

**Standards:**

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content Science:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
<b>D2</b> participate in and make constructive contributions to the learning activities associated with a traditional camp environment	<b>F3</b> Develop an understanding of the importance of recording and validating cultural knowledge.	<b>Outdoor survival S3</b> Students should know how to start a fire, prepare signals, and make temporary shelters.

**Lesson Goal:**

To learn about the traditional housing and shelters designed and built by the Chugach Region ancestors.

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

- Learn about the traditional houses and shelters the Chugach Region ancestors used.
- Learn what materials were used to build the traditional houses and shelters.
- 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	
Moss			
Mud		qikuq	
Branches/Boughs			<a href="#">uX Adk’udAwa’ts’</a>

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

Coloring pencils or Crayons  
Glue and/or glue gun  
Cardboard pieces (to build shelter on)  
Stick/twigs/branches  
Grass  
Moss

**Books/Documents:**

*Alexandrovsk- English Bay in its Traditional Way*, No. 2, Page 53

**Websites:**

- Simeon Kvasnikoff Sr., Port Graham Jukebox interview
  - <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/NanPG/prtgrham/html/23507.html>
- Eyak Dictionary <http://eyakpeople.com/dictionary>
- [\*The Eyak Indians of the Copper River Delta\*](#), Page 367.

**Teacher Preparation:**

- Invite an Elder or Recognized Expert to share knowledge of traditional housing and shelters used in Chugach Region.
- Review with students the ways to show respect for guest in classroom.
- Locate photographs of the traditional housing and shelters used.

**Opening:**

In this activity lesson, we will be learning about what the traditional houses looked like, what materials were used and how they were built. Imagine how it would be to live back a long time ago with no power tools, nails, or plywood to build a house for your family to live in. What do you think you would use to make a house or shelter to help keep you warm? Our ancestors used the materials available to them such as; driftwood, sod (grass with dirt), twigs, moss, branches, etc. These found materials were used to make houses or shelters that successfully kept people out of the elements like wind, rain and cold in order to survive. Together, we will build a model of a traditional house/shelter from the materials we collect outside.

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

1. Introduce the Elder or Recognized Expert to share their knowledge of traditional housing and shelters.
2. Show pictures of traditional houses and shelters to the students and hold discussion of what materials they can identify on each house/shelter.
3. Explain to the students they will be going outside to find and gather materials to build a model shelter. Remind the students to gather twigs and sticks (no longer than one-foot long), little branches, moss and grass.
4. Allow time to gather materials. Have the students go back inside when all the materials have been gathered and ask the students to lay out their materials they gathered on a table.

**Class II:**

1. On a sheet of cardboard the teacher will start assembling the frame for the shelter by using the sticks and twigs cut at even lengths and held together by using a glue gun.

2. Pre-cut the twigs and sticks, cut four twigs at eight inches. Then cut four twigs at four inches.
3. Assemble the walls and when ready, ask the students to help hold the walls in place so the adult using the glue gun can quickly glue the walls to the cardboard.
4. Ask the students to continue to hold the walls steady until they are dry.
  - a. If desired, tape the frame together first then glue it all together.
5. When the frame is glued down the students can place the smaller twigs on the side of the shelter, the smaller twigs will help support the walls by have one twig glued to the top wall and the cardboard floor.
6. Have the students pick out a twig that will be the correct size as the other twigs and continue to glue around the frame.
7. When the frame is done being put together the students can cover the frame with moss and grass for the exterior walls
8. When the shelter is completely covered, ask the students to create a list of the materials used.

**Assessment:**

- Students can describe how a traditional house or shelter was built and looks like.
- Students can list materials used to build a traditional house or shelter.
- Students can successfully say the Sugt'stun/Eyak vocabulary words.





Portage Bay, Alaska Peninsula, 1909 Photo courtesy of the Alaska State Library (PCA 24-109)

Lace thin poles  
horizontally

