



Presents...

A PROMISE IS A PROMISE

by Robert Munsch and Michael Kusugak
Adaptation and original direction by Barbara Poggemiller



Teacher's Resource Guide

Elementary Grades K - 8

Prepared by Amy Dhindsa, Kieran Moore, Esme Terry, and Naomi Arron

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Geordie Productions Presents...

A PROMISE IS A PROMISE

by Robert Munsch and Michael Kusugak
adapted and original direction by Barbara Poggemiller

Directed by: Dean P. Fleming

Starring:
Aimée Ambroziak
Nem Jevtovic
Chris Masson
Jennifer Miller

Design Team

Set & Costume Design: Shawn Kettner
Music by: Holly Harris

Tour Manager: Stéphane Rousseau

Dear Educator: If you would like to purchase a paper-back copy of
A Promise is a Promise, please email schools@geordie.ca
or speak to our Tour Manager, Stéphane Rousseau

About the Authors

ROBERT MUNSCH

Robert Munsch is a storyteller whose travels take him all over Canada and the USA. He is also adjunct professor at the University of Guelph. The Munsch's share their Ontario home with two children and a bird. Robert Munsch's popular books and records are enjoyed by children all over the world.

MICHAEL ARVAARLUK KUSUGAK

Born at Cape Fullerton on the west coast of Hudson Bay, Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak remembers his grand-mother singing and telling stories about the Inuit way of life. He has also written *Arctic Stories*, *Baseball Bats for Christmas*, *Hide and Sneak*, *Northern Lights: The Soccer Trails*, *Who Wants Rocks?*, and *My Arctic 1,2,3*. *A Promise is a Promise* is his first collaboration with Robert Munsch.

BARBARA POGGEMILLER

Having always dreamed of working in the theatre, Barbara Poggemiller is grateful that her dream has become a reality. She has traveled and worked across Canada and has acted, directed and taught theatre for over 20 years. She has directed shows for Youththeatre, Repercussion and the National Theatre School, as well as Prairie Theatre Exchange, Kaleidoscope Theatre and Carousel Players.

Introduction to this Study Guide

Human child, human, child,
Ours to have, ours to hold,
Forget your mother, forget your brother,
Ours to hold under the ice.

Dear Educator,

Take a moment to appreciate the role myth has played in your upbringing. Stories spun over the years and woven through generations have been passed your way - through oral storytelling, books, film, dance, crafts, visual arts and theatre. Our fantasies, our dreams and our superstitions spring from these age-old yarns and fables, once offered down to us as warnings or soothings, and which we in turn hand on to our young, enriching them with our own twists and angles.

Not only is *A Promise is a Promise* the re-telling of a myth, it is also an offering from another culture. To learn of the Qallupilluit who haunt the ocean ice cracks and spring upon children who venture too close is to learn of a contemporary lifestyle within a culture most of us have never experienced.

In this guide, students will explore the play and its characters through windows of Inuit culture, through reflections on myth and the mechanics of language. How is Allashua's concept of safety shaped by the culture into which she was born? Where do myths come from, and how are they incorporated into our daily lives? And how may a language develop to describe the environment in which it is used? How does environment influence the development of our communication?

One issue we did not have time to play with is that of family. Allashua's story can only unfold the way it does because of her steely family bonds. Students can be encouraged to talk about their own family structures and dynamics - these, of course, being the very fabric through which they see their world.

We hope you will find resource in the following pages, which provide just the very first opening to a longer path of creative exploration.

Enjoy the Show!

Plot Synopsis

Allashua lives in the far North of Canada, with her four younger brothers and sisters, and her mother and father.

One day, she decides to go fishing in the ocean through cracks in the ice. Her mother warns her of the Qallupilluit - monsters who grab children when they get too close to the cracks. She promises to go lake fishing instead but on the way there she changes her mind and heads for the ocean.

Sure enough, the Qallupilluit appear: great trolls dressed in parkas, who rise out of the cracks and drag Allashua into the sea. Allashua quickly makes a deal with the Qallupilluit: she promises to bring all her brothers and sisters back to the sea ice if they will let her go.

The Qallupilluit accept and set her free. "A promise is a promise!" they call after her.

On the way home, Allashua becomes colder and colder and begins to freeze in her wet clothing. Just in time, she is found by her father. As her parents hug her warm, she tells them of the promise she made to the Qallupilluit.

Her mother comes up with a plan: when Allashua sees her begin to dance, she must hurry with all her brothers and sisters down to the sea ice.

Before long, the Qallupilluit arrive at the house to collect the children. They are invited in to eat bread and candy before seizing them. Then Allashua's father begins to dance. The Qallupilluit begin to dance: they have never danced before. First they dance slowly, then faster and faster, until they forget all about the children.

When Allashua's mother joins in the dance, Allashua sneaks out with her brothers and sisters and takes them to the cracks in the sea ice. There, they call for the Qallupilluit, who are too busy dancing to hear her. Having fulfilled her promise, Allashua takes her brothers and sisters back to the safety of the land and waits for the Qallupilluit to return.

When they come screaming into sight, they realize they've been tricked. They yell and scream and pound the ice until they disappear beneath it. From that day on, the ocean remains perfectly smooth, so the family can fish happily out of danger. All but Allashua who too well remembers the fury of the Qallupilluit.

Pre-Show Activities

**Activity 1: Nunavut
Cultural Background**

- Grade Level:** Kindergarten to Grade 8
- Curriculum Connection:** Geography, Social Studies, Language Arts
- Purpose:** To familiarize students with Nunavut and Inuit Culture
- Lesson:** Discuss and review fun and interesting facts about the Nunavut territory and the Inuit culture found within. Compare and contrast the territory with your own province.
- Time needed:** One classroom period

Nunavut

One-fifth of all Canada, Nunavut's 770,000 square miles, more than half above the Arctic Circle, are home to just 26,000 people. All but 3,900 are Inuit, who share ancestry with peoples from Greenland to Siberia.

Northern Canada is a very beautiful place. Some times of the year the sun shines all day long. Other times it never rises at all. In the evening, the sky might shine with the northern lights. Can you describe or draw what the Northern Lights look like?

Today the Inuit live in houses, but the traditional way of the Inuit was to live in igloos in the winter and animal skin tents in the summer. New houses were built as the Inuit traveled to see family or as they hunted caribou and seals which were a very important part of their diet. Igloos and tents were good houses to live in if you were nomadic. Everything an Inuit family owned had to be carried to its new house.

See Appendix 1 for the Nunavut Flag colouring page.

Discussion Questions:

How is the Inuit culture different from your own? How is it similar?

What are some of the animals that live in Northern Canada? How did the Inuit hunt them in ancient times and how are they hunted now?

Which province do you live in? Which provinces are next to us? Which countries are close to us?

Where do other indigenous peoples live? (Hint: Check out the National Geographic Magazine, August 2000 issue)

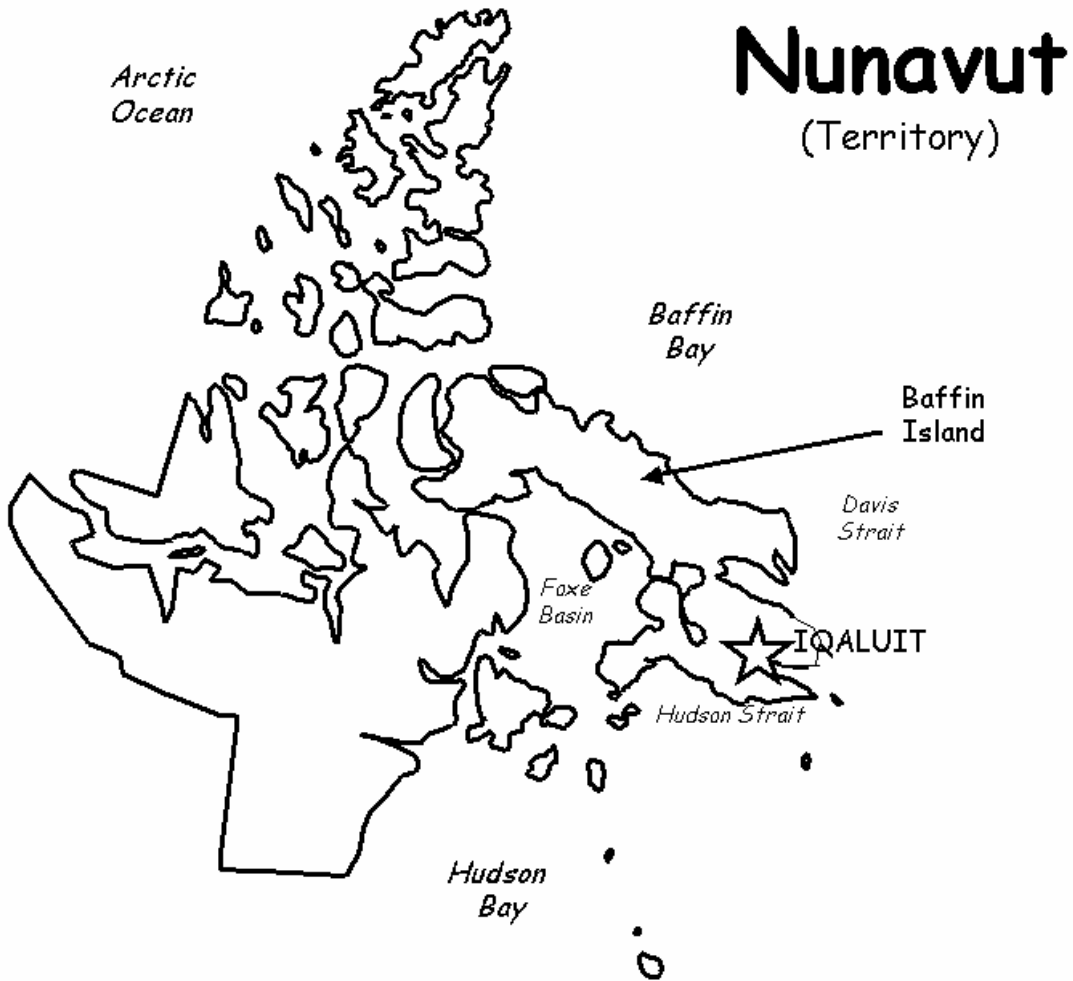
Can you find Nunavut on the map of Canada?



http://z.about.com/d/gocanada/1/7/0/-/-/-/regional_map_of_canada.gif

Nunavut

<http://www.kidzone.ws/geography/nunavut/map.htm>



Write some of the things you've learned about the Territory of Nunavut below:

Activity 2: Language Inuktitut

Grade Level: Kindergarten to Grade 8

Curriculum

Connection: Social Studies, Language Arts

Purpose: To explore a new language and its similarities and differences to English.

Lesson: Learn about Inuktitut, the traditional Inuit language through discussion and linguistics.

Time needed: One classroom period

PART 1: The Inuktitut Alphabet

a	ᐱ	u	ᐅ	i	ᐃ		ᐣ
pa	ᐱ	pu	ᐅ	pi	ᐱ	p	ᐱ
ta	ᐱ	tu	ᐅ	ti	ᐱ	t	ᐱ
ka	ᐱ	ku	ᐅ	ki	ᐱ	k	ᐱ
ga	ᐱ	gu	ᐅ	gi	ᐱ	g	ᐱ
ma	ᐱ	mu	ᐅ	mi	ᐱ	m	ᐱ
na	ᐱ	nu	ᐅ	ni	ᐱ	n	ᐱ
sa	ᐱ	su	ᐅ	si	ᐱ	s	ᐱ
la	ᐱ	lu	ᐅ	li	ᐱ	l	ᐱ
ja	ᐱ	ju	ᐅ	ji	ᐱ	j	ᐱ
va	ᐱ	vu	ᐅ	vi	ᐱ	v	ᐱ
ra	ᐱ	ru	ᐅ	ri	ᐱ	r	ᐱ
qa	ᐱ	qu	ᐅ	qi	ᐱ	q	ᐱ
nga	ᐱ	ngu	ᐅ	ngi	ᐱ	ng	ᐱ
&a	ᐱ	&u	ᐅ	&i	ᐱ	&	ᐱ

The language spoken by the Inuit is called Inuktitut. It is a very ancient language.

Qallupilluit is pronounced "ka-loo-pee-loo-eet", Inuit is pronounced "ee-noo-eet" and Allashua is pronounced "a-la-soo-ak". So, as with English, not all words necessarily sound the way they are spelt. Can you think of some English words like this?

<p><u>Vowel Sounds</u></p> <p>Inuktitut has only three vowel sounds: "aa", "ee", "oo".</p> <p>What are the vowel sounds in English?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p> <p>And sometimes...</p> <p>6. _____</p>

PART 2: Vocabulary

Some words we use in English are taken directly from Inuktitut, like parka, moccasin, mukluk and anorak. Can you think of any others? Make a list of such words and their meanings. Use the library or the Internet!

In Inuktitut there are about 50 different words for snow because the Inuit can identify around 50 different kinds of snow. They have one word for powdery snow, one for wet-packing snow, and another for grainy spring-time snow.

Some words don't exist in other languages at all. There is no Inuktitut word for promise, which means the Inuit would have difficulty expressing this idea or concept in their language. What would the play be called if the word promise didn't exist in English?

Try to think of some things in English that would have no Inuktitut equivalent such as pineapple or elephant. Today the Inuit know of these things but they wouldn't have in the old days!

PART 3: Become a linguist

Did you know that a person who studies language is called a 'linguist'?

Here, you can do some linguistics yourself:

Look at this list of Inuktitut words and their English meanings:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. agloo | seal's breathing hole |
| 2. akutaq | an ice-cream-like dessert |
| 3. amaut | the hooded pouch in which a mother carries her child |
| 4. angakok | shaman or healer |
| 5. inuksuk | a pile of stones built in the shape of a human form |
| 6. kamik | sealskin or bearskin boot |
| 7. kapataq | a hooded foxskin jacket |
| 8. mataq | whale skin |
| 9. nunatak | a mountain that sticks out of the Greenland Ice Cap |
| 10. seqijuk | a worthless individual |
| 11. toornak | an angakok's helping spirit |
| 12. Tuneq (Tunit, plural) | an imaginary people who sometimes make their homes in the depths of the earth or sometimes on the Greenland Ice Cap |
| 13. tupilak | an evil spirit |
| 14. ulu | a woman's knife |
| 15. umiaq | a large boat, usually rowed by women |

Now look at these everyday English words and their Inuktitut translations:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. mom | anana |
| 2. dad | atata |
| 3. Allashua's mom | Alaasuap anananga |
| 4. cracks in sea ice | qunnat (q pronounced r) |
| 5. here we all are | maanippugut |
| 6. ways and habits | illiquusiq (all aspects of living such as survival skill, games, clothing, arts and weather) |
| 7. culture | sviilaqujutiit (making fun) |
| 8. culture | isomainaqiijutiit (things to make us realize when chores have been completed) |

Inuktitut Numbers

1	atausik	6	pingasuujuurtut
2	marruuk	7	sitamaujungigatut
3	pingasut	8	sitamaujuurtut
4	sitamat	9	quliungigatuut
5	tallimat	10	quliit

Can you translate these sentences?

1. If Alaasuap anananga has atausik ulu and sitamat oranges, what does she have?
2. Quliit women get into their umiaq nearly every day because it is their illiquusiq.
3. Along the path, the men saw pingasut inuksuk to guide them on their journey.

Now, draw a picture that shows tallimat men on the shore and pingasuujuurtut women in a umiaq?

Activity 3

Myths and Legends

Grade Level: Grades 1 to 8

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies

Purpose: To explore the concepts and ideas behind myths and legends.

Lesson: Discuss myths and legends - their purpose and meaning to different cultures. Students create their own mythical creature.

Time needed: One classroom period

Every culture in the world has its own myths and legends, often told through storytelling. These help us understand what is important to that culture and which values it promotes. Myths can change or new ones may be created to explain new phenomena. An interesting thing about myths from different cultures is that often the images are the same and they talk about similar problems. Trying to keep children safe is a universal theme.

Myths, legends, historical accounts and storytelling have been a part of Inuit culture for centuries. In the winter, people will gather in a qagip (a giant snow house) and in the summer they will meet outdoors in a common area. Here they will play games, tell stories, and sing about particular events. These shared community celebrations help save and enrich the language tremendously.

Discuss:

- Think of other myths that have been designed by adults to protect or control the actions of their children. How do your parents and teachers help keep you out of danger? What will you tell your children when you grow up and have a family of your own?

❖ Now, create your own Mythical Creature

The Qallupilluit are very colourful, larger-than-life monsters. Many mythical creatures are designed this way. Examples of some are the Unicorn, Gryphon, Pegasus, Fairies, and Sphinx.

Have students use their imagination to create their own mythical creature.

- ❖ What does it look like? Does it resemble any existing animal?
- ❖ What does it eat?
- ❖ Does it have any supernatural powers? If so, what are they?

Younger students can draw pictures of their mythical creatures, while older students can prepare a short speech about their mythical creature.

Post-Show Activities

Activity 4 Review, Interpret, and Discuss

Grade Level: Kindergarten to Grade 8

**Curriculum
Connection:** Language Arts

Purpose: To review, interpret, and analyze the play.

Lesson: This activity is based on a discussion of the characters, setting, and main themes of the play.

Time needed: One classroom period

As a group, discuss the following:

- ❖ What were your favorite parts of the play and why?
- ❖ What were your least favorite parts of the play, and why?
- ❖ Have you read the book, *A Promise is a Promise*? Did it help to prepare you for the play?

Characters

- ❖ Who are the main characters in the play?
- ❖ What are their personalities like?

Setting

- ❖ Where does the story take place?
- ❖ When does the story take place - in the past, in the present, in the future?
- ❖ How does the setting impact the main characters' problems?

Plot

- ❖ Why are promises so important?
- ❖ The Qallupilluit force Allashua to promise that she will bring her brothers and sisters to the sea ice. How does the promise eventually backfire on them?
- ❖ Why does Allashua not heed her mother's warning?
- ❖ Allashua was lucky to get away. Did she learn her lesson? How did she change throughout the play?
- ❖ Allashua is the main character, or protagonist, of the play. Make a list of adjectives to describe what you know of her.
- ❖ What did you learn from Allashua's adventure?
- ❖ What did you like best about the play? Was there anything you didn't like? What surprised you?
- ❖ Which character did you like best? Did any of the people in the play remind you of anybody you know?
- ❖ From whose perspective was the story told? If the Qallupilluit had told the story, how would it have been different?
- ❖ "A Promise is a Promise!" is a saying. Make a list of other sayings you have heard. An example would be "Don't judge a book by its cover". What do these sayings mean? What is their historical background?

**Activity 5: Problem-solving
Drama Games**

Grade Level: Grades 2 to 8

Curriculum

Connection: Drama

Purpose: To act out problems and solutions in order determine the best way to deal with various situations.

Lesson: Using Drama to teach students about problem-solving.

Time needed: One classroom period

Sometimes when we are in danger, we have to think fast and we make rash decisions. Allashua escaped from the Qallupilluit by promising them her brothers and sisters, which caused an even bigger problem. Do students think this was the best course of action Allashua could have taken?

Have students describe a problem they have been faced with and how they solved it. Can they imagine other ways to solve the problem after the event?

Choose a few of the problems discussed by students. In groups, have students act out a problem and three alternative ways to solve it. Students then get to vote on which was the best solution.

Activity 6

Build your own Inuksuk

Grade Level: Kindergarten to Grade 6

Curriculum

Connection: Arts and Crafts

Purpose: To learn about Inuksuks through arts and crafts.

Lesson: Discuss the symbolism of Inuksuks, then students build their own.

Time needed: One classroom period

An Inuksuk is a pile of rocks that resembles a human being. Each one is as unique as a fingerprint because the stones used are the ones found where the Inuksuk is to be built. It is made to tell other people about an important place or to symbolize that they have passed this spot. It is also used to frighten animals into thinking they are looking at a hunter when they are chased towards it. This surprises and stuns the animal so that the real hunter chasing it has enough time to make the catch.

Build your own Inuksuk!

(adapted from www.creativekidsathome.com)

Inuksuks are made from placing rocks, balanced on top of each other in the shape of a human being.

1. Collect some rocks from outside, or if that's not possible, create your own through arts and crafts that resemble rocks. Most of them should have some flat surfaces. The easiest rocks to work with will have two flat surfaces (top and bottom).
2. Start balancing the rocks on top of each other. At this point, your main goal is learning about balancing the rocks and finding combinations that work well together. If two rocks just won't balance, try turning them over. Often just moving the rock a little bit can make a difference.
3. Decide where you want your finished Inuksuk to stand, and start building.

Suggested Reading

People of the Ice: How the Inuit Lived

By Heather Smith Siska (How they lived in Canada Series, 1995)

Building an Igloo

by Ulli Steltzer (School and Library Binding, 1995)

Frozen Land: Vanishing Cultures

by Jan Reynolds (School and Library Binding, 1996)

In a Different Light: Growing up in a Yup'ik Eskimo Village in Alaska

by Carolyn Meyer (School and Library Binding, 1996)

The Inuit (Footsteps in Time)

by Ruth Thomson (School and Library Binding, 1996)

The Inuit (Indians of North America)

by Nancy Bonvillain (III Porter, 1995)

The Inukshuk Book

by Mary Wallace (1999)

Magic Words

by Edward Field (School and Library Binding, 1998)

Other Books by Robert Munsch:

50 Below Zero (1989)
Boy in the Drawer (1982)
Aaron's Hair (2000)
Agu, Agu, Agu/Murmel, Murmel,
Murmel (1990)
Alligator Baby (1998)
Andrew's Loose Tooth (1999)
Angela's Airplane (1988)
The Dark (1997)
David's Father (1983)
The Fire Station (1991)

Other Books by Michael Kusugak:

Arctic Stories (1998)
Baseball Bats for Christmas (1993)
Hide and Sneak (1992)
My Arctic 1,2,3 (1996)
Northern Lights; The Soccer Trails
(1993)
Who Wants Rocks? (1999)

About Geordie Productions

Geordie Productions is a professional theatre company that has presented live English-language theatre for young audiences for over twenty-five years. Based in Montreal, Geordie tours extensively across Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes, performing in schools, theatres, libraries and community centres. Geordie has also visited the Far North and has performed across Canada and in the United States. Closer to home, Geordie's Montreal Mainstage series entertains thousands of families and school groups at Concordia's D.B. Clarke Theatre each season.

Artistic Director - Dean Patrick Fleming

General Manager - Anne Clark

Publicity/Box Office Coordinator - Siu-Min Jim

School Liaison - Lara de Beaupré

Administration Intern - Tara Nakhjavani

Bookkeeper - Gisèle Séguin

Technical Director / Geordie Space - James Douglas

Geordie Productions

4001 Berri, Suite 103

Montreal, QC H2L 4H2

Tel: 514.845.9810

Fax: 514.845.3634

GEORDIE'S MONTREAL MAINSTAGE MATINÉES FOR SCHOOLS - Come to us!

Geordie's Mainstage Matinée Series makes English language theatre accessible to school groups with performances at Concordia University's D.B. Clarke Theatre in downtown Montreal. Geordie subsidizes the ticket price for students and encourages educators to take advantage of the Culture in the Schools grant program administered by the Government of Quebec's Minister of Culture and Communication.

NEW THIS YEAR: 1 free teacher's ticket for every 15 students!

Call us today or visit our website for more details.

2007-2008 Mainstage Season

Hana's Suitcase | Peacemaker | The Jungle Book

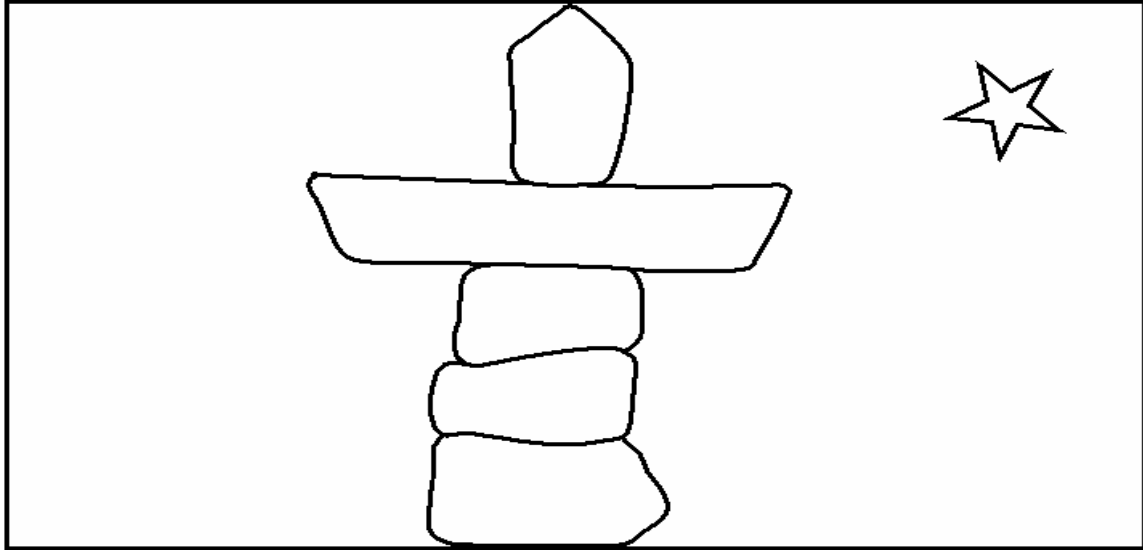
QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? FEEDBACK?

Send us an email! schools@geordie.ca

www.geordie.ca

Appendix 1 - Nunavut Flag

<http://www.kidzone.ws/geography/nunavut/flag.htm>



Nunavut

- Flag has a yellow background on the left and white on the right with a blue star and red *inuksuk* in the center.
- An *inuksuk* is a stone monument which is used to guide people and mark special or sacred places.
- The single star represents the north star - known as *Niqirtsuituq* in the native tongue.
- Adopted on April 1, 1999 when the territory of Nunavut was formed.

Appendix 2 - Additional Material

Fill in the Blanks.

1. The Qallupilluit says to Allashua, "The best you may be but the _____ you are not.
2. Allashua promised her mother that she would go fishing in the _____ and not in the _____.
3. The word 'Inuit' means _____ in English.
4. After Allashua returned home her mother gave her some _____ to warm her up.
5. Then Allashua's mother kept the Qallupilluit in her house by giving them _____ and _____.
6. The Qallupilluit especially enjoyed her father's _____ and started to _____ along with him.
7. The Qallupilluit sang with voices that sounded like _____ blowing over the ice.
8. Allashua promises the Qallupilluit she will bring her _____ and her _____ to the cracks in the ice.

Solutions

1. smartest
2. lake, ocean
3. the people
4. hugs/tea
5. bread, candy
6. dancing, dance
7. snow
8. brothers, sisters