

# Activity 1: Storytelling

Time: 2 or 3 class periods (1 class period = 45 min)

## Materials:

- Videos of elder's northern lights stories—available online at [culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu](http://culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu) or on the Cultural Connections USB flash drive provided with the activity kit
- Northern Lights: The Soccer Trails by Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak
- Storytelling Reflections worksheet (one per student)
- Be a Storyteller worksheet (optional)

## Standards Addressed:

- Alaska Cultural Standards: A.3, B.2, \*D.1, \*D.3
- Iñupiat Learning Framework: [E]E.e.3.3, [E]C.s.1.2, [E]C.s.2.1, [B]C.s.2.1, [E]C.s.3.1, [B]C.s.3.1, [E]C.s.4.1, [E]C.s.4.2, [B]C.s.4.1, [E]C.r.2.1, [E]H.uqu.4.1, [E]H.uqu.4.2
- Iñupiaq Cultural Values: Love for Children, Respect for Elders
- Alaska Science Content Standards: F.2, F.3
- Alaska English/Language Arts Content Standards: \*RSIT K-5 Grade 4: 9, SL K-5 Grade 4:1, SL K-5 Grade 5:1, SL K-5 Grade 4:4  
(\*addressed in extensions only)

## Background Information:

Different cultures use different strategies for teaching and learning. Some rely on books, others on institutions of education and others on one-on-one methods of communication. Iñupiat culture emphasizes oral tradition, as well as demonstration and practice to convey knowledge. Traditional storytelling serves many purposes. The stories shared during this activity teach cultural knowledge about the northern lights and encourage positive behavior related to health and safety.

## Assessments:

- Storytelling Reflection worksheet provides a means of assessing student ability to:
  - acquire and share knowledge and insights from traditional stories;
  - apply Iñupiaq knowledge and lessons embedded in stories to the broader world of health and safety;
  - infer what is important in the story;
  - explain the lessons in stories;
  - identify the name and community of elders whose stories they listened to.
- Classroom discussion provides a means of assessing student ability to:
  - engage in conversation about stories;
  - understand that some individuals, cultures, and societies use other beliefs and methods in addition to scientific methods to describe and understand the world;
  - understand the importance of recording and validating cultural knowledge

## Activity Preparation:

1. Determine the best method for viewing the elders' northern lights stories in your classroom. The stories are available online at [culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu](http://culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu) or can be pre-loaded on student computers using the Cultural Connections USB flash drive provided in the activity kit.

**Storytelling:**  
*Iñupiaq values: Love for Children, Respect for Elders*

Visit [culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu](http://culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu) (Multimedia) to hear stories about the **kjuḡuyat** from elders.

Choose and listen to two of the stories and discuss with a partner: What do the stories have in common? How are they different? Which did you like best? What are the lessons in these stories? What behaviors do they encourage and why are those behaviors important? What new Iñupiaq words did you learn, and what do they mean?

Pass it on: Retell one of the stories you heard to a friend or family member.



### Activity Instructions:

1. Explain folklore is a combination of traditional stories, customs or beliefs passed down from generation to generation. Legends are part of folklore. Legends are traditional stories that often are believed by many people but cannot be proven to be true. Legends and folklore often encourage desirable behaviors or contain lessons for the listener. Ask students if they know any legends or folklore.
2. Distribute the Kiuḡuyat<sup>NS</sup>/Kiuḡiyāq<sup>NP</sup> The Northern Lights Elementary Guide and ask students to read pages 2-3. Explain to students that there are traditional Iñupiaq stories about the kiuḡuyat<sup>NS</sup> / kiuḡiyāq<sup>NP</sup>, or northern lights, and that they will watch videos of elders telling some of these stories.
3. Place students in small groups or pairs and ask each group to watch 3 or more stories and then compare and contrast the stories and discuss the behavior each story encourages.
4. Discuss as a class and write notes on the whiteboard, assisting with story interpretation as needed: What do the stories have in common? How are they different? Which story did you like best? What are the lessons in the stories? Why might parents and grandparents tell children these stories? What behaviors do these stories encourage and why are those behaviors important? (i.e. be home on time at night, wear your hood, be quiet when traveling in the country, don't walk alone, etc.) What do these stories tell us about the northern lights? Why is it important to understand cultural knowledge related to the northern lights? Students who do not feel comfortable sharing their own insights can share an interesting peer insight and explain why it was so interesting to them.
5. Distribute the Storytelling Reflections worksheet. Please note: There are two versions of the worksheet. The North Slope Iñupiaq version is indicated by the superscript <sup>NS</sup> in the worksheet's title bar. The Northern Seward Peninsula Iñupiaq version is indicated by the superscript <sup>NP</sup> in the worksheet's title bar. Use the version that is most appropriate for your community. Ask students to complete the worksheets. Allow them to refer to the class discussion notes for ideas.

### Extensions:

- Invite an elder into the classroom to tell his or her stories about the kiuḡuyat<sup>NS</sup> / kiuḡiyāq<sup>NP</sup>.
- Ask students to complete the Be a Storyteller worksheet to outline one of the kiuḡuyat<sup>NS</sup> / kiuḡiyāq<sup>NP</sup> stories. Ask students to practice retelling the story to a partner, and then tell the story to a family member.
- Read and discuss Northern Lights: The Soccer Trails—How is this story similar to and different from the stories that students heard from elders on the videos and in person?

# Kiuḡuyat

## The Northern Lights

A&J Hughes Photography



### Have you ever seen the northern lights?

These glowing lights appear in the night sky in the far north. The Iñupiat have observed the northern lights for centuries. The Iñupiaq word for northern lights is **kiuḡuyat**. According to the Iñupiaq oral tradition, **kiuḡuyat** are the spirits of ancestors. The spirits are playing a game of kickball in the sky. Some Iñupiaq stories about the **kiuḡuyat** help to teach important lessons for children. The stories also reveal information about the lights such as when they are visible, what shapes they take in the night sky and more.





# Kiuġiyaaq

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## Storytelling:

*Iñupiaq values: Love for Children, Respect for Elders*

Visit [culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu](http://culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu) (Multimedia) to hear stories about the **kiuguyat** from elders.

**Choose and listen** to two of the stories and

discuss with a partner: What do the

stories have in common? How

are they different? Which did

you like best? What are the

lessons in these stories?

What behaviors do they

encourage and why are

those behaviors important?

What new Iñupiaq words

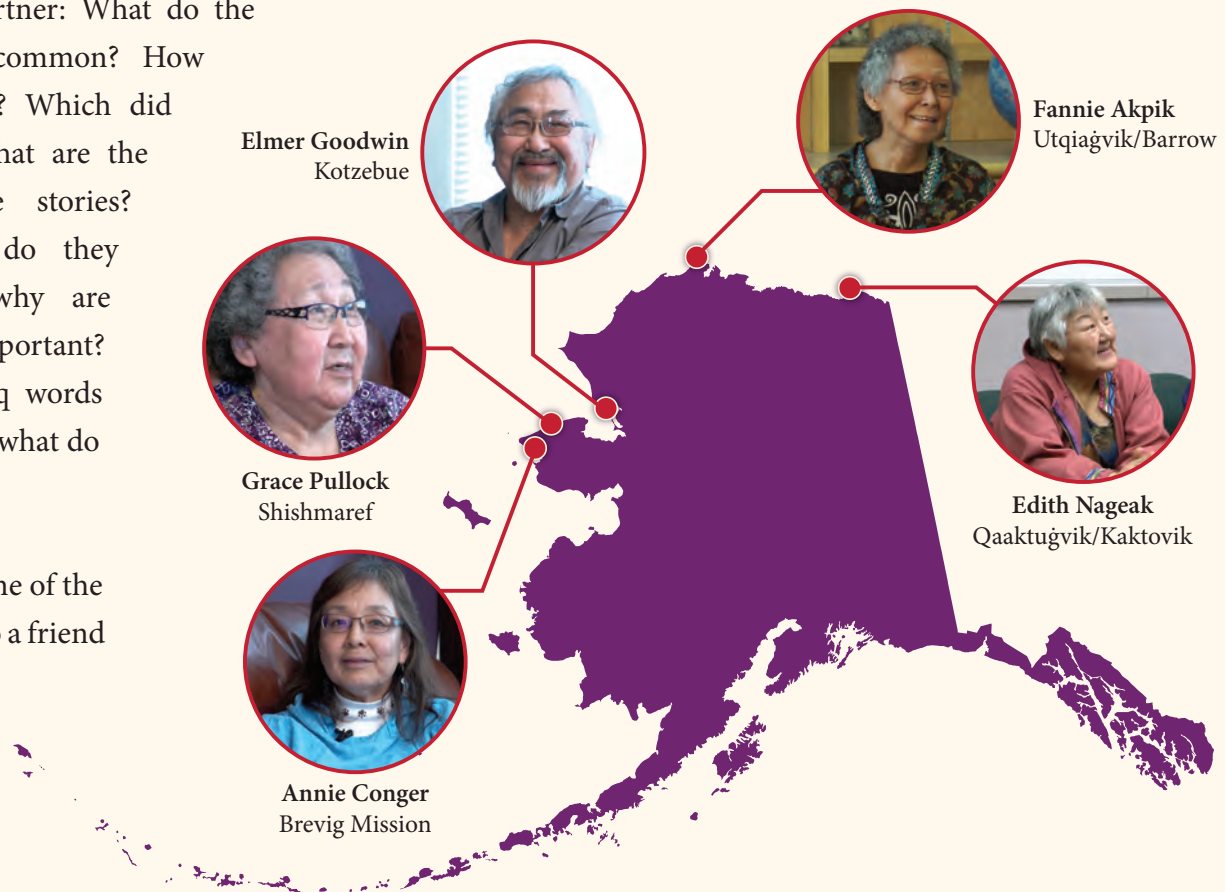
did you learn, and what do

they mean?

**Pass it on:** Retell one of the

stories you heard to a friend

or family member.



## Iñupiaq Northern Lights Vocabulary

*Iñupiaq values: Knowledge of Language, Cooperation*

Would you like to learn more Iñupiaq words related to the northern lights? Work with a classmate or your teacher to practice the science and color terms using the vocabulary cards provided.

Visit [culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu](http://culturalconnections.gi.alaska.edu) (Multimedia) to hear and practice the vocabulary words.

Storytelling Reflections<sup>NS</sup>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Listen to two stories about the kiuḡuyat. Circle the elders whose stories you listened to:



Fannie Akpik  
Barrow



Annie Conger  
Brevig Mission



Elmer Goodwin  
Kotzebue



Edith Nageak  
Barter Island



Grace Pullock  
Shishmaref

1. Draw a picture of the story you liked best:

2. I liked \_\_\_\_\_'s story best because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Choose a lesson from one of the stories and complete the sentences below:

3. \_\_\_\_\_'s story encourages children to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This is important because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. What is an Iñupiaq word for northern lights? \_\_\_\_\_

Storytelling Reflections<sup>NP</sup>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Listen to two stories about the kiuġiyaq. Circle the elders whose stories you listened to:



Fannie Akpik  
Barrow



Annie Conger  
Brevig Mission



Elmer Goodwin  
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Choose a lesson from one of the stories and complete the sentences below:

3. \_\_\_\_\_'s story encourages children to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This is important because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. What is an Iñupiaq word for northern lights? \_\_\_\_\_

**Be a Storyteller**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete the storytelling guide below for one of the stories you learned. Practice retelling the story to remind children to be safe and healthy. Remember to introduce yourself and explain who told you the story.**

What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

Where are you from? \_\_\_\_\_

Who told you this story? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the rule?

Example: Children should stay inside after 9 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What will happen?

Example: The northern lights will take off your head!

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How can someone escape or get home safe?

Example: Throw a ball of dog dung at it and run.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_