Explore Yup’ik Dance

“And the dancer would move with the rhythm, using body and arm movements to illustrate the story portrayed in the song.”
-Wassilie Berlin, quoted in alaska.si.edu/record.asp?id=216

In Yup'ik cultures, musicians play the drum and sing while dancers tell a story with their movements. Their dance fans (tegumiak) help draw attention to the movements of their arms.

Watch videos of Yup'ik dancers, linked below. Observe how they use their dance fans to help tell a story!

➢ Chevak Dancers: www.youtube.com/watch?v=m21KB4TjMkY
➢ Toksook Bay Dancers: www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzboKrHSSn4
➢ Yup'ik Seal Dance: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_uL_n3w4Vtl
➢ Acilquq Drummers and Dancers: www.youtube.com/watch?v=beU485Bxqxs
➢ Mount Edgecumbe Dancers: www.youtube.com/watch?v=m77RRqIptek

Think and Discuss:
What story do you think each dance group is telling? Watch their movements for clues!
What dances are important to your family, community, or culture?
Can you tell a story by dancing? Think of a story and dance it out!