

THE CANADIAN COAST GUARD AND THE ARCTIC

Learning objectives:

- Students will learn about Indigenous communities in the Canadian Arctic.
- Students will discuss the importance of the ocean and the land to the Inuit.
- Students will learn about the CCG's commitment to these communities.

Time:

1.5 hours

Subject:

Geography, History, Social Studies, Indigenous Studies

Grade:

4-12

Materials:

- The Canadian Coast Guard and the Arctic worksheet
- Chart paper and markers or a white board
- Devices with Internet connection
- [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#)

Overview:

Students will learn about the Canadian Coast Guard's (CCG) role in the Canadian Arctic and their relationship with the Indigenous communities living in the North. Students will begin by learning some basic facts about the Inuit communities in the Arctic, followed by discussions and research about the issues the Inuit and the land face as a result of climate change. Students will then create an infographic sharing how the Canadian Coast Guard's demonstrating its commitment to reconciliation with these Indigenous communities.

Lesson Description

Minds on

Students will begin with a clip from CBC News, [Thin Ice: How Labrador Inuit are confronting climate change](#), followed by a class discussion. They will create a mind map on chart paper or on the board about the topics in the video. Using the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, students will fill out the introduction of the Canadian Coast Guard and the Arctic worksheet.

Action

Students will learn about the importance of the Arctic to the Inuit by reading a quote from Sheila Watt-Cloutier's book, *The Right to be Cold: One woman's story of protecting her culture, the Arctic and the whole planet*. Students will research the importance of the land, water, and animals to the Inuit. They will make connections between the CCG's Ocean Protection Plan (OPP) and the needs of the Indigenous communities in the Arctic.

Conclusion

Students create an infographic, focusing on the goals of the OPP for Indigenous communities in the Arctic.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Begin the lesson by showing the students a clip from CBC News, [Thin Ice: How Labrador Inuit are confronting climate change](#). Have a class discussion and keep track on a mind map, using chart paper or a white board.

Use the following questions to generate discussion:

- What questions or ideas from the video stand out to you the most?
- What are some of the key changes in the Arctic mentioned in the video?
- What are community members most worried about?
- What can we do to help?

Once the video is over, distribute the Canadian Coast Guard and the Arctic worksheet to students. Share the link to the [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada Inuit volume](#). Give students a few minutes to explore the volume before they complete task 1 of the worksheet.

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Connection to the Canadian Geography Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Patterns and trends
- Interrelationships
- Geographic perspective

Inquiry Process

- Formulate questions
- Gather and organize
- Interpret and analyze
- Evaluate and draw conclusions
- Communicate

Geospatial Skills

- N/A

Action

Once students have filled out task 1 of the Canadian Coast Guard and the Arctic worksheet, they can move onto task 2 of the worksheet.

Have students read the quote provided on the handout from Sheila Watt-Cloutier's book, *The Right to be Cold: One woman's story of protecting her culture, the Arctic and the whole planet*, and explain that they will be using the worksheet to delve into the importance of the land, water, and animals to Inuit communities in the Arctic. Students will access the links provided on the worksheet to research information.

Once students have completed task 2, have volunteers discuss and share what they learned.

Use the following questions to generate discussion:

- What specific animals in the Arctic are affected by climate change? Are any of these animals endangered, at risk, or extinct?
- How are the Inuit communities adapting to the changes they are facing?
- Do you see any similarities between what is happening in the Arctic to anywhere else in Canada or the world?
- What are some questions you still have about climate change in the Arctic and the Inuit communities affected?

Students can now move onto task 3 of the worksheet. Share with students that the Canadian government is working hard to combat climate change and support the Inuit communities in the North in many ways. One such way is with the Canadian Coast Guard's participation in the Government's Oceans Protection Plan (OPP). To understand what this plan is about, show students a short clip from the CCG, [Oceans Protection Plan - Improving marine safety in the Arctic](#). Ask students to identify the goal of the plan stated in the video. Students should answer:

- Working closely with communities to improve marine safety and protect the environment.

Students can discuss some of the examples of this goal shown in the video and other questions they may have, such as: What is the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary?

Finally, students will look at the details of the [Oceans Protection Plan](#) and list at least three goals the government wishes to accomplish with local Indigenous communities across Canada and specifically in the Arctic. This article is quite long and comprehensive so students may want to work in pairs or groups. This will be followed by a discussion for students to share the different goals and initiatives they read about.

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Some of the possible answers that students can share include:

- Design new information-sharing systems and platforms so Indigenous communities have access to real-time information on marine shipping activities in their local waters
- Develop regulatory and other tools to engage Indigenous and coastal communities to better respond to local marine traffic issues
- Improve the safety of resupply in Arctic communities
- Develop stronger regional response plans in collaboration with partners, including coastal and Indigenous communities
- Work with Indigenous communities and others to identify and map regions of high ecological sensitivity as well as areas of cultural, social, and economic importance
- Conduct habitat restoration projects to mitigate stressors affecting marine life and their habitats, with Indigenous communities, local groups, and communities leading restoration activities
- Negotiate meaningful Indigenous partnerships
- Improve Indigenous capacity in design and delivery of marine safety
- Create Indigenous community response teams

Conclusion and Consolidation

Using the information the students learned about the Inuit, the Arctic environment, and the effects of climate change, students will create an infographic by hand or online to distribute or share in the school and/or their community.

Students can focalize their infographic on specific topics, such as the effects of climate change on animals, water, land, or communities in the Arctic or provide a broader infographic on all of these topics.

Once students are done, they may share their infographics with the class with a gallery walk.

Extend Your Geographical Thinking

- Students can transform their learning from the The Canadian Coast Guard and the Arctic worksheet and the plethora of information available through [IPAC](#) into an independent research project on a specific topic of their choice.
- Students can learn more about the Indigenous communities of the Canadian North by watching any of the free films available on the National Film Board website, such as [Never Lose Sight](#) or [Life on Ice](#).
- Students can indulge in their curiosity further with the various articles available on [CBC Kids](#) related to Indigenous topics beyond the Arctic.
- Students can discover more learning through Can Geo Education's [Arctic Imperative](#) and/or [Polar Knowledge Canada](#) resources.

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Modifications

- Students can complete any of the activities above in pairs or groups.
- Students can fill out the worksheets using an electronic device instead of by hand.
- Videos on YouTube can be slowed down and the Government of Canada's video comes with a transcript for students to follow along.

Assessment Opportunities

- Observational and anecdotal notes can be used for assessment for learning which can also be evidenced by the completion of the handouts.
- Assessment as learning can be facilitated by a Two Stars and a Wish activity or a simple reflective journal entry about the activity, sharing what they understood and what they need more time on.

Sources and Additional Resources

- Thin Ice: How Labrador Inuit are confronting climate change
- Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada - Inuit volume
- Nunavut Climate Change Secretariat
- World Wildlife Fund Canada
- Oceans Protection Plan - Improving Marine Safety in the Arctic
- The Oceans Protection Plan
- NFB documentary - Never Lose Sight
- NFB documentary - Life on Ice
- Arctic Imperative
- Polar Knowledge Canada

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Task 1: What do you know about the Indigenous communities in the Arctic?

Using the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*, please answer the following questions:

1. How long have the Inuit lived in Canada?

2. What does the term Inuit Nunangat refer to?

3. What are the four regions of Inuit Nunangat and where are each of them located?

Task 2: What is the importance of the Arctic to the Inuit?

“The weather, which we had learned and predicted for centuries, had become uggianaqtuq—a Nunavut term for behaving unexpectedly, or in an unfamiliar way. Our sea ice, which had allowed for safe travel for our hunters and provided a strong habitat for our marine mammals, was, and still is, deteriorating...the human fatalities that had been caused by thinning ice, the animals that may face extinction, the crumbling coastlines, the communities that were having to relocate — in other words, the many ways that our rights to life, health, property and a means of subsistence were being violated by a dramatically changing climate.”

- Sheila Watt-Cloutier, *The Right to be Cold: One woman's story of protecting her culture, the Arctic and the whole planet*

This quote mentions a few of the many consequences that Indigenous communities, as well as the land, ice, and animals in the Arctic are facing as a result of climate change. Take some time to conduct research using the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*, the [Nunavut Climate Change Secretariat](#) website, and the [World Wildlife Fund Canada](#) site to fill out the table provided.

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HUMANS

According to the quote, who is being affected by climate change in the Arctic?

1. _____

2. _____

ANIMALS

According to the quote, what animals are being affected by climate change in the Arctic?

1. _____

2. _____

LAND AND WATER

According to the quote, what aspects of land and/or water are being affected by climate change in the Arctic?

1. _____

2. _____

Based on your research, what impact has climate change had on the everyday lives of humans in the Arctic? What other questions do you have about humans living in the Arctic?

Based on your research, what impact has climate had on the habitats of animals in the Arctic? What other questions do you have about animals living in the Arctic?

Based on your research, what impact has climate change had on the land and water in the Arctic? What other questions do you have about the Arctic environment?

Task 3: The CCG's commitment to the Arctic

In 2017, the CCG announced the Oceans Protection Plan. After watching the CCG's video, [Oceans Protection Plan - Improving marine safety in the Arctic](#), determine what the goal of the Oceans Protection Plan is for Indigenous communities.

In 2018, the CCG officially announced the Arctic as the fourth Coast Guard region (the other three are Western, Central, and Atlantic), with the goal to improve collaboration with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, while also better meeting the needs of Arctic communities.

Take some time to read through the details of the [Oceans Protection Plan](#) and list three of the goals the government wishes to accomplish in collaboration with local Indigenous communities across Canada and specifically in the Arctic.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____