

In Our Own Words

Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content
to the K-3 Classroom



Unit 6: The Power of Stories

Grades 2-3



Overview — Gitxsan Worldview

The Gitxsan concept of non-linear time emerges from the worldview of the co-existence of the realms of the physical and supernatural worlds and our belief in reincarnation. In addition, Gitxsan stories, laws, songs, and language that shape the Gitxsan worldview come from the Breath of the Grandfathers. Since time immemorial the stories have been passed down. When the storyteller speaks, he or she is the vehicle for the voices of the *Gitxsan* ancestors. The listeners become a part of many storytellers past, present and future.

"If the oral stories of the Gitxsan can survive all the betrayal that the culture has endured, then the stories must have power."
~ Dr. Jane Smith (Xsiwis)

The key elements of Gitxsan storytelling that emerge from the voices of the Elders, include the past and present definition and purpose of the story, the potential of storytelling, the power of storytelling, and the characteristics of Gitxsan stories. Within the Gitxsan community, storytelling is personal, interpretative and uniquely cultural. Gitxsan storytelling is by design a co-creative process. Since time immemorial the Gitxsan have told their stories. When the storyteller speaks, he or she is the vehicle for the voices of the Gitxsan ancestors. Gitxsan stories come from "the Breath of our Grandfathers." The storyteller and listeners become a part of many storytellers past, present and future.

Wiigyat, the Gitxsan Trickster, felt that once he possessed the coveted ball of light the Gitxsan would respect him and bring him food and gifts. It was like winning the lottery or bingo. Wiigyat would never be hungry again. He would never have to work. Wiigyat would just rent out the ball of light in exchange for food. The Trickster thought he could buy reputation and prestige.

Wiigyat. pronounced We-GET, meaning "big handsome man"

The Elders teach that balance comes from trusting one's intuition and one's reason. Hear with open ears. See with clear eyes and a good heart.

The Elders teach that a person is responsible for all the choices they make. Discuss the areas in the young lives where they can make positive choices for themselves

Local Context

This relies heavily on the Trickster stories of the Gitxsan peoples. Wherever possible, teachers are encouraged to adapt the unit to invite guests and incorporate stories representing their local culture(s). Consult your district's Aboriginal contact for assistance in this. (An up-to-date list of district Aboriginal contacts can be found at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/apps/imcl/imclWeb/AB.do.)

About the Trickster

A Trickster is an anthropomorphic character who plays tricks or otherwise disobeys normal rules and conventional behaviour. The Trickster often has supernatural powers,

and sometimes plays the role of transformer/creator, sometimes destroyer, and sometimes clown or magician. The Trickster archetype may be used by writers to teach lessons about the meaning of existence, introduce humour, act as a symbol, and provide social commentary. The most common Trickster characters in North American First Peoples stories are Raven, Coyote, and Rabbit, all of whom are known by many local names. Other examples of Trickster characters include Anansi the spider (in many African cultures) and the Fox (in many European cultures).

Authentic Texts

The primary text for this unit is “Wiigyat — The Gitxsan Trickster” (provided at the end of this unit).

Additional texts include:

- The Adventures of Txamsm Series: *Txamsm and the Kingfisher*
- The Adventures of Txamsm Series: *Txamsm and the Children*
- The Adventures of Txamsm Series: *Txamsm Visits Chief Echo*
- *How the Fox Got His Crossed Legs*
- *Byron through the Seasons*
- Caring for Me series: *Eat, Run, and Live Healthy*
- Caring for Me series: *Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives*
- Caring for Me series: *Looking After Me*

Curriculum Connections

This unit can be used to help students achieve Grade 2 and 3 curriculum expectations in the following areas:

	Grade 2	Grade 3
English Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ speaking and listening for specific purposes ▪ listening and speaking skills ▪ making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections ▪ responding to stories in a variety of ways ▪ reading grade-appropriate texts ▪ personal writing and representations that express connections to personal experiences and ideas ▪ informational writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ speaking and listening for specific purposes ▪ listening and speaking skills ▪ making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections ▪ responding to stories in a variety of ways ▪ reading grade-appropriate texts ▪ personal writing and representations that express connections to personal experiences and ideas ▪ informational writing ▪ enhanced vocabulary knowledge and usage
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ presenting drama ▪ using drama to tell stories ▪ voice, movement, and body skills in drama ▪ purposes for drama ▪ responding to drama performances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ presenting drama ▪ using drama to tell stories ▪ voice, movement, and body skills in drama ▪ traditional drama forms ▪ purposes for drama ▪ responding to drama performances

	Grade 2	Grade 3
Health and Career Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ personal skills and attributes ▪ healthy practices; benefits of healthy practices ▪ healthy friendships ▪ assertiveness and refusal skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ personal skills and attributes ▪ healthy practices; benefits of healthy practices ▪ assertiveness and refusal skills
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ comparing objects by length and distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ perimeter of regular objects
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ changes that occur in the school and community ▪ ways individuals contribute to community ▪ roles, rights, and responsibilities within the classroom and school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ changes that occur in communities ▪ importance of communities ▪ characteristics of Canadian society ▪ personal roles, rights, and responsibilities affecting school and community well-being ▪ how needs and wants are met
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ similarities and differences in animals' appearance, behaviour, and life cycles ▪ changes that affect animals (e.g., hibernation, migration, decline in population) ▪ how animals are important in the lives of Aboriginal peoples in BC ▪ ways animals are important to other living things and the environment 	
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ creating images in response to stories ▪ experimenting with materials, technologies, and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ creating images in response to stories ▪ experimenting with materials, technologies, and processes

Themes Addressed

- storytelling
- tricksters
- time and place
- sustainability & continuity
- well-being
- traditional knowledge
- identity
- relationality & connectedness
- wisdom
- relationship with spirit world

Activities in this Unit

- The First Lesson: Respect
- Wiigyat's First Lesson
- The Bones of the Story
- Wiigyat's Travels
- Village Diorama
- Design Activities
- Nutrition
- Properties of Light
- Drama Presentation
- Magic Paintbrush
- Picture This
- Cartoon Corner
- Wanted Poster
- The Discarded Box
- Extended Reading and Writing Activities
- Transformation
- Staying Healthy and Safe
- Don't Smoke!

- The Power to Make Good Choices for Change
- The Importance of Skills
- The Moral of the Story
- Button Blanket
- Reporting Skills
- Eulogy



Suggested Instruction and Assessment Approach

The First Lesson: Respect

Model what respect looks like, sounds like, and feels like (e.g., take turns, listen without interrupting, ask for and provide help, smile, use people’s names, disagree politely, adapt tone of voice, avoid “name calling” and unkind criticism of others).

Discuss and provide examples of treating others as one would like to be treated.

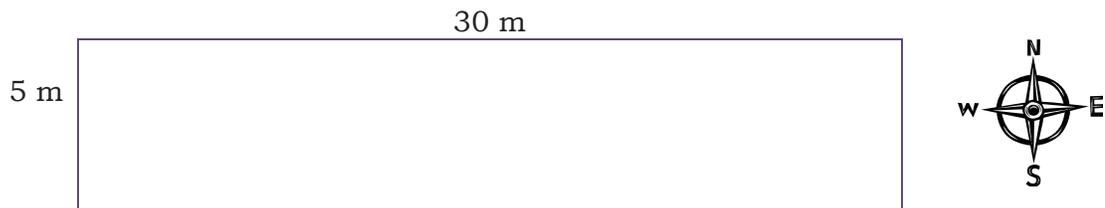
Wiigyat’s First Lesson

Read “Wiigyat — The Gitxsan Trickster” Chapter 1 (Wiigyat Visits the Shining Village) and Chapter 2 (Raven’s Accident).

In the big house, newly-weds slept on a platform on the east side of the great house, away from the others and a great distance from the warm fire. The elderly and those with young children slept close to the fire in the cooking area. The unmarried girls slept on the southern platform and the young men on the northern platform.

If the long house was 30 meters long and 20 meters wide, what is the perimeter?

The young men slept on the northern platform. If the platform was 30 meters long and 5 meters wide, what is the perimeter?



The Bones of the Story

To help your students grasp the structure of Gitxsan Storytelling and prepare them for writing their own, create a table for the “bones” of the story. Students can brainstorm their ideas while the teacher writes them on the chalkboard or chart paper. For example:

Possible Titles:

- The ball of Light
- Raven Steals the ball of light

Characters:

- Wiigyat
- Mother
- Chief
- Granny
- Gitxsan

Setting:

- Village
- Fish Camp

Problem:

- Wiigyat wants to possess the ball of light

Events:

- He watches the village
- He turns into a pine needle
- He swims into the chief’s daughter’s hand
- She swallows the pine needle
- Wiigyat is born
- He grows quickly
- He cries for the ball of light
- He plays nicely with the ball of light
- He flew away with the ball of light

Ending:

- His grandfather, the chief, is very angry

Wiigyat’s Travels

Wiigyat did not have a map for his travels, but he knew the cardinal directions. Have the students draw a map of the schoolyard for Wiigyat.

Mapping the School Yard

Draw a rough map of the schoolyard on the chalkboard before taking the students out doors to study the school grounds. Instruct the students to bring a pencil and a notebook outside to sketch a map.

Once outside show them which direction is north. If students are having trouble remembering the order of directions, teach them a mnemonic (e.g., **N**ever **E**at **S**our **W**atermelons).

Put a marker in the center of the field. Instruct the students to walk 25 steps to the north and return to center. Have students skip 25 steps to the south and back to the centre. Have students run 25 steps to the east and back to the centre. Have students walk backwards for 10 steps to the west and back to the centre.

Ask the students to point and show you from which direction the sun comes up and which direction it sets.

Instruct the students to draw a map of the school complete with landmarks they want to add, for instance the playground, flagpole, basketball court. Display the maps in the hallway.

Village Diorama

Materials Required

- Shoeboxes with a hole at one end for peeking in, 1 per student
- Pebbles for shoreline and to be placed around the fire
- Sticks for fireplace
- Construction paper for the background and objects:
 - 3 Different shades of blue for sky, mountain and river.
 - Brown for house fronts, canoe, totems, trunk of trees.
 - Yellow for sun and fire
 - Green for grass and trees
 - red for fire
- Blue Cellophane paper: cut off a strip off the top of the lid (roof) and tape on cellophane paper. This brightens the interior of the box
- Black marker to make cotton puffs look like smoke
- Red marker for designs on house front.
- Cotton puffs for smoke, clouds, snow
- Paper clips to tape to the backs of the trees, long houses, totems so they can stand.
- Scotch tape

Procedure

Have a completed “village in a shoebox” for them to model.

Place all the materials on a table at the front of the classroom. Each student has a shoebox.

Instruct the students to:

- Line the sides of the shoebox with strips of blue paper which they have measured.
- Glue the strips on to the sides and back inside the box.
- Do not cover the end with the peep hole.
- Take a contrasting blue sheet and once again measure this time they draw and cut out mountains.

- Glue the mountains to the far end and to the sides.
- Cut out a yellow circle for the sun and glue it in place over the mountains at the far end. Using little bits of the cotton puffs, glue on top of the mountains as snow.
- Bits of cotton puffs can also be placed in the sky for wisps of clouds.
- Cut out a strip of green paper and glue this to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the base of the shoebox.
- Measure out another shade of blue and glue this to the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of the base. This is the river.
- Line the shoreline with little pebbles. These also need to be glued down.
- Make a circle of pebbles in the middle of the village. This is the fireplace.
- Place little bits of sticks and bits of red, blue and yellow paper to give the illusion of a fire.
- Use bits of cotton puffs again and dap it with a black marker to make smoke, glue this on top of the sticks and paper.
- Cut out house fronts from the brown paper.
- (optional) the house fronts can be designed with the local crests.
- Open a paper clip part way and tape on end on the house front and the other in position in the village.
- Cut out evergreen trees (triangles) and paper clip and taped into the far end of the village.
- Cut out a number of totems can be cut out and designed with different animals and glued in place.
- Cut out canoes and paper clip and placed by the shoreline.
- Cut out humans and have them doing different tasks, such as fishing or tending the fire.
- Draw animals and cut them out and paper clip them by the trees.
- Make a presentation to the kindergarten class explaining the events happening in your village.

Design Activities

Building on the ideas from the Wiigyat stories, students can work in groups on any of the following design activities:

- Bring in the school or town logo to show the students what a logo is. Have students design a logo for Wiigyat's shoebox village. The logo should be simple, yet inviting, and can incorporate images such as a totem, house, sun, canoe, fisherman, hiker, or camper.
- Bring in a tri-fold brochure to have on hand for the students to see (e.g., from your town, for a special event). Challenge students to create a brochure to entice visitors to come to Wiigyat's village. The brochure should convey a direct message, and should be visually attractive. After reading your brochure your potential visitors should know where you are located and be eager to visit. The three panels of the brochure could include
 - 1st panel: Picture of the village, showing the long house, totem and river. Include Wiigyat's Village logo. The headline and picture should be very attractive.

- 2nd Panel: Describe the activities to attract visitors such as, canoeing, fishing, hiking. Draw a small icon with a caption to show each activity. Maybe the world's largest fish was caught here.
- 3rd Panel: Draw a map to show where the village is located. Include the name, address, phone number and email address of a contact person.

Bring in examples of postcards from the local area. Challenge students to create a postcard that could be sent from Wiigyat's Village.

Extension

As mathematics extension, set up "Wiigyat's Gift Store." Using manipulatives have students work on problems such as

- If the Postcards sold for \$1.00 each, how many could you buy if you had \$5.00?
- If you had a \$5.00 bill and you bought 2 cards, how much money would you get back in change?
- If a stamp was 50 cents, how many stamps could you buy if you had \$1.50?

Nutrition

Read *Eat, Run, and Live Healthy*, from the Caring for Me series.

Instruct the students on the importance of good nutrition. Help your students understand the basic daily food requirements.

Use the student handout, *Wiigyat's Plate*, to test students' knowledge of foods and food groups.

Properties of Light

Light is a form of energy. Sources of light include the Sun, the stars, light bulbs, and candles. Light travels in straight lines from its source. Light passes through some materials but not through others. For example, light passes through a glass window but not through a brick wall. A brick is opaque. Opaque materials do not allow any light to pass through them. Light rays that do not pass through a material reflect off it. Reflect means to bounce off a surface.

Bring in several flashlights and have the students experiment with different objects that light can pass through.

Create a class list of 5 things that allow light and 5 things that do not allow light to pass through.

Drama Presentation

Preparation

This activity uses the drama "Wiigyat and the Nutrition Spirits" provided at the end of this unit. Preview the text to determine if the level is appropriate for your

students. An alternate methodology would be to “cast” older students to perform the drama for your class.

Procedure

Everything that Wiigyat did was motivated by his desire to get free food. He was often very creative.

Select 6 students for the 2 narrators, Wiigyat, and 3 nutrition spirits. Divide the remainder of the class into fishermen, grannies, and hunters.

Supply the required props, some you can have the students make, such as green nutrition robes

- headdresses
- platters of food
- fishing nets, rods and platters
- an empty box of chips
- platter of bannock piled with icing)
- kerchiefs and aprons for the Grannies
- a book and pencil for Wiigyat
- a platter of deep fried garlic grouse wings and sweet and sour moose ribs.
- red jackets and spears for the hunters

Allow time for students to prepare the drama. You may wish to invite other classes for the presentation.

The Power to Make Good Choices for Change

Read *Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives* from the Caring for Me series.

Discuss making changes with your students. For example, if one does not already engage in regular physical activity, he or she can start small, starting by walking or biking to school. Stress how important it is to make good choices in life.

Remind the students about the negative behaviour they have learned about Wiigyat, then write a different story about Wiigyat. Then ask them to write a few sentences that show Wiigyat if he made proper choices for himself. Assign positive attribute words for them to use in their writing to show how he changed his character, such as

- Respect
- Positive
- Honesty/Honest

Example: One sunny day a stranger came to the banks of the Skeena River. He had an honest face, and he smiled a lot. He spoke gently to the children and showed them respect. He told the children that his name was Wiigyat. The children followed him up to the village. The children thought he had a good attitude because he took the time to play with them.

The Importance of Skills

Review the skills of Wiigyat with the students. He knew the ways of the animals. He knew the Gitxsan stories. He could transform into raven. He had good manners.

Create a worksheet for the students and brainstorm the skills of Wiigyat. Have the students illustrate one of Wiigyat's skills and one of theirs. Display on a bulletin board.

Wiigyat had many skills list three skills that you consider important in Wiigyat's life.

List three skills that you have learned that you consider very important. Who taught you these skills?

The Moral of the Story

Discuss the word "moral" with the students. What stories have they read or heard that have morals?

Read *Txamsm and the Children* from the Adventures of Txamsm Series. What is the moral of this story?

The *Txamsm Visits Chief Echo* from the Adventures of Txamsm Series. What is the moral of this story?

Generate a class list of morals. Have students each select one moral and create a decorated card or poster to illustrate the moral. Examples could include:

- Work hard for what you want.
- Be kind to others.
- See the good in others.
- Give compliments.
- Have good manners.
- Respect the rules.

Magic Paintbrush

Materials needed:

- Paper
- Paint
- Brushes
- Newspapers or drop cloths
- Old shirts for students to cover their clothes

Explain to the students that the Gitxsan believe that the colour of sunset is the Sun taking her children to bed. Wiigyat has the sun in the sky it has to set each evening.

Brainstorm with the students their thoughts about what the sun would say to them at sunset. (e.g., It's time to go to bed children. Another day is over were you kind? Sweet dreams).

Instruct the students that using their magic paintbrushes, to paint a sunset behind the mountain. Have them write the messages that painting would say if they could speak.

Picture This

Provide students with sheets of paper with the caption typed at the bottom. Brainstorm each caption with them by drawing pictures on the board. For example:

- Wiigyat began his journey to the village of the chief who owned the ball of light.
- Wiigyat was blinded by the brightness of the surrounding area.
- Wiigyat turned into a pine needle and he drifted towards the young girl.
- Wiigyat was born after a few short weeks.
- Wiigyat would cry as he pointed to the bent box that contained the ball of light.
- Wiigyat wished himself into raven and flew away with the ball of light.

Have them draw a picture to go with each caption. Cut out the pages to make a book. Then make a title page for your book. Then present the finished booklet to a younger class.

Cartoon Corner

Provide the students with sheets of paper with possible cartoon captions inspired by the Wiigyat stories. For example:

- "Help," cried Wiigyat. "I'm stuck in this mud hole."
- "You look funny stuck in that mud hole," said the wolf.
- "You need a bath," laughed the snake.
- "You should watch where you are going," advised the moose.
- "I'll get you all later," vowed Wiigyat to himself.

Brainstorm ideas and draw them on the board for some students to copy. Have the students draw pictures that go along with this funny story. Then cut out the strips and staple together and make a little comic book for others to read.

Wanted Poster

Remind the students of the Trickster's crime of stealing the ball of light. Have the students make a "Wanted Poster" of Wiigyat.

Discuss details to include on the poster. For example:

- Where was Wiigyat last seen?
- Who is offering a reward
- What is the reward?

Brainstorm ideas for visuals. They could have Raven flying away with the ball in his mouth or a man looking at the sun in the sky. He is wanted for stealing the ball of light.

The Discarded Box

After Wiigyat flew off with the ball of light, the box was empty.

To help struggling students add the following words on a wall word bank. When the students are familiar, write the words with a picture on index cards put them in a decorated ball of light box. Students can take turns reaching in for a card and reading it to the class.

After Wiigyat lost the ball of light, the empty box needed to be put to good use. Have the students decorate a box with pictures of raven, the sun, the moon and the stars. With the struggling students, make up a game where students go to the box and take out a word and read it to the class. The students can try to make a sentence with their word.

Sample words for word bank:

- | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|
| ▪ basket | ▪ gift | ▪ raven |
| ▪ beak | ▪ grow | ▪ return |
| ▪ blanket | ▪ light | ▪ scoop |
| ▪ bright | ▪ moon | ▪ sky |
| ▪ chief | ▪ pine | ▪ stars |
| ▪ darkness | ▪ plan | ▪ sun |
| ▪ fell | ▪ play | ▪ tantrum |
| ▪ fly | ▪ pleading | ▪ water |

Extended Reading and Writing Activities

Dialogue

Have students work in groups to create a dialogue inspired by “Wiigyat Visits the Shining Village.”

Brainstorm what Wiigyat’s mother and her father the chief would say as the mother defends her son and the chief does not want to share his ball of light. Each group can assign a writer and a presenter. Each group can present their script to the class.

Write a dialogue between the doting mother and her father the chief.

Mother: “Let him play with the ball of light.”

Chief: “No way.”

Mother: “I am sad when he cries.”

Chief: “He might break it.”

Song Writing

Have the students write a song about the sun. Suggest familiar tunes from classroom repertoire, folk songs, etc.

Example:

(Tune: New Moon on the Rise)
The sun walks in the sky
The sun dances in the sky
The sun swings in the sky
fog can't even put it out
rain can't chase it away
it's not afraid of thunder
Wiigyat has given us the sun.

Divide the class into two groups and have them stand in groups at opposite ends of the room. Have one group sing while the second group echoes each line sung. When the students are familiar with the song, provide drums so the children can beat out the rhythm. A paper plate and pencil can be used for a drum and drumstick if drums are not available.

Use a small ball and have everyone move along with the actions in the song. The spatial concepts, shapes and body awareness are here as everyone moves. For example:

The sun walks in the sky — throw the ball in the air as you walk forward
The sun dances in the sky — throw the ball from one hand to the other as you boogie backwards
The sun swings in the sky — bounce the ball as you sway
The fog can't put it out — hide the ball behind your back
Rain can't chase it — roll the ball on the floor in front of you and chase after it
It is not afraid of thunder — throw the ball up and miss it and act frightened
Wiigyat has given us by the sun — stand tall and put your arms up over your head, place the ball in your cupped hands.

Poetry Forms

Review or instruct the rules for different poetry forms (e.g., cinquain, rhyming couplet, limerick, title poetry). Have students write poems inspired by the Wiigyat stories.

Example Title Poetry:

W wanders
I in the forest
I interesting life
G goes looking for his people
Y yells a lot
A abandoned by his people
T tells a good story

Example Rhyming Couplets:

*Wiigyat loves being free
He sits under a tree
He looks at the sky
And eats his pie.*

Example Cinquain:

*Wiigyat
Tall, handsome
Walks, tricks, eats
All alone and sad
Trickster*

Example Limerick:

*Wiigyat fell out of the boat
He could not float
He couldn't see the dock
As he sank like a rock
And he lost his brand new coat.*

Vocabulary Building

Provide students with a printout of the Wiigyat stories, and have them highlight any unfamiliar words. Working in groups, have them look up and record the definitions for each word. Examples:

- Semi-darkness
- Possessed
- Spirit World
- Supernatural
- Disposing
- Reputation
- Prestige

Transformation

Remind the students that Wiigyat had the ability to transform into raven. With each event Wiigyat would transform the lives of those around him.

Read *How the Fox Got His Crossed Legs* for an additional example of transformation.

Brainstorm with the students a major event that might have occurred in their lives, such as starting at a new school, a new baby in the house, a family member moving away, or getting a puppy.

Have students select one major event from their lives and create a short journal entry to answer the following questions:

- What was the change in your life?
- What happened after the change?
- How did you feel about the change?

Volunteers can read their charts to the class.

Continue by reminding students that Wiigyat's timeline extends over many centuries, and the Wiigyat stories live on.

Have students continue their significant events list by creating a timeline of milestones in their lives.

Staying Healthy and Safe

Wiigyat was very healthy. He walked every day and he ate healthy foods like fish and berries.

Brainstorm and discuss the people who keep us healthy. For example:

- parents and caregivers
- Elders and community members
- PE teachers and coaches
- doctors and nurses
- dentists
- gardeners
- fishermen and hunter
- school cafeteria staff.

Wiigyat's family abandoned him because of he could not stop eating and he was stealing and lying. Wiigyat had to fend for himself; there was no one to keep him safe.

Continue by talking about those people who keep us safe. For example:

- parents and caregivers
- Elders and community members
- teachers
- janitors
- fire fighters
- police

Have student select three people who help them stay healthy and safe, draw a picture of each, and explain what healthy practices they promote.

Wiigyat practiced 3 out of 4 of the healthy habits. He didn't brush his teeth.

Brainstorm all the good habits that contribute to good health with the students. For example:

- Eating healthy foods
- Getting 9 hours sleep
- Jogging everyday
- Brushing my teeth 2 times a day
- Eating an apple every day
- Humming a little tune every day
- Biking every day in the summer

Have students select four good habits they currently practice. The students can fold their paper in half then half again and draw one of their selections in each square. Display the worksheets on the bulletin board.

Don't Smoke!

The children loved playing with Wiigyat because he was so adventurous and creative. Wiigyat would play with the children if they had food, so the children would find food for so Wiigyat would play with them.

One day Wiigyat wanted to teach them a new activity. He called it the 'To make smoke' game. Wiigyat took the children to a patch of dried cow's parsnip. Wiigyat cut the skinny stalks that were not hollowed out and cut them into 6 cm lengths and gave them to the children. Wiigyat took a burning piece of wood and lit up the cow's parsnip. Wiigyat showed them how to puff on the stalk and blow out smoke. The children enjoyed the "To make smoke" game. Wiigyat showed them how to shape his lips so they could make circles. The children knew if Wiigyat was the teacher, their parents would not approve.

Discuss the harmful effects of smoking. Brainstorm refusal statement students can use if someone tries to get them to smoke. For example:

- No Thank You
- I'm not allowed
- I will get grounded
- My parents won't let me
- No thanks, I'm allergic
- I don't want to smell like smoke

Have students create cartoons of themselves using one or more of the refusal statements.

Button Blanket

Materials and Preparation

You will need red, black and white construction paper, 30 buttons for each student, and glue.

Make a raven design from the red construction paper and center it on the 8 by 11 black construction paper. (Have students create their own flying or sitting raven design.) Or if preferred the blanket could be red and the trim and design black.

Cut red strips 6 cm wide for the border. Make round circles on the white the size of small buttons and glue on to the blanket as shown.

Copy the button blanket template, 1 per student (provided at the end of this unit)

Procedure

Read Chapter 3 (Wiigyat's Death).

If available, invite a guest from the First Peoples community to show a completed button blanket and talk about how they are made.

Distribute the template and the materials for students to make their blankets.

Demonstrate each step for constructing the blanket:

- Take the entire black sheet that is to be the blanket
- Glue the red strips to the top and the sides
- Glue 6 buttons spaced along the top of the blanket, with space for the neckline
- Glue 12 buttons evenly spaced along each sides of the blanket
- Take the previously raven prepared design and glue it to the center of the blanket
- Make sure there is one mistake made on the blanket.

Reporting Skills

Read the story of Wiigyat's Death to the class. Have the students working in pairs and using the questions you have composed, assign a reporting paper to the students. The students can interview each other and write the last interview conducted with Wiigyat and the two mountain lions.

Brainstorm with the students what some of the answers might be. The students present their reports to the class.

Sample questions:

- Do you consider it an honour to be chosen by Wiigyat?
- Do you like being a mountain lion?
- If you could be another animal, what would that be?
- Wiigyat, were you surprised to learn that you had a brother?
- Wiigyat, what was the highlight of your life?
- Wiigyat, do you have any regrets?
- What would you change?
- Wiigyat, what do you want to say to the children of the future?

Possible answers:

- I consider it an honour to be chosen to guard Wiigyat forever.
- I love being a mountain lion but I would love to be like the eagle and fly so high.
- I was shocked and thrilled to learn that I had a brother. I cried when I heard because I really wanted to be with my family.
- The highlight was when the sun flew into the sky and there was light for everyone.
- I regret the bad things I have done. I would learn all the skills my parents tried to teach me.
- To the children of the future listen to your teachers, your parents, and your Elders.

Eulogy

Have the students write a eulogy for Wiigyat. Include his creations, his skills, his hobbies, his talents, his strengths, the purpose of his life and what he left behind. With a eulogy, the Gitxsan never dwell on the negative. Wrap up Wiigyat's life in a powerful closing sentence. You might want to read the eulogy of a well-known personality to the students, such as Terry Fox, and then assign the eulogy writing.

Examples:

Wiigyat was born at the dawn of time. His Grandfather gave him everything he wanted.

Wiigyat took the ball of light from his Grandfather and then he dropped it and created the sun, the moon and the stars. Wiigyat was a great storyteller and he could sing and dance.

He was very charming and very handsome. He left many stories behind for the Gitxsan, so they could learn from his mistakes.

The history of the Gitxsan was more colourful because Wiigyat walked on this good earth.

He created the sun, moon and stars.

He was able to transform.

He was a great storyteller.

He was a singer and dancer.

He was very charming.

He was very handsome.

The stories that he left behind are lessons for everyone.

The history of the Gitxsan was more colourful because Wiigyat walked on this good earth.

Wiigyat — The Gitxsan Trickster

Introduction: Origin of a Gitxsan Trickster

The story tells that a baby boy was found by a fisherman near a pile of driftwood on the shores of the Skeena River. The fisherman took the baby back to their village. The chief and his wife did not have any children, so they adopted him. The chief's wife named the baby Wiigyat. It was soon discovered that Wiigyat could not or would not eat, but he continued to grow. The chief and his wife were very concerned because the Gitxsan were always whispering about their strange child. The chief offered a reward to anyone who could entice the child to eat. All attempts were unsuccessful.

Then one day a tall dark stranger with skinny, scabby legs arrived by canoe to Wiigyat's adopted village. The stranger would pull scabs off his skinny legs and place them in Wiigyat's mouth when he thought no one was looking. The children ran to their parents to tell of the stranger's actions but no one would believe them.

It was then that Wiigyat started to eat. The mysterious stranger, who was really a raven, refused any gifts for his kindness. The chief and his wife were very pleased that their problem was solved and their child was now eating.

It was soon discovered that Wiigyat's ravenous appetite could not be satisfied. He ate all the food in his parent's home. He went and stole food from the other smokehouses and food caches. The chief gave away all his belongings as retribution for Wiigyat's stealing. Wiigyat's eating was out of control.

In the early morning the chief assembled all his people very quietly. It was time to leave the village and Wiigyat. Wiigyat awoke as the canoes were leaving. Wiigyat shouted for his parents to come back for him. The canoes disappeared into the morning mist. Wiigyat was all alone. Wiigyat thought that they did not hear him. So he planned to set off on a journey to find them. A journey that involved stealing, lying, cheating, bullying, greed and poverty.

Characteristics of Wiigyat Stories

Much of the popularity of the Wiigyat stories is that they are amusing. The stories combine mischief with creativity. Another reason is that the listeners can relate to the Trickster or to the one that is being deceived. In addition, who among us does not enjoy eating? The Wiigyat stories teach lessons about the ineffective risks of being inexperienced in the ways of the world. It is important to be disciplined and learn the skills so one can be independent. Within the layers of the lessons, Wiigyat stories stresses the values of co-operation, the wisdom of looking at problems from different perspectives and emphasizes the importance of accepting the lessons life deals you, because that is life.



Chapter 1: Wiigyat Visits the Shining Village

Wiigyat's father, the chief, gathered the people together. It was time to leave the village and Wiigyat. His eating was out of control and the resources were at running low. In the early morning while Wiigyat slept, after a night of stealing and eating, the canoes silently slipped away. Wiigyat's mother had left some food for Wiigyat. He quickly gobbled it up and looked around for more. There was nothing left in the village.

One evening when he still had a home, Wiigyat had been outside the smokehouse waiting for the women to leave so he could fill his stomach. Wiigyat remembered the storyteller among them talking about a chief, in a northern village, who would not share the ball of light he owned. It was a time when the Gitxsan Territories were still in semi-darkness. Wiigyat knew if he possessed the ball of light it would change his life for the better.

Wiigyat began his journey through the vast wilderness to the village of the chief who owned the ball of light. Along the way he ate berries and drank lots of water to fool his grumbling stomach. One day he came to a steep canyon. Discouraged and not knowing how to get across; he sat down and wishing that he could fly. He felt a strange sensation as his body transformed into a raven. It dawned on Wiigyat that he had supernatural power. It was a great discovery. Raven flew to the other of the canyon and wished himself back to human form.

After several days Wiigyat came to the outskirts of a village. Wiigyat was blinded by the brightness of the surrounding area. He remained in the wooded area and spied on the activities of the people. Throughout the day a group of young girls would come to the river to fetch water and have a drink. The girls would scoop up the water with their hands and drink and then fill their water baskets and return to the village.

Wiigyat decided that he would wish himself into a pine needle and he drifted towards the daughter of the chief who owned the ball of light. The young girl scooped water into her hand and she noticed the pine needle, instead of disposing of it she just blew it to one side. She drank the water and the pine needle slipped down her throat. On the same day, the young girl was pregnant. The people were amazed with the short duration of the girl's pregnancy. Wiigyat was born after a few short weeks and he started to grow at an amazing rate.

The new mother loved her strange son who ate everything she prepared for him. Before long Wiigyat was walking and the first word he uttered was Ye'e (Grandfather). "Ye'e, Ye'e," Wiigyat would cry as he pointed to the bent box that contained the ball of light. Wiigyat threw tantrums and cried for the ball of light, but the chief who owned the ball of light did not trust anyone with his prized possession.

Wiigyat's mother and grandmother pleaded with the chief to let the child play with the ball of light. After all, what harm could a little boy do to the precious ball of light? Finally, fed up with the crying and tantrums, and secretly pleased that the first word his grandson spoke was Ye'e, the chief reluctantly gave in to the pleadings of his wife and daughter. Wiigyat brushed away his large tears and started playing very nicely with the ball. Wiigyat politely thanked his Ye'e, the chief and went to play with the other children. He had suddenly started speaking in full sentences. The beaming mother was so proud of her son. "Look at him," the grandmother, scolded the chief, "he is so charming and smart and you wouldn't let him play with the ball of light."

Each day Wiigyat would ask for the ball of light and he would return it. One day when Wiigyat was bouncing the ball down the path that led to the river the chief did not pay any attention, after all his favorite grandson would bring it back.

Wiigyat wished himself into raven and flew away with the ball of light. Wiigyat's grandfather, the chief, was screaming, "I knew it was you Wiigyat, who doesn't know you?" Of course, he did not know it was Wiigyat, but he wanted others to think he did. The village was blanketed in darkness as raven flew away.

Chapter 2: Raven's Accident

Wiigyat flew towards the Kisgegas River where he knew the Gitxsan would be busy with their salmon harvest. Wiigyat saw people below, there was not much light, except for the shiny ball in his mouth. Wiigyat did not realize that he was in 'the land in between'.

This was where spirits that denied their deaths worked preparing their salmon. The spirits went about doing the same tasks they did while they were still alive. They were doomed to repeat these tasks until they surrendered to their deaths. These were the living dead, who refused to enter into the spirit world. They liked the semi-darkness in which they existed. They were not ready to go to the light.

Not realizing this, Wiigyat opened his mouth to ask if they would like to use his ball of light the ball, it fell and broke. The ball shattered into a million pieces. The larger pieces became the sun and moon and the smaller pieces filled the sky with stars. Wiigyat took a few pieces and placed them in his robe. Raven accidentally gave the gift of light to the Gitxsan. He shrugged his shoulders and wandered on devising yet another plan to ease his great hunger.

Chapter 3: Wiigyat's Death

Wiigyat was very tired. He walked towards the West; this was to be his final journey. He was told that he had a brother living there in a western village amongst the Tsimshian. After Wiigyat was reunited with his brother, he felt that he had a sense of family and identity. His search was over. Wiigyat climbed the mountain and found a cave. He took two young mountain lions into the cave and sat one on either side. Wiigyat was a supernatural being. He willed that they be turned into stone. And there they sit to this very day.

Raven Stealing the Sun

As Raven (Wiigyat) releases the sun from the box, he exemplifies the eternal curiosity of the human mind. The world of knowledge is the world of light.

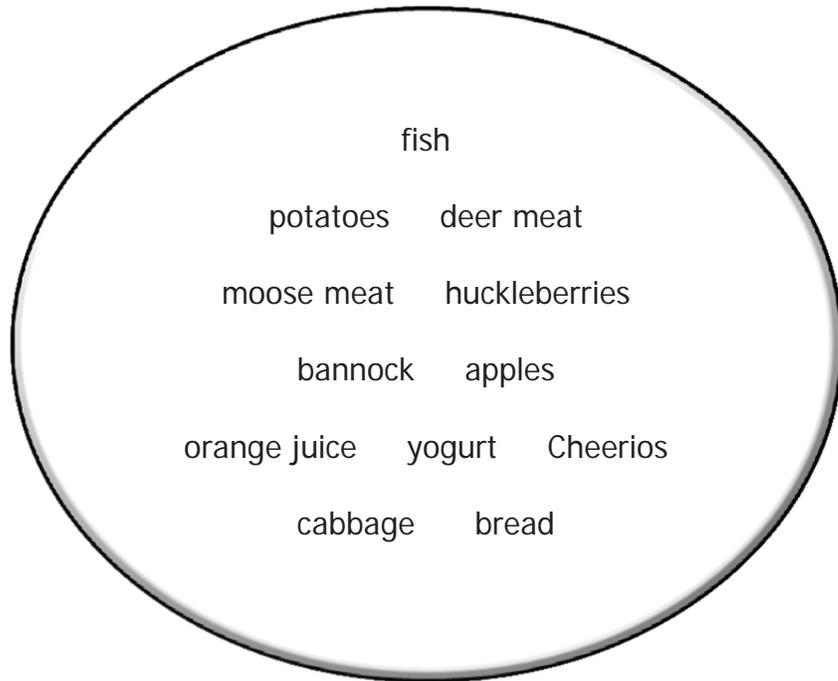


“Raven Stealing the Sun” artwork copyright © 1978 Ken N. Mowatt. (Mas lik¹i¹nsxw). Used with permission.

Wiigyat's Plate

Wiigyat always took more food than anyone. He also finished everything on his plate!

Take the foods from Wiigyat's plate and list them in the proper food groups.



Meat & Meat Products	Milk & Milk Products	Bread & Cereal	Fruits and Vegetables

The fishermen pull down a “yes.”

1st Narrator Well the fishermen are in, much to the disapproval of the Nutrition Spirits. Next up are the Gitxsan Grannies. I just know they will stick to traditional Gitxsan foods. They are so wise.

*(Enter Grannies with platter of bannock piled with icing)
(Grannies are wearing kerchiefs and aprons)*

Goodness Sakes, they have plastered their bannock with icing and sprinkled it with huge flakes of chocolate and slivers of hazelnuts.

*(Wiigyat sniffs at the bannock, has a taste and writes in cook book)
(Grannies high-five each other)
(Spirits put their noses in the air and do a blocking hand)*

2nd Narrator Oh dear, the Grannies are so happy they don’t even care that they have offended the Nutrition Spirits. Oh, here come the hunters. They have their entry of deep fried garlic grouse wings and sweet and sour moose ribs. Yummy, that looks good!

*(Wiigyat is nodding, eating then he licks each finger and writes in his book)
(The Spirits are shaking their fingers in a scolding way at the hunters)
(The hunters pat each other on the back)
(The hunters are wearing red jackets carrying spears and platters)*

1st Narrator Wow, all the recipes made it into Wiigyat’s cookbook. I’d like to try those recipes myself. They are all very creative. Wiigyat is going to eat all that food himself and he’s going to make a lot of money with that cookbook. Look, the Nutrition Spirits are leaving.

(Nutrition Spirits leave crying)

2nd Narrator Look, the Gitxsan are following the Nutrition Spirits. I think they are afraid because they have offended them. I hear the Nutrition Spirits are easily offended. Mark my words; there is going to thunder and lightning tonight.

1st Narrator Goodness, Wiigyat learned a lot of bad habits at Residential School; I thought he was learning math and reading. He has upset the Nutrition spirits and he even corrupted the Gitxsan Grannies. I never thought I would see the day.

2nd Narrator Please, pleaseee, try not to be like Wiigyat. He is so bad.

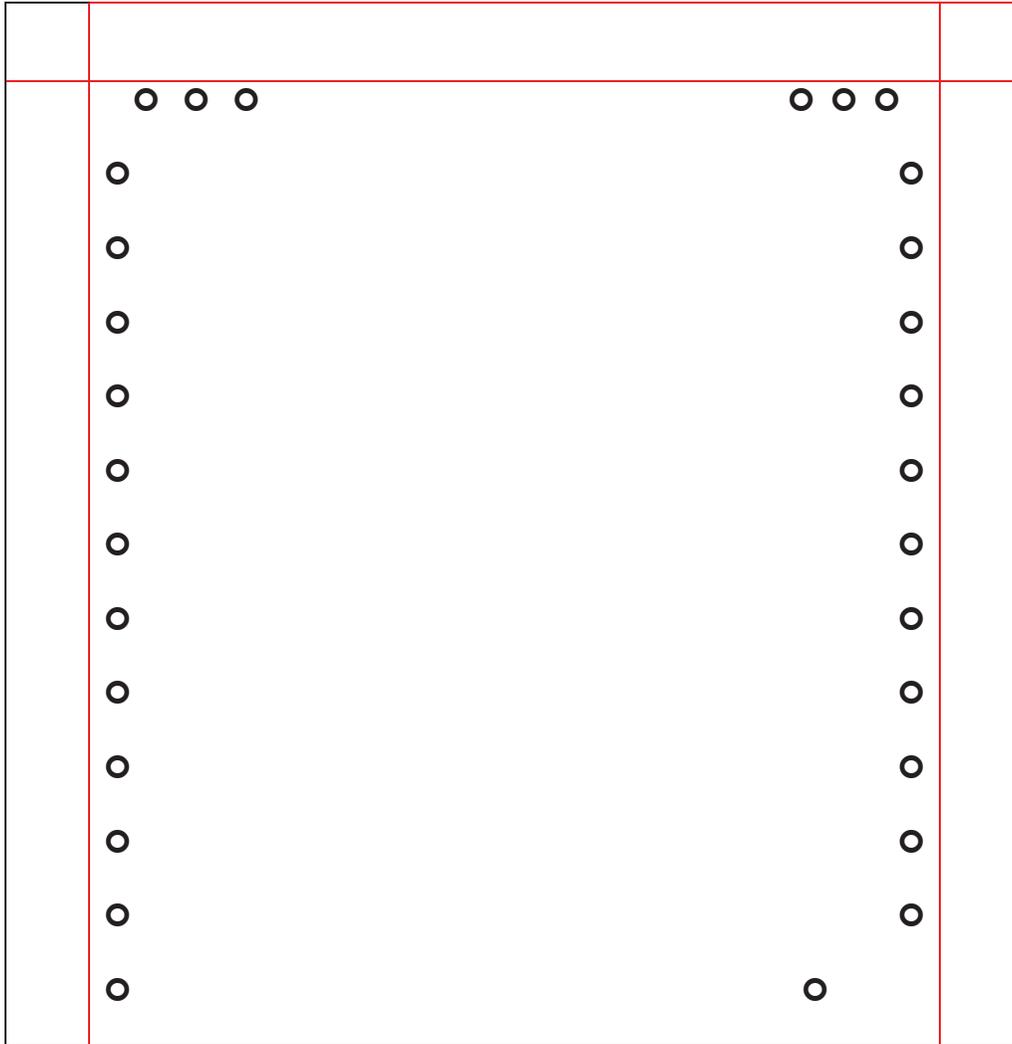
And to all of you, who could see the Nutrition Spirits, keep eating right, and exercise every day. Get 10 hours of sleep every night. We need to cheer up our Nutrition Spirits so they return to us. After all, where would we be without them?

Sabax, pronounced
sah-BA, meaning “the end”

Sabax

Button Blanket

The Gitxsan always leave one mistake on the blanket. They do not insist on perfection from anyone. In this way there will always be work for the future generations to do.



Rating Scale — Personal Writing

Emerging	Developing	Acquired	Accomplished
Meaning			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ topic may be hard to determine ▪ often very short lacks details and descriptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ some connections to experiences, offers some ideas and opinions ▪ often irrelevant or repetitious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ makes connections to personal experiences, ▪ a series of loosely related ideas and opinions ▪ some relevant examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ offers opinions and observations ▪ sense of purpose; ideas are related to a central theme ▪ relevant details, with examples ▪ comes from thoughts, feelings, opinions, memories, and reflections
Style			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language is often unclear; may make errors in word choices ▪ relies on short, simple sentence that have been provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses simple, basic language ▪ often repetitive ▪ relies on short, simple sentences or one or more long, rambling sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conversational language; may include some description ▪ some variety in sentence length; often short and abrupt; some long and run-on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ simple descriptive language with some variety ▪ beginning to show some control of sentence structure; some variety in length and pattern
Form			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ topic is unclear sequence is illogical ▪ omits connecting words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ often has no beginning ▪ may ramble without clear sequence or connections seldom uses connecting words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ opening sentence may signal the topic ▪ ideas are loosely connected, often by time (e.g., same day) ▪ repeats a few simple connecting words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a title or opening sentence signals the topic ▪ sequenced and connected ▪ beginning to use a variety of connecting words
Conventions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ errors make the writing difficult to read ▪ not written in sentences ▪ may omit letters and sounds ▪ often omits or uses punctuation and capital letters inconsistently frequent errors in pronouns and verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ frequent errors may interfere with meaning in places some complete sentences ▪ frequent spelling errors (but all sounds are represented) inconsistent use of capitals and punctuation some errors in pronouns and verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ several errors, but these do not interfere with the meaning ▪ most sentences are complete ▪ most common words are spelled correctly occasional errors in end punctuation; uses capital letters correctly ▪ most pronouns and verb forms are correct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ may include errors (particularly in more complex language); these do not affect meaning ▪ written in complete sentences ▪ most spelling is correct uses capital letters and ▪ end punctuation correctly ▪ uses correct pronouns and verb forms

Unit Assessment Criteria

Reading

Assess the extent to which students are able to:

- Read orally with rhythm, flow, and expression showing understanding of punctuation and other conventions of print.
- Identify the main idea of a passage.
- Identify or describe problem and solution, main characters, and setting in fiction.
- Locate information explicitly stated in narrative and informational text to answer literal-comprehension questions.
- Self-monitor comprehension by making predictions or formulating questions while reading.
- Retell a story after reading it.
- Make connections between a text and personal experiences (e.g., this reminds me of when I gave my favorite toy away).
- Express own opinion about material read.
- Distinguish between fiction/ nonfiction, prose/poetry, and short story/ drama.
- Identify use of dialogue or rhyme in common forms of text.
- Read orally high-frequency words.
- Obtain information using text features including pictures cues.
- Self-monitor and self-correcting while reading (e.g., sounding words out, adjusting reading pace).

Mathematics

Assess the extent to which students are able to:

- Understand and use numeration, including numbers, number systems, counting numbers, and whole numbers.
- Select and use appropriate systems, units, and tools of measurement, including estimation.
- Relate mathematical terms to everyday language.
- Clarify mathematical problems through discussion with others.
- Use mathematics in other curriculum areas.

Science

Assess the extent to which students are able to:

- Develop an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of life forms.
- Develop an understanding of the theories regarding the origin and evolution of the universe.
- Develop an understanding that some individuals, cultures, and societies use other beliefs and methods in addition to scientific methods to describe and understand the world.
- Develop an understanding of the importance of recording and validating cultural knowledge.
- Develop an understanding that advancements in science depend on curiosity, creativity, imagination, and a broad knowledge base.

Social Studies

Assess the extent to which students are able to:

- Use historical perspective to solve problems, make decisions, and understand other traditions.
- Identify groups and places that are part of their lives.
- Gather information from personal experiences, oral sources, and visual representations.
- Present information using oral or visual representations.
- Interpret simple maps using cardinal directions, symbols, and simple legends.
- Create simple maps representing familiar locations.
- Gather information from a variety of sources for presentation.
- Present information using oral, written, or visual representations.
- Describe how the physical environment influenced early settlement in their local community.

Health

Assess the extent to which students are able to:

- Assess the effects of culture, heritage, and traditions on personal well-being.
- Develop an awareness of how personal life roles are affected by and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and cultures.
-
- Understand how personal relationships, including those with family, friends, and co-workers, impact personal well-being.
- Communicate effectively within relationships.
- Evaluate how similarities and differences among individuals contribute to relationships.
- Make responsible decisions as a member of a family or community.
- Take responsible actions to be safe and healthy.

Arts — Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Art

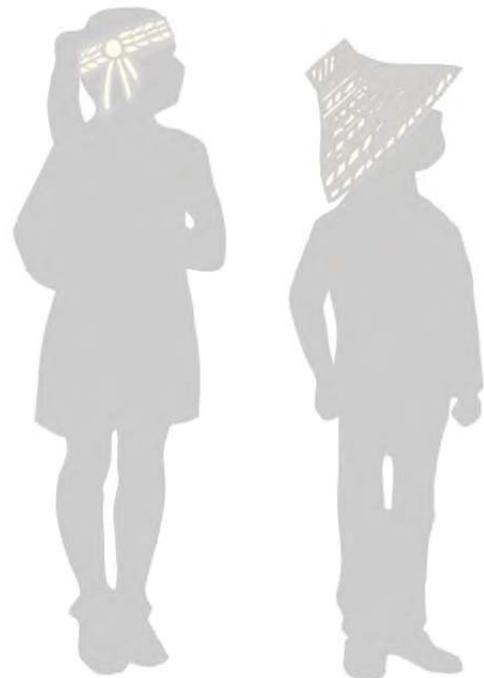
Assess the extent to which students are able to:

- Demonstrate willingness to participate in dance, drama, music and visual arts.
- Recognize First Peoples cultures and their arts.
- Recognize the role of tradition and ritual in the arts.
- Investigate the relationships among the arts and the individual, the society, and the environment.
- Recognize universal themes in the arts such as love, war, childhood, culture and community.
- Recognize specific works of art created by artists from diverse backgrounds.
- Respect differences in personal and cultural perspectives.
- Appropriately use new and traditional materials, techniques, and processes in the arts.
- Express and defend an informed opinion.
- Accept and offer constructive criticism.
- Exhibit appropriate audience skills.

Social Responsibility

Assess the extent to which students are able to:

- Reflect through their own actions the critical role that the local heritage language plays in fostering a sense of who they are and how they understand the world around them.
- Live in accordance with the cultural values and traditions of the local community and integrate them into their everyday behaviour.
- Practice their traditional responsibilities with their Elders.
- Make appropriate choices regarding the long-term consequences of their actions.
- Make constructive contributions to their community and the well-being of their family.
- Acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with their Elders.
- Recognize and build upon the interrelationships that exist among the spiritual, natural, and human realms in the world around them, as reflected in their own cultural traditions and beliefs.



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- the other individuals, communities, and organizations who provided the authentic content that enriches the material included in this teacher resource.

Many of the strategies and unit plans in this guide incorporate the use of grade-appropriate story books and other learning resources identified in *Authentic First Peoples Resources for Use in K-7 Classrooms* (FNESC, 2012). This guide is available online at www.fnesc.ca.



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Debra Hooper

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