

TRADITIONAL TRANSPORTATION: EXPLORING THE QAYAQ GR: PREK-2 (LESSON 2)

Elder Quote Belief:



“It helps when you’re out there in rough water. It definitely works. I don’t know whose idea it was, but you would have to be very smart to figure that out. They traveled in very rough seas out here. I’ve been in a boat where forty- or fifty-foot boat couldn’t travel where our people traveled in their fifteen- to sixteen-foot kayaks. They landed on the rocks on the beach with no problem. The bigger boats would just sink.”

-Nick Tanape, Nanwalek¹

Grade Level: PreK-2

Overview: The Sugpiaq people of the Chugach Region developed a unique qayaq/kayak with a bifurcated bow. The qayaq supported many activities for sustaining life. The Sugpiaq used the qayaq to hunt and fish, transport resources, and move families from village to village.

Standards:

| <i>AK Cultural:</i> | <i>AK Science Content:</i> | <i>CRCC:</i> |
|---|--|--|
| B 2 Culturally knowledgeable students are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life. | E 1 Science and Technology: A student should understand the relationships among science, technology, and society. | CE9 Students should have respected and appreciation for their own cultures as well as the cultures of others. |

Lesson Goal: Learn about the uses of qayaqs in the Chugach Region and the unique construction used.

Lesson Objective(s): Students will:

- Learn Sugt’stun words for qayaq parts
- Color, cut and make a paper qayaq from PreK-2 template.
- Learn about the unique design of the Chugach Region bifid (split) bow on the qayaq.

Vocabulary Words: Sugt’stun Dialects

| English | Prince William Sound | Lower Cook Inlet | |
|---------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Kayak | Qayaq | Qayaq | Eyak gAyAXgug |
| Bow | Nanguna | | |
| Stern | nucuguia | cuunga | qu’LXaad |
| Ribs | unarat | nugluku | |
| Cockpit | atuna | rraatan | |

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Elder or Recognized Expert to share traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and expertise on subject.
- Classroom set of the paper qayaq template (attached)
- Colored crayons or markers
- Scissors
- Glue or tape

In Kit:

- Qayaq model and large die cut photo
- Banners

Books/Documents:

- *Qayaqs and Canoes: Native Ways of Knowing* by Jan Steinbright
- Article, *Skin Boats* told by Sergius Moonin [Alexandrovsk Volume 2](#)

Teacher Preparation:

- Elder or Recognized Expert to share traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and expertise.
- Review the proper ways to show respect to guest in classroom.
- Review the book *Qayaqs and Canoes: Native Ways of Knowing*, page 76-87 and review any video resources on website.
- Display model qayaqs and hang up banners around classroom.
- Preview the article on Skin Boats told by Sergius Moonin in [Alexandrovsk Volume 2](#)
- Make copies of the qayaq templates, one per student. (Attached)
- Gather supplies: crayons, markers, scissors, tape, glue as needed.

Opening: Have you ever paddled or sat in a kayak/qayaq before? (Pass around photos and diagrams of a skin on frame qayaq.) I am going to read an article on *Skin Boats* by Sergius Moonin from Nanwalek. Please listen carefully as he describes these traditional boats and what they did.

Have a discussion and describe the uses of a qayaq; to travel from place to place, for fishing and hunting, moving materials from different locations, transport families from villages and camps.

It is amazing how the Sugpiaq/Eyak people would travel many miles, in some cases they would travel for months to trade, visit family or sometimes for war.

Activities:

Class I:

1. Read the story *Skin Boats* told by Sergius Moonin out loud to the students.
2. Have the students gather around the banners, especially to focus on the bow of the qayaq.
3. Ask students to notice how the bow has a split? Explain the reason for the split bow, it was designed to absorb the waves and act as a “shock absorber”. How ingenious!
4. Ask students to guess where this unique piece of wood could come from. (Below is a photo example).
5. Share the photos and diagrams (included in kit) of traditional qayaqs.
6. Discuss the parts of a qayaq using English, Sugt’stun/ Eyak vocabulary words.

7. Have the students to design and create paper qayaq from the template.

Assessment:

- Students correctly describe the parts of a qayaq with Sugt'stun/Eyak vocabulary.
- Students successfully complete paper qayaq project.

¹Jackson, J. S., & Mishler, C. (2001). *Qayaqs & canoes: Native ways of knowing*. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Native Heritage Center.



Bifurcated Bow of the Chugach Sugpiaq



Can you see the potential bifurcated bow in this picture?

