



Kootéeyaa

Totem Poles

Grade Levels K-1

A series of elementary level thematic units featuring Tlingit language, culture and history were developed in Juneau, Alaska in 2004-6. The project was funded by two grants from the U.S. Department of Education, awarded to the Sealaska Heritage Institute (Boosting Academic Achievement: Tlingit Language Immersion Program, grant #92-0081844) and the Juneau School District (Building on Excellence, grant #S356AD30001).

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Lessons were field tested in Juneau classrooms in 2005-6.

All units are available online at sealaskaheritage.org.



Sealaska Heritage Institute



Cultural Significance

One of the first things anyone who sees an old village site notices are the magnificent totem poles perched along the shore. To us today totems are beautiful works of art. To the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people of Southeast Alaska they also hold deep meaning and are of great significance. They tell clan stories and describe important historical events. Some even signify the final resting place of clan leaders.

Elder/Culture Bearer Role

An Elder who has knowledge of totem poles and their stories is essential to this unit. There is no better source of knowledge for students than someone who has grown up in a traditional Native lifestyle. Hearing stories and facts from someone who has experienced these things first hand makes learning more personal and relevant for students.

If at all possible it is also very important for a carver to share his work with the class, to better understand how totems are made as well as to see that carving is a potential career.

Overview

In this unit we use the topic of totem poles to learn Kindergarten math concepts, literacy skills, and science concepts as well as gain a deeper understanding of Tlingit/Haida cultures.

Lesson #1 – What is a totem?

Students learn about different types of totem poles and what they are used for. They then use poles to learn about main characters and sequencing in stories.

Lesson #2 – How tall is a pole?

Students use totem poles to study measurement. They use their own units of measure to find out how tall two different types of poles are. With linking cubes they make small poles of different heights and compare ways to make 10.



Lesson #3 – The first totem

Students hear the story of the First Totem and learn why cedar is the best tree for carving a totem pole. They learn to distinguish a cedar tree from other trees.

Lesson #4 – Getting a tree (Optional Activity)

Students figure out what makes a tree good for carving and how to choose a tree in the forest-based on the surroundings.

Lesson #5- Carving a pole

Students identify different traditional crests used on totem poles and learn about the process of painting and carving a pole.

Lesson #6 – Commission a pole

Students listen to a story and identify the main characters. They design a pole for another student based on a different story. Students ceremonially pay each other for the poles with pattern beaded necklaces and food prepared by the class.

Alaska State Standards

Language Arts/English

E1) Use information, both oral and written, and literature of many types and cultures to understand self and others.

Math

A2) Select and use appropriate systems, units, and tools of measurement, including estimation.

A5) Construct, draw, measure, compare, visualize, classify and analyze relationships among geometric figures.

Science

B2) Design and conduct scientific investigations using appropriate instruments.

B6) Employ strict adherence to safety procedures in conducting scientific investigations.

C3) Understand that society, culture, history, and environment affect the development of scientific knowledge.

Art

A3) Appropriately use new and traditional materials, tools, techniques, and processes in the arts.

Cultural Standards

A5) Reflect through their own actions the critical role that local heritage language plays in fostering a sense of who they are and how they understand the world around them.

A6) Live a life in accordance with the cultural values and traditions of the local community.

D4) Gather oral and written history information from the local community and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance.



Lesson 1 What is a Totem?

Objectives

Students:

- Understand that a story has to be in order
- Gain knowledge about the different carving elements used to create totems
- Learn about the place of crests on totem poles
- Sort and classify totem poles according to similar attributes (size, shape, and color)
- Learn to speak the Lingít words and phrases that pertain to totems

Time

60 minutes

Materials

- Book- *Totem Tale* by Deb Vanasse Sasquatch Books, 2006, ISBN 1570614393
- Photos of totem poles
- Chart paper
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Glue

Vocabulary

Lingít

kootéeyaa

naa

naa yahaayí

naa kootéeyaayi

naa gáas'i

kaa shagoon

kaa kinaak gáas'i

kaa kinaak teiyí

kaawduwatee

English

totem pole

clan

crest

house front pole

house post pole

memorial pole

mortuary pole

tomb stone

ridicule pole



Lingít Phrases

Kootéeyaa xaateen.

(Yéil) gáas' kootéeyaa.

(Ch'áak') gáas' kootéeyaa.

I see a totem pole.

It is a (raven) pole.

It is an (eagle) pole.



Activities

Activity #1 Reading Totem Tale

1. Read the story *Totem Tale* by Deb Vanasse aloud to the class.
2. Stop on the page when the animal crests are returning to the pole and can't remember what order they go in.
3. Ask students to give ideas about what crest they think should be at the top of the pole and why they think it should be there.
4. After several students have had a chance to share and you feel they have a good understanding of the reason for their choices, give students paper to draw a picture and write a sentence about which crest is on top. Make a list of all the crests that were in the book, for students to choose from.
5. Once all students have had a chance to complete their drawings and sentences gather them together to share their drawing and sentence. (This part of the activity might be done the following day.)
6. After all students have shared their work, finish reading the book. (If this is being done the next day, re-read the entire book.)
7. After completing the book have a class discussion about how the crests finally figured out what order to go in. Talk about how they needed to tell a story and that it is important that a story goes in a correct order in order to make sense to the readers.

Activity #2 Types of Poles

1. Review the story *Totem Tale* by Deb Vanasse and discuss that this story described one type of totem pole.
2. Show photos of other types of poles: house front poles, house posts, memorial poles, and mortuary poles. Do not label them yet.
3. Ask students what they notice about the different poles. Record their responses on chart paper.

A response to listen for, or lead students to, is that all poles have animals on them, called crests. Notice the height they are as well - some poles are short and some are tall. One type has a square or box on top.
4. Using the pictures, ask students to sort the poles into differing groups. Give several students a chance to sort the poles. End the turns with a final sort by the four types of traditional poles.
5. Using label cards, give each group of poles a label in both English and Lingít, and describe what each one is.
 - a. **House front poles** tell a story and have several different figures on them. They have an entrance at the base of the pole and are attached to the front of a long house.
 - b. **House post poles** are the shorter poles that are placed inside the house and used as support beams. These poles also tell stories.
 - c. **Memorial poles** are made for people who have died. These poles display the crest of the person who has passed away and sometimes also have potlatch rings on top. These poles are commissioned by the



Totem Poles

descendants of the person who the pole is in memory of. They can not claim the title and privileges of this person until a memorial potlatch is held and the pole is raised

d. **Mortuary poles** are used to hold the remains of high-ranking people.

The body of such a person is placed in a box that is attached to the top of the pole.

6. Give students photos to cut out, sort, and glue onto paper under the appropriate titles.
7. Practice saying the different pole names in Lingít while pointing to the pictures.

Activity #3 Totem Tale Game

1. Four students at a time can play this game to start. One is the “Carver” while the others form the pole. The Carver chooses 3 crests for his/her pole and decides what order they should be in. Secretly, he/she writes them down.
2. Next the Carver assigns each of the other 3 students a crest. The Crests then lay down on the floor in the order they think the Carver wants them.
3. If they are not in the correct order the Carver can only say the number of students that are in the correct place. For example if the correct order is Raven, Frog, Bear, and the students have lined up Raven, Bear, Frog, the Carver would say, “One correct.”
4. The Crests then have to decide on how to re-arrange themselves. If they decide to try Bear, Raven, Frog, the Carver tells them they that they have none correct.
5. Continue on until they have found the correct order.
6. To make it more difficult or to include more students simply add to the number of crests on the pole.

Assessment

Give students four pictures of different types of poles and have them glue them under the right labels.

Develop a checklist of Lingít words and have students say them individually or in a group setting to check their language acquisition.

Optional Extension Activities

If you live in an area where poles can be viewed go and visit them.

Read other traditional stories and work on the skill of sequencing.

Use Tlingit rubber stamps to make a totem pole with the crests from a story.





Lesson 2

How Tall is a Pole?

Objectives

Students:

- Compare standard units of measurement with non-standard units of measure (e.g., hand span, pencil, paper clip, block, etc.), according to one or more of the following attributes: length (shorter, longer, the same) or height (taller, shorter)
- Use different combinations of numbers to create the sum of 10
- Add to their knowledge about totem poles
- Learn the Lingít words and phrases pertaining to counting and comparing

Time

60 minutes

Materials

- *The First Totem Pole*, The Queen Charlotte Island Readers, ISBN 0-88865-041-8
- Butcher paper
- Chart paper
- Objects to measure with
- Calculator paper or string
- Linking cubes

Vocabulary

Lingít

nakaa

a yaanáx

a kín

kooxéedaa

Keijin Kooxéedaa yáx

English

measure

more

less

pencil

A unit of measure. Five pencils.

Lingít Phrases

Wáa sá kuwaat wé kootéeyaa?

Ayaanáx kuwáat' ya kootéeyaa.

Akín kuwáat' ya kootéeyaa.

(Kooxéedaa)teen at nakaa.

Keijin kooxéedaa yáx liyáat'.

How tall is a pole?

This pole is taller.

That pole is shorter.

Measure it with the (pencil).

It is five pencils long.

Activities

Activity #1

The First Totem Pole

Read *The First Totem Pole*. This tale shows how images emerge from the cedar tree as a carver works, how the finished totem is raised in a village and how its presence is celebrated.



Activity #2 How tall is a pole?

Teacher preparation

Before this activity cut 2 pieces of colored butcher paper or calculator tape. One should be about 3 yards long and the other about 16 yards long. These papers represent the heights of two poles, - a house post and a house front pole.

1. Ask the class how tall they think totem poles really are. Ask them to give examples by using comparative descriptions, such as "As tall as a ...".
2. Ask the class which pole they think is the house post and which is the house front pole and why they think that. (The house post is shorter because it has to fit inside the house and the house front pole can be taller because it is outside the house.) Label the poles.
3. Ask the class what it means to measure something. Make chart with all their ideas about what measuring is.
4. Have the class give ideas about what tools they can use to measure the poles - paperclips, linking cubes, pencils, dictionaries, chairs, hand span, feet, student bodies, etc.
5. Discuss what would make measuring fair or equal. Choose an object to measure as an example - a book perhaps. Choose a unit of measure such as a paper clip. Have one student come up and try to measure the book with the paper clip. Take notice of where he/she starts to measure from. Talk about starting from the edge of the book is appropriate but starting away from the edge is not appropriate.



6. If you are using one of a particular object such as a paperclip you have to move the clip each time to count one unit. Show students how making sure that you do not overlap or leave too big a space between each unit is important when measuring.





- If you use multiple units of the same object such as paperclips, make sure that all the paperclips are the same size. Students often make a measuring mistake if they choose pencils or crayons as their unit of measure. (only unsharpened pencils or unused crayons will work). All the units of measurement must be the same size.



- Discuss the fact that totem poles are very tall and if you use a small unit of measure such as linking cubes it will take a very long time to measure one and it might be inaccurate. Try using larger objects of measurement if possible.
- Divide the class into two teams, Team A and Team B. Within those teams divide students into two groups, one to measure the house post and one to measure the house front pole. There will be two groups working on each pole, one from Team A and one from Team B. Make the data table similar to the one below on chart paper.

	Team A	Team B
House Post		
House Front Pole		
We used	to measure the pole.	

- Teams choose their units of measure and measure the poles. Each team should choose a different unit. Tell them to record their data on the chart, making sure to note the unit of measure.
- Gather students back in a group to look at the final measurements. Ask students to compare the measurements of Team A. Which pole is taller? How do you know? Students should reply with something about the house front pole having a larger number for its measurement.
- Look at Team B's measurements. Which pole is taller? How do they know?
- Compare Team A's measurement with Team B's measurement of the house post. Are they the same height? Did they measure the same pole? Why are the numbers different if they measured the same thing? Students should reply with something about units of measure.
- Make a data table similar to the one below on chart paper and show it to the class.

	Height
Pole A	35
Pole B	64

- Ask them which pole is taller. Then fill in the unit of measure like on the data table below.

	Height
Pole A	35 markers
Pole B	64 paperclips



16. Ask the question again. Students should change their mind about which is taller. Ask students to give reasons for changing their minds.
17. Have students break into teams of two and measure out the two pole lengths on calculator paper or string and compare them. Were they right about which pole was larger?

Activity #3 Linking Cube Poles

1. Show students two pretend totem poles made out of linking cubes. Make one pole 3 cubes tall and the other 6 cubes tall. Ask the class which pole is taller? Which pole has more cubes? Which pole has fewer cubes?
2. Ask the class how many cubes it took to make these two poles – a total of 9 cubes. Take the two poles apart so that there are 9 individual cubes. Ask a student if he/she can make two different poles using all nine cubes. Ask the class what the height of the two poles is and record it and their name on a data table similar to the one below.

Student	Pole A	Pole B
	3 cubes	6 cubes
<i>Bill</i>	<i>2 cubes</i>	<i>7 cubes</i>
<i>Sarah</i>	<i>4 cubes</i>	<i>5 cubes</i>

3. Take the poles apart again and ask another student to come make two different poles using all nine cubes. Record it on the data table.
4. Repeat for one more student.
5. Give each student 10 cubes and a data table to record different pole heights for possible combinations of 10 cubes.
6. This activity could be repeated on another day with a different number of total cubes.

Assessment

Check how accurately each student can measure a table in the room, choosing a unit of measure.

Ask students to give at least two examples of ways to make the number 10, using data tables to assess comprehension and accuracy.

Additional Optional Activities

Find out the actual heights of some poles in your local area. Measure them out on calculator tape.

Websites and Teacher Resources

- *Alaska's Totem Poles*, by Pat Kramer, Alaska Northwest Books, 2004, ISBN 0882405853
- *Looking at Totem Poles*, by Hilary Stewart, University of Washington Press, 1993, ISBN 0295972599



Lesson #3 First Totem

Objectives

Students:

- Identify and compare different attributes of a cedar tree with other trees - alder, spruce, hemlock
- Describe what attributes makes a cedar tree good for a totem pole

Time

60 minutes

Materials

- *The First Totem Pole* by Rose Williams
- Chart paper
- Writing paper
- Drawing paper
- Access to a cedar tree

Vocabulary

Lingít

kootéeyaa

laax

keishish

yán

shéiyi

English

totem pole

red cedar

alder

hemlock

spruce

Lingít Phrases

shux'waanax aa kootéeyaa

Ya yát' wé laax.

Yeik liyaat' wé laax.

Wooch yáx dzitee wé laax.

Kawdzitíx' wé laax.

The first totem

The cedar is tall.

The cedar is short.

The cedar is straight.

The cedar is crooked.

Activities

Activity #1

Read *The First Totem Pole*

1. Show students the cover of the book *The First Totem Pole* by Rose Williams and ask them how they think the Haida people first thought about when they made the first totem pole.
2. After students have shared some ideas read the story. Pay special attention to the type of tree the Haidas decided to use to carve the pole, and the fact that they had to look for a “good” tree to use.



3. When finished reading ask students what they think would make a tree “good” for carving. Record responses on chart paper. Some things to listen for or lead them to:
 - the tree couldn't be too tall or too short
 - it should have as few branches as possible
 - it shouldn't have too much sap
 - it shouldn't rot too fast.
 - it shouldn't be too hard or too soft for carving.

Activity #2

What is a pole carved from?

1. Refer back to the class chart of what makes for a good tree to carve. Discuss the fact that trees are living. Talk about what makes it a living thing - it grows, it needs food that it gets from the sun, it needs water, it dies.
2. Show pictures of different trees and take notes on what students notice about each of them on chart paper.
 - a. Alder
 - b. Hemlock
 - c. Spruce
 - d. Cedar
3. Ask them what they notice about the cedar tree that makes it different from the others. Record the characteristics of the trees on chart paper set up similar to the one below.

Alder	Hemlock	Spruce	Cedar
-leaves -short -lots of branches -hard -skinny	-tall -needles, softer and flat -evergreen -thick, bumpy bark -flat -soft	-tall -needles, evergreen -sharp needles	-tall -fewer branches -needles, very flat and soft -easy to carve

4. Using blank sheets of paper give students this writing prompt:
Why is cedar good for totem poles?



Activity #3 Tree field trip (Optional)

1. Invite a local carver and an Elder/culture bearer to accompany the class on a field trip.
2. Go on a field trip to look for cedar trees. Remind the class to look for the characteristics of cedar trees and test them against various trees until a cedar tree is found. For example, “We know that a cedar tree has needles not leaves. Does this tree have leaves or needles? It has leaves. Is this a cedar tree? No.”
3. After thanking the tree in a traditional way, take samples of cedar boughs and bring them back to the classroom for students to draw and describe. Direct students to draw the branches in detail, taking notice of the characteristics of the cedar.

Assessment

When given 3 photos of different trees, students pick out the cedar tree and describe at least 2 characteristics of a cedar tree.

Websites and Teacher Resources

- *Sea and Cedar: How the Northwest Coast Indians Lived*, by Lois McConkey, Firefly Books, 1991, ISBN 0888943717

Lesson 4 Getting a Tree (Optional)

Objectives

Students:

Learn what makes a tree a good choice for a totem pole.

Time

Activity 1 – 45 minutes

Activity 2 – 60 minutes

Materials

- Tables turned upside down to simulate a fallen tree
- Objects to simulate brush around the tree
- Chart paper

Vocabulary

Lingít

as gutú

éil' tlein

éek

aas

kaa yaa awunéi

gunalchéesh

English

forest

ocean

beach

tree

respect

thank you



Lingít Phrases

Aas *gaxtulagéich.*

Aas *gaa has wu.aat.*

Gunalchéesh *laax.*

We're getting a tree.

They went to get a tree.

Thank you cedar tree.

Activities

Activity #1 Falling a Tree

1. Ask the class to review the characteristics of a "good" tree. Tell them to "pretend" that they have finally found a tree to carve a totem pole. What do you need to do to cut it down? Discuss traditional ways to show respect for natural things and what might be appropriate things to do to show respect for a tree. Record the class ideas on chart paper.

Tlingit people believe that all things have spirits and giving thanks to living things when you kill them for things that are needed is a way to show respect for them. Prayers of thanks were said to the tree before cutting it down. Ceremonies were also sometimes conducted. If possible ask an Elder who has experience and knowledge of traditional ceremonies to share them with the class.

2. Ask the class what they might say to a tree to give it thanks for taking its life for a totem pole. Record some responses on chart paper.
3. Direct students to think of a sentence or two to write, to give thanks to a tree.

Activity #2 Moving a Tree

1. Review the characteristics that make a good tree for a totem pole and discuss where you would go to look for a cedar tree.
2. Ask the class: If they found a tall, straight cedar tree with few branches, what would be the best use for that tree, to be in order to use it as a pole? "You wouldn't want a tree too far in the forest because it would be hard to get out. You wouldn't want a lot of brush around it. You wouldn't want it too far inland, away from the water, because that would also make it hard to get out."
3. Tell the class that you are going to pretend the classroom is the forest and that the hallway is the ocean. Using a table turned upside down or another object that is large enough for students to have to work together to push, pretend it is a tree.
4. Set up several of "trees" around the classroom and number them. Some of the trees should be harder to move than others, with books and other objects surrounding it simulating brush around a tree. Set up some that are free of this debris.
5. The object of the game is to move a "tree" to the hallway in the fastest time.
6. Teams of 3-4 kids choose a "tree" to move to the hallway. Time their move and record it on a chart similar to the one below.

Team	Tree	Time
<i>Billy and Jill</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>26 sec.</i>
<i>James and Jessica</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>18 sec.</i>
	<i>3</i>	



7. After everyone has had a chance to be on a team and move a tree, meet back together and discuss why they chose the tree they did. What types of trees were easier and faster to move? Record their reasons for why certain trees are easier to move than others. Look for things such as: few things around it, and closer to the door. Discuss the fact that this is true in the forest when looking for a cedar tree to use as a pole. Draw a picture of a cedar tree in the forest that would be good for a totem pole.

Assessment

Show a picture of two trees in the forest. Ask students to choose which tree would be easier to use a totem pole and give at least 2 reasons why.

Optional Extension Activities

Invite an experienced carver who knows about falling trees to come in and share his/her work with the class.

Lesson 5 Carving a Pole

Objectives

Students:

- Identify crests on a totem pole
- Understand how an adze is used.
- Identify traditional paint colors and how they are made
- Learn the Lingít words and phrases that pertain to this lesson

Time

60 minutes

Materials

- Chart paper
- Transparency
- Markers
- Scissors
- Paint brushes
- Crayons
- Salmon eggs
- Egg whites
- Stove
- Pots
- Cornstarch
- Charcoal from a fire
- Red cabbage
- Cranberry juice
- Empty containers
- *Qayaqs and Canoes Native ways of Knowing* by the Alaska Native Heritage Center, ISBN 0-9709164-1-8
- Pictures of adzes



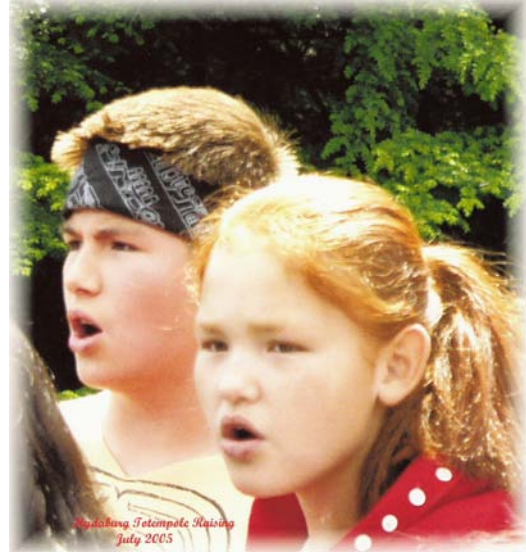
Vocabulary

Lingít

naa shukwá
 yéil
 ch'áak'
 xut'aa
 daakanóox'u
 s'aak
 té
 t'ix'
 neegwál'
 t'ooch
 x'aan
 x'éishx'w
 s'oow

English

crests
 raven
 eagle
 adze
 shell
 bone
 stone
 twine
 paint
 black
 red
 blue
 green



Lingít Phrases

Aas kach'aakw.
 Kootéeyaa du teey.
 (Yéil) áyá xát.
 (Ch'áak') áyá xát.
 (Deisheetaan) naax xát sitee.
 (Teikweidí) naax xát sitee.

Carving a pole.
 Replicating a pole.
 I am of the (raven) moiety
 I am of the (eagle) moiety.
 I am of the (Deisheetaan) clan
 I am of the (Teikweidí) clan.

Activities

Activity #1 Crests on a pole

1. Once a tree is down it is time to start painting and carving. The carver needs to know what designs to put on the pole. Think back to the book *Totem Tale* and remember how the crests decided what order to go on the pole in.
2. Brainstorm a list of crests on chart paper with the class. Students might start with the clan crests that belong to them or their relatives. Tell students that some clans have the same crest design and some clans have more than one design. When they are finished make sure they have a number of Tlingit crests on the list. They include, but are not limited to:

Yéil - Raven Moiety

Laayanéidí - raven
 Lukaax.ádi- sockeye
 L'uknax.ádi- coho
 T'akdeintaan - tern
 Kiks.ádi - frog
 Deisheetaan - beaver
 Kaach.ádi - raven
 Ishkahittaan - raven
 L'eneidí - dog salmon
 Sukteeneidí - raven
 Gaanaxteidí - raven
 Gaanax.ádi - frog

Ch'áak' - Eagle Moiety

Yanyeidí - wolf
 Shangukeidí - thunderbird/eagle
 Teikweidí - brown bear
 Dakl'aweidí - killer whale
 S'iknax.ádi - black bear
 Naanyaa.aayí - killer whale
 S'eet'kweidí - eagle
 Chookaneidí - porpoise
 Kaagwaantaan - wolf
 Tsaagweidí - killer whale/seal
 Was'eeneidí - brown bear
 Naasteidí - eagle



3. Read *The Wellness Pole* story (See Resources) to the class and discuss what crests are on this Haida pole. Use the picture of the Wellness Pole to discuss the pole and identify the crests.
4. Use the Wellness totem pole designs provided to make overhead transparencies. Project the images on to large paper and trace the images on the paper to form a large paper totem pole. It will be painted in Activity #2.



Activity #2 Paint a pole

1. Once a totem pole is designed, it is ready to be painted. Using pictures of painted totem poles, ask the class what colors they notice are used to paint poles. Black, red, and bluish-green are the traditional colors used. Color the class Wellness Pole with crayons, using the traditional colors.
2. Traditional paints had to be made from materials that were found naturally in the area. All these paint colors start off the same and then pigment is added later to make the different colors. To begin, salmon eggs are chewed up and spit out into a bowl. It is then mixed with different pigments.
3. Explain the process of making different colors. Then either make the colors in a traditional way with salmon eggs, or follow these directions to make 3 colors:
4. For black salmon egg paint: Use a pin to prick a hole in the salmon eggs and let the fluid out into a small container. Mix in finely ground charcoal from a fire. (not briquettes) See below for the ingredients for other colors.

Black	Red	Blue
Mix charcoal from a fire with egg whites	Mix cranberry juice and a teaspoon of cornstarch, simmer on stove while it thickens	Heat 1/2 red cabbage in a pot, simmer the juice with a teaspoon of cornstarch until it thickens

5. Have groups of students make one color paint at a time, while the rest of the class colors the Wellness pole pages with traditional colors.
6. Students then paint the large paper Wellness Pole made in Activity #1, using the paints they made. The pole can be cut out and hung up in the classroom or hallway.





Activity #3 Using an adze

1. Discuss with the class what happens once they have decided on designs for a totem. They will then start to carve it. Show pictures of carvers using an adze and pictures of adzes. Discuss how carvers use these tools to shape a log to become a totem pole.
2. If possible, have carver come in and demonstrate using an adze. If you don't know a carver use a video such as *Qayaqs and Canoes Native Ways of Knowing* (from the Alaska Native Heritage Center) to show how to use an adze, even though it is on a canoe. There are also clips that can be found on the Internet.
3. Tell the class that an adze is made from one piece of wood and a blade made from stone, shell, or metal. Study the pictures of adzes and guide students to figure out how the shape of the handle could come from one piece of wood. Look at pictures of trees where the branches connect to the trunk and study that shape. Notice how they are the same shape.

Assessment

Students identify crests on the Haida Wellness Pole and use traditional Tlingit or Haida colors in the appropriate places.

Lesson 6 Commission a Pole

Objectives

Students:

- Apply what they have learned about totem poles and retell a story or stories
- Identify important characters of a story
- Learn new Tlingit words and phrases

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Chart paper
- *The Girl Who Lived with the Bear*, by Barbara Diamond Goldin, Gulliver Books 1997, ISBN 0152006842
- *Totem Poles to Color and Cut Out: Tlingit*, by Stephen Brown, Bellerophon Books 1992, ISBN 0883881500
- Crayons
- A variety of books to choose a story from
- Scissors
- Paper towel rolls
- Glue
- Beads
- Bead cord
- Snack food to prepare such as muffins





Vocabulary

Lingít

at *kach'aak'u saati*
áajee *kawduwakaa*
xút'aa
tsú *kananéekw*
sh *kalnéek lingít'í*
ash *koolyát*

English

carver
hire
adze
retell
characters
game

Lingít Phrases

Áajee *kawduwakaa kootéeyaa akach'aakw.*

Commission a pole.

Activities

Activity #1

Read *Woman Who Lived with the Bears*

1. Now that the class has a basic understanding of how a totem pole is made, gather the class in a group area and discuss the concept of hiring a person to do a job. Have students give examples of things that someone might be hired for, such as chopping wood or babysitting.
2. Describe what a major event is - like a child being born or someone having a birthday party. Lead the class into the fact that a chief or the head of a clan might hire a carver to carve a totem pole to remember an important event or someone who has passed away. Spend some time reviewing the different types of poles and what a carver would have to do to produce a pole.
3. Remind students that sometimes poles tell stories. Read the book *The Girl Who Lived with the Bears* by Barbara Diamond Goldin
4. After the reading give students the corresponding totem pole to color - *Totem Poles to Color and Cut Out: Tlingit*, by Stephen Brown, and practice re-telling the story to a partner.
5. When all the students have finished coloring, possibly the next day, have some students who would like to, come up and share their totem pole colorings with the class, and tell their favorite part of the story.

Activity #2

Hire a carver

1. Tell the class they are going to pretend to hire a carver to make a totem pole for their personal favorite story. Brainstorm with the class a list of some of their favorite stories, or read several new ones aloud and let them choose. (For example, *Frog Girl and Storm Boy* by Paul Owen Lewis).
2. Each student chooses a story, writes the title, and gives a reason why he/she likes that story. They then choose the most important characters from the story to be on a pole they will make and what order the character should be in – the same as in the story.
3. Either assign partners or let students chose their own. Students then “hire” each other to “carve” the story pole for the story the other person has chosen.
4. Students meet with their carver partner to describe the story and tell which characters they want on the pole.



5. The “carver” draws on the pole template to design a totem for the other student. When they have finished drawing they cut out the template and glue it on to a paper towel roll to make a totem pole. (If they are available and are appropriate to the story students could also use Northwest Coast design stamps to make a pole.)

Activity #3 Raising a pole

1. When the whole class has finished their story poles (probably the next day), students gather together to discuss how to “raise” their poles.
2. Refer back to *The First Totem Pole*, by Rose Williams and look closely at the part where they have a potlatch to raise the pole.
3. Students first need to “pay” the carver of their pole. To do this, they need to think of some gifts they could make and food they could share. Brainstorm as a class some ideas for gifts and food.
 - a. One easy thing to make is beaded necklaces. Using hemp rope or another thick string, students could use pony beads to make necklaces as payment for their poles.
 - b. Using beads students can make patterned necklaces. Demonstrate some different patterns for students such as an ABAB pattern using two colors or a AABCAABC pattern using three colors.
 - c. Give students turns to share some ideas for different patterns before they start stringing their necklaces.
4. They also should have some sort of special snack to simulate the feast of a traditional potlatch. The class might like to make something together, like cookies or muffins. If students have access, they might ask their families to donate a jar of fish to make fish spread to eat with crackers, or some other Native food. Invite an Elder to the class feast
5. Decide on a day to have the potlatch and work on the presents and food.



On the day of the “pole raising” gather together and direct students to exchange their poles and gifts in a respectful manner. After the exchanging and payments are done, eat together to celebrate the occasion. Each student can then take a turn telling which story he/she chose, who the “carver” was, and share his/her pole. Each carver should be thanked for the work he/she did.



Assessment

After listening to a story, students identify the main characters in the story.

Websites and Teacher Resources

- <http://www.kitsumkalum.bc.ca/photo/prv.html>, 1987 Totem Pole Raising video.
- <http://www.cathedralgrove.se/text/07-Totem-Websites-1.htm#ur02>, Totem Pole websites.
- <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Billreidpole/>, The Respect To Bill Reid Pole.

