

Activities & Projects

Tapestry of Life



Level: Grade 6 Social Studies

Preparation: Print images if required. Print *Worksheet 1 – The Order of the Day* and *Group Assignments 1 – 6 – Our Boots*

Duration: Discussion re sequence of events – 30 minutes; reading and reporting about the boot making process – 90 minutes; perspective writing activity – 60 minutes = 180 minutes

Materials: None

Goals:

- describe ways in which the natural environment molded Inuit culture
- use a variety of resources and tools to investigate Inuit peoples
- write narratives that present a particular perspective or point of view

New Vocabulary:

Blubber, breathing hole sealing, harpoon, Inuit, kamik, scraper, scraping platform, sinew, sole, stretching frames, tapestry

(see [Glossary](#) for definitions)

Description:

Begin: Print or project the map of Canada to locate the Canadian Arctic, and the traditional locations of the many Inuit groups who live there. Draw several circles or “brainstorm bubbles” on the board or chart paper, and label them Weather, Land, Plants, Animals, and the Inuit People. Ask students to call out what they already know about the arctic. Record their ideas in the relevant bubbles, adding new ones if necessary. Review the bubbles, and explain that hunting animals was how the Inuit people survive in a cold environment.

Seal skin was used for clothing, including watertight boots. Seal also provided meat, lamp oil (rendered from blubber) tents, boats, harpoon lines, foats (bladder) and tools (bones). Caribou fur made the warmest clothing. Caribou also provided meat, sinew, blankets, tool (bones), and ornamentation (teeth). Excellent seamstresses were highly valued in traditional Inuit society – indeed a woman who could sew well would be readily sought as a wife. Her family’s very survival could be dependant on her sewing skills.

Print or project the [tapestry by Mina Napartuk](#) made of appliquéd sealskin on cloth. (It is also featured on the [Introduction page](#) of the web exhibition *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*.)

Mina Napartuk was born in Kuujjuarapik in 1913. Trained in the traditional way of life, she was an expert in the making of skin and fur garments. At the age of sixty-one she turned her talent to the creation of wall hangings made of pieces of sealskin appliquéd on cloth. Her tapestries depicted vignettes of traditional Inuit life on the land, as it was lived at the point of contact with

Europeans. Some of the activities shown in her work are no longer practiced.

This tapestry was commissioned by The Bata Shoe Museum in 1979. It shows the steps that are needed to make a pair of warm, dry boots for a very cold climate, from the seal hunt to the sewing and finishing of the kamiks. Explain that this tapestry shows an important event in life of an Inuit family. Tell the story using The Order of the Day resource. Enlarge or project *Worksheet 1 – The Order of the Day* and have a whole–group discussion of the sequence of events. Refer to *Worksheet 1 – The Order of the Day – Answers* for the sequence depicted on the tapestry.

Learn: Split the class into 6 groups. Assign a section of the first part of the exhibition to each group, beginning with 'The Land', and ending with 'Sewing Tools'. Ask them to read the page and summarize the information on *Group Assignments 1 – 6 – Our Boots*. They will then present it to the class. They should also identify where the topic of their section is depicted on the tapestry. Make sure that they read aloud the quote at the beginning of each section. The quotes are primary sources that will help students connect the material to real people.

For the presentations, print or project the tapestry so that the students can make use of it.

Apply: Ask students to write a story based on the tapestry from the perspective of one of the characters. For example, they can choose to write about the seal hunt from either the perspective of the seal, the dog, the Inuit boy, or the hunter. Or, they can write about preparing skins and sewing kamiks from the perspective of the mother or the little girl.



Wall hanging of appliquéd sealskin on cloth made by Mina Napartuk with visual stories showing the steps in making kamiks: hunting, scraping and sewing.
Wool felt, sealskin, cotton thread, cotton backing, nylon Velcro
Kuujjuarapik, Quebec
BSM P79.272

Sequence of steps in tapestry by Mina Napartuk

(Based on translation of the Inuit syllabics on the tapestry)

1. Going hunting:

Father says to his son: “Come little son, we’ll take the puppy and go hunting”.

2. Hunting:

Father stands over the breathing hole with his harpoon poised, waiting for the seal to come up for air.

3. Seal caught:

Father hauls out a square fipper seal that he has successfully harpooned.

4. Helping to pull:

The boy and his dog are excited about the catch. Father says “Son, help me pull! Now we will have plenty to eat!”

5. Going home:

They haul the seal home. The boy says “Oh father, my dog and I will be happy to eat!”

6. Scraping:

Mother scrapes the skin and stretches it on a frame as the daughter tends her baby brother.

7. Sewing:

Mother sews the sealskin kamiks outside the tent because it is too dark inside.

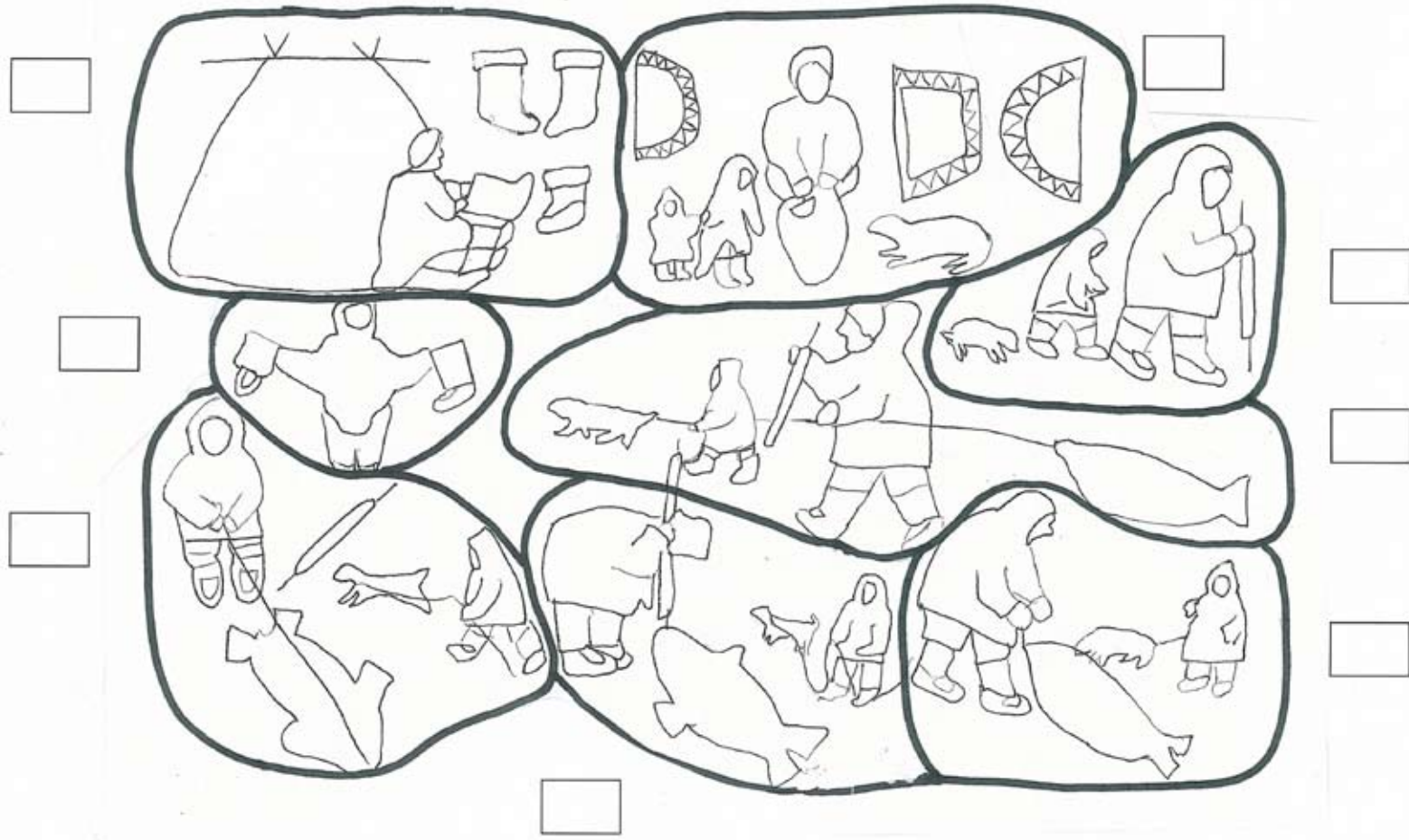
8. Finished kamiks:

The kamiks are finished and Mother is happy.

Student Name: _____

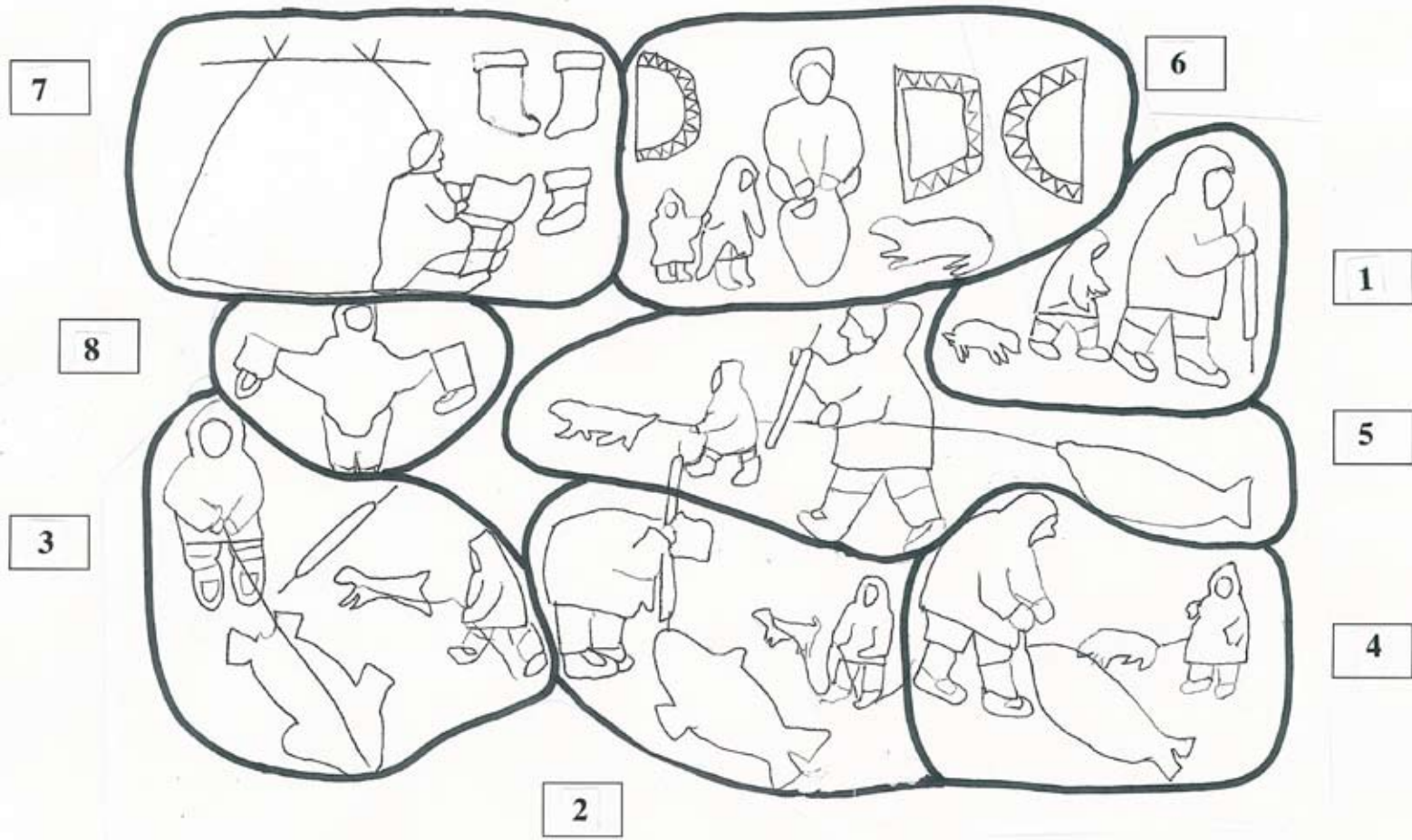
Order of the Day

Number the steps needed to make a warm pair of kamiks. Place a number from 1 - 8 beside each picture.



Order of the Day – Answers

Number the steps needed to make a warm pair of kamiks. Place a number from 1 - 8 beside each picture.



Activity 1, Tapestry of Life – Group Assignment 1 – Our Boots

Student Names: _____

Skin Clothing

*Come up to me,
Come up to me.
I will gladly sew hoods
to your garments.
I will gladly set fine soles
to your kamiks.*

Traditional song collected by Rasmussen, 1930
(Translation of a song collected from the Caribou Inuit
on the Fifth Thule Expedition by Knud Rasmussen, 1921-1924)

GROUP TASK:

Go to the *Skin Clothing* Section in the exhibition *Our Boots – An Inuit Woman's Art*.

Read the page and summarize the information. Identify the parts of Mina Napartuk's tapestry that relate to your topic. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to include the quote above in your presentation.

Activity 1, Tapestry of Life – Group Assignment 2 – Our Boots

Student Names: _____

Skin Footwear

Inuit women make kamiks and other traditional clothing which enable us to thrive in Arctic environments. Caribou skins provide excellent insulation, while seal skins protect us from wet conditions. We use combinations of seal, caribou, and other skins to produce footwear that is suited for many different weather conditions.

Sally Qimmiu'naaq Webster, 1995

GROUP TASK:

Go to the *Skin Footwear* Section in the exhibition *Our Boots – An Inuit Woman's Art*.

Read the page and summarize the information. Identify the parts of Mina Napartuk's tapestry that relate to your topic. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to include the quote above in your presentation.

Activity 1, Tapestry of Life – Group Assignment 3 – Our Boots

Student Names: _____

Scrapers and Scraping Platforms

I bring [my scraping platform] with me when we go camping for the summer so I can easily shave hair from seal skins. You have to make sure you keep the board clean and fat so you won't accidentally slice through the skin.

Lydia Akumaliq, Arctic Bay, 1984

When I was little I started playing with scrapers and tools by practicing on skins.

Irene Quqshuun, 1986

GROUP TASK:

Go to the *Scraper and Scraping Platforms* Section in the exhibition *Our Boots – An Inuit Woman's Art*.

Read the page and summarize the information. Identify the parts of Mina Napartuk's tapestry that relate to your topic. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to include the quotes above in your presentation.

Activity 1, Tapestry of Life – Group Assignment 4 – Our Boots

Student Names: _____

Stretching Frames

*We prepare skins in different ways for different conditions.
We remove fat and dry them. Frames help us make the skins
smooth and free from wrinkles.*

Jennie Lennie, Sarah Ovatuatia Philip and Sally Qimmiu'naaq Webster

GROUP TASK:

Go to the *Stretching Frames* Section in the exhibition *Our Boots – An Inuit Woman's Art*.

Read the page and summarize the information. Identify the parts of Mina Napartuk's tapestry that relate to your topic. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to include the quote above in your presentation.

Activity 1, Tapestry of Life – Group Assignment 5 – Our Boots

Student Names: _____

Ulus

*Every woman has her own tools made with her own design.
When an elder dies, her ulu is sometimes buried with her.*

Ulayok Kaviok, 1986

GROUP TASK:

Go to the *Ulus* Section in the exhibition *Our Boots – An Inuit Woman's Art*.

Read the page and summarize the information. Identify the parts of Mina Napartuk's tapestry that relate to your topic. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to include the quote above in your presentation.

Activity 1, Tapestry of Life – Group Assignment 6 – Our Boots

Student Names: _____

Sewing Tools

Sinew is the strong tendon which connects muscle to bone. The best sinew is found along the backbone of the large animals we hunt. We separate the bundles of dried sinew into strands for sewing. When damp, animal sinew swells up and stops water from leaking through needle holes along kamik seams.

Elisapee Alooloo, 1984

GROUP TASK:

Go to the *Sewing Tools* Section in the exhibition *Our Boots – An Inuit Woman's Art*.

Read the page and summarize the information. Identify the parts of Mina Napartuk's tapestry that relate to your topic. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to include the quote above in your presentation.

Activity 1, Tapestry of Life – Group Assignments 1-6 – Our Boots – Answers

The main points the students should cover are:

Skin Clothing

- Inuit animal skin clothing provides protection from the environment
- Clothing is layered to allow temperature control
- Women are the makers of clothing, from preparing the skins to sewing
- Men's sewing skills were limited to mending

Skin Footwear

- Inuit footwear is a combination of layers: stockings, slippers and boots
- Water-resistant sealskin boots are used in warm or wet conditions
- Caribou, a dense, warm fur, is used for cold conditions
- Sealskin is porous, therefore permitting perspiration to escape and keeping feet dry and warm

Scrapers

- Scrapers have a short, wide blade, usually attached to a handle
- Blades were made from stone, slate, or bone
- In the 18th and 19th century iron obtained through trade or shipwrecks was preferred
- Scrapers are used to remove tissue and fat, to soften and to remove the fur from a skin

Stretching Frames

- Scraped skins are dried on frames to make them more elastic
- Once stretched and dried, it is softened by shaping the skin into a ball with the fur inside, and stamping on it repeatedly.
- It is smoothed with a scraper to remove wrinkles
- It is then rubbed and twisted until it is soft

Ulus

- Ulus are the crescent shaped knives used by Inuit women
- A woman would have many ulus that would be used for particular tasks like skinning, eating, and sewing
- Men made ulus for their wives, often molding it to fit her hand perfectly
- Women were sometimes buried with their ulus.

Sewing Tools

- Sinew, taken from either side of the caribou spine, was used for thread
- Sinew swells when wet, filling the holes made by the needle in the sewing process and making boots more waterproof
- Traditionally needles were made from bones; steel needles were preferred once they became available

Activities & Projects

Seal Hunt Debate

Level: Grade 10 Civics



Preparation: Print images if required. Make 'continuum line'. Print *Questions to Consider about the Seal Hunt* and *Seal Hunt Debate Questionnaire*

Duration: 240 minutes (four periods)

Materials: Coloured paper for continuum line. Small pieces of paper (3" x 3" approx) and paper clips for each student.

Goals:

- compare the varied beliefs, values, and points of view of Canadian citizens on issues of public interest
- analyze a current public issue that involves conflicting beliefs and values, describing and evaluating the conflicting positions
- demonstrate an ability to research questions of civic importance, and to think critically and creatively about those issues
- communicate their own beliefs, effectively using discussion skills.

Description:

Begin: Have a discussion with the students about what they know about the environment of the Inuit and their traditional lifestyle. Create a mind map with the students on the blackboard or chart paper. See Glossary for a definition of a mind map. [Click here](#) for an example of a mind map. (Alternative graphic organizers such as webs, fishbone diagrams etc. could be substituted, depending on the knowledge and experience of the students.)

Print or project the [tapestry by Mina Napartuk](#) made of appliquéd sealskin on cloth. (It is also featured on the [Introduction page](#) of the web exhibition *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman's Art*.) Mina Napartuk was born in Kuujuarapik in 1913. Trained in the traditional way of life, she was an expert in the making of skin and fur garments. At the age of sixty-one she turned her talent to the creation of wall hangings made of pieces of sealskin appliquéd on cloth. Her tapestries depicted vignettes of traditional Inuit life on the land.

This tapestry was commissioned by The Bata Shoe Museum in 1979. It shows the steps that are needed to make a pair of warm, dry boots for a very cold climate, from the seal hunt to the sewing and finishing of the kamiks. Explain that this tapestry shows an important event in life of an Inuit family. Tell the story using *The Order of the Day* resource. Refer to *Worksheet 1 – The Order of the Day – Answers* for the sequence on the tapestry. Also, project and read with the class *The Land, Skin Clothing and Skin Footwear* sections of the exhibition to give the students a sense of the arctic climate and traditional Inuit clothing.

Inform students that they will be participating in a debate about the seal hunt. Explain that a debate is a formal discussion between two teams who take opposite sides on a particular issue.

- organization and clarity of arguments
- whether arguments were supported with facts and examples
- the effectiveness of the rebuttal
- general persuasiveness of the arguments
- teamwork

Suggested Debate Structure:

Introduction of Ideas

- Each side has five minutes, timed by the Moderator, to state their view on the topic.

Question Period

- Each side asks three questions of the other side.
- Moderator can then ask two questions of each side.

Rebuttal

- Each side will then have the opportunity to comment on their opponents answers to their questions. Each side will have approximately five minutes.

Closing Arguments

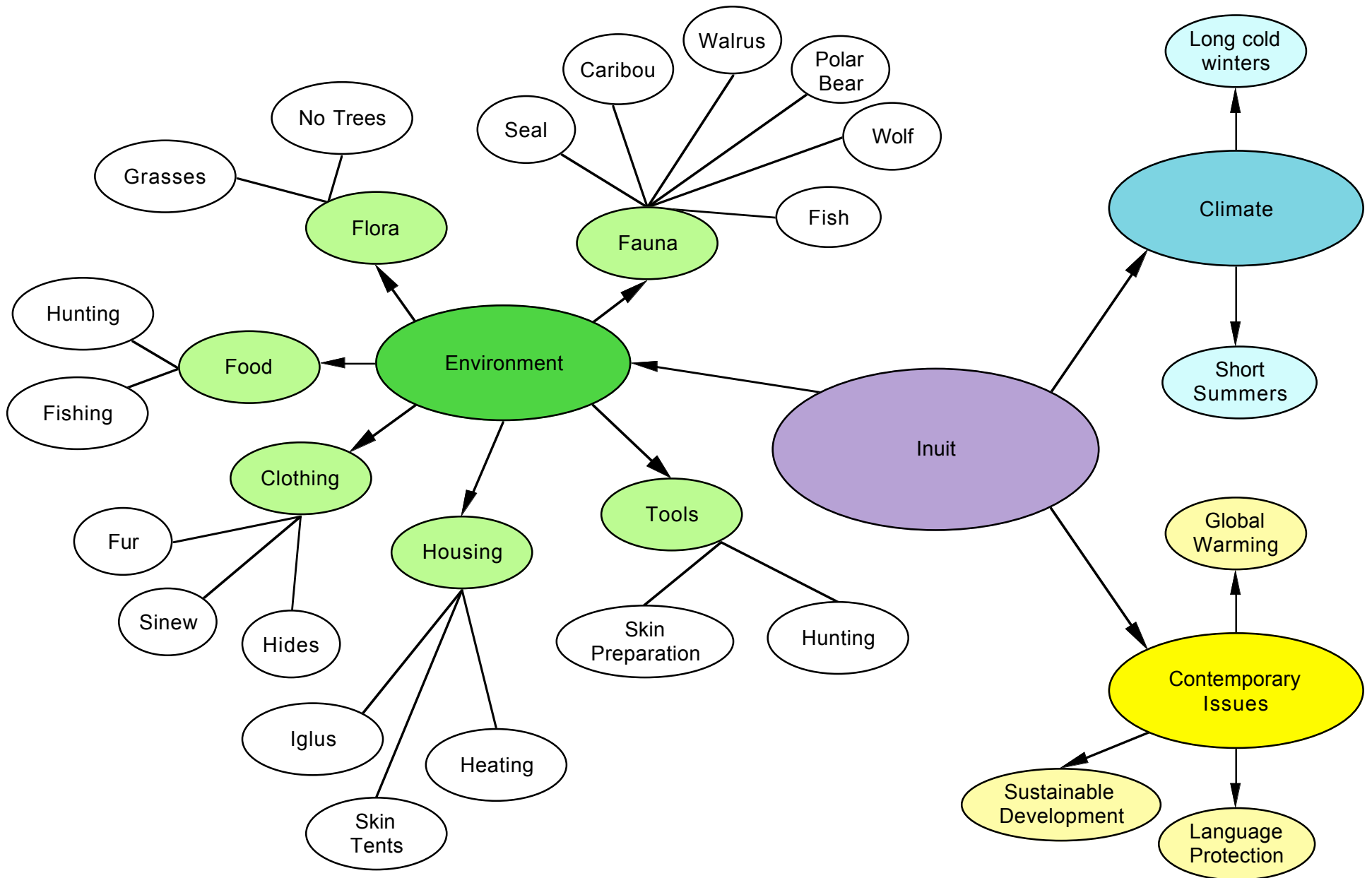
- each side can make a five minute closing statement

When the debate is over, ask the students to reflect on the various arguments and to fill in the *Seal Hunt Debate Questionnaire*. A vote on which team won the debate may also be held. Finally, give the students the opportunity to change the position of their marker on the continuum line if their opinion has changed.

Research Project

Ask students to research a different contemporary issue affecting the Inuit, such as global warming, sustainable development, language protection etc.

Mind Map - The Inuit and their Environment



Questions to consider about the seal hunt

- What is culling, and why do people believe it is necessary to cull the seal population?
- Is the hakapik a humane instrument? Why do some hunters prefer not to use a rifle?
- In April of 2008, the premiers of Nunavut and Labrador called for a federal ban on the hakapik. Why?
- Is there a difference between the seal hunt in Atlantic Canada versus seal hunting in Nunavut/Northwest Territories?
- Are baby seals (pups) killed during the seal hunt?
- Which celebrities have taken up the cause of banning the seal hunt? Have their efforts been effective?
- Many people who protest against the seal hunt eat meat, poultry, fish etc. Is there a difference, for example, between eating seal meat and using seal skins for clothing, and eating beef and using leather for clothing?
- Historically, what role has Greenpeace played in opposing the seal hunt? What are some of the tactics they have employed over the years?
- Who benefits economically from the seal hunt?
- Can the Inuit survive without the seal hunt?

Websites to get you started:

<http://www.sealsandsealing.net>

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international>

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2008/04/15/hakapik-ban.html>

Activity 2, Seal Hunt Debate

Seal Hunt Debate Questionnaire

Student Name: _____

1. For each question below, rate how successful each team was in the debate from 1 to 4.
1 = very unsuccessful, 2 = unsuccessful, 3 = somewhat successful, 4 = successful

Effectiveness of Debate

Questions	Pro Seal Hunt	Anti Seal Hunt
Were the arguments organized and clear?		
Were the arguments supported with facts and examples?		
Was the rebuttal effective?		
In general, were the arguments persuasive?		
Did the group work well as a team?		
TOTAL		

2. Now, list three key points made by each side that you feel were strong arguments.

Key Points

Pro Seal Hunt - Key Points
1.
2.
3.
Anti Seal Hunt - Key Points
1.
2.
3.

Activities & Projects

An Inuit Tapestry: The Art of the Boot

Level: Grade 9 Aboriginal Cultures/Visual Arts



Preparation: Print images if required. Print *Group Assignments 1–8 – Art of the Boot*, if using

Duration: 150 minutes (45 min. more if using Supplementary Activity = 195 min.)

Materials: paper, fabric, glue and other art supplies for tapestry, as desired

Goals:

- understand the creation of Aboriginal art forms as a way of maintaining the values, traditions of particular communities
- demonstrate understanding of the relationships among the Inuit, their environment, and art forms
- produce an artwork designed around specific content objectives and design challenges

Description:

Begin: Building on previous lessons in your unit, introduce the concept that Aboriginal art forms are a way of maintaining the values and traditions of Inuit communities.

Print or project the *tapestry by Mina Napartuk* made of appliquéd sealskin on cloth. (It is also featured on the *Introduction page* of the web exhibition *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman's Art*.) Mina Napartuk was born in Kuujjuarapik in 1913. Trained in the traditional way of life, she was an expert in the making of skin and fur garments. At the age of sixty-one she turned her talent to the creation of wall hangings made of pieces of sealskin appliquéd on cloth. Her tapestries depicted vignettes of traditional Inuit life on the land.

This tapestry was commissioned by The Bata Shoe Museum in 1979. It shows the steps that are needed to make a pair of warm, dry boots for a very cold climate, from the seal hunt to the sewing and finishing of the kamiks. Explain that this tapestry shows an important event in life of an Inuit family. Tell the story using *The Order of the Day* resource. Refer to *Worksheet 1 – The Order of the Day – Answers* for the sequence on the tapestry. Also, project and read with the class *The Land, Skin Clothing and Skin Footwear* sections of the exhibition to give the students a sense of the arctic climate and traditional Inuit clothing.

Learn: Discuss the tapestry as a work of art:

- The mural is flat, lacking depth, but if you look carefully at the figures, clever use has been made of the shadings in the sealskin to give a roundness or three-dimensional quality to the people.
- The story is presented in a somewhat linear fashion, but the sequence of events is non-linear (i.e. the tapestry's narrative does not read like a printed page from top left to bottom right). The aboriginal perspective differs from the Western one in this regard.
- In addition, the vignettes are not 'compartmentalized' (the way, for example, a comic strip

- would have lines segmenting each scene).
- There is no perspectival space, both in setting (i.e. no horizon) or in the rendering (note the foreshortening of figures that we look at head-on, like the mother scraping a skin at the top middle, or the father catching the square flipper seal on the left edge).
 - There is no hierarchical size. The most important figures and objects are usually the largest, without regard to their relative size in reality. For example, the finished boots held by the mother, the whole goal of the exercise, are very large. Indeed most of the boots and clothing are given prominence of size.

Print or project the image of another work by Mina Napartuk, *Above and Below the Ice – One World*. This work is made with sealskin and chamois appliqués and storytelling syllabics on a black felt background. The Inuktitut syllabics say: “Polar bear looking for a seal hole”, “This woman has (dog) sniffing for a seal (food)”, “Waiting over a seal hole”.

Notice that in both works the animals below the ice are also depicted. Discuss the title of this work in the context of both tapestries.

Apply: Discuss the word tapestry, technically a piece of cloth into which a picture or design has been sewn or woven that is hung on a wall for decoration. You may wish to project images of other Inuit artists’ wall-hangings, such as the wool and felt works of Jessie Oonark. Art historians believe her bold, flat areas of colour have firm roots in traditional Inuit sewing techniques. Like Mina Napartuk, Jessie Oonark was a seamstress who sewed clothing for her family, and adapted her skills to fabricate wall-hangings.

Ask the students to create a ‘tapestry’ depicting an event in their lives. They should show several ‘stages’ of the event, the way that Mina Napartuk has done. They should consider perspective space, hierarchical size, and the compartmentalizing and sequencing of the narrative. They may choose the option of creating their mural from the Aboriginal perspective, or a different one. The medium could be paper, cloth, or a material of their choosing. Students should complete a storyboard and a rough sketch, and then work on a large, colour version of their tapestry.

Supplementary Activity: For this supplementary activity *Art of the Boot*, the class is split into eight groups. Each group explores a section on a different Inuit group in the web-exhibition *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*. They will apply what they have learned to the study of one of the boots, pictured on their *Group Assignments 1-8 – Art of the Boot*. The group will prepare and present their findings to the class, emphasizing the sewing skills and creativity of the women who made the boots that are both practical and beautiful. The students are encouraged to include the quote in their presentation. The quotes are primary sources that help students connect the material to real people.



Above and Below the Ice – One World, Mina Napatuk, 1970's
Permission granted by Warkinuit, Kanata ON to use in this activity

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 1

Student Names: _____

Igluilik Inuit



“Our clothing is like a living history book. It reflects the people and events that influence us. After almost 20 years of negotiations we have re-established our land “Nunavut”. I spelt out “Nunavut” and Okiutaqtuq (our land freezes) on these boots and duffe stockings.”

- Cecilia Naleopa Kudluk, Coral Harbour

Go to the *Igluilik Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above (S87.69). Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 2

Student Names: _____

Baffnland Inuit



*“My duffe stockings are embroidered with a lot of different embroidery stitches.
The flowers are made to match the flowers on my boots.”*

- Annie Kilabuk Jr., Pangnirtung, 1987

Go to the *Baffnland Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 3

Student Names: _____

Labrador Inuit



“One of the ways I tell my kamiks from others is by looking at the beaded toes. Emilia wore these [haired ring seal boots], around town all year long, except when it was wet.”

- Minnie Merkuratsuk, Nain, 1985

Go to the *Labrador Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 4

Student Names: _____

Ungava Inuit



“In this area we make some kamiks with fat sole, like these haired ringed seal skin kamiks.”

- Elisapee Audlaluk, Inukjuak

Go to the *Ungava Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 5

Student Names: _____

Caribou Inuit



Bleached seal skin is appliquéd to shaved seal kamiks to create decorative patterns. This technique is common to both Caribou and Iglulik Inuit.

Go to the *Caribou Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman's Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 6

Student Names: _____

Netsilik Inuit



“To keep kamiks soft and flexible, you have to keep them in a plastic bag in a cold place, like the freezer or an unheated back porch. I learned how to make skin boots from my mother and still make them the same way.”

- Elma Innuuinak, Pelly Bay

Go to the *Netsilik Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 7

Student Names: _____

Copper Inuit



"I decorated these caribou leg skin kamiks by putting a piece of bleached seal skin over top a seal skin dyed with red and purple fabric dye."

- Mabel Nigiyok, Holman Island 1987

Go to the *Copper Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman's Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Activity 3, Art of the Boot – Group Assignment 8

Student Names: _____

Inuvialuit Inuit



“To decorate my mukluks, I put together different-coloured pieces of bias tape to make Delta trim.”

- Jennie Lennie, 1994

Go to the *Inuvialuit Inuit* section of *Our Boots: An Inuit Woman’s Art*. Read the text, and look at the other artifacts in the section. Record what you can about the boot pictured above. Prepare to present your findings to the class. Be sure to incorporate the quote into your presentation.

Maker:

Materials:

Decoration:

Name three things that you think the maker is highly skilled at:

Glossary

Blubber – The fat of seals, whales and walrus.

Breathing hole sealing – Seals are warm-blooded animals who need to resurface from the sea from time to time to breathe. They keep returning to the same hole, thereby preventing it from freezing over. Traditionally, Inuit hunters went out onto the sea ice in December. With the assistance of dogs, or by reading minute depressions in the snow, the hunter locates a breathing hole, and then bends over it waiting for the seal to surface. It could be many hours, and the hunter stays motionless throughout the wait. When the seal comes up to breathe, the hunter thrusts the harpoon into the seal. The harpoon head, which is attached to a long line, comes off, wedging into the head and making it possible to pull the animal up through the hole. The hunt is conducted much the same way today, although rifles are used rather than harpoons.

Culling – To hunt or kill animals as a means of population control.

Hakapik – A tool of Norwegian design for clubbing seal, consisting of a shaft, hammer head (used to crush a seal's skull), and a hook (used to drag away the carcass) on the end. When used correctly, it is said to be a humane and quick way to kill the animal. Some hunters prefer it as it allows them to kill the seal without damaging the pelt. In Canada, hakapiks are used primarily on the east coast. There have been calls to ban hakapiks by Canadian politicians over the years, primarily because of concerns that it contributes to a negative image of the seal hunt, as Europe contemplates a ban on importing seal products. Both sealers and activists resist the call to ban the tool, as both sides claim that one rifle shot does not always kill the animal, and they are left bleeding on the ice floes until the hunters can get close enough for a second shot.

Harpoon – A tool used by the Inuit primarily for hunting sea mammals, consisting of a shaft, a removable toggle head and a line.

Inuit – The original indigenous inhabitants of the Canadian arctic. Inuit means “people”.

Kamik – An Inuktitut word from the central and eastern Canadian Arctic meaning boot.

Mind Map – A mind map is a diagram that begins with a central idea, with new and related ideas radiating out from the centre. By focusing on key ideas and then looking for branches out and connections between the ideas, this tool ‘maps’ knowledge in a way that helps one to understand and remember new information.

Pleated soles – Pleated sealskin soles are cut larger than the actual foot measurement. Edges are chewed, thinned and scraped to soften them. This enables the sewer to make tiny, compact pleats. Pleats are made by taking a small stitches and pulling them tight. Pleats help shape the sole by creating a cup around the heel and toe.

Scraper – A tool for removing hair and softening hide.

Scraping platform – Two fat boards nailed perpendicularly to one another on which the skin is spread to remove blubber or hair. Some skins are not suited to cleaning on a scraping platform because of their thickness or vulnerability to tears.

Sinew – The leg or back tendon of a large animal such as a moose or a caribou that, when shredded into strands, makes a strong thread. It expands when wet thus 'filling' the sewing holes punched by an awl, and therefore helping to make a garment more waterproof.

Sole – The bottom part of a shoe or boot which touches the ground.

Stretching Frame – A rectangular frame made of wooden poles or boards lashed or nailed together. A skin that has been scraped free of fat and fascia is lashed and stretched on a frame until it dries.

Tapestry – A wall-hanging with rich, often varicoloured designs or scenes created by weaving or appliqué.

Ulu – A crescent-shaped knife used by women throughout the Arctic.

