

Overview:

Legends surrounding tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanoes are rare in the Kodiak and Aleutian region. In this lesson, students learn stories from the Aleutian Arc that describe tsunamis or actions related to tsunamis.

Targeted Alaska Grade Level Expectations:

Science

- [4] SE2.2 The student demonstrates an understanding that solving problems involves different ways of thinking, perspectives, and curiosity by identifying multiple explanations (e.g., oral traditions, folklore, scientific theory) of everyday events (e.g., weather, seasonal changes).
- [3] SF1.1-3.1 The student demonstrates an understanding of the dynamic relationships among scientific, cultural, social, and personal perspectives by exploring local or traditional stories that explain a natural event.

Writing

- [K] 1.2.1 The student writes for a variety of purposes and audiences by writing to express ideas for self and others (e.g., using drawings, symbols, letters, words, sentences).
- [1] 1.2.1 The student writes for a variety of purposes and audiences by writing thoughts or ideas to communicate with specific audiences (e.g., cards, letters, notes, lists).
- [2] 1.2.2 The student writes for a variety of purposes and audiences by using expressive language when responding to literature or producing text (e.g., journals, pictures supported by text or poetry).
- [3] 1.2.2 The student writes for a variety of purposes and audiences by using expressive language when responding to literature or producing text (e.g., journals, pictures supported by text or poetry) (L)
- [4] 2.2.3 The student writes for a variety of purposes and audiences by using expressive language when responding to text (e.g., writer's notebook, memoirs, poetry, plays, or lyrics) (L)

Targeted Alaska Cultural Standards:

- A3 Culturally knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community. Students who meet this cultural standard are able to acquire and pass on the traditions of their community through oral and written history.
- E3 Culturally knowledgeable students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them. Students who meet this cultural standard are able to understand the ecology and geography of the bioregion they inhabit.

Objectives:

The student will:

- listen to legends from the Aleutian Arc that are related to earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis;
- write a tsunami story in the style of a legend; and
- illustrate a story related to tsunamis.

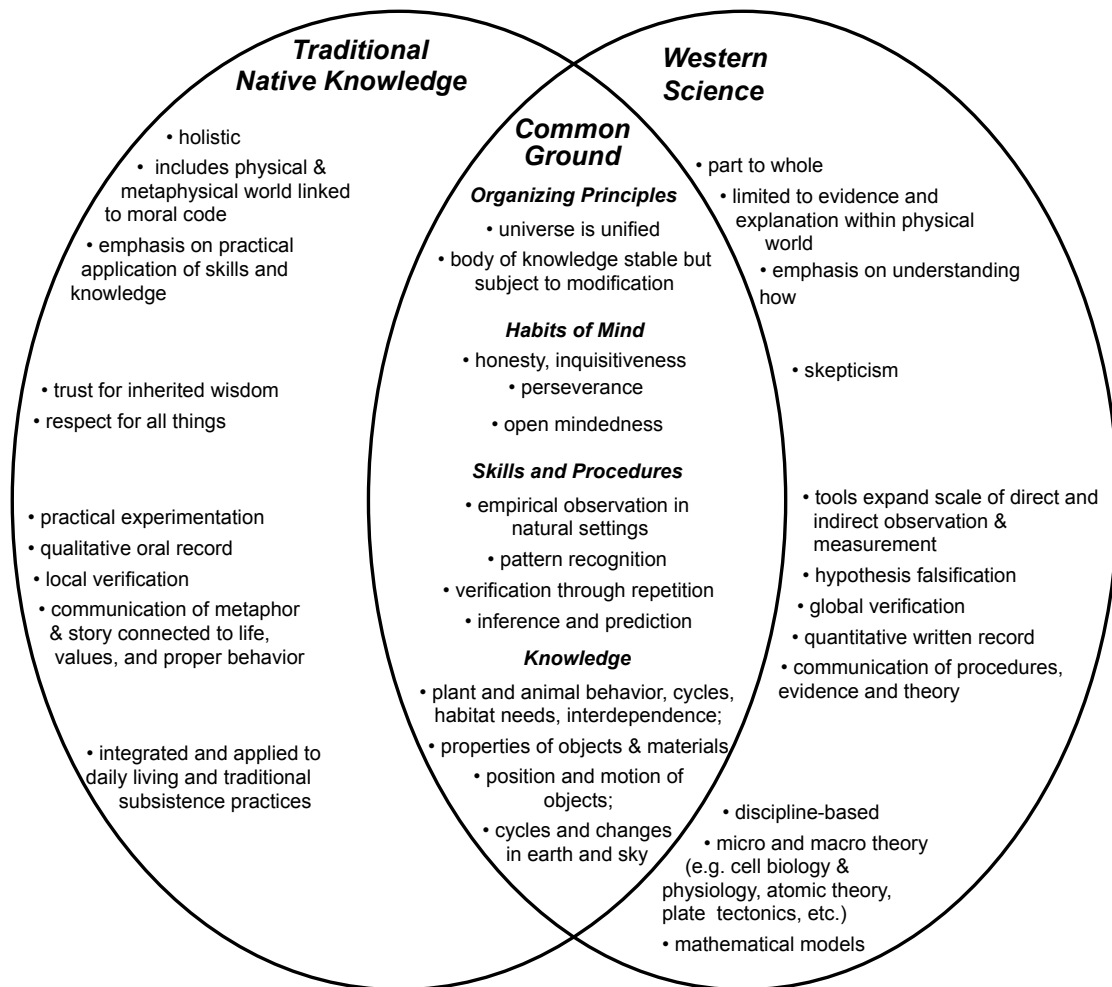
Materials:

- Crayons, markers or colored pencils
- VISUAL AIDS: “Legends 1-5”
- STUDENT WORKSHEET: “My Tsunami Legend”

Science Basics:

In traditional Native knowledge, information is recorded through oral traditions. Storytelling serves as a way to transmit knowledge, as well as to entertain. Teaching methods using both traditional Native knowledge and Western science enable students to develop skills and understanding from multiple perspectives. The diagram below illustrates both similarities and differences in the characteristics of traditional Native knowledge and Western science.

In the Aleutian Arc, there are two major indigenous groups. One group is the Unangaꝯ (sometimes referred to as Aleut) of the Aleutian chain. The plural forms of Unangaꝯ vary among the two major dialects. In the Western dialect, the plural form is Unangas, and in the East, the plural form is Unangan. The other major group of the Aleutian Arc are the Alutiꝯ (Alutiit — plural), also called Sugpiaꝯ (Sugpiat — plural). The homeland of the Alutiit/Sugpiat includes the Alaskan Peninsula, Kodiak Island, Lower Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound.



Source: Stephens, S. (2000). *Handbook for culturally responsive science curriculum*. Fairbanks, Alaska: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Alutiiq/Sugpiaq Narrative Genres

When hearing or reading Alutiiq/Sugpiaq narratives, it is helpful to understand that there are two common genres. The oldest form is an unigkuaq (unigkuat - plural). Unigkuat are stories from a distant time that often involve animals and humans transforming into one another as well as communicating with each other. These stories may also tell of origins, like how volcanoes formed. By today's standards they may seem supernatural, but for many Elders, these stories are very real and nonfictional.

Another narrative genre of the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq is the quliyanguaq (quliyanguat - plural). Unlike unigkuat, quliyanguat are often personal stories and can be traced to a specific date. Both unigkuat and quliyanguat concerning tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanoes teach awareness of potential hazards.

The stories in this lesson are simplified. At the time of the 1964 Alaskan Earthquake and tsunami, the only Alutiiq story told to anthropologist Nancy Yaw Davis was the story of Father Herman and the tsunami. The story of Volcano Woman was the inspiration for artist John Hoover. Sally Swetsof of Atka shared the story of Chiiguyaakaġ, which is told in Atka and surrounding villages. All other stories were gathered from recorded accounts of early Western anthropologists of the Aleutian Arc.

Activity Procedure:

1. Explain that indigenous people, like the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq and Unangan/s, tell stories to teach and to entertain. Some stories tell about dangers of the land and sea, or how landforms, like mountains, were made. Legends are stories that are passed down from generation to generation.
2. View MULTIMEDIA FILE: "Legends."
3. Distribute the STUDENT WORKSHEET: "My Tsunami Legend." Instruct students to write and illustrate a 'legend' about a tsunami. The legend should include an imaginative explanation for how or why tsunamis occur.
4. Ask students to share their work with each other.

Extension Idea:

- Instruct students to act out each of the five legends in small groups.
- Investigate tsunami legends from around the world, then compare and contrast to Alaskan tsunami legends.
- Instruct students to take home their legends to share with family members.

Answers:

Illustrations and writing should indicate that the student understands the concept of a legend as it relates to tsunamis or related activities such as earthquakes or volcanoes.

Name: _____

Student Worksheet

My Tsunami Legend (page 1 of 1)



Directions: Write and illustrate a 'legend' about a tsunami.

Aleutian Legends

Student Information Sheet



Chiiqyaakaġ and the Tsunami

Chiiqyaakaġ is the Aleutian song sparrow. A chiiqyaakaġ warned an old lady that a tsunami was on its way to the village. Heeding the warning, the lady told the villagers what she had learned from the chiiqyaakaġ. Those who believed her went with her up the hill. The others were destroyed along with the village when the great waves came. After the tsunami, the survivors helped the old lady rebuild the village.

From Atka and other surrounding villages